

A silhouette of a person standing with their back to the camera, arms raised in a 'V' shape. The person's hair is blowing in the wind. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise sky with a dark horizon line at the bottom.

Class of 2022 Convocation Ceremony

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

ASU **Watts College**
of Public Service and Community Solutions
Arizona State University

Dean's congratulations



Every Watts College degree program starts with a premise: that which makes the individual stronger makes the collective stronger. And, that which makes the collective stronger benefits all of us. This means that we are interdependent; our wellbeing remains interconnected.

By choosing to earn a degree in the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, each of you chose to pursue a path to positively impact the community in your own way. I am grateful for your dedication to public service. Your aspiration to make the world a better place inspires me each and every day.

Today we celebrate your academic accomplishments and your dedication to serve. I am a believer that each person has the capacity to make a difference. And, when we do this together, that is how we change the world. Because of you and our collective will, together, we will realize the mission of the Watts College to build more healthy, vibrant, equitable communities.

Congratulations!

Cynthia A Lietz

Cynthia Lietz, Dean
Watts College of Public Service and
Community Solutions





“I am part of the solution!”

Our schools

The **School of Community Resources and Development** advances the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our local and global communities through instruction, research and service. Our school — ranked #2 in the U.S. and #7 in the world for hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism research by the Center for World University Rankings — provides interdisciplinary expertise and innovative academic programs in nonprofit leadership and management, parks and recreation management, and tourism development and management.

The **School of Criminology and Criminal Justice** merges theory and practice. Ranked #2 in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for our Criminology and Criminal Justice PhD program and #7 for our online graduate program, the core of our instruction focuses on the theories of criminality and evidence-based best practices for responding to crime through the lenses of three interrelated structures — policing, courts and corrections — which comprise the criminal justice system.

The **School of Public Affairs'** mission is to understand and address society's grandest challenges in public management, policy and governance. We seek to maximize our impact through rigorous interdisciplinary research, project-based education, collaborative and inclusive community engagement, experiential learning and innovative solutions. We are ranked among the top 15 public affairs schools in the country by U.S. News & World Report, with highly-rated programs in emergency management and homeland security, IT management and local government management.

One of the largest and most diverse social work programs in the U.S., the **School of Social Work** is motivated by its steadfast commitment to promote social, political and economic justice with a special emphasis on populations of the Southwest. Our school, which U.S. News & World Report ranks among the top 30 in the country, prepares professional social work practitioners and scholars who are committed to enhancing individual, family and group problem-solving capacities, maximizing human potential and creating a more just and humane society.

Meet Mike and Cindy Watts

2018 gift establishes the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions

“An investment in public service education is an investment in our shared future. The name Watts will now, and in the future, be synonymous with public service.”

- Former Dean Jonathan GS Koppell

Mike and Cindy Watts are known for their generous civic involvement and investment, a passion that began with their west Phoenix neighborhood of Maryvale and extends to the Arizona State University community and the college that bears their name.

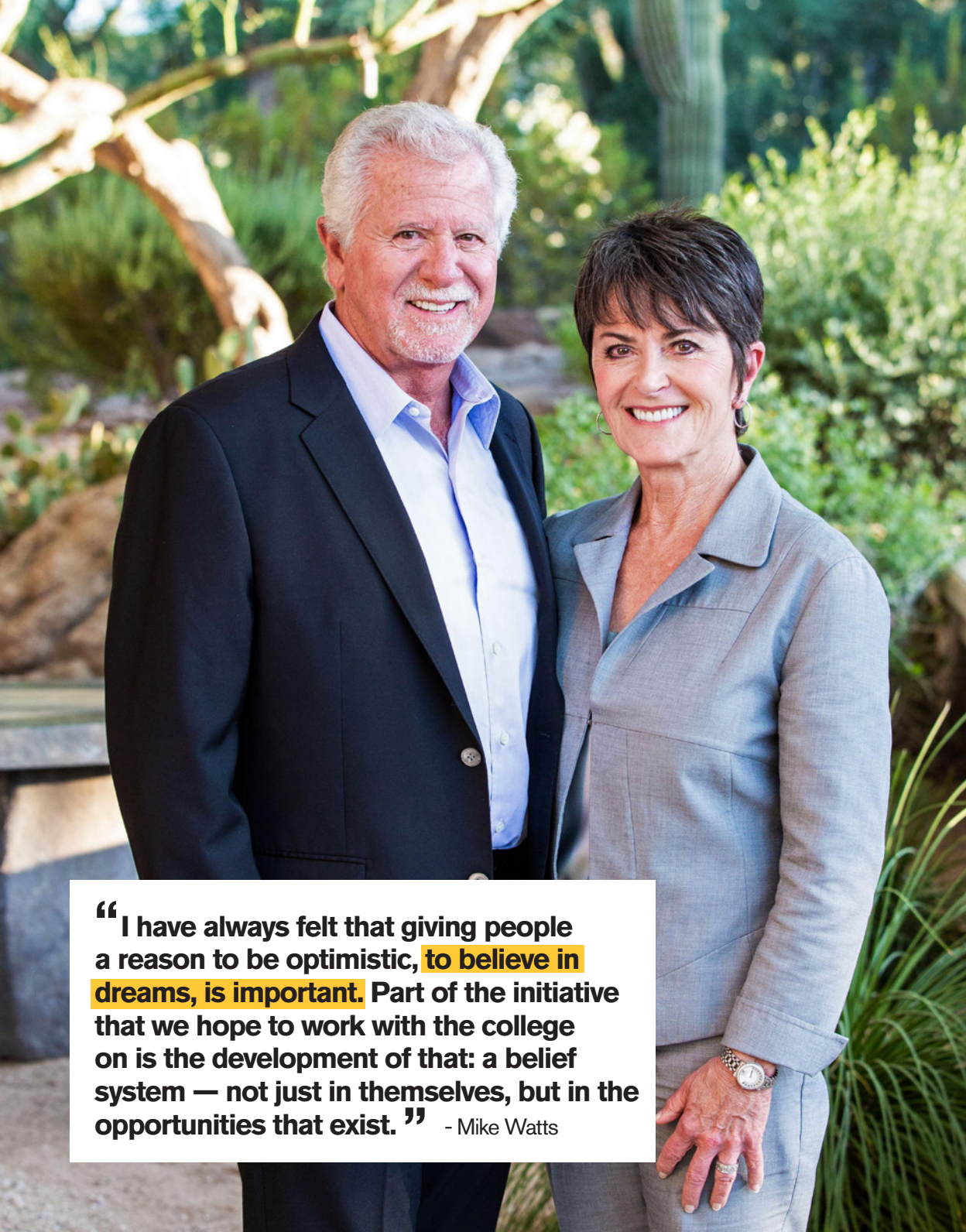
In 2018, Mike and Cindy made a substantial gift to our college as an investment in our diverse and mission-driven student body, who do not wait to graduate to start making a difference in the communities they serve. This gift was more than an investment in the College of Public Service and Community Solutions: It was — and remains — a significant contribution to community, opportunity and solutions.

The Wattses are co-founders of Sunstate Equipment, a highly successful equipment rental company that began in Arizona in 1977 and has expanded to 14 other states. They both grew up in Maryvale, at the time a newly-developed suburb. Maryvale began experiencing urban decline in the 1980s and '90s.

To reverse this, Mike and Cindy made leadership gifts to the Maryvale YMCA and endowed the Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety, an initiative of ASU's now-Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions.

They have been engaged with the university since 1988 and are lifetime members of the ASU President's Club. They are dedicated to using their resources, both financial and personal, to elevate the quality of life for all in our community and state.

The investment by Mike and Cindy supports and expands the work of the college in community development, public policy, criminal justice and child well-being.



“I have always felt that giving people a reason to be optimistic, to believe in dreams, is important. Part of the initiative that we hope to work with the college on is the development of that: a belief system — not just in themselves, but in the opportunities that exist.” - Mike Watts

The gift and its impact

The Wattses' generous investment supports three key areas:

- **Community impact.** One major initiative is to revitalize the Maryvale community with emphasis on collaborating directly with community leaders to bolster their efforts and increase community engagement.
- **Academic excellence.** The gift funds five endowed professorships that will allow the college to attract established scholars who are focused on community development, public policy, criminal justice and child well-being.
- **Student success.** Funding also supports student-driven programs focused on policy and leadership training, service learning, social entrepreneurship, research and access to transformative experiences for first-generation students.

Outstanding graduates

Alexandra Ghiozzi

School of Community Resources and Development

From studying journalism as an undergraduate to earning a master's degree in sustainable tourism three decades later, Alexandra Ghiozzi has crafted her career by adding one experience to another.



The San Francisco Bay Area native graduated from Santa Clara University with a bachelor's degree in communication with a political science minor. Media jobs being few upon graduation, she took a position at a bank that appeared to have a future: manager, vice president, career stability.

"But I was bored," said the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions' fall 2022 Outstanding Graduate from the School of Community Resources and Development. "I'd look out of my window every day and ask myself, where could I be besides here at my desk?"

Ghiozzi responded to an ad seeking airline flight attendants and wound up among 2,000 chosen from roughly 40,000 applicants. She flew on and off for four years before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks changed the airline industry and led to cutbacks.

"9/11 changed everything. Then I had two young children – which changed my perspective. Being gone four days a week was not conducive to raising a family," said Ghiozzi, who today lives in Brentwood, Calif., about 70 miles east of San Francisco.

Staying home wasn't the ideal choice, either. After six months at home full time, her husband told her "you've got to do something," she said. Ghiozzi bought a travel agency franchise in 2005, which shut down during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She took a few online courses. One in sustainable tourism intrigued her. She then chose ASU's online program to pursue her graduate degree in the field. Today her business is rebuilding, she's training an additional agent and instituting principles of sustainable tourism into her work.

She recommends her clients eat at locally owned restaurants and shop at local stores, which along with other choices, helps benefit the economy, the environment and society as a whole. "Now I have enough knowledge to make better recommendations to my clients," she said.

"Education is not enough; action is required to make the kind of changes our society and the world needs to make right now."

Tatjana Carranza

School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

One of Tatjana Carranza's favorite things about America is how people here have significant freedom to choose their careers – including switching fields – compared to those in her homeland.



College students in her native Germany have the benefit of having their academic costs picked up by the government, Carranza said, but often the price of that paid-for education is being stuck with one's first choice.

"Yes, it's free, but it comes with restrictions," said Carranza, whose initial plans were to become a language translator. "Here, you have transitions. In America I feel like I had all these opportunities."

Carranza, the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions' fall 2022 Outstanding Graduate in Criminology and Criminal Justice, was born and raised in Germany, where she earned an associate degree in foreign languages, before moving to the U.S. at age 21.

Carranza gained her U.S. citizenship and is a U.S. Army veteran. She lived in Washington state and Georgia before moving in 2018 to her current home in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where her husband is still in the service.

Her bachelor's degree was in legal studies. She decided to pursue criminal justice for her online master's degree, fine-tuning her choice to crime analysis.

"Crime analysis is behind-the-scenes kind of work. You would do an analysis of where crime is located to decide if this area needs more law enforcement support," Carranza said. "Especially with problem-oriented policing now, where do we focus our resources when they are so limited?"

Carranza's capstone project involved researching traffic collisions and where they happen and why. "You ask, why is this intersection so bad?" she said. "It goes to city planning. Does this one corner have a tree that is blocking the view? It's a very interesting field."

"Yes, (higher education in Germany) is free, but it comes with restrictions. Here, you have transitions. In America I feel like I had all these opportunities."

Outstanding graduates

Ty'Lesha Yellowhair

School of Public Affairs

As the youngest of five children, Ty'Lesha Yellowhair (Navajo, or Diné) had more than enough incentive to pursue her education. Not that there weren't challenges to overcome for it to happen.



Following the example of their mother – who holds three master's degrees -- all four of Yellowhair's siblings also earned degrees.

"It's been incredible to witness the strides they have all taken, for me to live up to the examples of my siblings and my mother," said Yellowhair, the fall 2022 Outstanding Graduate from the School of Public Affairs.

Today a Chandler resident, Yellowhair is of the Diné nation, originally from Kayenta, Arizona. She is Todich'íinii (Bitter Water Clan) born for Tí'áashchí'í (Red Bottom People Clan).

Her maternal grandfather's clan is Naakai Dine'é and paternal grandfather's clan is Tó'áhaní (Near the Water Clan).

After graduating from Monument Valley High School in 2011, she enrolled at ASU in American Indian Studies, but changed her major to early childhood education after realizing she wanted to make an impact in her community in a different way. But after making that change, she realized that she had a different calling.

"I developed a passion for social work and public affairs. It was something I just had to do," she said. She left school for a few years after the birth of her son, but returned in 2015 to earn her bachelor's degree in American Indian Studies with a certificate in Native leadership and governance. At its fall 2022 commencement, the university is conferring upon her a Master of Public Administration degree and a Master of Social Work degree.

Yellowhair's decision to go into social work, particularly into efforts to shape public policies that guide social services, set her apart from her mother and siblings.

"My sisters contribute to our community by molding the minds of our children as teachers. My mom, it's been 50 years; she assumed that I would fall into that too," Yellowhair said. "But I will be the first social worker and first public administrator in my family, working with policy and how systems operate. For me, that's an incredible accomplishment."

"Advocacy is the center of my being. I never had to learn what social injustice was from a textbook."

Kevin Brown-Kaufman

School of Social Work

After living through what he calls a “rough upbringing” that involved moving in and out of several cities, a teenage Kevin Brown-Kaufman decided to fast-track his enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps by dropping out of the 11th grade to complete his high school requirements more quickly in night school.



However, the Phoenix native, then living in Salt Lake City, became a young father in 1997. He put his educational goals aside to start working and remain in his daughter's life. Working in floor coverings eventually paid quite well and lasted a decade. Brown-Kaufman still harbored the dream of becoming a U.S. Marine and wanted to go to Iraq with U.S. forces to fight in the war there.

With the requirement of finishing high school to enlist, even at age 22, still present, he could have done what older students often do – get a General Education Development certificate. Instead, he realized he really wanted to graduate from high school, even though it would take longer. Brown-Kaufman, the fall 2022 Outstanding Graduate of the School of Social Work, held fast to his decision.

“It was my attitude, that I would not join with a GED, being firm on my feet, and meaning what I said,” said Brown-Kaufman, who earned his bachelor's degree in social work. “I understand how powerful all of us are if we really believe in ourselves.”

He honorably served in the Marine Corps (active and reserves) from 2005 to 2019. He earned an associate degree (2019) and entered ASU summer 2020.

Today, his daughter is 25 and an ASU alum. He saw her get up every day for school, which motivated him to do the same, and say to himself, “I got this.”

Now Brown-Kaufman's looking ahead to serving others by “being the voice” for them.

“In a lot of those situations and lifestyles, we get stuck and think that's all we have. But if we change our mindset and stop blaming ourselves, stop blaming our parents or our upbringing and do it for ourselves, we can do what we say we'll do.”

“In a lot of ... situations and lifestyles, we get stuck and think that's all we have. But if we change our mindset and stop blaming ourselves, stop blaming our parents or our upbringing and do it ourselves, we can do what we say we'll do.”

Outstanding graduates

Aviel Waxman

Barrett, The Honors College

Aviel Waxman's father had multiple sclerosis, and Waxman helped care for him until his death four years ago. Being there for his father helped the fall 2022 Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions Outstanding Graduate, Honors, realize the importance of helping others.



"I knew I wanted to help people, seeing him live with multiple sclerosis through his later years," said Waxman, a Glendale resident who is earning his Bachelor of Social Work degree. "I was learning how to support people."

Waxman's father also was a very good listener, a trait his son developed.

"Dad was a huge proponent of listening to others and that people's stories are important.

Many people would come to the house in Flagstaff and talk with him," Waxman said. His father, no matter where he was, would start conversations with strangers and learn about their life stories. "That inspired me to go into the helping professions."

Waxman grew up in Flagstaff, then moved to the Phoenix area in 2011 after flooding from the 2010 Schultz Fire. While in high school, Waxman focused his senior community service project on domestic and sexual violence, which led him to being hired at a Peoria-based nonprofit dedicated to ending this type of behavior. He worked there until his sophomore year at ASU.

"In high school, and during my first year at ASU, I worked for a nonprofit organization called BLOOM365, where most of my coworkers either had or were working on getting their social work degrees. That caused my interest to learn more about the profession and how I could use my degree to help others," Waxman said. "However, my Introduction to Social Work class really showed me what I could do and helped to confirm that the social work field is something that I would like to work in."

Waxman plans to pursue a Master of Social Work degree with a focus on policy, administration and community practice.

"I plan to work with Watts College at the West campus to help build unique experiences for prospective students looking into public service," Waxman said. "After I graduate, my goal is to work within the community development sphere to help empower others and create safe, equitable and healthy communities."

"While we can help to solve a problem or an issue where it is at, nothing much can really change without challenging or changing the systems involved."



Doctoral graduates

School of Community Resources and Development

Hyunrang Han

Linsi He

Mahalakshmi Ravi Mahalingam

School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Michaela Reed Flippin

Stephanie Jean Morse

School of Social Work

Andrea Alexa Kappas Mazzio

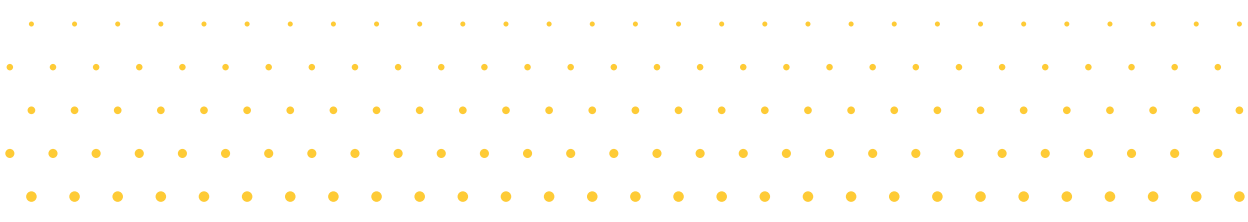
School of Public Affairs

Yifan Chen

Haneul Choi

Hey Jie Jung

Tianyi Xiang



Moeur Award winners

Tatum Erb

Dusenge Gloria

Haley Hewitt

McKenna Hubbard

Grace Martinez

Rebecca McOmber

Diana Perez

Ciara Ruiz-Earle

Hallie Searles

The Moeur Award was named for Dr. B.B. Moeur, a physician and businessman in Tempe in the early 1900s. He was a business owner and was active in local politics, including eight years on the Tempe School Board, as well as serving on the Board of Education of the Tempe Normal School (predecessor of ASU). As Governor of Arizona from 1933-1937, he provided leadership during the Great Depression.

Since 1901, the Alumni Association has presented the Moeur Award to those graduates with the highest academic standing who have completed their course work toward their degree while attending ASU with eight consecutive fall and spring semesters. Award recipients are honored at each commencement ceremony, receiving an award certificate; the recipients receive a plaque after degrees are formally conferred in the alumni database.

Barrett, The Honors College graduates

Aviel Waxman

Dusenge Gloria

McKenna Hubbard

Amanda Lombard

Mayrani Tarin Reyes

Grace Martinez

Celebrate your graduation with us!



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media and with your friends and family.
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The Watts College congratulates the class of 2022.

We are so proud of all you have accomplished!



**You have reached a tremendous milestone,
but your education doesn't have to stop here.**

Master's programs

Community Resources and Development, MS
Criminal Justice, MA *
Criminology and Criminal Justice, MS
Emergency Management and
Homeland Security, MA *
Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MNLM *
Program Evaluation and Data Analytics, MS *
Public Administration, MPA
Public Administration - Executive, EMPA *
Public Policy, MPP
Public Safety Leadership and Administration,
MPSLA *
Social Work, MSW *
Sustainable Tourism, MAS & MST *

Doctoral programs

Community Resources and Development, PhD
Crime Analysis, MS*
Criminology and Criminal Justice, PhD
Public Administration and Policy, PhD
Social Work, PhD

Graduate certificates

Assessment of Integrative Health Modalities
Corrections Management *
Crime Analysis *
Criminal Sentencing and Sentencing Advocacy *
Domestic Violence and Evidence-based Practice
Emergency Management
Homeland Security *
Latino Cultural Competency in Social Work
Law Enforcement Administration *
Nonprofit Leadership and Management
Participatory Governance
Policy Informatics
Program Evaluation
Public Administration
Public Policy
Social Entrepreneurship and Community
Development *
Sustainable Tourism *
Trauma and Bereavement

* Available online






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