

# OnWisconsin

FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS SPRING 2024

## **The Speech That Launched Your Life**

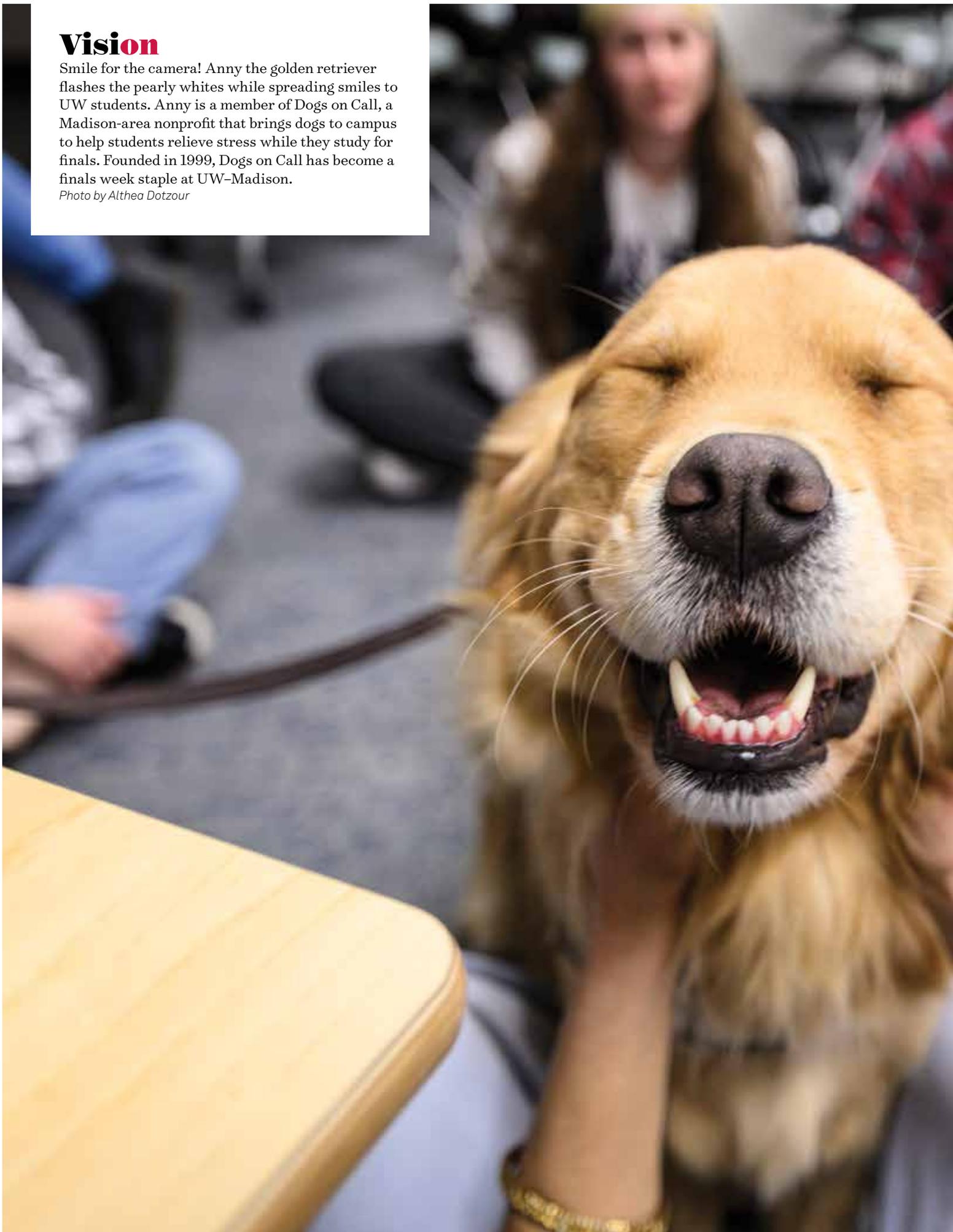
Relive the UW's  
wisest commencement  
addresses.



## Vision

Smile for the camera! Anny the golden retriever flashes the pearly whites while spreading smiles to UW students. Anny is a member of Dogs on Call, a Madison-area nonprofit that brings dogs to campus to help students relieve stress while they study for finals. Founded in 1999, Dogs on Call has become a finals week staple at UW-Madison.

*Photo by Althea Dotzour*





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# OnWisconsin

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BRUCE RICHTER

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WCFTR

Michael Mann (right) directs Al Pacino in *Heat*. See page 30.

#### Cover

Jon Huntsman gives the 2014 spring commencement address. Photo illustration; photo by Bryce Richter

## Hockey Dynamos

Thank you very much for a great article on the history of women's hockey at the UW ["Better Than Winning," Winter 2023 *On Wisconsin*]. It has been a terrific 25 years for the varsity program. I also have many wonderful memories of cofounding the club team and playing with them for many years. Thank you for mentioning our names. Many of us from the early years are still in contact with each other. We also enjoy how the varsity team has performed over the years. Thank you, [Coach] Mark Johnson!

**Karen Schwarz '84**

*Madison*

Great article, but could you explain why Olympian Brianna Decker, arguably one of the three best Badger women's hockey players, did not get mentioned, even in the section about threatening to boycott the IIHF world championships?

**Mike Tompkins '87**

*Dousman, Wisconsin*

**Editor's Note:** *Our defense is that the Badger women's hockey players, both past and present, are so talented that it was challenging to highlight them all.*

## Buzzer-Beating Moments

Thanks for Doug Moe's article "Badgers at the Buzzer" [Winter 2023]. It reminded me of the kind of people Badgers are — strong and resilient! Great memories.

**Ann French**

**Gonsalves '82, MS'83**

*San Diego, California*

Thanks for recognizing my most amazing sports memory — March 16, 1973, at the Boston Garden. Three fellow undergrads and I hopped in a Camaro and drove to Boston for the NCAA hockey championships and were rewarded with the most thrilling come-from-behind victory in history! It felt like a home

game with all the Badger fans in the Garden. I've been to lots of exciting sporting events (including the World Series during an earthquake), but none compare with how I felt when [Dean] Talafous scored the tying goal in the closing seconds and then the winner in overtime. Wow!

And the next day was St. Patrick's Day — in Boston. Winning the championship two days later seemed a foregone conclusion. What a weekend!

**Neil McGinn '73, MS'75**

*Germantown, Wisconsin*

I share Doug Moe's experience of his first UW sporting event, since my dad also took me to the memorable home football opener at Camp Randall Stadium in September 1965. While the game may have been a dull 0-0 contest, the excitement of going to the huge stadium with my dad created a lifetime memory. He and I enjoyed many more games together, and it inspired me to earn a UW degree.

**Tom Sennett '79**

*Alpharetta, Georgia*

Thank you for including the March 10, 2007, Badger women's NCAA hockey game in "Badgers at the Buzzer." It was the first women's hockey game my wife and I attended. We were hooked and purchased season tickets for the next 13 years until we retired to northern Wisconsin. That game was the most exciting one-score game in the team's history. The second-most exciting was their seventh national championship game in 2023, after which we again did our victory dance in our living room. We have seen many gifted players over those years and one incredible coach.

**Jim Bauer '78**

*Goodman, Wisconsin*

## UW Trivia

As a fan of Trivial Pursuit and a UW grad, I was chagrined to be completely unfamiliar with the origin of the plastic game

piece. After reading John Allen's article, I am now more than ready for any metatrivia question about the genesis of this iconic creation. I enjoyed the Trivial Pursuit-style quiz ["Nontrivial Pursuits," Fall 2023]. As with the original board game, I aced some categories (medicine, science) while being totally flummoxed by others (business, arts and literature). Thanks to *On Wisconsin* for illuminating this wealth of UW history and making me, as always, proud to be an alum.

**Michael T. Selch '73**

*Los Angeles*

## Long Live UW Logos

I just read Preston Schmitt's article on UW logos ["Creating the Badger Brand," Winter 2023]. Very nicely done, but I can fill in a few details. Dean Philip Farrell was not the person who started the movement to use the crest *W*. I was.

When I joined the faculty in 1983, I was looking for a logo for my business school letterhead. As a former UW student, I was very familiar with the crest on the Field House, so I used it on my letterhead. A few years later, I got an angry letter from the medical school saying I could not use their logo. I pointed out that, actually, they stole it from me, and I never heard another word.

Also, as a member of the UW Athletic Board when the Kohl Center was built, I attended a meeting to review early drawings of the project. At that point, the Motion *W* was on the drawings of the building's facade. I cut out a crest *W* and taped it over the Motion *W* and told everyone that this was the original symbol of Wisconsin athletics, and we should honor tradition. Surprisingly, the crest *W* is what ended up adorning the Kohl Center, not the recently adopted Motion *W*.

**Jim Johannes '72, MS'75,**

**PhD'78**

*UW professor emeritus of banking and finance  
McFarland, Wisconsin*

## Pieces of the UW's Past

In “Surprising Stories from UW Archives” [Winter 2023], I was tickled to see photos of the old 602 Club and its sign, which now graces the UW Archives information desk.

The “6-0” was a favorite hangout for me and some of my graduate student friends in the early '60s. At that time, it was well known as a place that welcomed gay men (I don't remember seeing any women at the bar), but it welcomed others as well. Gays entered through the front door and sat at the bar. Others entered through the back door and sat at the tables.

The 602 was a warm and friendly place. Dudley [Howe] tended bar and played classical music on a phonograph. A group of people who were writing a publication called *Studies on the Left* made the 602 a regular hangout. Someone once said to Dudley, “Those people are communists!” To which he replied, “Oh, they're all right!”

**Lillian Pubols MA'64, PhD'66**  
Portland, Oregon

“Surprising Stories from UW Archives” quotes an oral history comment from James Huberty regarding low turnout at an antiwar demonstration in the fall after the [1970] Sterling Hall bombing. I don't doubt Mr. Huberty's recollection, but ending the narrative on that note supports a common false memory regarding opposition to the [Vietnam] war. After a period of confusion and reconsideration, demonstrations in fact resumed and continued vigorously.

Note, for example, responses in Madison and around the country to the Cambodian incursion and the “Christmas Bombing,” including a UW campus strike and at least one very large and peaceful antiwar demonstration featuring newly appointed [Madison] Police Chief David Couper. I recall a great deal of reflection and uncertainty among the war

opposition both before and after the bombing, [but it] certainly did not put an end to antiwar feeling or activity.

**Scott Herrick JD'73**  
Rio Rancho, New Mexico

## Yearbook Memories

Many thanks for the *Badger* yearbook story [“Whatever Happened to the *Badger* Yearbook?”] in the Winter 2023 issue. I have fond memories of my staff experience as copy editor of volume 80 (1965). I treasure my four UW yearbooks, as well as the senior yearbook of my mother (Ethelmae Houghton '37).

**Evelyn Stamm Cooper '65**  
Lake Forest, Illinois

Your Winter 2023 issue of *On Wisconsin* was the best (or at least my favorite) issue that I can recall reading. I don't think I skipped a single article! I found all of them to be particularly interesting, including the one about the passing of the yearbook, which I contributed a few sports articles to back in the day.

**Brian Foster '82**  
Saint Louis, Missouri

## Jumping for Joy

[In regard to “Twenty-Five Years of ‘Jump Around,’” Fall 2023 Tradition]: My daughter got married this past August in Madison. She [Rachel Lupini '16], her husband [Matthew Lupini '16], and I are all UW-Madison alumni. Most of the guests were, too.

A few weeks before the wedding, she asked me which song we might use for the father/bride dance at the reception. After some thought, we decided on something a bit different. We filled the DJ in on our idea, and when the time came, he introduced us and said, “Since they are both UW alumni, they have chosen a ‘traditional Wisconsin song’ for their dance, and they welcome you to join in.”

And while I think most of the guests were expecting either a polka or the “Hokey Pokey,” all

We want to hear from you! Please email your letters to [onwisconsin@uwalumni.com](mailto:onwisconsin@uwalumni.com) or mail to WFAA, On Wisconsin, 1848 University Ave., Madison, WI 53726. You can also post comments online at [onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://onwisconsin.uwalumni.com).

pandemonium broke out when the telltale intro of (daaaaaah ... dat ... dat ... daaaaaah) — you guessed it ... “Jump Around” began!

**Doug Olk MD'83**  
Madison

From 1983 through 1988, our student section initiated a similar ritual to “Jump Around.” It wasn't timed to any specific song, but we dubbed our move the “Popcorn,” and it involved people randomly popping up from their seats. It looked a lot like the “Jump Around” as whole sections would participate, but it never gained the notoriety that “Jump Around” has. I hereby stake claim to the original idea on behalf of the students who were at Madison in 1983!

**Brian Harder '88**  
Chicago

## Online



ALTHEA DOTZOUR

## TOMORROW'S YELLOWSTONE

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks are American treasures, but climate change is leading to drier conditions and more fires. A University Communications multimedia project at [news.wisc.edu/tomorrows-yellowstone](http://news.wisc.edu/tomorrows-yellowstone) showcases UW professor Monica Turner's lab, which is working to sustain the world's most beautiful ecosystems. Visit the website to see how a warming planet is changing the places we love.

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## OnWisconsin

Spring 2024

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Madison Magazine: 608-270-3600

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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](http://supportuw.org).

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BRUCE RICHTER

## Navigating Free Speech in Stormy Times

Chancellor Mnookin calls for respect for those with differing opinions.

Campus events of recent years have highlighted tensions between the right of free speech and the desire to make all students — whatever their backgrounds and beliefs — feel welcomed and valued. Universities across the country are dealing with these issues. From racist incidents to scheduled talks by polarizing speakers to, most recently, demonstrations in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there have been calls to silence those whose opinions evoke pain, fear, and anger in others.

In a November statement titled “Choosing Humility, Not Hate,” Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin expanded on the need to balance the university’s legal obligations with the goal of creating a community where all students can have a sense of belonging.

Mnookin amplified a call from the UW-Madison Center for Interfaith Dialogue to “speak freely, but with humility” and to “act strongly, but do not harm.”

“Let me be clear,” she said. “No one should ever be attacked or disparaged based on their religion, identity, or place of origin.” But she reminded the campus community that, as a public university, UW-Madison is required by law to allow freedom of speech, even when that speech causes pain. And as she mentioned during her investiture, the university needs to remain open to the free discussion of ideas and “resolutely committed to that ‘continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.’”

During conversations this past fall with students who were affected by the Middle Eastern crisis, Mnookin said, she heard a consistent theme: “Please recognize our fundamental humanity. ... Even if you disagree with us about the politics of the Middle East, do not treat us as less than human.” She added that “to a quite astonishing degree, [the students] had a genuine sense of empathy for what their classmates who had different religions and different politics were going through now.”

The chancellor ended her statement with a sentiment expressed by one of those students: “Events overseas should not compromise our commitment to compassion and empathy toward one another. Let’s strive to be a university that reshapes the narrative on this topic and promotes a message of hope, unity, and love.”

Promoting hope, unity, and love: when applied to the multiple fraught issues of our times, that is one Wisconsin Idea that could benefit the entire world.

NIKI DENISON



# From Academic Powerhouse to Powering the State

From 1848 to today, UW-Madison has been home to both dreamers and doers. Badgers are driven by public service, pushing beyond our boundaries and solving society's largest problems. We call it the Wisconsin Idea. Because this is **where an idea can change the world.**

# OnCampus

News from UW-Madison



JEFF MILLER

## A Deal to Move Forward

*University leaders work out a compromise with the state legislature.*

In December, the UW System Board of Regents approved an agreement between the Universities of Wisconsin and state legislative leadership that moves forward critical priorities of UW campuses across Wisconsin, including UW-Madison.

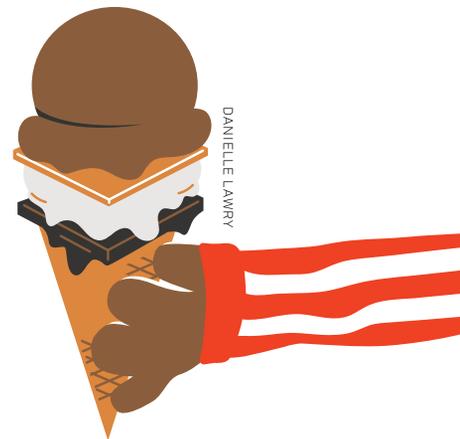
Following months of negotiations, leaders settled on terms that include releasing a previously approved pay raise for employees; \$32 million in state funding that was withheld by legislators in the recent state budget process; and updates and repairs to buildings at UW-Madison and other campuses. Following approval by the legislature and governor, UW-Madison would also receive \$197 million toward a new engineering building, widely supported by business leaders across the state. This was the number one legislative priority of campus and the Universities of Wisconsin.

University leadership agreed to several steps requested by legislators, including a temporary cap on positions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); a realignment, over the next two years, of about 40 DEI positions throughout the system to focus more directly on academic and student success; and a systemwide cap on hiring administrative positions for three years.

The Universities of Wisconsin will also support potential legislation under which UW-Madison would admit the top 5 percent of graduates from Wisconsin high schools, based on their grade-point-average ranking. This represents a renewed commitment to Wisconsin's top scholars and signals that there is a place for them at UW-Madison.

"Compromise is never easy, and this compromise is far from perfect, but I continue to believe this pathway will permit us to hold onto our core values — including our firm commitments to diversity and belonging — while also allowing us to move forward," says UW-Madison chancellor **Jennifer Mnookin**. "At the same time, we can and must remain steadfast in our commitment to serving students of all backgrounds, including those underserved by higher education, and those who hold a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives. We must also continue to seek ways we can further improve this work to best serve our underrepresented communities."

**GREG BUMP**



DANIELLE LAMRY

## ICE CREAM FOR THE AGES

What's a birthday party without ice cream? One way the university celebrated its 175-year milestone this year was to solicit suggestions for a special Babcock Hall flavor to acknowledge its "demisemisepcentennial."

The winner, 175 S'more Years, contains, unsurprisingly, "rich chocolate ice cream with a marshmallow swirl and graham cracker crunch." The limited-run concoction is one of more than 200 unique ice cream flavors that the Babcock Hall Dairy Plant has created since its founding.

Runner-up suggestions from an online poll that drew more than 8,000 votes were Demi Semi Confetti, Demi-Semi-Sweet-Centennial, and Flamingos on the Hill. The winning flavor was first served at the university's 175th anniversary gala celebration in October.

Couldn't make it to the gala? You still have a chance to try the flavor if you can make it back to campus before June. (Roasting over an open campfire is not recommended, however.)

To learn about more 175th anniversary initiatives, see [175.wisc.edu](http://175.wisc.edu).

**NIKI DENISON**



BRUCE RICHTER

## Farewell to the (F. H.) King

The sustainable agriculture student organization has been renamed the People's Farm.

It sounds like a call to rebellion: The King has fallen! Power to the People!

But you can put away the red banner of socialism — it's not a revolution but a rebranding. Since October 2023, the organization formerly known as the F. H. King Students for Sustainable Agriculture has been called the People's Farm.

The student organization began in 1979, based at the Eagle Heights community garden in the northwest corner of campus. It initially took its name from **Franklin Hiram King**, a professor of agricultural physics at the UW from 1888 to 1902. King was something of a prophet of organic farming techniques, and he did groundbreaking — forgive the term — studies of soil physics and soil fertility. He's also remembered as the father of the cylindrical silo, a staple of farm architecture across the Midwest.

In 2023, the student organization's governing board voted unanimously to change its name — not as a knock on King but as a reflection of the group's current goals.

*At the People's Farm last October, students gathered potatoes that they then distributed for free on East Campus Mall.*

"This name change is by no means an attempt at erasure of the contributions F. H. King made both to the field of agriculture and the UW," says **Connor Reilly '25**, farm director for the organization. "Rather, it is purely to make our name more inherently aligned with what we do. Everything the organization has done since 1979 has been for the people, not in the name of F. H. King."

The King legacy will live on within the group, which, according to Reilly, will devote part of its website to telling King's story and plans to add plaques or signs to highlight his many accomplishments.

Long live the people!  
**JOHN ALLEN**



BRUCE RICHTER

## Financial Help for American Indian Students

Beginning this fall, UW–Madison will offer financial support to cover the full cost of pursuing an undergraduate degree for state residents who are enrolled members of federally recognized Wisconsin Indian tribes. The commitment covers not only tuition and fees but also housing, meals, books, and other educational expenses. Additionally, a five-year pilot program will cover in-state tuition and fees for students pursuing a law or medical degree who are Wisconsin residents and enrolled members of federally recognized Wisconsin tribes.

Together, the two new initiatives will be called the Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise program. The program does not rely on taxpayer funding but is supported by other institutional resources, such as private donations.

“As a university, we are deeply committed to a future of mutual respect and cooperation with the American Indian tribes in Wisconsin,” says Chancellor **Jennifer Mnookin**. “This program is another tangible, meaningful step in that direction.”

As university leaders developed the initiatives over the past year, they consulted with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, a consortium that includes the tribal chairperson or president of each of the 11 federally recognized American Indian tribes in Wisconsin. Mnookin met with council members three times to discuss the proposed program, and changes were made based on those conversations. In October, the council unanimously voted to support the Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise program.

“The creation of this program marks a significant step in the partnership between the American Indian tribes in Wisconsin and UW–Madison,” says **Shannon Holsey** (above), president of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians and chairwoman of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. “While several other states have programs with similar goals, we are not aware of another effort that goes this far financially to help Native students afford higher education. This program sends a strong message that our students are important to the state’s flagship university.”

Since 2016, a Native Nations working group at UW–Madison has sought to create educational networks, respectful research relationships, and culturally responsive engagement programs with the Native Nations of Wisconsin. In 2019, the university installed the Our Shared Future heritage marker on Bascom Hill, pledging a shared future of collaboration and innovation with the Ho-Chunk Nation, on whose ancestral land the university sits.

**DOUG ERICKSON**



BRUCE RICHTER

## Badger volleyball’s indomitable

**Sarah Franklin x’24** was named National Player of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association. She and Dana Rettke ’21 are the only UW players to receive this high honor.

**Update your iPhone contact:** The collective name for Wisconsin’s 13 public universities — the group that includes UW–Madison — has changed from the University of Wisconsin System to the Universities of Wisconsin. President Jay Rothman explains that it “rightfully shifts the focus from the system to the universities that are providing opportunities to the students and families we serve.”

## Nearly one in five undergraduates at UW–Madison are the first in their families to attend college.

To better support these students, the university has launched First-Generation Badgers, which will provide resources and community-building opportunities. “We want each student to feel like they can succeed and that they belong here,” says Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin.

## A building expansion for the School of Veterinary Medicine will meet the growing demand for veterinary care,

along with aiding research that benefits both animals and humans. The school is consistently ranked in the top 10 among its peers around the country.



BRUCE RICHTER

## Madison Is Simply the Best

Don't believe it? Look to the polls.

UW-Madison is one of the country's best universities, and it just happens to be in one of the country's best cities. Madison ranks near the top in poll after poll, offering near-scientific proof that it's

an incomparable place to spend a college career. Here's a sampling of Madison's recent rankings in the quality-of-life sweepstakes.

**DEAN ROBBINS**



**#1 Best Places to Live**  
Livability, 2022



**#1 Best College Football Town**  
Sports Illustrated, 2019



**#1 Most Neighborly City**  
Neighbor.com, 2023



**#2 Most Caring Cities**  
WalletHub, 2019



**#1 Best State Capital to Live In**  
SmartAsset, 2021



**#2 Most Walkable Cities**  
Expedia, 2018



**#2 Happiest Cities**  
Men's Health, 2020



**#2 Best Cities for Bikes**  
PeopleForBikes, 2020



**#11 Most Beautiful Cities**  
Forbes, 2022



**#3 Best College Towns**  
Best College Reviews, 2022



**#4 Greenest Cities**  
Zippia, 2020



BRUCE RICHTER

## A Strong Start for Bucky's Pell Pathway

For a class assignment in fifth grade, **Tanner Popp x'27** (above) penned a letter to his future self. He would become a veterinarian, he wrote, and would attend the UW.

"I wanted to get into UW–Madison so badly that it inspired me all through high school in everything I did," says Popp, of Coloma, Wisconsin.

That hard work paid off. Today, Popp is a freshman at his dream school. He was also one of 977 students new to campus last fall — 829 freshmen and 148 transfer students — benefiting from Bucky's Pell Pathway, the university's newest financial aid initiative.

The program is designed to guarantee Wisconsin residents financial support — after other scholarships and grants — to cover not only tuition and fees but also housing, food, books, and most other educational expenses. Eligibility is based on whether a student qualifies for Federal Pell Grants, which play a crucial role in expanding college opportunity for students in low-income households.

"Many Wisconsin residents have the misapprehension that UW–Madison will be financially out of reach," says Chancellor **Jennifer Mnookin**, who announced the initiative last year. "Bucky's Pell Pathway makes sure that if Pell-eligible students do the hard work to get accepted here, we will meet their full financial need."

Popp is among the exceptional students in this first class of Bucky's Pell Pathway recipients. He graduated in the top 10 of his class at Westfield High School — and just like his fifth-grade self, he still wants to be a veterinarian.

Bucky's Pell Pathway expands on Bucky's Tuition Promise, now in its sixth year. That program guarantees scholarships and grants to pay for tuition and segregated fees for Wisconsin residents with household adjusted gross incomes of \$65,000 or less — about half of the state's households.

"Almost one in four Wisconsin residents new to campus this fall will be covered by either Bucky's Tuition Promise or the new Bucky's Pell Pathway," says **Derek Kindle**, vice provost for enrollment management. "Our emphasis on providing access to a top-notch educational experience is helping to retain and support some of the state's most impressive students."

**DOUG ERICKSON**



DANIELLE LAWRY

## ADVICE FOR THE MODERN FARMER

Since the 1880s, young Wisconsin farmers have journeyed to UW–Madison to learn the tricks of the trade at a weekslong agricultural training program known as the Farm and Industry Short Course. This past fall, they headed to River Falls instead.

Although the traditional residential program has officially moved to UW–River Falls, UW–Madison continues to serve as a partner and share its agricultural research and expertise. The newly configured, 16-week short course teaches the fundamentals of dairy farm operations and animal management, with participants earning up to 24 degree credits in their first year.

At the same time, UW–Madison is developing other farmer-education programs with greater flexibility and a wider variety of topics. These short courses include Ag Forward, a five-day program focused on the latest agricultural research findings; the Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program, which includes a traineeship at a golf course or other turf facility; and Spanish for Dairy Industry, online language courses that can help farming professionals communicate better with Spanish-speaking workers.

"Much has changed about farming and the world since the first short-course students came to Madison," says **Glenda Gillaspay**, dean of the UW–Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. "Today, by working together, we can serve more people and better leverage the unique features of each campus."

**PRESTON SCHMITT '14**



BRUCE RICHTER

## Hope for an Endangered Art

Veronica Pham MFAx'24 preserves an ancient form of papermaking, with a twist.

Most of us use paper products without thinking much about them. But for artist **Veronica Pham MFAx'24**, every piece of paper tells a story.

Pham entered the MFA program in the UW's School of Human Ecology with a passion for papermaking. Her father was a refugee from Vietnam, so she gravitated toward traditional Vietnamese techniques. A trip to Vietnam in 2022 allowed her to learn the art from master prac-

tioners: harvesting fiber in the jungle, stripping off the bark, boiling it, beating it, mixing it in a slurry, forming the sheets, pressing them, and letting them dry. This beautiful process produces the paper used in Vietnamese rituals — and sadly, it's vanishing from the earth.

"Since the 1980s," Pham says, "hand papermaking traditions in Vietnam have been in rapid decline as a result of industrialization and wars."

Pham hopes to keep the craft alive, but with a personal twist. Her own papermaking incorporates plants from her home base in the Midwest — including regional mulberry and hemp — that came to North America via Asia, just as her own parents did. Through her art, she is reflecting on her family's journey and her own identity.

*For Pham, every piece of paper tells a story.*

"I'm embedding a kind of information into the paper," Pham says. "It's a way of talking about migration and healing through the tradition of papermaking."

Pham credits UW professor **Mary Hark** with helping to clarify her artistic approach. This March, in an MFA thesis exhibition at the School of Human Ecology's Ruth Davis Design Gallery, she'll celebrate tradition while also showcasing a distinctive sensibility. Expect thin sheets of handmade paper that integrate spun mulberry threads — a.k.a. the "information" embedded in the paper.

Just don't expect any of the works to look alike.

"One sheet of paper," Pham says, "is never the same as the last sheet of paper."

**DEAN ROBBINS**



JEFF MILLER

### Stimulating the Brain to Stop Suicide

According to the World Health Organization, more than 700,000 people die by suicide every year, with a high percentage of deaths among teens and young adults. But a team of UW–Madison researchers is hoping to bring those numbers down. Led by the Center for Healthy Minds and the Wisconsin Institute for Sleep and Consciousness (WISC), the team is exploring whether a combination of targeted brain stimulation and meditation can improve well-being and help prevent suicides.

UW–Madison researchers will investigate how complementary neuroscience and meditation-based interventions could target and repair the areas of the brain that control emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility — the ability to multitask and adapt. After an initial assessment, participants will undergo a four-week test period of hybrid interventions, including meditation training and a highly novel, targeted brain stimulation during sleep. This stimulation (transcranial electrical stimulation with temporal interference) directs targeted frequencies from noninvasive sensors placed on the head. Participants are expected to be unaware of the stimulation.

“This approach of combining meditation during wakefulness with neurostimulation during sleep has never been tried before. But there are strong reasons to expect that they will synergistically interact, and we expect the combined impact will be greater than the sum of its parts,” says **Richard Davidson** (above), director of the Center for Healthy Minds, who led the study with WISC director **Giulio Tononi**.

Following each phase of interventions, participants will be reassessed for well-being and suicidality. Ultimately, the team envisions a future where personalized interventions enable individuals to flourish even amid challenging circumstances.

“This kind of work has never been done before, and the world really needs it,” says Davidson.

**HEATHER HARRIS**

*“You may be leaving UW, but UW will never leave you.”*

— Former National Basketball Association all-star **Michael Finley '14** at the 2023 winter commencement. See page 24 for a look at the UW’s most memorable commencement speeches.



JEFF MILLER

**For the first time, UW–Madison has topped \$1.5 billion in annual research expenditures**, earning a number eight ranking among the nearly 900 public and private universities surveyed by the National Science Foundation. Not proud enough yet? The UW also moved up to 35th in U.S. News & World Report’s best colleges rankings, its highest position in the past 15 years.



BRUCE RICHTER

**Badger football players are used to away games, but not quite this far away.** In 2027, they’ll play Pitt in Dublin’s Aer Lingus College Football Classic. The team’s only other game outside of the United States came in 1993, when it appeared in Tokyo’s Coca-Cola Classic.

**Laila Edwards x'26, a standout for the Badger women’s hockey team,** became the first Black woman to skate for the United States senior team. The achievement earned her shout-outs from the *New York Times* and *Essence* magazine, fulfilling her goal of being a role model.



UW ATHLETICS

## All the World on Stage

Assistant professor of design Aly Amidei creates costumes, characters, and a caring environment for performers.

Onstage costume changes guarantee oohs and aahs from audiences of live theater — think *Cinderella's* bibbidi-bobbidi ballgown or the *Into the Woods* Witch's return to youth. These quick changes aren't as effortless as they're made to appear, but **Aly Amidei** is adept at pulling them off — and on. After all, a quick change kickstarted her career in costume design.

Amidei is an assistant professor of design in the theater and drama department in the UW School of Education. A lifelong seamstress, she made her behind-the-scenes debut in her college costume shop while pursuing a degree in science — a path she swiftly abandoned in favor of a career in visual storytelling.

“Costume design was the perfect combo of the things that I liked about science — the creative problem-solving and the use of materials in new and interesting ways — with the things I liked about English, artmaking, drawing, and sewing,” Amidei says.

Throughout her three decades in the industry — as a designer, theater-company founder, and playwright — it grew clear to Amidei that traditional theatrical pedagogy often excluded individuals based on appearance or ability, barring aspiring artists from certain roles or from pursuing theater altogether.

Amidei has since dedicated her research to reimagining theater pedagogy to incorporate human-centered practices such as fair pay and humane working hours. This approach also extends to her costume design work, in which she prioritizes each performer's

identity and accessibility needs when composing their onstage appearance.

Shakespeare wrote that all the world's a stage. Amidei wants the stage to look more like all the world.

### ***How is costume design different from designing consumer fashion?***

There's a sustainability factor in theater costumes so that you're making stuff that will



*Amidei develops theatrical practices that are more inclusive of both performers and audiences.*

last a long time — 40 to 60 years — so there's a bit of an engineering angle to it. How do we make this so that it lasts forever or that it will work for multiple people in the future? It's also the way that you're telling stories. When you pick out your clothes in the morning, it's just, "What makes me feel good? What will be appropriate for the things I have to do today?" But when you're thinking about costuming a character, you're considering how you're telling this character's story to the audience.

***As a costumer, what unique perspectives do you have that might not be top of mind for an actor or a director?***

There's a lot of psychology around clothing that I think you pick up by paying attention to what people wear and why they're wearing it — the codes and cues that clothing can tell an audience. Sometimes you send them one message, but that's in opposition to what's actually happening. I always use the example of *American Psycho* with Christian Bale: he looks very handsome, he is really well pulled together, but he's going to kill you. We're sending the audience cues that are different than what the actual character motivation is in that moment.

***How do costumes help differentiate a familiar story across many productions?***

One of the theater companies I work with a lot does adaptations of novels, so a lot of people have already read those books and have an imagination around what that character looks like. You are sometimes fighting that, even more so when it's something that's already been adapted to film. I use the example of *Cinderella*: when you do a children's

production of *Cinderella*, if you put her in anything other than a blue dress, children will flip tables and riot. Or, you purposefully subvert the expectations of the audience to tell them, "This is not your grandmother's *Cinderella*. It's going to be something different." I generally try not to fight too much with expectations, but nod to them or play with them to tell the story.

***How did your experiences in theater inspire the current focus of your research?***

During one of my first experiences as a designer in college, one of my peers had a limb difference, so I was, from the get-go, thinking about how I could make this costume work for this actor. I was encountering that in my work, but not encountering it in teaching and what I was being taught.

***How has your approach to costume design become more inclusive?***

When I get a cast list, I usually try to get them for measurements. Now, I've updated that process to include a questionnaire where I ask them about access needs. I will ask things about what kind of clothing they like to wear. Do they typically dress masculine or feminine, or a mix, or no preference? If they wear special garments, I ask them to bring those to the first fitting. I ask if they have modesty needs: do you not want to show your arms? Do you wear a hijab? Do you have things like tattoos, but also do you have medical devices that you wear, like a prosthetic or a [colostomy] bag or an insulin monitor? ... I'm trying to make it so that people normalize the sharing of these types of needs.

*Interview by Megan Provost '20  
Photo by Althea Dotzour*





DANIELLE LAMRY

## Are We Alone in the Universe?

To tackle the biggest questions, it helps to have a big team. And there aren't many questions more massive than the ones related to the origins of life on Earth and whether other worlds — the ones we already know and the ones we have yet to discover — could someday support life.

"This is one of humanity's biggest existential questions: Are we alone in the universe?" says **Richard Townsend**, UW professor of astronomy. "Even if the only other thing in the universe is single-celled organisms or some weird sort of crystalline silicon life, it doesn't matter. It's a complete philosophical game changer."

The team Townsend is currently assembling could be a complete game changer, too. The Wisconsin Center for Origins Research is a new multidisciplinary group that includes researchers from astronomy, chemistry, integrative biology, geoscience, bacteriology, botany, and atmospheric and oceanic sciences.

"The study of life's origin on Earth and potential origin elsewhere in the universe is catching fire now, thanks to new theories, novel experimental approaches, and the excitement of upcoming solar system exploration," says **David Baum**, a professor of botany who studies the evolution of living organisms. "The UW has great strength in this area, but until now we have not been well coordinated."

Astrochemist **Susanna Widicus Weaver** was recruited to Madison in 2020. Shortly thereafter, a more expansive origins-of-life cluster of faculty positions was approved, resulting in three new assistant professors flocking to UW-Madison. **Betül Kaçar**, a professor of bacteriology, is an astrobiologist who studies ancient DNA. **Thomas Beatty**, a professor of astronomy, studies signs of life on exoplanets. **Zoe Todd**, whose appointment is split between chemistry and astronomy, studies early Earth chemistry and the delivery of biomolecules via impacts from comets and meteorites.

The Wisconsin Center for Origins Research will put students on the cutting edge of the biggest questions in origins-of-life research.

"We will offer experiences that give students skill sets they can't develop anywhere else," says Widicus Weaver.

And maybe, just maybe, they'll answer some of the universe's biggest questions.

**AARON R. CONKLIN MA'93**

**3.84**

The average time, in years, that it takes for a UW student to earn a bachelor's degree. This is the shortest average time to degree that UW-Madison has ever recorded, down by about half a week from the year prior. More than three-quarters of

UW undergrads now finish their degrees in four years or less. In May 2023, the university awarded 8,094 bachelor's degrees and 12,407 total degrees.



## THE BARN OF THE FUTURE

As extreme heat gripped much of the world in summer 2023, farmers tried to keep cows from overheating with electricity-gobbling barn fans and misting machines that sucked thousands of gallons of water.

To develop a smarter and less expensive alternative, a team of UW-Madison researchers (above) is using an innovative electrical device called an eTag to monitor the temperature of individual cows in real time and gain a better understanding of their behavior under stress.

"The overarching objective of this project is to detect and mitigate heat stress in dairy cattle, because it is a daunting challenge in terms of economics, animal welfare, and environmental aspects," says **Younghyun Kim**, a UW associate professor of electrical and computer engineering.

Kim and his team implanted temperature sensors about the size of a rice grain at the base of the cows' necks. Connected to small devices clipped to the animals' ears, the sensors delivered real-time temperature data every five minutes. Every time the cows visited the milking parlor, wireless charging coils recharged the devices.

Ultimately, the researchers hope to take the eTags out of the equation and develop a low-cost system that relies only on cameras in barns to identify overheated cows. They could be integrated into a smart barn system that automatically deploys cooling measures for individual cows or zones of a barn, reducing both electricity and water costs.

**JASON DALEY**

## ONLINE SECURITY RISK

When you type a password or credit card number into a website, you expect that your sensitive data will be protected by a system designed to keep it secure.

That's not always the case, according to a group of UW digital security researchers led by **Kassem Fawaz**, a UW–Madison associate professor of electrical and computer engineering. They found that some popular websites are vulnerable to browser extensions that can extract user data like passwords, credit card information, and social security numbers from HTML code.

Browser extensions are add-ons that allow users to customize their internet experience, for example by blocking ads or allowing one-click password storage.

The researchers found that a huge number of websites — about 15 percent of more than 7,000 they looked at — store sensitive information as plain text in their HTML source code. While many security measures keep hackers from accessing these data, the researchers hypothesized that it might be possible to find it using a browser extension. “It’s a dangerous thing,” Fawaz says.

He hopes his research will convince website administrators to rethink the way they handle this sensitive information. His team proposes alerts to let users know when sensitive data are being accessed by browser extensions, as well as tools for developers to protect these data fields.

**JASON DALEY**



BRUCE RICHTER

## An Ancient Subject for Modern Art

Last September, UW–Madison dedicated a striking aluminum sculpture called *Effigy: Bird Form* by the late UW professor and Ho-Chunk Nation artist **Truman Lowe MFA'73**. Lowe created the sculpture in 1997, inspired by ancient Ho-Chunk mounds. Before finding its permanent home near Van Hise Hall, it was showcased at Phoenix's Heard Museum and the White House. “This is my attempt to pay my respects, to celebrate the longevity of our history and our traditions,” Lowe said of the work. “We have endured, and I know we will survive.”



WELLCOME IMAGES

## CRACKING DA VINCI'S CODE

Leonardo da Vinci (above) may have been a genius, but he was also a hot mess, at least in terms of organizing his works. When he died in 1519, the Renaissance master left behind 7,000 pages of undated drawings, scientific observations, and personal journals, more or less jumbled up in a box. Ever since, art historians have tried to make an accurate timeline of the various documents now held in collections across the world.

A new system developed by a UW–Madison engineer could help in that centuries-long effort.

**William Sethares**, a UW professor of electrical and computer engineering, and **Elisa Ou MS'19, PhDx'24** are using a camera system and sophisticated algorithms to match the undated drawings and writings to others with established dates. The two are also working on a project dating the works of Dutch painter Rembrandt, and they believe their system is applicable to any artwork or document on preindustrial paper.

Idiosyncratic markings on paper made before the mid-19th century allow the researchers to group artworks from the same batch of paper and date the works if at least one is firmly dated. Seeing these markings with the naked eye is difficult, however, especially on delicate paper covered with ink, paint, or writing. That's why Sethares helped develop a hardware and software system called the watermark imaging system, which can compare markings with others in a database to see if there is a match.

**JASON DALEY**

## Back to the Top 10

New coach Mike Hastings engineers a stunning turnaround for UW men's hockey.

**Mike Hastings** is a winner.

You could say that about a lot of head coaches, but in the case of the new leader of Wisconsin men's hockey, he's literally posted winning records in all his 25 seasons across college and junior hockey. And that counter will soon turn to 26, as the Badgers complete a stunning turnaround for a program that had just suffered five losing seasons over the last six.

This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for Hastings's new team. But by the midpoint of the season, the Badgers had already won the Holiday Face-Off tournament and reached a top-10 national ranking (including a stint as number one). The UW is poised to return to the NCAA tournament this March, led by a physical, disciplined defense, a puck-controlling, opportunistic offense, and the smothering goalkeeping of **Kyle McClellan '23, MSBx'25**.

How does Hastings do it? He drills consistency, not just on the ice, but also in life. You'll often hear him call it the "dailies" — an almost obsessive focus on all the little things a player can control throughout the course of a day to set himself up for success. It starts by waking up with a positive mindset and ends with a reflection.

"That's really all we ask the guys to do," Hastings says. "We don't ask them to be perfect. But we do ask them to be okay with their self-evaluation and get prepared for the next day."

It's an accountability approach that Hastings refined at Minnesota State University, where he turned the Mavericks into a mighty force over 11 seasons and reached the NCAA

title game in 2022. The .719 win percentage over his tenure made him the nation's active leader and ranked as the third highest in the history of NCAA men's hockey.

Hastings's ties to Minnesota run deep. He was raised in Crookston and played college hockey for Saint Cloud State before embarking on his coaching career there. To leave his home state required an irresistible offer from across the border.

"In my mind, Wisconsin was one of the best, if not the best, head coaching positions in the country," Hastings says. "It's just something that you don't say no to."

When Hastings accepted the UW's offer in March 2023, one of the first people to send a congratulatory text was, remarkably, the man he replaced: **Tony Granato '17**. "I think that speaks about Badger family," Hastings said in his introductory press conference. "It's humbling. I think it's a special place."

Hastings credits this season's success to the immediate buy-in from returning players, such as stars **Cruz Lucius x'26, Mathieu de Saint Phalle x'24, and Mike Vorlicky x'24**. They're joined by eight freshmen and four transfers, three of whom followed Hastings from Minnesota State, including top contributors **Simon Tassy x'25** and **David Silye MSBx'25**. The roster displays all the hallmarks of a Hastings-coached team on the ice: tough, unrelenting, and never beating itself.

The program also got a boost when **Todd Knott**, Hastings's longtime assistant, turned down a head coaching offer from Min-

nesota State last spring to join the UW as associate head coach. Knott earned the 2023 Terry Flanagan Award for his career body of work and is regarded as one of the best recruiters in college hockey.

"There's just a passion that he brings in relationship building. He's a head coach in an associate head coach position," Hastings says. "When I've gone to coach USA Hockey, he's stepped in, and we've never missed a beat."

As easy as he's made winning look, it took Hastings years to actually enjoy it. In 1994, at age 28, he became the head coach of the United States Hockey League's Omaha Lancers — admittedly before he was ready. He recalls a player approaching him toward the end of that first season and asking whether he ever smiles.

"I was coaching out of fear and insecurity when I started, and those young men probably paid the price for it," Hastings says. "What I learned from it was that if you can build relationships with players and show them that you care as much about them as people as you ever do as players, you can get somewhere together with them."

Amid a 26th straight season of winning hockey, Hastings has brought the Badgers a perfect balance of high standards and close support.

"When you surround yourself with good people and talented players who are willing to buy into working together," he says, "you can accomplish some very special things."

*Hastings's teams are tough and unrelenting, never beating themselves on the ice.*

By Preston Schmitt '14  
Photo by Bryce Richter





BRYCE RICHTER

# SPEAKING WORDS OF WISDOM

*These stars gave the UW's most memorable commencement addresses.*

BY PRESTON SCHMITT '14

It might seem counterintuitive that the event that caps one's college experience is called commencement. But the ceremony is not only a celebratory end-note; it also marks the beginning of a new chapter in a graduate's life. This chapter is called "The Real World." And what a scary place that can be! (At least, ahem, for a journalism major.)

Enter a commencement speaker, a person who has successfully navigated the real world and whose duty it is to deliver a charge to fresh graduates so they may also succeed. Since the late 1980s, a steady stream of prominent alumni and national figures have stridden to the podium, with a noticeable uptick in star power over the past decade. What other stage has been graced by both celebrity journalist Katie Couric and football giant J. J. Watt x'12?

Here's your chance to relive some of the most memorable commencement speeches in UW history — this time, no cap and gown required.

## STOP THIS INSANITY MAY 1979

It's not every day that the vice president of the United States comes to tell you about the risk of nuclear annihilation. But such was the state of the Cold War when **Walter Mondale** was invited to speak at the UW's commencement ceremony in 1979.

As a policy wonk, Mondale seized the opportunity to pitch the Camp Randall crowd on the

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II Treaty between the U.S. and the Soviets. He compared the threat of nuclear warfare to living in a "volcano's shadow."

"No other danger jeopardizes so completely the legacy of our civilization. No other peril threatens to trivialize so utterly the hopes and dreams that this commencement symbolizes," he said.

Mondale unpacked arguments for and against a truce with an untrustworthy foe.

"The stark reality is that neither of us can win an all-out arms race. ... Sheer sanity, common sense, and a decent respect for mankind call upon our generation to do something to stop this insanity before we are destroyed," he said.

While the college graduates found his arguments compelling, as evidenced by several standing ovations, the U.S. Senate did not. President Jimmy Carter signed the treaty the following month, but it was never ratified by Congress.

## FIGHT ALL THE WAY MAY 1997

As a national correspondent for CBS News, **Rita Braver '70** could have shared plenty of fascinating anecdotes with the UW's Class of 1997. After all, she had covered Bill Clinton's presidency, the Iran-Contra affair, and a Cold War spy ring. But instead, Braver shared the emotional story of a college friend and fellow UW alumna, Elizabeth Glaser '69.

*Russell Wilson drew lessons from his turbulent college football career.*



U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE



JOHN PAUL FLOO/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES

*Vice President Walter Mondale preached against nuclear weapons; CBS's Rita Braver shared the emotional story of a UW friend.*

“[She] lit up every room she walked into,” Braver said.

When the two reconnected years after graduation in Washington, DC, Glaser shared that she had received a blood transfusion after giving birth to her daughter in 1981. She learned four years later — when her daughter developed mysterious symptoms — that the blood was tainted with HIV. She had unknowingly passed the virus to her daughter through breastmilk and, later, to her son in utero.

“Now her daughter was dying,” Braver said, “and my friend had come to Washington to try to convince the doctors at the National Institutes of Health to allow her daughter and other children to have access to AZT and other experimental drugs.”

Glaser became a leading AIDS activist, pushing for more research funding and better access to novel treatments. It was too late for her daughter, who died in 1988, but not for her son.

“Frankly, a lot of people when hit with the kind of tragedy that fell upon Elizabeth would have withdrawn, given up, become bitter, angry, or completely immobilized,” Braver said. “Elizabeth fought all the way.”

Glaser died in 1994 at age 47. But her legacy carries on with the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

“So there you have it,” Braver told the UW Field House crowd, “the story of a University of Wisconsin graduate who faced adversity, and, in the process, became a hero. And that brings me to my last bit of advice: look for heroes.”

## HOW TO THINK, HOW TO SPEAK MAY 2016

Every commencement speaker has nice things to say about the host university. It’s part of the gig. But when it comes to the UW, there might be no bigger — or more boisterous — booster than former Wisconsin governor **Tommy Thompson ’63, JD’66**.

Thompson arrived at the podium without any notes and delivered a stirring, from-the-heart endorsement of the university’s value to the state.

“You’re at the greatest university in the United States. ... A university that taught me how to think, how to speak, how to be a citizen,” he said at the ceremony for doctoral graduates.

Never one for modesty, Thompson ticked off the many campus buildings he helped to fund from the capitol. (“You name it, and we built it.”) The lifelong Republican also supported faculty retention initiatives, through which he convinced biochemistry professor Michael Sussman to turn down a job offer elsewhere.

“He was a Democrat, never voted for me. But he came in and said, ‘I’m leaving to go to New York.’ And I said, ‘The heck you are! You’re staying in Wisconsin!’ We raised the money, and we kept those professors here.”



Then-chancellor Rebecca Blank, visibly delighted throughout Thompson's speech, followed with the perfect summation: "Now you know why he was governor."

### TURNING NO INTO YES MAY 2016

Perhaps the UW's most controversial commencement speech — at least if you polled the state of North Carolina — belongs to former Badger quarterback **Russell Wilson MSx'13**. By the time Wilson returned to Camp Randall Stadium, he had reached the heights of his NFL career as a Super Bowl champion. But his speech focused on the adversity he had overcome, including the turbulent end to his playing career at North Carolina State before transferring to Wisconsin for his senior season in 2011.

In Wilson's telling, he had planned to return to NC State for his last year, but Coach Tom O'Brien spurned him, saying, "You're never going to play in the National Football League. You're too small. There's no chance. You've got no shot. Give it up."

Wilson's lesson: "If you know what you're capable of, if you're always prepared, and you keep things in perspective, then life has a way of turning no into yes."

North Carolina media aggressively questioned his account in the days following the speech, noting that Wilson's side pursuit of professional baseball contributed to losing his starting quarterback spot. The *Charlotte Observer* published a story titled "Russell Wilson Rips Open Old NC State Wounds," while a fan blog accused him of "carelessly vomit[ing] his revisionism to fit his mundane narrative."

*Former governor Tommy Thompson delivered a stirring tribute to the UW; astronaut Jim Lovell refused to accept limitations.*

(But who's bitter?)

Perhaps Wilson had learned from other commencement speakers that you never let a little exaggeration get in the way of a good story. Regardless, it seems that time heals all wounds. In spring 2021, Wilson returned to the stage to give a commencement speech — at NC State.

### LOOKING BEYOND Z DECEMBER 2016

When someone like **Jim Lovell x'50** tells you to dream, you should probably listen. The legendary astronaut and his Apollo 8 crewmates became the first people to orbit the moon in 1968. Two years later, the Apollo 13 commander immortalized the words "Houston, we've had a problem" while guiding a critically damaged spaceship some 200,000 miles back to Earth.

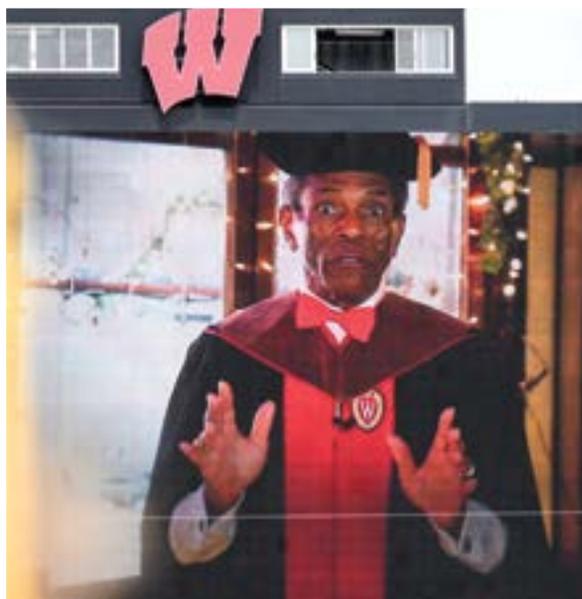
Speaking to UW graduates in December 2016, Lovell — who had enrolled at the university 70 years prior on a Navy ROTC scholarship — made an impassioned plea for a quality he saw lacking in contemporary America: foresight.

"Every major advancement of civilization has met with extreme resistance," Lovell said, citing scientist Lee de Forest's declaration that humans would never reach the moon just a decade before Apollo 8.

"Fortunately," Lovell continued, "there were those in days gone by who refused to live in the 'A to Z' world."

Lovell invoked Dr. Seuss's *On Beyond Zebra!* throughout his speech. In the book, the young narrator feels constrained by the traditional letters of the alphabet and invents new letters beyond Z. Lovell's

*What was commencement like 70 years ago? See this story on our website, [onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://onwisconsin.uwalumni.com), to watch rarely seen video. You can also explore a complete list of UW-Madison commencement speakers.*



UW ATHLETICS: JEFF MILLER

addendum for college graduates: keep looking beyond Z.

“You will be amazed at what you can do,” he told the captivated Kohl Center crowd. “My mother could hardly believe that I circled the moon in 1968, but today, my 50-year-old son doesn’t think it’s any big deal because, after all, we had done it as long as he can remember. Your generation will stand on a higher hill because of the mountains that we have climbed, and the whole world benefits from your ready acceptance of it.”

### A BETTER VERSION OF YOURSELF DECEMBER 2020

As the first class to spend an entire semester under COVID-19 restrictions, the winter 2020 graduates needed something — or someone — to believe in. And who better to believe in than **Rose Lavelle '17**, especially after the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup?

The star soccer player and Badger great had recently capped the U.S. national team’s championship run with a brilliant solo goal against the Netherlands, turning her into a national hero overnight.

“I always get asked in interviews how my life has changed since that moment, and I always have the same answer, which is — it hasn’t. ... I feel about as normal as I could ever feel and as normal as I did before the World Cup, just now with a little bit more experience,” she told the graduates in a recorded video.

That experience on the world stage gave Lavelle, then 25, some wisdom beyond her years, as when she recounted a series of debilitating hamstring injuries that plagued her early career.

“What I’ve learned is no matter how many

*Soccer great Rose Lavelle explained what to do when life knocks you down; actor André De Shields, speaking virtually, celebrated the imagination; ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield explored the benefits of uncertainty.*

times life knocks you down, you get back up and you go again — a better version of yourself than you would’ve been had you never been knocked down in the first place,” she said.

It was the perfect message for an unprecedented time.

### LOOK FOR THAT MYSTERY MAY 2021

**André De Shields '70** is no stranger to the stage — Broadway or commencement. The actor served as the UW’s commencement speaker in both 2007 and 2021, delivering singular speeches worthy of a showman.

De Shields is the rare commencement speaker who refrains from talking about himself — not a single word. It’s a remarkable fact when you consider his career started with a nude production of *Peter Pan* on campus and culminated in a Tony Award for his performance in *Hadestown*.

His latest address came at a time of civic turmoil with the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. Along with bursting into song, De Shields acknowledged the troubled times. “Does it mean it is the end of the world? No. ... It means that you have to make use of your limitless imagination and allow this old world that’s yearning to die — let it die. Use your imagination in helping this new world that’s eager to be born to come to life.”

And leave it to the one-and-only André De Shields to romanticize the process of getting a job.

“Don’t look for just a job,” he said. “Look for that horizon, that if you do not discover it, it will forever remain a secret. Look for that treasure, that if you do not uncover it, it will forever remain just X marks the spot. Look for that mystery, that if you don’t unravel it, it will forever remain a mystery.”



BRUCE RICHTER

## MAKE YOURSELF UNCOMFORTABLE MAY 2022

On February 23, 2022, UW–Madison announced that **Linda Thomas-Greenfield MA’75**, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, would serve as the spring commencement speaker. One day later, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, dramatically disrupting our belief in the international order as well as transforming the role of one of America’s top diplomats.

The world had changed overnight. So it’s no wonder that Thomas-Greenfield’s speech to UW graduates a few months later centered on discomfort.

She began her address by noting how she felt on leaving her home state of Louisiana for the first time and arriving in Madison as a graduate student in 1974.

“Madison looked and felt like a foreign land to me,” Thomas-Greenfield told the crowd at Camp Randall. “I had no family here, no friends. And most of the people were white, and I was not. ... [But] being uncomfortable here in Madison taught me how to adapt, improve, to learn.”

The UW also opened the world to her. Political science professor M. Crawford Young encouraged Thomas-Greenfield to travel abroad and conduct research in Liberia, a trip that would pave her journey to the Foreign Service.

“If you stay in your comfort zone, sticking to what you know, then you are making a bet,” she cautioned the graduates. “You are betting that your life and the world will stay the same. But let me tell you, you’re going to lose that bet every single time.”

Thomas-Greenfield highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war as world-changing episodes that the graduates had already experienced during their short time on campus.

“Shutting yourself off from the world, trying to hide from its problems, won’t serve you,” she said. “Because global challenges, even those in faraway places, are going to impact you.” ●

*Preston Schmitt ’14 is a senior staff writer for On Wisconsin.*

## NOTABLE QUOTABLES



“If you want to be a Badger, it’s not enough to put on a red sweatshirt and cheer at the football games. If you want to be a Badger, you’ll wear the Wisconsin Idea on your sleeve and make the time you spent here count for something.”

— Tammy Baldwin JD’89, U.S. senator, May 2005



“You don’t have to agree on everything to work together on something. ... This is the way progress gets made, when we refuse, despite our differences, to write each other off.”

— Jon Huntsman, former Utah governor and Republican presidential candidate, May 2014



“My mom’s expression to her four children was, ‘Let ’em know you’re there!’ Needless to say she did not raise shrinking violets. You got to get out there and get yourself noticed.”

— Katie Couric, journalist, May 2015



“No matter how big you are, no matter how strong you are, no matter how tough you may be, everybody needs to ask for help at some point in their lives. ... On the path to your dreams, you will not do it alone.”

— J. J. Watt x’12, former NFL defensive end, May 2019



“As someone who has been humbled by having my hopes dashed repeatedly, I know it takes a great deal of courage to view our mishaps as bellows that can nourish, rather than extinguish, the embers of our ambition.”

— Manu Raju ’02, CNN’s chief congressional correspondent, December 2021



“Your job is to fill your days with what lights your soul. ... Once your soul is lit, the path will reveal itself. And on your path — and this is most important — make sure you watch out for deer.”

— Charlie Berens ’02, comedian, December 2022

*Mann (left)  
directs The Last  
of the Mohi-  
cans, artfully  
combining mood,  
music, and moral  
concerns.*





# A Moviemaker on a Mission

*With singular intensity,  
Michael Mann '65 pits loners  
against the powers that be.*

**BY DEAN ROBBINS**

**A**t the University of Wisconsin, Michael Mann '65 obsessed over what to do with his life. He'd grown up on Chicago's mean streets, toiling as a taxi driver and construction worker. That plus his UW English degree would qualify him to be ... what, exactly?

Moviemaking hadn't entered his mind. For a hard-working grocer's son with little time for artistic pursuits, how could it? But the university offered its first courses in film history and theory in the early 1960s, giving Mann a look at German expressionism. The startling imagery rocked him back on his heels — and a screening of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* delivered the knockout punch. He marveled at a film that could connect with a mainstream audience while also communicating an auteur's singular point of view.

Mann's existential quest had come to an end. As he walked down Bascom Hill after one of these screenings, he knew he would make movies. Personal and popular ones, like *Dr. Strangelove*.

How many UW film students have had the same thought on the same hill? What distinguished Mann was his obsessiveness. With characteristic intensity, he tore through film school in London and wrote for the 1970s cop show *Starsky and Hutch*. He scored his first big success with 1979's made-for-television



prison movie *The Jericho Mile*, which introduced the world to a writer-director who would take no half measures in pursuit of a plot. Mann shot the picture on location in Folsom Prison and cast convicts in minor roles. *The Jericho Mile* won three Emmy awards and set the stage for Mann's later cinematic triumphs, which stayed true to his long-ago vision on Bascom Hill.

### Mann's protagonists may yearn for a normal existence, but their obsessions usually consign them to life on the margins.

Like the directors featured in his UW film classes, he developed a style of his own — one that might be called Mann-ly, with aggressive editing and audio to evoke male protagonists on the edge. You know you're in the Michael Mann universe when a car speeds down a dark city street, neon reflecting on the windshield, synthesizer and electric guitars pulsating in time with the driver's dangerously elevated heartbeat. In his frequent tales of cops versus criminals (*Miami Vice*, *Thief*, *Heat*, *Public Enemies*, *Manhunter*, *Collateral*, *Blackhat*), the gunfights can rattle your dental fillings, thanks to Mann's penchant for using raw sound captured on set.

These scenes are hard to shrug off as superfluous violence. They involve you directly in the characters' fateful conflicts with the powers that be. In the boxing epic *Ali*, Muhammad Ali (Will Smith) puts

up his dukes against the entire U.S. government. In *The Insider*, a journalist (Al Pacino) defies both the tobacco industry and his own TV network. These are imperfect characters who strive for perfection in their work, whether a hit man (Tom Cruise in *Collateral*) or a hacker (Chris Hemsworth in *Blackhat*). They may yearn for a normal existence, but their obsessions usually consign them to life on the margins.

Mann will only take on projects that matter to him, so his filmography is relatively slim after a half-century's worth of work. The 2023 release of the race-car saga *Ferrari*, his first production in eight years, is an occasion for revisiting a director who artfully combines mood, music, and moral concerns, rivaling his crime-focused peers Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola.

Here are five gems worth watching and rewatching. They're sure to inspire future generations of moviemakers, just as that Madison screening of *Dr. Strangelove* inspired a young Michael Mann.

**Thief (1981):** An independent-minded ex-con (James Caan) falls back on his safecracking skills for a final score — the one that will ensure a happily-ever-after ending with his new family. What could possibly go wrong when a local mob boss offers a helping hand? Displaying the mania for realism that would become his trademark, Mann employed professional criminals as consultants and even used their burglary tools for the spectacular break-in scenes.



SHUTTERSTOCK (3)



At a UW screening of *Dr. Strangelove*, Mann realized that a film could connect with a mainstream audience while also communicating an auteur's personal point of view.

**Heat (1995):** In a cat-and-mouse game for the ages, Mann presents a master cop (Al Pacino) who's not so different from the master criminal (Robert De Niro) he's pursuing. Each is dedicated to his craft, and each pays a price for his professionalism. Healthy romantic relationships are forever out of reach for two alpha males focused on crimes, whether committing or solving them. Their only authentic relationship is with each other, evident in the classic diner scene where the antagonists meet for coffee and confessions.

**The Insider (1999):** Like *Ali*, *Ferrari*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*, this fact-based drama finds Mann stretching beyond his favorite subject of perpetrators and police. But even in the confines of broadcast journalism, his scene-making is no less explosive. Journalist Lowell Bergman '66 (Pacino, again at his very best) puts everything on the line to interview a tobacco-industry whistleblower (Russell Crowe) on *60 Minutes*. As if tossed in a tempest, Mann's whirling camera evokes the storm clouds in Bergman's soul.

**Ali (2001):** Mann puts conventional biopics to shame with his large-canvas portrait of Muhammad Ali (Will Smith), who taunts and transforms American culture in the fraught decade between 1964 and 1974. The director nimbly dodges the genre's clichés by emphasizing offbeat moments rather than on-the-nose exposition. He uses every weapon in his filmmaking arsenal to bring the boxing matches to life, and his speedy, swirling, scrappy camera work matches his subject's pugilistic style. But Mann's greatest achievement in *Ali* — what distinguishes it in a crowded field of Ali books, articles, and documentaries — is going beyond the bluster to capture the champ's complex inner life.

**Collateral (2004):** While *Heat* is an epic clash of alpha males, this existentialist thriller pits alpha vs. beta — with surprising results. Vincent (Tom Cruise) is an assassin who arrives in Los Angeles with a hit list and a will to power reminiscent of Nietzsche's superman. Max (Jamie Foxx) is an all-too-human cabbie who picks up Vincent and reluctantly takes the ride of his life through the city's neon-lit underworld. Mann delivers all the cinematic pleasures he's known for, including career-peak performances by top actors and stylish action sequences heavy on guns and gamesmanship. He also delivers something he's not necessarily known for: humor, arising from the contrasts in this oddest of odd couples. ●

Dean Robbins is a movie critic, coeditor of *On Wisconsin*, and fellow *Dr. Strangelove* fan.

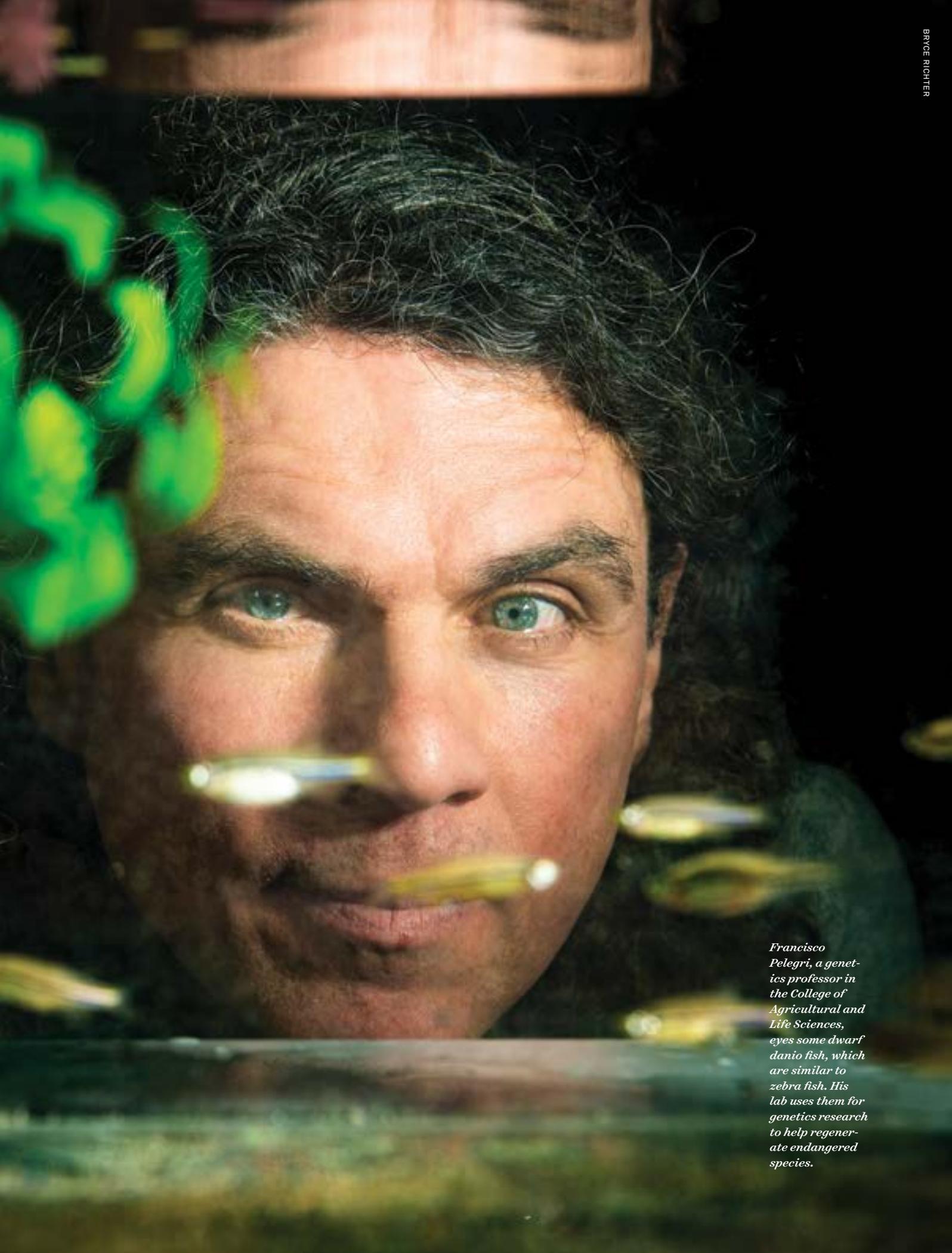
*Imperfect characters who strive for perfection (left to right): Al Pacino playing cat-and-mouse in Heat; Jamie Foxx and Jada Pinkett Smith fleeing an assassin in Collateral; Will Smith putting up his dukes against the entire U.S. government in Ali.*

For video clips of Michael Mann's best movies, see this article on our website, [onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://onwisconsin.uwalumni.com).

# Beyond *Jurassic Park*

*UW researchers say it's essential  
to biobank animal DNA now to protect  
species before they face extinction.*

**BY SANDRA K. BARNIDGE '09, MA'13**



*Francisco Pelegri, a genetics professor in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, eyes some dwarf danio fish, which are similar to zebra fish. His lab uses them for genetics research to help regenerate endangered species.*



## Take That to the (Bio)Bank

“Right now, we’re in a stage where we are very reactive when it comes to biobanking,” says genetics and medical genetics professor Francisco Pelegri, who is leading the new biobank initiative at the UW in close partnership with Paul Robbins, the dean of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and a professor of environmental studies and geography.

Currently, conservation geneticists tend to focus on projects that aim to bring species back from functional extinction, such as an effort in Kenya to save the northern white rhinoceros. Researchers there are creating embryos from the few remaining northern white individuals and implanting those embryos into female southern rhinos. While these techniques could succeed in bringing back several northern whites, Pelegri says that in these cases, even if the resulting offspring survive, there still may not be enough genetic diversity left to build a healthy population long-term.

In populations that aren’t genetically diverse enough, the negative effects of inbreeding can occur within just a few generations. To prevent this, he says, a species needs at least 50 individuals (none of them clones). But that would only prevent immediate problems. To ensure genetic diversity over time, a population needs at least 500 individuals, and ideally 1,000 or more. That number is much higher than emergency efforts can produce — efforts such as the ones designed to save near-extinct species. The Tasmanian devil, the vaquita porpoise in the Gulf of California, and the Yangtze River dolphin in China all have only a few dozen individuals left, at best. When populations drop to such a severely low level, the species enters what’s known as the “extinction vortex,” where additional reproduction simply hastens the genetic consequences of inbreeding.

“Going forward, what we want is to be more proactive, where you basically have a lot of samples ahead of time while we can still find them,” Pelegri says. “This is why it’s important to biobank now.”

That’s one of the core lessons about bioconservation that Pelegri emphasizes both in the lab and in the classroom. In 2015, he launched an undergraduate course called Developmental Genetics

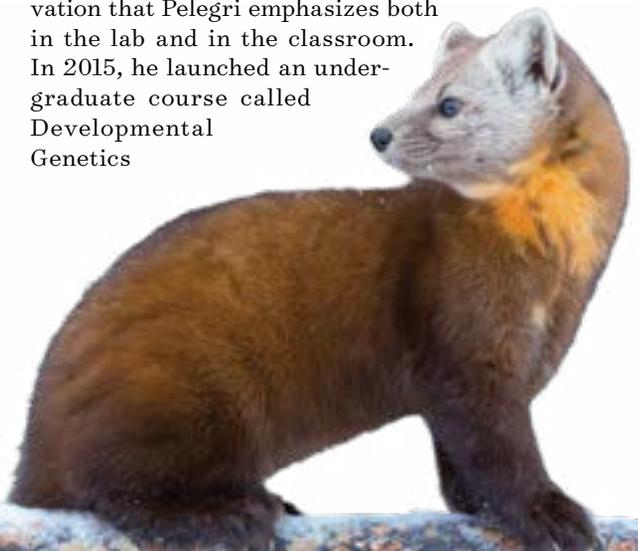
**T**he Great Lakes are home to more than 1,000 native species of water-dwelling animals, from microscopic water fleas to the mighty lake sturgeon that can weigh hundreds of pounds. The count is hundreds more when combined with the region’s bird populations and land-based species, such as flying squirrels, white-tailed deer, black bears, and recovering populations of eastern wolves, to name only a very few.

Thanks to the proximity of major research universities like UW–Madison, the five Great Lakes make up one of the most studied and documented watersheds in the world. Yet even with so much attention from scientists and conservationists, animals in and around the Great Lakes are facing increased pressure from climate change, pollution, invasive species, and habitat loss due to land development.

It’s a not-so-slow-moving crisis, and the environmental outlook for the Great Lakes is part of the ongoing, massive decline in animal populations worldwide, with two million species at significant risk of extinction, according to the latest analysis by the United Nations. The situation has inspired UW researchers to explore a new way to stave off biodiversity loss in Earth’s largest freshwater ecosystem: a large-scale genetic biobank that could store animal DNA for decades, ideally without relying on subzero refrigerators.

Along with developing the new technologies to make a biobank of this scale possible, UW researchers are pioneering an ethical approach to animal DNA collection that will prioritize Indigenous community partners from the very beginning of the process. This combination of innovative science with a commitment to environmental justice is poised to fundamentally impact the emerging field of conservation genetics, which applies scientific tools to stave off species decline and extinction.

*The Kirtland’s warbler (above) and the American pine marten (right) are two of the candidates for a Great Lakes biobank that will store animal DNA to stave off species decline.*





BRUCE RICHTER

for Conservation and Regeneration that offered an optional spring field trip to Costa Rica to give students some active experience with bioconservation projects. Four students enrolled in the pilot semester, but by 2020 the demand had grown to almost 100 students, and Pelegri began to teach the class year-round. Word also spread among faculty members, including Robbins.

Robbins is a senior fellow at the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental research center based in Berkeley, California. Through the institute's network, he met the geneticists who made headlines in 2021 by successfully cloning a black-footed ferret from 30-year-old frozen cells. The work reintroduced a genetic lineage to a "perilously narrow" species, and it inspired Robbins to explore how traditional conservationists like him could work alongside geneticists on high-impact, high-profile projects.

"The more I asked around, the more I realized there were already people hard at work thinking about this in Madison," Robbins says. "When I suddenly realized the UW was in a leading position on this topic, as a dean of an institute that's supposed to help people coordinate, I got excited."

Robbins reached out to Pelegri to team up on a biobanking grant from the UW2020 initiative, which aimed to reward high-risk research ideas. The grant was originally connected to work Pelegri had planned for upcoming trips to Costa Rica with undergraduate students to collect blood from mosquitoes as an indirect way to gather DNA samples

from various protected species, which are otherwise mostly off-limits to sampling. But when the COVID-19 pandemic halted university travel, the biobank partners began to think about research opportunities closer to home.

"One of the things we were thinking about was how do you prioritize [conservation] from an ethical perspective?" says Pelegri. "We started working with Aldo Leopold's land-based ethics of preservation."

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold, the former UW professor and legendary conservationist, argued that humans have a moral responsibility to the natural world and are uniquely called upon to care for the land and develop strong relationships with all parts of the earth.

Gradually, Pelegri and Robbins turned their attention north toward the Great Lakes Basin and to the possibility of biobanking all of the animal species there. They've also begun to build a cross-campus coalition of UW faculty from a wide range of disciplines to draft grant applications and explore other opportunities to start moving the Great Lakes biobank forward.

*Pelegri has posted photos of endangered species in his office as a reminder of what's at risk if we don't prioritize animal conservation. Wood turtles (below) have suffered substantial declines in the last century.*



ISTOCK (3)

## No Freezer? No Problem

The concept of animal biobanking sounds not so different from the large-scale plant seed banks that are now cropping up at universities around the world in an effort to protect native and endangered species for the future. But storing animal DNA is far more complicated and costly than storing plant seeds. Existing biobanks use subzero freezers to hold tissues for decades, which is a lot of time — there may be accidents, power outages, political instability, or human errors. Last summer, a freezer was mistakenly turned off at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, and 25 years of animal cell cultures were lost overnight.

Keeping samples at subzero temperatures is also expensive, which tends to limit the kinds of research facilities that are able to work with tissues that require cold storage. “If you walk through any lab complex, you’re going to see loads of freezers and refrigerators, and we assume that’s essentially just the cost of doing business,” says biomedical engineering professor William Murphy, who is one of the primary collaborators on the biobank initiative. “But if there were alternatives [to subzero freezers], they could be quite transformative.”

For the UW2020 grant, Murphy’s and Pelegri’s labs partnered to explore several projects related to the challenge of preserving organic tissues long-term at room temperature. In particular, they studied the genetic profile of tardigrades, the highly resilient micro-animals that have the remarkable ability to desiccate themselves for long stretches of time and then rehydrate and carry on with no obvious effects on their health. Additionally, both labs are looking at model organisms such as zebra fish to study various gene transplant techniques.

Currently, Murphy is focused on work inspired by nature’s most effective form of extremely long-term storage: fossils. “What we’re mimicking in nature is the ability of fossils to stabilize biological molecules,” he says.

For the past few years, Murphy’s team has been generating a library of almost 100 minerals they can produce in the lab, and they’ve screened each one to identify whether and how it can work to stabilize biological molecules. For instance, Murphy sees potential in a class of fossilized minerals called calcium phosphates, which are the same kinds of minerals found in bones and teeth. The minerals

can be useful as stabilizers of the proteins, DNA, and RNA that will form the building blocks of biobanked species. Recently, they’ve also been combining mineral ions with strands of therapeutic RNA, the same type of RNA used in COVID-19 vaccines. “We’ve been able to identify materials that stabilize the RNA for several months, even at room temperature,” he says.

It’s the first step on a long road, but it could have benefits beyond biobanking, making it possible to stock laboratories, hospitals, or even airplanes with “freeze-dried” biological tissues for a wide range of human medical uses (see sidebar).

## You Don’t Biobank Somebody’s Family without Asking First

While some collaborators, like Murphy, focus on the groundbreaking technologies needed to make the biobank possible, Robbins is leading the conversation on how to ensure that the application of these innovations balances with broader ethical considerations.

“People need to know that we aren’t going mad-scientist on this,” says Robbins. “This is a very deliberate, very thoughtful, publicly engaged exercise that starts by listening, for example, to the tribes [in the Great Lakes region].”

More than 80 percent of the world’s biodiversity is thought to be on lands that belong to or are actively managed by Indigenous communities. In the Great Lakes region, several tribes have federally protected comanagement authority of certain areas. That means scientists like the UW biobank partners not only *should* consult Indigenous partners on decisions related to sampling, storing, and using genetic materials from species on those lands — in many cases, they legally must.

To that end, Robbins and Pelegri recently coauthored a journal article, along with Hilary Habeck Hunt PhD’25 and Jonathan Gilbert PhD’00, the biological sciences director at the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, which is the agency responsible for protecting the hunting, fishing, and gathering rights of 11 Ojibwe tribes across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Titled “Sovereign Genes,” the article was published in *Frontiers in Conservation Science* and outlines a set of principles for collaboration between scientists and Indigenous communities to employ genetic tools responsibly in wildlife conservation.

“The serious, historic mistakes made in human genetic biobanking and the way in which those efforts harm[ed] Indigenous communities provide lessons that can be used to plan for wildlife bio-preservation in approaches that are responsible, respectful, and potentially collaborative,” the paper states, referring to poor practices by scientists in the past related to informed consent, compensation, and tribal sovereignty, among other issues. “By honoring Indigenous sovereignty and community autonomy, and by working to create or leverage existing formalized agreements, powerful genetic toolkits can be brought to bear in the protection and preservation of species of cultural and conservation significance.”

*The Karner blue butterfly (below) and whooping cranes (right) are among the species facing threats from habitat loss, pollution, climate change, and other factors.*



Robbins says that this unequivocal commitment to not only listening but also showing genuine deference to Indigenous partners is crucial to the biobank's ultimate success. "Will it be fraught? Yes. But this is an opportunity for tribes to exercise their rights," he says, adding the hypothetical example of someday obtaining DNA samples from wolves in ceded Ojibwe land in central Wisconsin. "For them, the wolf is kin. You just don't go biobanking somebody's family without asking them, especially in ceded territories where they have management rights. By talking to them, we hope to introduce this topic in a sensitive way."

In time, Robbins and Pelegri also anticipate biobank-related collaborations with other major American and Canadian universities throughout the Great Lakes region. Yet they agree that the UW's deep talent pool across multiple disciplines — from biomedical scientists and engineers to bioethicists, historians of science, and communication researchers — make it likely that Madison will emerge as the leading regional hub for conservation genetics in the coming years.

"The UW is so good at everything it's going to take to do this right that we have a responsibility to lead," says Robbins. "We can't afford to wait for other people to do it wrong."

For Pelegri, the moral imperative of the biobank is also closely tied to the role of humans in climate change and biodiversity loss. When we think about "fixing" human-induced species loss, we often think in terms of de-extinction efforts. He cites new efforts to revive the passenger pigeon, once the most abundant bird species in North America, which died out in 1914 after a few decades of excessive hunting and habitat loss. But instead of looking backward at what we've lost, Pelegri says, "it's important to change the narrative and say, [conservation genetics] technology is not just for that. In fact, it's probably going to be more important for keeping alive what we have right now. ... Anything can become extinct."

"If we can preserve genetic diversity now, then if we ever notice that a living population is being affected in the future, we can actively reintroduce that diversity to keep it healthy," says Pelegri. "And it's not just for that population — it's for an entire ecosystem, because everything is related."

An entire ecosystem like the Great Lakes, for example. And from there, Pelegri hopes to see a global network of interconnected biobanks that offer an extra layer of protection for animal species everywhere. ●

*Sandra K. Barnidge '09, MA'13 is a freelance writer in Alabama, which the Nature Conservancy ranks as the fourth most biodiverse state in the country, beating 35th-ranked Wisconsin.*

## Saving Animals, Saving Humans

Finding a way to preserve animal biobank samples without subzero freezers could also have major benefits for human health care.

For example, storing the materials for stem cell therapy to treat cancer requires expensive liquid nitrogen freezers that can be out of reach for underdeveloped nations.

"My dream," says biomedical engineering professor William Murphy, "would be that these approaches [to storing biological materials without specialized freezers] would make new medical therapies available, accessible, and functional for everyone in the world, especially the emerging cell and genetic therapies that are right now accessed only by wealthy societies."

One focus of Murphy's research involves studying how fossils occur in nature. "If a certain type of protein is in the human bloodstream, it might be stable and functioning for minutes to hours," he says. "But that same protein, if it's present in a biological fossil, might remain intact for centuries or even millennia."

Although Murphy's work is just getting started, it will become more important over time,

he says, as more therapies requiring preserved biological materials are being developed and approved.

S.K.B.



# Nursing by the Numbers

More than  
**60%**

Number of graduates who went on to find jobs in Wisconsin

*Badger graduates have provided a century of care and innovation to patients around the world.*

**BY NIKI DENISON**

The field of nursing is regarded as a science and a serious academic pursuit, but that wasn't always the case.

When the UW began offering nurses' training in the 1920s, the program's director, Helen Denne Schulte, faced an uphill battle. A previous attempt at a program had closed during its first semester, and she encountered skepticism from UW president Edward Birge that parents would find enrolling their daughters a worthwhile investment. He assured her that there was "no money" for the program. Beyond that, Denne Schulte had a hard time convincing faculty that it was worth their time to teach nursing classes. But she persisted, and in 1924, the University of Wisconsin launched one of the earliest public nursing programs in the country.

When the first 11 graduates crossed the stage three years later, they earned nursing certificates, which also included a bachelor of science degree in hygiene. Today, the approach to academics has changed, with a greater emphasis on graduate degrees, distance learning, accelerated degrees,

innovation, and research, which forms the scientific basis for professional nursing practice. Along with striving to alleviate the shortage of nurses, nursing instructors, and nursing researchers, the UW School of Nursing is focused on addressing disparities in health care and helping to create a more diverse nursing workforce.

The school has been an early adopter of technology, offering its first televised classes in 1963 and its first internet course in 1997. The school's current home, Signe Scott Cooper Hall, opened in 2014 and includes state-of-the-art patient simulation labs; 25 research suites; and exercise, outdoor, and wellness areas for students. Its high-tech classrooms and flexible layout were designed to allow the school to adapt easily as health care advances and evolving public health scenarios reconfigure the needs of the nursing profession.

The following figures suggest the impact the School of Nursing has on the world today. ●

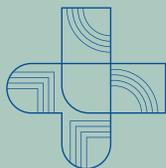
*Niki Denison is coeditor of On Wisconsin.*

**21**

Number of funded research projects in 2022–23

**17**

Number of countries with UW School of Nursing graduates



**Snapshot of 2023's incoming bachelor of science in nursing class**

Number of applicants: **333**

Number enrolled: **162**

Percent who are first-generation students: **25**

# 16

National ranking among 657 bachelor of science in nursing programs; 10th among public schools (U.S. News & World Report rankings)

# 98.6%

Graduation rate (also the average body temperature of an adult)

# 48

Number of published journal articles by the school's tenure-track researchers in the 2023 academic year

# 7

Number of current faculty whose research focus includes health disparities

# 6%

Projected growth in nursing jobs between 2022 and 2023 — higher than all other professions (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

# 3

Pathways to a bachelor's degree: the traditional program, the accelerated program, and a bachelor of science in nursing completion program (BSN@Home)

# 1

Rated the most honest and ethical profession in the United States, followed by doctors, pharmacists, high school teachers, and police officers (2020 Gallup poll)

# 6

Signature research areas: aging and care for older adults; children, families, and reproductive health; health equity; health systems and public health; mental health and substance abuse; symptom science and palliative care

# 10,923

Number of living nursing alumni

# \$82,750

Average salary for registered nurses nationally in 2023 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

# 3 million+

Number of nurses in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

# 50

Number of states with UW nursing graduates (plus Washington, DC)

# 12

Number of months for students who already have a bachelor's degree to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing through the accelerated program

# 1,000+

Number of students enrolled annually as of 2023



Percent who are female: **84.5**  
Percent who are male: **13.5**  
Percent who are transgender or gender not specified: **2**

Youngest: **19**  
Oldest: **60**  
Percent who are Wisconsin residents: **67**

Percent who are white: **70**  
Asian: **16.6**; Hispanic/Latino: **11.7**; Black: **5.5**; American Indian: **3.7** \*

\*Students may be counted in more than one category



*The tour documents the 12,000-plus years of human existence along the shores of Lake Mendota.*

# ***The Millennia before***



# *UW-Madison*

*How the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour became a unique campus institution*

Standing on the crest of Observatory Hill, UW–Madison senior Kane Funmaker x’24 invites the people around him to envision a much different view of Lake Mendota than the one in front of them.

Hundreds of years ago, Funmaker tells the group, thousands of Ho-Chunk people flourished on the land along the lakeshore. It was a thriving center for tribal resources and trade, with prosperous fishing, raised garden beds, maple tree stands for sap collecting, and nearly 1,000 effigy burial mounds.

“Imagine Ho-Chunk clan villages all over this area, their dwellings ringing Lake Mendota, which the Ho-Chunk called Waaksikhomik,” Funmaker says.

The stop was one of several that day on the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour, a popular educational offering that began modestly two decades ago and has evolved into a campus institution. The walking tour of up to two hours examines the 12,000-plus years of human existence documented along the shores of Lake Mendota, particularly the history of the Ho-Chunk Nation, on whose ancestral land the university now sits.

Participants view the unique double-tailed water spirit burial mound near Agricultural Hall — one of dozens of mounds on campus. On another stop, they stand atop Bascom Hill and learn of the campus buildings constructed on mounds, including Bascom Hall and North Hall. And they visit more recent additions to campus, such as the fire circle at Dejope Residence Hall, with its bronze plaques representing the 11 federally recognized American Indian tribes in Wisconsin.

John Zumbrunnen, senior vice provost for academic affairs and vice provost for teaching and learning, says the tour is a deeply important learning opportunity for the campus community, one that combines expert scholarship and engaging storytelling.

“So many people on campus and in the community are committed to honoring the Indigenous cultures that have long called this special place home. One way to do that is by learning about the land and its history.”

It is indeed a rich history. There are more Indigenous burial mounds in a greater variety at UW–Madison than on any other university or college campus in North America, says state archaeologist Amy Rosebrough MA’96, PhD’10. “These mounds are an extremely rare resource.”

For something so embedded in the

*Tour guides like Funmaker explain what it’s like to be Ho-Chunk at UW–Madison.*





*Tour guide Abbey Woldt '26 (third from left) discusses the “pipe of peace” imagery prevalent at the Memorial Union.*

campus terrain, the tour began informally and with little fanfare. Its genesis can be traced to the hiring of Aaron Bird Bear MS'10 in 2000 as the American Indian student academic services coordinator in the College of Letters & Science. His charge was to support the academic, cultural, and social needs of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students.

But not long after arriving, Bird Bear identified a shocking problem.

### **“I Didn’t Ask Anyone’s Permission”**

Aside from the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program, there was hardly anything related

to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians visible on campus.

“I was appalled at the complete lack of infrastructure — the complete lack of commitment — to Indigenous people in any sincere way, shape, or form,” says Bird Bear, a citizen of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Diné Nations who is enrolled in the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold.

Bird Bear set out to change that. Along with the late Ada Deer '57, a pioneering Native American activist and director of the UW American Indian Studies program at the time, he reactivated and cotaught American Indian Studies 150 and 151, courses that introduce students to current American Indian issues. At one of these classes, Deer invited Daniel Einstein MS'95 to give a guest lecture. Einstein, the campus historic and cultural

## TAKEAWAYS FROM THE TOUR

**The story of human occupation** along the southern shores of Lake Mendota begins more than 12,000 years ago — around the time the last glaciers retreated from the area.

**UW–Madison occupies ancestral Ho–Chunk land**, a place the Ho–Chunk Nation has called Teejop since time immemorial. In an 1832 treaty, the Ho–Chunk were forced to cede this territory.

**Earthen burial mounds** of Native peoples are widely distributed across campus, with several of the most prominent in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

**Memorial Union** features several “pipe of peace” design elements, and the history behind this imagery has troublesome aspects. Between the 1890s and the early 1940s, the pipe of peace ceremony drew crowds of students to Library Mall during commencement week. In this parody of Native American life, white students dressed in costumes and passed an elaborate pipe decorated with the ribbons of each graduating class.

**The Tree of Peace** on Observatory Hill was planted in 1988 by Mohawk elder Tekaronianeken, who reminded us to care for one another and for the environment.

— D.E.

resources manager, took the class on a walking tour of some of the campus sites with Native history, including the Ho–Chunk effigy mounds on Observatory Hill.

“I was astounded,” Bird Bear recalls. “I didn’t know that all of this history was here.”

Bird Bear took what Einstein had taught him, expanded on it, and stitched together a walking tour that “would lift the colonial veneer that obscures the Indigeneity of this space,” he says.

The result was the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour. Bird Bear began giving tours in 2003 simply as a service to Indigenous students. He wanted them to feel a connection to the land and to know that they belonged on campus. Word spread, and soon many others were inquiring about the tour, including teachers-in-training, staff members seeking professional development, and instructors looking to expose their students to Native history.

More than 25,000 people have now taken the free tour. It’s a remarkable outcome for an idea Bird Bear says he never officially pitched to anyone. He credits then–Chancellor John Wiley MS’65, PhD’68 with giving him the confidence to launch the tour.

“He told me, ‘Women and minorities too often wait for approval to do something. That’s not how this place works. Just go do something and tell me when it works.’”

So that’s what Bird Bear did. “I didn’t ask anyone’s permission,” he says. “I just started giving tours.”

### ***“This Is a Sacred Place to Me”***

Until recently, almost all the tours were led by Bird Bear and Omar Poler ’07, MA’10, the Indigenous education coordinator with the Office of the Provost. The two took on the role in addition to their official university duties, fitting in tours whenever they could. Bird Bear later became the university’s first tribal relations director. He retired in 2023, which underscored the need for a different approach to the tour, one that would ensure its long-term viability.

The tour is now offered through a partnership between Campus and Visitor Relations and the Office of the Provost, putting it on firmer footing. To meet demand, the university recently increased the number of tour guides from two to nine. For the first time, some of the tour guides are UW–Madison students, and several, including Funmaker, are Ho–Chunk. This adds another compelling aspect to the experience. Participants hear directly from current students about what it is like to be Ho–Chunk at UW–Madison.

Silas Cleveland x’25, a history major, says being a tour guide is helping him explore his own complicated feelings about the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Wisconsin and at the university. He is Ho–Chunk and often weaves personal stories into the tours he leads.



*Being a tour guide helps Cleveland explore his own complicated feelings about the treatment of Indigenous peoples.*

“It means the world to me to be part of these tours,” he says. “This is a sacred place to me. I want people — especially my fellow students — to understand that there is so much more to the history and culture of Wisconsin than beer and cheese.”

The guides bring a mix of backgrounds, interests, and personal histories, which enriches the experience for tour participants, says Poler, a member of the Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Faculty and staff members also lead tours, along with students.

“Each tour guide is going to bring something different to the role and share it in a different way,” he says. “Someone could go on this tour any number of times and see history and the land through a different lens each time.”

### ***“A Counternarrative”***

During the stop on Bascom Hill, tour guides point out the “Our Shared Future” heritage marker near South Hall. It acknowledges the circumstances that led to the forced removal of the Ho-Chunk from their ancestral home — a land they call Teejop — and pledges a shared future of collaboration and innovation between UW–Madison and the Ho-Chunk Nation. At a dedication ceremony in 2019, then-Chancellor Rebecca Blank said she hoped the marker would start a conversation that “moves us from ignorance to awareness.”

For Brenda Owen ’96, MS’99, PhDx’24, a doctoral candidate in nursing, it’s an apt description of her own journey at UW–Madison. Even though she

is Ho-Chunk, she had little idea of the land’s history until taking the tour many years ago.

“I was sort of dumbfounded,” she recalls. “How could I hike up Bascom Hill every day but not know that North Hall and Bascom Hall were built on top of mounds?”

She took the tour a second time.

“It was as if the first tour revealed to me my ancestral and historical connections to the land,” Owen says, “and the second tour awakened an active relationship with the environmental elements.”

Bird Bear’s original intent has been realized, she says.

“As a First Nations student, I experienced campus through the lens of the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour, and it provided me with a deeper sense of belonging and of fitting in.”

Owen is now a project assistant for the tour and a tour guide herself. She sees the tour’s impact daily. It is common for tour participants to applaud at the close of a tour and to send unsolicited emails and cards thanking the tour guides.

“My hope is that all students — not just First Nations students — be given the opportunity to experience the campus and Teejop from this perspective,” Owen says. “The tour is a counternarrative of sorts. There is a rich history of 12,000-plus years of human presence with this land. UW–Madison has been here less than 2 percent of that time. I’m glad our university is expanding the narrative to be more inclusive.” ●

*Doug Erickson writes for University Communications.*

# RETHINKING THE AMERICAN MUSEUM

*Marcela Guerrero MA'05, PhD'15 is breaking barriers as the Whitney's first curator of Latino art.*

**BY GEORGE SPENCER**

**M**arcela Guerrero MA'05, PhD'15 is lucky. She sees her role model every morning. When Guerrero, a senior curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, steps off the elevator to go to her office, right in front of her hangs a huge, stunning 1916 painting of the museum's founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

The steady gaze of the confident, relaxed benefactor greets everyone, but Guerrero, 43, takes away a special message. "It's a reminder that the intention of the woman who built this space was to give artists opportunity, visibility," she says. "We've come a long way since the early 20th century, but we can still make art more accessible to more people."

Guerrero is one of the nation's few Latina curators. Latinos make up only 3 percent of museum leaders, curators, and educators, according to a 2015 Mellon Foundation study. Today, museums are rethinking the cultural canon, and in her groundbreaking role at the Whitney, Guerrero, who was born and raised in Puerto Rico, ranks as the first curator to specialize in acquiring and showing works by Latino artists.

"She's the right person at the right time in a critical moment of American art history," says Mari Carmen Ramírez, who in 2001 was the first curator of Latin American art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. "She's made it her life's mission to give voice to this very heterogeneous community."

*Building trust with museumgoers is the most difficult part of Guerrero's work.*





## ANGUISHED, JUBILANT, BEAUTIFUL

Whitney Museum director Scott Rothkopf describes Guerrero as “a real visionary.” Together they are formidable allies.

“We are revamping the museum’s identity and being more forthright about aspects of our collection we’ve neglected and aspects of the American identity that haven’t been shown or recognized,” Guerrero says.

Her multiartist exhibition *no existe un mundo poshuracán: Puerto Rican Art in the Wake of Hurricane Maria* marked the first time a major U.S. museum had celebrated the island’s art in 50 years. It showcased works by 20 artists living there and in the diaspora, including Frances Gallardo, Elle Pérez, and Gamaliel Rodríguez. Spanning the Whitney’s sixth floor, the show won raves as one of 2022’s best. *ARTnews* magazine called it one of the year’s 25 “defining” exhibitions. The *New Yorker* hailed it as “anguished, jubilant, galvanizing, and often beautiful.”

Five years in the making, the event reflected Guerrero’s wrenching experience during 2017’s Category 5 hurricane, which killed nearly 3,000 people on the island. Hired five months earlier as an assistant curator, she was caring for her newborn daughter in her Brooklyn home when the storm hit. Her father, a retired pharmacy professor at the University of Puerto Rico, was trapped in Puerto Rico.

“My mom was here helping me, but he was incomunicado for three days,” Guerrero recalls. “We were desperate and concerned for his safety.”

Months later, when she returned home, the lingering devastation shocked her. “Things were already bad before Maria, but to see traffic lights not working symbolized no order,” she says. “It felt like the island was in a freefall.”

During the storm, Guerrero racked her brain about how she could help people back home. Soon the notion of doing a show, one she says was the most personal she may ever do, began to take shape. The resulting exhibition blended Maria’s psychological and physical traumas. Its sections highlighted not only the shattered infrastructure but also the ecological ruin, grief, and crushed tourism industry.

Guerrero knew that most museumgoers from the mainland had only a basic understanding of Puerto Rico. “People go there for a trip to the beach, but what else is happening there? There are people living, thriving, making life, surviving,” she says. “I wanted to provide that window into how people there live and make art.”

The event helped Guerrero crystallize her conflicted feelings about the status of Puerto Rico and its residents. When she speaks of the island, she always calls it a colony, never a territory, a term she says most Puerto Ricans think is a euphemism.

“The people of Puerto Rico do not have the same rights as other citizens,” she says. “It’s important to use that word — *colony* — because it’s a reminder

“We’ve come a long way since the early 20th century,” says Guerrero, “but we can still make art more accessible to more people.”

that the U.S. was an empire whose colonialist project began when it colonized Puerto Rico in 1898.”

## “THE REALITIES OUTSIDE OUR WALLS”

Being a curator means more than developing new shows in collaboration with artists and Whitney staffers. Guerrero is also tasked with the equally daunting responsibility of acquiring works by Latino artists, either by purchasing pieces from galleries or by working with donors.

“That could be its own full-time job,” she says. “I sometimes feel guilty, because if I’m busy working on an exhibition, then that’s less energy I have to put into advancing our collection.”

Major gaps exist in the Whitney’s collection of Latino artists, and Guerrero has been up to the job. Thanks to her, nearly 25 percent of the museum’s 2021 acquisitions were works by Latino artists, including Firelei Báez, Dalton Gata, and Rodrigo Valenzuela.

Even seemingly mundane aspects of presenting art at the Whitney have been transformed by Guerrero. When she started, she noticed that the wall labels were only in English, though audio narrations were available in Spanish.

“It was shocking that labels were not also in Spanish,” she says. “It’s pervasive in other U.S. museums. It’s provincial, thinking that English is a hegemonic language.”

Today, the Whitney is starting to label works in both languages. “It’s about fair representation,” says Guerrero, who notes that Spanish is the second most spoken language in the U.S. “I always think about language justice and how in U.S. history sometimes families decided not to speak Spanish. They thought you had to assimilate, and to assimilate you had to shun part of your identity. So, how do we repair that in a public institution? I think it’s through better mirroring the realities outside our walls.”

Building trust with museumgoers is another challenge, one that she says is the most difficult part of her work. New York City has the largest Puerto Rican population outside of the island, yet such visitors are underrepresented at the Whitney.



*Guerrero has acquired significant works by Latino artists, including Firelei Báez's Untitled (Tabula Anemographica seu Pyxis seu Navtic).*

“Mainstream museums have turned their back on this audience,” says Guerrero. “I hear it all the time, like, ‘Why would I go there? It doesn’t care about people like me.’”

To combat the problem, during the run of *no existe*, the museum established a partnership with the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. Guerrero, along with Cris Scorza, the Whitney’s chair of education, is also building a network with other groups to create a cultural comfort level with community members.

On a clear day, when Guerrero looks out the windows of the curatorial offices, she can see the Statue of Liberty. She loves the view and is always drawn to horizon lines where she can see water. “That’s probably from growing up on an island, to feel a sense of home,” she says. “Tranquility.”

## IMAGINING A NEW FUTURE

As a child, Guerrero never dreamed of being an art museum curator. Neither of her parents was an artist, but they exposed her to the arts — and as an 18-year-old visiting Washington, DC, she found herself drawn to the Smithsonian’s art museums. Walking into those vast galleries on the National Mall reminded her of visiting churches.

“You’re immediately engaged in an exercise of interpretation, surrounded by beauty, by aesthetics, free to reflect,” she says. “You create your own

experience with the art. No one’s telling you what to think.”

As an undergraduate, Guerrero majored in history of the Americas and art history at the University of Puerto Rico. Slowly, she began to realize she had the skill of communing with art.

“There are no words. You ‘read’ a work and ask yourself, ‘What does this communicate to me?’”

She began to see museums as dynamic places that brought out the best in her, and she sensed she would enjoy collaborating with others to share art with the public.

When Guerrero came to the UW for her master’s degree in art history, her life changed, thanks to her adviser, Professor Jill Casid. “Jill revolutionized how my brain operated,” says Guerrero. “She taught me to think critically and question everything.”

Twenty years later, the two remain friends, and Casid traveled to New York for the opening of the Puerto Rico show. She considered it a profound shift for artists who haven’t been getting the representation they deserve.

Does she think her former student is a rising star in the world of art museum curators?

“She was a rising star,” says Casid. “Now that star has risen.” ●

*Freelance writer George Spencer is a former executive editor of the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine.*

# On Alumni

News from Home and Abroad



ALTHEA DOTZOUR '09



## Celebrating by the Light of the Moon

An anniversary gala highlights the UW's impact.

It was a 175th birthday party for the ages. In October, the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association led the planning and execution of a festive gala on behalf of the UW–Madison chancellor's office and the campus 175th Anniversary Planning Committee. The event was called By the Light of the Moon: 175 Luminous Years of the University of Wisconsin.

Above are some photos of the once-in-every-175-years event, which drew nearly 500 attendees

for an elegant evening in the Discovery Building that included Wisconsin foods and beverages, a university timeline, a "secret" bar, and lots of Badger spirit.

Clockwise from top left: **John '55** and **Tashia '55 Morgridge** chatted with Chancellor **Jennifer Mnookin**; assistant engineering physics professor **Stephanie Diem '03** was one of three faculty members who gave presentations on their research; a Badger memorabilia gallery featured UW inventions, artifacts, and mementos; Provost **Charles Isbell**, his wife, **Sheila**, and Wisconsin Alumni Association executive director **Sarah Schutt** enjoyed the brief program; commemorative cheese; a surprise appearance by members of the UW Marching Band; and commemorative ice cream.

*The festive event highlighted the UW as a place where an idea can change the world. Guests enjoyed foods such as Cran-iverscherry cheese and Babcock's newest ice cream flavor, 175 S'more Years.*



## On and On and On *Wisconsin*

The UW's alumni magazine celebrates its 125th anniversary.

In 1899, 125 years ago, the University of Wisconsin's alumni association decided to offer something new and substantial in its effort to build support for the university: it began publication of a magazine. This periodical, in the words of editor **Charles Adams 1899**, was intended “primarily for the alumni, [though] it will aim, I suppose, to interest those whose thoughts often turn to matters of higher education.”

This was the launch of the *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*,

*In 1899, this publication began life as the Wisconsin Alumni Magazine. In 1936, it rebranded as Wisconsin Alumnus. Single life was fun for a while, but we re-pluralized in 1988 and became Wisconsin Alumni. In 1990, we became On Wisconsin.*

which later became *Wisconsin Alumnus*, and later still, in 1990, *On Wisconsin*. We're not the world's first alumni magazine — that's believed to be *Greetings*, first sent by Wayland Academy of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, in 1882. But we've certainly been around awhile.

In that first issue, Adams and his colleagues — who included future Pulitzer Prize-winning historian **Frederick Jackson Turner 1884, MA1888** — spent 60 pages relating news of the students, faculty, and alumni. We do much the same today.

It can be disorienting to read the articles in that first issue, published an eighth of a millennium ago. Adams warned that there was frequent conflict between campus and the state government: “it often happens that a legislator comes to

Madison with a vigorous determination to lessen the appropriations to the university.” Who can imagine such a thing, as we look back from this era of amity and common purpose?

But the aims that inspired Adams and his colleagues still drive us today. Like Adams, we on the *On Wisconsin* editorial team believe that, “in educational matters, at least, knowledge is the surest possible cure for skepticism and hostility.”

And so we continue to offer you a look at the ways that UW-Madison changes lives for people, and the ways that extraordinary people change the UW. Our name has changed a few times, but our purpose hasn't.

Thanks for reading and for keeping us going all these years.

**JOHN ALLEN**

## 60s–70s

**Lon Getlin '67** of West Linn, Oregon, is the founder of the Getlin's Corner Foundation, a nonprofit organization that awards need-based undergraduate scholarships to the children of enlisted marines and navy corpsmen. The foundation memorializes the Battle of Getlin's Corner, a Vietnam War battle in which 15 marines and navy corpsmen lost their lives, including Getlin's brother, Captain Mike Getlin. Six Silver Stars, four Navy Crosses, and a Medal of Honor were awarded to the men who fought and died in the battle. Lon Getlin was also a marine infantry officer who fought in Vietnam and later became a marine fighter pilot and Top Gun graduate. After the war, Getlin served as a refugee camp commander in Camp Pendleton, California.

These three Badgers took book club to a new level: while searching for a book similar to the one she had just written, *The Hardest Year: A Love Story in Letters During the Vietnam War*, **Carole Wagener '70** came across **Laura Colbert '06's** memoir about her deployment in Iraq, *How to Pee Standing Up, or Sirens: An Alarming Memoir of Combat and Coming Back Home*. Later, Wagener discovered **Annette Langlois Grunseth '72's** book, *Combat and Campus: Writing through War*. The three military writers became fast friends, and each has won an award for her respective book.

Ambassador **John Lange '71, JD'75** was serving as the chargé d'affaires for the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, when it was bombed by al-Qaeda on August 7, 1998, along with the embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. He later received the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award for "skilled leadership and extraordinary courage" in the bombing's aftermath. On August 7,



2023, Lange commemorated the 25th anniversary of the East African embassy bombings with U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken at the Department of State. "I look on all of the Dar [es Salaam] and Nairobi responders as heroes, and none of us will ever forget that tragic day," Lange said in his address. Lange now serves as a senior fellow of global health diplomacy with the United Nations Foundation.

**Jim Charne '72's** campus memory made us smile: "My pad was at 534 West Dayton Street [from 1969 to 1972 and] faced straight into Bedford [Street]. The house, along with much of our block, was demolished in early 1973 to make way for a hotel facing Johnson Street. Our front porch was a target for [police] tear gas canisters during any sort of civil disturbance. I was hired by Columbia Records as a college representative in September 1969. With our [house's] high-visibility location and a landlord who didn't care, I engaged in some guerrilla marketing for the then-new group on our Columbia label: Chicago (above). That initiative caught the eye of the big brass and led to summer jobs in Chicago at the sales branch, then in New York City at [Columbia's] headquarters, and upon graduation, my first post-college job at the CBS Records branch in Minneapolis. In all, my handiwork helped lead to a career in the record business ... and then

*Jim Charne '72 poses with the guerrilla marketing masterpiece that launched his career in the music industry.*

[in] video games and computer software. My advice to young people: the way to get noticed is to do something. A couple cans of paint and some initiative led to my wonderful career."

When they were juniors at the UW, **Bill Froming '72** of Lake Oswego, Oregon, and **Terry Waitrovich '72** of Portland, Oregon, spent an unforgettable year in Aix-en-Provence, France, as part of the Michigan-Wisconsin Junior Year in France program. In order to ensure that current UW students can enjoy the same life-changing experience, Froming and Waitrovich have established a scholarship for students who are financially unable to commit to a full year abroad. At press time, Froming, Waitrovich, and other alumni of the Aix-en-Provence program had raised nearly 70 percent of the funds needed to permanently endow the scholarship program. *Merci beaucoup* to these adventure-savvy Badgers!

On March 17, 2016, **Sharon Kilfoyl '72, MA'80** was out to dinner while, unbeknownst to her, a fire raged in her basement at the Williamson Street Art Center in Madison. Seven years later, Kilfoyl presented remnants of the wreckage, pieces from her *Foragings from the Fire* series, in the exhibition *Garbology: What We Throw Away* at Madison's Overture Center for the Arts last fall. "The fire made this art," Kilfoyl said. "I only figured [out] a way to present it to you." Kilfoyl is the director of the Williamson Street Art Center and the founder of public art organization Developing Artists, Murals, and Alliances, formerly known as Dane Arts Mural Arts.

And the Emmy goes to ... the Ho-Chunk Nation for its short film *Exploring the Artistic Process of Truman Lowe: A Journey through Native American Art and Education*. The victory, announced during the

**WELCOME, ALL!**  
The Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA) encourages diversity, inclusivity, nondiscrimination, and participation by all alumni, students, and friends of UW–Madison in its activities.

**X-PLANATION**  
An x preceding a degree year indicates that the person did not complete, or has not yet completed, that degree at UW–Madison.

65th Chicago/Midwest Regional Emmy Awards, marks the first Emmy win for the Ho-Chunk Nation, who partnered with Madison-based Discover Mediaworks on the short film about late Ho-Chunk artist and UW professor **Truman Lowe MFA'73**. “Thank you and *pinagigi* — that means ‘thank you’ in Ho-Chunk, my language — to the academy for this award honoring the legacy of Truman Lowe,” said **Casey Brown x'04**, executive public relations officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation and producer on the film.

Not only is **Russell Kirby '74, MS'77, PhD'81, MS'91** the namesake of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network's Russell S. Kirby Mentoring Award, but he's also its first recipient. Kirby, a distinguished professor and perinatal epidemiology expert at the University of South Florida College of Public Health, received the award for his commitment to the research, surveillance, and prevention of birth defects, as well as for mentoring students and colleagues. “Mentoring is very rewarding and generates life-long connections and friendships that transcend our daily work,” Kirby said. He was also presented with a 2023 Outstanding Research Award for his contributions to perinatal and pediatric epidemiology.

**Nelson Neal MS'74** of Tucson, Arizona, has spent more than 30 years researching and presenting on the life and career of Hemsley Winfield, who lived from 1907 to 1934 and is believed to be the first African American modern dancer. Neal published a biography of Winfield in 2020, and in 2023, he commissioned a commemorative plaque to be placed on Winfield's gravesite in Yonkers, New York. Neal is a retired professor of dance and a dance historian.

## He's an Ice Guy

This history alum literally wrote the book on refrigeration.

**Jonathan Rees MA'92, PhD'97** made a fateful discovery when he got off the elevator in the UW's Wendt Commons Library. The future Colorado State University-Pueblo history professor often went there to research his doctoral thesis on the steel industry. Every time the doors opened at his favorite

study floor, the first things he saw were century-old bound volumes of the industry journal *Ice and Refrigeration*.

Curious, he began flipping through them. Later he stumbled on a museum exhibit in Oshkosh about the history of Wisconsin's ice industry. Soon he found a cool scholarly niche — the history of refrigeration, a rarely examined part of American history.

He was astonished to learn that the ice harvesting machines used in Oshkosh looked like ordinary farm equipment, but with different blades. “I quickly realized that cutting ice off lakes wasn't that different from cutting furrows with a plow,” recalls Rees, the author of *Refrigeration Nation: A History of Ice, Appliances, and Enterprise in America* (2013) and other books on the subject.

Ice harvesting peaked in Wisconsin between 1880 and 1900. A regional company controlled the business from extraction and storage through distribution. Every winter, its gangs of workers descended upon the Fox River and the state's pristine lakes. They harnessed horses shod with spiked shoes to contraptions that had razor-sharp blades. With industrial precision, they sliced and diced thousands of blocks of ice. Then they shipped the frigid fruit of their labor around the Midwest, much of it to Chicago meatpackers and Milwaukee brewers. Thanks to refrigerated train cars and cold brewing, those businesses boomed, forever changing Americans' dining habits.

The U.S. has always led the world's refrigeration industry. A Boston merchant invented the field in 1806, when he exported ice to the Caribbean. Fifty years later, iceboxes, which kept foods cold with the help of blocks of ice, were commonplace.

“People went from having access to perishable foods briefly to having them all the time,” says Rees. “From the 1870s to the 1920s, it felt like we were the richest country on Earth. Ice ended seasons. Suddenly you could eat anything you wanted anytime you wanted to.”

Rees keeps close to heart the advice of his thesis adviser, the late **J. Rogers Hollingsworth**, who told him, “There are no limits to what you can write about.” With that in mind, he has done a scholarly about-face. His new hot topic is his forthcoming book on the history of the chili pepper in America.

“I definitely consider myself a food historian,” he says. “I know some people who study the history of stoves, but [chili peppers are] a different kind of heat.”

GEORGE SPENCER



JULIANA ROTHBAUM



COURTESY OF ERIC HOLUB

## Eat Your Beans

Eric Holub '82, MS'85, PhD'88 is revolutionizing the British diet.

**Eric Holub '82, MS'85, PhD'88** has a knack for improving upon regional culinary staples. As a postdoctoral student in plant pathology at UW–Madison, he bred a cold- and moisture-hardy alfalfa to better sustain Wisconsin's dairy herds. Today, as a professor of translational plant genetics at the University of Warwick in Coventry, England, he's developed three new varieties of UK-registered dry beans (URBeans) as part of an effort to diversify the British diet.

How will legumes diversify the diet of a nation nourished by baked beans on toast? According to Holub, URBeans inspire new food narratives. Capulet, which resembles a white navy bean, bears an iconic surname from *Romeo and Juliet*; Godiva, a blond bean, honors Coventry's legendary Lady Godiva; and Olivia, a black bean, is named for the character from *Twelfth Night*. Unlike the imported navy beans of Heinz fame, URBeans are bred to thrive in "British soil and sunshine" and provide British home cooks with opportunities to broaden their culinary concept of beans.

"We'll be breaking out of tinned thinking by working with everyday cooks as agents of change," Holub says.

URBeans are the seeds of a growing UK public health initiative around food diversity. To accompany his new beans in British kitchens, Holub is gathering new varieties of tomatoes, peppers, squash, herbs, and root vegetables — many sourced from U.S. land-grant universities, including the UW — that are gardener-accessible, commercially scalable, and undeniably delicious. To Holub, a versatile, locally grown diet is a crucial step toward improving public health.

"We all need more diversity of plant fiber in our diets," he says, "and it's age-old sense to start changing people around you by sharing ideas and experiences around food."

Cooks from community centers in Coventry and primary schools in neighboring Leicestershire have been preparing and serving a mix of Godiva and Capulet beans as part of Bean Meals, a program that engages students in the journey their food takes from local farms to lunch trays. At the University of Warwick's main campus, a food truck serving locally grown baked potatoes will add URBeans to its topping offerings, and URBeans will be sold in local zero-waste grocery stores.

"I'm applying 4-H knowledge from my youth — head, heart, hands, health — for community and country and maybe the globe," Holub says.

MEGAN PROVOST '20

## 80s

**Wanda Silva MS'83**, president and CEO of boutique mergers and acquisitions firm Silva Capital Solutions, was named to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 2023 Most Admired CEOs of Professional Services. The award recognizes innovation, strong financial performance, commitment to diversity, and community engagement and contributions.

When their 18-year-old son Connor died of brain cancer in 2013, **Scott '84** and **Liz '85 Dawes** founded the Robert Connor Dawes Foundation to raise awareness and funding for pediatric brain cancer research in the United States and Australia, where the family currently resides. One of the foundation's biggest annual events is Connor's Erg, a rowing competition in which the UW men's and women's rowing teams are regular challengers. In 2022, Liz, who serves as the foundation's CEO and chairperson, received a Medal of the Order of Australia during the Australia Day Awards for her dedication to pediatric brain cancer research.

**Jeff Siegel '84** of South Orange, New Jersey, has joined digital media studio PocketWatch as the company's global head of content distribution. PocketWatch develops children and family franchises with popular YouTube and TikTok stars. Siegel was formerly the senior vice president of program sales and strategy at media company Group Nine Studios, where he worked with Disney, Hulu, Discovery, and Starz and helped to secure Group Nine's first Netflix series.

Healthy students are happy students at Sugar Creek Elementary School in Verona, Wisconsin, where principal **Todd Brunner '88** has led the school to numerous accolades in health and wellness. In 2018, the school won a bronze award from the Alliance for a

Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program, becoming the first school in the Verona Area School District to earn the distinction. Since then, Sugar Creek has earned a silver award in the United States Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge, a gold Wisconsin School Health Award, a gold distinction "Bright Spot" award from the Healthy Kids Collaborative, and many more. Brunner has served as principal of Sugar Creek Elementary School since 2006.

## 90s

**Dora Clayton-Jones '90**, an associate professor in Marquette University's College of Nursing, was recently promoted to associate professor with tenure and is believed to be the first African American pediatric nurse practitioner to receive tenure in the state of Wisconsin. Since then, she has been inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and is the 2023 recipient of the Vel R. Phillips Trailblazer Award from the City of Milwaukee Common Council. The award recognizes a female Milwaukee resident who best exemplifies Phillips's legacy of "selfless service and trailblazing work." Clayton-Jones's research focuses on health equity for those living with sickle cell disease and other chronic illnesses.

Lights, camera, Aleman! Hearst Media Production Group promoted **Rita Hagen Aleman MA'91** of Milwaukee to executive producer of news and documentary development. Aleman is the executive producer and director of special projects for national public affairs talk show *Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien*, which she has executive produced since the program launched in 2015. In her newly created role, Aleman will expand her work in national news programming

and documentary and docu-series development.

**Bernard Moon '93** of San Francisco cofounded and launched SparkLabs Saudi Arabia, a venture capital fund for entrepreneurs in the Middle East and northern Africa. The company's accelerator program provides start-ups in the region with funding, office space, and access to a global network of entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, investors, and executives. Moon cofounded SparkLabs Group in 2013, and the company has since invested in more than 500 start-ups around the world.

Yes, chefs! Two Madison-based Badgers were nominated

**"I look on all of the Dar es Salaam and Nairobi responders as heroes, and none of us will ever forget that tragic day."**

— Ambassador John Lange '71, JD'75

for the 2024 James Beard Awards. **Syovata Edari '96, JD'01**, the founder of CocoVaa Chocolatier, is a semifinalist in the Outstanding Pastry Chef or Baker category. Edari opened her confectionery on Madison's east side in 2016 after leaving a career in criminal defense to study chocolate making in Europe. Her confections have won international awards.

**Christy McKenzie '04** was nominated in the Outstanding Hospitality category for her farm-to-table deli and catering company Pasture and Plenty. McKenzie started Pasture and Plenty as a meal kit service in 2017 before opening a café space on Old University Avenue in 2018.

**Rob Britton '98** of Minnetonka, Minnesota, has been named president of the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Society Minnesota, one of the oldest chapters of the CFA Institute. Britton is a senior portfolio manager and partner

at the Minneapolis Portfolio Management Group.

## 00s

**Marlena Guzman Holden '00** is the first brand and communications director of Madison-based technology nonprofit Education Analytics. She spent the previous 10 years working for UW-Madison at the Waisman Center and University Health Services.

After a sales career that included stints at Harley-Davidson, Marriott International, and Airbnb, **Jenny Bulgrin Venkat '02** launched Jenny BV Sales Coaching and Consulting. She works with clients across the spectrum of sales experience, from new hires to seasoned professionals, and specializes in serving start-ups and entrepreneurs.

The Society of American Archivists presented **Emily Pfothauer '02, MA'06** of Madison with the 2023 Spotlight Award. The award recognizes an individual who has worked for the good of both the profession and of archival collections. Pfothauer is a grant writer with Taliesin Preservation at the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center. She previously spent nearly 14 years with Wisconsin Library Services, playing an integral role in the Recollection Wisconsin project, which makes Wisconsin's cultural heritage more widely accessible online. Pfothauer has also supported Indigenous communities' efforts to digitize and increase accessibility to their cultural heritage materials.

**Chris Henjum '04** of Minneapolis has been appointed as the taxpayer rights advocate of the Minnesota Department of Revenue. The Taxpayer Rights Advocate Office ensures fair and consistent application of Minnesota's tax laws. Henjum joined the agency in 2019 as a tax policy lead for the income

**BOOK NEWS?**  
See page 60.

**CLASS NOTES SUBMISSIONS**  
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*Margaret Duffey '18, Katie Koralesky '08, and David Demet '17 throw up the W after summiting a mountain in Squamish, British Columbia.*

tax and withholding division. Before joining the Department of Revenue, Henjum was the policy director of the legal and legislative advocacy firm Flaherty and Hood.

**Rachel Patzer '05** has been named president and CEO of the Regenstrief Institute, an Indianapolis-based medical research and development organization. Regenstrief is a supporting organization of the Indiana University (IU) School of Medicine, where Patzer has also been named the Leonard Betley Professor of Surgery and an adjunct professor of medicine in IU's Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health. Patzer was most recently the founder and director of the Health Services Research Center at the Emory University School of Medicine and a professor in the school's department of surgery. Her research focuses on improving access to care and addressing health inequities.

**Hannah Lowen '07** doesn't shy away from whiskey business: she joined New Riff Distilling in Bellevue, Kentucky, as a founding member in 2013, helping to establish the young distillery's operating systems, branding, and programs. After her most recent role as New Riff's vice president of operations, Lowen is

taking the reins as CEO. New Riff is one of the country's leading independently owned distilleries.

**“Thank you and *pinagigi* — that means ‘thank you’ in Ho-Chunk, my language — to the academy for this award honoring the legacy of Truman Lowe.”**

— Casey Brown x'04

Move over, flamingos: restaurateur **Kaitlin Fischer '09** brought a new iconic bird to Madison with fast-casual eatery Butterbird. Branded as “Wisconsin's finest chicken and bar,” the Regent Street restaurant is the second culinary hotspot from Joe and Shaina Papach, owners of Madison's renowned fine dining establishment the Harvey House, where Fischer started as general manager before becoming director of operations. Butterbird and the Harvey House are only the latest installments in Fischer's illustrious career in hospitality, which spans everywhere from Middleton's Louisianne's and bygone Madison Irish pub Brocach to managing high-end restaurants in Las Vegas, Chicago, and New York City.

One day, it may be easy to be green thanks to **Raisa Lee**

'09 of Oakland, California. As director of project development with Clearway Energy Group, Lee oversees solar energy and storage in the western United States. Lee was previously a project and development engineer at solar energy company SunPower, where she specialized in the design of solar facilities. In total, Lee has successfully deployed more than three gigawatts of solar power over the course of her career. For her commitment to a cleaner, greener future, she was awarded the 2023 Business Award from Clean Energy, Education & Empowerment, a U.S. Department of Energy initiative focused on advancing women in the energy sector.

## 10s

It's only fitting that media professionals **Sammy Pepper '11** and **Ethan Krupp '12** met through a UW hashtag on Twitter in 2011. The two went on to collaborate on the management of President Barack Obama's social media accounts during his second term in office before starting their own consulting firm, SPEK Consulting, in 2017. Now, both Pepper and Krupp are cofounders and partners of À La Carte Media Consulting, a digital marketing consulting firm whose partners managed more than \$10 million in paid media campaigns in 2023. Congrats to this Badger business duo!

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) presented **Emily Myatt '12** with the 2023 Government Relations Professional of the Year award for her commitment to advocating for cancer-fighting public policies. Myatt is the regional government relations director of ACS CAN, the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, where she leads strategy for campaigns, volunteer engagement, and fundraising.

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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 may submit full-length obituaries for online posting at [uwalumni.com/alumni-notes/submit](http://uwalumni.com/alumni-notes/submit).

There really are Badgers everywhere you go! Take it from **Margaret Duffey '18**: “My partner, **David Demet '17**, and I live in Squamish, British Columbia. We were driving along an unmaintained forest service road outside of Squamish on our way to a trailhead for a backpacking trip when we came across a couple and their dog. They had just parked their car on the side of the road and were beginning to hoof it up the steep and potholed road with their packs. We offered them a ride. **Katie Koralesky '08**, Matt, and their dog, Finn, were visiting from Vancouver for their first backpacking trip. Matt mentioned that Katie was ‘actually from Wisconsin,’ and David and I erupted in cheers. We soon discovered that we’d not only picked up a Wisconsinite, but also a fellow Badger. We spent the next 24-plus hours together, summited a mountain, swam in an alpine lake, did yoga while the moon rose over the mountains, watched the sun rise, and camped in a remote area where cellular service is fully forgotten. ... It was a magical weekend made even more special with the unexpected Badger bond.”

## 20s

**Scott Wittkopf '22** is cooking up food justice in Chicago as the lead chef instructor at Inspiration Kitchens. Through the culinary branch of nonprofit Inspiration Corporation, Wittkopf trains people from homeless, previously incarcerated, and underserved populations for careers in the food industry. Wittkopf is a professional, French-trained chef whose résumé includes Restaurant Espadon in Paris, the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin, and L'Etoile in Madison. Thanks to **Kirstie Danielson '96, PhD'07** for sharing this news with us!

*Tell your dog Megan Provost '20 says hi.*



WENDY VINCENT OF COLOR ME WENDY PHOTOGRAPHY

## Healing from Infant Loss

A UW fund helps support families mourning miscarriage and stillbirth.

In November 2020, **Grace** and **Ryan Gilles** (above with their daughter Ingrid) were stunned when their baby’s heart stopped beating during labor. Grace gave birth to a stillborn girl, and the couple named her Joan Margaret Gilles.

The loss devastated their entire family, so they started a GoFundMe campaign to do something positive with their pain. “We wanted to create a memorial space for Joan, where her short but deeply significant life would be remembered and where her story could be shared,” Ryan says.

The Gilleses decided to donate any additional money to help families who had experienced a similar loss. Joan’s aunt, **Leigh Button**, suggested creating an endowed fund, and the result was the Joan M. Gilles Memorial Fund. The permanent endowment assists the UW Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in raising community awareness about infant loss and stillbirth, as well as available resources for families.

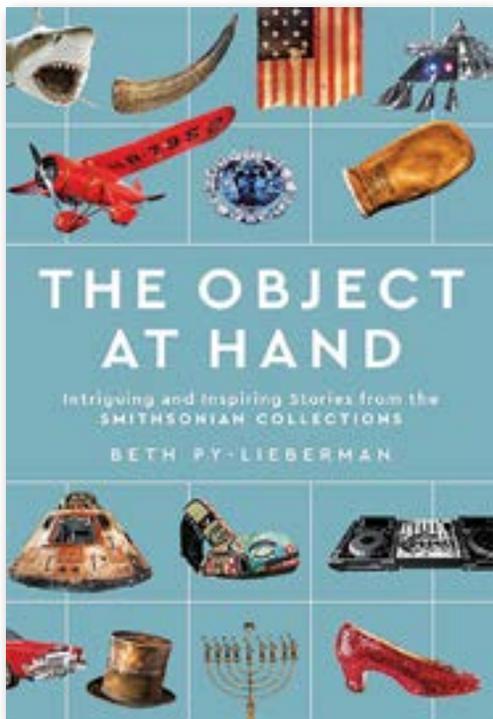
One of those resources is UW Health’s Hope after Loss Clinic. The clinic is one of only a handful in the country assisting those who experience miscarriage and stillbirth, even though those types of losses occur in one out of four pregnancies.

The family was impressed with the passion of the clinic’s founder, **Kristen Sharp**. After the loss of her own baby, Sharp, a clinical associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, wanted to provide more support for grieving families. “Our goal at the Hope after Loss Clinic is to provide personalized care to each family and focus not only on their medical needs but also on their emotional needs,” she says. The clinic provides follow-up care after a loss, preconception counseling, counseling services with clinical psychologist **Julianne Zweifel '87**, and prenatal/obstetric care for patients who are pregnant after a prior loss.

Grace says that giving back has offered her family the opportunity to take the worst thing that has ever happened to them and create something good. They hope that the endowment will help the Hope after Loss Clinic to pave the way for more clinics of its kind across the country.

“We want our fund to aid in the push to destigmatize the discussion of miscarriage and stillbirth so that others can get the proper mental and physical care from their providers the same way our family has,” she says.

**NICOLE HEIMAN**



*Py-Lieberman examines an iconic airplane, an artist's love letter, a storied stone, and more.*

## National Treasures

In *The Object at Hand*, Beth Py-Lieberman '83 tells the American story via the Smithsonian collection.

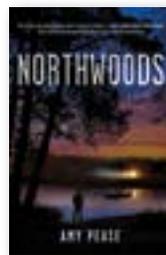
Did you know that the Hope Diamond, perhaps the world's most prized and priceless jewel, once hung around the neck of a 20th-century socialite's dog? Do you know where you can find both Chuck Berry's red 1973 Cadillac Eldorado and Dorothy's ruby-red slippers? In *The Object at Hand: Intriguing and Inspiring Stories from the Smithsonian Collections*, **Beth Py-Lieberman '83** shares tales and tidbits that piece together a complex American history.

While Py-Lieberman's collection of 86 artifacts is only about 0.00005 percent of the Smithsonian's collection of more than 150 million, it is representative. Some of her highlights are a love letter from artist Frida Kahlo to her husband and fellow artist Diego Rivera, the plane in which Amelia Earhart made her historic solo flight across the Atlantic, a panel from the AIDS Memorial Quilt that honors activist Roger Gail Lyon, a Bible belonging to preacher and rebellion leader Nat Turner, and the life-sized model of a megalodon shark that looms above diners in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

In delving into more detail than museum placards allow and organizing the artifacts by themes, Py-Lieberman's book is elevated from a mere catalog of the Smithsonian's collection to an anthology of interconnected histories.

"From priceless treasures to simple ephemera, these selections prove that in a hectic, digital world, it is still the humble object that has the power to transport us on journeys of the imagination," writes *New York Times* best-selling author Geraldine Brooks.

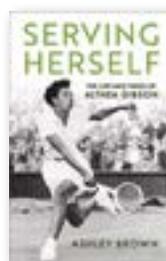
Py-Lieberman is a senior editor of museums for *Smithsonian* magazine online and has been with the magazine for more than 30 years.



### *Northwoods*

**AMY PEASE '00, MS'04**

Life isn't all water skis and walks in the woods in Shaky Lake. Despite its idyllic location in the popular vacation destination of northern Wisconsin, the town is ravaged by the opioid epidemic. A teenage boy turns up dead, a teenage girl is missing, and it's up to troubled veteran Eli North to pull his town — and himself — back from the brink.



### *Serving Herself: The Life and Times of Althea Gibson*

**ASHLEY BROWN**

Althea Gibson was the first African American tennis player to win titles at the French Open, the U.S. Open, and Wimbledon. She won 11 Grand Slam tournaments and was featured on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* and *Time*. Still, she ran up against the barriers encountered by many Black women of her time. Brown, an assistant professor in the UW's Department of History and the Allan H. Selig Chair in the History of Sport and Society, recounts the trials and triumphs of one of America's greatest athletes.



### *Perfume on the Page in Nineteenth-Century France*

**CHERYL KRUEGER '82, MA'84, PHD'92**

It can be difficult to put one's finger on a scent, and even more difficult to commit that scent to the page (without spritzing it from a bottle). The French, however, were quite adept at it. Krueger explores the influence of olfactory language on 19th-century French poetry and prose, examining medical tracts, letters, posters, ads, and etiquette books.



Submit your book news at [uwalumni.com/go/bookshelf](http://uwalumni.com/go/bookshelf) and visit [goodreads.com/wisalumni](http://goodreads.com/wisalumni) to find more works by Badger alumni and faculty.

*This new streaming series brings DeWalt's small-town romance to the small screen.*

## From Net Fiction to Netflix

Ali DeWalt '13's debut novel, *My Life with the Walter Boys*, gets new life as a streaming series.

Long before Netflix was producing its original coming-of-age dramas, 16-year-old **Alexandra (Ali) DeWalt '13** published her debut e-book, *My Life with the Walter Boys*, on the story-sharing website WattPad under the pen name Ali Novak. In March 2014, the wildly successful novel hit bookstore shelves IRL (in real life). And in December 2023, *My Life with the Walter Boys* debuted as a Netflix original series.

DeWalt's story follows Jackie Howard (played by Nikki Rodriguez, most recently of the Netflix series *On My Block*), a privileged teenager living a charmed life in Manhattan when she loses her family in a tragic accident. Newly orphaned, she leaves New York to live with the Walter family and their seven boys on a farm in rural Colorado. Jackie finds herself caught in a love triangle with two of the Walter brothers while navigating the complexities of adolescence faced by every teenager, whether in a big city or a scenic small town.

"It's coming of age. It's discovering yourself. It's coming to terms with the difficulties life can bring you. It's found family," showrunner Melanie Halsall told *Entertainment Weekly*.

*My Life with the Walter Boys* garnered more than 12 million views in its first full week on Netflix. At press time, the show had spent six weeks on Netflix's Global Top 10 list for TV in English and reached its Global Top 10 list for TV in 88 countries. Just 10 days after the show's debut, it was renewed for a second season, and the book on which the show is based has since become a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller.

"This has been a dream of mine since I was a little girl," DeWalt wrote on Instagram.

DeWalt is also the author of the novel *The Heartbreakers* and its sequel, *Paper Hearts*. iGeneration Studios, one of the producers of *My Life with the Walter Boys*, recently announced plans to develop the books into a new series called *The Heartbreakers Chronicles*.



### ***Unbottled: The Fight against Plastic Water and for Water Justice***

**DANIEL JAFFEE MS'96, PHD'06**

The bottle of water you can buy from a vending machine represents a \$300 billion industry with a significant environmental cost. Jaffee sheds light on bottled water's social and economic impacts, including rising levels of single-use plastic waste, access to safe drinking water, and the uncertain future of public water systems. The book also celebrates social movements that advocate for the human right to water.



### ***Singular Spaces II: From the Eccentric to the Extraordinary in Spanish Art Environments***

**JO FARB HERNÁNDEZ '74**

In her second volume of the *Singular Spaces* series, Hernández continues to document art environments created by 99 self-taught artists from every region of Spain. These spaces typically exist outside the commercial art world. In committing them to public memory, the author preserves them beyond the artists' lifetimes.



### ***U.S. History in 15 Foods***

**ANNA ZEIDE MA'08, PHD'14**

In her latest book, Zeide teaches American history in 15 courses. Through foods that exemplify their respective moments in time, Zeide analyzes not only what Americans were eating, but also what it said about the state of the country. From whiskey during the American Revolution to the rise of the Big Mac, this book is a feast fit for a history buff.

**MEGAN PROVOST '20**

## A Humble Man with a Big Impact

Herb Kohl '56's legacy stretches across campus and around the nation.

The titles on Herb Kohl '56's resume — U.S. senator, successful businessman, Milwaukee Bucks owner, and philanthropist — didn't seem to square with the quiet man who grew up in Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood. Where you might expect bluster, instead you got a self-effacing, driven dedication to community and philanthropy.

"He's a very humble man," said former Senate majority leader Harry Reid, reflecting on Kohl's 2013 retirement after 24 years in the Senate.

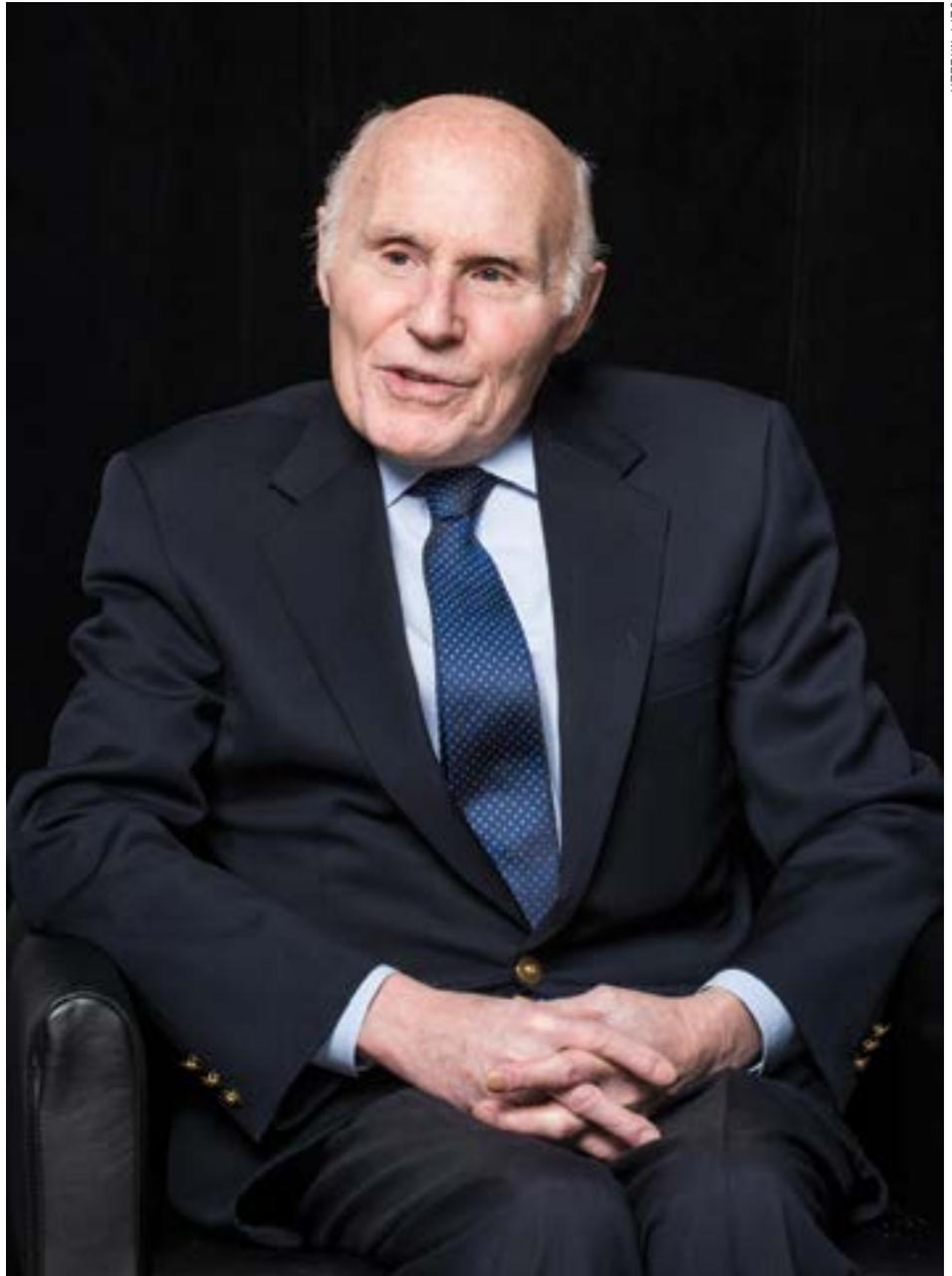
Kohl, who died in December at age 88, entered the UW with childhood chum, college roommate, and lifelong friend **Allan "Bud" Selig '56**, a Sherman Park neighbor who went on to become commissioner of Major League Baseball.

"If you're lucky, during your four years here, your mind is opened up to unimaginable ideas, thoughts, and aspirations," Kohl said of UW-Madison. "It was just the most idyllic, happy four years that you could imagine."

After working in real estate and investments, Kohl became heir to the family-owned chain of grocery and department stores that his immigrant father, Max, built. He was its president from 1970 to 1979.

Intent on keeping the National Basketball Association in Wisconsin, Kohl bought the Milwaukee Bucks franchise in 1985 for \$18 million.

In 2014, he sold the team for \$550 million, then donated \$100 million to help fund an arena project anchoring the team in his hometown.



JEFF MILLER

"He did it because he loves this city, he loves the people who are here, and he believes in its future," said Milwaukee Mayor **Tom Barrett '76, JD'80**.

A Democrat, Kohl was elected to the Senate under the campaign slogan "Nobody's Senator but Yours." He was an advocate for public education, crime-fighting programs, and Wisconsin dairy farmers.

Kohl's philanthropy is widely admired. His \$25 million gift to UW-Madison in 1995 helped to

Read more about Herb Kohl in "Nobody's Senator but Ours," in the Winter 2022 issue of *On Wisconsin*. You can find it at [onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://onwisconsin.uwalumni.com).

fund construction of the Kohl Center. In 2019, he gave \$10 million to the La Follette School of Public Affairs to promote public policy research, teaching, and outreach.

Kohl surprised Wisconsin teachers in 2016 by funding every request — nearly 700 of them — to underwrite classroom projects in 140 districts. "We owe a lot to our teachers and hold enormous hope for our students," Kohl said. "They are both a constant source of inspiration."

**DENNIS CHAPMAN '80**

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# MY UW

Janet  
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## I BELIEVE IN THE TRAILBLAZING RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY THE FACULTY.

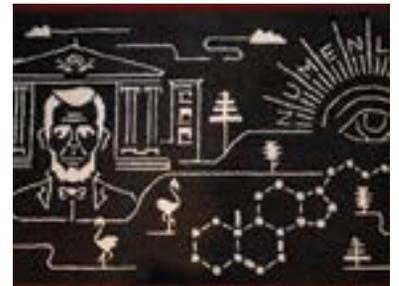
After 33 years as a faculty member at UW-Madison, I can say that I really believe in this university. I put the Department of Psychology and the Department of Gender and Women's Studies in my will because I know what remarkable work each one does.

*Professor Janet Hyde*

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FAR LEFT: BRIAN HUYNH; BRUCE RICHTER (3)



## Welcome Back to Campus

One Alumni Place reconnects visitors with the UW.

Since it opened in 2017, One Alumni Place has become a popular spot in the heart of campus — a place where visitors can relax, grab a cup of coffee, browse yearbooks and other publications in the library, or attend an event.

Located at the end of Lake Street in what was formerly part of the Below Alumni Center, “it’s a unique, intimate, spirited space to reconnect with campus and other alums,” says Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA) executive director **Sarah Schutt**. “A lot of people drop by — especially those coming back to campus for the first time in a long while.”

In the summer, most people visit on Fridays for Badger Meet-ups, which might include yard games in the adjacent Alumni Park, a green space featuring outdoor exhibits that highlight notable UW alumni and ideas. “It’s a nice time to connect with other Badgers, and some people have made new friends while stopping by,” says **McKenzie Zdrale ’00, MA’23**, managing director for engagement programs.

*Families warm up in a cozy One Alumni Place (left) in February 2020. They attended a WAA Family Fun Day in conjunction with the Wisconsin Union Winter Carnival. Right: the alumni library, a wall of Badger memorabilia, and a carpet detail that mirrors the Badger Pride Wall in the adjacent Alumni Park.*

WAA members can take complimentary pontoon boat rides, which depart from the nearby Goodspeed Family Pier. And it’s hard to beat summer events on the rooftop deck, with spectacular views of Alumni Park, Lake Mendota, and of course, sunsets.

The fall season brings gatherings on Fridays before home football games. “The space really comes alive for the annual Homecoming block party,” says Zdrale. This past year, family-friendly activities included a photo booth, trivia contests, face painting, and art activities to complement outdoor festivities such as the pep rally and silent disco in Alumni Park.

One Alumni Place also hosts a wide variety of enrichment and learning programs, including the Wisconsin Idea Spotlight events. The series has featured speakers such as **Brian Stack MA’88**, a writer for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*; an event with former Badger football player **Chris Borland ’13**, who is now active with the Center for Healthy Minds and led attendees through a meditation; and a panel of prominent UW women who marked 150 years of female students on campus.

One Alumni Place is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., except during campus breaks and holidays. Feel free to drop in, sit by the fireplace, and find out what’s happening on campus.

**NIKI DENISON**

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