

OnWisconsin

FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS WINTER 2020

Poetry for a Crisis

Married writers Cherene
Sherrard and Amaud
Jamaul Johnson explore
the realities of Black lives.

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**Photos from a
Turbulent Year**

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Vision

"Till the cows come home" now has a date: September 1. That's when the UW's dairy herd returned to campus from its COVID-19-induced exile. After students were sent home in March, the cows spent five months at the Arlington Research Station.

Photo by Bryce Richter



University Research Park
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in 2018 to create Innovation
One, the new headquarters
for Exact Sciences.

University Research Park Where COVID Meets Cutting Edge

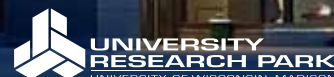
Since 1984, scientists and entrepreneurs at University Research Park have been changing the world for the better. So when issues like COVID-19 arise, it's no surprise that Wisconsin-based companies and researchers who call the park home have joined the fight against the virus. From vaccines in development by FluGen, to the research of UW-Madison scholars, and tests by Exact Sciences, GoDx, and Nimble Therapeutics, University Research Park is an innovation neighborhood that embodies the Wisconsin Idea in action.

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Campus partners moving
Badger innovation forward



OnWisconsin

Mary Murphy Edwards lives and breathes martial arts. See page 38.

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UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES/MICHAEL KIENITZ



ANDY MANIS

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NICOLE SCHMIEDL, THE NORTH FACE

Out There Adventures helps LGBTQ+ youth find themselves. See page 48.

Cover

Poets Cherene Sherrard and Amaud Jamaul Johnson on East Campus Mall. Photo by Jeff Miller.

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Picture Perfect?

Let me compliment the brilliant decision to create and publish illustrated profiles in this issue ["Heroes of the Pandemic," Fall 2020 *On Wisconsin*]. This was the perfect way to break up the copy in a pleasing way. The illustrations were top-notch (and the profiles were, too, by the way).

George Hesselberg '73

Fitchburg, Wisconsin

I've been reading the alumni magazine for 70 years, and the Fall 2020 issue gets the gold medal.

Ken Becker

Sterling Hall Memories

On Wisconsin received a number of Facebook responses to "The Blast That Changed Everything" [Summer 2020]. Below are some reactions to our collected history of the 1970 Sterling Hall bombing, which was conceived as a protest against the Vietnam War.

Poignant accounts of what actually happened in the day. Surreal, and so meaningful. Grateful for all who chose to give their personal accounts of this terribly traumatic event.

Robin J. Poedel Simon

Woke me up — all the way across Lake Mendota — horrible!

Ann Danner Dwyer

We were just down the street on University Avenue. I had several sailing friends who were grad students in the physics department. Their research experiments were destroyed in the blast. So university and physics department officials had to decide what to do about their grad-student status. Lots of lives were disrupted and one life was lost. Does violent protest serve any purpose?

Jim Negro

I remember seeing it on the news; I was seven. I told my dad I would never go to that school. [But] I'm a proud 1985 UW graduate!

Kathryn Kuhn Dirkse

I was living on West Dayton (the house was in a spot which has been turned into the parking lot for the DoubleTree hotel) when the bomb woke me up. A friend living on our back porch for the summer came in my room and said something like, "What the f**k was that?" We pulled on jeans and ran past the Nitty Gritty, down Johnson and then University toward all the sirens. It's about a mile. By the time we got there, maybe 15 minutes after the blast, cops were everywhere. Still, we could get in that little park between Lathrop Hall and Chamberlin Hall for a look at the bombed side of Sterling Hall, but cops eventually pushed everybody out. It was chaos.

Ken Merrill

I graduated from pharmacy school that summer. My husband had a research lab facing Sterling. It was blown to pieces. Scary time for us with National Guard on corners with bayonets drawn. The pharmacy school was tear-gassed for no reason.

I worked at the Rennebohm drugstore on State and Lake. We had our windows trashed and had to duck under counters to avoid glass. The class of 2020 and class of 1970 both have had events making graduations difficult.

Andrea Harkins

We lived outside Verona at the time and were awakened by the sound.

Kris Buchanan Stichman

I was a student at this time. I used to key punch cards for grad students in the physics building. So much research lost. It was scary times.

Terry Leibfried

Very sad day ... I lived in "Jingles Tower" on the lake and felt it. I was at work, serving breakfast at the Madison Inn, when I found out that my friend was the one who lost his life.

Jorja Bailey

WISCONSIN MEDICINE

Can't get enough medical news? Then UW Health and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health are here to help. In the fall, they presented a biweekly livestream called Wisconsin Medicine, in which experts talk about how the two organizations have partnered to solve critical health challenges. Episodes include discussions of cancer, women's health, Alzheimer's, and the future of medicine. Recordings can be found at wiscmedicine.org. The events will return in January.

"We want to take the discovery enterprise at the UW, which is world class, and MacGyver that into first-in-human clinical trials."

Jacques Galipeau, oncology

"Precision therapy allows us to better predict a particular therapy's effectiveness through understanding of individual tumor mutation."

Howard Bailey, director of the UW Carbone Cancer Center

"The world of human health is filled with conditions that are invisible to the human eye."

Lee Gravatt Wilke, director of the UW Health Breast Center

"My dream is to never tell anyone's mother, daughter, or sister that she has cancer."

Lisa Barroilhet MS'19, medicine and gynecologic oncology

"The only way we can win Alzheimer's is through cutting-edge research."

Sanjay Asthana, founding director of the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

OUR UW

Jack and Sandy



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Jack Winder '62, MBA'69

Sandy Winder '61

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OnWisconsin

Winter 2020

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Quarterly production of *On Wisconsin* is supported by financial gifts from alumni and friends. To make a gift to UW-Madison, please visit supportuw.org.

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JEFF MILLER

It's been an extraordinary year, with so many fast-paced events that, as a quarterly magazine, we've struggled to keep up. Beyond the swift pace, the human toll has also been disorienting and challenging. That's why we've turned to a year-in-review photo feature to capture the subtleties and impact of current events more completely than words alone.

The year began, of course, with a Rose Bowl — remember when we thought losing the big game was a tragedy? Then came the pandemic, which sent the majority of students home at spring break to finish the semester remotely, and which left faculty and staff scrambling to put their courses online virtually overnight. However, that paled in comparison to fear for the health of loved ones, the mounting death toll, a feeling of isolation, and the economic suffering as the extended shutdown began to cause job losses and hardship on a scale unseen since the Great Depression.

The Memorial Day police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis set off a series of Black Lives Matter demonstrations that continue to this day. As some of the protests grew violent, we saw boarded-up storefronts on State Street. Then, as businesses began to reopen, the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha set off another round of demonstrations that resulted in businesses replacing the plywood just as students were returning to campus in late August.

This fall's students face a college experience unlike any of those who came before them. In mid-August, the Big Ten made a historic decision to cancel the fall football season out of concern for the health of players and staff, and the following month, it announced that a shortened season would begin in October. Students are undergoing regular testing for COVID-19, wearing masks, and observing social distancing. Large parties are verboten, and classes are a mix of online and in-person.

But, despite the many challenges, there are signs of hope. This issue includes news of how UW researchers continue to help find solutions to the pandemic and how campus is coping. It also includes thoughtful comments from two Black UW faculty poets whose work can help us begin to process the racial strife that has typified this year.

In a time of uncertainty, we're sure of one thing — even a pandemic, accompanied by social unrest, is not enough to quench that legendary Badger spirit.

NIKI DENISON

Bella Rosenberg '24 and father Todd Rosenberg '90 moved her possessions into Elizabeth Waters res hall early — one of many safety protocols.



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Campus Responds to COVID-19

UW-Madison leaders adapted to keep students, employees, and the community safe during the fall semester.

Although UW-Madison leaders employed a plan to offer both remote and safe, in-person learning experiences during the fall semester, it wasn't without challenges. Within the first several days of the academic year, campus saw a rapid increase in positive COVID-19 test results among students — for which, UW officials note, there was no evidence linking transmission to in-person instruction. Leaders were quick to take action and communicate updates to campus and the surrounding area.

When the semester began on September 2, the UW had already launched a public, online dashboard that published students' and employees' COVID-19 test results — both on and off campus — on a daily basis. Positive cases at the time were relatively low, but as the week progressed, the number of positive test results rose among students.

On September 7, Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** called on undergraduates to severely restrict their in-person interactions and movements to only those that were essential. The UW also worked with Public Health Madison and Dane County to order a number of fraternity and sorority houses to quarantine. However, after two days passed with a positive test rate of at least 20 percent, Blank announced on September 9 that, for two weeks, the university would switch to all-online instruction, quarantine Sellery and Witte residence halls, and adjust some campus operations — such as closing all in-person study spaces. The UW then monitored case numbers and evaluated whether to reopen campus.

On September 23, at the conclusion of the two-week period, campus saw lowered case numbers as well as a reduced rate of infections. Blank lifted the quarantine on Sellery and Witte and announced that campus would begin to resume some in-person activity starting September 26, while continuing to track infections.

In consultation with public-health experts and shared governance, Blank noted campus would expand testing capacity and lessen turnaround time, as well as reduce the concentration of students in residence halls by encouraging voluntary departures and allowing more students to move into single rooms.

University staff and the UW-Madison Police Department would also continue to monitor off-campus activity and impose consequences — including removal from the university — for students violating county orders or the UW's standards. At press time, Blank had also stated her hope for Dane County officials to assist in off-campus efforts.

"If we see another uptick in positive cases, I will not hesitate to take additional actions to limit the spread of the virus," Blank wrote in her announcement. For more updates on the fall semester since *On Wisconsin* was printed, visit news.wisc.edu/covid-19-campus-response.

STEPHANIE HAWS '15



COURTESY OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY SCIFI LAB

IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST

Researchers from UW-Madison and Cornell University have created a wristband with a science-fiction superpower: continuously tracking the entire human hand in 3-D. This breakthrough in wearable sensing technology has potential applications for virtual reality and human-robot interaction.

Dubbed FingerTrak, the wristband senses the many positions of the human hand with thermal cameras, each about the size of a pea. It's the first device that can accurately reconstruct a full hand posture in three dimensions based on the contours of the wrist. The lightweight design allows for free movement — a major advance on previous wrist-mounted cameras that were too bulky for everyday use.

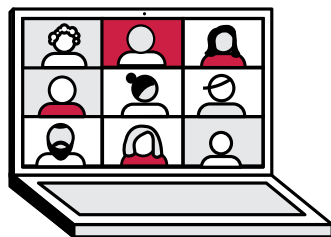
FingerTrak could revolutionize sign-language translation, as well as monitoring disorders that affect fine motor skills.

"How we move our hands and fingers often tells about our health condition," says **Yin Li**, an assistant professor at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health who contributed to FingerTrak's software. "A device like this might be used to better understand how the elderly use their hands in daily life, helping to detect early signs of diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's."

DEAN ROBBINS

4.6%

The seven-day average of infections among students on September 23, down from 8.4 percent on September 9. The average continued to decline, and by October 1, it had dropped to 1.2 percent.



THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE

Due to the pandemic, many companies have been forced to transition their employees to working remotely. And some workplaces have already made the decision to continue doing so even after the pandemic is over, according to **Jirs Meuris**, a professor in UW–Madison’s Department of Management and Human Resources at the Wisconsin School of Business.

“Probably for certain jobs it works well, but for others, that is not necessarily the case,” he says.

A main advantage to remote working for companies is the cost savings, because employers don’t need to rent or purchase as much office space or pay for utilities and other building maintenance costs. Meuris adds that the ability to work remotely can also be seen as a benefit for staff who desire to work from home.

A downside for employees, though, is that “it’s much harder to set boundaries with your work and home life.” There is the temptation to answer work emails or complete other tasks during evenings or weekends, he says, and this can lead to burnout or work–family conflicts. A second drawback, he adds, is that a lot of innovation and problem-solving “happens through small conversations that people have” when they run into each other throughout the course of the day, “so you have a lot less of that.”

Whether businesses end up bringing their employees back to the office or not, Meuris says, it’s going to take a while for things to feel normal and for organizations to recuperate from the disruption caused by the pandemic.

NIKI DENISON

DANIELLE LAMBERSON PHILIPP



BRUCE RICHTER

Student Teaching in a Pandemic

In today’s increasingly digital world — accelerated by a pandemic — it may be tempting to question the necessity of in-person college coursework. But not if you’re in training to become a physical-education teacher.

A semester of student teaching is the final piece of coursework for physical-education majors at UW–Madison and a state requirement for licensure. “It’s the time when they find out, ‘Wow, I can really do this,’” says **Cindy Kuhrasch**, coordinator for the UW’s physical-education program.

With all Dane County public schools beginning the year online, Kuhrasch turned to St. James Catholic School just south of campus, whose younger students were returning to the physical classroom. The school then turned to her. Its physical-education teacher took a leave of absence because of family concerns, so Kuhrasch filled the position herself and became the cooperating teacher for her UW students.

Her willingness to go above and beyond to provide a comparable experience for her students in a time of pandemic is shared by many instructors across campus. When the UW reopened this fall with 8,000 undergraduate course sections, roughly two-thirds of them had fully transitioned to an online format, a quarter remained face-to-face, and a tenth took a hybrid approach.

Kuhrasch’s workplace-experience course is a hybrid of sorts, as the student teachers are tasked with developing virtual lesson plans via Google Classroom for the older students and for younger students opting to learn from home. One of the first assignments? Going for a walk and showing neighbors that they care by wearing a mask and keeping a safe distance.

This year, the UW students may be gaining *more* experience as they learn to assess physical, social, and cognitive development in person and from afar. The unusual circumstance has also created a unique bonding experience for the student teachers, who are typically spread out at schools around the county.

“Because they’re all here, the conversations they’re having are so rich,” Kuhrasch says. “I walk in and it sounds like a teachers’ think tank. They’re just bouncing ideas off one another, like, ‘Maybe this will be too hard for this class, or we should think about this kid’s needs.’ It’s really incredible.”

PRESTON SCHMITT ’14

Kuhrasch (standing at left) goes above and beyond to provide students with a workplace-experience course.



DANIEL EINSTEIN

When people count up the losses attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, Madison's drama scene won't be listed as the most tragic. But it suffered a loss nonetheless. University Theatre shut down in March and put its 2020–21 season on hiatus during this period of physical distancing; the Wisconsin Union Theater shut down in March and planned limited-capacity in-person events for the fall. This year, the show must go off, but we at *On Wisconsin* wish to keep the memory of live drama alive with a look back on a nearly forgotten venue: Bascom Hall Theater.

Don't worry if you don't remember the Bascom Hall Theater. Its life was fairly short. Opened in 1927, it was largely abandoned by the thespian community when Memorial Union's theater wing opened in the 1930s.



Today it goes by the rather prosaic name Bascom 272, and it's a lecture hall. During renovations in 2020, workers uncovered some of that stage history. They found a poster for *Cyrano de Bergerac* produced

In spring 2020, the UW renovated Bascom Hall's room 272, which was once the university's theater. Nosy workers discovered artifacts from the 1920s, including this poster for a 1929 production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

in 1929 and graffiti from student actors, including two who would gain national fame: Oscar winner **Don Ameche '31** and radio star **Bernardine Flynn '29**.

Bascom 272 was actually the second Bascom Hall Theater — the first was located outside the building, on the western slope of Bascom Hill. In the 1910s and 1920s, students performed on an outdoor stage in front of benches on the hillside. In the mid-1920s, the university decided to build a liberal arts addition onto Bascom Hall, and during construction, that morphed into a theater. The theater opened May 13, 1927, with a production of *Outward Bound*.

With the Union's stage and others opening on campus, the university lowered the curtain on Bascom's history as a theater venue.

JOHN ALLEN

SO LONG, SAT'S

For the next two fall enrollment cycles, undergraduate applicants to UW–Madison will not be required to submit ACT or SAT scores. The shift in admissions policy reflects both an immediate response to disruptions caused by COVID-19 and a broader desire to study how such a policy might alter the composition of incoming classes.

The test-optional approach, an extension of an earlier move to accommodate fall 2020 applicants who had limited access to the tests last spring, was approved by the Board of Regents and will affect first-year applicants for spring 2021 through summer 2023. Data gathered and analyzed by university researchers will help determine whether UW–Madison returns to a standardized test requirement.

Under the revised approach, freshman applicants will not be penalized for their inability to submit test scores. In the upcoming enrollment cycles, applicants who've taken the ACT or SAT will have the option to self-report their scores if they believe it adds to the totality of their academic record.

"While test scores have been a requirement for an admissions decision, they have always been only a portion of the holistic review we give each and every applicant to UW–Madison," says **André Phillips**, director for admissions and recruitment. "Our team is trained to review every aspect of a student's application — including the context of their school and their individual story — to find students who are best able to succeed at our university and who will exemplify the Wisconsin Idea."

DOUG ERICKSON



DANIELLE LAMBERSON PHILIPP



JEFF MILLER

All in for Diversity

UW–Madison is working to meet its public mission by creating a diverse and inclusive community. It's made progress with successful programs like Diversity Forum and the Faculty Diversity Initiative.

But after the recent Black Lives Matter protests and other calls to action, UW leaders saw an opportunity to redouble their commitment to a welcoming campus environment.

"We believe diversity is a source of strength, offering opportunities for innovation, scholarship, and community-building," says **Cheryl Gittens**, the UW's interim deputy vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion. "Diversity strengthens our learning enterprise as a whole."

A new Office of Inclusion Education, housed within Student Affairs, will develop programming that addresses identity and community. It grew out of conversations with the Student Inclusion Coalition, the Wisconsin Black Student Union, and other groups representing students who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

To equip students with the skills for creating an inclusive community, the Our Wisconsin training program is now mandatory for incoming undergraduates.

"It's a good strategy to think about this curriculum in the same way we consider other educational programs, like AlcoholEdu or preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence," Gittens says.

A new Exceptional Service Support Award will acknowledge faculty who play a critical role in supporting institutional inclusion efforts. Recipients will gain release time from teaching to allow a focus on service.

"Their work as mentors and collaborators is critical to what we're trying to do to create an inclusive campus environment," Gittens says.

The university is partnering with the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association on a \$10 million fundraising initiative to recruit and retain a more diverse group of students, faculty, and staff. It's also investing \$1 million in research that sheds light on race in America.

"This is what I appreciate about UW–Madison," Gittens says. "There's a commitment to strategies we can adopt to better understand who we are and where we need to direct our energy toward transformative change."

DEAN ROBBINS

Gittens is helping the university explore transformative change.

Delay of Games



JEFF MILLER

When the clock hit zero at the end of a disappointing Rose Bowl on January 1, 2020, Badger fans thought they knew when the team would begin its 12-game road to redemption: September 5 against Indiana, with visits from Southern Illinois and Appalachian State in the following weeks.

COVID-19 upended all that. In March, all sports schedules were put on hold. The 2020 season remained in limbo until August 5, when the Big Ten announced that the Badger football season would kick off on September 4, now with only 10 games.

On August 11, the Big Ten reversed itself: the entire fall slate of sports would be postponed indefinitely. On September 16, the Big Ten re-reversed itself and announced that, due to advances in COVID-19 testing, a nine-game football season would begin October 24, a mere 49 days after fans had initially expected (but after *On Wisconsin's* press time). The stadium would be nearly empty, as the UW isn't selling tickets and is working with Madison and Dane County to discourage tailgating.

The new schedule could still be disrupted. A 5 percent rate of positive COVID-19 tests among team members, or a 7.5 percent positive rate among players, coaches, and support staff, would force a halt to practice and competition. In the week when the Big Ten announced the new season, the Badgers were on a self-imposed shutdown of team activities.

To tide fans over, the athletic department and the Big Ten Network aired a four-week "Dream Season" of classic (i.e., rerun) football games. The UW entries featured Badger radio announcers Mike Lucas and Matt Lepay calling the action and ran from September 19 to October 10.

Though football had a restart, most fall sports remained on hold, as of press time. "Plans are being discussed at the conference level," says **Brian Lucas**, director of football brand management for the UW athletics department.

JOHN ALLEN

IT ALL ADDS UP

A pandemic isn't merely a health problem — it's also a data problem. To keep an illness like COVID-19 from spreading throughout a community, officials need to know how many people have been infected, where they are, and where they aren't.

Before restarting in-person instruction in September, UW-Madison decided that it would make its data public and showed students, faculty, staff, and community members exactly how campus was doing in its effort to monitor the virus. The online coronavirus dashboard tracks how many tests the UW has administered to students and employees, shows how many are negative and positive, and indicates when those results apply to people on and off campus.

The dashboard was a key tool in illustrating why the UW made the decision to go virtual just a week after classes began: infections were on the rise, and the positivity rate climbed above 10 percent in the first half of September.

"The more that we can test our community," Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** wrote at the launch of the dashboard, "the better control we have over infections."

The dashboard earned a B+ grade from Yale University researchers, and it continues to give a picture of how the UW's testing regimen is doing. Find it at smartrestart.wisc.edu/dashboard.

JOHN ALLEN

NEWS FEED

Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, is no stranger to UW-Madison. Both her parents taught on campus when she was pre-school age. "Wisconsin is part of my story," Harris says.



The School of Education has launched the Teacher Pledge to address Wisconsin's teacher shortage. It will pay the equivalent of in-state tuition and fees, plus testing and licensing costs, for all teacher-education students. In return, students pledge to work at a Wisconsin school for at least three years after graduation.



When it's time to replace part of a blood vessel, a new 3-D-printed artificial version created by UW scientists would allow doctors to keep tabs on it remotely. It's made of a flexible composite and is capable of real-time monitoring. So long, CT scans and ultrasounds.



BRUCE RICHTER

Can You Dig It?

Believe it or not, Bascom Hill is under construction. It seems that nothing — not pandemics, protests, or on-again-off-again in-person classes — can stop people from digging up central campus. Since 2019, crews have been working to excavate a utility tunnel under Bascom. Much of the piping there is more than 50 years old, and the water lines have had their problems, failing six times in the last decade. The new tunnel (which replaces an older, smaller one) is 640 feet long and nearly 10 feet in diameter. But no, students will not be allowed to walk through it to avoid climbing the hill. That's what the Number 80 bus is for.

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That's where UW-Madison landed in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of U.S. colleges and universities, up from 46th last year. The UW also rated highly in the Academic Ranking of World Universities, standing at 32nd internationally. We're coming for you next year, University of Tokyo.

PANDEMIC CHALLENGES INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

UW-Madison has seen a decrease in international student enrollment, with 5,231 starting this fall semester compared to 6,200 last fall.

Katie Dunagan, the university's assistant director of international admissions and recruitment, says that "wasn't a surprise, given all of the restrictions and challenges that these students were facing." Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some were unable to travel to the United States because of limited flights and increased prices, and others couldn't get visas when most embassies abroad closed. While some opted to take online courses, others were not able to do so and decided to defer enrollment until spring semester.

"There is a lot of political rhetoric out there that sort of coincided with this wave of the pandemic," Dunagan says, "and those two things together created something definitely unprecedented in the field of international education."

UW-Madison's Office of International Student Services is responding with a variety of supportive measures, including virtual events and activities, advising appointments, informational town halls, newsletters, web updates, virtual orientation, and social media outreach.

Lora Klenke '94, managing director for international alumni relations for the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, says it's key for the university to remind international students that they are valued. "International students increase the social and cultural diversity of our campus," she says. "They enrich the research and learning environment and help U.S. students develop relevant skills in how to work and communicate in a global workforce."

NIKI DENISON

NEWS FEED

Go Big Read unites the campus community through a shared reading experience, generating conversations in courses and at special events. This year's selection is *Parkland: Birth of a Movement*, Dave Cullen's hopeful look at the student activism that followed the 2018 mass shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school.



Before the fall semester, UW experts in textiles, filtration, and infectious disease raced the clock to create a special face covering to help students and staff comply with the campus mask requirement. The team worked around worldwide fabric shortages to mass-produce a durable and easy-to-wear mask that was available when classes started.

Veteran higher-ed administrator Claudia Guzmán has been named the new assistant dean and director of the UW's Multicultural Student Center. "I want the center to be a space where students of color can feel completely comfortable," she says.



BRUCE RICHTER

World-renowned geochemist and UW-Madison professor **Andrea Dutton** studies past behaviors of sea levels and polar ice sheets to predict their fate. The 2019 MacArthur “Genius” Fellow and 2020 Fulbright Scholar collects and examines fossil coral reefs from coasts around the globe, focusing mainly on time periods with a similar average global temperature to the one seen today. She sheds light on rising sea levels so we can prepare for what’s to come.

How would you describe your work?

I often liken my work to a detective’s, because I’m looking for pieces of the puzzle. When I’m out in the field 24/7, my whole mind is immersed in the mystery that we are trying to solve, and I’m constantly asking myself questions like, “What else can I look for? What are the missing pieces of the puzzle? Is there a different way to interpret what we see here? How can we answer this while we’re here?”

Your findings show that, about 125,000 years ago, when Earth last saw the temperatures we’re seeing today, sea level was about 20 to 30 feet higher than it is

Formerly at the University of Florida, Dutton joined the UW’s Department of Geoscience last year. She was hired through the Target of Opportunity Program, an initiative that aims to enhance the quality and diversity of the UW’s academic departments.

now. Why is it that today’s sea levels don’t seem to be in sync with past trends?

What has happened today is we have warmed up the earth so quickly that the earth systems are still adjusting to that change. They’re playing catch-up to this rapid warming that we’ve just forced upon the ice sheets. What that tells us is that our ice sheets are out of equilibrium with the present climate. And that’s why it begs this question of, “Okay, if we’re headed toward something like 20 to 30 feet of sea-level rise, how quickly is that going to happen?”

What is one of the biggest uncertainties in projecting the future of sea-level rise?

We don’t fully understand the physics of that rapid, dynamic retreat of ice in the polar regions, especially for the Antarctic ice sheet. We’re now watching that in real time, [monitoring] the ice sheet, and trying to learn on the fly about how this process works.

But that’s where I come in as a geologist, because I can look at the past and say, “All right, to some extent we’ve done this exper-

iment before. Maybe we didn’t warm it up as quickly, but we have been at these temperatures before.” We can use that knowledge.

In a TEDx Talk, you mentioned that sea-level rise is more of a social problem than a scientific one. Could you elaborate on that?

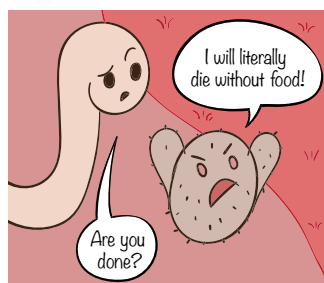
We have enough scientific knowledge that we understand that sea level is going to continue to rise even with the amount of warming that has already happened. Any additional warming now will make that even worse. The problem now is fundamentally getting people to accept that sea-level rise will be part of our future.

What can people do to start a conversation around what’s happening and prepare for the future?

That’s the biggest challenge: getting people to talk about climate change. So, I encourage everyone to talk about it. The silence that is often wrapped around this issue really prevents us from making progress.

*Interview by Stephanie Haws ’15
Photo by Bryce Richter*





Why is a blood cell studying in a library? Why are microbes ordering food in a restaurant? Why is a ribosome getting psychoanalyzed on a therapist's couch?

These are images from JKX Comics, illustrating scientific concepts for nonscientists. In 15 comics, **Jaye Gardiner PhD'17**, **Kelly Montgomery MS'16**, and **Khoa Tran PhD'18** use storytelling skills to explain UW–Madison research on cancer, HIV, and the big bang, among other topics. The whole collection is available for free at jkxcomics.com, to the delight of parents, middle school teachers, and science fans everywhere.

Gardiner, Montgomery, and Tran met in Science and Medicine Graduate Research Scholars, a UW fellowship program for underrepresented grad students. In 2015, they hatched the idea of using comics

Panels from JKX Comics (clockwise from top left): You Are What You Eat; Lena and the Hunt for Toms; A Microbial World; and Longitudinal Effects of Psychotherapy with Transgender Clients. (TNG stands for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming.)

to promote scientific literacy, refining their concept in weekly sessions at the Library Cafe & Bar near campus. As scientists — not artists or writers — they had a lot to learn.

"Growing up, we all loved the Sunday comics," Tran says. "But storytelling was new to us, so it took a year of trial and error to create our first project."

The trio got a break by winning the UW's Arts Business Competition, which rewards innovative ideas from arts entrepreneurs. They used the funding to collaborate with UW scientists and other artists on a set of seven comics, showcasing the finished products in a public event at the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery. Kids had a chance to meet the researchers featured in the comics and dream about their own careers in science.

The JKX founders are now scattered across the country, Montgomery as a PhD student and Gardiner and Tran as postdoctoral fellows. But they continue to work on new comics, as well as an anthology of their UW projects. They plan to donate copies of the anthology to underserved children in the Madison area through the Madison Reading Project.

"It will help them learn about the important research happening at the university right down the street," Tran says.

DEAN ROBBINS

The Virus Fighters

LENNON RODGERS



COVID-19 testing might be coming to a sewer near you.

Testing wastewater for the virus behind COVID-19 could provide early detection of new outbreaks, giving health care workers critical time to respond. UW–Madison researchers are partnering with cities around the state

to test 60 percent of Wisconsin's wastewater. They're also studying wastewater from campus buildings, including residence halls, to detect new infections early. While researchers doing this work are safe from the virus, they do face hazards of a sort on the job.

"Samples on campus can be from within minutes of production, so they are a bit messier," says **Martin Shafer PhD'88**, a senior scientist at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. Yet, he adds, "we do it for the good of science and public health."

This innovative testing is just one of the ways the UW has marshaled its resources and ingenuity to address the pandemic.

Engineers have tackled the virus as well. **Lennon Rodgers** and **Karl Williamson** of the Grainger Engineering Design Innovation Laboratory designed the Badger Seal, a DIY flexible frame to better fit disposable or cloth masks against the face. The seal can make these cheap masks much more effective at filtering out particles.

UW researchers have also been genomic sleuths. **Thomas Friedrich '97, PhD'03** and **David O'Connor**, who have studied COVID-19 for months, partnered with **Nasia Safdar MS'02, PhD'09** at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) to track down a health care worker's COVID-19 infection. Genetic sequencing revealed that the worker harbored a virus strain identical to their family member's virus and distinct from the virus of patients they had cared for. The results should offer reassurance to frontline workers: their protective equipment really can keep them safe from infection.

In late August, UW Health and SMPH were selected as one of the first sites in the country for a late-stage clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine. **William Hartman**, an assistant professor of anesthesiology who has directed clinical trials of antibody-based medicines and convalescent plasma treatments, is leading the UW trial. It aims to recruit 30,000 participants nationwide.

ERIC HAMILTON

"In these unprecedented times, we must serve as a beacon of hope and pride that lifts the spirits of the community."

— **Corey Pompey**, associate director of bands, on his desire to perform with the UW Marching Band as soon as it's safe

NEWS FEED

Tony Granato '17 is headed for the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame. Granato is the third-highest goal scorer in the history of the Badger men's program, as well as its current coach. He joins sister Cammi Granato, the first woman inducted into the hall in 2008.



Hello, good-bye: The Nicholas Recreation Center, the sleek new building on W. Dayton Street, is ready for athletes and fitness buffs. Meanwhile, the good ol' Natatorium is slated for demolition in late fall, to be replaced by a second state-of-the-art recreational facility in 2023.



University of Wisconsin Hospitals are ranked first in U.S. News & World Report's "Best Hospitals" survey of the state. Not to brag — much — but it's our ninth consecutive first-place ranking.

UW ATHLETICS; BRYCE RICHTER

Contender *Cassidy Scheer*



If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear it, it may not make a sound, but for **Cassidy Scheer '04**, it makes excellent practice timber.

Scheer is one of the nation's leading lumberjack athletes, with titles in events from log-rolling and tree-climbing to chopping and sawing. After putting himself through college by managing his family's lumberjack exhibitions in his hometown of Hayward, Wisconsin, Scheer brings his own skills to the professional stage and continues the family tradition of racking up titles from the Lumberjack World Championship and Stihl Timbersports — the world's premier competitive lumberjacking organization.

Scheer's winning record should come as no surprise: he hails from a long line of lumberjacks. Various relatives, including his father, Fred, took logrolling lessons at the world championship competition site in their youth. Fred went on to win four world championships in log-rolling, which count among the nearly 30 individual titles the Scheers hold in log-rolling and tree-climbing.

"I take pride in being part of the first family of log-rolling and tree-climbing," says Scheer. "We're a very competitive family. We're always trying to one-up each other, but it has a healthy dynamic to it."

Fred and his siblings also founded the family's lumberjack exhibition shows. What started in 1979 with some lawn chairs and a \$3 admission fee has since grown into a business that draws state and national fans.

Scheer stepped right into the family business. He spent his youth honing his skills and managing lumberjack shows. Despite the UW's lack of an official timbersports organization, Scheer stayed in practice by logrolling just off the shores of Lake Mendota.

Scheer is slated to represent the U.S. in a closed-studio Stihl Timbersports World Championship in Munich, Germany — that is, if pandemic-related travel restrictions don't turn him away at the gate.

"I was mostly known as a log-roller and tree-climber throughout my lumberjack sports career," he says. "I had learned how to chop and saw working in the lumberjack exhibitions but had never really taken those two disciplines very seriously."

Upon recognizing his knack for recreational chopping and sawing, Scheer committed to a specialized training regimen and began attending competitions in preparation for a shot at the Stihl Timbersports U.S. Championship.

But it wasn't enough to qualify this Northwoods-bred lumberjack prodigy for Stihl's competitive stage.

"The first year [2016] that I applied to the Stihl Timbersports series in the U.S., I was actually denied," Scheer says. Stihl fills 40 spots each year, and Scheer ranked 45th.

But in 2017, he entered the competition ranked 24th and finished eighth overall. In 2018, he rose to a sixth-place finish on his way to a national-champion title in 2019.

"I worked really hard," he says. "I was always addressing my greatest limiting factor [and working on] all the events that I needed to do better at to actually win that competition."

After securing his U.S. title, Scheer headed to Prague, Czech Republic, in November 2019 to compete against the champions from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Europe in the Stihl Timbersports Lumberjack World Championship, where he placed a close second.

"I'm unique in that I've competed at the highest level in all lumberjack sports disciplines. There are only two or three of us who have ever done that," Scheer says.

His secret to athletic excellence: as with log-rolling and wood-chopping, it comes down to balance.

"It's finding that ideal combination of athleticism, technique, and mental focus," he says. "I'm always trying to address my biggest deficiency in those three categories."

As a decorated veteran of both exhibition and competitive lumberjack stages, Scheer continues to keep audiences entertained through skill and showmanship.

"If somebody watches the 2017 through 2019 Stihl Timbersports U.S. Championships, they'll see that I'm clearly the person who's having the most fun out there. I'm the person [interacting the most] with the crowd. And when I have fun and I'm fired up like that, I tend to compete my best."

Scheer is also helping to train the next generation of lumberjacks, starting with his four-year-old daughter.

"I'm actually planning to get her her first ax pretty soon," he says. "It'll be a tiny ax that's not very sharp, but I'll set up the chopping apparatuses for her and start teaching her the mechanics of a good swing."

For Scheer, the allure of timbersports for athletes and audiences alike has always been clear. "Lumberjack sports [are] something that most people can identify with because most people have climbed a tree or split firewood," he says. "It's like rodeo in the sense that it's derived from actual workaday skills."

Between fitness equipment that mimics chopping work and ax-throwing bars cropping up across the country, Scheer can't help but chuckle at the bit of lumberjack in all of us.

"There will always be an appeal to playing with sharp objects and doing things that are somewhat dangerous," he says.

MEGAN PROVOST '20
PHOTO COURTESY OF STIHL TIMBERSPORTS

POETRY OF THE MOMENT

*In timely new collections, married UW professors
Cherene Sherrard and Amaud Jamaul Johnson
explore Black identity and struggle.*

BY PRESTON SCHMITT '14

PHOTOS BY JEFF MILLER





... I'm ashamed
 of how much compassion I've shown our
 declared
 enemies, which is what I was given, always
 unzipping
 my jacket, attempting to speak before spoken to,
 being pleasant, thinking everyone is watching.
 And what they are waiting for is whatever I've
 placed
 in my hand, which rarely feels like grace.

— “How often I’ve turned to Latasha Harlins,
 who would have been 43 this July,” *Imperial
 Liquor*

Even before the police brutality and Black Lives Matter protests earlier this year, Latasha Harlins was never far from Amaud Jamaul Johnson’s mind.

In 1991, Harlins walked into a Los Angeles convenience store and was shot in the back of the head by the store’s owner, who accused her of trying to steal a bottle of orange juice. She was Black. She was 15. She died with money in hand.

Johnson, a nationally renowned poet and English professor at UW–Madison, dedicated a poem to Harlins in *Imperial Liquor*, his new collection on race and fatherhood. A Compton, California, native, he left for college as his city burned following the acquittal of police officers who had beaten Rodney King around the time of Harlins’s death.

“One of the great anxieties I have is that it seems like these riots mark generational shifts,” Johnson says. “When my father was a teenager, he experienced the Watts riots in ’65. When I was a teenager in Los Angeles, there was a riot. And now my sons have rioting and protest that’s part of their adolescent experience. It feels like we’re caught in a dangerous loop.”

Such brutal realities of being Black in America — from slavery to today — underpin much of Johnson’s award-winning writings, as well as his wife’s. Cherene Sherrard, a fellow distinguished poet and professor in the Department of English, also released a collection this year. In *Grimoire*, she writes of the turbulences of Black motherhood that echo across generations.

In the couple’s poetry, the elegance of each line guides you deeper into a haunting scene. You agonize over pain and loss, violence and survival. You explore the transience of home, identity, and memory. And you start to understand why — as the country confronts racial strife and a devastating pandemic with precious little empathy — a poet’s touch is essential.

“During a time like this, when people feel like they don’t quite understand where things are going, where there’s a confusion or hopelessness, there’s a great call for poetry,” Johnson says. “We saw this

after September 11. Poets deal in uncertainty — or what John Keats called negative capability. A poet exists in a space where the answers aren’t readily available, where you linger in a silence and speak into it.”

*I packed the dishes in saddlebags between
 copies of The North Star,
 what issues we had not passed clandestinely
 on to other subscribers.
 All items in the pastry shop were sold or
 returned to lenders, save
 these blue-and-white cups and saucers in
 which I served custard or tea. ...
 Their mismatched sturdiness lent an elegance,
 a charm that led ladies
 to linger over their little cakes. When we
 unpack in Michigan, all the cups
 have chipped, all the saucers have fissures, but
 I use them anyway.
 A reminder of what cannot be broken.*

— “Chaney,” *Grimoire*

“DREAMING HISTORICALLY”

Sherrard was a year into her PhD program in African American literature at Cornell University when Johnson arrived to pursue a professional master’s in African American studies. They met at an orientation event.

At the time, they didn’t know poetry was in their future. But their academic training and dedication to African American history have led to a distinctive body of work that gives new voice to historical figures.

Johnson calls this process “dreaming historically” — immersing oneself in a moment of time and suspending knowledge of what comes next. Textbooks lay out the facts of history; their poetry transports you to the scene. Imagining history through sight and sound, by touch and taste, allows for deeper truths to emerge.

Johnson released *Red Summer*, his 2006 debut collection, after completing the prestigious Wallace Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University. The title, referring to the 1919 race riots and lynchings that erupted across the country, feels as urgent today as at the time of publication. With lyricism inspired by the blues, the collection explores the nature and permanence of violence. In “Chicago Citizen Testifies in His Defense,” Johnson writes of the murder of Eugene Williams, a Black teenager who drowned during the Red Summer when his raft floated toward a segregated section of beach and a white man pelted him with rocks: “The fate of the rock, like that of the boy, / falls somewhere between gravity and god.”

In 2013, Johnson released *Darktown Follies*, shifting from tragic violence to tragic humor. The collection reopens the curtains to vaudeville and

Colleagues in the Department of English, Johnson is the Halls IV Classical/Modern Literature Studies Bascom Professor and Sherrard is the Sally Mead Hands Bascom Professor.

minstrel shows, in which blackface became a staple. As with all of his writing, the historical bleeds into the contemporary. In the book's first poems, he portrays Black performers who negotiated degrading acts to secure a place on stage; later, he touches on appropriation, stereotype, and performance in our lives today. The uncomfortable humor is only fitting for the historical subject.

"There's something about doing historical work, when you're trying to humanize people in the past to understand both their strengths and weaknesses, that hopefully allows us to be kinder to each other," Johnson says.

At times, the process of dreaming historically involves a physical element. For *Grimoire* — meaning a book of magic spells — Sherrard drew inspiration from the smells and tastes of her kitchen. To better understand Malinda Russell, the first African American to publish a cookbook, Sherrard re-created her 19th-century recipes as authentically as possible.

Little is known about Russell, a free Black woman and single mother from Tennessee who moved to Michigan and published *A Domestic Cook Book* in 1866. But Sherrard brilliantly folds her recipes into the first part of the collection. In "Marble Cake," she writes: "My son, ½ cup white flour, ¼ cup brown sugar / has trouble with fractions. When pregnant / I did not follow instructions, *beat the yolks and sugar / together until very light* ... Mixed children usually / come out beautifully. The doctor is unsure about mine. / *Paper and butter the pan, first a layer of the white, / then of the dark, alternately finishing with the white.*"

That poem's narrator is a contemporary Black mother and amateur cook whom Sherrard created to interact with Russell across time. The enduring hardships of Black motherhood tie *Grimoire* together, with later sections exploring grim disparities in childbearing and childrearing. The book notes that Black infants are twice as likely to die as white infants, an inequity more severe today than at the time of Russell's cooking.

In "Outcome," such statistical prophecy dooms all Black mothers: "Her serve is 125 miles an hour / but she cannot outrun this. / She has won, has published, / but she cannot outwrite this. / She has starred, has danced, / but she cannot out-twirl this." While reading Russell's cookbook, Sherrard was drawn to the use of "receipt," an archaic form of "recipe." The word's versatility — used for spells, food, and medicine, or, more imaginatively, to refer to the steps of successful parenting — allowed for a potent mix of themes.

Rereading her collection now, she's finding the poems "eerily prescient" as she raises two teenage sons during a time of racial strife and pandemic.

"On one hand, you want to protect a space for joy, for well-being, for growth, for experience, for the kind of trial and error that's really necessary to develop independence," Sherrard says. "And yet,

Johnson: "A poet exists in a space where the answers aren't readily available, where you linger in a silence and speak into it."



you're always weighing that against the fact that they don't have as much room to make mistakes as other children."

Over the summer, as protests over police violence consumed the country, Sherrard and Johnson weighed how to discuss the cultural moment with their sons, fearing how much they've already internalized the tragedies of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and others. The family took a trip to State Street in downtown Madison, where local artists had transformed broken windows into vibrant plywood murals honoring victims of police violence and conveying hopeful messages of unity and change.

"We wanted them to see images of affirmation — celebrating Black life — so that it's not one long doom scroll of Black death," Sherrard says. "Seeing those images was a really good example of how art can bring an awareness and understanding of the struggles people are having."

*the most dangerous men
in my neighborhood
only listened to love songs*

*to reach those notes
a musicologist told me
a man essentially cuts*

*his own throat. some nights
even now, i'll hear a falsetto
and think i should run*

— "Smokey," *Imperial Liquor*

TRAGEDY BAKED IN

For all its historical references, *Imperial Liquor* is perhaps Johnson's most personal and vulnerable work, part ode to the Compton of his youth and part nod to the anguishing parent everywhere. It contains his signatures: stunning lyricism and evocative imagery.



In Grimoire, Sherrard writes of the turbulences of Black motherhood that echo across generations.

Released in February, the collection became revelatory just a few months later with the police killing of George Floyd. Johnson captures the urgency of the Black Lives Matter movement, with one reader posting on Goodreads: “If there is a book for this moment, this is it.”

In the poem dedicated to Harlins, Johnson writes: “My sons / were gone too long. They are developing this habit / of walking their allowance down to our corner store. / One of the many ways I’ve failed them, we haven’t / had that talk about their bodies, about the alarming rate / of illiteracy surrounding their bodies.”

And in “Don’t Forget You(r) Lunch,” the narrator addresses his son directly. No matter how friendly, honest, successful, or polite he grows up to be, it may never be enough: “the first time a police officer / put a gun to my head, the night / was as still and musty and oily / as your body is now.”

Johnson reads everything aloud as he writes. “The music has to be right,” he says. He believes poetry has both a sound system and an image system, and rather than rhyme words, he might correlate strong images, like fire and blood. As a child, he first fell in love with language because of hip-hop and R&B.

“Tough guys in my neighborhood didn’t necessarily listen to gangster rap. They listened to love songs,” he says. “So there’s this relationship I have to sound, that a really beautiful thing often has this tragedy baked into it — like, what does it mean to be afraid of a lullaby?”

Johnson is soft-spoken, in contrast to the fierce, baleful language of his poetry. Even in casual conversation, he speaks in a series of ellipses and questions, one thought inevitably interrupted by a deeper one. Such deliberation and doubt serve a poet well.

“Poetry isn’t about answering questions, necessarily,” Johnson told *Boxcar Poetry Review*. “But maybe, after several poems, we’ll begin to ask better questions, or get somewhere closer to the truth.”

Johnson and Sherrard will discuss their poetry in a virtual event on December 17 at noon (CST). Learn more at uwalumni.com/go/poetry.

In Sherrard’s writings, amid deep explorations of race and gender, her personality shines through with unexpected moments of levity. Sharp satire and pop-culture references permeate her work. In *Grimoire*, “ginger” is as likely to refer to the cooking ingredient as it is the *Gilligan’s Island* character. “In my episode,” Sherrard writes, “Ginger marries the Professor / after pushing that insipid Mary Ann / out to sea on a bamboo raft.”

Sherrard arrived on the poetry scene in 2010 with *Mistress, Reclining*, a chapbook that won the New Women’s Voices Prize in Poetry. She earned praise for crafting an intricate persona for Jeanne Duval, the multiracial mistress of 19th-century poet Charles Baudelaire. In 2017, she published *Vixen*, a dramatic collection filled with explorations of identity and a historical narrative on slavery with avatar Annabelle X.

Sherrard credits her ability to develop fictional and historical personas to her upbringing as an only child. “I grew up with my own imagination and books as companions,” she says. “That sense of transforming into another person was very appealing to me.”

Raised in Los Angeles, she was initially drawn to film and became active in theater. “At some point,” she told *Water-Stone Review* last year, “I started writing my own characters instead of pretending to be someone else’s.” Her bold approach has earned her an admiring label from the *Washington Independent Review of Books*: “a writer who doesn’t subordinate herself to make a poem.”

*A flood, like Noah’s flood,
like after Katrina, like the
Mississippi’s goddamn muddy
Blues, like Sylvia on death,
or Toni on slavery, like swag
surfing over the breakwater,
the levees levitating,
water seeping up through
cracked foundations, like molasses,
drowning cows in a pasture
of sweet. This placental blood
is an abrupt surprise.*

— “Dixie Moonlight,” *Grimoire*

LIVING WITH A POET

For Johnson and Sherrard, poetry is often superseded by the demands of parenthood and professorship. Writing time feels like stolen time.

“A lot of the work is just trying to block out other responsibilities to get the writing done, and I’m always surprised that it happens,” Johnson says. “I think, ‘Where did that poem come from? How is that possible?’ It feels like a gift when a poem really comes together.”

Sherrard is a fellow at the UW-Madison Institute

for Research in the Humanities and teaches 19th- and 20th-century literature courses, including one this spring on novelist Toni Morrison. Johnson is the director of the MFA program in creative writing and leads poetry seminars. Time is so precious that they rarely discuss or share their poetry while it's in progress, afraid to burden the other.

"We used to do more of that," Sherrard says. "Now it's more like, 'I wrote this poem, look!' And he says, 'Good for you!' ... As important as poetry is, it's also the debris of the lived experience. It's the thing that we're constantly shedding so we can kind of move on to something else."

And as they grapple with their own work, they're training the next generation of great writers and thinkers.

Before her fellowship, Sherrard was the director of graduate studies for the English department, where she oversaw the Bridge Program that allows students who finish their master's degree in Afro-American studies to transfer to the English program and earn an accelerated doctorate. She notes that the program has increased the number of Black students earning PhDs from the UW.

Johnson has seen his creative writing students go on to make major literary contributions. Most notable is Danez Smith '12, a queer Black poet whose collection *Don't Call Us Dead* was a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award.

"As a teacher, it's a real honor to see what's possible in a poem," Johnson says. "I don't care how rough a draft is — I always think there's something there."

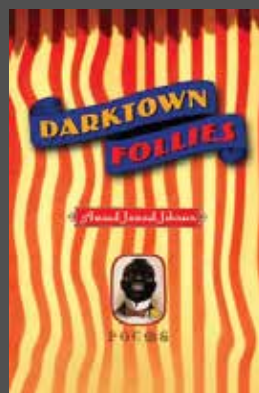
Even as self-proclaimed homebodies, Johnson and Sherrard have found releasing poetry collections during a pandemic to feel particularly isolating. Johnson was set to embark on his book tour the same week the country shut down in March. Beyond the impact on publicity and sales, sharing the work through virtual readings doesn't allow for the usual hallway chats with readers or dinner with contemporaries. "I remember a colleague saying, 'A poet really touches every book that they sell.' There's kind of an intimacy to it in terms of that exchange," Johnson says.

"I've had to adjust my expectations around what I would be doing to shepherd this new book into the world," Sherrard adds, noting that the altered process has involved "a little bit of mourning."

Fortunately, these poets know how to support each other.

"Living with a poet makes this work feel really normal," Johnson says. "We both respect the energy and effort that go into creating art. I imagine some people may think, 'Oh, it seems so interesting or unusual to write poetry.' But poetry is kind of a family business. It's just who we are." ●

Preston Schmitt '14 is a staff writer for On Wisconsin.



Darktown Follies
Amaud Jamaul Johnson
Tupelo Press



Red Summer
Amaud Jamaul Johnson
Tupelo Press



Mistress, Reclining
Cherene Sherrard
Finishing Line Press



Imperial Liquor
Amaud Jamaul Johnson
University of Pittsburgh Press



Vixen
Cherene Sherrard
Autumn House Press



Grimoire
Cherene Sherrard
Autumn House Press

"SMOKEY" AND "HOW OFTEN I'VE
TURNED TO LATASHA HARLINS,
WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN 43 THIS
JULY" FROM *IMPERIAL LIQUOR* BY
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TOPSY-TURVY

2020 *Images from an extraordinary year on campus*

If we hadn't seen it with our own eyes, we would never have believed it. UW-Madison's year included a move to all online classes in the spring, a truncated football season in the fall, and other coronavirus-related disruptions. Add in a Rose Bowl game that now seems like ancient history, and you could safely call 2020 "extraordinary." Maybe even "phantasmagorical."

Did it really happen? The photos on the next few pages prove that the UW's pandemic year wasn't just a hallucination.

See onwisconsin.uwalumni.com for more images of the university's tumultuous year.

**PHOTOS BY JEFF MILLER
AND BRYCE RICHTER**



New Year's Fizzle

Remember when losing a Rose Bowl game seemed like a tragedy? The Badgers began the year in Pasadena, even though they were runners-up for the Big Ten title. With 7:51 left in the game, the UW was leading by six points and had the ball. But Danny Davis III fumbled, and one play later, Oregon scored a touch-down. Wisconsin ended up losing 28-27.



Who's a Good Boy?

The 2020 Super Bowl featured a surprising link to UW-Madison: not on the field but during TV commercials. WeatherTech, a company that makes car and pet accessories, created a Super Bowl ad called "Lucky Dog," featuring Scout, a golden retriever who was the organization's unofficial mascot. Scout had developed a tumor on his heart, and he was treated by the UW School of Veterinary Medicine. In gratitude, WeatherTech used its airtime to promote giving to the veterinary school. Scout passed away in March.

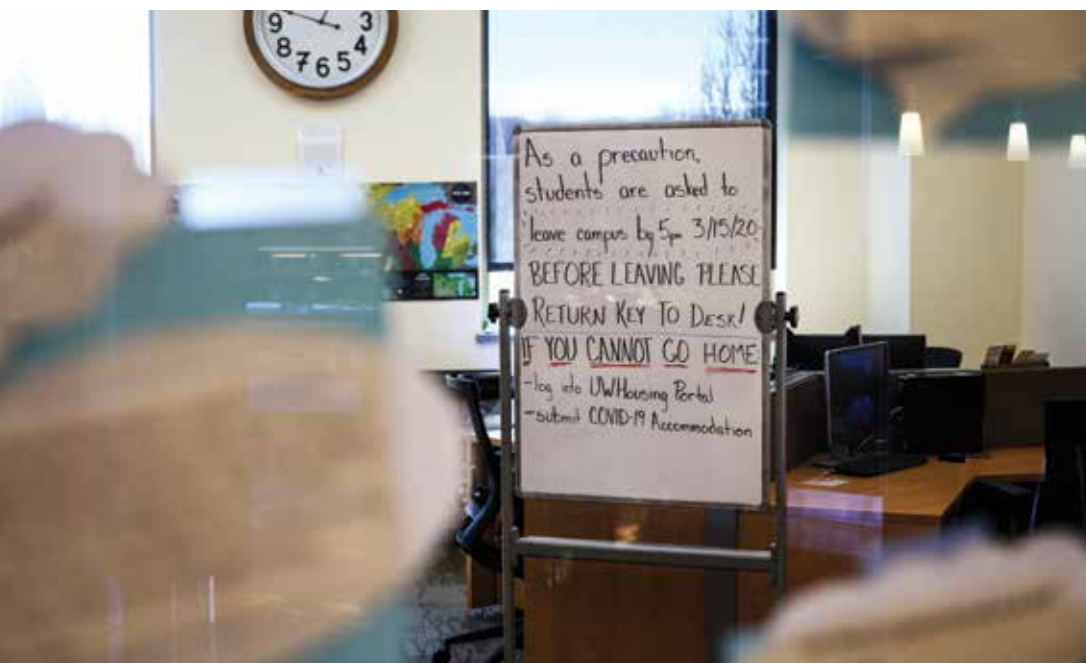




BRIAN HUYNH

All Online

On March 23, the university shifted to alternate delivery of classes. Brian Huynh '22 moved back home to finish his sophomore year from his parents' basement, documenting his suddenly online semester in a series of photos for University Communications.



Bye for Now

Due to growing concerns about the coronavirus, the university encouraged as many students as possible to move off campus at the start of spring break. A message board in DeJope Residence Hall communicated the urgent information. Most important: don't forget to drop off your key.



Situation Room

In response to the coronavirus, UW-Madison sprang into action through the Emergency Operations Center. Representatives from across campus began to monitor risks, responding as necessary to protect students, faculty, and staff.



Victory Is Sweet

Men's basketball star Micah Potter '20, MSx'22 celebrates the team's Big Ten title — a stunning turnaround after a difficult start. But the season ended abruptly when the Big Ten and NCAA canceled their tournaments.

Problem-Solvers

The printing center at the UW's Division of Information Technology transitioned to producing 1,000 medical face shields a day for University Hospital.





Mask and Gown

UW–Madison postponed its in-person commencement ceremonies for spring 2020, but graduates like Yingzi Zhang '19 (left) and QiuHong Li '20 still dressed up for photos.

So Close, So Far

In normal times, the university provides a ladder to boost up graduates for a memorable selfie with Honest Abe. But in the time of pandemic, it had to put up a fence. "Please come see me when it's safe for selfies," a socially distant Abe wrote on a nearby sign.





March for Justice

On June 7, hundreds of demonstrators gathered near the Humanities Building for a Black Lives Matter Solidarity March to “stand up and speak out against racism.”

Window Wonders

When protests left broken windows on State Street, artists helped transform plywood coverings into vibrant murals with hopeful calls for justice and change. UW–Madison students (left to right) Courtney Gorum x'23, Molly Pistono x'22, and Daniel Ledin x'22 painted a tribute to victims of racial injustice.





Tip-Top Terrace

A sanitized table is ready for visitors: Over the summer, the Terrace reopened — with safety precautions in place — after closing in spring. With physically distanced seating, patrons could enjoy the sun-soaked campus spot thanks to online reservations. Food and drink were available, and masks and face coverings were required upon entry, while receiving service, and while exiting.

Everywhere a Sign

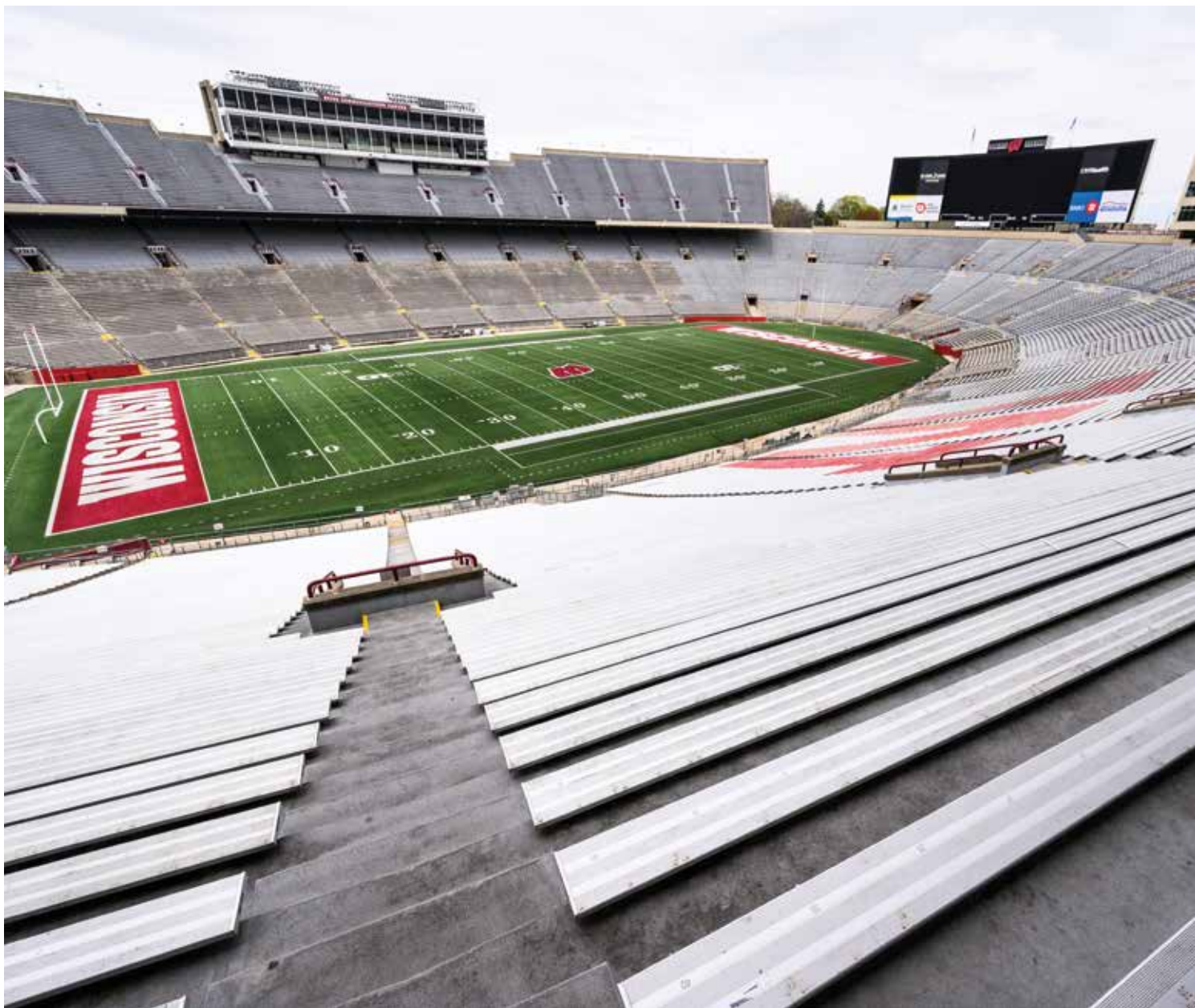
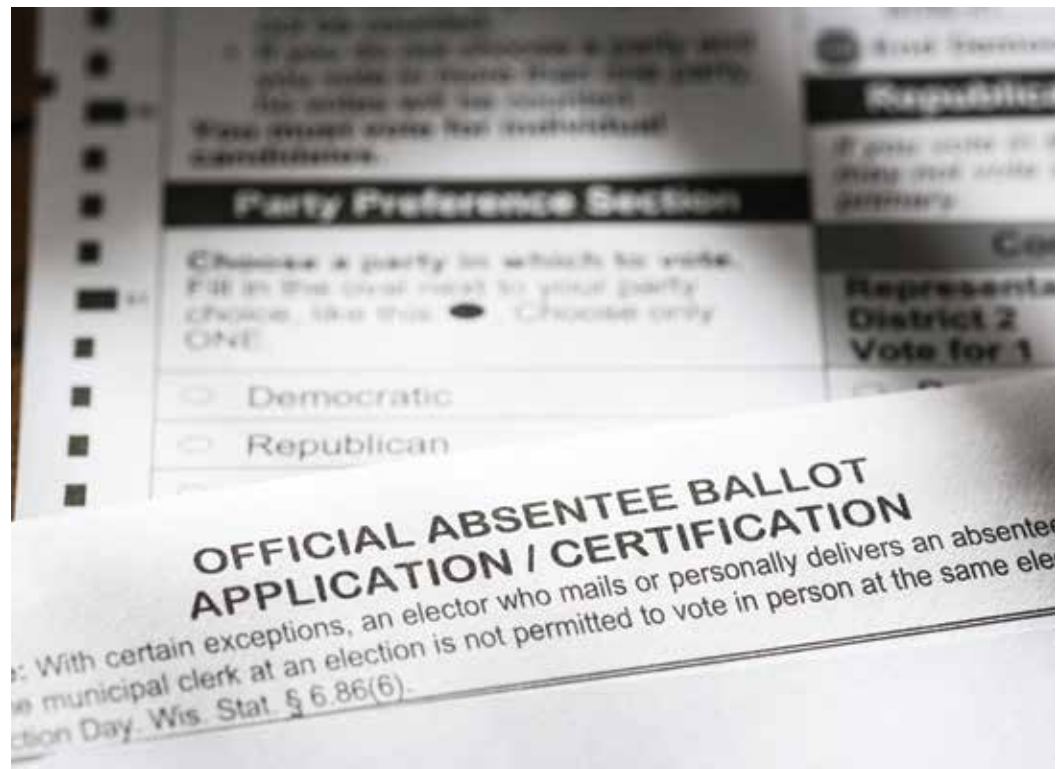
Campus gained a plethora of new signage, including at the Health Sciences Learning Center, where university staff prepared for fall semester with reminders about campus health and safety measures.

Absentee Voting

The U.S. presidential election was one of many events affected by the pandemic. Campus found avenues to offer safe absentee voting in July for the August 11 primary.

No Lines for the Bathrooms

In May, Camp Randall Stadium sat empty in the midst of a closed campus. Normally at that time of year, the football field would have been covered as stadium crews prepared the facility to host spring commencement. Instead, the in-person graduation event was canceled. This fall's football season will also take place without fans.





A Masked Move-in

Wearing face masks and keeping a safe distance from others, undergraduates moved into Ogg Hall at the end of August.



The Nose Test

In early August, staff from University Health Services instructed university community members on how to self-administer a nasal swab at a COVID-19 testing tent on Henry Mall. The location was the first of three free testing sites available to students, faculty, and staff as campus prepared to reopen for fall semester.



Personal Space

Students wore face masks and sat at least six feet apart for a lecture by law professor Kathryn Hendley on the first day of classes. Campus reopened on September 2 with these and other Smart Restart safety protocols in place.



Send Help

A week into fall semester, more than 2,200 students in Sellery and Witte Halls were quarantined for 14 days following an outbreak of COVID-19 in the residences. Students in Sellery wasted no time in playfully showing their feelings with signs reading “SOS,” “Send Help,” and “Free Us.”

Vegging Out

F. H. King: Students for Sustainable Agriculture (named after a legendary professor) is an idealistic UW collective that runs a two-acre organic farm in Eagle Heights. In the fall, the students gave out their produce for free at “Harvest Handouts” programs on East Campus Mall. ●



It's Fight Night!

Mary Edwards '82 can throw a punch but found her calling ringside.

BY JENNY PRICE '96

TWO HOURS before the bell rings for the first mixed martial arts fight on the night's card, Mary Murphy Edwards '82 is cageside, dressed in black with a small roller bag. Her clothing choice is practical: it hides any blood splatters that could come her way sitting that close to the action.

As the deputy commissioner of unarmed combat sports for the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, Edwards is one of a handful of women nationally in charge of every step of the process involved in boxing, kickboxing, and mixed martial arts bouts. She approves or rejects matchups that promoters propose, hires officials, and oversees fighter weigh-ins. Edwards is also a seventh-degree black belt in Shaolin Kempo Karate, which means there's no place else she'd rather be on a Saturday night in downtown Madison.

She doesn't flinch when the sweat and spit start flying.

"Do you *have* to go to the fights?" some of her more squeamish officemates have asked as she prepares to travel most weekends to events around the state. Her response is unequivocal: "That's the *best* part."

Edwards began to "live and breathe" martial arts not long after graduating from UW-Madison with degrees in French and international relations, including a year abroad in France with plans for a career in law or business. She married young and moved to Vermont, where she began studying at Villari's Martial Arts Center, taking three classes a day to earn her black belt in three years.

The daughter of a high school wrestling and football coach in a small southwest Wisconsin town faced pushback from her family. Her father didn't think much of martial arts at the time. Her mother was horrified. "I was literally told, 'Don't do these things. It's not ladylike,'" she says. Within a few years, Edwards and her husband relocated to Montreal to open a new location for the Villari's martial arts franchise.

"They were so shocked to see a woman. I was asked many times if I was a model or an actress just wearing a belt," she says. "And I was running the school."

After six years, Edwards returned to Madison to open another location for the martial arts school on State Street, where she still serves as its highest-ranking instructor. Her children called her "Master Murphy" when they were growing up.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS before the bell rings for the first round, two dozen fighters gather in a banquet room above a Madison bar to register and weigh in. The fighters take turns stripping down to their underwear to step on the scale. Edwards sits at an L-shaped table with the event's promoter. A pile of \$20 bills and license applications for fighters and the people who will be in their corners rises next to her laptop. One fighter grumbles about having to "drop \$120 just to fight." Edwards notes later, "If you want a posse, you have to pay for it."

On the January 25 fight night, inspectors on her team expel people from the locker room if they aren't licensed. The atmosphere creeps toward chaotic as fans crowd into a large ballroom inside the Monona Terrace convention center. The bar opens and the noise builds with an assist from a DJ playlist that includes "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N' Roses at top volume. The vibe belies the calm precision and discipline Edwards and her team employ to enforce the rules from start to finish.

"I love the fighters," she says. "I'd do anything to help keep them safe."

But Edwards has suspended fighters for bad behavior or unsportsmanlike conduct. "Don't come to my state and disrespect my ring," she says of one who flipped the bird behind her back after she warned him. "I won't approve him for fights going forward."

Before the fights begin, Edwards and her team inspect the cage and go through an evacuation plan. She also enlists the only woman inspector present to administer required pregnancy tests for fighters in the sole female bout on the card.

At intermission, she goes back to the locker room to check on a fighter getting stitches from the ring-side doctor and another with a swollen hand.

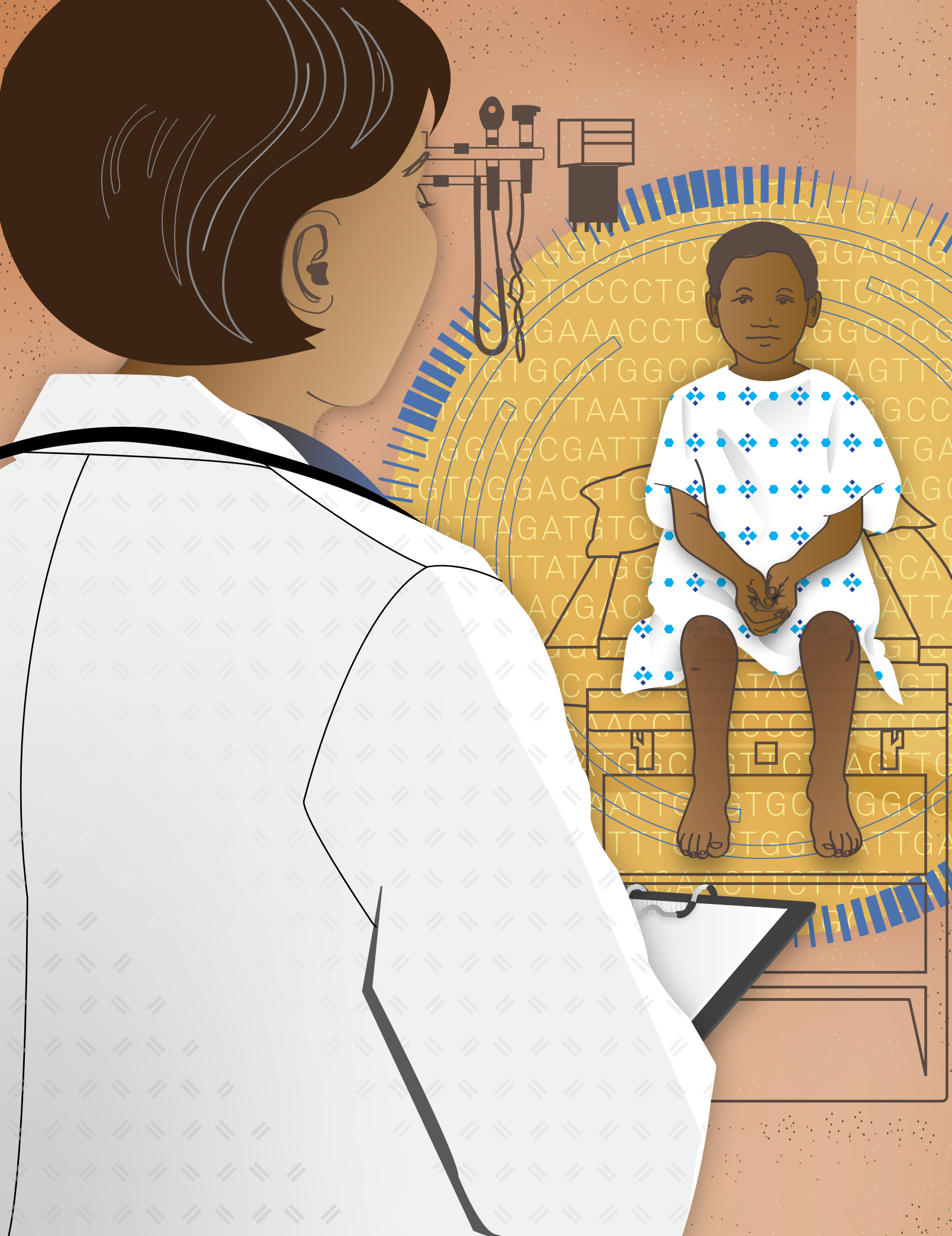
Later in the night, she checks on other fighters as they exit the medical area. "How do you keep the face so pretty?" she asks a female fighter, who points out her nose is crooked from a previous injury and gives Edwards a hug goodbye.

Edwards will enter the results and stats from tonight's fights into a national database when she returns to the office on Monday, a day she is supposed to take off but won't. "Their record is everything," she says.

She leaves the locker room, roller bag in hand. "Most nights you think, 'I get paid for going to a good fight.'" ●

Jenny Price '96 is a former coeditor of On Wisconsin. She can now cross sitting cageside at a mixed martial arts fight off her bucket list.

The deputy commissioner of unarmed combat sports oversees a bout at Monona Terrace. "I love the fighters," Edwards says. "I'd do anything to help keep them safe."



The Quest for a Kinder Cure

Paul Sondel '71, PhD'75 searches for the most effective, least disruptive way to end childhood cancers.

BY CHRIS MALINA

Paul Sondel '71, PhD'75 knows his work involves a balance of means and ends. A pediatric oncologist, he helped drive medical advancements that now cure 80 percent of children with cancer. That's good. But the balance: the treatments children go through come at a cost that's more than financial. Due to the cancer and the intensity of the treatments, many patients face "toxicities during treatment, as well as lifelong medical issues, not only because of the cancer but because of what it took to treat the cancer," he says.

Former pediatric cancer patients have to deal with potential late effects of their treatments. Some experience organ failure in their 20s and 30s; some face the emergence of secondary cancers.

Sondel's goal is to help international efforts to successfully cure all forms of childhood cancer and to do it in a way that gives children the best chance of living a long and healthy life.

"You can't have quality of life without life," he says, "but we need to be concerned about quality of life and, from the very beginning, be picking those treatments that are not only curative but also cause the fewest problems downstream."

Over the past decade, Sondel and a UW Carbone Cancer Center team have focused on delivering treatments while minimizing the cost to young patients.

Not bad for a guy whose first job on campus was washing test tubes.



Paul Sondel (center) discusses research with Dream Team members Alexander Rakhmilevich and Jacquelyn Hank.

DISHWASHER

Sondel, a physician-scientist, has been a prominent part of the pediatric cancer program at the University of Wisconsin for decades. Among other leadership positions, he was the head of the pediatric hematology, oncology, and bone marrow transplant program for 26 years. He's also lent his expertise to numerous national cancer organizations, and he is an internationally recognized expert in the field of cancer immunotherapy.

As an undergraduate, Sondel knew he wanted to become a physician, but he also had a desire to understand what was going on behind the scenes at the clinic. "I wanted to understand what research was like and how you use research to make medical decisions," he says.

Seeking lab experience, he started knocking on doors around campus, hoping he might be able to land a job. Fortunately for Sondel, one of the doors he knocked on belonged to Fritz Bach, the pioneering researcher and physician whose bone marrow transplant work would pave the way for modern immunotherapy. He offered Sondel a job in his lab, a move that would set Sondel on his professional course.

In addition to washing the glassware, Sondel was able to get involved with the lab's research, which was turning its attention to leukemia. Early studies in mice had shown that different cancers had specific tumor antigens — molecules that the immune system could recognize — and so a mouse could be immunized against leukemia. That research led the team to start doing bone marrow transplants to treat

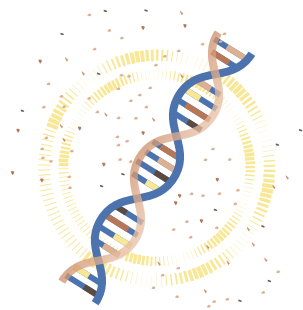
the disease in humans. "It was one of the first things that was [proving] to be successful for those many patients with leukemia who weren't being cured with chemotherapy at the time," Sondel says.

With that experience, Sondel went to medical school at Harvard. But his classes in tumor and transplant immunology hadn't caught up to the research he participated in back in Wisconsin. So he took a leave of absence from Harvard and came back to UW-Madison to pursue a PhD with Fritz Bach.

Although he did eventually go on to finish medical school at Harvard, he returned to the UW and joined the faculty in 1980. "I wanted to be involved in the care of children with cancer," he says. "I wanted to do research that could potentially impact children and adults, and I wanted that research to be in the realm of how we might use the immune system to have an effect against the tumor."

At the time, much of cancer immunology revolved around how to improve bone marrow transplants. With an allogeneic transplant — that is, from one human to another — cells are harvested from a matching donor and given to a recipient. While this procedure can be lifesaving, it comes with risk, including rejection by the recipient's immune system and graft-versus-host disease, in which the donor's immune cells attack the recipient's healthy cells.

While many researchers sought ways to make the graft work better, Sondel turned to a separate strategy: might there be some way to use patients' own immune cells to attack their cancer? In 1990, he began to build research around this concept.



DREAM TEAM

In 1998, Sondel recruited Ken DeSantes to lead the UW's pediatric oncology bone marrow transplant program. DeSantes brought experience with a method of radiation delivery using a substance called metaiodobenzylguanidine, or MIBG, that the team is now combining with immunotherapy.

"I came with a strong clinical interest," DeSantes says. "I wasn't in the laboratory, but I was very interested in clinical immunotherapy. So having Paul in the lab and me very interested in clinical research, it was a nice starting point."

DeSantes and Sondel built a translational research operation, recruiting physicians and scientists. They moved into the American Family Children's Hospital, which enabled the team to add other pediatric physician-scientists: Mario Otto and Inga Hofmann from Germany and Christian Capitini, who had held a fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. The team also includes lab scientists — Jacquelyn Hank '74, MS'76, PhD'78, Amy Erbe-Gurel, and Alexander Rakhmievich — who trained in Madison, Montana, and Moscow.

The UW's childhood cancer team has a strong record with clinical trials, and they are often asked to participate in national and international studies as a partner institution.

In 2012, Sondel and Capitini were at a conference when they heard that St. Baldrick's, a leading childhood cancer foundation, was teaming with Stand Up to Cancer to fund a "Pediatric Cancer Dream Team." The mandate: revolutionize pediatric cancer research.

Sondel and Capitini discussed the idea of a collaboration with immunotherapy colleagues at other institutions. They also talked with colleagues who were studying the genetics of childhood cancer. Collectively they decided to "take these two fields that are really cutting-edge in pediatric cancer research and see if we can use genetics to inform what we're doing in immunotherapy, utilizing a new approach, called immunogenomics," Sondel says.

Genomics — the study of a person's entire genetic makeup — and immunotherapy match well. Researchers can use genomics to analyze the composition of tumor cells and match this with the molecular and cellular functions of the immune system. The goal is to allow immunogenomics to help determine the best targets for immunotherapy, meaning

a higher likelihood of killing the cancer cells, as well as leaving the healthy cells unharmed.

While more than 100 pediatric centers competed for the grant, UW-Madison and six collaborating institutions were selected, and the Dream Team was born. In its first six years, it has treated more than 930 patients in 34 clinical trials, it helped get the first gene therapies approved by the FDA, and it has discovered new immunotherapy targets.

"We're now finishing the seventh year of our eight-year grant," Sondel says.

The Dream Team designation has reaped other benefits. When the National Cancer Institute announced a competition to create a network for clinical immunotherapy trials, the team's member institutions were able to show that they already

had the infrastructure in place to make it happen. They won that competition, too.

"The two grants complement each other," Sondel says, and they add to support from several other grants and foundations, including decades of help from Wisconsin's Midwest Athletes Against Childhood Cancer Fund. "They are enabling the UW to make independent

progress and to work with this Dream Team," Sondel says. "This includes discovery research and its translation into early clinical trials, which we hope will become treatments that provide more cures and allow us to cut back on chemotherapy."

Sondel knows that the immunotherapy research being done here is solid. "We have substantial momentum and scientific depth here at the UW," he says. "What's next is testing new ways to improve immunotherapy by incorporating contributions from additional scientific fields." ●

Chris Malina is a communications specialist for the UW's Carbone Cancer Center. A longer version of this article appeared on the medical website Doximity.

Immunogenomics
is the parallel study of the genetic
structure of tumors and immune
cells, with the goal of making cancer
treatments more targeted and less
harmful to patients.



*Szarkowski
believed that
“the world itself
is an artist of
incomparable
inventiveness.”*

“Last week I finally got home ... where I could think about the future and look at Lake Superior at the same time. No matter how hard I looked, the lake gave no indication of concern at the possibility of my departing from its shores, and finally I decided that if it can get along without me, I can get along without it.”

WITH NEW EYES

As a curator and practitioner, John Szarkowski '48 helped shape our view of photography — and the world.

BY LOUISA KAMPS

THE QUOTE ON THE FACING PAGE IS FROM A letter John Szarkowski '48 wrote in 1961 to Edward Steichen, accepting an invitation to lead the Museum of Modern Art's department of photography. At the time, Szarkowski was already an accomplished photographer himself. He had shown his work in well-reviewed exhibitions and finished two books of his photography. He was beginning a new project, funded with a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation, to photograph the Quetico Superior wilderness area along the Minnesota-Canada border.

The Ashland, Wisconsin, native was living in a house overlooking Lake Superior in Bayfield County. It is understandable that he would need a moment to gaze at the water and gather his thoughts before committing to move to New York City. But even if he felt divided — and a little miffed that his beloved lake did not rise up to protest the prospect of his leaving its shores — he went on to a 29-year tenure at the Museum of Modern Art, becoming a singularly influential curator who, as a *New York Times* critic

once put it, “almost single-handedly elevated photography's status ... to that of a fine art.” He helped people look at photography, and the world, with new eyes.

With an artist's natural curiosity, Szarkowski championed dozens of innovative young photographers, including Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, and William Eggleston. Drawing on his own decades-long study, he also wrote about the work of 19th- and 20th-century photographers in clear, evocative prose that doubled the pleasure of looking at pictures. With Szarkowski as your learned and witty guide, you feel as if you have entered into the spellbinding scenes that great photographers catch with their cameras.

For his first major exhibition at the museum, *The Photographer and the American Landscape* in 1963, Szarkowski selected sweeping, voluptuous portraits of the American West and Midwest. Some were by Ansel Adams, Alfred Stieglitz, and other well-known 20th-century artists, but others were

taken by relatively unknown photographers who set out to document the Great Plains and Rockies in the decades after the Civil War. “This work was the beginning of a continuing, inventive, indigenous tradition, a tradition motivated by the desire to explore and understand the natural site,” Szarkowski wrote in the introduction to the exhibition’s catalog.

In the same essay, he described Henry H. Bennett’s photos of Victorian men and women canoeing in the Wisconsin Dells in the 1880s. He called the subjects “neatly dressed, poised, superior to the site, but with friendly feelings toward it” — people discovering their own “identity with the wild world.” His smooth, nuanced prose gives readers the sense that they are themselves gliding with excitement and wonder through the magical hushed Dells, long before motorboats ever buzzed those waterways.

SZARKOWSKI ACQUIRED HIS FIRST CAMERA

at age 11, and photography became one of his chief hobbies alongside playing the clarinet and trout fishing. On the same day he arrived at the University of Wisconsin in 1943, he visited a local portrait photographer named Frederica Cutcheon, whose work he had admired in the window of her downtown studio on an earlier high school trip to Madison. He introduced himself as a photographer looking for work, and Cutcheon hired him on the spot for 75 cents an hour.

It was a handsome wage for a student in those days, helping Szarkowski pay for his lunch at Rennebohm Drug Store, where he hung out with buddies from the Pro Arte Quartet. Most important, working as Cutcheon’s assistant (with open access to her darkroom) gave him the chance to watch an accomplished commercial photographer who understood lighting and composition and, he said, “knew something about how a picture was put together.”

Szarkowski majored in art history because he thought looking at other people’s well-made photographs would be a good way to learn about making his own. But then, he said, he got “interested in not only the fact that they were well made, but that they were about interesting ideas, and that they were part of interesting traditions.”

John Fabian Kienitz ’32, MS’33, PhD’38, one of Szarkowski’s art history professors, gave him a particularly important piece of instruction: go to the Union and buy a copy of Walker Evans’s *American Photographs*. The book mystified him at first, with its unsentimental images of everyday America during the Great Depression. But as Szarkowski kept looking at it in his boarding-house bedroom, “it kept getting better,” raising new questions and prospects for photography that he was eager to consider.

As a student in Madison, Szarkowski also became enthralled with contemporary art. He helped organize gallery shows at the Union, including small traveling exhibitions of paintings by Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee that came to campus from the Museum

of Modern Art. And in his first job after graduation, working in Minneapolis as the staff photographer at the Walker Art Center, he was profoundly affected by seeing the radical new work of abstract expressionists, such as Karl Knaths and Barnett Newman, arriving from New York galleries.

SZARKOWSKI’S EARLIEST PHOTOS, including *Music Hall, Madison* (1943–44), taken on a melancholy, misty night while he was in college, have undeniable poetry. Yet as he matured, his photographs became more close-cropped and crisply articulated. With *Screen Door, Hudson, Wisconsin* (1950) and *Young Pine in Aspen* (1955), he gave familiar northern Wisconsin scenes their own expressionist charge. In *Old Stock Exchange, Traders* (1954) and *Owatonna Bank, Banking Room* (1954–55), two photographs of ornately decorated buildings designed by Louis Sullivan that went into his first book, *The Idea of Louis Sullivan* (1956), the contrast between the buildings’ sharp architectural details and the soft, rounded people inhabiting the scenes is tender and thought-provoking.

Years of writing and thinking about photography led Szarkowski to compare it to the act of pointing: “It must be true that some of us point to more interesting facts, events, circumstances, and configurations than others,” he wrote in the introduction to *The Work of Atget*, published in conjunction with a series of exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art from 1981 to 1985. “The talented practitioner ... would perform with a special grace, sense of timing, narrative sweep, and wit, thus endowing the act not merely with intelligence, but with that quality of formal rigor that identifies a work of art.”

Szarkowski, a married father of two, retired from the museum in 1991. By then, he was ready to return to living closer to the land. He spent time at the farm he owned in upstate New York, where the weathered barns and gentle hills could easily stand in for Wisconsin. He tended his antique apple trees lovingly, and when he returned to UW-Madison in 2000 to teach a course on the history of photography, he spent spare time helping his friend and fellow photographer Greg Conniff graft new branches onto an apple tree in Conniff’s backyard. He died in 2007.

The tonally soft and spare photographs Szarkowski took in his later years — including a series of graceful desert landscapes and portraits of his apple trees in all kinds of weather — project an air of calm confidence. They also encapsulate a truth that most skillful photographers, he said, learn eventually: “the world itself is an artist of incomparable inventiveness, and that to recognize its best works and moments, to anticipate them, to clarify them and make them permanent requires intelligence both acute and supple.” ●

Szarkowski almost single-handedly elevated photography’s status to that of a fine art.

Louisa Kamps is a freelance writer based in Madison.



John Szarkowski
Screen Door, Hudson,
Wisconsin, 1950

John Szarkowski
Owatonna Bank, Banking Room,
1954–55

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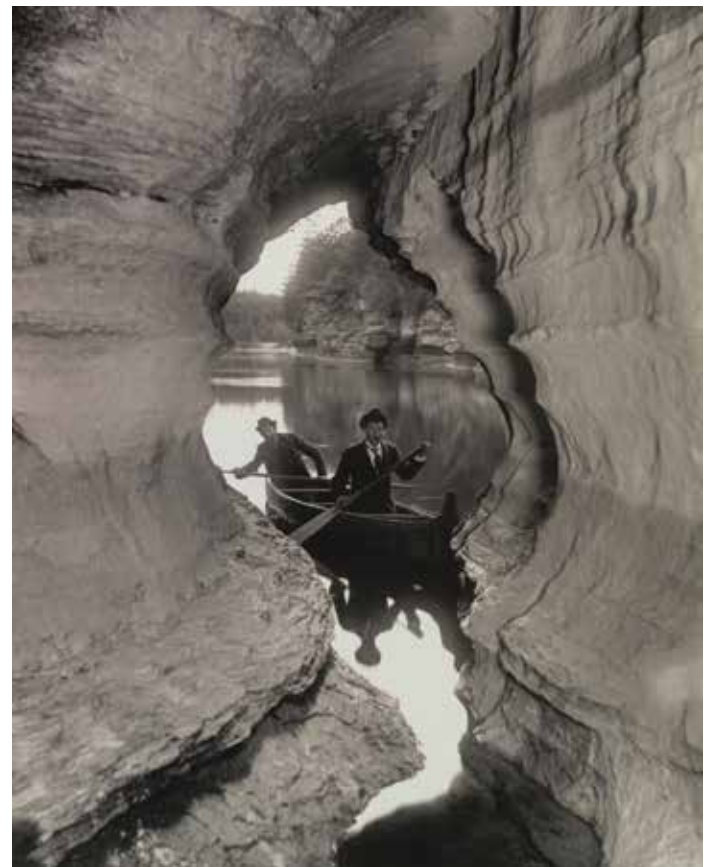


Garry Winogrand
Diane Arbus, Love-In, Central Park,
New York City, 1969

© THE ESTATE OF GARRY WINOGRAND, COURTESY
 FRAENKEL GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO, AND LUHRING
 AUGUSTINE, NY

Henry Hamilton Bennett
Canoeists in a Boat Cave,
Wisconsin Dells, ca. 1890–95

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A group of hikers with large backpacks are walking away on a forest trail. The trail is surrounded by dense green foliage and ferns. The hikers are wearing various colored shirts and shorts, and their backpacks are in shades of blue, green, and red. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path.

Coming Out

in the Out of Doors

BY MEGAN PROVOST '20

PHOTOS BY NICOLE SCHMIEDL, THE NORTH FACE



WITH A UNIQUE ADVENTURE PROGRAM, ELYSE RYLANDER '12 HELPS QUEER KIDS FIND A SAFE HAVEN IN NATURE.

When Elyse Rylander '12 was a kid, being “out” meant sunbaked skin, scratched knees, and wide-open waters. Today, that word means so much more.

“There’s nothing straight about nature,” Rylander says. Trees are crooked and gnarled. Rivers meander. Hills rise and valleys fall. Nature embraces the irregular, the uneven.

It makes a home, Rylander argues, for things that are queer — and people who are, too.

“Oftentimes it’s physically impossible to even walk in a straight line because you’re always having to maneuver around something,” Rylander says. “I think for a group of people that is culturally told, either implicitly or explicitly, that they’re not natural, to be able to go out into the natural world and see queerness all around you is probably one of the most empowering experiences, especially for a young person.”

Rylander has made a career and a life in nature. What started as a space for childhood adventure and freedom to roam became a safe haven to explore and embody her queer identity. Now, Rylander offers this experience to her “kiddos” — LGBTQ+ young people searching for themselves through her organization, Out There Adventures. Rylander is out, and is helping give others that freedom, too, in a space where being out is the most natural thing in the world.

WILD CHILD

Rylander was born to be wild — literally. She was only four weeks old when she took her first canoeing trip down the Wisconsin River (in a homemade, cedar-strip canoe, no less), and she has been living

more out of doors than in ever since.

Growing up on her parents’ 12 acres near Poynette, Wisconsin, Rylander spent her childhood bound only by how far her family’s adventures and her own wanderings could take her.

“We were definitely those kids that go outside after breakfast and don’t come home until dinner,” she says.

Summers off with her mom, a teacher at the local high school, meant camping up north near her grandparents in Mercer, while snowy white winters sent her down the ski slopes of Cascade Mountain in Portage.

“We’re very much of modest means,” Rylander says. “We were not a family that took vacations to Florida or Disneyland or anything, but we spent just a ton of time outside in more of a local sense. I joke that I’ve been to every boat landing north of Wausau, because we would just go frog around for weeks on end in the summertime.”

When she wasn’t blissfully lost in the wilderness or out on open waters, Rylander’s childhood was set against the backdrop of down-home, everybody-knows-everybody Wisconsin in which someone’s mom was on every street corner, and Friday night football was a town affair. It could be cozy, and it could be intimidating.

This social setting grew more constricting as she came to terms with her own identity. From a young age, she recognized that she was queer.

“[As a kid] I remember having a really fat crush on Kimberly, the pink Power Ranger, and it manifested for my parents as that I wanted to be [her]. I was like, no.”

Her mother, Robyn, hasn’t forgotten.

Out There Adventures seeks to empower participants and offer them the feeling of resilience that Rylander (above) found at the UW.

“She had this weird obsession with the pink Power Ranger,” she says. “The white Power Ranger was a boy, and his name when he wasn’t a Power Ranger was Tommy; she went through a stage where we could only call her Tommy. We couldn’t call her Elyse.”

However, a lack of conversation surrounding the topic of being queer kept Rylander in the closet throughout her years at Poynette High School.

“It was just such a non-conversation that I didn’t even really think that [coming out] was an option,” she says.

Not wanting to rock the canoe, Rylander adhered to the image of other teenagers in her school: she wore Abercrombie & Fitch; she shopped at Hollister; she maintained an image that was palatable to her small community.

“I mean, forget being gay,” she says. “There was one out girl that I went to high school with, and it seemed to be absolutely terrible for her. It felt like it would have been social suicide to come out.”

Still, Rylander says that both her family life and her time spent in nature were spaces of support and freedom of expression. “You’re on vacation and you’re in the middle of the woods. Nobody cares how you’re presenting yourself.”

Activities like kayaking, camping, and foraging offered Elyse and her sister, Eliza, a sense of accomplishment and an opportunity for confidence-building that, paired with her parents’ unwavering support, she considered unique.

“It just felt really cool to be a young girl doing those things,” Rylander says. “There was more of a sense of confidence-building around our gender identity, [but] that was never explicitly articulated. That was just an ethos that my parents were able to live out.”

RYLANDERS BLEED RED

Camping and canoeing aren’t the only traits that run in Rylander’s family: they hail from a long line of Badgers. Thanks to Poynette’s proximity to Madison, Rylander spent the early part of her life attending Badger basketball and football games with her dad, biking Picnic Point, and eating Babcock ice cream on sunny Terrace days. Attending the university was a natural next step for her after high school.

However, when it came time to apply, she was terrified.


“I got an early acceptance from [the University of] Minnesota, and I was like, ‘I don’t want to be a Golden Gopher! Please don’t make me go!’ ” she says.

Her nerves didn’t settle until, finally, mail came from Madison.

“I remember getting the big envelope that had the ‘yes’ on the back,” she says, “and I was like, ‘WAAAA!’ I was so ready to leave Poynette and to be [in Madison].”

It wasn’t just long-held family tradition that drew



A photograph of three hikers standing in a forest. The hiker on the left is wearing an orange shirt and blue shorts, with a large red backpack. The hiker in the middle is wearing a green tank top and a pink cap, with a large blue backpack. The hiker on the right is wearing a plaid skirt and a backpack, with a large blue backpack. They are standing on a dirt path surrounded by tall trees with thick trunks. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Rylander (far left) and her wife, Emily (far right), lead an Out There Adventures cohort on a backpacking trip in the North Cascades in Washington State.

Rylander to Madison. The city offered a refreshing anonymity.

“Being able to kind of start over and reinvent myself was something that I absolutely wanted and needed, so it was not at all overwhelming to be one of 40,000,” she says.

Despite relocating to the city, Rylander didn’t stray from nature for long. She took a job as a kayaking instructor at Rutabaga Paddlesports in Monona, where she met Mo Kappes, an instructor and openly gay woman. Kappes would later join the UW campus as the director of Adventure Learning Programs, which Rylander was involved with as a student.

“She was so calm and cool and just felt so self-assured. I was like, ‘This is what I want to be,’” Rylander says. “I had never really had much interaction as a burgeoning adult with queer folks that were like, ‘Yeah, it’s totally fine. Jump in, the water’s great.’”

Although the UW offered a queer community, Rylander says she was never interested in spaces like the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center or groups like Gay-Straight Alliance.

“I think my initial coming out was very much an assimilationist sort of view. I just wanted to fit in,” she says. “I remember walking around campus with Mo one time and having a conversation of, ‘I don’t know why all these queer folks have to be so *fight the power* and intense with it. Just chill out. Try to blend in.’”

With Kappes’s guidance and her own growth, Rylander quickly shed this mind-set.

“I look back and I’m like, ‘Oh my God, I can’t believe I said that,’” Rylander says. “But I had so much internalized homophobia, and I was so afraid of being chastised or physically harmed.”

Kappes also recalls Rylander feeling “not queer enough” for the UW gay community.

“There’s no one way to be gay,” she says, “and you can’t be gay enough or not gay enough. You are who you are. ... If [others] feel like you have to be a certain way to be gay enough, then that’s on them.”

In the small and supportive environment of a first-year interest group, a freshman-only course titled *The Psychology of South Park*, Rylander openly identified for the first time as a queer woman.

“I think there was definitely a part of me that was wanting to feel adventurous or take that sort of leap in that way,” she says. “But more so, I think it was ... sort of a litmus test of how this [was] going to go.”

After coming out to close friends throughout the school year, she decided it was time to tell her parents when she went home for the summer. In a conversation in the kitchen with her mom, she hinted that her “friend” from school was actually her girlfriend.

“My mom had this tray of muffins, and she dropped one hip and she went, ‘Oh, honey, you really think we didn’t already know?’ And then just put the



muffins in the oven and proceeded with her day.”

Robyn remembers the moment just as clearly as she does the fear she felt for her daughter’s safety.

“[I was] so scared that she wouldn’t be able to be who she is and live in her own skin because somebody might harm her,” Robyn says. “I still worry about it.”

When Rylander told her father what apparently was not news to anyone in the family, his response was a question: “Why did we spend all that money on prom dresses?”

“Lesbians can go to prom, too, Dad,” Eliza quipped.

Rylander was now out: out of the closet, out of Poynette, and as often as possible, out in nature.

THIS ONE’S FOR THE KIDDOS

Rylander graduated with a degree in communication arts and gender and women’s studies and a certificate in LGBTQ+ studies. While friends and family alike were skeptical of the value of a women’s studies degree, Rylander has found it to be essential to her professional goals.

“I can’t talk enough about how much my time at Madison created so many different opportunities and opened doors and thoughts,” she says.

It was in a capstone course for her LGBTQ+ studies certificate that Rylander began to formulate her current endeavor: Out There Adventures (OTA).

“A lot of folks were self-selecting out of traditional outdoor-ed programs for fear of being ostracized,” she says. “Knowing what a profound impact that time outside had for me, especially when I was coming to terms with my queer identity, [I wanted] to be able to help other kiddos have that access as well.”

Rylander moved to Seattle to tap into the outdoor community of the Pacific Northwest. She launched her nonprofit in 2014, with a mission to create a space in which LGBTQ+ youth can explore and inhabit their own identities. OTA’s first cohort of two “kiddos” and two instructors set out in June 2015 for paddling in the San Juan Islands.

“I worry sometimes people may feel it’s infantilizing,” Rylander says of her term for the young people she works with, “but for me it’s a term of endearment. ... *Kiddos* does imply an age difference, but one that comes with the responsibility of wanting to care for them as I would my own.”

According to Rylander, the emotional and community-building aspects that render OTA unique among outdoor-adventure organizations grow organically from the youth who take part in its programming.

“Really, it’s about helping them to foster a sense of resiliency and self-confidence to advocate for themselves out there. That’s what everyone with a marginal identity has to do, because we don’t yet live

in a world that is truly inclusive,” she says. “That idea of resilience is really key in helping them to understand that having an underrepresented or a marginalized identity can be your key to success and can be your power — your superpower.”

Outside of adventure-oriented activities, OTA enacts what Rylander calls a *queerriculum*, a model that “permeates every aspect of a course that keeps queerness at the center.” Elements include changing the gendered pronouns and names in stories told about natural processes in order to make these narratives more culturally relevant to LGBTQ+ folks, creating spaces to try out new names and pronouns, and allowing time to navigate male–female binary bathrooms, which are not always welcoming to other gender identities.

“What Elyse offers is this academic or philosophical knowledge base about queer theory [beyond] just [her] lived experience,” Kappes says. “That’s why I think OTA is unique.”

According to Kappes, Rylander is a model for fostering empathetic and inclusive spaces. “That takes intentionality and understanding and knowledge,” Kappes says. “She can bring that.”

For Rylander, that process starts with the same self-reflection she practices with her kiddos. “You have to unpack your own stuff as it relates to everything and [get] a good handle on who you are and your blind spots and your biases, because we all have them,” she says. “If you come to the table with a better sense of self and truly wanting to be an accomplice in the work, then when you do make a mistake, as we all will, people are far more inclined to support you through that process.”

Despite the rich experience that Rylander has cultivated for OTA participants, she says her own fear of coming out would have prevented her from taking part in such a program had it existed during her own formative years.

“I think knowing that the opportunity existed probably would have been a benefit. But I don’t think I would have been able to experience the benefits of actually participating,” she says.

That’s why Rylander presents nature as a space in which nothing is straight, and in which queerness flourishes organically — as it does in the kiddos for whom she offers a way “out.”

And it doesn’t hurt that nature — with all its twists, trials, and triumphs — brings out strength.

“There is something that is so profoundly empowering,” Rylander says, “when you can go, yeah, I’ve dealt with some stuff, and I have always come out on the other side. So perhaps I feel as though I won’t make it up this next thousand-foot gain, but I’ve done other really difficult things, so why can’t I be successful in this moment?” ●

Megan Provost, a former On Wisconsin intern, is now happy to be contributing as a staff member.

“She’s maybe the most fun person that I’ve ever co-instructed with,” Rylander says of wife Emily (far left). “She’s the person you want to have when group morale is low because she can turn it around real quick.”

On Alumni

Alumni News at Home and Abroad

2020 Distinguished ALUMNI AWARDS

Three to accept top honors

For more than eight decades, the Wisconsin Alumni Association has singled out some of the UW's most accomplished graduates for recognition. This year's group of honorees have bettered the world in the areas of human rights, military service, and business.



BRUCE RICHTER

Ada Deer greeted students at a Native November celebration at the UW's Multicultural Student Center in 2018.

Ada Deer '57

Ada Deer grew up on Wisconsin's Menominee Indian Reservation in a log cabin with no running water or electricity. She attended UW-Madison on a tribal scholarship, becoming the first member of the Menominee tribe to earn a UW-Madison degree. It was the first of many firsts. Next up: she became the first American Indian to earn a master's degree from Columbia University's School of Social Work.

Deer worked relentlessly on behalf of the Menominee in their struggle to restore their land and sovereignty. In the 1950s, the federal government initiated a national termination policy that Deer describes as a "cultural, legal, and economic disaster" for affected tribes.

The Menominee tribe was the first to resist the policy and worked to achieve a historic reversal that set a legal precedent, which was later used by other tribes. The work of their grassroots organization, DRUMS (Determination of Rights and Unity of Menominee Shareholders), resulted in the passage of the Menominee Restoration Act in 1973. Deer was then elected as the first woman to chair the tribe in Wisconsin. She said later, "At Menominee, we collectively discovered the kind of determination

that human beings only find in times of impending destruction. Against all odds, we invented a new policy — restoration."

Deer returned to UW-Madison in 1977 as a lecturer in the American Indian Studies Program and the School of Social Work, and in 1992, she became the first American Indian woman to run for Congress in Wisconsin.

The following year, President Bill Clinton appointed her as the first woman to serve as Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior. One of her most important works in this role was applying her powers to federally recognize 226 Native villages in Alaska, as well as helping to set policy for more than 550 federally recognized tribes.

From 2000 to 2007, Deer directed UW-Madison's American Indian Studies Program. In 2010, she was recognized by the National Association of Social Workers as a Social Work Pioneer for her work as an advocate and organizer on behalf of American Indians. Deer credits her mother, also a fierce advocate for American Indians, for her confidence and dedication to social justice for all people. "I speak up. I speak out," she says. "I want to do, and I want to be, and I want to help. And I've been able to do it."

Gary Ebben '82

Gary Ebben was inspired to go into military aviation by his older brother, Dale Ebben '64, who was an Air Force fighter pilot.

Gary retired in 2019 as an assistant adjutant general for air of the Wisconsin Air National Guard. After earning his UW bachelor's degree in electrical and computer engineering, Ebben pursued Air Force pilot training. As a command pilot, he has logged more than 3,000 flying hours, including 64 combat missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Ebben enlisted in the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1981 while attending UW-Madison. He rose through the ranks to become vice commander of the 115th Fighter Wing, a unit based in Madison that serves in Iraq and Afghanistan. After 9/11, Ebben oversaw the unit's rapid conversion to readiness for active-duty service. He then became commander of Wisconsin's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS



COURTESY OF KIMBERLY-CLARK

Center near Camp Douglas. At the time of his retirement, Ebben's role entailed leading nearly 10,000 airmen and soldiers, as well as the entire Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, which also includes Wisconsin Emergency Management.

Reflecting on his career, Ebben has been struck by the fact that “we have so many tremendous young men and women in this country — extraordinary individuals who are willing to serve their country and commit to a purpose bigger than themselves. I have been incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to wear the uniform and serve alongside them.”

Ebben has received 21 awards for his service, including the military's Distinguished Service Medal, the National Guard Association Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.

He has been involved with the UW's ROTC program, providing shadowing and mentoring opportunities. He is active with the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy for high school at-risk youth, and he helped create the Wisconsin Guard's STARBASE program for fifth-grade science, technology, engineering, and math. Ebben is also an active supporter of the Badger Honor Flight, a program that gives veterans the opportunity to see memorials that have been erected in their honor.

One of his former supervisors, the late Major General Al Wilkening, said that Ebben's strengths combine an engineering mind with exceptional human-relations skills. “I've supervised hundreds of officers in my 40-year career,” he said, “and I'd put Gary in the top 1 percent.”

Thomas J. Falk '80

Tom Falk grew up in the Milwaukee area as the oldest of nine children. After earning his UW accounting degree, he began his career with what is now Grant Thornton, and in 1983, he joined Kimberly-Clark, known for brands such as Kleenex, Huggies, Scott, Kotex, Cottonelle, and Depend.

The company sent him to Stanford to earn a mas-

Gary Ebben (left) and Tom Falk are among this year's Distinguished Alumni Award honorees. Due to the pandemic, all three nominees will accept their awards sometime in 2021.

ter's degree in management, and he steadily worked his way up the ladder, serving as chair of the board and CEO for 16 years before retiring at the end of 2019.

During Falk's 36-year career, Kimberly-Clark's total shareholder return outperformed the S&P 500, and he was instrumental in transforming the company into a global leader in consumer products. Over the years, Falk has garnered numerous accolades for his business acumen. *Forbes* magazine has described him as an “operations wiz,” and *Barron's* said he was “a master of efficiency” who ended each day with an empty in-box.

Falk was a key player in the company's acquisition of Scott Paper, and also in the turnaround of European operations, achieving major efficiencies. He was the chief architect of Kimberly-Clark's global organizational structure and Go to Market initiatives, which saved more than \$200 million in two years by reducing costs in the supply chain. Falk also led sustainability initiatives and increased gender diversity during his time at Kimberly-Clark. An avid reader, he made a habit of preparing an annual booklist so that his team could get to know him better.

Falk has served on the board of visitors for the UW's business school and has chaired the board for the UW Foundation. Falk and his wife, **Karen Falk '80**, have been generous with UW-Madison, supporting endowed faculty chairs and scholarships in both the Wisconsin School of Business and the School of Education, from which Karen graduated.

Falk serves on the boards of Lockheed Martin and the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, and as a national governor of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. He chaired the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas's 2013–14 fundraising campaign, and he and Karen chaired the 2019–20 campaign. They also made a generous gift to the organization's Coronavirus Response and Recovery Fund.

Falk says that the motto he has lived by is “Never stop learning. Never stop being curious about the world around us and the people who live in it. They will teach you something new every day.”

Tradition *Lady Liberty on Lake Mendota*



BRIAN HUYNH

Once upon a time, the Lady of the Lake wasn't universally beloved.

In February 1979, legendary pranksters **Leon Varjian '83** and **James Mallon '79** and the Pail & Shovel Party made good on a campaign promise: bringing the Statue of Liberty to Madison. Built to look semi-submerged, Lady Liberty on Lake Mendota was a replica, with papier-mâché, chicken wire, and plywood substituted for shiny copper.

While the prank delighted supporters of student government's parody party, the frivolous cost of construction — some \$4,000 — offended others. Among them was a Milwaukee state senator who introduced legislation to curb student expenditures. (It failed.) A political science class demanded a refund for their share of the cost. "Varjian dutifully wrote out sixty ten-cent checks," the UW's alumni magazine reported.

Ten days later, vandals torched the statue. Varjian and Mallon held a funeral service on the ice, complete with "Taps" and a 21-gun salute. "She Died for Lack of Tol-

erance," her tombstone declared. **Now inflatable, the statue has overcome acts of both man and nature to become a uniquely UW-Madison tradition.**

erance," her tombstone declared. Mallon prophesied that Lady Liberty, like the mythical phoenix, would rise from the ashes. And so she has, overcoming acts of both man and nature to become a uniquely UW-Madison tradition.

In 1980, the Pail & Shovel Party re-created the statue with fiberglass-coated Styrofoam. The statue was moved to storage at a professor's barn in Barneveld, Wisconsin, where the pieces remained for years and fell into disrepair, expedited by a 1984 tornado. Desperate to pay off their debts, Varjian and Mallon sold the statue to a local attorney for \$3,200.

Rising restoration costs forestalled several attempts to liberate the statue over the next decade. The Wisconsin Hoofers finally revived it for the 1996 Winter Carnival, after which Dane County acquired it for display at local events.

Hoofers reacquired the statue from the county for just \$1 and restored it for the 2009 Winter Carnival. It was the Styrofoam version's last stand, as it was van-

dalized beyond repair the following year during assembly.

Forty years after her first appearance on Lake Mendota, the Statue of Liberty rose yet again — this time in inflatable form. On February 1, 2019, thousands of spectators flocked to the lakefront to take pictures of Lady Liberty 3.0. The Wisconsin Union worked in secret for months to pull off the stunt, collaborating with Landmark Creations in Minneapolis.

"What started as a prank back in the '70s [is now] an excellent example of what the Wisconsin Union and Hoofers are all about, which is finding outlets for students to do really extraordinary things, particularly for their fellow students," says **Mills Botham '19**, who helped to bring Lady Liberty back to life as a student and is now head of instruction for the Hooper Sailing Club.

The new Lady of the Lake is cost-effective, weather-resistant, and quick to assemble, and the Winter Carnival plans to display it for years to come. At long last, the tradition is here to stay.

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

40s–60s

Keith Brown '46 graduated from the UW with a degree in mechanical engineering after completing the U.S. Navy's supplementary program to Annapolis. Born in Chicago and raised in Wheaton, Illinois, Brown married the late **Jean Van Ouwerkerk Brown '47** shortly after finishing school. He worked for Shell Oil and Kohler Company before spending 20 years with Exxon-Mobil in its commercial sales department. He was eventually promoted to sales at its headquarters prior to his retirement at age 59. He and Jean moved to Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, where they became actively involved in the community, including Keith's term as the president of the property owners' association.

A Bucky pat on the back goes to each of the following Badger graduates who were inducted into the UW Athletic Hall of Fame this year: the late **Richard Bartman x'57** of boxing; **Jeffrey Braun '79** of men's track and field; **Tom Burke x'98** of football; **John Byce '90, MBA'01** of baseball; **Aaron Gibson x'99** of football; philanthropist **Ted Kellner '69**; **Carla MacLeod '06** of women's hockey; **Jessie Stomski Seim '02** of women's basketball; **Mike Wilkinson '04** of men's basketball; and **Jackie Zoch Major '76** of women's rowing. The induction recognizes their exemplary athletic achievements and contributions to the university.

Earlier this year, **Kathleen Hall Jamieson MA'68, PhD'72** received the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Public Welfare Medal and was elected to the academy. The medal is NAS's most prestigious award, with past recipients including Neil deGrasse Tyson and Bill and Melinda Gates. Jamieson, a leader in the development of science commu-

nication as an academic field, is the Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, and the program director of the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands.

The Kelben Foundation, established by **Mary Tucker Kellner '68** and **Ted Kellner '69**, contributed to the initial \$500,000 for the grant program Rebuild and Revitalize. The program was launched by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC), and its funds were vetted and distributed by the MMAC's Community Support Foundation in tandem with Milwaukee's Department of City Development. The grant aimed to help small and local businesses recover in a time of pandemic and protests. "We need to get those businesses back on their feet and those employees back to work for those businesses," Ted told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* in June.

"My commitment to the arts and to supporting the work of artists was cultivated under the excellent mentorship of a few key people at the UW. I am so grateful!"

Sharon Maidenberg '99

Rose breeder **William Radler '68** of Greenfield, Wisconsin, has earned the 2020 Award of Excellence from the National Garden Clubs, a volunteer gardening organization. Radler, who was nominated by the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, is the creator of the Knock Out® Family of Roses that sell throughout the nation, as well as in Canada, Europe, Australia, and Japan. He previously worked with Milwaukee County Parks and served as director of Boerner Botanical

BOOK NEWS?
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Gardens, and he has authored *Rose Growing Simplified* and coauthored *Rose Gardening*.

In June, **John Knoebel '69**, a pioneer member of the New York Gay Liberation Front, was a presenter of LGBTQ+ history in this year's 24-hour worldwide Global Pride webcast — a 50th anniversary celebration of the first Gay Pride March, in which he participated. Last year, Knoebel was named a grand marshal of the NYC Pride March on the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Also an author, Knoebel had a 33-year career as a vice president of marketing and as president at the *Advocate* and *Out* magazines. More recently, Knoebel cofounded the website OUTspoken-LGBTQ.org, capturing the oral histories of pioneers from the early years of LGBTQ+ activism in the U.S.

70s

Ernst Berndt MS'71, PhD'72, the emeritus Louis E. Seley Professor in Applied Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been selected for the 2020 Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics. It honors his leadership as well as his economic research on the measurement of multifactor productivity and quality-adjusted price change. Berndt is the 48th recipient of the award, which is sponsored by the Business and Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association, the National Association for Business Economics, and the Washington Statistical Society.

After 16 years, **Michael May '75, JD'79** has retired from his position as attorney for the City of Madison. First appointed by Mayor Dave Cieslewicz in 2004, May also served under mayors Paul Soglin and Satya Rhodes-Conway. His tenure makes him the second-longest-serving city attorney in Madison's history.



COURTESY OF BLAKE SORESENSEN

REVOLUTIONIZING THE SNACK BAR

Before he was a star athlete, **Blake Sorensen '11** was the “allergy kid.” When he was growing up, his nut allergy meant that his mom had to prepare special lunches for him and his siblings. In college, it meant that the UW football team’s chef had to modify the usual offerings for him and his 120 teammates.

“It’s just the little things,” Sorensen says. “Anytime you go out to eat, or order a pizza, or you’re on a plane and someone’s eating nuts around you, you always have to be conscious.”

The nut allergy also kept him from eating snack and energy bars, which typically contain allergens. So, while pursuing his MBA at Indiana University, he tackled the problem on his own.

After months of trial and error with a food processor, Sorensen developed a nut-free, seed-packed recipe and raised \$20,000 in one day on the Kickstarter website. In 2018, he officially launched Blake’s Seed Based snack-bar company. Four flavors of bars are now available in more than 1,000 retail stores, including Walmart and Woodman’s, and are purchased in bulk by several college and professional football teams (including the UW).

“I always have a box around the house — the problem is that everyone keeps eating them!” reads one Amazon review. “Those who buy special food for allergies understand how rare it is for a friend/family member to want to eat your special snacks.”

Eleven percent of adults and 8 percent of children have food allergies, according to the Food Allergy Research and Education organization, and the condition can be deadly. When he was three years old, Sorensen’s throat swelled shut after a meal, prompting an emergency room visit.

Knowing the stakes, Sorensen partnered with one of the only facilities in the country that could guarantee no trace of the eight most common food allergens. “They actually pat you down for nuts when you go in,” he says.

Sorensen’s work ethic and goal-oriented mind-set on the football field have translated to the business suite. A versatile linebacker and consumer affairs major, Sorensen led the Badgers in tackles his senior season and earned Academic All-Big Ten honors three times. Even as the pandemic threatens the company’s expansion to new stores, Sorensen believes its mission will soon make it competition for snack-bar giants.

“We’re solving a real need,” Sorensen says. “A lot of times we hear from parents or kids, but we just got an email from a 22-year-old who’d never had a snack bar. And now he can.”

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

He continues to be a member of the board of visitors for UW Law School and a member of the board of directors for the Senior Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Wisconsin.

Through the Valhalla Charitable Foundation, **H. Signe Ostby '75, MBA'77** and her husband, **Scott Cook**, of Woodside, California, donated \$500,000 to support the state’s remote-learning efforts and help bridge the digital divide. The donation was in response to a call to action from Governor Gavin Newsom for community leaders, businesses, and government to help ensure all students in California have access to tools needed for distance learning.

Rod Bertolet PhD'77 has retired as professor emeritus from Purdue University’s Department of Philosophy, where he started after earning his UW degree. In addition to his teaching and published works in philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and epistemology, Bertolet served as department head from 1992 to 2008.

A Badger high-five goes to **Khershed Cooper MS'77, PhD'82**, who was one of seven members of SME — a nonprofit association of professionals, educators, and students who support the manufacturing industry — selected to its 2020 College of Fellows. The recognition is attained only after achieving more than 20 years of significant career contributions in manufacturing. Cooper is a program director for advanced manufacturing in the Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation Division of the Engineering Directorate at the National Science Foundation.

80s

Duke University professor **James Dobbins III MS'83, PhD'85** is the president-elect of the American Association

of Physicists in Medicine and will serve as president in 2021. He was the founding director of Duke University's medical physics graduate program and recently completed a five-year term as associate vice provost of the university, during which he oversaw the academic and programmatic factors of its joint-venture university in Kunshan, China.

The Sewing Machine Project, founded by **Margaret Jankowski '83** and based in Monona, Wisconsin, celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2020. In that time, the project has delivered more than 3,000 sewing machines to people in need across the globe. It also offers free mending and classes to local groups.

The archivist of the United States has honored **Steven Ourada '83, MA'86, MA'88** for his 25 years of service and leadership at the Federal Records Centers Program and the National Archives and Records Administration. He currently serves as the division director of the Federal Records Centers' operations in the eastern half of the U.S.

Congratulations, **Anne Savage '83, PhD'90**, who earned the 2019 Conservationist of the Year Award, one of the John Muir Conservation Awards given by the John Muir Association. It recognized Savage's work creating programs that combine conservation and education to protect the cotton-top tamarin. Savage is the former conservation director for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

Jeffrey Graves MS'85, PhD'87 has taken the reins as president and CEO of 3D Systems in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The additive-manufacturing company creates solutions for the aerospace, automotive, medical, and dental industries. Graves, previously CEO at MTS Systems for eight years, brings 17 years of CEO

experience to his new position. He also serves on the boards of directors at Hexcel and FARO.

Joe Weiland '86 is the managing partner of Arlington Financial Advisers in Santa Barbara, California. He embarked on his financial-adviser career 30 years ago, and he has spent that time advising both individuals and businesses. In addition to balancing his client responsibilities, Weiland develops best practices for managing the firm's client relationships. An avid surfer and hiker, he is past president and a current member of the board of the Santa Barbara Club, is on the board of trustees of the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, and is an active member and past president of the Sunrise Rotary Club.

Stacy Swadish Kosmatka '87 is the executive director of Historic Milwaukee, Inc., which she has headed since 2013. The nonprofit, which promotes the city's history and architecture, earned its fourth consecutive grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to help fund the 10th annual Doors Open, a citywide exploration of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods. Kosmatka has been in the nonprofit industry for 25 years and, prior to that, worked for newspapers in Iowa and Wisconsin. She served as the *Daily Cardinal's* editor-in-chief in 1985.

Since publishing her 2017 *New York Times* bestseller, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*, **Nancy MacLean PhD'89** has given more than 170 keynotes or talks on the book. The work has earned three awards and much acclaim, including positive reviews from the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and *Publishers Weekly*. MacLean is a professor of history at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Paul Olsen '89, the executive director for programs and

partnerships at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, has received nearly \$1 million to lead a three-year effort to accelerate a project for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The project, which includes building an offshore wind farm, aims to help the region find solutions to some of its climate challenges.

90s

Liz Kramer Lefkowsky '91 and her husband, **Eric Lefkowsky** (cofounder of Groupon), together founded VING Project, a national movement to inspire the next generation of givers. For the sixth consecutive year, it gave hundreds of teenagers \$1,000 each to pass along to a coworker, friend, or any kind person in need outside of their families. It required recipients to submit a video, nominating someone 18 or older who was in need of financial assistance. "Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we realized how this program had the potential to help people now more than ever," Liz told CNN in June.

In May, **Adam Ganser '93** became the executive director for New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P), a nonprofit advocate for parks and open space in the city. He previously served as the vice president of planning and design for the High Line public park, which was built over a historic elevated rail line in Manhattan. "There has never been a more critical time for parks and open spaces in New York City and beyond," Ganser said. "Current circumstances magnify our need to push and think creatively to care for existing parks, and to develop more open spaces for all New Yorkers."

Oscar Suarez MS'93, PhD'00, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez, earned the Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society's 2020 Ellen Swallow Richards Diversity Award. The accolade, which was presented during

COVID-19
Due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that some of this alumni news may have changed since it was submitted to us. We apologize if we have not been able to capture the most recent events.

the society's annual meeting in February, recognized Suarez's work in engaging Hispanic students in materials science and engineering.

Brenda Velasco Mizenko '96 has been selected for the 2020–21 South Dakota Math and Science Leadership Cohort, sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Education. Mizenko — who has a background in elementary science and currently teaches fourth grade in Rapid City, South Dakota — will collaborate with fellow teachers across the state to establish more STEM opportunities, examine different research-based practices, and explore opportunities in K–12 STEM education.

Anand Kamannavar MS'98 of Santa Clara, California, has been appointed the global head of Applied Ventures, where he oversees its global venture investment portfolio of more than 80 companies across 15 countries. Applied Ventures collaborates with and invests in startups to help make their ideas a reality. Kamannavar has more than 20 years of experience in new business development, technology, and venture capital. He also serves as a board member or observer for Exo Imaging, Ultivue, Solid Energy, and Ontera.

Professor and interim dean of Georgia State University's (GSU) Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing and Health Professions **Huanbiao Mo PhD'98** has been appointed as the college's permanent dean. During his time in the interim role, Mo formed a partnerships committee and created a research council. He has a joint appointment as professor in GSU's Department of Chemistry, and he previously chaired the university's Department of Nutrition.

Sharon Maidenbergl'99 has relocated to Austin, Texas, to serve as executive director and CEO of the Contempo-

rary Austin art museum. She previously lived in California for 20 years and spent 13 of them working at and leading the Headlands Center for the Arts. She has been involved in the nonprofit arts sector since graduating from the UW. "My commitment to the arts and to supporting the work of artists was cultivated under the excellent mentorship of a few key people at the UW," she writes. "I am so grateful!"

00s

Dwayne Maddox MBA'03 of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, has taken the helm as marketing director at National Guardian Life Insurance Company. He joins the company with nearly 15 years of insurance experience, 11 of them as the advertising director at American Family Insurance and three years at Allstate. Maddox is a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County's board of directors and is the development chair for the Sun Prairie Boys & Girls Club. He also serves as a member of the Community Development Authority for Sun Prairie.

Interactive e-commerce company Pinduoduo, Inc., based in Shanghai, has named **Lei Chen MS'04, PhD'07** its CEO, replacing former CEO **Colin (Zheng) Huang MS'04**, who will remain as the company's chair of the board. Chen is one of the company's founding members and was previously its chief technology officer.

Melanie Holub Isaacs '04 of Phoenix got the idea to create nonprofit Pal Experiences when she was working as a marine biologist at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and saw a young guest with autism struggling to enjoy the museum. Today, Pal Experiences promotes access to public venues for those affected by disabilities. Isaacs's work has received recognition from the mayor's office and has become a pertinent part of disability

access in Arizona.

UW civil engineering graduate **Anthony Heddlesten '07** has been named chief of the civil and environmental engineering section of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Rock Island, Illinois. He'll serve as technical manager of levee rehabilitation for a five-state region. Heddlesten is also on the city council in Riverdale, Iowa.

Contemporary circus artist **Sarah Muehlbauer '08** of Madison was one of five global recipients of a COVID-19 Microgrant for Early Career Circus Artists, for which she created an original performance that honored Mental Health Awareness Month in May. The grant was created by Lynsey Wyatt, owner of Cirquation Aerial Arts & Acrobatics in Virginia, and Muehlbauer's performance was shared as part of a compilation film. Muehlbauer has worked as an aerialist, choreographer, and collaborative producer since 2012, and her latest collaboration was funded by a grant from the Leeway Foundation in Philadelphia. In 2008, she was the winner of the VSA national emerging young artist award for artists with disabilities.

Fellow Badgers **Caryn Murphy PhD'08** and **Randall Davidson '81, MBA'89** are members of the radio, television, and film department at UW–Oshkosh, and they were also both recently honored with the UW System Board of Regents' Teaching Excellence Award. Murphy is a professor of film and television history and criticism, and she also serves as interim director of the university's women's and gender studies program. Davidson, a senior lecturer, specializes in broadcasting and journalism, and he advises the campus's award-winning radio station.

"Much like the inspiration behind Ted Time Co., life doesn't always go according to plan," **Mike (Michelangelo)**

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OBITUARIES
Brief death notices for Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA) members and friends appear in *Badger Insider*, WAA's magazine for its members. You also may submit full-length obituaries (with one photo each) for online posting at uwalumni.com/go/alumninotes.

Giancarlo '09 and **Lee Maier '11** write about the recent launch of their Chicago-based fashion-accessory company. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Badgers — who met while attending the UW — decided to raise money for masks for health care workers in Chicago and Milwaukee. One of the hospitals to receive masks, Children's Wisconsin in Milwaukee, is where Maier's late brother, Aaron, had been treated for cancer. Aaron passed away at the age of 28 after a second battle with cancer. "Our brand is inspired by my brother's approach to life," Maier writes. Ted Time Co.'s name refers to the teddy bear Aaron had been given during his first fight with cancer.

10s

Yale University's Department of Psychology has bestowed its 2020 Jane Olejarczyk Award on **Lucille (Alexandra) Hansen Armentano '12**. The accolade recognizes a psychology graduate student who has contributed most significantly to the quality of student life within the department. Armentano served as chair of Yale's Graduate Student Assembly, which represents more than 2,500 students. Toward the end of her tenure, she led its COVID-19 response and helped secure a one-year funding extension for current graduate students affected by the pandemic, among other accomplishments.

STAT, a Boston-based media company focused on telling stories about health, medicine, and scientific discovery, named **Ryan Denu '12, PhD'18, MD'20** as one of its 2019 STAT Wunderkinds. The honor seeks out science and medicine's "unheralded heroes" who are about to launch their careers. Denu, who has studied how a specific gene mutation can interfere with development and also predispose people to cancer, is now an internal medicine res-

MULTICULTURAL MAVERICK

No one could ever accuse **Lisa Skriloff '77** of being timid. In May 1994, she walked away from a coveted position as director of marketing at the *New York Times* — and instantly took a \$100,000 drop in salary — to launch her business, Multicultural Marketing Resources, Inc. (MMR).

Over the past 26 years, Skriloff has built MMR into an authoritative source of multicultural and diversity experts for marketers, agencies, journalists, research firms, and brands.

Through publications like her flagship newsletter, *Multicultural Marketing News*, and her online

Source Book of Multicultural Experts, Skriloff has made it easier for firms to reach African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+ consumers. MMR also maintains a directory of speakers from different backgrounds and an online career center with job postings that can be accessed for free.

Skriloff's interest in different cultures and her embrace of new experiences started at an early age. As the daughter of an engineer and purchasing director who was regularly transferred around the world, Skriloff lived in New York, California, England, and Germany. When she received an invitation to apply to UW-Madison, her first thought was, "I never lived in the Midwest. This could be interesting."

Away from her family, Skriloff felt free and comfortable in Madison to explore and become more self-reliant. When her wanderlust kicked in after graduation, she landed in Madrid, Spain. For two years, she taught English, wrote for an English-language magazine for expats, and traveled extensively. "I did really like working for myself," Skriloff says.

Even after she returned to the United States and worked at the *Times*, she thought like an entrepreneur, proposing new multicultural sections, before leaving to found MMR.

Skriloff's clients are fiercely loyal. "Her efforts greatly contributed to our brand becoming the first, top-of-mind agency for any client or organization looking for information about or services within the Asian American market," says Saul Gitlin, a former executive at Kang & Lee Advertising.

Skriloff's education degree helped her grow her business when she saw the need for teaching marketers about the benefits of reaching out to underserved communities, but learning was a two-way street. When prospective clients asked about a service or product she did not yet have, she learned to come up with it quickly — a skill and attitude this world traveler understands.

"I've always been a little too optimistic, but it's worked out well because I see things as: this will be good; this will be fun," she says.

ROBERT LEROSE



COURTESY OF LISA SKRILOFF



FOCAL FLAME PHOTOGRAPHY

TIMELY BOOST FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Since former U.S. Senator **Herb Kohl '56** made a \$10 million gift to the La Follette School of Public Affairs in 2019 for the Kohl Initiative, the school has undergone the largest expansion in its 37-year history.

Kohl is perhaps best known for his \$25 million lead gift to fund the Kohl Center, as well as his support for education throughout Wisconsin. But his latest gift is particularly timely. "Senator Kohl's generous and inspirational gift could not have come at a better time," said La Follette School director **Susan Webb Yackee**. "Thoughtful and evidence-based policy-making is more important than ever in Wisconsin and across the country."

To meet students' burgeoning interest in public policy, the school has added 11 faculty members, nearly doubling its roster. They will expand opportunities for students and the broader community to learn about timely issues such as health policy, as well as the benefits of racial diversity for social relations and civic participation. Other areas of expertise among the new faculty include climate policy, state and local finance, international trade, water policy, child health policy, and public management.

The Kohl Initiative also provides wide-ranging resources for the school's new undergraduate certificate in public policy program, which has tripled from an initial cohort of 50 students to more than 150 for fall 2020.

Kohl-funded research at the school has focused on topics such as out-of-pocket health care costs, minimum wages and immigrants' health, social genomics, state agency leadership and policy-making, and the impact of financial aid on post-education economic outcomes.

In addition, the Kohl Initiative allowed the school to convene nearly 350 policymakers, practitioners, community leaders, and researchers for its inaugural La Follette Forum in early 2020. The forum focused on critical health policy topics and innovative solutions for improving the health of Wisconsin residents.

Kohl, a former owner of the Milwaukee Bucks who represented Wisconsin in the Senate for 24 years, has long demonstrated a deep commitment to public service and an ethos of civility in public debate and policy-making. A founding member of the La Follette School's board of visitors, he believes the school is critically important for solving many of the country's most difficult issues. When the gift was announced, Kohl said, "Our democracy is being threatened by bitter partisanship, and the La Follette School is poised to lead by example — fostering cooperation, respectful discourse, and service to others. The school's commitment to be a convener of thoughtful debate and evidence-based research provides a critical path for moving our country forward."

ident at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

Bryce Hensley '13, an attorney for Romanucci & Blandin, was named to the *Crain's Chicago Business* "20 in Their 20s" list. Hensley represents victims of toxic exposures, civil-rights violations, sexual harassment, injuries from vaping, wrongful death, and more. He worked on last year's Boeing 737 MAX crash in Ethiopia. Romanucci & Blandin was cofounded by **Antonio Romanucci '82**.

Although **Isaac Scott '14**, who studies ceramics at Temple University, never considered himself a photographer, his photos were featured in the June 22, 2020, issue of the *New Yorker*. The images captured early days of protests in Philadelphia following the death of George Floyd. In a June interview with *Madison Magazine*, Scott — who was raised in Madison — said, "I decided it was such a historic moment I should go to as many protests as I could and document them."

Ice-cream lovers will be envious of **Maya Warren PhD'15's** position as senior director for international research and development for Cold Stone Creamery. Among her duties, the food scientist creates new ice-cream flavors for Cold Stone locations around the world. "I look at a local ingredient and say, 'I see people in this country eating a lot of *blank*. Why don't we turn that into ice cream? How would people feel about that?'" she told *Mental Floss* during National Ice Cream Month in July. She credited UW food-engineering professor **Richard Hartel** for taking her under his wing while she was earning her doctorate. Warren also won the *Amazing Race* in 2014 and hosts "Ice Cream Sundays with Dr. Maya" on Instagram.

Class Notes/Diversions editor Stephanie Haws '15 was here.



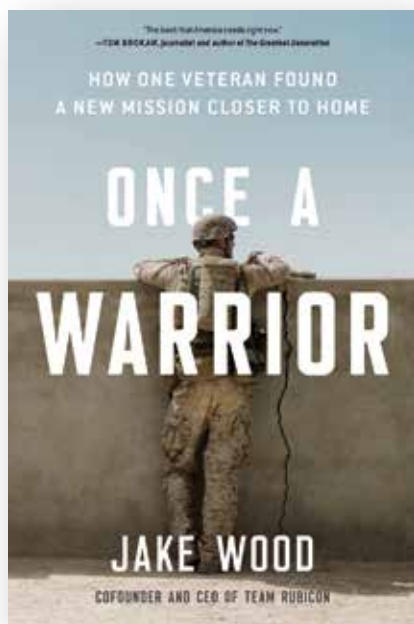
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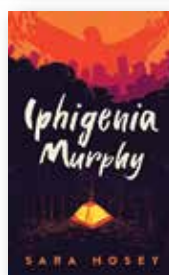
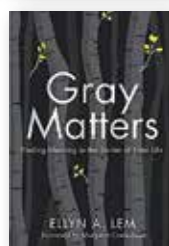
JONATHAN GLANCY

In his new book, *Once a Warrior: How One Veteran Found a New Mission Closer to Home*, former marine sniper **Jake Wood '05** of Redondo Beach, California, revisits his return from Iraq and Afghanistan in 2009 and the subsequent creation of Team

Rubicon, a nonprofit that deploys military veterans to respond to disaster areas around the world (see “A New Mission,” Fall 2015 issue of *On Wisconsin*). In addition to helping communities affected by catastrophe — sending out veterans who use their military training to solve problems quickly and calmly — Team Rubicon offers veterans a renewed sense of purpose. As cofounder and CEO of Team Rubicon, Wood gives readers a look into the roots of the organization, which now — 10 years since its beginning — has more than 100,000 volunteers.

“It’s part memoir in that it’s the story of the last 15 years of my life, but it’s really intended to be bigger than that. It’s a story about service,” Wood said in an interview with *NationSwell* in April.

Wood, who was an offensive lineman for Badger football during his time on campus, earned the 2018 Pat Tillman Award for Service, which he received during the ESPYs (Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly Award) that year. Tillman, a former NFL player who enlisted in the army after 9/11 and died in Afghanistan, has been an inspiration to Wood. In his acceptance speech for the 2018 award, Wood said, “Know your neighbor, love your neighbor, help your neighbor. Doing that is the best tribute that we can pay to the memory of Pat Tillman, and it’s the best thing for our country right now.”



Following his first volume on early gay history in Wisconsin, **R. Richard Wagner MA'67, PhD'71** of Madison has released *Coming Out, Moving Forward: Wisconsin's Recent Gay History*, which details challenges faced by LGBTQ+ Wisconsinites in the post-Stonewall period from 1969 to 2000. The book also features forewords by two of the first openly gay U.S. legislators, both from Wisconsin: U.S. Representative **Steve Gunderson '73** and U.S. Senator **Tammy Baldwin JD'89**.

In *Wisconsin Changed My Life!*, **Oscar Herrera MS'81**, the first Hispanic cabinet member in the state, outlines his journey from childhood and early adulthood in Mexico City to his career in Wisconsin politics and government. This memoir shares the Madison resident's triumphs and setbacks, providing motivation to readers looking to live with passion and ambition.

Ellyn Lem '86, an English professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha, has authored *Gray Matters: Finding Meaning in the Stories of Later Life*. The book examines issues relevant to seniors — such as

where to live and how aging affects both intimate and familial relationships — through primary research with more than 200 individuals over the age of 65.

Turtle Boy, a debut middle-grade novel by **M. Evan Wolkenstein '97** of Novato, California, explores friendship, self-image, and grief, while also emphasizing the importance of taking chances. Seventh-grader Will Levine, who is bullied at school, learns through his bar mitzvah community-service project that life is “too short to live in a shell.” Wolkenstein is a high school teacher and writer whose work has appeared in *Tablet* magazine and the *Washington Post*.

In *Iphigenia Murphy*, author **Sara Hosey MA'98, PhD'07** of Sea Cliff, New York, illustrates the journey of Iffy (Iphigenia) Murphy, who runs away from home and strives to find her long-lost mother. Set in Queens in 1992, the young-adult novel follows Murphy as she meets friends who, like her, seek a place where they feel at home. As she carries out the remarkable journey to find her mother, Murphy must also confront problems that — despite running away — she can't escape.

Submit your book news at uwalumni.com/go/bookshelf and visit goodreads.com/wisalumni to find more works by Badger alumni and faculty.

How to Walk on Water and Other Stories is **Rachel Swearingen '02's** debut collection. Released in October, it won a New American Fiction Prize and was recently named a "must-read title" by the *Chicago Tribune*. The Chicago-based author takes readers from the Windy City to Seattle and Venice with a multitude of characters — an investment banker, an au pair, and a down-on-his-luck son — who willingly open their doors to trouble. "This crafty collection is worth a look," *Publishers Weekly* wrote.

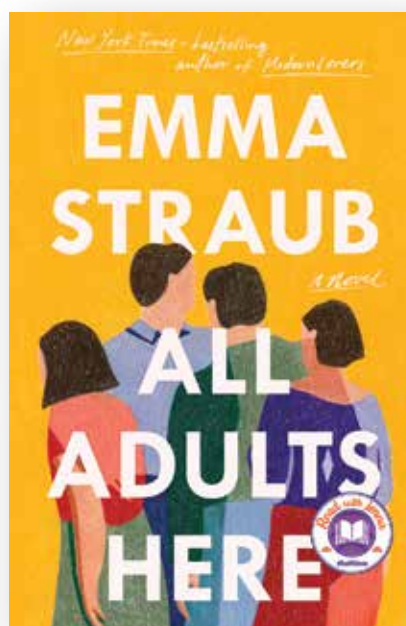
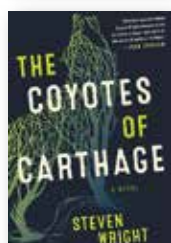
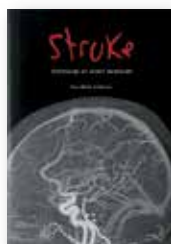
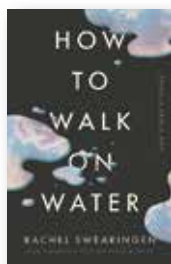
At the age of 27, **Sara Anderson '04** of Westby, Wisconsin, nearly lost her life to a stroke. In *Stroke: Overcoming My Worst Nightmare*, Anderson recounts the day she came home from the gym and ended up going to the hospital, and she shares the journey to recovery that has followed. Wanting urgently to raise awareness of strokes among young people, Anderson typed her 244-page book with her one working hand rather than waiting until typing became easier.

Gatekeeper, a debut poetry collection by **Patrick Johnson '12, MPASx'21**, takes a close look at the web. Johnson, of Madison, pulls inspiration from

the natural world and from science as he captures the complexities of the digital realm. The collection was selected for the 2019 Ballard Spahr Prize for Poetry.

Steven Wright MFA'14, a clinical associate professor at UW Law School, has released his debut novel, *The Coyotes of Carthage*. The political thriller follows Dre Ross as he is sent to South Carolina with dark money to lead a ballot initiative on behalf of a mining company. "The plot of this novel about politics is the lives we're living now," said a *Washington Post* book review in April. Wright, a former trial attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice, is the codirector of the Wisconsin Innocence Project.

Trans rights activist **Alina Boyden MA'15, PhDx'21** of Madison has authored her first novel, *Stealing Thunder*. Although the fantasy's protagonist, Razia Khan, was raised to be the Crown Prince of Nizam, she was born with the soul of a woman. Under a new name, Khan runs away to escape her father's hatred, and she finds a sisterhood and a life purpose — one that eventually brings her face-to-face with her father and a chance to reclaim what she's lost.



INTO ADULthood



MELANIE DUNEA

In May, **Emma Straub MFA'08** — *New York Times* bestselling author of *Modern Lovers* and *The Vacationers* — released *All Adults Here: A Novel*, also a *New York Times* bestseller. The book opens with a pivotal moment for the protagonist, Astrid Strick, as she wit-

nesses a school-bus accident that kills a longtime acquaintance. Strick, a 68-year-old widow and mother, is left feeling shaken, and the incident surfaces a repressed memory from her early parenting days that causes her to confront her mistakes.

The novel was Jenna Bush Hager's May pick for her Read with Jenna book club on the *Today Show*. "[The book is] bright and colorful, and you can escape into it," she said during the broadcast, "but it still — even though it's witty and funny — it still explores really great themes, like family and identity and forgiveness."

The *New York Times* echoed that sentiment in May, saying, "'Literary sunshine' is a good way to think of Straub's work. Her writing and tone are consistently bright and straightforward; her approach to character is warm and generous. ... *All Adults Here* touches on fraught topics like coming out, gender identity, marital infidelity, abortion, and predatory behavior, all while maintaining a feel-good mood that suggests most things will work out in the end."

Straub also owns Books Are Magic, an independent bookstore in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband, Michael Fusco-Straub (see "A Store Grows in Brooklyn," Spring 2018 issue of *On Wisconsin*). She studied creative writing while at the UW.

Destination *Frank Lloyd Wright Homes*



MARK HERTZBERG



JAMES STEAKLEY / CC BY-SA



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Herbert and Katherine Jacobs House

441 Toepfer Street (top photo)

This 1936 building is Wright's answer to a challenge from Herbert Jacobs to design a "decent" home for \$5,000. At just \$500 over budget, the result was the first of Wright's "Usonian" structures: affordable and quintessentially American homes that would later inspire ranch-style houses.

Robert M. Lamp House

22 N. Butler Street (above)

Built in 1904 for Madison city treasurer and Wright's childhood friend "Robie" Lamp, this early example of Wright's work once boasted stellar views of both Lake Mendota and Lake Monona.

Wisconsin's most famed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright x1890, never finished his UW degree — but he had a long history with Madison. He designed a number of homes in the city.

Eugene A. Gilmore House

120 Ely Place (center)

Wright created this home, dubbed "the Airplane House" due to its winged structure, in 1908 for a UW law professor. From atop a hill in University Heights, it overlooks Madison and Lake Mendota.

Walter and Mary Ellen Rudin House

110 Marinette Trail (above)

An outlier in Wright's body of work, this 1959 creation for UW mathematicians Walter and Mary Ellen Rudin features a basement and sits unharmoniously with its natural environment — a taboo in Wrightian architecture — rendering it more difficult to warm in the Wisconsin winters.

Don't Just Go Long. Go Further.

Jonathan Taylor, Pro Running Back

*Jay-T
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