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A mother's wish leads to a lifetime of music for MSU professor

By Alexis Sargent

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Professor of Choral Conducting and Music Education Dr Sandra Snow conducts the choir during a women's choir rehearsal on Feb. 11, 2016 at the Music Building. Snow is one of the honorees of the Beal Outstanding Faculty Awards this year.

Sundeep Dhanjal (<http://statenews.com/staff/sundeep-dhanjal>) | The State News

“Please, give this child music lessons.”

These instructions were written on a note and given to Sandra Snow’s adoptive parents from her birth mother.

Because of the note, Snow’s parents made sure to place her in music and singing lessons growing up.

“When Sandra was born, I knew there was just something musical about her,” Sharon Brammer, Snow’s birth mother, said. “To find out what she has accomplished has been just a miracle. Every word I use sounds corny. It almost takes my breath away, to know that she has become what she has from such a different beginning.”

Fast forward to 2016 and Snow is now Dr. Snow, a distinguished faculty member in MSU’s College of Music (<http://www.music.msu.edu/>).

Brammer and Snow have been in contact for about six years now.

“To say I am proud of her accomplishments – well, I can’t even begin to explain how proud I am,” Brammer said.

Snow works with undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of conducting, choral pedagogy and choral singing at MSU.



“Maybe I would have made my way towards music, but maybe I wouldn’t have,” Snow said. “It was something that stayed with me through my childhood and into adulthood, knowing that was a wish that my birth mother had for me. ... (Music) became the fabric of who I am.”

Snow was awarded the 2016 William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award (<https://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadhandbooks/facultyhandbook/DistAward.htm>) for her work as a music instructor at MSU. She was also the recipient of the MSU Teacher-Scholar Award in 2007.



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Snow conducts the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble (<https://www.msu.edu/~slsnow/>).

Snow has also conducted several all-state honors choirs. Later in 2016, she will conduct the American Choral Directors Association's National Youth Choir (<http://acda.org/>) and will travel to Prague, Salzburg and Vienna.

“This is a way for me, as a university professor, to keep my hands somewhat engaged in the teaching of high school and younger students,” Snow said. “I probably do four to six all-state choirs in a semester. It keeps me young, actually.”

Music education sophomore Isaiah Hawkins said Snow is a great asset to the vocal music faculty at MSU.

“Dr. Snow is great,” Hawkins said. “She is very knowledgeable and she seems like she truly cares about what she's teaching.”

Professor of music and associate director of choral programs at MSU Jonathan Reed is Snow's husband.

“I've always been taken by Sandra's incredibly keen musicianship and her uncanny ability to teach,” Reed said. “Some people are just born teachers, and Sandra is one of those people.”

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