

Speaker Biographies

2020 Symposium on Sustainability: Visions of a Sustainable Future

Public Lecture – The Power of One

Ms. Erin Brockovich – consumer advocate, author

Ms. Brockovich’s exhaustive investigation, as a file clerk in a California law firm, uncovered that Pacific Gas & Electric had been poisoning the small Town of Hinkley’s Water for over 30 years. In 1996, as a result of the largest direct-action lawsuit of its kind, spearheaded by Ms. Brockovich and Ed Masry, the utility giant was forced to pay out the largest toxic tort injury settlement in US history: \$333 million in damages to more than 600 Hinkley residents. The story and eventual film made “Erin Brockovich” a household name. Ms. Brockovich’s ongoing work in encouraging and empowering others in making a difference has been featured in ABC’s 2001 Special Challenge America and the Lifetime series “Final Justice with Erin Brockovich”, as well as New York Times Business Bestseller, “Take it From Me: Life’s A Struggle, But You Can Win”. As President of Brockovich Research & Consulting, Ms. Brockovich is currently involved in numerous environmental projects worldwide, fielding requests for assistance with groundwater contamination complaints in every state of the US, Australia, and other international hot spots, and is working on cases in California, Texas, Florida, Michigan, Illinois and Missouri. www.Brockovich.com

Presentation of the Live Green! Awards for Excellence in Sustainability

Merry Rankin, Director of Sustainability, Iowa State University and Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Ames

Merry Rankin is Iowa State University’s inaugural Director of Sustainability, responsible for coordinating Iowa State University’s sustainability initiatives and serving as a central resource for collaboration and information. Through a partnership with the City of Ames, she also assists in the facilitation of community sustainability planning and implementation. Prior to coming to ISU, she worked for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, working with the Recycling Technical Assistance Team and overseeing the Department’s statewide volunteer program – Keepers of the Land, and also Iowa State University Wildlife and Fisheries Extension Service. Merry has a B.S. in General Business and an M.S. in Wildlife Biology, both from Iowa State University and has completed international environmental human dimensions research in India, Costa Rica, Australia, and South Africa. Outside of work, Merry serves on the Board of Directors for Worldly Goods.

Izabel Wilde, Director of Sustainability, Government of the Student Body

Izzy Wilde is a senior at Iowa State University majoring in community and regional planning. She also serves as Director of Sustainability on the executive cabinet of Iowa State University's Student Government, directing the Student Government Sustainability Committee, and overseeing the Student Government Green Initiatives Fund – focused on supporting student sustainability initiatives and opportunities. In this role, Izzy also spearheaded discussions and collaborations resulting in the passage of the Student Government Senate Climate Commitment Plan resolution. “In the spring semester of 2019, I spent time abroad in Canberra, Australia. There I learned more about the importance of environmental sustainability for a country with such a diverse and fragile ecosystem.”