



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

**UNIVERSITY
OF LIVERPOOL
ALUMNI AWARDS
2019**



Congratulations!

On behalf of the University, I would like to congratulate you on your award. I am delighted to recognise your achievements and contribution to society with this honour.

Our alumni are the University's greatest asset and it is heartening to read your stories and learn more about the impact you are making.

I am extremely proud to be the Vice-Chancellor of the University where so many of you started your journey.

These new awards allow us to recognise the many and varied achievements of our alumni community and as the first recipients of these awards, you have set the bar high for future winners!

This is a proud day for you, your family and friends, as well as for me and my colleagues at the University. We look forward to keeping in touch and following your stories.

Many congratulations again and enjoy the celebrations!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet Beer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Janet Beer

The logo is a white speech bubble shape on a dark blue background. Inside the bubble, the text "UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL ALUMNI AWARDS" is written in a bold, sans-serif font, stacked in three lines. Below this, the year "2019" is written in a much larger, bold, sans-serif font. The speech bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom right.

**UNIVERSITY
OF LIVERPOOL
ALUMNI AWARDS
2019**

Celebrating the success and achievements
of alumni across the world

This year's award was designed by Rebecca Lim, Third Year Law Student

“I don’t do this for any form of recognition, but I must admit, to be acknowledged and awarded for my efforts is positively overwhelming. It is a great feeling to receive an award as part of the University’s first Alumni Awards celebration and I am absolutely honoured – thank you!”

Dr Jaclyn Bell

BSc Hons Mathematics 2010,

MSc Mathematical Sciences 2011, PhD 2016

Jaclyn spent almost a decade studying Mathematics at the University of Liverpool. Since gaining her PhD, she has become one of the University’s best advocates, regularly volunteering her own time to help inspire the next generation of students.

She was nominated for the award by Professor John Gracey, DFG Mercator Fellow in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, who said: “Seeing Jaclyn giving mathematics and science talks at schools and clubs across the North West and the UK, she shows how she is an excellent role model for women in science as well as highlighting the benefits of a university degree, given her own widening participation background.”

Jaclyn says: “I got tired of seeing the same types of people talking at conferences, lecturing, and on TV documentaries and almost never saw anyone from Liverpool - or from a state school background for that matter - and very rarely saw women in these roles either. With my passion to improve the aspirations of disadvantaged young people and their chances to get into higher education, I started visiting schools to talk about what I do and how they too can have a career in maths, physics or even space science! To date I have given talks to more than 100 schools and community groups and I’ve made it my mission to challenge the diversity and inclusivity of the schools and organisations I visit.”

Now working as a Senior Teaching Fellow at Imperial College London, Jaclyn has previously held roles at Positive Futures Liverpool, the Science Museum, the British Science Association and the UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres.

She has recently been awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Liverpool’s Department of Mathematical Sciences, something she describes as an ‘amazing honour’, and she has also won the Sir Michael Marshall Award for Diversity in Air Charter at the Air Charter in Aviation Awards 2019, as well as the WISE Rising Star Award 2019.



“I am astounded to receive an Alumni Award! The University has so many truly amazing and inspirational graduates working all over the world, so I feel very humbled to receive this award. I hope I can represent those of us who chose to stay in this wonderful city, as well as highlight the amazing cultural sector we have in Liverpool. Thank you so much!”



Lucy Byrne

BA Hons Art History and English Literature 2002

Lucy is the Managing Director of dot-art, a Liverpool based social enterprise with artists at its heart.

“We support visual artists and champion art as an integral part of everyday life by selling locally sourced, affordable art, working with businesses to put art in the workplace and public realms, running art classes and working with schools and community groups”, says Lucy.

In particular, her work with schools caught the attention of Andrea Edwards, who nominated Lucy for this award. She said: “Lucy is looking at how children will view art through digital formats and how this can influence young children and adults in making art part of their lives.”

Since 2012, the programme has engaged almost 7,000 children from over 400 schools, reaching an audience of more than 50,000. The dot-art Schools Programme is an interactive, online, inter-school art competition, taking place on an annual basis and culminating in a gallery exhibition. Working with partners such as Liverpool John Moores University, St George’s Hall and the Walker Art Gallery, it allows children to see their work on public display, having a lasting impact on the lives of hundreds of people.

Lucy describes her motivation for the programme: “I want us to play a small part in giving all children, regardless of their background, the opportunity to experience and participate in the arts at a formative stage of their education and have their eyes opened up to the possibilities of a creative career”. There are now plans to roll out the initiative across England over the next 12 months.

Lucy never intended to stay in Liverpool after graduating, but she says: “By the time I had finished my degree, which had confirmed my desire to work in the arts industry, I could see that there was huge potential for development within the commercial visual arts sector in the city, and set out to take full advantage of this!”

It has clearly worked, as Lucy and dot-art are described as occupying a vital position in the cultural infrastructure of the Liverpool City Region.

“I have always been something of a ‘backroom boy’, preferring to quietly help others solve their problems rather than blow my own trumpet, but it is good to occasionally acknowledge the work that I have done, and also to highlight the mentoring and support that I have had from diverse people and institutions along the way.”



Dan Chambers

BA Hons Geography and Pre-historic Archaeology 1989

Dan was known as ‘The Bicycle Man’ during his student days, according to friend and alumna Caroline Dempsey who nominated him for this award.

That passion for cycling and hands-on engineering led to him making custom-made bike frames between assignments as an archaeologist. A chance conversation with a customer in 1996 led to him making his first racing wheelchair, and a career was set in motion.

Draft Wheelchairs was co-founded by Dan the following year to engineer racing wheelchairs for athletes all over the world. In 20 years, Dan has made over 650 racing chairs, including chairs for winning Paralympic athletes such as David Weir CBE and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. Since the Sydney 2000 Games, Draft Racing wheelchairs have won a total of 47 Paralympic medals.

However, it isn’t just athletes who have benefited from Dan’s work. Dan has also designed over 400 tailor-made handcycles, rowing seats, water-ski seats and day chairs. Caroline says: “Dan and the team at Draft Wheelchairs have improved the lives of many people with limited mobility. A friend with MS told me that having a Draft Wheelchair has improved the quality of her life no end.”

In 2012, the Royal Academy of Engineering bestowed the Sir Frank Whittle Medal, (one of their highest accolades) on Dan for his outstanding and sustained achievement, which has contributed to the wellbeing of the nation.

David Weir supported Dan’s nomination for the Whittle Medal, saying: “Dan has built my racing wheelchairs since 1998. In that time I have achieved six Paralympic medals, won many marathons, World and European Championships, and set several world records. I don’t think I would have been able to compete at this high level without the support of Dan, Draft Wheelchairs, and their racing chairs.”

Dan says he is particularly proud of his Royal Academy award as an engineer who has come to the field through a totally unconventional route, with no formal training, and is hugely honoured to be recognised by a premier professional body.

“I feel incredibly honoured to have been recognised by the University – an institution I have the utmost respect for – as part of these inaugural awards. I know that the calibre of students, and therefore alumni from the University is really high, so to think I have been selected amongst what I am sure was a pool of very worthy nominees is extremely humbling. And I guess, more than anything, I am proud of being a Scouser – there’s no place like this great city and its people on earth!”



Danielle Chan

LLB Law 2003

Danielle is the Head of Communications and Engagement at Community Integrated Care and is an award-winning pioneer in internal communications.

Danielle graduated with a Law degree, collecting the University of Liverpool Law School Graduate of the Year award along the way. She went on to complete a legal practice course at The College of Law in Chester before taking a training contract with a commercial law firm in Manchester.

Specialising in employment law, Danielle took a role as an employment solicitor at Community Integrated Care, one of the country's largest care providers. It was in this role that she would transition her career into communications.

“She found that her incredible strategic and communications skills could be applied more effectively in new fields - marketing, communications, and internal communications,” says fellow graduate and former colleague John Hughes.

“People often ask me how I was able to make the move from law to communications” said Danielle. “Honestly, I attribute a lot of that to my education. My degree, and subsequent postgraduate qualification, supported me to develop a really wide and diverse range of skills, many of which lend themselves perfectly to a career in communications.”

In particular, Danielle has been praised for her development of internal communications. John says: “Danielle has pioneered the emerging field of internal communications, with her innovative methods featuring in prestigious journals, conferences and publications. In the past few years she has collected an unprecedented nine top accolades from the Institute of Internal Communications and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, including Team of the Year honours and the sector's highest - the 'Grand Prix Award'.

“Internal communications is an area I feel extremely passionate about” says Danielle. “I think all too often businesses overlook the importance of engaging meaningfully with their workforce, ensuring that people feel recognised and valued and have a clear sense of purpose and direction.”

“Receiving an Alumni Award is surreal and surprising but very heart warming. Liverpool has a very important place in my heart.”



Dr Ebony Escalona

BSc Veterinary Conservation Medicine 2007,

BVSc Veterinary Science 2009

Ebony is the founder of ‘Vets: Stay, Go or Diversify’, an online support platform for vets across the world.

Since graduating, Ebony has worked as a first opinion vet in North Wales, completed an equine internship at the Philip Leverhulme Equine Hospital, and a PhD with Imperial College London in collaboration with Liverpool, as well as being a locum equine vet in the North West and an advisor to the equine charity, Brooke.

In 2017, Ebony set up Vets: Stay, Go or Diversify (VSGD) to combat the growing problem of vets leaving the profession. “Watching too many of my friends burning out before they had a chance to truly shine led me to set up a career support network to showcase the wonderful and varied things you can do with a veterinary degree or ‘vet passport’. Unfortunately, the veterinary world is full of ‘wounded healers’, people who are great at helping others but not always themselves. I wanted to provide a positive outlet to support career diversity and sharing ways people can thrive,” she said.

Since its launch in 2017, VSGD has reached a global community of over 12,000 members and has hosted a live event with more than 300 attendees, as well as delegates streaming online.

In 2018, Ebony’s work with VSGD, as well as her work as a veterinary advisor at the Brooke equine charity, was recognised by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons with the first RCVS Inspiration Award. The award is bestowed upon a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse at any stage in their career who has demonstrated the ability to inspire and enthuse others. Ebony was also invited to the Queen’s Garden Party last year for her work with VSGD.

Nominated for the Alumni Award by fellow veterinary alumna Nicola Beesley, the Communications Officer for the University of Liverpool Veterinary Alumni Association (ULVAA), Ebony has maintained her links with the University, writing for the ULVAA newsletter and returning to the University to support the Liverpool University Veterinary Society at careers fairs. Nicola said: “I feel very proud to call Ebony a friend and we should be very proud to have such a fabulous ambassador as a member of our alumni community.”

“Considering where I reside – in Canada’s north – it is amazing that across the ocean, at a prestigious university, I could be recognised for my work in a small First Nation community, particularly given the University’s celebrated alumni are Nobel Prize winners, heads of state, and many other luminaries. The ceremony will be my first visit to Liverpool and the campus. It is a true honour and still surreal that 6,639km away I will be recognised by my alma mater.”



Justin Ferbey

MBA 2011

Justin is the Deputy Minister for the Department of Economic Development for the Yukon Government and the President and CEO of the Yukon Development Corporation.

Justin studied his MBA degree online whilst living in the far north of Canada, in Carcross, Yukon. Justin refers to this time as ‘very memorable’ working during the day, and then studying until midnight.

Whilst studying, Justin was called upon to lead a ratification vote to establish a new order of government in Canada. The vote was a referendum to establish a modern day treaty with the Canadian government and his indigenous community, the Carcross Tagish First Nation. The successful vote concluded 40 years of negotiations with the Canadian federal government.

Justin would go on to lead the First Nation government for four years before being asked to attempt to transform his local economy.

“I am responsible for diversifying Yukon’s economy while balancing environmental stewardship,” said Justin, “These wide responsibilities include implementation of international and national free trade agreements, supporting renewable energy projects, attracting capital into the mining sector, overseeing immigrations programming, and strengthening Yukon’s start-up economy.”

Justin says his time studying helped him to shape his career, “At the time I was leading the restructuring of our First Nation government and I was learning about organisation design at the University of Liverpool. It was a powerful opportunity to match work conundrums with lessons in real time.

“I am proud to say I hold a graduate degree from the University of Liverpool.”

“I am humbled, flattered and honoured to win an Alumni Award. From being very young, I dreamt of being a vet and believe me, I struggled to get into vet school. Only Liverpool accepted me. The admissions officer Tim Nicholson took a chance on me and I have always tried to make him and the University proud. There were many times I thought I’d never get to be a vet, so to win an award when I scraped though by the skin of my teeth is really phenomenal. I’m beyond thrilled.”



Dr Danielle Greenberg

BVSc Veterinary Science 1998

Danielle is the Director at The Liverpool Vets, an independent veterinary practice in Liverpool City Centre.

Danielle may be most recognisable from the BBC programme *Animal Hospital* which she describes as ‘quite an experience’. However her work with animals in and around the city is what makes her really stand out from the crowd.

In 2016 Danielle underwent major surgery and struggled to walk. “I feared I’d never work as a vet again” she said. From her bed she looked into ways to utilise her skills and came across the ‘Care for the Paw’ charity.

“The charity delivers food and bedding for dogs belonging to homeless people in the city centre and I asked if they could use a non-walking vet. ‘Can you put in microchips?’ was the response, and I started to hobble down to the Bombed Out Church, where I sat on the stone fence and helped where I could.”

Luckily, Danielle was able to regain the use of her legs. “Now I go out on a Saturday night to check on the dogs, and any who need veterinary treatment can receive it on the streets or occasionally at my clinic.”

Setting up The Liverpool Vets gave Danielle another avenue to help the local community. Not only does it act as a donation point for dog food, blankets and coats, but its foundation was set up to counter the ever-increasing corporatisation of the industry.

In 2019, Danielle was awarded ‘Vet of the Year’ by Petplan, a remarkable achievement, especially considering there were more than 40,000 nominations nationwide.

“Receiving an Alumni Award is an absolute honour! It was totally unexpected. I’m really humbled to be recognised by the University that gave me so much, both in terms of my career and personal development.”



Dr Muhammad Khan

MRes Clinical Sciences 2014, MBChB Medicine 2015

Muhammad is currently undertaking his specialist medical training in Clinical Radiology at the North West School of Radiology.

During the final year of his studies, Muhammad co-founded the ‘Our Healthy Future’ initiative. Thanks to a clinical entrepreneur grant from Health Education England, the social enterprise was set up to work with a range of partners and institutions, like Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, to promote health amongst children in the community through evidence-based products and initiatives.

The programme is now called the Health Careers Portal. Muhammad describes it as ‘a social enterprise aimed at widening access to healthcare careers such as medicine’.

He said: “Whilst the NHS is one of our greatest assets and largest employers, there is a perceived lack of widening participation in healthcare careers. I don’t think this is right. Students should be selected based on aptitude and ability, not based on their privilege.”

Health Careers Portal is a series of challenges that students, typically between 16-18, undertake to develop relevant skills needed in healthcare. The bespoke app allows students to track their process and showcase their skills as part of the application process through UCAS to universities. One student described it as ‘the Duke of Edinburgh award...but for the NHS’.

Muhammad’s work on the portal has seen him gain recognition from NHS England, who selected him as a Clinical Entrepreneur Fellow. He was also recently appointed as an Associate Clinical Tutor at the University of Liverpool’s School of Medicine.

“I am honoured to receive an Alumni Award from the University of Liverpool and I hope that I have been able to give something back to the people and the city of Liverpool.”



Professor Charles Kingsland

MChB Medicine 1982, MD Obstetrics and Gynaecology 1994

Professor Charles Kingsland is the founder of the Hewitt Fertility Centre in Liverpool and is eminent in the field of reproductive health.

After a brief post-graduation flirtation with General Practice in 1982, Charles decided to pursue a career in gynaecology. After further study in London, Charles returned to Liverpool in 1989 and established the Reproductive Medicine Unit, which in 2002 would be renamed the Hewitt Fertility Centre after the late Jonathan Hewitt, a close friend and fellow alumnus of the University of Liverpool.

When Charles left the centre after 25 years, he said: “I am proud to have overseen the development and growth of the centre into one of the world’s foremost IVF units.”

Throughout his career he has performed over 50,000 consultations with couples and has personally performed many thousands of IVF cycles in NHS and private practice.

Charles has spent considerable time training the next generation of fertility doctors in the UK. He is Professor of Reproductive Medicine at the Postgraduate Medical Institute at Edge Hill University, and established sub-speciality training programmes within the Liverpool Women’s Hospital and Britain’s first master’s programme for Fertility Nurse Practice, collaborating with Edge Hill University.

He now works as the Clinical Director at CARE Fertility, Britain’s largest independent fertility group with 16 clinics nationwide, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to the centre. Of his career, Charles said: “I am very proud of my 30 years working in Liverpool and establishing the Reproductive Medicine Unit where I have trained many doctors, nurses and scientists in the speciality. However, what gives me most pride are the thousands of couples who I have helped to achieve the families they so longed for.”

“I feel honoured and very grateful to receive an Alumni Award from the University of Liverpool.”



Dr Sze May Ng

MSc Medical Sciences 2005, PhD Child Health 2010,
LLM Law 2014

Sze May is an award-winning Consultant Paediatrician at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital.

May has served for over two decades in the NHS, publishing over 70 peer-reviewed publications, sitting on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline committee, acting as Editor-in-Chief of a paediatric diabetes journal and serving as chair of the UK Association of Children's Diabetes Clinicians.

She has also been actively involved in setting national training and policies around diabetes and has led on multiple national guidelines for the management of diabetes. In 2019, May was invited to 10 Downing Street as a thanks and commendation for her contribution to diabetes care, and was also an invited speaker to the House of Commons to talk about ending the postcode lottery for access to technology in diabetes.

May was nominated for this award by Eugene Toh, who said: “Her inspiring 10-year memoir *A Journey with Brendan* details the struggles she faced as both a paediatrician and a mother raising a child on the autism spectrum.”

May says: “In writing my personal story, I have included the best and most valuable of what I learned as a mother and a paediatrician. I hope that my personal journey will be a source of hope and advice for many families caring for children with autism.”

She continued: “There are times in my life when it has been a struggle to have a fine balance between a career and family responsibilities, especially with two children with special needs. I am proud that I am able to juggle a career that is so rewarding and enriching while having the support of my family who are happy and pursuing their own dreams and interests.”

In 2019, May was also appointed as an Honorary Associate Professor of the University of Liverpool.

“I am humbled to receive an Alumni Award and I feel appreciated. My volunteering and contributions to the University of Liverpool’s alumni community is a thing of joy to me.”



Faith Osiobe

MSc Global Human Resources Management 2011

Faith is an HR professional who has been the University’s Nigerian alumni ambassador since her graduation.

As a student, Faith found herself taking on a supporting role to many other international students who were also studying online courses at the University. Faith would often check up on students who were absent from certain classes, or who needed help getting coursework completed.

“At the time,” Faith says, “there was an online student lounge for Nigerian students coordinated by Hakeem Olomowewe. This platform made it easy to connect with current students not just classmates, so I was able to reach out to many and offer support when they needed it.” This would prove to be the foundation of the University of Liverpool Nigeria Alumni Community that Faith would go on to run.

“One of my key projects and professional achievements was succeeding in officially setting up and launching the University of Liverpool Alumni Network in Nigeria. I developed and implemented effective structures and programmes for the network which has grown to a membership of more than 600 professionals from different fields,” says Faith.

She would grow the network by attending graduations to congratulate and recruit new Nigerian alumni, as well as hosting at least seven events across Nigeria a year, whilst also attending careers fairs to help encourage student recruitment to the University.

She is particularly proud to have supported and helped fellow alumnus Chika Chukwumerije, who won the bronze medal in Men’s Taekwondo at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. He was the recipient of the British Council UK Alumni Awards Social Impact Award in 2016. Upon winning that award, Chika said: “I was happy that the University of Liverpool Alumni Network in Nigeria who, galvanised by Faith Osiobe, supported me with their votes and well wishes.”

Faith was nominated for this award by five members of the Nigerian Alumni Network, another sign of the impact she has made to the Nigerian Alumni community.

Rob Owen OBE

BA Hons Politics and Geography 1987

“I am deeply honoured to be receiving an Alumni Award. So many amazing people have attended this great institution, so to be singled out is certainly humbling.”



Rob is the Chief Executive of the St Giles Trust, a multi-award winning national charity that helps break the cycle of disadvantage.

After graduating, Rob spent many years working in investment banking in London, Tokyo and New York, as well as spending time on high altitude arctic expeditions to the North and Magnetic poles.

Rob then had what he describes as a ‘Damascene moment’, thanks to his son Max. “I didn’t want Max growing up thinking it’s all about the money, so I did an MBA at Henley, where a wonderful Professor called Terry Garrison said I would make a great charity CEO. That was my lightbulb moment.”

In 2007, Rob was appointed to his current role, and over the last 12 years, under Rob’s leadership, the charity has become the biggest player in tackling knife crime and county lines exploitation and has helped to reform well over 25,000 clients a year.

Rob says: “We believe everyone has the power to turn their lives around, no matter what their situation. We use expertise and past experiences to empower people who are not getting the help they need - people who are hard to engage because they have been failed time and time again – held back by poverty, abuse, dealing with addiction or mental health problems, or caught up in crime and gangs.”

The Trust uses an innovative model where all of the frontline staff are female prisoners, who are then trained for six months for them to achieve a Level 3 in Advice and Guidance.

Clearly the model is working, as the Trust has won multiple awards and has been one of only five companies in the *Sunday Times* ‘Best Companies to Work For’ list for the last 10 years. It’s also been evidenced that for every £1 invested in the Trust the tax payer is saved £10.

As a result of his work with the St Giles Trust, Rob has managed to secure the Duke of Cambridge as a patron of the charity, attended a private lunch with the Queen, and in 2015 was awarded an OBE.

Jasmin Paris

BVSc Veterinary Sciences 2008

“It’s a great honour to receive an Alumni Award, and I feel very grateful for the family and friends who have made it possible. I hope that by highlighting my story in this way it may serve as an inspiration to others – regardless of age, gender or background, to take on new challenges, push their boundaries, and perhaps surprise themselves at just how far they can really go.”

Jasmin is a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and the 2019 winner of the Montane Spine Race, one of the world’s toughest endurance races.

Following graduation, Jasmin worked as a vet for a year in a small animal practice near Glossop, Derbyshire, completed a year’s small animal rotating internship in Minnesota, USA followed by a three year residency in small animal internal medicine in Edinburgh. It was her move to Edinburgh that prompted her to start running.

Jasmin was nominated for the award by Dr Gail Leeming, Lecturer in Veterinary Pathology at the University of Liverpool. Gail described her achievement in winning the Spine Race as ‘remarkable’ and a ‘feat of physical and mental strength.’

The Spine Race is a 268 mile race along the Pennine Way from Edale in Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders. The race is run annually in mid-January. Competitors are required to carry all their kit (sleeping bag, shelter, cooking equipment, food and clothing) and navigate the race unaided through all weather conditions, mostly in darkness.

Jasmin finished first overall, becoming the first female to win the race outright, and broke the existing male record by 12 hours, completing the race in just 83 hours and 12 minutes.

Jasmin also had to stop at checkpoints along the way to express milk as she was still breastfeeding her baby daughter Rowan at the time. She attributes some of her success in the race to her daughter: “I think my daughter was an advantage in terms of sleep deprivation training – I only slept for three hours during the race, but I’m guessing I was better prepared for that than any of the other competitors!”

Her victory garnered international attention, with television appearances, write ups in the *Guardian*, *Vogue*, the *BBC* and others, and she was congratulated on Twitter by Chelsea Clinton, who described her as an ‘inspiration’. In December, she was celebrated as the Barclays Sportswoman of the Year at the Women of the Year awards and lunch.



“It’s absolutely fantastic to get this award! I received a letter in the post and it really did come as quite a surprise. I haven’t felt quite like that since I got a Valentine’s Day card from a girl in my class circa 1979! As alumni of the University of Liverpool, I think we all have a collective duty to do what we reasonably can to share our experience, impart a little wisdom, and support the next generation of ‘movers and shakers’.”



Steve Peacock

LLB Hons Law 1988

Steve is a partner at Weightmans law firm based in Liverpool City Centre.

Steve describes the moment he stepped off the train at Liverpool Lime Street for the first time in 1984 as “an overwhelming sense of wellbeing and happiness that stuck with me throughout my time at the University of Liverpool. I knew from that moment it was going to be great and it truly was.”

“I had never been to Liverpool before, but I knew on that train journey that it was going to be fantastic.” Clearly it was, as over 30 years later Steve is still here in Liverpool contributing to the future of the Liverpool Law School and the city.

After graduating, Steve went to Chester Law School for a year before selling Belgian chocolates in Harrods - including to Princess Diana - then worked briefly on a French campsite before starting a solicitors training contract at Weightmans. In 1999 he was made a partner at the firm where he is now Regional Office Head for Liverpool.

“Steve has never forgotten the Liverpool Law School”, says Professor Debra Morris, Dean of the School of Law and Social Justice who nominated him for the award. “He supports the School - both by helping numerous students with employability opportunities, including providing placements, acting as a mentor, speaking at numerous events - and also at a more strategic level by sitting on the Law School Advisory Board.”

Steve is always the first to volunteer to help the School and is a member of the recently established Liverpool Law School Alumni Association board. In the last 18 months he has helped to organise an event at Weightmans’ London office with Lord David Hunt of Wirral and recently hosted a quiz for Liverpool Law Alumni.

When asked why he spends his time volunteering, he said: “It is so much tougher for law graduates these days and if I can do anything to make their journey through education and into employment a little easier then I relish that opportunity.”

“University helped broaden my horizons and gave me the opportunity to develop my interests and passions. It feels good to receive an Alumni Award from the University.”



Ioan Roberts

BA Hons Popular Music 2007,
MA Music Industry Studies 2011

Ioan is the owner and director of 24 Kitchen Street, an independent and diverse music venue in Liverpool's Baltic Triangle.

For many people around the world, Liverpool is defined by the music scene and many University of Liverpool students spend a lot of time at music events across the city. For Ioan, this formed part of his student experience as well.

“I was attending a large number of music events in the city and in Manchester - probably too many. This was a great way to develop my passion for music and music culture. I promoted parties around Liverpool whilst at university and these activities both informed and were informed by my studies.”

After Ioan finished his masters, he was searching for jobs and ‘half-heartedly’ applying for roles in London, before some friends started asking him to come back to Liverpool to organise another party. Eventually, along with his friend Tom, he bought 24 Kitchen Street and started work on the site, which is when his business partner Saad joined the venture.

“We had to replace the floor, dig up the sewers and sort out the electrics. It's been an uphill battle a lot of the time, but we've come a long way to now booking world-renowned artists, whilst helping to develop some really good local ones.”

Ioan was nominated for the award by his former dissertation supervisor Dr Michael Jones who says, “The venue's significance should not be underestimated. Ioan's openness to the widest range of genres and communities has seen him offer the space to our Chinese students to create their own music events.”

Ioan continued: “I'm proud of the whole team we've got at 24 Kitchen Street and our position within Liverpool's various music scenes and I would like to highlight the importance of protecting independent venues in Liverpool and across the country.”

“My experience at the University genuinely shaped me as an individual. There were so many incredible opportunities to volunteer with people who showed me how to be really human and kind. It’s an honour to receive the Alumni Award but others should be recognised too – the volunteers I’ve met over the last few years and the incredible women I work with every day. They keep me inspired, hopeful and committed to ending violence against women and girls.”



Roisin Ross

BA History with Criminology 2017

Roisin is a Senior Domestic Violence Caseworker at Solace Women’s Aid and is the founder of the Caim Project, which was set up to help bridge the gap of support for refugee survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

Whilst studying for her History degree, Roisin built up a wealth of experience in the charity sector working with ground-breaking organisations such as Syria Relief, the Merseyside Refugee and Asylum Pre and Post Natal Support Group (MRANG), the Help the Homeless Society, South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services, the NSPCC, and aiding refugees in Greece.

“I worked with some truly inspirational people, but the moment that shaped me the most was supporting an Iranian survivor with her asylum appeal. She had fled ‘honour’-based violence, rape and domestic violence and I was helping her to appeal the Home Office’s decision to reject her asylum application. The last time I saw her was on my final day volunteering and she was destitute, hopeless and suicidal. I’ve never forgotten her.”

In 2017, during the final months of her degree, Roisin was awarded the ‘Biggest Impact on Liverpool Community’ award from the Liverpool Guild of Students. After graduating she moved to Bangladesh to complete an internship at Deki, a microfinancing charity empowering people to escape poverty. She has also worked in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector, as an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), and she is now a Senior Domestic Violence Caseworker at Solace Women’s Aid, which offers advice and support to woman and children experiencing abuse.

In 2019 Roisin set up the Caim Project. “Using my volunteering experience I developed training and resources to educate frontline professionals and volunteers on how to safely, empathetically and effectively respond to refugees who have experienced or are at risk of sexual and/or domestic violence. I fundraise for these outreaches so that the Caim Project can offer free training to grassroots and frontline organisations and so far we have trained over 100 volunteers working in camps, squats and day centres in France and Greece.”

“It is such an honour to receive an Alumni Award. I never expected that some crazy idea I had on a very busy 699 bus to university one day would lead to me receiving an Alumni Award! I am so proud that the School of Engineering have turned this into an annual event and I am so grateful to Professor Elsheikh for putting his faith in me and allowing me to create and organise the Alumni Networking event, and for Dr Graham Schleyer and Denise Stewart, - I couldn't have done it without them!”

Megan Stammers

MEng Mechanical Engineering with Management 2018

Megan is a Graduate Engineer at Rolls-Royce and is the founder of the annual Engineering Alumni Networking event which this year saw more than 200 students engage with recent graduates of the University.

Like many students in their final year, Megan was unsure what she wanted to do after graduation. Whilst sat on a busy 699 bus, she came up with the idea of getting students and alumni in the same room together to talk about their experiences and what they had been doing since graduation.

What started as an idea would blossom into an annual event and a staple of the School of Engineering calendar. With the help of Professor Ahmed Elsheikh and Dr Graham Schleyer, who both nominated her for this award, Megan set up and created the Engineering Alumni Networking event.

Megan says that she came up with the idea for the event, “to bring together engineering alumni who had been in the same situation as myself and my course mates and to educate, inspire and showcase the careers that are available to University of Liverpool engineers.”

It's safe to say that the event was a success, with over 40 companies attending in the first year, including Rolls-Royce, Jaguar Land Rover, BAE Systems, Aston Martin (featuring a concept car), and many more.

Since graduating, Megan has mentored and helped current University of Liverpool students to run and organise the event, as well as attending to represent Rolls-Royce herself.

Megan says that one of the biggest lessons she learned as a student was to always say yes. She has since continued that tradition, and in her role at Rolls-Royce has represented the company at careers fairs, STEM events and team events. “Without the experience I gained at University, I wouldn't have been selected as one of the eight graduates from around the world to organise the Rolls-Royce Excellence Awards, our annual awards ceremony held in London which celebrates the achievements of our employees globally.”



“It’s always nice to receive recognition, but this is especially true when it is from the University that I chose in 1971 and I retain fond memories of.”



Professor Michael Thrasher

BA Hons Political Theory and Institutions 1974,
PhD Politics 1982

Michael is an election commentator with *Sky News* and a leading expert on UK local elections. He has also been part of the team that has worked on the combined *BBC, ITV and Sky* exit poll or the last four general elections.

At 10pm on 12 December 2019, millions across the UK were glued to TV screens as exit polls predicted a Conservative majority government. By UK law, an exit poll cannot be revealed until the polls have closed, but Michael, along with other academic colleagues, had been analysing the data all day.

2019 was the fourth exit poll that Michael has been part of, and it’s all come from a journey that started during his time at the University. Michael started his studies in 1971, studying for a BA in Political Theory and Institutions before embarking on a PhD at the University on *The Political Theory of English Local Government 1834-1972*.

In 1977 he moved to Plymouth after being offered a post at what is now the University of Plymouth. “I figured I’d stay in Plymouth for a couple of years before moving, but things didn’t work out that way.” Shortly after moving to the South West he began his 40 year collaboration with colleague Colin Rallings, with whom he would go on to found the Elections Centre.

Michael was nominated for this award by Dr Stuart Wilks-Heeg from the Department of Politics, who says that “the Elections Centre has revolutionised the study of local elections, making results far more widely available and identifying their significance for the academic study of voting behaviour more generally.”

In 1986, Michael and Colin were asked by *The Sunday Times*’ Editor Andrew Neil to analyse that year’s local elections, a role they have held ever since. Since 1989, Michael has also been a regular face on *Sky News* analysing local, national and European election results for broadcast news.

“It was a big surprise to learn that I was to receive an Alumni Award and I’m humbled and grateful! It’s rewarding to think that my former University feels I’ve done something worthwhile with the education and encouragement I received, and I’m forever grateful to the staff who taught and helped me.”

Dr Sean Wensley

BVSc Veterinary Sciences 2003

Sean is a former president of the British Veterinary Association and is a global advocate for animal welfare.

Sean always knew he was going to be a vet. Growing up amongst the pine woods and red squirrels of Formby, he was never far from the natural world.

During his time as a student, he applied for a vacation scholarship funded by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. “It opened my eyes to the world of animal welfare science - understanding how animals perceive the world; understanding their needs and wants and their pleasures and pains; and discovering how this scientific understanding is informing and shaping our ethical judgements about how animals should be treated and used for human benefit.”

After graduating, Sean studied for an MSc at Edinburgh Vet School and in 2008 joined the UK veterinary charity, PDSA, as a Senior Veterinary Surgeon for Communication and Education. His work with the charity and his own interests in animal welfare led him to become involved with the British Veterinary Association (BVA), the national body for the profession. In 2014 he joined the BVA Council and in 2015/16 he served as President.

Under his presidency, the BVA launched its ‘Animal Welfare Strategy’. Sean says: “The aim was to create a structured animal welfare action plan for the UK veterinary profession. The strategy is providing the basis for ongoing activities under its themes of animal welfare assessment, ethics, legislation, advocacy, education and international.”

When asked about the strategy by *Veterinary Record* in 2018, Sean said: “On a personal level, I want to see animals having a good quality of life in the different ways that we use them. On a professional level, we all take an oath to protect and promote animal welfare and there’s a global societal expectation of the profession to do that so we have to ask ourselves, are we doing it?”

In 2017, Sean’s work was recognised on a global scale, receiving the World Veterinary Association’s Global Animal Welfare Award for Europe. He was also made a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in 2018 for his Meritorious Contributions to the Veterinary Profession.



James Yu

BA Hons Business Economics 2013

James and his sister Belinda Yu founded Wicker Wings, creating handmade wicker baskets which blend the Chinese artisanal art of wicker weaving with British leather craftsmanship.

After graduating in 2013, James was unsure if he wanted to work for an existing company and earn some money like the rest of his friends, or start a business for himself. Whilst the latter seemed ideal, he was unsure what type of business he could run.

After a family conversation around the kitchen table, James and his sister discovered that their grandmother had hand woven wicker baskets for a living in China before the family had moved to England.

“We were inspired by this shared story and discovering that there is a decline in demand for handwoven goods using natural materials, we wanted to start something that would echo our grandmother’s past whilst sustaining artisanal jobs,” says James.

Wicker Wings was launched in 2014, since the company launched, they have been featured in *Harper’s Bazaar*, *The Times*, *Vogue*, *Glamour* and many more.

The company also works hard to give back to the community. Wicker Wings has a ‘bag-for-bag’ where for every bag initiative sold they’ll donate a small bag of books to children in poorer areas of Asia.

“Our parents have taught us to remember that you may not have much, but you will always have more than some, so you should always help when you can.” James said: “They also instilled in us that education comes first and it’s the foundation for our future and that was where the bag-for-bag mission came from.”

James is particularly proud of the growth the business has seen in the past few years. “I think one of the things I am proud of is the small team we have assembled who are fully committed and driven by the exact reason we started Wicker Wings.”

“I have so many wonderful memories from my time at the University of Liverpool, so it feels great to receive an award!”



