



State of the State

Governor Gretchen Whitmer

Special Guests of Governor Whitmer for the 2019 State of the State Address

Governor Whitmer has invited the following special guests to join her as she delivers her first State of the State address. Each guest has either overcome, or helped others overcome, adversity and represents the best of what it means to be a Michigander.

Steve and Paula Kiefer

Steve and Paula Kiefer's son, Mitchel Kiefer, was killed by a distracted driver on I-96 as he was driving home from college. Steve and Paula founded the **Kiefer Foundation** to end distracted driving and all associated traffic deaths and injuries. The Kiefer Foundation has partnered with the Michigan Department of Transportation to put up 1.7 miles of guardrail at the point of Mitchel's crash and plans to educate 100,000 people on distracted driving. Governor Whitmer is calling on the legislature to join 16 other states that have passed hands-free laws to keep our roads and kids safe.

Meredith Bronk

Meredith Bronk started her career with Open Systems Technology as a project manager in 1998 and worked her way up the ladder to become the president and CEO. In January, **Governor Whitmer toured Open Systems Technology**, which has grown to more than 200 employees and expanded to multiple locations under her leadership. Governor Whitmer is making sure that small businesses throughout our state, like Open Systems Technology, have what they need to grow by leveling the playing field and making sure that Michigan dollars go to Michigan companies.

Marla Williams

Marla Williams is a special education teacher at Davison Elementary-Middle School in Detroit. Marla's role as an educator doesn't stop when the school day is over. She goes to her student's birthday parties, visits them when they're sick, and even brought home their clothes and washed them herself. Governor Whitmer is sending a message to teachers, like Marla Williams, that their commitment to their students does not go unnoticed, which is why she is working to strengthen our system of education and provide teachers with the funding they need to do their jobs.

Eric Oswald

Eric Oswald went from protecting the country as a Colonel in the Air Force to protecting our state's water as the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality's Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance Division. Eric made the switch after 28 years of service because he was "looking for a new challenge," which consisted of leading a team of approximately 150 experts to ensure safe drinking water after the Flint water crisis. Governor Whitmer is working to make that challenge easier through the restructuring of the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and her proposed infrastructure plan because everyone deserves clean water.