

## Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award

### Congratulations to our 2006 Honoree!

(Elizabeth) Beth Alexander, M.D., M.S.  
Professor, Department of Family Practice, College of Human Medicine  
University Physician, Michigan State University

Sixth Recipient of the  
Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award

Beth Alexander was born in Kansas to a family that did not believe in investing in the education of women. Despite that fact, she grew up asking questions of everyone around her---exhibiting a curiosity and quest for knowledge that led to a full scholarship to Kansas State University, where she completed her undergraduate degree in only three years. A master's at Indiana University followed in 1969 and in 1972, after her two children were born, she completed her necessary 'pre-meds' and applied to the medical school at the University of Kansas (where she was the first woman with children ever admitted.) Though doubts were raised over the potential for her success at combining motherhood and the rigorous program, she graduated at the head of her class of 200, again in an accelerated three years. In 1980 she completed her Family Practice specialty.



After a successful five year private group practice in Wichita she joined the medical school faculty at her alma mater (1985) and in 1989 was recruited by Michigan State University, where she added administrative responsibilities to her teaching duties. In 1995 she completed an ACE fellowship at Oregon State Health Sciences University, researching the issue of effective leadership facilitating change in institutions (We are proud!)

Dr. Alexander's career has been marked by advocacy for women, children and marginalized people. She has delivered 2200 babies in her career, been cited as Distinguished Clinician at MSU, and in 1998 was named one of "Michigan's Best Doctors" (nominated by her peers and patients.) In an era of 'high tech medicine' she makes house calls for the elderly, counsels students and is noted for her 'above and beyond' willingness to serve.

Broadly versed in areas of reproductive health, international health issues and ethics, Dr. Alexander personally supports two scholarships for students and inspires her students to follow her lead in community service. She has been a leader in the development of curricula beneficial to women, to the support of women's athletics, and in the challenging field addressing family violence---training police officers, judges and attorneys in Michigan and health care professionals across the nation who focus on this issue. Hers is a voice with national and international groups developing policy for care recommendations for women... and especially for underserved adolescents around the world.

As MSU's University Physician she has helped to define the position as the institutional public health officer of the university, protecting the health of students, faculty, staff, and most notably, incoming international students. Her approach to health emergencies on campus (described as calm and effective interventions to institutional crisis) has resulted in innovative policies, replicated throughout Michigan and beyond.

MSU's president Louanna K. Simon has said, "Beth Alexander is a superb role model for women, who has built solid relationships and touched many lives with her unassuming encouragement and sharing of knowledge... I rely on her counsel, which is wise, calm and informed."

The American Council on Education Michigan Women's Network is honored and pleased to present its 2006 Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award to Dr. Beth Alexander.