

# KACS – A 2013 ChemLuminary Finalist



**Chemist**

+



**Dancer**

Mix  
→



September 23, 2013

By Elke Schoffers

Photos by Roxana Manta-Bielanski (RM), Denis Billen (DB), Melissa Basileo (MB)



It has been six years since the Kalamazoo Local Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS) received a ChemLuminary Award. In 2007, our section won the award for *Best Ongoing Event for National Chemistry Week*. This year, Kalamazoo ACS (KACS) received recognition by becoming a finalist in the *Most Innovative New Activity or Program* category for organizing the “Chemistry & Culture: Elements of Dance” event at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts in November 2012.

Since 1999, the ACS has honored the efforts of volunteer members through the ChemLuminary Awards. The awards recognize participants in ACS Divisions, Local Sections, and Regional Meetings whose efforts have helped to achieve excellence. Among others, 187 Local Sections of the ACS were eligible to compete for awards in 17 different categories, which were announced on September 10, 2013 during the 246<sup>th</sup> ACS National Meeting in Indianapolis. Even though our section did not win the final prize, we are pleased to have received the designation of “finalist” during the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual ChemLuminary Awards Ceremony. The section was represented by Local Section Chair Elke Schoffers who designed a 64 x 48” poster with highlights of the nominated event along with 13 other activities KACS organized in 2012. About 300 people attended the festivities, which began with a reception that featured 36 posters from all prize contenders.

“Elements of Dance” was the first KACS social event that included dancing. Everybody was invited for the three-hour program, at no charge, which attracted an unprecedented 179 people at a new venue, the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA). The audience consisted of about 70 chemists and 100 people from the general public, many of them local ballroom dancers. Joseph Reish (WMU Dean of Libraries) oversaw the activities as the Master of Ceremonies. Chemist and KACS member Denis Billen (Pfizer) was the evening’s DJ who provided music in Ballroom, Latin and Swing. Some disco songs were played with special light and smoke effects. The program included showcase dances, a Salsa dance lesson taught by WMU chemistry faculty members Elke Schoffers and James (Gus) Guzinski, a

Zumba demo, open dances, dance cards, and a puzzle about the elements in the periodic table.

The showcase lineup included performances by Guzinski and Schoffers in the Fox Trot and Argentine Tango with their respective partners. The program and open dances took place in the KIA auditorium while the lobby was set up with display and handout tables (including from student clubs) to encourage informal interactions. Two large periodic tables were made available to help attendees win the “Chemistry of Dance” competition, which required the matching of elemental symbols to dance names. For example, “H” (for hydrogen) can be matched to “Hustle” and “S” (for Sulfur) to “Salsa”. Attendees also won prizes by filling out a dance card. Among others, prizes included Au-, K-, and Zn-elemental pins, Meg-A-Moles, and custom-made lime green T-shirts with blue print of the winning design submitted by Evan Dalke, a WMU Graphic & Printing Science major. The audience was invited to join the Cupid Shuffle, which was started by chemistry students. Participation was also encouraged for the Zumba performance by the “Xtreme Z Team” and for the Salsa dance lesson given by Guzinski and Schoffers. In sum, the mixing of chemists and dancers created a “fun reaction”.

The event was initiated through an “ACS Innovative Project Grant” (submitted by Schoffers) and through generous donations by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Kalamazoo Spice Extraction Company (Kalsec), Aldrich, VWR, and the Western Michigan University Business Technology and Research Park (WMU BTR). Special thanks also go to co-sponsors Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, the Southwest Michigan Ballroom Dance and the Kalamazoo chapter of USA Dance.

The **Kalamazoo** Local Section of the **American Chemical Society** (KACS) serves its members in the Allegan, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization that offers educational and professional events, many of which are open to the public. The KACS mission statement as well as information about past and upcoming events can be found at [www.KalamazooACS.org](http://www.KalamazooACS.org).

### **ChemLuminary Photos (September 10, 2013 in Indianapolis, IN)**



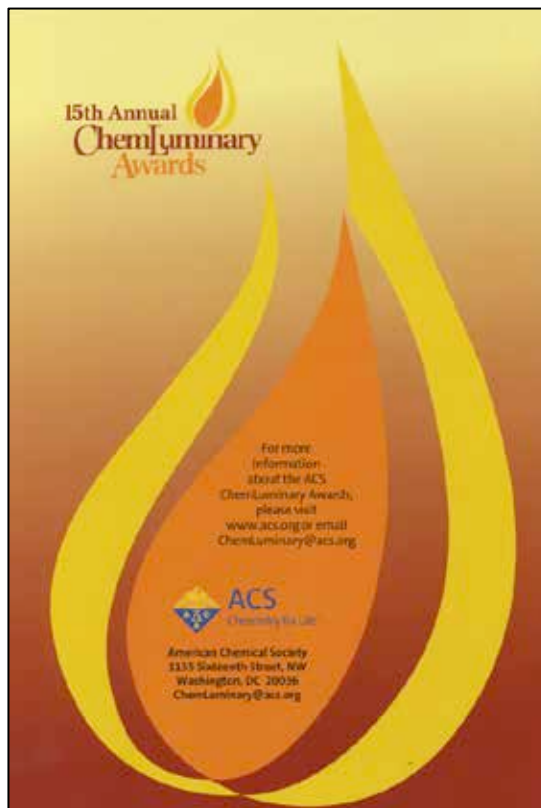
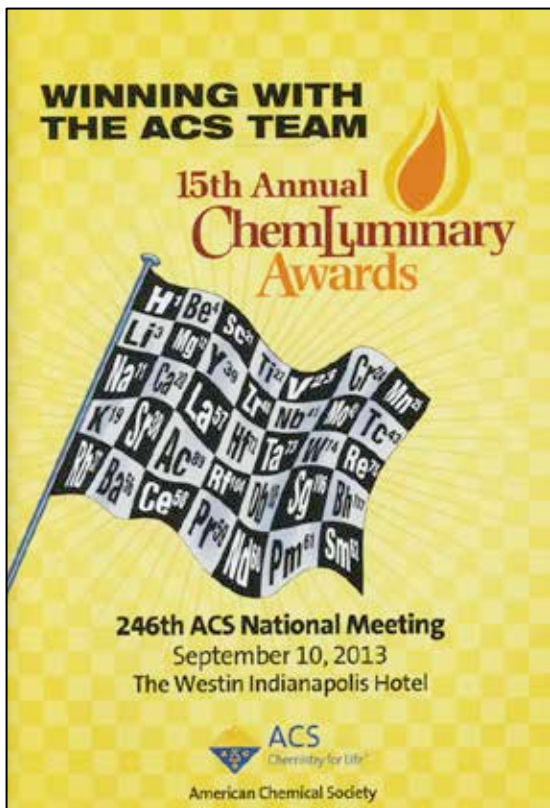
Visitors browsed the poster presentations while enjoying appetizers and drinks in the ballroom of the Westin Hotel downtown Indianapolis (RM).



Local Section Chair Schoffers presented the section's poster. ACS also conducted an interview with her during the reception (RM).



Various awardees were invited on stage and congratulated by selection committee members and ACS officials. The stage was decorated to reflect the national meeting's theme "Chemistry in Motion" (RM).





## Chemistry & Culture: Elements of Dance Photos (November 9, 2012 in Kalamazoo)



Joe Reish was the Master of Ceremonies (DB).



Open dance at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts auditorium (DB).



Showcases performers, from left: Guzinski and dance partner Jenny Grunberg, a Kalamazoo dentist, and Schoffers with Art Downey, a professional dance instructor (DB).



Doug Williams (Kalsec) dancing with his wife, Karen (DB).



Guzinski and Grunberg during open dancing (DB).



From left: Hilary Leaf, Heather Christy, Sara Burnhans, and Melissa Leach from the Xtreme Z Team performed a Zumba dance (DB).



Downey and Schoffers concluded the Argentine tango (MB).



WMU chemistry majors Sarah Ellison (left) and Ashley Mead (DB).



WMU chemist Patricia Holten (Environmental Safety and Emergency Management) with David Pease (MB).



Retired food chemist and expert in hot spices Guzinski together with catalysis chemist Schoffers teach a Salsa lesson to look for a new "reaction" on the dance floor. Attendees practiced their steps in the KIA auditorium (DB).





The event attracted young and old, couples as well as singles. (DB)

Evan Dalke's T-shirt design (front), note "K" (chemical symbol for potassium) as symbol for Kalamazoo in KACS.



Showcase performances: Chemistry instructors and their dance partners. Below (first two rows): Dr. Elke Schoffers (Western Michigan University) with Art Downey, a professional dance instructor at Kalamazoo DanceSport, performed an Argentine Tango. Below (last row): Dr. James Guzinski (retired from Kalsec, current WMU faculty) with Jenny Grunberg, a Kalamazoo dentist, performed a Foxtrot.

