

A Bit of Me

This series of profiles on SUNY Broome community members is a part of the Student Village diversity calendar initiative. We will be highlighting members in our community who identify with or can speak on the diversity theme or topic for each month. The theme for March is Women's History month and the topic is women in the workforce. To be featured in this series please reach out to Pamela Alvarez or Alexandria Donkor.

Sandy Wright

SUNY Broome Professor

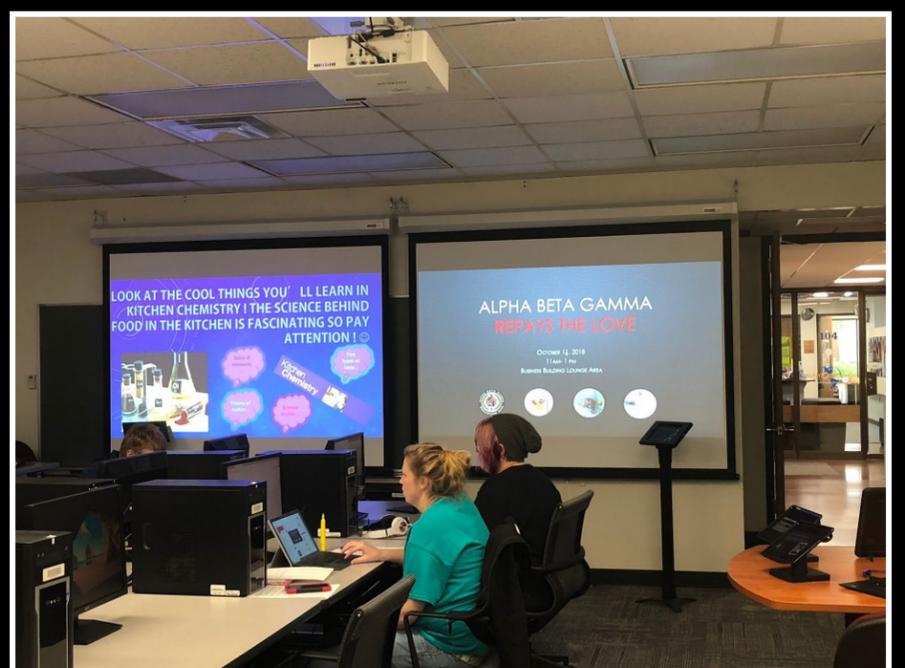
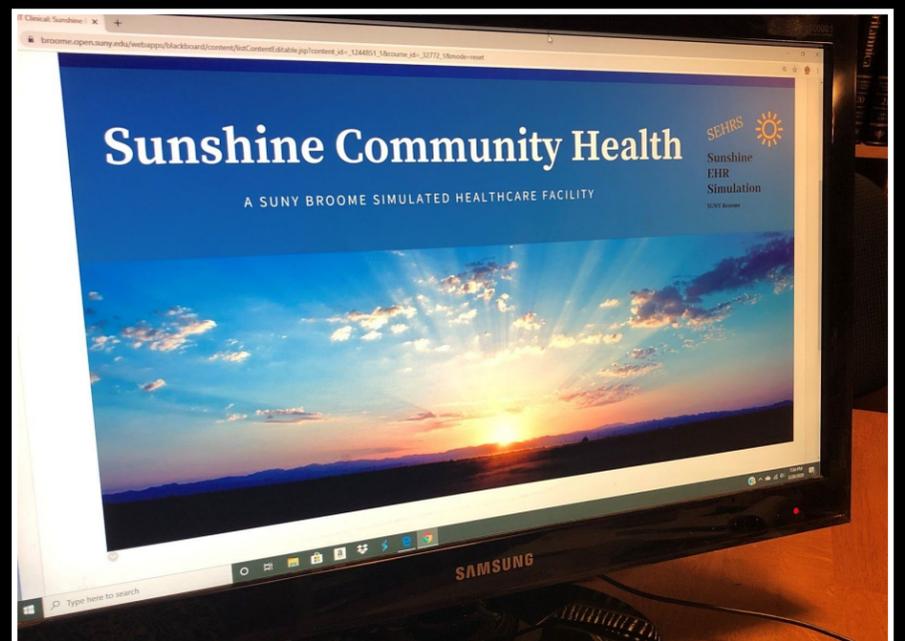


Background: Sandy Wright is a professor in the Business Information Technology department at SUNY Broome.

WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PROFESSION?

I began my undergraduate studies with a BA in Literature at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In addition to a love of literature, I have also always enjoyed math and mathematical puzzles. This led me to take computer science electives during my undergraduate degree. As I began thinking about graduate school, I was looking for a career that would allow me to use my computer skills in an applied setting. I also had a strong interest in management science - the use of computers to improve management techniques. This led me to pursue a Masters in Business Administration which I earned from Binghamton University.

After a brief time in college administration at Binghamton University, I decided I would be happiest in the classroom where I could work with students directly in achieving their goals. I began teaching at SUNY Broome in 1987, and have taught a wide variety of computer based classes from C++ to Database to Web Development. Outside of the classroom I'm active in the Women's Institute, the President's Task Force for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. My most recent project is building a database to simulate electronic health records for the health sciences called SEHRA, Sunshine EHR Academic. A fun fact is that the Sunshine Fund Grant which has supported this project is offered in memory of Harold Sunshine, Professor Emeritus, who inspired me as a young girl to pursue my degree in literature and to teach at SUNY Broome!



DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR GENDER PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN CREATING THE PERSON YOU ARE TODAY? WHY OR WHY NOT?

I was born the third daughter in a family where both my parents were actively involved in parenting. My father was undeterred by gender when seeking out a helper with car repairs, minibike riding, outdoor chores and hunting. At the same time, my mom, a teacher and traditional homemaker, engaged me in baking, cooking, sewing, and caring for my young baby brother. I think I was very fortunate to have been allowed to explore all of these activities without a sense of “gender” as a defining factor. I have always felt strongly female. I bond closely with my female friends, took to feminist ideals beginning in eighth grade thanks to a beloved English teacher, Ms. Armstrong, and identify most with female characters and role-models both in fiction and in history. Being female has taught me resilience and self-determination in the face of misogyny and abuse. It has taught me unbridled joy as a wife and mother.



IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN?

Know who you are, outside of what society tells you you should be. Be true to that self. Do not buy into commercialized depictions of what you should be or allow them to define what you can or cannot do. Only you can define what being female means to you. Retell the stories to create a world that supports who you are. Find the stories of women that inspire you to be true to yourself.

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT AS A WOMAN YOU WISH YOU HAD BEEN TOLD WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?

My one regret is not knowing how many women suffer unwanted and inappropriate advances of men, especially at a young age. I bore the burden of such experiences alone, afraid to admit to them for fear of being judged myself. I wish I had been told earlier that I had done nothing to bring these advances on. That I bore absolutely no responsibility for the inappropriateness of men who prey on women.

WHICH DISNEY PRINCESS OR NON-DISNEY PRINCESS DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?

Belle! Books were my first love, my escape, my treasures, and still are. And then there was the princess in the first book I remember owning, The Princess Who Never Smiled. Her sadness with the world could not be lifted by jewels or power or titles, but only by a poor young lad who comically tripped into her life. The power of a smile, the power of friends and family who make me laugh is another great treasure in my life.

WHAT ERA IN WOMEN'S FASHION IS THE MOST APPEALING TO YOU?

I think I'll always be a 70's girl. Faded jeans, peasant tops, and sandals for every day, and a good power suit/pussy bow blouse when I must!

IS THERE ANY WOMAN (VILLAIN OR HERO) THAT YOU DISLIKE IN A MOVIE/SITCOM/SHOW/VIDEO GAME?

I was disappointed in the portrayal of Cheetah in Wonder Woman 1984. There was something all too familiar about the *portrayal* of one woman's envy of another woman leading to an extreme embrace of self destructive behavior. An undertone of sexuality and power defined by the height of both heel and hair may have been humorously representative of style trends in the 80's but fell flat for me in 2020.

IS THERE A FEMALE VILLAIN YOU LIKE OR IDENTIFY WITH?

Black Widow. Of course portrayed more as a hero than a villain, but definitely a hero with a dark past. On some very small level, I identify with rage that can seek justice through amoral acts. Definitely satisfying to watch on the screen!

HAS A PARTICULAR WOMAN INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR CURRENT TASTE OR AESTHETIC? IF SO, WHO?

Dame Judi Dench, particularly in her role as M in the James Bond series. As I head toward my 60's I love the idea of the stately, intelligent, sophisticated female. Of course she is in her 80's so maybe I'm overshooting my age a bit, but I'm ready for flowing long lines, soft neutrals and comfortable flats!

IF YOU COULD MEET WITH ANY FAMOUS WOMAN FROM ANYWHERE AND ASK THEM ONE QUESTION, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU ASK?

Stacey Abrams. What can each of us do, right now, to move this nation forward?

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE FICTIONAL WOMAN AND WHY?

Ah, there are so many! River Song from Dr. Who is one of my favorites. She is intelligent, funny, independent, quirky. I love the partnership she has with the Doctor. They are equals. Maybe after 12 months in pseudo-quarantine with my husband I'm jealous of a long-distance, cross-time relationship! JK. My husband is my best friend, after 40 years in a synchronous timeline, but it's hard not to love the idea of a character who lives life with the acceptance of time as an illusion, and relationship as future, past and present.