

*The UMW Department of Mathematics invites you to the*

*Fall 2014 Alumni Colloquium*

*“From Second-Rate Mathematician to First-Rate  
Scientist”*

Dr. Jonathan Stallings, class of 2009  
Assistant Professor of Statistics  
North Carolina State University

**Thursday, November 13th**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**Monroe 110**

**Abstract:** Statistics is both the art and science of extracting knowledge from information in the form of recorded data. The science of statistical methods comes from rigorous applications of mathematics such as analysis, linear algebra, and decision theory. While mathematical competency is necessary to succeed as a statistician, it is hardly sufficient. Rather, the most impressive quality of pioneering statisticians like R. A. Fisher, George E. P. Box, and John Tukey was how they could frame complicated, real-life problems into ones that could be answered using tame mathematics. Box once said, “Why do we [statisticians] aspire to be second-rate mathematicians when we could be first-rate scientists?” In this talk, I overview how I have come to appreciate this philosophy, starting with my time as an undergraduate student at UMW. I share the experiences I had at UMW and as a graduate student at Virginia Tech that helped me become a better statistician. Examples are provided to demonstrate how the mathematics courses I took at UMW gave me the tools I needed to survive graduate school.

