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# Buhrmann, Haywood Honored by McLean County YWCA with “Women of Distinction” Awards

Nov 22, 2021

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan Web Content Specialist Kristen Buhrmann and Instructional Professor and General Biology Lab Coordinator Libby Haywood were presented with "Women of Distinction" awards by YWCA McLean County in a virtual event on Oct. 21, 2021.

The awards recognize women who are trailblazers in their professions, pathfinders for social justice and women on the rise. The categories for the Women of Distinction award include: Business & Education, Community Leadership, Human Services, Mission Impact, S.T.E.A.M., Promise and Community Key.

Buhrmann was honored in the Promise category. The Promise award is given to a woman who has been in their career for five years or less but has made significant contributions to the community around her and inspires others to follow her example.

Buhrmann is a pathfinder for social justice through her continuous efforts to challenge established norms and privileged systems. During her time at IWU, she has created a staff working group that focuses on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and has implemented a plan for the University’s social media to support LGBTQ+ and BIPOC community members. Under Buhrmann’s guidance, there was a public acknowledgement of Juneteenth and Pride Month for the first time in the University’s history. She is also actively involved with the West Bloomington Revitalization Project, Illinois People’s Action and the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees.

Haywood was honored under the S.T.E.A.M. category. The S.T.E.A.M. award is given to a professional in the field of science, technology, engineering, arts or math who demonstrates exceptional leadership and helps to break down gender barriers.

Haywood advocates for marginalized students on campus through her commitment to social justice and anti-racist pedagogy. Haywood’s commitment to ensuring these practices is emphasized by her presence on both the IWU Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, as well as the Faculty Committee on Diversity. Haywood has presented and published scientific research and received numerous awards for curriculum development and teaching. She is also the faculty advisor for “Students of Color in STEM,” which won organization of the year at the 2021 Student Involvement Awards hosted by the [Illinois Wesleyan Office of Student Involvement](#).

Alumna Hannah Johnson ’12 was also among the nominees. Johnson is the director of youth and family education at the [McLean County Museum of History](#). She has worked at the museum since 2014, and helped to develop and grow programs such as the Futures in History Camp and the “Community in Conversation” series. Johnson has ensured the museum is connected to the community through working with groups such as Black Lives Matter, NAACP, Not in Our Town, YWCA McLean County and more to enhance the preservation of the history of McLean County. Johnson is also the leader of the Central Illinois Community of Educators where she works to eliminate barriers for McLean County residents.

The full list of nominees for the Women of Distinction award can be found in the [event program](#) on the YWCA website.



Kristen Buhrmann, Web Content Specialist



Libby Haywood, Instructional Professor and General Biology Lab Coordinator

By Kailee Galloway '23