



## **Past Board Members**



**Rich Wolin**

Director of Training at Northwestern Michigan College

Rich is currently Director of Training at Northwestern Michigan College and the Director of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center. He was the creator and lead developer of the Active Learning Model and has trained and mentored hundreds of Michigan companies in Leadership, Teamwork and Lean skills. Rich was one of the founding members of the teams that brought together the Michigan Lean Consortium and the Northern Michigan Lean Learning Consortium.



**Eric Walters**

Management Engineer at Sparrow Health System

Eric has worked to streamline processes and engage people at all organizational levels to create positive change for over twenty years. He spent the first half of his career in the medical device industry. More recently, he has been working in the clinical laboratory and health care industries. Eric has been co-chair of the MLC Project Committee since 2012. He holds degrees from University of Illinois and Michigan State University, is Certified by ASQ as a Six Sigma Black Belt and as a Quality Auditor, and by ASCP as a technologist in Molecular Pathology.



**Dave Kippen**

Lean Leader at Dickinson Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan

For the past 8 years, Dave has served as a Lean leader, coach and educational instructor. Dave's passion is to aid in the development of leadership and growth throughout all levels of the organization. During this time, Dave has successfully coached more than 300 people through Lean 101/102/103 classes and facilitated hundreds of Kaizen events throughout the United States and Europe. Dave believes that the development of people is the most critical of all Lean endeavors, and strives to create Lean leaders, regardless of level or position in industry. Dave is Bronze



certified through the SME/AME/Shingo Prize/ASQ Partnership. For more information, please connect with him via his LinkedIn profile or at [davekippen@yahoo.com](mailto:davekippen@yahoo.com).



**Jessica Jannaman**

Corporate Health & Safety Specialist at Chrysler Group LLC

Jessica Jannaman is a member of the Michigan Lean Consortium (MLC) and serves as a participant on the Event Committee. Jannaman works at Chrysler LLC in Auburn Hills, MI, as Corporate Health & Safety Specialist. She assiststo communicate, organize and coordinate safety initiatives and objectives throughoutorganizationwith the team of health and safety representatives she works with at Chrysler LLC. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Health, a Lean Black BeltCertificate,and is currently pursuing a Master's of Science in Safety Management at Oakland University.

Jannaman has been an MLC member since 2011 and has been active on the Event Committee, as well as serving on the Annual Conference Planning Committee over the two past years. Jannaman is also active with the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) serving as Secretary for the Greater Detroit Chapter. She strives to influence systemic thinking and integrating lean principles into the safety profession.

Jannaman looks to help in the continuation of the MLC's initiatives/goals and to apply them within her own influences.



**Mike Taubitz**

Principal Consultant, FDR Safety  
Co-chair, National Lean & Safety Network

Mike is a frequent speaker at professional and industry group meetings and is often referenced in articles, magazines, and



technical papers. He spent 43 years with General Motors in a variety of engineering and human resource positions and held every safety position - from plant safety supervisor to Global Director of Safety and Ergonomics - at the company. In the late 90s, he learned lean and continuous improvement thinking for office and business systems and used that as a foundation when he developed and led GM's emerging issues process from 2000 until his retirement in 2008.



**Jim Manley**

Managing Director

Demmer Center for Business Transformation at The Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University

Jim is currently the Managing Director for the Demmer Center for Business Transformation at The Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University in Lansing, MI. He has worked for General Motors, Delphi and Faurecia and had the rare opportunity to study with Dr. W. Edwards Deming and learn lean "hands on". He also worked as an adjunct faculty member at Eastern Michigan University, teaching courses on lean manufacturing and statistical process control. During his career with Delphi, Jim coached teams in 29 countries as they implemented lean into their plant operating system. Jim received the Delphi Corporate Lifetime Lean Achievement Award in 2005.



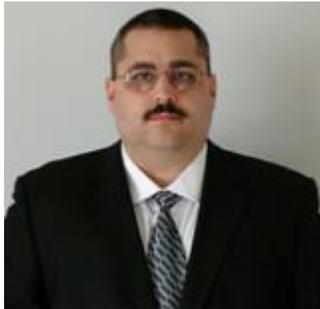
**Debra Levantrosser**

Debra is co-founder of the Michigan Lean Consortium. She firmly believes that lean principles will encourage innovation and make Michigan competitive as a business player in the new economy.

During her expansive career, Levantrosser has served as executive director of Strategy Development and Business Improvement at Johnson & Johnson, helped identify over \$6



billion in savings, led more than 300 kaizen events and has used lean philosophy in health care, manufacturing, law enforcement, insurance, interior design, construction, and consulting in over 50 countries.



Levantrosser holds bachelor degrees in German and political science from Michigan State University and a master's degree in public administration from Marist College in New York and is completing a PhD in organizational management at Capella University. Her dissertation is about lean culture.

**Ken LePage, BSME**  
**Associate Vice President, Process Excellence (Px)**  
**St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital**

Ken is currently the Associate Vice President of Process Excellence (Px) for St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital in Pontiac, MI as well as a Board Member on the MLC Board of Directors responsible for Membership.

Ken is a graduate of the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. He began his career at the Nippondenso Company. He then joined Ford Motor Company, where he took the design and development of the D4 fuel injector from a clean sheet all the way through production.

Following his design into production and after several years as a Production Supervisor and Manufacturing Engineer with Ford, Ken was promoted to Product Line Manager (Operations Superintendent), where he led the implementation of numerous Lean Manufacturing improvements and Six Sigma projects that resulted in over \$30M in operational cost savings.

Ken was subsequently promoted to the position of Lean Manufacturing Manager for all interior/exterior systems for North America. In this role, he was on the team that authored the Visteon Manufacturing Operating System (VMOS) leadership guide, which is similar to the Toyota Production System (TPS). He was also the mentor for 14 North American manufacturing facilities in the training and implementation of Lean tools and Process Excellence.

In 2005, Ken decided to leave manufacturing and bring his Lean & Process Excellence implementation and mentoring expertise to the Healthcare field working for Johnson & Johnson's Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics ValuMetrix Services group. He has implemented Lean projects at numerous hospital sites worldwide, using his leadership skills and the structured tools of Process Excellence to help gain the dramatic results required to gain operational cost savings, improve capacity, improve performance and customer satisfaction.

Ken joined Trinity Health, one of the largest Catholic healthcare systems in the country, in March of 2008 where he worked as the Lean Sensei in the Process Excellence group. His experience and hard work were a valuable asset to Performance Leadership as Trinity Health transitioned to a Process Excellence driven operating company.



In November 2009, Ken moved within Trinity Health to join the St. Joseph Mercy Oakland team as the Associate Vice President of Process Excellence, where he continues to drive Px through the organization. That December of 2009, he was also elected to the Board of Directors for the MLC.

Ken lives in Canton, MI and is married to an amazing woman, Kathy, and has two wonderful sons with her, Charlie & Kevin. The boys are a lot of fun and have become big fans of their dad's alma mater, especially while watching the college football games together on Saturdays in the fall.

**Rick Fleming  
Director,  
Michigan Shingo Prize  
The Right Place**

Richard currently works with The Right Place, Inc. to help promote the Shingo Prize in Michigan and assists organizations with the process of transformation to a lean operational philosophy. He has provided manufacturing companies and service firms with lean enterprise consulting, training, and opportunity assessments for more than 20 years. His expertise has been used by leaders to achieve product and process enhancements that result in improved productivity, quality, and service. Richard has worked with manufacturers, banks, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, non-profit organizations, and utilities.

After receiving his Masters in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan, Richard served as Lean Manufacturing Engineering Manager for the Industrial Technology Institute, Manager of Flexible Manufacturing Systems for Lamb Technicon, and process control and machine design engineer for Union Carbide Corporation. In these positions, Richard directed the installation of multi-million dollar flexible manufacturing systems and pioneered unique approaches to successfully implement lean manufacturing systems for OEMs and their supply chains.

In 1987, Richard became a student of the Toyota Production System approach and began helping small manufacturing operations in Michigan and Ohio to understand and adopt TPS principles through the Michigan Modernization Service and CI User Groups. He worked with Mike Rother and Kiyoshi Suzuki, an ex-Toyota Manager and internationally recognized author of "The New Manufacturing Challenge" and "The New Shop Floor Management," for four years helping companies implement principles of the Toyota Production System / Lean Manufacturing. Richard co-founded with Mike Rother & Kiyoshi Suzuki the CI User Group approach to networking and shared learning, which has been highlighted in the Wall Street Journal.

Richard is a Shingo Prize examiner and assisted Metalworks (winner of the 2007 North American Shingo Prize) and Micron Manufacturing (winner of the 2008 silver medallion Shingo Prize) with their journeys to achieve world class status. He has also worked with several Michigan companies to achieve the bronze level Shingo Prize.



## **Jason Schulist**

Director, Major Enterprise Projects

DTE Energy

Jason Schulist serves as Director, Project Management, Engineering and Construction, Major Enterprise Projects, DTE Energy. He previously led the Program Office, Major Enterprise Projects. While in these roles, Jason has driven the process development effort leading to awards as APQC's Best Practice Provider for Effective Project Management Offices in 2012 and the highest scores in PM Solutions' Project Management Maturity Model for both the utility and construction industries.

As Director of Continuous Improvement, Jason led the effort to save DTE Energy over \$700 million while building CI capability in its employees. DTE Energy was awarded Best Process Improvement Program in 2009 by the International Quality and Productivity Council during his tenure. Jason started with DTE Energy in 2004. Prior to joining DTE Energy, Jason led a small retail assembly company for 2 years and worked at General Motors for 13 years in strategy, business development, and an executive in lean manufacturing.

Jason earned a B.S in Electrical Engineering from Marquette University, and an M.S. in Electrical Engineering & MBA from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as part of the prestigious Leaders for Manufacturing (now Leaders for Global Operations) program. Jason is a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).

Jason serves on the boards of the Greening of Detroit, Recovery Park, the Michigan Lean Consortium, the Construction Industry Institute (CII), Oakland University's Systems Engineering Department, and the University of Michigan's Tishman Construction Management Program. He was past Chairman and co-founder of the Michigan Lean Consortium, an organization committed to the economic, social, and environmental excellence of Michigan through the use of lean principles. He is co-creator of DTE's Sustainable Lean Sigma discipline, applying lean six-sigma to environmental and social issues. He also served on the boards of Menlo Labs and the Society for Organizational Learning. Jason has been a featured speaker at several conferences and numerous podcasts on continuous improvement, project management, and construction management.



## **Chris Wilson**



Chris Wilson recently retired as director of Operational Excellence for Amway Corporation with more than 20 years of leadership, domestic and international experience. His extensive supply chain operations background was a perfect fit for him to introduce lean/continuous improvement to Amway.

He has helped create a learning organization where thousands of Amway employees are using problem-solving techniques to improve the way they do their jobs, while the company has significant cost savings. Well integrated into the Grand Rapids business community, Chris has helped local non-profit organizations implement these lean techniques into their work practices. He

resides in Ada, Mich.



### **Lester Sutherland**



Mr. Sutherland is currently a Lean Six Sigma Coach for the Operations Department of Housing in HUD. Mr. Sutherland chose to retire from Ford Motor Company after many years of service and devote himself to his passion for teaching and mentoring Lean systems. Mr. Sutherland has won numerous awards for production and quality improvements as both an engineer and manager at Ford Motor Company.

### **Phil Berry**

**Senior Director, Continuous Improvement  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan**

Phil Berry is Senior Director of Continuous Improvement for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Berry is responsible for leading the company's next steps on the Lean/Continuous Improvement journey. Berry's Continuous Improvement team facilitations are leading operational performance improvements in both process efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Berry's major area of focus is to create and foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that enhances the strong position Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan has in the healthcare insurer market. This will be accomplished through successful implementation of a three year Continuous Improvement Strategy/Roadmap.

Berry came to the Blues in June 2009 with extensive professional experience in operations related leadership, management, mentoring and engineering roles with Fortune 100 companies specializing in Lean, Six Sigma, Quality, Operations, and Product Development. Berry was previously Executive Director, Continuous Improvement after three years as head of Quality for Acument Global Technologies (formerly Textron Fastening Systems). Prior to this, Berry held various high level positions with Textron from 1997 to 2007. He also held several positions at Honeywell (formerly AlliedSignal or Bendix) from 1985 to 1997.

Berry is a certified Textron Six Sigma Black Belt with Design for Six Sigma focus. Berry's robust Lean manufacturing experience dates back to his early career.



Berry holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering, both from the University of Michigan.

Berry currently serves on the Michigan Lean Consortium Board of Directors. He has also served on his local American Society of Quality Board.

**Willie Brown, Jr.**  
**Retired development engineer, GMC**  
**Lean consultant**



**Self-employed**

**CERTIFICATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS**

- Lean Manufacturing Certified
- Six Sigma Green Belt

As a retired General Motors senior supplier development engineer, he was responsible for Lean Management training for more than 150 Tier I original equipment and aftermarket automotive suppliers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Today, he uses his vast manufacturing and quality experience to help businesses, non-profits and educational institutions apply Lean. He also serves as an independent consultant to Oakland University located in Rochester, Michigan, where he trains public school administrators across the U.S. on how to strategically reduce expenses and eliminate waste through Lean thinking.



**Renae Hesselink, CPIM,LEED  
AP/Vice President Sustainability  
Nichols**

Dedicated to bringing Lean 5s to facility departments around Michigan, Renae is also a founding member of the U.S. Green Building Council West Michigan chapter, and currently Chair of the Board of Directors and the Chapter's Green School Advocacy Committee Chair. She has been with Nichols (a distributor of custodial and packaging supplies) for 17 years in various positions and three years ago moved into to a new role within the company as Vice President of Sustainability.



**Steve Palmreuter  
Director of Process Excellence  
Saint Mary's Health Care**

Steve spent 15 years in manufacturing beginning in operational leadership roles with the past 10 years spent in lean coaching roles. He has worked for companies like Cascade Engineering, Bosch Corporation, and Herman Miller. Most of his lean coaching experience came as a Lean Manager at Herman Miller where he worked with Herman Miller suppliers to teach them the principles of the Toyota Production System while also helping them to improve quality, cost, and delivery. Steve made the transition to health care when he joined Saint Mary's Health Care 5 years ago where he is the Director of Process Excellence.



**Amy Long**



## Director of Episodic Quality Improvement and Implementation

### Concentra

Amy Long is a Lean Instructor and Six Sigma Black Belt who began her Continuous Improvement journey as a child thanks to her Dad's belief in "working smarter not harder."

Her professional background includes 12 years of experience working in various continuous improvement roles at The Dow Chemical Company and Henkel Corporation. She recently transitioned to the health care industry where she is currently Director of Episodic Quality Improvement & Implementation at Concentra. She holds an MS in Organizational Development from Eastern Michigan University and a BA in Organizational Communication from Western Michigan University.



### Bob Hemrick

Director of Continuous Improvement Strategy Group

DTE Energy (A founding organization of the MLC)

Bob is the Director of Continuous Improvement at DTE Energy and serves at the current Chair of the Michigan Lean Consortium. During Bob's career that spans 26 years he's held positions in Engineering, Manufacturing, Quality and Plant Management in industries ranging from

Aerospace to Automotive and most recently the Energy industry with DTE. Bob has lead lean efforts at companies like Dana Corporation deploying lean to more than 250 global sites and most recently at DTE where he supports, guides, and coaches C-suite executives and operational leaders toward the development of a distinctive Continuous Improvement culture. Bob holds degrees in Engineering (BSME) and Business (MBA).



### Julianne Leigh

Director of Outreach Planning and Budget

Oakland University

Julianne is a co-founder for the Michigan Lean Consortium. Julianne is currently the Director of Outreach Budget and Planning at Oakland University (OU). In this role, she provides leadership in development, presentation, and monitoring of overall strategic plans for OU-Macomb. She also directs strategic plan operations, working with OU-Macomb staff to ensure quality and compliance with university policy, development of assessment requirements, and budget oversight. Leigh earned a master's degree in Training and Development through Oakland University and is currently working on her PhD in Educational Leadership with a Higher Education concentration.