



New Chapters

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I am writing to congratulate and thank two of my friends and co-workers who are retiring this month. I have had the pleasure of working with Bob Brown and Rex LaMore for many years and would like to extend congratulations for their remarkable careers and thank them on behalf of the many communities who they have faithfully served for decades. Their commitment to define and fulfill the mission of the Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) serves as a testament to their talent, passion and dedication to the co-creation of research and programs that have empowered communities across our state for years.

I have known and worked with Bob since he joined MSU Outreach and Engagement and then worked more closely with him when he joined the CCED team thirteen years ago. We have a shared interest in asset-based community development and have worked to assist communities to identify and discover assets that they can mobilize to address agreed upon community issues and concerns. It has been a pleasure to work with someone who values community processes that give voice to individuals and build capacity for communities to more actively guide the destiny of their communities. Dedication, passion and commitment are words I will always associate with Bob.

My relationship with Rex goes back to the mid-1970s when we met in graduate school studying community and economic development. I was one of his first students when I enrolled in a community development course he had designed and convinced his major professor to allow him to teach. Little did I know at the time that he would go on to teach many courses to hundreds of students in his career at MSU. And little did I realize that I would work with him for over forty years and co-teach community development courses, be co-principal investigators on numerous proposals and share administrative responsibilities as part of the Center for Urban Affairs that later was renamed the Center for Community and Economic Development.

I have many stories and fond memories of our work together which I am happy to share but most of all I value his commitment to community and his unrelenting determination to help MSU

share its resources and capacity with poor and underserved communities not only in our state but across the country and the globe. Over the years his voice has been consistent and clear and will be missed but not forgotten. It will live on through others who have worked with him over these many years and through his students and research assistants who have been transformed because of his guidance and mentorship.

Finally, I want to thank both Rex and Bob for the positive effect they have had on me and my career. None of this work can be done by one individual but rather by a team of dedicated individuals and I thank them for helping to build a team which shares their passions for the work, the communities they serve and most importantly to each other. They are now moving on to new chapters in their lives, but they leave a legacy at CCED that is expressed by the stated mission of the CCED and guided by the community development principles of good practice.

I will miss working with these skilled professionals but will take to heart that we will be friends forever. I wish them both the best and look forward to their new chapters in their lives.

