

OnWisconsin

FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS SUMMER 2024



UW the Beautiful

Dazzling public art gives campus a look all its own.

Unsung UW Scientists



Vision

At Camp Randall, Badgers jump around; in the Field House, they bounce around. Children jump up, jump up, and get down at the Family Fun Fair during UW–Madison’s open house in April. The UW held the open house as part of its 175th anniversary celebration, which runs from summer 2023 to summer 2024.

Photo by Bryce Richter



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OnWisconsin

Metals artist Tanya Crane MA'14, MFA'15 approaches making jewelry as if it were sculpture. See page 50.

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Vision
- 7 Communications
- 9 Salutation *Hot Fun in the Summertime*

OnCampus

- 11 News
- 12 *Bygone Lake Street's Lost Golden Arches*
- 14 Calculation *Babcock Dairy Fun Facts*
- 16 Exhibition *Ho-Chunk Banners*
- 21 Contender *Dietitian Jensen Skinner '18*
- 22 Conversation *Center for Interfaith Dialogue*

OnAlumni

- 54 News
- 55 Tradition *Hamburger Heaven*
- 56 Class Notes
- 62 Diversions
- 64 Conversation *Korean Education Leader*
- 65 Honor Roll *MRI Inventor*
- 66 Destination *The UW's Warm-Weather Hangouts*



JESSE BECHER

FEATURES

24 Art for All

See the UW's most significant public paintings and sculptures — and learn the secrets to their success.

By Preston Schmitt '14

34 Unsung Scientists

These Badger researchers may be overlooked by history, but their achievements will still make you proud.

By Elise Mahon

38 So What Else Did You Learn in College?

Student organizations help Badgers become innovators and risk-takers, preparing them for life beyond campus.

By Jessica Steinhoff '01

44 The Most Successful Actor You've Never Heard Of

From *Better Call Saul* to *Grace and Frankie*, Hans Obma '02 is best known for playing villains with flawless accents.

By Nicole Heiman

48 The Small-Town Writer Who Hit the Big Time

Drawing inspiration from her picturesque hometown of Portage, Wisconsin, Zona Gale 1895, MA1899 crafted an award-winning literary career. *By Dean Robbins*

50 Sgraffito Storytelling

Jewelry artist and metals professor Tanya Crane MA'14, MFA'15 uses a special technique to explore such themes as her family's history and the Great Migration.

By Megan Provost '20



CHUL-YOUNG JANG

Dong-One Kim MS'91, PhD'93 applies the Wisconsin Idea as the president of one of Korea's leading universities. See page 64.

Cover

Threshold makes a bold statement in Nancy Nicholas Hall. Photo by Althea Dotzour



DANIELLE LAMBERSON PHILLIPS

Bees Please is one of the UW's unique student organizations. See page 38.

You Have Questions. We Have Experts.



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Other Commencement Speakers

I was disappointed that the article about commencement speeches failed to mention the speech that did not occur [“Speaking Words of Wisdom,” Spring 2024 *On Wisconsin*].

In June 1967, the graduating class anticipated with great curiosity the commencement speech of U Thant, secretary-general of the United Nations. It would have been the first time that such an international luminary graced Camp Randall for a graduation. It was not to be.

Instead, UW president Fred Harvey Harrington delivered encouraging but forgettable words to the graduates. Egypt and Israel were engaged in the Six-Day War; U Thant had more important matters to attend to than a quick trip to Madison.

It was U Thant’s absence that I remember, not the encouragement from the UW president.

Richard Sussman ’67
Atlanta

You missed a “notable quotable” in your article about memorable commencement speeches. My father, Truman Torgerson ’39, was president of the Wisconsin Alumni Association in 1969–70. He was slated as the final speaker during the June 8, 1970, commencement. The temperature was very warm, with previous speakers long-winded, and students were miserable in their caps and gowns. Dad scrapped his well-prepared and practiced speech and stated that the theme of his talk was from the Bible — Matthew, chapter 14, verse 14: “He had compassion on the multitudes.” With that, he left the podium.

The story made the front page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and many other newspapers around the country the following day.

Ollie (Oliver) Torgerson ’68
Rhineland, Wisconsin

The article on commencement addresses mentioned only two pre-2016 speeches (in 1979 and 1997). I am sure there were many noteworthy commencement addresses before then. I recall that UW president Fred Harvey Harrington gave a major speech against the war in Vietnam. That was important and certainly memorable.

Paul Kaufman ’70
Englewood, New Jersey

Badger Greats

Thanks for the great stories in the Spring 2024 issue, including the summary of the School of Nursing accomplishments [“Nursing by the Numbers”]. But mostly thanks for the amazing photo in “Speaking Words of Wisdom” of Chancellor Rebecca Blank and Russell Wilson MSx’13 — what a great picture of two great UW–Madison contributors!
Patti Brennan MS’84, PhD’86
Professor Emerita, UW–Madison School of Nursing and College of Engineering
Washington, DC

How to Take First Nations Tour

“The Millennia before UW–Madison” [Spring 2024] was a good article. I knew that there were mounds on campus, but I did not realize the depth of the [Native American] history on campus. This is an important program.

The article made me want more. How can one sign up for the tours?

Ted Bilek ’77, MBA’80
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

Editor’s Note: *You can sign up for the First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour through UW Campus and Visitor Relations. Visit info.wisc.edu/campus-tours. Enjoy!*

We’re Rooting for You!

I have just gotten *On Wisconsin*. I wonder how much longer [I’ll be] reading it. I am 98 years old. I am

We want to hear from you! Please email your letters to onwisconsin@uwalumni.com or mail them to WFAA, On Wisconsin, 1848 University Ave., Madison, WI 53726. You can also post comments online at onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.

in very good health. I am trying to make it to 100!

Alexander Melter ’51
Walnut Creek, California

X-planation

I have a question: What is the meaning of the *x* identifying some people whose names are in bold, but not others? I’m reading the article about commencement speakers and see that Russell Wilson is MSx’13.

Richard Roznoy DMA’76
Amherst, Massachusetts

Editor’s Note: *An *x* preceding a degree year indicates that the person did not complete, or has not yet completed, that degree at UW–Madison.*

Online



DOLTON MANSVAGE

WATCH ON WISCONSIN VIDEOS!

For most issues of *On Wisconsin*, our team creates a special video to accompany one of our stories. You can find each video embedded in the relevant article on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com. For example, visit the website and search for this issue’s story “So What Else Did You Learn in College?” to see bracing footage of a polar plunge in Lake Mendota (above). Better yet, visit our YouTube channel, youtube.com/c/WisconsinAlumniAssociation, to find all the UW-centric videos in one place, including “How to Make a Fudge-Bottom Pie,” “Commencement through the Years,” and “The Future of UW–Madison.”

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OnWisconsin

Summer 2024

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JEFF MILLER

A Warm Welcome

On Wisconsin's summer issue offers something new under the sun.

The summer issue of *On Wisconsin* hopes to get you off the couch and into the sunshine.

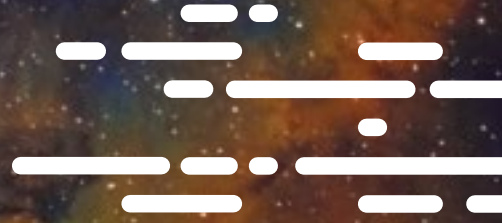
Our cover story, "Art for All," explores UW-Madison's most significant works of public art, laying out a trail to follow if you happen to be back on campus this summer. Similarly, "The Perfect Summer Spot" leads you through the UW's best warm-weather hangouts. And if these itineraries take you close to Bascom Hall, hike up the hill to see the glorious banners featured in "Sowing 160,000 Seeds."

These are all free activities that require little more than a sturdy pair of shoes and a bottle of sunblock. Along the way, you can enjoy a scoop of Babcock Dairy ice cream, the subject of a rigorous statistical analysis in "Milk Metrics." Or one of the savory sandwiches featured in "The Best Campus Burgers."

We even have you covered for day trips. About 40 miles from Madison is Portage, home base for the illustrious UW alumna Zona Gale 1895, MA1899. "The Small-Town Writer Who Hit the Big Time" explores Gale's Pulitzer-winning literary career, inspired by her scenic surroundings. Her heart swelled at the sight of the wide Wisconsin River flowing through Portage, and yours likely will, too.

In general, we're reluctant to suggest recreational activities that don't involve *On Wisconsin*. Luckily, a sunny summer day is the perfect excuse for reading a magazine outdoors.

DEAN ROBBINS

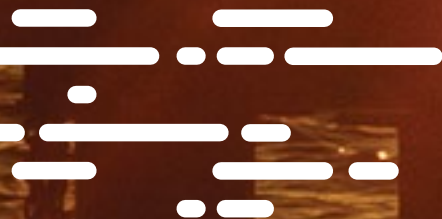


From Terrace Sunsets to NASA Moonshots

WHERE AN IDEA CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

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.

—
175.wisc.edu



OnCampus

News from UW-Madison



ALTHEA DOTZOUR

Initiatives for the Public Good

Chancellor Mnookin announces plans for world-changing innovations.

Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin** has unveiled a set of new initiatives designed to address global challenges, including artificial intelligence (AI) and environmental sustainability.

The Wisconsin Research, Innovation, and Scholarly Excellence (RISE) Initiative will facilitate transformative discoveries and translate them into real-world impact. Over the next three to five years, UW-Madison expects to add between 120 and 150 faculty through RISE in addition to regular hiring, reflecting about a 40 percent increase in faculty hiring.

“We’re going to look at the grand challenges facing our state and the world and grow the faculty in a targeted way that builds on our existing strengths in places where, with strategy and investment, we can accelerate discovery and world-changing research and education,” Mnookin says.

The first area of focus under RISE will be artificial intelligence. UW-Madison researchers have already employed AI to improve the diagnosis of genetic disorders and help farmers detect disease in their crops before it spreads. It can accelerate the pace of discovery, but it also requires thoughtful attention to ethics and security.

RISE will increase UW-Madison’s network of AI innovators, adding up to 50 faculty positions across campus to complement regular hiring already planned in AI and AI-adjacent areas.

The UW is also launching a cross-campus initiative focused on environmental sustainability, including a new interdisciplinary research hub. The initiative represents the most comprehensive environmental sustainability effort in the university’s history and will make campus a living laboratory for sustainable practices.

UW-Madison will be on a course to drastically reduce campus’s environmental impact, cultivate a culture of sustainability, build climate resilience, and spark discoveries that will benefit the university, the people of Wisconsin, and the planet.

Finally, the UW will strengthen its commitment to innovation and entrepreneurial excellence.

“Entrepreneurship is an area where we have opportunities to magnify our economic impact on this state and to shepherd life-changing innovations out into the world,” Mnookin says.

KELLY APRIL TYRRELL MS’11



DANIELLE LAMBERSON PHILLIP

TASTIE TREATS FOR ASTRONAUTS

In January, botanist **Simon Gilroy** and his lab sent tomatoes into space, their sixth plant-based experiment with NASA on the International Space Station. Nicknamed TASTIE — short for *Trichoderma* Associated Space Tomato Inoculation Experiment — the project aims to give researchers a better understanding of how plants grow without gravity.

“Plants know up from down, right? They don’t have a brain or anything like that, but shoots grow upward, and roots grow downward. They clearly are using directional information,” Gilroy explains.

But remove gravity from the equation and things get wonky. And stressful. That’s where the team is hoping a common fungus, *Trichoderma harzianum*, will come in. On Earth, the fungus is known to be beneficial for plant growth, making plants hardier in the face of stressors. In space, it may help grow food for long-distance explorers.

“The moon and Mars — where I think we’re going to go — they’re a long way away,” Gilroy says. “You’re going to have to be able to be self-sustaining at a significant level.”

ELISE MAHON

Campus will become a living laboratory for sustainable practices.



Lake Street's Lost Golden Arches

We remember the one little McDonald's that did its best to keep campus supersized.

For almost four decades, the corner of State and Lake was home to a beloved institution where UW students could get a quick bite. No, not the lunch counter at Rennebohm Drug Store, though that had its fans. Across the street and one door down, at 441 N. Lake, stood McDonald's, offering those in need a quick infusion of all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, and sesame-seed buns.

This McDonald's franchise appeared on the campus scene in 1968, the same year that the Big Mac was added to the menu at all of the chain's restaurants. Ray Kroc himself — the man who turned, ahem, *Scottish cuisine* into an American phenomenon — made an appearance at the opening of the company's 1,031st outlet. Between then and 2006, the spot served the campus community with uncounted tons of beef, one quarter pound at a time, as well as McMuffins, McNuggets, and the famed french fries that were invented by **Edwin Traisman**, onetime administrator of the UW Food Research Institute.

By the 21st century, the Lake Street McDonald's was showing its age, and its owners felt it was too expensive to renovate. They sold the site to the U.S. Postal Ser-

vice, which has operated a post office there ever since.

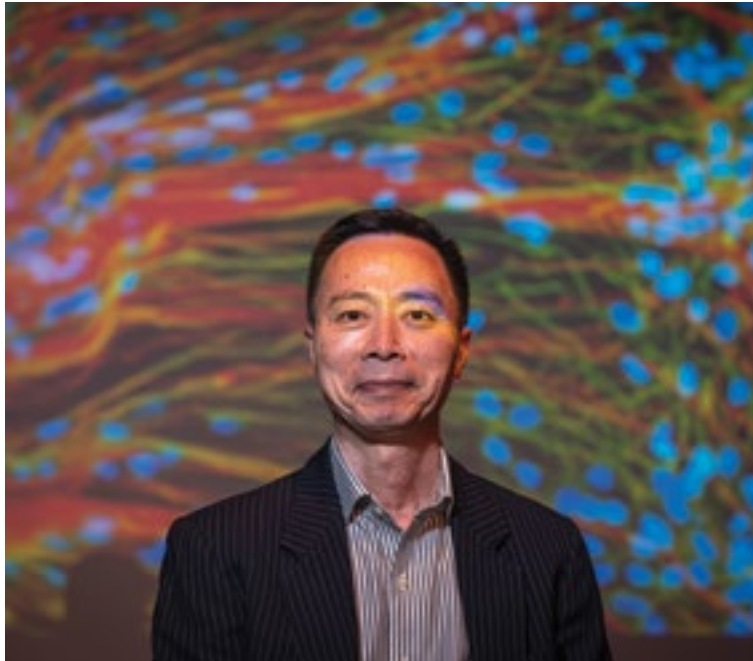
W marks the spot! This photo was taken circa 1973, when the McDonald's was five years old. Today, it's a post office. The structure to the left is now a convenience store, and the parking ramp to the right is being replaced with apartments.

vice, which has operated a post office there ever since.

The departure provoked mixed emotions. Then-alder **Austin King '03** told the *Badger Herald* that he wouldn't shed any tears over the loss of McDonald's. But **Charlie Burns '09** responded that losing it was upsetting. "That McDonald's used to be my pre-football game meeting place ... to get breakfast," he said. The McD's on Regent Street was too far away.

The post office still stands at 441 N. Lake, but the area around it is in flux. The city closed the Lake Street Campus Garage in December 2023, aiming to turn the lot into apartments, parking, retail space, and a bus station. The nearest McFlurry is still a mile away — 21 minutes by foot or seven minutes to the drive-thru.

JOHN ALLEN



ANDY MANIS

How to Print a Brain

A UW breakthrough could help treat disorders, says Su-Chun Zhang PhD'91.

A team of UW-Madison scientists has developed the first 3D-printed brain tissue that can grow and function like typical brain tissue. It's an achievement with important implications for scientists studying the brain and working on treatments for a broad range of neurological and neurodevelopmental disorders, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

"This could be a hugely powerful model to help us understand how brain cells and parts of the brain communicate in humans," says **Su-Chun Zhang PhD'91** (above), professor of neuroscience and neurology at the UW Waisman Center. "It could change the way we look at stem cell biology, neuroscience, and the pathogenesis of many neurological and psychiatric disorders."

Printing methods have limited the success of previous attempts to print brain tissue. Among other innovations, the UW researchers situated brain cells — neurons grown from induced pluripotent stem cells — in a softer gel than in previous attempts.

The printed cells form connections inside each printed layer as well as across layers, creating networks comparable to human brains. The neurons communicate, send signals, and interact with each other through neurotransmitters.

"Because we can print the tissue by design, we can have a defined system to look at how our human brain network operates," Zhang says. "We can look very specifically at how the nerve cells talk to each other under certain conditions."

The printed brain tissue could be used to study new drug candidates, brain growth, signaling between cells in Down syndrome, and interactions between healthy tissue and neighboring tissue affected by Alzheimer's.

EMILY LECLERC



JEFF MILLER

The new School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences building will be named Morgridge Hall after John '55 and Tashia '55 Morgridge, whose contributions have helped make it possible. The building will open next year with state-of-the-art classrooms, research facilities, and collaborative spaces, representing a significant UW investment in technological innovation.

The UW women's hockey team fell just short of winning its eighth national championship, losing 1-0 to Ohio State in the March 24 NCAA final. But what a season! The team won the Western Collegiate Hockey Association playoff championship and had two of the three finalists for the Patty Kazmaier Award: Casey O'Brien '24 and Kirsten Simms '26. And Mark Johnson '94 became the first NCAA women's hockey coach to win 600 games.



MK DENTON

In spring 2020, the pandemic canceled prom for many high school seniors, but on April 13, more than 1,000 of those disappointed students — now UW-Madison seniors — got a do-over. The Class of 2024 held an event called Senior Prom at the UW Discovery Building, featuring magnificent outfits, a photo-ready balloon arch, and, to everyone's relief, lots of non-socially-distanced dancing.

Milk Metrics

Babcock Dairy is as much a campus staple as Terrace sunsets and football Saturdays — each of which pairs beautifully with a scoop of Babcock’s signature frozen dessert. To tantalize your taste

buds, we’ve compiled a collection of Babcock Dairy data, complete with more than a daily (or yearly) serving of calcium.

MEGAN PROVOST '20

Got Milk?

Babcock Dairy processes an average of **1,500** gallons of milk per day. Half of this goes toward making ice cream, and the other half goes toward milk and cheese.

Triple Scoop

Babcock has seen plenty of flavors in its day, but its top three are perennial staples: **VANILLA, ORANGE CUSTARD CHOCOLATE CHIP,** and **CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DOUGH.**



Get It While It's Cold

Like tax accountants and retail workers, Babcock dairy products have busy seasons. Ice cream sales ramp up around April and run through September. A typical summer week at the Babcock Dairy Store will see more than 700 dishes of ice cream scooped. Cheese season picks up in October and runs through January, ensuring all holiday spreads feature a little taste of home for Badgers.



What's Cooler than Being Cool?

Babcock ice cream is stored in a freezer set at **-20 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT** (with a windchill of -40 degrees Fahrenheit). This allows the ice cream and mixed-in ingredients to set properly before being moved into the less-frigid freezers and dip cabinets of the Babcock Dairy Store and campus scoop shops.

If It Ain't Broke ...

The Babcock Dairy Plant recently got a much-needed upgrade, but the tried-and-true recipe for the ice cream base we know and love hasn't changed since Babcock was founded in **1957**. It still uses fresh, fluid milk; pure cane sugar; pure vanilla extract; 80 percent "airiness," compared to the federal maximum of 100 percent; and 12 percent butterfat, compared to the federal minimum of 10 percent.

With Cheese

Babcock Dairy sold more than **5,000** pounds of cheese in 2023.



22 Flavors

Babcock typically offers **22** varieties of cheese. During the plant's renovations, it pared the selection down to 12 but will build back to 22 within the year.



Fan Club

Babcock ships its dairy products all around the country. These three cities are home to its most loyal customers: **MADISON, CHICAGO,** and **DALLAS.**

Breaking Even

The milk and cheese that Babcock sells on campus are priced only to cover the cost of ingredients, labor, and distribution. In short, the dairy hub isn't turning a profit on keeping campus up on its calcium.

The Big Cheese(s)

At Babcock, three cheeses reign supreme: **AGED CHEDDAR, PILL HAVARTI,** and **GOUDA.**

Brain Freeze

Babcock sells an average of **75,000** gallons of ice cream every year.



JEFF MILLER

A New Entry to Picnic Point

The Lakeshore Nature Preserve has long held a special place in the hearts of Madison philanthropist **Jerry Frautschi '56** and his family. Now, with a \$14.3 million gift, Frautschi will help build a world-class visitor and education center at this iconic UW–Madison landmark.

“My family has lived in Madison since the 1800s, and we feel a great sense of responsibility to give back to the city and community that we love,” Frautschi says. “I am pleased that I am able to carry on my family’s tradition of philanthropy and community service and that visitors will have a welcoming gathering place with improved access to the trails that line the lakeshore.”

The Lakeshore Nature Preserve Frautschi Center is planned for the area outside the stone wall at the Picnic Point entrance. This location does not disrupt habitat within the preserve and is designed to increase natural habitat and stormwater filtration.

“We are fortunate to have such beautiful natural spaces on campus for recreation, research, and education,” says UW–Madison chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin**. “And we are exceptionally fortunate for Jerry and his family’s generosity and their commitment to creating this welcoming, accessible, and sustainable space for our students, employees, and visitors.”

The Frautschi family connection to the preserve began 36 years ago when Jerry and his brother, John, purchased what was known as Second Point along Lake Mendota’s shoreline. The property was in danger of being developed at the time, and the family was committed to preserving natural spaces. The brothers paid \$1.5 million for the land and then gifted the property to their father for Christmas in 1988. The Frautschis renamed the land Frautschi Point and donated it to the University of Wisconsin.

Construction on the facility is slated to start in 2025, and the center is scheduled to open in 2026.

TOD PRITCHARD



UW ATHLETICS

Former UW men’s basketball coach Bo Ryan has been named to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, joining the likes of Michael Jordan and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. In 14 seasons with the Badgers, Ryan notched the best winning percentage in Big Ten history and led the team to seven Big Ten titles — not to mention back-to-back Final Fours in 2014 and 2015 and an appearance in the national championship game.

No surprise to see UW–Madison ranked as one of the world’s top universities. The UW placed 39th overall in the 2023 *Times Higher Education* World Reputation Rankings. Thirty-one countries are represented on the list — and we wish you better luck next year, number 40 London School of Economics and Political Science.

Speaking of rankings worth bragging about, U.S. News & World Report’s list of “Best Graduate Schools” put the UW School of Education at number one in the country. And it’s no fluke: the school has placed in the top five for 11 straight years.

This summer, former Bachelor contestant Jenn Tran '20 will star in ABC's The Bachelorette, making her



ABC

the first Asian woman to lead the reality dating series in its 21-year history. “I just can’t help but think about how many people I’m inspiring and how many lives I am changing,” says Tran, who to us will forever be the Bachelorette.



JASON WEISS

Sowing 160,000 Seeds

New banners for Bascom Hall connect the UW and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Ho-Chunk artist **Molli Pauliot MA'20, PhDx'24** and UW associate professor of design studies **Marianne Fairbanks** were commissioned to create banners for the university's 175th anniversary, and they bonded over their mutual love of basketry, textiles, and beadwork. After completing their design work, they sent the two-dimensional graphics to **Stephen Hilyard**, a UW professor of digital arts, who used 3-D animation software to create the effect of 160,000 individual small beads called "seed beads."

The banners they designed — three panels, each about seven feet by 16 feet — were hung from the front of Bascom Hall. The piece is called *Seed by Seed*, incorporating symbols, imagery, and traditional colors of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

"The title of this piece reminds us of the work we are doing to acknowledge that this university sits on the ancestral homeland of the Ho-Chunk people, who

were forcibly removed from this place," Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin** said at a November 7 ceremony on Bascom Hill. "And it reminds us of our ongoing responsibilities to move our campus community from ignorance to awareness, and that this work can't be confined to a day, a month, or even a year. It's a work of a lifetime."

The installation of the banners coincided with Native November, an annual campus celebration of Indigenous culture. They remained up through the month, then returned during the spring semester as part of a regular rotation of designed banners.

"When the university first raised the flag of the Ho-Chunk Nation [three] years ago, it made national news," says Pauliot. "It also started a lot of discussions about the university and its relationships with Native Nations. That's what I'm hoping happens with these banners — that they continue this conversation and

expand on it."

Throughout the design process, Pauliot and Fairbanks drew inspiration from beaded bandolier bags — dazzling Ho-Chunk objects that showcased remarkable technical skill and were highly valued when trading with other tribes. Using the latest 3-D software, Hilyard sought to replicate some of that intricacy on a grand scale.

Pauliot finds the beads an apt metaphor for the developing relationship between UW-Madison and the Ho-Chunk Nation. She serves as the project assistant for Our Shared Future, a university initiative that represents the UW's commitment to respect the inherent sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

"In beadwork, you weave together, one by one, thousands of seed beads to form something beautiful," Pauliot says. "That's how I view Our Shared Future. With each little positive interaction, we are hopefully weaving together, seed by seed, a future based on collaboration and mutual respect."

DOUG ERICKSON

The banners replicate the intricacy of beaded bandolier bags, on a grand scale.

A Nap at the Gym

Catnap, meet the Badger nap. Visitors to UW–Madison’s new Bakke Recreation & Wellbeing Center can retreat from the bright lights of its traditional workout areas to a dim, quiet room with a replicated starry sky and a trio of nap pods.

You could mistake the sleeping vessels — formally called EnergyPods by the company MetroNaps — for personal spaceships. Attached to the reclining chairs are white spheres that wrap around the head and upper body, providing both privacy and the option for total darkness. The nap pods may look futuristic, but they satisfy a primal need for a student population that is susceptible to sleep deprivation. According to the National Sleep Foundation, more than half of college students average less than seven hours of sleep per night. And a lack of sleep is frequently linked to worse academic performance and a slew of other health risks.

The UW’s nap pods make it easy to catch up on z’s. Once you turn on the machine and plug in your headphones, you’re greeted by a soothing voice. You can simply set your timer and pass out, or you can customize your experience: recline or incline your position, turn on massage-like vibration, cycle through relaxing music tracks (or play your own), and adjust built-in lighting. As you approach the end of your rest session, the pods gently rattle you awake with an intensifying combination of light, sound, and vibration. The session times max out at 20 minutes.

“When we talk about sleep hygiene and wellness, we know that the most effective naps are when you’re not going into REM sleep,” says **Ellie Knoll ’20, MPH’22**, well-being coordinator for University Recreation & Wellbeing.

And Badgers have taken a lot of effective naps. During the pods’ debut semester last fall, they logged 4,538 sessions and 37,466 minutes of rest. They’re most popular on weekends, with highest demand from 4 to 8 p.m.

The nap pods do not require reservation and are located in the Bakke’s Rejuvenation room as part of a calming suite that includes a meditation studio, massage therapy rooms, and consultation space for wellness coaching.

“Bakke doesn’t feel like a traditional gym or rec center,” Knoll says. “It’s really about the whole person — and that includes taking care of your sleep.”

PRESTON SCHMITT ’14



BRUCE RICHTER



On February 20, Wisconsin governor **Tony Evers ’73, MS’76, PhD’86** signed the Guaranteed Admissions bill, which ensures that the top 5 percent of students in Wisconsin high school classes will be guaranteed admission to UW–Madison. The top 10 percent will be guaranteed admission to any other Universities of Wisconsin campus. The changes take effect for the entering Class of 2025. “We want students from every county of this great state to know that if they’re at the top of their high school class, UW–Madison can be for them,” says Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin**.

“For the better part of 175 years, the College of Engineering has made a profound impact on generations of engineering students and on citizens in Wisconsin and around the globe. The new building will position our college to magnify this impact.”

— **Ian Robertson**, dean of the UW College of Engineering, upon the signing of a bipartisan bill providing State of Wisconsin funding for a new building that will allow about 1,000 additional undergraduates in engineering

A FEDERAL BOOST FOR UW RESEARCH

UW–Madison is set to receive more than \$56 million in new funding for research initiatives after the passage of two federal appropriations packages.

The set of bipartisan bills, signed into law by President Joseph Biden in March, will fund the federal government through September 30. Both pieces of legislation included funding for research projects specific to the UW.

The bills' passage allows campus to continue research in several high-demand areas, including next-generation energy development and the social and economic vitality of rural communities. Funded initiatives include \$28.75 million for the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center; \$10 million for PANTHER, a biomedical research program addressing traumatic brain injuries; \$5 million for the Center for Unmanned Aircraft System Propulsion; and \$2 million to establish a regional center to combat the fentanyl crisis.

The funded initiatives reflect UW–Madison's diverse research portfolio — one of the nation's largest. Last year, the university topped \$1.5 billion in research expenditures, ranking eighth among all public and private universities.

"This funding is a testament to UW–Madison's leadership in research and innovation," says interim vice chancellor for research **Cynthia Czajkowski**. "It reinforces our commitment to address the state and nation's most pressing challenges, from enhancing rural economies and driving innovation in the dairy industry to advancing research in sustainability and biofuels."

RODEE SCHNEIDER '04, MA'11

CLIPPING MINUTES OFF STROKE SURGERY

Four recent UW–Madison biomedical engineering graduates have invented a simple device that could shave minutes off stroke and aneurysm surgery — minutes that could be crucial in preserving neurological function.

Surgeons use long, thin guidewires to thread catheters into the body's vascular system to address problem areas, such as a blood clot that's causing a stroke. They currently rely on technicians to help them load a torque device at the end of the wire to help maneuver it.

The new device is a small plastic cylinder that allows surgeons to simply clip it on at any point along the guidewire without needing to wait on a technician and without needing to slide it off to change catheters or place another therapeutic device, such as a stent.

"The surgeon can just clip it on and get the catheter up to where you want it and then clip it off, deliver the catheter, deliver the therapy, and clip it on if you need it again," says **William Hayes '23**, who served as team lead on the project. "It's just right there for you, rather than having to have another person six feet away fiddling with the end" of the guidewire.

The device has won two university awards, and the team hopes to license it for commercial use.

TOM ZIEMER '07



JEFF MILLER

A Badger Hanging Tough

Former assistant basketball coach **Howard Moore '95** was honored on court before a men's basketball game on March 2. It was his first return to the Kohl Center since a 2019 accident that killed his wife and daughter and seriously injured him. At halftime, UW athletics announced that new offices in the Kohl Center will be named the Howard Moore Family Men's Basketball Offices. Moore played for the UW from 1990 to 1995, helping to return the Badgers to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1947; and he served as assistant coach from 2005 to 2009 and 2015 to 2019. "Howard Moore represents everything it means to be a Badger," says UW athletic director **Chris McIntosh '04, MS'19**. "His impact here is deep, and his legacy should be attached to this program forever."



CLINT THAYER/UW DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

A Milestone in Alzheimer’s Research

The UW School of Medicine and Public Health has received the largest National Institutes of Health grant in the university’s history to lead a national Alzheimer’s disease study.

The grant, with anticipated funding totaling up to \$150 million, will fund a five-year initiative that involves all 37 Alzheimer’s Disease Research Centers in the United States, establishing a standardized brain imaging and blood plasma test protocol. There is more than one kind of dementia, and patients can have more than one at the same time, known as “mixed dementia.” The project will help physicians determine which type a patient has so they can provide better treatment.

Researchers are beginning to understand that mixed dementia occurs more frequently than previously realized and can cause multiple changes in the brain. For example, individuals can be initially diagnosed with and treated for Alzheimer’s disease, but their brains may also show signs of vascular dementia or Lewy body dementia.

Without knowing the true cause of patients’ dementia, physicians can’t properly treat them, says **Sterling Johnson** (above), study leader and professor of medicine at the School of Medicine and Public Health.

“This study represents a significant milestone in Alzheimer’s research,” he says. “We can shed light on the complex interplay of multiple pathologies contributing to dementia, ultimately advancing our understanding and treatment” of the condition.

The research team aims to recruit at least a quarter of participants from historically underrepresented communities.

“Health disparities are associated with a broad, complex, and inter-related array of factors,” Johnson says, “and it is vital we ensure our findings are applicable to all individuals affected by these devastating conditions.”

JESSIE GERACI-PEREZ



Astronomers have discovered a planet closer and younger than any other Earth-sized world yet identified — a remarkably hot place whose proximity to our own planet and to a star like our sun offers a unique opportunity to study how planets evolve. “It’s a useful planet because it may be like an early Earth,” says UW astronomy assistant professor Melinda Soares-Furtado, who co-led the study that identified it, along with Benjamin Capistrant ’21.

In its first season, the UW curling team became national champions, beating Princeton University in the March 10 final in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Curling is an Olympic sport played on ice in which teams slide heavy granite stones toward a target — and obviously, UW students know a thing or two about ice.



ALTHEA DOTZOUR

Badger football is installing a heated field in Camp Randall Stadium for the 2024 season. An expansion of the college football playoff season could bring late-December games to Camp Randall, and the field surface will be safer with a radiant heating system underneath to keep it from freezing.

PROHIBITION MAY HAVE EXTENDED LIFESPANS

A new study found that people who were born in “dry” counties during the Prohibition era lived an additional 1.7 years, compared to those born in “wet” counties. Because parts of the United States became dry through state and federal regulation at different times between 1900 and 1930, data from this period provided a natural basis for comparison.

Jason Fletcher MS’03, PhD’06 of the La Follette School of Public Affairs is a coauthor on the study, which was the first to look at the long-term effects of Prohibition on longevity.

“Researchers now understand that exposures during pregnancy, due to interruptions to fetal development, can have long-term cascading effects on later-life health,” Fletcher says. He adds that recent advances in data analysis allowed the researchers to gain new insights about the impact of 100-year-old laws.

The findings could have implications for public health policy during a time when the number of mothers who drink during pregnancy has risen from 9.2 percent in 2011 to nearly 14 percent in 2022.

TOMMY JAIME



PHOTOQUEST



Cows: The Video Game

Move over, *FarmVille*. There’s a new farming video game on the market. *Mooving Cows*, developed by UW-Madison researchers and released on app stores in January, provides an interactive training experience for the dairy industry.

While UW assistant professor **Jennifer Van Os** traveled the state in her role as an animal welfare extension specialist, the most common request she fielded from dairy producers was to train staff on proper cow handling. Continuing education in animal handling is an industry requirement, but most free training resources are low-engagement readings and videos. *Mooving Cows* offers an active learning environment that transports players to a virtual farm and simulates cow handling from the safety of a tablet.

“In a digital game setting, we can remove the risks of causing stress or injury to real cows or people,” Van Os says.

In *Mooving Cows*, players control the actions of a farmhand and are tasked with guiding cows out of a pen or around a milking parlor. Over eight levels with escalating difficulty, they learn how to gently direct the animals’ movement and how to cautiously handle unpredictable cows in heat. The game rewards patience with stubborn cows and penalizes rash actions that can startle them, such as sudden movements and loud noises. The player’s actions affect the cows’ behaviors, stress levels, and productivity. The happier the cows at the end of the level, the more milk for the farmer.

An early evaluation of *Mooving Cows* found that it increased knowledge and confidence in cow handling for the Wisconsin dairy employees who played it. Within two months of release, the free app had been downloaded nearly 7,000 times by users across 98 countries.

One reviewer wrote: “This is a great move forward for animal handling education. ... [The] behavioral tendencies from the animals very much reminded me of difficulties I had in training farmhands.”

PRESTON SCHMITT ’14

Food Is Fuel

Performance dietitian Jensen Skinner '18 keeps Badger athletes up and running.

If you are what you eat, then **Jensen Skinner '18** is broccoli and french fries. Her balanced approach to nutrition is not only a personal philosophy but also a critical component of her job as a performance dietitian for UW athletics. Overseeing softball, women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, swimming and diving, and tennis, Skinner is responsible for helping student-athletes stay on track to meet their personal and performance-based nutrition goals.

"Being a dietitian is so much more than telling an athlete what to eat," she says. "It's about meeting the person where they're at, understanding their unique needs, and deciding what success looks like to them."

Using an "athlete-driven approach," Skinner offers comprehensive services, including

nutrition advice, performance and hydration testing, and body composition analysis. Ensuring that nutrition advice caters to each sport's requirements, she facilitates game-day fueling, travel meals, and team-based education, like cooking classes or themed talks for each team.

"We look at what energy systems athletes use to see how we can support them on a biochemical and metabolic level. Even in the same sport, sprinters versus distance swimmers or soccer midfielders versus goalies, they're using different energy systems, so their needs can look very different," she says. "The biggest part

Skinner takes an individualized approach to athlete nutrition. Even those in the same sport can have very different needs.

of being an effective dietitian is considering the individual."

Skinner is also responsible for operating Refuel, the Kohl Center's newly opened fueling station and smoothie bar for student-athletes. The station is centrally located between locker rooms, making it easy for students to pick up nutritious snacks, shakes, and customized smoothies on the go.

"Nutrition is something that you do three times a day, every single day, regardless of if you're practicing, in the off-season, or [in] retirement," says Skinner. "We're focused on building life-long habits and good attitudes toward food."

HAYDEN LAMPHERE

PHOTO BY BRYCE RICHTER



“Here, You Need to Listen”

The UW’s Center for Interfaith Dialogue teaches students to get along despite their differences.

UW–Madison launched the Center for Interfaith Dialogue last year — and not a minute too soon, given the onset of the Israel–Palestine war. Though it had been in the works for a while, the center opened just as the university urgently needed a place where students from different religious backgrounds could get to know one another and engage in civil dialogue. Interim director **Ulrich Rosenhagen** envisioned a program in which undergraduates serve as “interfaith fellows,” educating themselves about religious traditions while fostering a spirit of understanding in the UW community. He wants them to graduate with the skills to live amicably with fellow citizens, even amid disagreements.

Does that sound like an impossible dream at this turbulent moment? The Center for Interfaith Dialogue plans to make it a reality.

The center is a successor of the UW Center for Religion and Global Citizenry and the Lubar Institute. What is the current mission?

One of the core ideas is to have a learning community with students of different religious and nonreligious backgrounds, including religious minori-

ties. They learn together and get to know each other, and then they serve on campus as ambassadors-at-large for interfaith matters.

What do students get out of the experience?

As a big public university, we have a mission to form responsible citizens. They need to have four years after high school to go out and see how they can contribute to society, function in a democracy, and manage diversity. Student Affairs invested in this effort by starting the Center for Interfaith Dialogue.



How does the program work?

Ten to 15 students meet for a full year, hopefully stay together even when times get rough, and learn to accept each other. On social media, people don't listen anymore, but here, you need to listen. You can't just dominate the conversation. And that's a learning process.

In the first semester, we build trust and form community. The next stage is religious literacy, because interfaith dialogue only works when you know a bit about other practices and convictions. Your peers share their traditions and how they make sense of the world. Then second semester starts with visiting different worship spaces and exploring contemplative practices so students can experience other traditions in the safety of the group. Finally, they have to run events on campus, like interfaith storytelling or an interfaith conference.

So when the students graduate, they're ready for interfaith leadership.

What role did the center play when the Israel-Palestine war broke out?

We created a faith-leaders advisory board, which is a diverse group of people who work with

students. We got them talking to each other after October 7 and came up with an important statement that reflected on civil engagement without harming each other. And that was very helpful.

I know of parents on either side who have called the dean of students and asked, "Is my child safe?" There is a lot of concern, and we need to find ways to bring together the different student groups with their very different perspectives on what's happening in the Middle East. The center is holding a shared space for the students.

At stressful moments, how can campus balance freedom of speech with a sense of belonging?

The First Amendment is one of the great accomplishments of civilization, but if free speech means that we dominate conversations with no concern for what holds us together as a community, then we need to readjust this approach. Often, it's the better choice not to provoke and not to push. That might be different for different people. But I think our insistence on First Amendment rights is moving us toward exhaustion. If we just take a deep breath, listen, maybe not use social media constantly, we'll have more time to digest. And if students can learn this during their four years here, that's a big step.

What will it take to learn that lesson?

Students have safe spaces on campus that allow them to freely be themselves. This is important. But as a larger community, we also need to learn how to work through different perspectives and disagreement. The center wants to create a safe space for students to express themselves while also training them to engage in conversations across differences.

How will UW-Madison — and the world — benefit when that happens?

Campus is a diverse community, and it's all very fragile. This is not a factory to produce engineers. It's a vibrant space that reflects society and culture. The diversity we have here is the diversity we have in America. Universities are trying to model a way to interact with each other and live together as a community, despite our disagreements.

We tend to lack the institutions that train people to be a little more civilized. And I think we have an opportunity to do precisely that with our students at the Center for Interfaith Dialogue.

Interview by Dean Robbins

Photo by Bryce Richter

Rosenhagen:
"We tend to lack the institutions that train people to be a little more civilized."

ART FOR ALL

What makes a good public painting or sculpture? Here are UW-Madison's most successful works in plain sight.

BY PRESTON SCHMITT '14



Máquina
*marries art and
engineering.*



The virtue of public art on a college campus is that students can interact with it however they wish. There's no pressure or judgment, whether they contemplate the artworks to divine their meaning or routinely overlook them in the mad dash to class. Either way, the installations promise to be there the next day, a backdrop of the campus experience.

When I was a journalism student at UW–Madison, I can't say I ever looked at Vilas Hall's *Freedom of Communication* for more than a few seconds. But I do know that the building's exterior would have felt naked without it. And now when I return a decade older (and wiser), I appreciate the mosaic's artistry and message.

Fortunately, public art is patient.

Wisconsin ranks 49th among states in public funding for the arts. It spends 18 cents per capita, compared to Minnesota's leading \$9.62, according to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. A major setback was the 2011 repeal of the state's Percent for Art Program, which for three decades had funded artworks for new or renovated public buildings, including those at the UW.

But the university remains a sanctuary for public art, providing joy to passersby. Its collection grows every year and enlivens nearly every block of campus. Here's a look at the UW's most significant pieces and what makes them shine.

A Silent Teacher of Patriotism

Days after the firing on Fort Sumter in 1861, Wisconsin governor Alexander Randall ordered the state fairgrounds in Madison to be converted into a training site for Civil War soldiers. Carpenters turned cattle sheds into cozy barracks, and over the next four years, Camp Randall welcomed three-quarters of the 90,000 Wisconsin troops who served the Union. When they left for the front lines, they marched through the same Dayton Street entrance where the monumental Camp Randall Memorial Arch now stands.

The state dedicated the arch in June 1912 in front of hundreds of Civil War veterans. "This arch symbolizes the triumph of right over wrong, of freedom over oppression, the triumph of liberty-loving and freedom-enjoying citizens over those who enslave," Col. Duncan McGregor said during an address. He added that the granite monument "fulfills all the demands of taste, solidity, and durability." But not everyone agreed on that point.

In 1911, the state legislature had appropriated funds for the arch on the historic grounds owned by the UW. After a commission hired the Woodbury Granite Company of Vermont for the design and construction, the *Wisconsin State Journal* published a series of scathing editorials and critiques from national artists. The newspaper called the proposed design "inartistic," "inappropriate," and





The arch, once considered “a laughingstock,” is now a cherished symbol.

“a laughingstock.” Architect John Russell Pope wrote, “I do not remember of ever seeing anything anywhere that has less either sculptural or architectural qualities than this thing.”

In the face of public pressure, the commission announced that it would redesign the arch and work with architect Lew Porter, who was already supervising the construction of the state capitol. It’s not clear how much of the design was altered, as the final product closely resembled the earliest published plans of a roughly 30-foot-high monument.

Perched atop the monument is Old Abe, the bald eagle that served as mascot for the Eighth Wisconsin Infantry. Two statues, representing a young soldier and an old veteran, flank the arch. Interior plaques commemorate the regiments that trained there. And nearby, a marker for the Lincoln Heritage Trail honors the Union’s commander in chief. The marker ties the arch to another iconic work of the era: Adolph Weinman’s bronze *Abraham Lincoln* atop Bascom Hill.

The Camp Randall Memorial Arch symbolizes the triumph of right over wrong, of freedom over oppression.

Today, the Camp Randall arch is widely cherished as both a historical symbol and a striking entrance to the stadium grounds. As a Civil War veteran who praised the monument wrote to his fellow soldiers: “Long may it stand, a silent teacher of patriotism.”

The Greatest Lumberjack

When the Memorial Union opened in 1928, its rustic Paul Bunyan Room on the first floor transported visitors to the logging bunkhouses of northern Wisconsin. Flagstone flooring, hewn oak furniture, and warm lighting imitated the quarters where workers passed time by telling tall tales of the greatest lumberjack of them all. And it’s in this room that a young UW artist brought the lore to life with the world’s first Paul Bunyan murals.

As part of the New Deal in 1933, the federal government established the Public Works of Art Project to employ artists and beautify buildings with American imagery. James Watrous ’31, MS’33, PhD’39, then a graduate student and later an art professor, earned a \$25 weekly wage to fill the Paul Bunyan Room’s walls.

“It seemed a bountiful wage to a young, unemployed artist,” he later wrote.

Although funding dried up six months later, Watrous vowed to finish the 11 panels and two maps on his own dime. Each piece took considerable time to complete because of his finicky medium: tempera,

an ancient paint mixture of powdered pigment, water, and egg yolk. The bygone technique gives the *Paul Bunyan Murals* a bright, distinctive luster, with blues and reds boldly emerging from earth-tone scenery. Watrous finished the set in 1936.

The whimsical drawings cover a range of Bunyan legends: his dayslong fight with the big Swede Hels Helsen, which carved the Black Hills; his blue ox, Babe, who grew so fast that he busted out of a new barn every night; his blacksmith, Big Ole, who sank a foot deep in solid rock when he held the ox's iron shoes.

If you examine the murals closely, you can spot one with a slightly different styling and sheen. That panel tells the story of chief cook Sourdough Sam, whose "griddle was so big that his flunkies greased it with bacon slabs strapped to their feet." Watrous re-created it in 1993; the original, which drew from folklore, depicted the workers in a racially insensitive way.

That same year, UW students formed the Multicultural Mural Committee at the Wisconsin Union. Their effort led to Chicano artist Leo Tanguma's *The Nourishment of Our Human Dignity* and *The Inheritance of Struggle* in 1996. Neighboring the Paul Bunyan Room, those murals show representation in art at its best.

Watrous died in 1999, but his presence on campus still looms large. Shocked upon learning in 1939 that the UW was storing artworks in Bascom Hall's basement, he tirelessly campaigned for a campus art museum to preserve the university's collections. When the Elvehjem Art Center opened in 1970, Watrous was widely recognized as the driving force.

An Unspoken Bond

Outside the north end of UW–Madison's Elvehjem Building sits *Mother and Child*. Stoic, protective mother stares into the distance; innocent, carefree child folds his arms into her chest, their two figures becoming one. Anyone can relate to their unspoken bond and unconditional love.

The life-size work is one of six authorized bronze casts made from William Zorach's Spanish marble sculpture. The original *Mother and Child* won a show prize from the Chicago Art Institute in 1931 and found a permanent home at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The UW acquired its *Mother and Child* in 1977 as an anniversary gift from the Class of 1927 to the fledgling Elvehjem Art Center (now the Chazen Museum of Art). The sculpture, originally installed by the south entrance on University Avenue, was envisioned as the first of several to surround the building. While such an ambitious sculpture garden never came to be, *Mother and Child* now anchors a courtyard of its own. The quiet, contemplative setting suits a work that Zorach described as his "finest piece of sculpture."



Above: The world's first Paul Bunyan murals. Right: A vision of unconditional love.

He wrote: "There is nothing more emotionally significant than the relationship between mother and child. ... Life exists through them and could not exist without them."

Creative Problem-Solving

In 1994, UW–Madison transformed an unsightly parking lot in front of Engineering Hall into something of an actual park with green space and tree-lined walking paths. The centerpiece of this reimagined Engineering Mall is a 4,500-pound, 18-foot-tall stainless steel fountain that tends to overshadow it all — by design. Meet the mighty *Máquina*.

Spanish for "machine" and alternatively called the Descendant's Fountain, *Máquina* marries art and engineering. Saint Louis-based sculptor and UW alumnus William Conrad Severson '47 — who donated the piece in memory of his father, Edwin 1921 — wanted it to represent "engineering tools and the engineer's role in creative problem-solving."

The fountain's pair of half-disk pieces appear suspended in air, perpetually on the verge of interlocking. Their C-like shape resembles precision measuring tools. For years, *Máquina's* internal jets

For more stunning images of UW–Madison's public art, see this article on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.



JEFF MILLER

produced steady streams of water that traveled down the sculpture and along a channel to a reflecting pool on the opposite end of the mall. The fountain was connected to computers that could synchronize the mall's lights, speakers, water patterns, directional stream, and compressed air functions. The fountain's winter mode produced hanging icicles; in warmer months, "Westminster Chimes" and UW school songs rang out as jet streams pulsated to the melody.

The College of Engineering and Dean John Bollinger '57, PhD'61 long championed *Máquina* as a hands-on laboratory for students. As late as 2009, student groups met in an underground control room to maintain it and design new features. These included motion-sensor columns that could manipulate water patterns with a wave of the hand; an internet livestream that allowed viewers to remotely control the fountain; and a touch screen in the Engineering Hall lobby with similar functions.

But the water stopped flowing over the last decade. With outdated technology and patchwork programming, simply running the fountain became a challenge of its own. The control room no longer meets modern safety regulations, and the water pipes and pump system likely need to be replaced.



The college has instead turned its attention to a new engineering building, for which it secured funding this year.

Máquina may have met its functional demise. But as an art piece, it still fulfills the original vision that Severson outlined three decades ago: to be “a provocative image that is imprinted upon the mind and experience.”

Overwhelmed with Light and Color

Legendary glass sculptor Dale Chihuly MS’67 has often credited water as a source of his creativity, with a custom plastic clipboard and wax pencil next to his shower as proof. While studying at the nation’s first studio glass program at the UW in the mid-1960s, he chose to live in a small cabin on the shores of Lake Mendota.

“I remember the sparkle of the lake,” Chihuly said in 1997, the same year he was commissioned for an art installation at the new Kohl Center on campus.

That lake view inspired *The Mendota Wall*, all 1,284 blown-glass pieces. Their radiant greens, blues, reds, and yellows reflect the colors of sunlight hitting the water. The 140-foot wall installation — Chihuly’s largest at the time — greets visitors as it spans the Kohl Center’s curving main concourse. More than 100 spotlights, each carefully positioned, brilliantly illuminate the glass.

“I want people to be overwhelmed with light and color in some way that they’ve never experienced,” the Seattle-based artist has famously said. And by that measure, *The Mendota Wall* delivers.

If you try, you can identify around 50 clusters of glass in varying shapes and sizes. But as with counting waves, the number turns arbitrary. Scattered, onion-like bulbs sprout coils and tendrils that intersect and curl over each other. Chihuly considered the installation part of his series of “anemone walls,” and indeed, the tentacle glass forms look like they could have come from the bottom of the sea.

The blown-glass pieces of the 140-foot Mendota Wall reflect the colors of sunlight hitting the water.

The state paid \$144,000 for *The Mendota Wall*. Chihuly’s proposal read simply: “A wall of light. A wall of effervescence. A wall of color.” By the time it was done, Chihuly estimated that the piece was worth close to \$1 million. He considered the balance a gift to the university “that was seminal in my career.”

Harvey Littleton, the late UW art professor and



JEFF MILLER



INGRID JORDON-THADEN (3)



the pioneer of studio glass, applauded his former student's "riot of color" in *The Mendota Wall*.

"It brings joy to the building," he said.

The Holy Trinity of Nature

UW-Madison's Botany Garden on University Avenue boasts more than 500 species of plants from around the world. But one flower stands far above them all: a saucer magnolia, carved in limestone as part of the three-piece *Essence* sculpture that dots the garden's winding paths.

The Flower joins the *The Seed* and *The Fruit* in honoring fundamental stages of the plant life cycle. Susan A. Falkman's works were commissioned in 2004 during an expansion that doubled the Botany Garden's footprint.

Precise detailing and intricate textures unite the limestone pieces, but each can stand on its own. *The Seed* captures the intimacy of a plant emerging from the earth and into the light as a chrysalis wrapped by tender leaves. *The Flower*, placed near the garden's magnolia family, lives up to the natural beauty of full bloom through its delicate rendering. And *The Fruit*, sited by the Newton Apple Tree, provides a playful note with its half-eaten state and exposed core. A lone seed dangles from the apple's core, leaving us with the promise of new life.

Falkman, a Wisconsin-based sculptor who

Left: Chihuly's art installation at the Kohl Center is "a wall of effervescence." Right: Essence honors the fundamental stages of the plant life cycle.

refined her craft in Greece and Italy, wanted the work to stay true to “the essence of a botanic garden — the holy trinity of nature,” she says. But for the close observer, she left other secrets to discover. The apple’s uneaten back side, for example, takes the shape of a female torso. From a certain angle, *The Seed* looks like a caped monk figure on the move.

Still, Falkman’s chief interest is the purity of the magnolia blossom.

“The streaming of life’s energy,” she says. “I love carving that.”

The Threshold to the Rest of Your Life

As you enter Nancy Nicholas Hall, home of UW–Madison’s School of Human Ecology, *Threshold* greets you across the main foyer. The giant mosaic proves the ultimate statement piece, spanning 20 feet across the wall and sparkling with vivid color.

Appropriately, *Threshold* commands the connection point between the old building and the large new addition, which opened in 2012. But Chicago-based artist Lynn Basa drew inspiration from what lies *behind* the mosaic’s wall: Observatory Hill. A series of spherical onyx orbs — originally aglow with LED backlighting — invite observers into a new dimension.

“If you looked all the way through the hill that it’s against, you’d see the lake on the other side,” Basa says. “The idea of the glowing onyx was students being able to see into their future through these tunnels or openings.”

Human ecology explores the interplay between people and their environments, so Basa also played with motion, flow, and connectedness. *Threshold* features dramatic changes in scale: the massive onyx orbs; the medium-sized, bean-shaped slabs of brown marble; and the tiny pieces of Byzantine glass, smalti, and ceramic tiles. Strings of tesserae drift from one end to the other, linking all parts to the whole. Dominant greens are joined by mesmerizing blues, browns, and gold. A sprinkling of reflective tiles project an even broader range of color.

The backlighting has since burned out, but the mosaic still glows under skylights and stands as a remarkable technical feat. “You don’t see any other mosaics where people use all those materials,” Basa says of the painstaking process, “and now I understand why.”

The title *Threshold* represents more than just the piece’s physical location. It also speaks to the students who pass by it every day.

“College is one of the most significant, formative times in any person’s life,” Basa says. “You’re not the same person coming out as you were going in. You’re on the threshold to the rest of your life.”

“We Will Survive”

In September 2023, *Effigy: Bird Form* found its way home. The Truman Lowe MFA’73 sculpture,





first displayed at the White House a quarter century prior, secured a rightful resting spot on UW–Madison’s Observatory Hill near the Native burial mounds that inspired it.

Lowe, the prominent Ho-Chunk artist and longtime UW professor, was commissioned for the *Honoring Native America* exhibition that opened at the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden in 1997. It was the first collection of contemporary Native fine art to be shown at the White House, earning the praise of First Lady Hillary Clinton for “truly express[ing] our millennium themes: to honor the past and imagine the future.”

Before the UW acquired it, *Effigy* was on display for more than 20 years at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

The sculpture is made of dozens of two-inch aluminum rods, curved and welded together to form the skeleton of a bird. Its lattice outline gives “a sense of invisibility of the entire form,” Lowe said, to honor “those mounds that have disappeared.” The

Above: Threshold invites viewers into a new dimension. Below: Effigy: Bird Form communicates permanence.

bird hovers just above the ground with wings fully spread, posing almost like a fighter jet. The horizontal design was intentional: Lowe wanted *Effigy* to be visible from the presidential helicopter at the White House.

Lowe, who died in 2019, was particularly inspired by a bird mound on Observatory Hill with a wingspan of 50 feet. *Effigy* now keeps watch over the mound and its neighboring two-tailed water spirit. Dozens of other mounds are extant on campus, which occupies the ancestral land of the Ho-Chunk.

Tragically, many mounds in the area have been destroyed by agricultural and urban development over the last two centuries. And so *Effigy*’s permanence may be its most powerful message.

“This is my attempt to pay my respects, to celebrate the longevity of our history and our traditions,” Lowe said of the sculpture. “We have endured, and I know we will survive.” ●

Preston Schmitt '14 is On Wisconsin's senior staff writer.

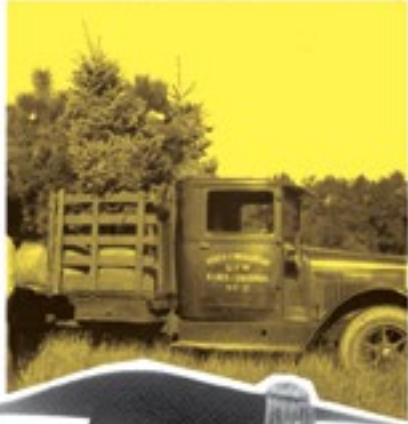


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UNSUNG SCIENTISTS

Despite significant contributions, these UW researchers have largely been forgotten by history.

BY ELISE MAHON

From top to bottom are: Song Kue, Miyoshi Ikawa, Marguerite Davis, Eloise Gerry, Sister Mary Kenneth Keller, and Leo Butts. Their work had key impacts on modern marvels such as computers, blood-thinner medications, and vitamins.

In subjects ranging from medicine to ecology, engineering to computer science, the University of Wisconsin's top-ranked research program has made valuable innovations for the past 175 years. Just a few examples: Harry Steenbock 1916 revealed the benefits of vitamin D; Karl Paul Link 1922, MS1923, PhD1925 discovered the blood thinner warfarin, and James Thomson was a trailblazer in stem-cell research.

But what about some of the lesser-known UW scientists, often overlooked in their time, who made key discoveries? Science is a team effort, even if that isn't always reflected in the history books. While the following scientists aren't household names, the research they did and the training they received from UW-Madison helped advance their fields and improve the world.

WARFARIN WARRIOR

Although most people haven't heard of Miyoshi Ikawa MS'45, PhD'48, they probably have heard of warfarin, the medicine used as a blood thinner.

The story of warfarin, which was patented in 1947, began at the UW in 1933, when a farmer sought the help of biochemistry professor Karl Paul Link. The farmer's cows, who were eating moldy sweet clover hay, began mysteriously dying from internal bleeding. The animals' blood wasn't clotting, so Link and his research team decided to find out why.

Once they discovered the chemical compound responsible for the cows' thin blood, the researchers worked in the lab to create new variations of the substance, each with slight modifications to its chemical structure. Their goal was to maintain the compound's blood-thinning effect.

Ikawa, a graduate student in the Link lab; fellow lab member Mark Stahmann PhD'41; and Link created analogue 42, the version that would become what we know today as warfarin. The researchers

found the compound was useful as a rat poison. Later, they realized it could also be used as a drug to help people with blood-clotting disorders, a pivotal discovery that has saved countless lives.

Ikawa's studies here, however, were linked to a darker part of our nation's past. In the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, anti-Japanese sentiment was rampant in the United States.

The first woman in the country to complete a doctorate in computer science was a UW-Madison grad — and a nun.

Ikawa was studying at the California Institute of Technology in 1942 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the West Coast a military zone and authorized the forced evacuation and incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans. With the help of his CalTech graduate adviser, Ikawa was able to relocate to Madison and find a position in Link's lab.

After finishing his graduate studies at the UW, he returned to the West Coast for postgraduate research at CalTech and UC-Berkeley and became a professor at the University of New Hampshire.

COMPUTER VISIONARY

The first woman in the country to complete a doctorate in computer science was a UW-Madison grad — and a nun.

In 1932, at 18 years old, Mary Kenneth Keller PhD'65 entered the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Soon after taking her religious vows, Keller began a teaching career and, during summer break, pursued a math degree. She was teaching high school math on the west side of Chicago in the early 1960s when she began to realize the rising importance of computers as a tool in mathematical computation. Intent on learning more, she attended a summer program at Dartmouth College, where she and other high school teachers learned how to operate computers and write simple programs.

Later, when Keller was in her 50s and teaching math during summer school at Iowa's Clarke College, the school's president sent her to UW-Madison to pursue a PhD in computer science.

In her dissertation, "Inductive Inference on Computer Generated Patterns," Keller explored the ways computers could be used to mechanize tasks and solve problems.

After earning her doctorate, Keller established the computer science department at Clarke College and gave lectures on computer science at other institutions whenever she could.

She was an avid proponent for women seeking higher education and for working women in general, especially mothers. She was even known to encourage her college students to bring their children to class.

GRADE-A SCIENTIST

We know that vitamins exist today thanks in part to the dedication of Marguerite Davis '26.

Davis, a Wisconsin native, grew up inspired by the women's rights movement in the late 19th century. She also had an interest in science and began pursuing higher education at the UW before transferring to the University of California to complete her bachelor's degree. Called back to Wisconsin to help look after her father's house, Davis hoped to continue her work in science.

Enter: Elmer McCollum, a professor in the UW Department of Agricultural Chemistry. In the early 1900s, McCollum was attempting to create a mixture of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats that could replace the standard feed given to animals and optimize their diets. But the animals fed on McCollum's experimental diet experienced stunted growth, sickness, and even blindness. Something was missing.

With Davis's help, McCollum began tedious and time-consuming studies to uncover what that something was, helping to feed, care for, and take detailed observations of lab rats.

Some rats were fed a dairy-based fat while others were fed olive oil or lard. The rats fed oil or lard became sick and failed to grow properly, but those who consumed dairy fat continued to grow. Realizing there must be important compounds in the dairy fat, McCollum and Davis extracted those compounds and added them to the oil and lard.

Their hypothesis was confirmed when rats fed the fortified oil or lard were as healthy as those fed dairy fat. In 1913, McCollum and Davis identified the important compound as vitamin A. The two guessed that other foods must also hold these vital nutrients, launching subsequent experiments to pinpoint these substances and their benefits.

Each year Davis worked in the lab, McCollum requested a salary for her, but it wasn't until her sixth year that he finally received the funding. Davis continued to make vital contributions, changing the field of nutrition as we know it.

TRAILBLAZING PHARMACIST

Leo Butts 1920 was the first African American to graduate from the UW School of Pharmacy. Butts grew up in Madison, where he was active in civil rights in high school. He became the first African American to play for the UW varsity football team and enlisted in the Students' Army Training Corps.

But arguably his most important accomplishment at the university was his groundbreaking senior

thesis researching the status of African American pharmacists. Butts pieced it together despite limited documentation in the UW libraries. He reached out to prominent African American pharmacists and pharmaceutical organizations, collecting anecdotes and statistics on the number of existing African American pharmacists and drugstores.

In his thesis, he also demonstrated the benefits of increased cooperation between African American doctors and pharmacists: improvements in the health of Black communities and their sense of connection.

After graduating, Butts worked as a pharmacist in Gary, Indiana, but he lost his job during the Great Depression and worked for a time as a mail carrier. Eventually, he returned to his chosen profession, operating a pharmacy until he passed away in 1956. He provided both care and a gathering place for his community.

Unfortunately, the sparse information on African American pharmacists persisted into the 1980s, when James Buchanan '43, the School of Pharmacy's second known African American graduate, found himself wondering if he had been the first.

SHE SAVED TREES BEFORE IT WAS COOL

The nation's first woman microscopist was a UW graduate and professor. Eloise Gerry PhD1921 moved to Madison in 1910 to join the U.S. Department of Agriculture's then-new Forest Products Laboratory. The lab conducted innovative wood and fiber-use research that contributed to the sustainability of forests.

Gerry also continued her education, studying botany and plant pathology. Later, she became a professor at the UW.

In 1916, she started her own research program to help conserve pine trees in the American South. Traveling around the region to collect data, she showed that the lumber industry was cutting down trees at an unsustainable rate. Her research helped to preserve local ecosystems and stabilize the pine-related turpentine industry by enabling more productive and longer-lived trees.

Gerry was proud to be a woman in her field. When she was hired at the Forest Products Laboratory, she recalled that "there wasn't any man willing to come and do the work." After earning her doctorate, she was sure to sign her full name, "Dr. Eloise Gerry," rather than just her first initial and last name so that people would know she was a woman.

She made a point of being active in numerous professional associations, most notably serving as the president of Graduate Women in Science, a global organization that still works to inspire and support women in science. The organization established a fellowship in Gerry's name that continues to offer research funding to selected fellows.



UW ARCHIVES

EDUCATION ADVOCATE

Song Kue '82 was UW-Madison's first Hmong graduate. His electrical engineering degree made him a highly sought-after employee, and he was recruited by the electronics company E-Systems, where he designed technologies that improved the ability of fighter jets to detect military movement.

Kue and his wife, See, came to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, as Vietnam War refugees in 1975. He spoke some English and was encouraged to pursue higher education at UW-Green Bay's Sheboygan campus. Kue had experienced limited access to communications while living in Laos, so he decided to apply his interest in computers and mathematics to electrical engineering with hopes of improving communication technology.

He soon transferred to UW-Madison to finish his bachelor's degree. The Hmong community in Madison was small at that time, and his college career at a primarily white institution didn't come without challenges. But as an avid soccer player, he was a strong supporter of the university's soccer team and was proud to be a Badger.

Math was an equalizer to Kue. He saw higher education as a path to success and instilled that belief in his children and among the growing Hmong community in Madison, whom he often tutored in math. He encouraged them to pursue higher education, and several of his children, numerous nieces and nephews, and some of his grandchildren have since attended college, almost all of them at UW-Madison. ●

Elise Mahon is a science communicator for University Communications.

In spite of a bias against female researchers during her day, Eloise Gerry PhD1921 did trailblazing work in forest science.



So What Else Did You Learn in College?

Whether earnest or eccentric, UW student organizations prepare Badgers for life outside the classroom.

BY JESSICA STEINHOFF '01

UW-Madison offers more than 1,000 student organizations. Some, such as the Taylor Swift Society, explore highly specific interests, while others, such as the wall-scaling, rail-hurdling Badger Parkour club, are for only the bravest of Badgers.

The tie that binds all of these groups, even the most unconventional, is the Wisconsin Idea.

“Student organizations are where classroom teachings meet students’ interests and real-life issues,” says Madeleine Carr MS’23, communications coordinator for the Wisconsin Union, a hub for beyond-the-classroom learning and leadership opportunities. “They help students find career paths and places to make change.”

These clubs also dare students to view themselves in a new light: as innovators, risk-takers, or simply adults ready to take on the world. Here are six organizations that allow them to leave their comfort zones and embrace experiential learning, whether by donning a princess dress or hugging a bee.





Attempt a Blind Date

Sidesplitting stories are common by-products of blind dates, but what if humor drove the match-making process? Datamatch aims to answer this question at nearly 50 universities, including UW-Madison. It began at Harvard in 1994, and the local chapter debuted in 2019.

Armed with an algorithm and a silly survey, the organization matches thousands of Badgers each Valentine’s Day. Questions referencing pop culture and campus traditions reveal clues about each respondent’s personality and sense of humor.

In a recent survey, participants were asked who wears the Bucky costume at campus events. The answer they chose — “the soul of Barry Alvarez,” “a really big Starship [food-delivery] robot,” “What do you mean it’s a costume?” or “a clan of smaller Badgers” — helped the algorithm determine their matches.

According to club president Johanna Mejias ’24, respondents receive perks such as restaurant coupons they can use for dates or friend outings. In 2023, Datamatch also organized a game night, a sketch-comedy show, and a prom at Memorial Union.

“Our goal is to enrich the college experience by encouraging students to make new friends, find love, or both,” she says. “Basically, we want students to have fun and enjoy some good deals while they’re at it.”

Mejias, a computer science major interested in game design, joined Datamatch her freshman year, when the COVID-19 pandemic made socializing difficult. The sign-up instructions were vague, so she figured her match would be revealed at one of the club’s meetings. Instead of meeting a potential love interest there, she found a group of future friends.

“I didn’t realize I was joining the committee behind Datamatch,” she says. “I was apprehensive since it was run by these guys who were older than me and had been friends for a while, but they welcomed me with open arms.”

Mejias sharpened her communication skills by applying for grants and building partnerships with local businesses, and running the organization has instilled confidence.

“I used to be afraid to take charge, but I’ve seen a change in myself over the years in the club,” she says. “I believe this will help me in any career I pursue.”





Plunge into an Icy Lake

The Wim Hof Club, whose members are known as Hoffers, gather at the Memorial Union, have a meditation session, and jump into icy Lake Mendota. This combo is thought to promote health and vitality: the colder the water, the bigger the benefits.

“Our meditation involves a lot of breathwork: big inhales, short exhales, and breath holds designed to activate the sympathetic nervous system and promote a sense of calm awareness when you encounter a stressor,” says Prabvir Kukreja ’24, one of the club’s leaders.

The stressor, of course, is the lake. Hoffers say its frigid embrace can help the body’s immune system thrive. This theory springs from Wim Hof, a Dutch athlete who became fascinated with Tibetan breathing techniques. He’s known for his ability to tolerate extreme temperatures and for his method of combining breathwork with cold exposure. Kukreja also points to research by Stanford neuroscientist Andrew Huberman, who has found that cold exposure can reduce inflammation and elevate dopamine levels for prolonged periods.

Kukreja started experimenting with cold exposure as a high school student in New Jersey. The COVID-19 pandemic was ravaging people’s mental health, and he’d heard that cold showers could help

For the Hoffers, discomfort can produce resilience.

quell anxiety. When he discovered the Hoffers at UW–Madison, he knew he had to take the plunge.

“I fell in love with it, and I met other people who are interested in holistic health practices,” he says.

The club has shown him how much discomfort he can handle, too — and how that discomfort can produce resilience. This lesson applies not only to physical challenges but also to academic and social ones.

“When the club meditates, we often include a gratitude component that involves sending out love to others,” Kukreja says. “When you experience a stressor, it’s important to remember that you’re not alone and to take care of yourself afterward.”



Hug a Queen Bee

Bees don’t get many hugs, but they should, says Bees Please president Audrey Braun x’25.

“At least half of the foods we eat rely on pollinators, especially bees,” says the conservation biology and environmental studies major. “But bees are being killed by insecticides, diseases, and climate change, and they’re being overworked in the agricultural sector.”

Bee burnout has dire consequences not only for crops, but also for plants that produce shade, shelter, and oxygen. After learning facts like these from a documentary film in high school, Braun knew bee advocacy was in her future. Then, as a college freshman, she made a beeline for pollinator-protection projects.

“The longer I’ve been in Bees Please, the more I’ve wanted to do,” she says, noting that the organization has helped her develop public speaking and networking skills. “As president, I want to encourage the campus to do more bee-friendly landscaping.”

Braun sees opportunities to add biodiversity to grass-heavy areas of campus and incorporate native pollen sources into rooftop gardens. Discussing these ideas with the Office of Sustainability and other potential partners is the next step.

Bees Please members have visited local elementary schools to share bee facts and tracked pollinators at Allen Centennial Garden. The club also organizes apiary field trips where students can observe hives and meet their inhabitants. Braun even got to cradle a queen bee.

“It was a cold March day, so the beekeeper said we had to keep the queen bee warm,” she recalls. “I held her in my hands, with my mittens on, and he told me to breathe on her. I was terrified I’d inhale her, but that didn’t happen. She and her royal court didn’t sting me, either. They trusted me, and I trusted them.”

Build a Human-Powered Vehicle

The need for vehicles that run on renewable power has never been greater, and UW–Madison’s Human-Powered Vehicle Challenge (HPVC) team builds prototypes that harness the body’s energy.

“The goal is to revolutionize transportation,” says team leader and future engineer Teekay Kowalewski ’25. “There’s an infrastructure problem in cities, especially for parking single-commuter vehicles. Four human-powered vehicles can fit in a car-size parking spot. Plus, they don’t use fossil fuels.”

More sophisticated than the average bicycle and more practical than Fred Flintstone’s foot-powered car, the HPVC team’s vehicles are designed with speed, endurance, and ease of use in mind. They range from recumbent three-wheeled buggies to sleek two-wheelers that look like racing bikes with windshields.

“We have to consider steering



Jack Loebbaka '24 and Kenny Lee '24 aim to revolutionize transportation.

geometry and other complicated stuff you’d have to figure out for a larger vehicle, but basically, we’re making a bike you can ride to work without getting wet,” Kowalewski says.

The UW team consists of 10 students who apply classroom knowledge to real-world problems as they cultivate technical skills in product design, manufacturing, and testing. Many are mechanical engineering majors, but students from any academic discipline can participate.

Most years, the team enters a newly designed vehicle in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers’ Human-Powered Vehicle Challenge, where students from across the country flaunt their innovative thinking, design skills, and racing abilities. In 2023, the team created a vehicle suited for wintry conditions and tested it on Lake Mendota. It won an innovation award and the endurance race, whose half-mile course featured a speed bump, a hairpin turn, rumble strips, and other obstacles.

The club gives Kowalewski valuable practice defining problems and devising design solutions. And it’s a chance to create collaboratively, building pride through teamwork.

“I just love making stuff,” he says, “and this is an opportunity to do that with an awesome team.”



BRUCE RICHTER



Make Change with Art

Amelia Bader x'25 couldn't find a student organization that married art and activism, so she and a friend founded one in 2022. Art for Change creates "safe spaces for UW students to come together, express themselves as artists, and use those artistic abilities to fuel positive change."

Service projects take the form of consciousness-raising murals and fundraisers for other change-making organizations.

"Figuring out why an issue matters to you is important, and making art is a good way to do that," Bader says. "We organize events where students paint their own stories and explore issues that they really care about, whether it's gender rights, environmentalism, or something else."

Bader's ethnic and religious heritage informs her own art making. Participating in Fanana Banana, a Milwaukee-based collective for Muslim women artists, has helped her connect with her peers. It also inspires her to make Art for Change as inviting and interactive as possible.

"Fanana Banana helped me find my voice as an artist and realize that I want to use my art to spread positive, powerful messages," Bader says.

The club's public art projects encourage the whole campus to wrestle with social-justice questions. One of them explored the benefits of divesting from fossil fuels, and an interactive piece at the Wisconsin School of Business's Chalk the Block event encouraged passersby to leave notes for strangers.

"One person writes a nice note, and the next person who comes by takes that note and replaces it with a note they've written," Bader explains. "It's a way to connect with people you don't know and promote a sense of belonging, which is something all of us need."



Kayla Lemens x'26 gives children the royal treatment through A Moment of Magic.

Become a Princess

Before many Badgers become doctors, lawyers, and teachers, they dream of becoming princesses and superheroes. A Moment of Magic helps UW students live out these fantasies as they delight hospitalized children.

Part of a national volunteer project founded in 2014, the UW-Madison chapter sends Cinderella, Moana, Spider-Man, and other beloved characters to patients at children's hospitals in Madison and Milwaukee, as well as events hosted by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Gilda's Club, and the Down syndrome charity GiGi's Playhouse.

President Gracey Niedzielak x'25 portrays Princess Elizabeth, a character created by a little girl the organization visited in its first year. This princess doesn't have the star power of *Frozen*'s Elsa, but she melts hearts just the same.

"Children don't care if you're a popular character; they see a princess, and their eyes light up," explains Niedzielak. "I get to give Princess Elizabeth a story and personality."

Plus, wearing a poofy purple dress now may help her don a lab coat later.



A SAMPLING OF UW STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

American Indian Science and Engineering Society

Association for Women in Sports Media

Badger Acts of Kindness

Badger Amateur Radio Society

Badger Cheese Club

Badger Drone Club

Badgers against Hunger

Barbershop Quartet Club

Bellydancing UW

Black Law Students Association

Concrete Canoe Team

Data Science Club

Disney Club

Ethical and Responsible Business Network

Euchre Club

Fiction Writers Association

Fishing Team

Hollywood Badgers

Knit for a Cause

Madison Anime Club

Madison Asian Rappers Zone

Madison Saxophone Club

Magic: The Gathering Club

Party of Poets

Puzzlers of UW–Madison

Queer and Trans Engineers

Star Wars Club

Wisconsin Competitive Cheer Club

Wisconsin Quantum Computing Club

“I’m premed and interested in becoming a pediatrician,” she says, “so I joined A Moment of Magic to make a difference in kids’ lives while gaining skills I could use for working with kids.”

The club has about 30 active members, many of whom plan to work in schools or pediatric health care settings. Some play characters and others make the rest of the magic happen, striking up conversations with patients’ families and partnerships with hospitals and charities.

Serving the community with others is magical in its own way.

“I’ve found lifelong friends in this group,” Niedzielak says.

Barb Kautz-Wittwer of the UW Center for Leadership and Involvement, which connects students with opportunities to make a difference on campus, says friendships like these are reason enough to join a student organization.

“They help make a big campus feel smaller.” ●

For a goose-bump-raising video of the Hoffers jumping into ice-cold Lake Mendota, visit [this story on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://thisstoryonourwebsite.onwisconsin.uwalumni.com).

Jessica Steinhoff '01 plunged into the Daily Cardinal and Undergraduate Research Scholars but never frozen Lake Mendota.

The Most Successful Actor You've Never Heard Of

In a career paved with hard-earned achievements, screen villain Hans Obma '02 endeavors to find the role of a lifetime.

BY NICOLE HEIMAN

You may not know the name Hans Obma '02, but you've seen his face. You may not recognize his voice — he's mastered an impressive array of accents — but you've heard it. He's had roles in dozens of well-known films and television shows, including *Better Call Saul*, *Grace and Frankie*, *WandaVision*, and *May December*.

Through each of those experiences, Obma has come to understand that making one's way in Hollywood requires diligence, tenacity, and a winning attitude. He may not be famous quite yet, but he's been a gainfully employed actor for 15 years. With optimism intact, Obma continues pursuing his big break. And he has real-world role models in actors like Steve Carell, Kathy Bates, Bryan Cranston, Viola Davis, and Morgan Freeman, who were all in their 40s when they made it big.

Now, with a new series project he's put together himself, he's that much closer to joining their ranks.





He may be a nice Wisconsin boy at heart, but Obama excels at playing bad guys.

ACT ONE: BACKSTORY

One of four children, Obama — who grew up in La Crosse and Fond du Lac, Wisconsin — felt early on that he didn't have much to offer, leading to a fair amount of self-doubt.

"All of my siblings were more successful athletes than I was, which is quite revered in small towns," he says. "I also come from a family of rather exceptional people — my brother is an orthopedic surgeon, my younger sister is an anesthesiologist, and my older sister is an immigration attorney. I just didn't relate to being the perfect doctor or lawyer. Instead, my throughline for how I can understand the characters that I've so naturally been able to play is if the characters are quite flawed."

Though Obama's talents weren't necessarily valued where he grew up, things began to shift when his high school Spanish teacher, Julie Proffitt, recognized that he had a gift for languages. "The fact that Mrs. Proffitt so openly shared her belief in me encouraged me to apply myself in a whole new way, and now I fluently speak a variety of languages," he says. He not only speaks flawless Spanish, but he also knows French, Russian, German, and his most recent challenge — Welsh. He found Russian and Welsh the most difficult to learn.

His aptitude for accents rises to the level of a superpower. "Accents are something I really enjoy — they bring me to life," Obama says. "When putting together an accent, I find that I change the way my mouth is shaped, which then causes me to carry myself differently — it's all connected."

Zeroing in on what one wants in a career can be an arduous venture. Despite his own ups and downs, Obama recognizes that not everyone gets the opportunity to go after the life that they'd always wanted. "Early on, I heard someone say that you've got to figure out what your essence is and give that to the world," he says. "More and more, sharing the core of who I am is central to my work as an actor: to speak my truth."

Justin Markofski '02, Obama's college roommate and close friend of 22 years, has a clear vision of what makes him a standout in the sea of celebrities. "Hans takes a special interest in others and goes out of his way to remember things about people that will make them feel seen, special, and cared for. ... He is teachable and pragmatic. This combined with his diligence has helped to cultivate his skills as an actor within a unique niche."

Obama consistently receives high marks from most anyone he interacts with. Kathleen Culver '88, MA'92, PhD'99, director and professor at the UW School of Journalism and Mass Communication, got to know him when he was a student double majoring in journalism and Spanish, and they remain in contact to this day.

"I first met Hans when he took our introductory boot-camp class, Mass Media Practices," Culver

says. "I remember him being a fan favorite of his classmates. Hans has a joyous soul, a big heart, and tremendous talent. He's someone who gets along with everyone and always strives for the best outcomes for all, which is so important in fields like ours, because they so often rely on teamwork."

ACT TWO: GETTING INTO CHARACTER

Relocating from Wisconsin to Los Angeles in 2008 was a culture shock and a career gamble. But Obama knew that if he didn't try, he would regret it. "Once in LA," he says, "I felt like I'd gotten to this place where there really were thousands of doors to opportunity, but so many of them were closed with signs that said, 'Don't knock.' It wasn't a welcoming feeling."

If you've ever watched *Vampire Diaries*, *The Rookie*, *Narcos: Mexico*, or *For All Mankind*, you've seen Obama playing a variety of characters. And getting those roles took time and hard work. Arriving in LA with no acting credits, he soon realized that he needed help defining the areas where he had something unique to offer. "While specializing in foreign roles, I also worked out how to play criminals and found that I have the capacity to play mentally ill characters quite naturally," he says.

Finding a renowned acting coach was key to acquiring the confidence and skills necessary to move forward. "Working with David Rotenberg was a foundational time for me," he says. "I would send him tapes of different monologues, to which he would offer notes. For several months, I did villain after villain, and he told me that I *need* to play bad guys. And now, I know how to approach those types of roles in a way that I didn't before."

Shortly after working with Rotenberg, Obama booked a handful of roles in close succession. First, he got to portray a Revolutionary War hero on *TURN: Washington's Spies*, which was a French-language role. Around that same time, he was in an episode of *NCIS: New Orleans* playing a German master villain, quickly followed by a Hungarian bad-guy role in *Get Shorty*.

Another one of Obama's early successes was booking a prime-time role on *Criminal Minds*. He found being on set exhilarating. In 2018 and 2019, he earned a role in the fourth and fifth seasons of the *Breaking Bad* spinoff, *Better Call Saul*. "Even though my character, Adrian, was rather secondary," he says, "that job helped pay for a couple years of life." He also enjoyed the opportunity to interact regularly with lead actor Jonathan Banks, who played hitman and fixer Mike Ehrmantraut.

Meaningful experiences, career wins, and good friends kept Obama in LA full-time for 12 years before he moved back to Wisconsin in 2020. Among those friends was fellow actor and mentor Shun Lee, who helped him recognize that he didn't have to apply everyone's advice or have every social media account. And he didn't have to accept every role.

“When I first moved to California, I had the rather erroneous thought that anyone who’d been here longer had something to offer that I ought to consider,” he recalls. “But many of those I interacted with were coming from a place of defeat and jadedness. Through my time with Shun, I came to recognize that if you have wisdom and apply it consistently, that is what will likely lead to positive results. The best advice tends to focus on the possibilities and how to pursue them effectively.”

As Obma’s career began to take off, so did his confidence and reputation, earning him a place in the final season of the comedy series *Grace and Frankie*. He was a Norwegian candy smuggler — Hummer Von Vuckinschloker — opposite Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda. That same year he portrayed an evil scientist in *WandaVision* with Elizabeth Olsen and Kathryn Hahn. “Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda were gracious and complimentary, which meant a lot, and I now carry myself differently because of the way things went on that set. The same holds true for *WandaVision*, which was a victorious experience where they kept giving me more and more to do because they were happy with what I was creating with my character.”

Most recently, Obma played a principal role in *May December*, directed by Todd Haynes and starring Natalie Portman. “Both Natalie and Todd were gracious, and it gave me an opportunity to firmly plant my feet and work with an Oscar-winning actress and an Oscar-nominated director,” he says. “I could have walked into that film and fallen flat on my face, but working with Todd and Natalie, instead of falling, I flew.”

ACT THREE: SILVER LININGS

When the pandemic began in early 2020, it offered opportunities to slow down and look at things from an entirely different angle — adopt a pet, make your own sourdough, learn how to knit. For Obma, it was a chance to delve deeply into practicing languages and accents. He also read *The Artist’s Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* by Julia Cameron, which inspired him to write.

“I came up with an idea for a television series that would feature a main character, Joseph Gard, who’s a sensitive man from Wisconsin,” Obma says. “He’s an MI6 interpreter who speaks many languages and uses different accents, which is perfect for me — a dream role.”

Once he felt he had written a successful pilot — *A Question of Service* — Obma decided to go a step further and fund the entire project himself, all during COVID. What came after is something he couldn’t have predicted.

After submitting his 20-minute proof-of-concept film to 11 film festivals across the U.S. and the UK, he came away victorious, winning eight times in his category. For a first-time writer, it’s an incredible feat.

Obma’s talent for languages and accents has boosted his career. “You’ve got to find out what your essence is and give that to the world,” he says.

So, how do these triumphs translate into a series getting picked up by a streaming platform?

“Once I’m ready to start reaching out to producers, I’ll share all that we’ve achieved thus far,” he says. “Then, I’ll pair that with the excellent bookings I’ve had as an actor. My hope is that it will all add up to something they may want to invest in. I’m eager for a 10-episode series, to avoid making choices that don’t ring true, and to work with people who are passionate about crafting quality stories.”

Obma maintains a generosity of spirit in everything he does, including how he views his college experience as a key to his career. He is a fourth-generation Badger, which is a great source of pride for him.

“I love the idea of people from the Badger state succeeding,” Obma says. “I like that the UW has been part of the experiences for so many important people in my life, too. I love that a person can come from Wisconsin, attend UW–Madison, and go do anything in the whole wide world. I think that’s very exciting.”

Almost as exciting, perhaps, as being on the verge of the role of a lifetime. ●

Nicole Heiman is a senior writer for the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association and a lifelong film enthusiast.





The Small-Town Writer Who Hit the Big Time

*Zona Gale 1895, MA1899 achieved spectacular
literary success by staying close to home.*

BY DEAN ROBBINS

Sinclair Lewis of Sauk Centre, Minnesota, and Thomas Wolfe of Asheville, North Carolina, are among the early-20th-century American writers who fled their small towns and then flayed them in fictional form — Lewis with *Main Street* and Wolfe with *Look Homeward, Angel*. The towns returned the snub by making each author persona non grata.

But torching your regional roots was not the era's only literary model. Consider the case of Pulitzer-winning writer Zona Gale 1895, MA1899.

As an only child in Portage, Wisconsin, Gale gazed at the wide Wisconsin River that flowed along Canal Street. In 1881, at age seven, she wrote her first story on sheets of wrapping paper and used a ribbon to bind the pages into a book. She read canonical works, including John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and recorded each plot in a notebook. Clearly this was an author in the making, and her parents supported her literary efforts — unusual for her time and place, not to mention her gender. With her mother's encouragement, she submitted a novel for publication at age 13 and received the first of what would be many rejection letters.

In 1891, Gale entered the University of Wisconsin and made a mark on the male-dominated campus. She achieved her first success as a writer, publishing in the college literary magazine. In her spare time, she even placed a story in Milwaukee's *Evening Wisconsin*. When the newspaper mailed her first professional payment — a three-dollar check — she rode the train all the way from Madison to Portage to show it off to her parents.

After graduation, Gale headed straight for the *Evening Wisconsin* office, presenting herself to the editor every day for two weeks until he agreed to let her write another story. It was a trifling assignment — a report on a flower show —

but Gale gave it everything she had. "I have never put so much emotion into anything else that I have written," she recalled. Knowing a star when he saw one, the editor made a spot for her on staff.

After earning a master's degree in literature from the UW, the ambitious writer applied herself to breaking down doors in New York City. She showed up at the *New York World* day after day with a list of stories she was prepared to write, until the skeptical editors finally relented. She secured a staff job,

impressed the Manhattan literati, and — after a few more rejection letters — published short stories in prominent magazines.

In 1904, however, Gale made a career move that would have baffled Sinclair Lewis and Thomas Wolfe. She returned to Portage for the rest of her life.

The Home Folks and Neighbors

The small-town setting became the wellspring of Gale's fiction: the courthouse, post office, churches, bakeries, twilight bonfires, holidays, funerals, young lovers, town gossips, wise elders, and, of course, the life-giving river. *Birth, Miss Lulu Bett*, and other best-selling books inspired by Portage made her a leading practitioner of literary realism. She drew on her journalistic skills to examine the pleasures and pitfalls of provincial life, particularly the obstacles to women's fulfillment.

The plight of one such thwarted heroine is the subject of *Miss Lulu Bett*, which Gale turned into a daringly true-to-life play that won a 1921 Pulitzer Prize in the drama category — the first ever awarded to a woman or a UW alum. Gale sat in the audience with her Portage friends when a touring production of *Miss Lulu Bett* opened in Madison later that year. Cheered by the crowd, the author went on stage to thank "the home folks and neighbors."

Gale used the substantial earnings from her books' sales to build a Greek Revival-style house on Canal Street, with a study facing the beautiful Wisconsin River. She didn't hole up there, though — not with a host of problems to solve in her city and state. Few writers have matched Gale in civic involvement. She spoke out for women's rights, racial equality, education, and pacifism, and she put her time and money where her mouth was. Her advocacy for women students earned her a spot on the

University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. She also joined the University of Wisconsin Board of Visitors, the American Union against Militarism, the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, the Woman's Peace Party, and the National Woman's Party, helping to draft the

Wisconsin equal rights law in 1921. So greatly did she care about her hometown that she even advocated for saving a stately oak tree that was endangered by a new building.

Why would a rich, famous, critically acclaimed writer choose to spend her days in Portage? Gale put it simply: "I have my river." ●

Dean Robbins is the coeditor of On Wisconsin and, like Zona Gale, a die-hard lit major.

In 1904, Gale made a career move that would have baffled most successful writers.

Gale examined the pleasures and pitfalls of provincial life, particularly the obstacles to women's fulfillment.



A mesmerizing clarity in design: Crème de Violette (2020) pairs cholla bark with an enameled copper form.

Sgraffito Storytelling

*Tanya Crane MA'14, MFA'15
revolutionizes an ancient engraving
technique to explore personal histories.*

BY MEGAN PROVOST '20

Sgraffito, Italian for “to scratch,” is a technique typically applied to pottery in which an outer layer of material is scratched away to reveal another layer beneath it. It can also be applied to enamel, which is how jewelry artist and metalsmith Tanya Crane MA'14, MFA'15 incorporates it into her practice.

Crane is a professor of the practice in metals at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. Her unique take on sgraffito lends her work a meticulous level of detail and a mesmerizing clarity in design that, along with her pedagogy, earned her a 2024 United States Artists Fellowship.

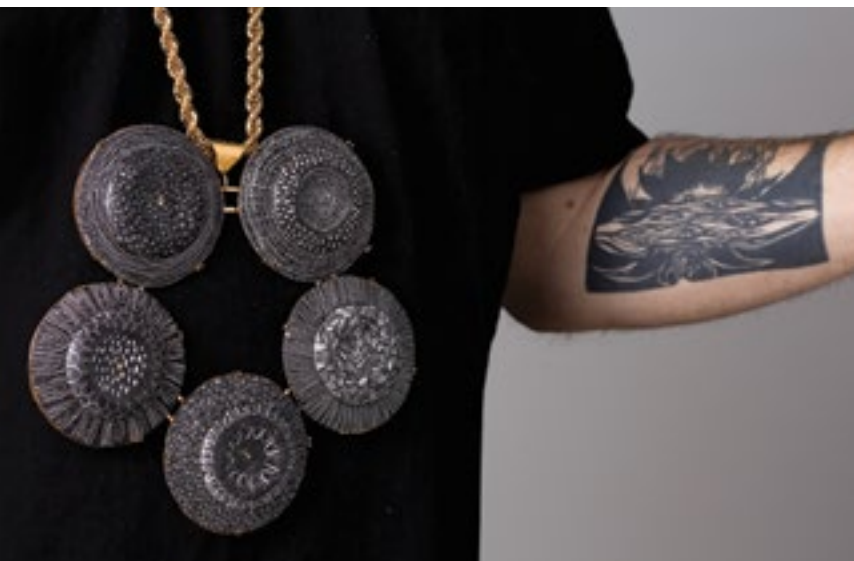
Sgraffito is a fitting technique for an artist whose body of work chronicles memories and the

passage of time. As a sharp tool gradually reveals a concealed layer and, eventually, a complete design, the stories embedded in Crane's art slowly come into focus.

“I'm really interested in the stories [of the Great Migration] and particularly my family's story,” she says. “I'm also interested in these old buildings that surround me [in Boston]: the remnants of the textile industry and the detritus that they've left behind.”

Her work also considers the concept of home. Crane currently resides in Rhode Island, the latest stop in her own sgraffito-like movement across the country that started with an artistic childhood in Los Angeles and took her to Seattle, New York, Wisconsin, and now New England, her path gradually revealing itself.

Here are just a few of the stories she's soldered into museum-worthy memory.



COURTESY OF TANYA CRANE (4)

Statement Piece

The word *jewelry* often brings to mind wedding rings, dainty necklaces, and other precious ornaments that fall into the category of “fine jewelry.” The pieces that Crane creates are notably bolder than these delicate objects.

“When you go to a university to learn jewelry, you’re going because you want to make small sculpture,” she says. “Everything I make is a sculpture ... and all the sculptures speak about the body. They speak about adornment, about being worn, and about the viewership of jewelry.”

As a graduate student under the mentorship of UW art professor Lisa Gralnick, Crane crafted statement pieces: necklaces that are intentionally large and attention-grabbing. Perhaps none makes a bigger statement than *Big Pimpin’* (2014), a pendant comprising five 24-karat-gold-plated, enameled medallions suspended on a thick, gold-plated chain. The medallions are coated in black-over-white enamel, and each is etched with a unique sgraffito design. Crane notes that the piece was inspired by both the adornment of ancient African kings and the necklaces, or “bling bling,” worn by contemporary celebrities to connote wealth and status.

“That is maybe the most pivotal piece in my oeuvre,” Crane says. “It encompasses my history, it encompasses my research, and it encompasses the lineage of my journey through making.”

Cocktail Hour

Crane’s work often involves etching, but not all her stories are concealed beneath an outer layer. Growing up as a mixed-race child in the 1970s and 1980s, Crane split her time between her mother’s home in a predominantly white Los Angeles suburb and visits with her father in the city’s more diverse neighborhoods. The divide was obvious, but her place in it was not.

“You always feel like you’re not Black enough or you’re not white enough,” Crane says. “You’re told that.”

In her work, she captures these stark contrasts and the liminal space in which she exists by pairing natural materials, like stones, with handmade ones, like her enameled forms.

“Elementally, these materials are the same,” Crane says. “Enamel is glass. There’s glass in stone, so there’s crossover, but when you look at the surface of these two items, they look totally different.”

This juxtaposition is evident in pieces like *Crème de Violette* (2020) and *The Pink Squirrel* (2020), brooches that combine cholla bark and driftwood, respectively, with a tapered, enameled tube.

“I like to pair things to kind of ask, how do we exist?” she says. “Where are the similarities? Where are the differences?”



As for the cocktail-oriented naming conventions for these brooches: “I’m thinking of them as works that could bring people together,” she says, “and we come together over drinks.”

Miguel’s Story

A rare departure from her focus on jewelry, Crane’s most personal piece is a vessel that captures a personal history.

Miguel’s Story (2023) is a copper bowl coated in black-over-white enamel. The outside of the bowl features a series of tally marks; the inside bears the text of an interview conducted with her father’s brother, Miguel, which she transcribed in sgraffito.

“My father passed away in the ’80s — he had ALS — and I was born in the ’70s, so I only know little snippets of his story,” Crane says. By interviewing his brother and sister — some of his last living relatives — Crane evokes a more complete picture of a man she didn’t get a chance to know. She hopes to tie her family’s stories to those of the Second Great Migration, the period from the 1940s through the 1970s that brought so many Black settlers to the American West and that influences the region to this day.

Miguel’s Story is part of the Enamel Arts Foundation Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Crane gifted the proceeds to Miguel when the piece was purchased.) But perhaps her most intimate piece — and her most unconventional — has yet to be put on public display.

What’s His Worth (2023) is a vintage men’s urinal coated with black-on-white enamel and a gold-leafed interior. The enameled surface features the same sgraffito tally-mark design as *Miguel’s Story*.

“Because my dad had ALS, I knew him as being paralyzed,” Crane says. “He had needed assistance with everything, and until maybe the ’80s, all the things in hospitals were made out of enamel.”

When Crane found the urinal in a Wisconsin antique store, she wasn’t quite sure what to do with it, but as her family’s story has revealed itself over time, it became an appropriate artifact on which to preserve a history that she continues to uncover. ●

Megan Provost ’20 is a staff writer for On Wisconsin.



Left (top): Crane works in her studio. Left (bottom): Big Pimpin’ (2014). Above: Miguel’s Story (2023). Below: What’s His Worth (2023).

On Alumni

News from Home and Abroad

The UW Comes to You

175th anniversary state tour will continue this summer.



CHRIS FLUNK

WFAA staffer Briana Morgan-roth '17 served ice cream during last summer's state tour. The complimentary treat is a popular perk of the 175th festivities on the road.



DAY OF THE BADGER

April saw another record-setting Day of the Badger, the annual giving event for the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA). Staff hid plush Buckys (above) on campus, including contact information so students who found one could choose a campus unit to receive a pre-funded gift. Bucky's Push-Up Challenge, which had the badger doing a push-up for every 10 gifts given between noon and 1 p.m., added more fun to the day.

What could be better on a warm summer day than a chance to mingle with fellow Badgers and enjoy free family activities?

In a continuing celebration of UW–Madison's 175th anniversary and its contributions to communities throughout Wisconsin, the university's state tour will include visits to several more cities this summer.

First up is a May 30 stop in the Fox Valley (Appleton), and Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin** will join the team for this event. The remaining visits are Janesville on June 25; Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire on August 14; Waukesha on August 22; and La Crosse on a date to be determined.

The tour features activities such as games, giveaways, music, and photo booths, and complimentary Babcock ice cream will be available. Some of the visits will feature interviews with local alumni chefs or other foodie trendsetters following the events.

The tour began last summer, when UW–Madison traveled to Green Bay, Sheboygan, Milwaukee, and Wausau. The events are designed to celebrate the UW's impact on the state. From the beginning, the university has positively influenced every corner of Wisconsin, functioning as a vital contributor to the state's industry and economy and helping to raise the standard of living. It has also provided an affordable education to hundreds of thousands of students, many of whom have stayed in — or returned to — the state and continue to give back.

"The most meaningful part of the tour has been witnessing the tangible impact that the UW has on citizens of Wisconsin through partnerships with businesses and communities," says **Sarah Schutt**, the Wisconsin Alumni Association's executive director. "I imagine the UW's founders would be proud to see how the university they envisioned so many years ago has evolved into today's world-class institution and become an economic engine for the state."

Don't miss out on the fun! See 175.wisc.edu/state-tour for more information.

Day of the Badger By the Numbers

4.2%
increase in the number of Day of the Badger donors, for a total of more than 4,715

13.8%
increase in the number of gifts, for a total of more than 7,215

\$1.78 million
was raised, a 6.8 percent increase from the number of dollars raised last year

INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI

UW–Madison has 16,887 international alumni, and this summer, Chancellor Mnookin will head to Asia to visit some of them. International graduates often fill prominent positions in their home countries. Most recently, **Lawrence Wong '94**, who majored in economics, was named the prime minister of Singapore.

GET BADGER SWAG

Volunteer to stay in the know about UW–Madison news and then share it on your social networks. You'll automatically be entered into drawings to win Badger prizes each month. See socialbadgers.socialtoaster.com.



The Best Campus Burgers

We revisit the restaurants that have sustained generations of meat-eating Badgers.

Asking a Badger to pick the best burger is like forcing a parent to choose a favorite child. There are too many classic spots by the UW-Madison campus, too many fond memories stored inside their walls. Instead, I decided to revisit four favorites, each hamburger served with a heaping side of nostalgia.

My journey starts in the intimate booths of **Dotty Dumpling's Dowry**. I order the best-selling Melting Pot, a six-ounce patty topped with cheddar, Swiss, and provolone cheeses; smoked bacon; and English garlic sauce on a fresh-baked seeded bun. The plated Melting Pot lives up to its name,

A classic offering from Dotty Dumpling's Dowry, served with a heaping side of nostalgia.

with the cheese trifecta dripping over the edge of the burger. The medium-pink beef bursts with flavor, but the rich fixings provide the memorable, mouthwatering punch. It only takes one taste to realize why Dotty's has been a Madison staple for 50 years.

A trek up State Street leads me to the old-timey **Plaza Tavern** and its famed Plazaburger. The quarter-pound sensation, which has sold in the millions since its 1962 debut, is all about the white sauce. You can taste sour cream and mayo in the mix, but the rest is classified. My \$7 order is prepared on a small grill behind the bar, smothered in the special sauce, and served on a starchy whole wheat bun. I'm reminded instantly that there's no other bite like it.

Next is the **Nitty Gritty**, the "Official Birthday Place." My special day isn't for a couple weeks, so a free drink and souvenir mug aren't on the menu. But there's always the award-winning Gritty

Burger. The standard six-ounce patty is served medium well on a honey wheat sesame seed bun. It's the bulkiest burger of the bunch, with char flavor reminiscent of backyard grilling. The Gritty Sauce, while secret, smacks of Thousand Island. It's a satisfying meal, even on the 364 days that aren't your birthday.

And at the Memorial Union's **Der Rathskeller**, I order the Signature Stacked Burger — a double quarter-pounder with American cheese. It's a worthy rendition of the classic pub burger that comforts regulars at neighborhood joints across Wisconsin. For a touch of tangy flavor, I add some Rath Sauce — a divine, orange-ish mix of ranch, mayo, ketchup, and barbecue and adobo sauces.

I take my last burger bite as the UW men's basketball team upsets Purdue on a projector screen in front of a packed Rath crowd. It tastes a lot like home.

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

50s–60s

E. Richard Stiehm '54, MD'57 wrote in with a heart-warming story full of artistic flair: “The tale begins in 1957 when [my wife] **Judy Hicks Stiehm '57** was chair of the Wisconsin Union Gallery Committee, which chose the art for the monthly exhibits at the Memorial Union. Judy was especially attracted to the work of graduate student **Otto Donald Rogers '58, MA'59**, or OTTO, as he signed his paintings. She hoped one day to acquire one of his paintings. That day occurred one year after her graduation, when Judy returned to the campus for a teaching certificate and for our marriage ceremony. We pooled our savings to purchase the painting. It became our most precious possession until the arrival of our three daughters. ... Its final resting place is in the dining room of our home in Santa Monica, California. After receiving a master's in fine arts from the UW, OTTO joined the faculty of the University of Saskatchewan and began his very successful painting career. ... We shall keep [our OTTO] painting in the family to remember the painter, appreciate Judy's early insight into his talent, and honor our shared alma mater.”

BOOK NEWS?
See page 62.

CLASS NOTES SUBMISSIONS
uwalumni.com/alumni-notes/submit •
Class Notes,
Wisconsin Alumni Association,
1848 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726

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.

Roger Harrison MS'69, PhD'75 was awarded the David Ross Boyd Professorship at the University of Oklahoma. The position is one of the university's highest honors. Harrison is a professor of chemical, biological, and materials engineering. He is also the first author of the second edition of *Bioseparations Science and Engineering*, a textbook that has been used in more than 90 universities around the world.

70s

Upon her retirement from the English faculty at Salem University, **Linda Yoder MA'72** and her late husband, **Delmar Yoder MS'70, PhD'72**, took over the care of Owl Creek Farm, a 70-acre conservation farm in Morgantown, West Virginia. In 2023, Linda worked with the West Virginia Land Trust to ensure the farm's preservation under Monongalia County's first-ever agricultural conservation easement. The agreement prevents the land from being developed and limits its use. The Owl Creek Property encompasses agricultural land, forest land, and a stream that falls within a drinking water protection area. “When I first set foot on this beautiful land in 1976, walked up a streambed, and smelled the pennyroyal underfoot, I felt this was a special place,” Linda told the *Morgantown News*. “The dream of sustaining it began to grow.”

Well-loved books become weathered with wear, especially those that circulate through a public library. At the Madison Public Library, longtime employee and volunteer **Romeo Dais MA'75** gets the library's tattered physical materials rotation-ready again. His bi-weekly mending shifts include taping, gluing, and reinforcing binding on books ranging from dated volumes to recent best-sellers. Dais has worked and volunteered for the library for 45 years, helping Madisonians

through multiple eras of information navigation and media consumption.

Several Badger artists were involved in the exhibition *Back to Front: Artists' Books by Women* at the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College in Lynchburg, Virginia. **Martha Kjeseth-Johnson MA'93** is the director of the Maier, and the exhibit was curated by artist **Martha Chiplis MFA'91**, an assistant professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. *Back to Front* featured 34 artists whose work represents the variety of interpretations of the book as an artistic medium. The show included selections from the Quarantine Public Library, an online collection of one-page books curated by **Tracy Honn MFA'89** of Madison and **Katie Garth '13** of Philadelphia, and works by artist **Catherine Ruggie Saunders MA'75, MFA'76**, a professor of art and design at Saint Xavier University in Chicago.

Charles Vacca '77 of Coventry, Rhode Island, is another Badger bookworm: “I was recently going over some past *On Wisconsin* [magazines] and came upon your Summer 2022 On Campus feature ‘A Mighty Feat of Reading,’ describing how **Kyla Vaughan '22** read 392 books in 2021! Well, I am happy to report that I managed 370 in 2023, including the 365th on December 29. ... I have read more than 300 books yearly starting in 2020, culminating in my personal best of 370 in 2023 and 3,319 volumes since I started counting in 2004! And just like Vaughan, my 2024 will be focused on reading award winners, favorite authors (e.g., **Joyce Carol Oates MA'61**, Larry McMurty, Stephen King), [and about] the Civil War and baseball.” Happy tales to you, Charles!

After more than four decades in international agricultural development, **John Bowman**



Judy Stiehm recognized the talent of artist Otto Donald Rogers when they were both students at the UW.

MA'78, MS'80 of Bethesda, Maryland, has retired. He most recently worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, with whom he managed programs and projects related to food security, agricultural research, and human nutrition. He also worked with the Feed the Future initiative, a global food security directive launched by the Obama administration, leading horticulture and integrated pest management programming. Bowman's career took him to more than 40 countries, and he lived for a time in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Philippines, and Turkey, bringing innovative agricultural technologies to farmers around the world.

For her longtime service to her Asheville, North Carolina, community, **Cassie Dillon MA'79** was presented with an Outstanding Philanthropist award from the Western North Carolina chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Dillon is a longtime volunteer with the Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity, where she has served in roles from core volunteer and committee member to board chair. She is also a guardian ad litem in Buncombe County, where she advocates in court for children receiving social services. We couldn't be prouder of this big-hearted Badger!

More than 40 years after completing his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at the UW, **Robert Stormont '79** of Hartland, Wisconsin, received his doctorate in medical physics from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 2023. Stormont is an expert in nuclear magnetic resonance radio frequency development. He is credited with developing GE Health-Care's Adaptive Imaging Receive (AIR) coil, a flexible magnetic resonance imaging device that was named the year's best new



BRIANNA ROYLE KOPKA/B2 PHOTOGRAPHY

Translating Queen

An alum finds a niche converting Swedish bestsellers into English.

When **Rachel Willson-Broyles MA'07, PhD'13** was growing up outside Eau Claire, Wisconsin, she fell under the spell of the Swedish band Ace of Base and decided “to learn about Sweden, because that’s where they were from.”

Some 15 years ago, as she was working toward her PhD in Scandinavian studies at UW–Madison, she took a seminar in translation in the Department of Comparative Literature. Scandinavian studies professor **Susan Brantly** suggested she translate a page or two of the 2006 novel *Montecore: The Silence of the Tiger* by a distinguished Swedish author, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, who was going to be visiting the UW–Madison campus.

“I’d already starting translating stuff by myself,” Willson-Broyles says, “articles and things. I really just loved the Swedish language.”

She took Brantly up on the offer, and when Khemiri arrived in Madison, the professor suggested she give the author her translated pages.

“I felt a little silly doing it,” Willson-Broyles says. “My student project.”

But two months later, Khemiri contacted her. He’d sent the pages to Knopf, the publisher with the English rights to the novel. An editor wanted to know if Willson-Broyles was a translator.

She replied, “I’d like to be a translator.”

Montecore was published in English, with Willson-Broyles as translator, in 2011.

That year, Khemiri told the *New York Times*, “Rachel excels at finding the balance between humor and tragedy, which I sometimes struggle with.”

In the years since, Willson-Broyles, who lives in Saint Paul, has translated some 40 books from Swedish to English.

Among the most recent are two novels by the acclaimed crime author Christoffer Carlsson: *Blaze Me a Sun* — “the first great crime novel of 2023,” according to the *New York Times* — and 2024’s *Under the Storm*, which the *Times* reviewer described as “once more wonderfully translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles.”

As a full-time translator, Willson-Broyles says she can finish a book in about three months. The level of involvement with the writer varies. “Most authors are delighted to answer questions,” she says.

Willson-Broyles’s wish list includes seeing translators get more cover bylines and more consistent royalties — “not only for my career,” she says, “but for everyone who works in literary translation.”

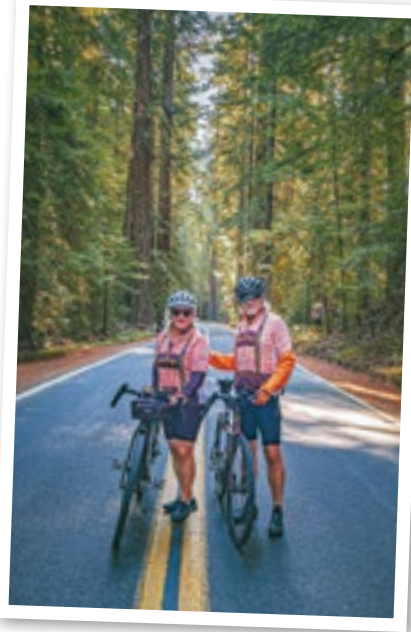
DOUG MOE '79

radiology device and received the 2023 International Award from the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

80s

No distance is too great for **David Jewell '80** of Anaheim, California, who rode more than 2,000 miles in the “Mission Possible — Border to Border” bike journey from Vancouver, Canada, to the Mexican border to raise money for charity. Jewell was the captain of the Fly Ontario team, which raised nearly \$50,000 for multiple sclerosis research. The group also raised money for Katrina Kures, an initiative that the Jewell family started 15 years ago after their daughter, Katrina, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. All proceeds raised through Katrina Kures are donated to the Children’s Hospital of Orange County, where Katrina received her diagnosis and early care.

David Jewell biked from border to border to raise money for causes close to his heart.



“That’s really what’s making it fulfilling ... going to these communities and just seeing the joy and the relief in people ... that now have a burden that’s been lifted.”

— **Chris Jimieson '99**

Karen Sames '80 was honored with a lifetime achievement award from the Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA). Sames is a professor emerita of occupational therapy at Saint Catherine University in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where she served on the faculty for 28 years before retiring in 2023. She has also held several roles with MOTA, including three terms as president, and with the American Occupational Therapy Association, including one term as treasurer.

James Dobbins MS'83, PhD'85 of Durham, North Carolina, received a lifetime achievement award from the

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.

Society of Directors of Academic Medical Physics Programs (SDAMPP). Dobbins is associate vice provost emeritus and professor emeritus of radiology, biomedical engineering, and physics at Duke University. His research has contributed to several diagnostic imaging techniques used in hospitals around the world. He was the founding director of Duke’s graduate program in medical physics, now one of the top three such programs in the country, and he helped launch Duke’s joint venture university in China. Dobbins previously served as president of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine and was cofounder and president of SDAMPP.

When **Mark Rasmussen '84, MS'87** was hired as the chief lending officer of the California Community Reinvestment Corporation in 1998, he inherited a company in the red. He and his team went on to approve \$2.59 billion in loans dedicated to affordable housing projects and develop nearly 50,000 low-income housing units throughout California. Rasmussen is also the chair of the board for Holos Communities, a Los Angeles–based

architecture and planning firm that develops permanent housing for vulnerable populations.

Tomislav Kuzmanovic '85, JD'88 has been named partner-in-charge of law firm Hinshaw & Culbertson’s Milwaukee office. He’ll oversee the office’s management and strategic direction. Kuzmanovic joined the firm in 1988 and specializes in commercial and business litigation. He has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* in the category Personal Injury Litigation — Defendants.

In 2022, **Kimberly Hoggatt Krumwiede '87** was named dean of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center’s School of Health Professions. Hoggatt Krumwiede came to MD Anderson from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center’s School of Health Professions, where she served as associate dean of academic affairs, director of interprofessional practice and education, and chair of the school’s Department of Health Care Sciences. She is also a medical illustrator. U.S. News and World Report ranked MD Anderson first in the nation in its 2023–24 Best Hospitals.

After he was driven out of the South during the Civil War era for his abolitionist views, William Henry Brisbane settled in Arena, Wisconsin, in 1868. More than 150 years later, **Bruce MFA'89** and **Samantha Becker Crownover '91, MA'94** purchased and restored the historic Brisbane house, filling it with artwork by artists of color and renting the property out to history buffs and casual Wisconsin vacationers alike. For their diligence in preserving this piece of Wisconsin history, the Crownovers received the 2022 Preservation Award from the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation and the 2023 Restoration Award from the Board of Curators at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

90s

Lowell Schwartz '93 of Takoma Park, Maryland, was appointed deputy assistant secretary for nonproliferation policy in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. In this role, he will oversee the department's efforts related to nuclear nonproliferation and biological weapons threats. Schwartz previously served as a senior professional staffer on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Melissa Holloway JD'96 has been elected chair of the board of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA). She has been a member of NACUA since 2001, served one term on its board, and was the 2020 recipient of its Distinguished Service Award. Holloway is vice chancellor and general counsel for North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, the largest of the country's historically Black colleges and universities.

Here's some news you don't have to go digging for: **Amy Rosebrough MA'96, PhD'10** was named state archaeologist by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Rosebrough joined the society as a staff archaeologist in 2001 and is regarded as one of the foremost experts on Wisconsin's effigy mounds. In her new role, she'll lead the archaeology program in the State Historic Preservation Office, which provides services including archaeological research and the protection of archaeological sites on state and public lands.

In 1988, Ron Roloff opened Madison record store Strictly Discs. After 35 years, he and **Angie Roloff '97** sold the business to **Rick Stoner '06** of Milwaukee. Stoner is taking over as president and CEO of Strictly Discs, along with business partners **Dru Korab '06** and **Kyle Nakatsuji MBA'11, JD'12**.



COURTESY OF PROJECT PAWPAW

Project Pawpaw

A biologist hopes to make an elusive native fruit more widely available.

Adam D'Angelo MS'23 was 10 years old when his older brother took him to visit a research orchard at Cornell University and pointed out a tree with long, teardrop-shaped leaves: *Asimina triloba*, commonly called the pawpaw, which produces North America's biggest native fruit.

The younger D'Angelo was confused. "But I know all the fruits," he insisted. Like most people, he'd never seen, much less tasted, a pawpaw. The roughly palm-sized green ovals are characterized by creamy, yellow-orange flesh. In the wild, the flavor of pawpaws ranges widely, from a blend of mango and banana to marshmallow or even vanilla ice cream.

For D'Angelo, encountering that first, mysterious pawpaw tree sparked what would become a lifelong passion for plant breeding. After completing an undergraduate degree in plant biology at Rutgers, he joined the lab of UW-Madison plant and agroecosystems professor **Irwin Goldman** as a graduate researcher. D'Angelo worked on crops such as the Badger Flame beet, which bred sweet, colorful vegetables mild enough to eat raw.

"The best advice I got from Irwin is that people eat with their eyes," D'Angelo says. "Food is such a human experience, and people are drawn to the inherent beauty of plants. So if you can emphasize that, it really helps with people's willingness to try something new."

Now, D'Angelo has launched Project Pawpaw, an ambitious effort to breed commercial pawpaw trees to produce more consistent and appealing fruit with a longer shelf life. Wild pawpaw fruit has an especially brief season and goes bad quickly, which makes it impossible to transport long distances and keep in grocery stores. "If we can fix the shelf-life issue and a few other small [plant-breeding] issues, we could have a product that can be grown locally, provide economic viability to small farmers, and provide community members with access to high-quality, delicious fruit," D'Angelo says.

D'Angelo is preparing to plant 1,500 pawpaw trees this spring at a research orchard in southern New Jersey that he's been carefully tending and preparing for several years. "We're really only one or two steps away from having a great fruit crop for North America," he says. "Pawpaws can be grown using fewer pesticides or fertilizers than conventional fruit crops. They are adapted for life in this climate, meaning we can grow tropical-tasting fruit right here, instead of shipping it from across the world."

Project Pawpaw is funded by sales of pawpaw-themed merchandise and tree seedlings. D'Angelo also offers reliable, science-backed resources to novice pawpaw home-growers. To learn more, visit projectpawpaw.com.

SANDRA K. BARNIDGE '09, MA'13



SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Vet School Expands

The facility gains vital space for its mission of improving both animal and human health care.

The UW School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) has built a new three-story space — which connects to the existing small-animal clinic — to meet a growing demand for more student learning spaces and veterinary patient care.

SVM was scheduled to open the first two floors of the \$174 million expansion in June, doubling the size of the small-animal hospital and tripling the area devoted to infectious disease research. The school is home to 75 percent of the vital infectious-disease research conducted on campus, and it provides quality care for nearly 30,000 veterinary patients per year.

The expansion was made possible by a wide community of benefactors. The project received \$90 million from the state, with the remaining support contributed by generous donors such as **Debbie Cervenka**, a member of the SVM board of visitors. “To be involved and have the ability to provide financial support for this expansion has been a tremendous honor,” says Cervenka. Other contributors include current and former teaching hospital clients, alumni, and pet lovers.

The updated space will greatly expand SVM’s ability to meet the increasing demand for research and care that benefits animals as well as humans. Some of the improvements include research and diagnostic equipment, such as CT, MRI, and PET-CT machines; room for more student learning spaces; an oncology center; and a cardiology suite.

The new facility will house biosafety level 3 lab spaces, which are designed for easy decontamination of potential airborne toxins. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 75 percent of the rising infectious pathogens that affect humans originate in animals, and scientists at the school are on the front lines of investigating infectious diseases such as West Nile encephalitis, avian influenza, and COVID-19.

The 150,000-square-foot construction will also offer student collaboration spaces, acupuncture, internal medicine, general surgery, and an ultrasound suite. The MRI machine is capable of accommodating large and small animals alike.

The third floor of the new building will likely be completed in early 2025, along with an enclosed large-animal arena, remodeled isolation stalls for bovine and equine patients, and renovations to the existing building.

“I can’t wait to see what the future holds for this incredible school,” says Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin**: “The discoveries and innovations, the graduates who will meet the state’s urgent need for veterinarians, and the compassionate care that will change the lives of our animal patients as well as the lives of the humans who love them.”

NICOLE HEIMAN

Shout-out to these Badgers for keeping a local business and the love of vinyl alive!

Chris Jimieson ’99 is the founder of Strides for Africa, a run/walk that raises money for clean-water projects. Now in its 15th year, Strides for Africa has funded 44 clean water projects in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Gambia. “That’s really what’s making it fulfilling ... going to these communities and just seeing the joy and the relief in people ... that now have a burden that’s been lifted,” Jimieson told the *Wisconsin State Journal*. He is also partnering with **Alhaji N’jai**, a research fellow in the UW’s Department of Pathobiological Sciences and the African studies program and founder of the Madison nonprofit Project 1808, to build a college in N’jai’s hometown of Kabala in Sierra Leone. Jimieson is an environmental consultant with environmental engineering consulting company SCS Engineers.

Sarah Wu ’99 is an assistant professor of practice in speech-language pathology at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois. Wu serves as a coordinator of clinical education, supervising graduate students in clinical placements requiring trauma-informed care for bilingual patients. A specialist in bilingual language development, delays, and disorders, Wu previously spent 17 years providing speech therapy services in school-based settings and is the founder of Bilingual Speech Therapy Resources, a private practice that develops bilingual therapy materials.

00s

Vivek Swaminathan ’03 is helping health care companies make more informed choices through Cardamom Health, a Madison-based start-up that brings together data, analytics, and application experts to help health care organizations get

On Alumni Class Notes

the most out of their technology investments. Cardamom's leadership team is well staffed with Badgers, including vice president of people **Emily Nidetz '03**, chief operating officer **Andy Mueller '04**, and partner **John Manzuk '07**.

Attorney **William Bratcher '05, JD'10** of Greenwood, Wisconsin, was elected to serve as judge of the Clark County Circuit Court Branch II. He started his six-year term in August 2023.

BioForward Wisconsin, a Madison-based biohealth nonprofit, welcomed **Angela Ryan EMBA'06** to its board. Ryan is the vice president of clinical and IVD product management at biotechnology company Illumina. She joins several Badgers on BioForward's board, including **Pam Gabris '91**, head of development strategy and study management at Labcorp Drug Development; **Edward Ladwig '96**, president of food chemistry testing at Eurofins; **Eric Ruedinger '04**, general manager of global anesthesia and respiratory care at GE HealthCare; **Jessica Giffey '07**, chief operating officer of systems and therapeutics at SHINE Technologies; **Justin Krause MBA'23**, vice president of operations, coordination, and strategy at Exact Sciences; and **Anjon Audhya**, professor and senior associate dean for basic research, biotechnology, and graduate studies in the UW's School of Medicine and Public Health. BioForward is led by an executive committee including CEO **Lisa Johnson '83**; board secretary **Sarah Duellman MS'05, PhD'08**, global strategic business lead of biotech at Promega; and board treasurer **Garrett Peterson EMBA'10**, chief strategy officer at Yahara Software.

Ellen Skorpinski '07 has joined HGA Milwaukee, the city's largest architectural firm, as an associate vice president

and senior engineering project manager. In this role, she will direct engineering processes through all phases of project development. Skorpinski comes to HGA with more than 15 years of mechanical engineering experience, most recently as a project manager with architecture and engineering firm Shive-Hattery.

10s

Congratulations to **Rebecca LeMoine MA'10, PhD'14** and husband Matthew Taylor of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, on the arrival of their second son, Julien Lewis Taylor, in June 2023. Perhaps we'll meet this baby Badger as a member of the UW's Class of 2045!

Calling all pet owners! **Jordan Sand PhD'10** of Verona, Wisconsin, and **Maria Dashek MS'15, DVM'17, PhD'19** of Columbia, Missouri, have the answer to your furry friends' dry-skin struggles: Happy Scratch is an all-natural product that stops itchy, allergen-induced dermatitis in cats and dogs. Sand, a molecular toxicologist, first developed the treatment with late UW animal sciences professor **Mark Cook** and patented the discovery with the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. Sand later met Dashek, a veterinarian, in Cook's lab, and the two cofounded Cold Water Technologies, the parent company of Happy Scratch. A round of app-paws for these innovative Badgers!

We're raising a glass to **Marc Wendt '14, MBA'18** of Fayetteville, Arkansas, for his entrepreneurial endeavor with OJOY Wine Company. Wendt founded OJOY in 2023. The company offers dealcoholized wines to consumers seeking beverage alternatives that don't sacrifice flavor. OJOY's flagship product is Sparkling Blanc, a dry, fruit-forward white blend that resembles champagne. Wendt is a marketing director for Procter & Gamble.

Lights, camera, Nina: **Nina Ham '15** of Burbank, California, is the cinematographer behind the dramatic shots in the Paramount+ docuseries *Murder of God's Banker*. The show follows the investigation into the 1982 death of Italian banker Roberto Calvi, who was known as "God's Banker" due to his work with the Vatican. Ham is also behind the camera in the upcoming Paramount+ series *Mafia Spies*, Nebula's *That Time When* with Anita Sarkeesian, and various projects with the *Hollywood Reporter*, *Billboard*, and Adobe.

"When I first set foot on this beautiful land in 1976, walked up a streambed, and smelled the pennyroyal underfoot, I felt this was a special place. The dream of sustaining it began to grow."

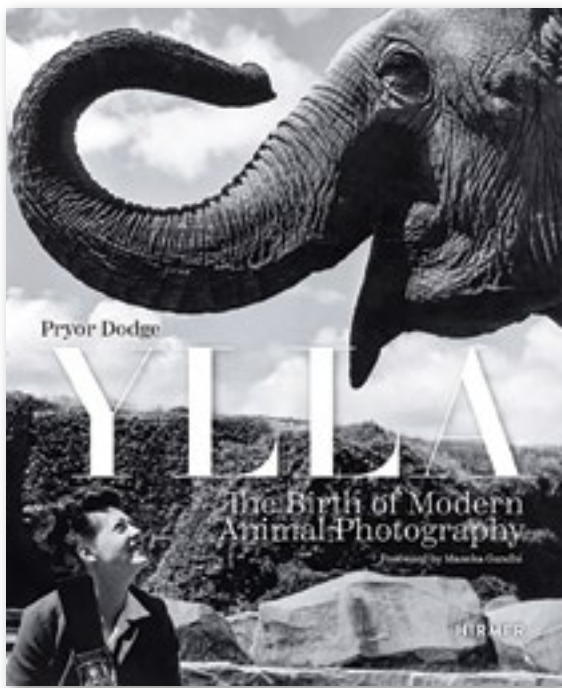
— **Linda Yoder MA'72**

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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.

League One Volleyball (LOVB) is the nation's largest club volleyball community. In November, it will launch its professional league, which will include a team in Madison — and who better to start off their roster than **Lauren Carlini '17**? Carlini played for the Badgers from 2012 to 2016 and was the first player in program history to become a four-time All-Big Ten pick. She's been a member of Team USA volleyball since 2016 and has played professionally in Italy, Russia, and Turkey. She's set to join the LOVB Madison team after the 2024 Summer Olympics. "This country loves volleyball, Madison loves volleyball, and I'm excited to really start it off strong," Carlini told Madison's WMTV. "There's no limit to what it can become."

As Megan Provost '20 always says, "Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on." Or was that Paul McCartney?



Camilla “Ylla” Koffler got animals ready for their close-ups.

The Art of Loving Animals

In *Ylla*, Pryor Dodge '71 pays tribute to a seminal photographer.

Nowhere are the words *shoot* and *capture* more benevolently applied to animal life than in the work of photographer Camilla “Ylla” Koffler. During her short but prolific career, she celebrated her subjects as individuals with souls and personalities rather than portraying them as objects to be ogled like hunters’ trophies. Author **Pryor Dodge ’71** offers the iconic photographer an equally flattering and well-deserved spotlight in *Ylla: The Birth of Modern Animal Photography*.

Ylla (EE-lah) was born in 1911 to Hungarian parents in Vienna. She began her artistic career studying sculpture, but an aptitude for photography and a penchant for rescuing stray animals led to her capturing their very best angles. At the outset of her career, she primarily photographed house pets or exotic species in zoos, eschewing the gender norms of the day by getting up close and personal with animals typically only approached by male zoo handlers. Her fearlessness eventually took her to Africa, where she discovered a passion for photographing animals in the wild.

Ylla’s appetite for adventure brought her to India in 1955. While riding in a speeding jeep to photograph a bullock cart race, she fell from the vehicle and died from her injuries.

“Ylla’s pictures brought animals into the living rooms of America and Europe in such a way that they conveyed a feeling of sharing in wonderful adventures,” *Sports Illustrated* nature columnist John O’Reilly wrote upon her death.

Her work also lives on in several books, including two children’s books that became instant classics: *The Sleepy Little Lion* by Margaret Wise Brown (of *Goodnight Moon* fame) and *The Two Little Bears*.

Dodge is also the author of *The Bicycle*, a history of bicycles and cyclists that features his own extensive collection of antique bikes and cycling memorabilia.



Black Fatherhood Podcast

ALVIN THOMAS

Thomas sits down with fellow experts and scholars to discuss ways of helping to “educate, validate, and elevate” the experience of Black fatherhood. Topics include masculinity, mental health, coparenting, and communication. The podcast won Gold and Listener’s Choice awards in the diversity, equity, and inclusion category of the 2023 Signal Awards. Thomas is the Phyllis Northway Faculty Fellow and an assistant professor of human development and family studies in the UW’s School of Human Ecology.



Free Time: The History of an Elusive Ideal

GARY CROSS MA’73, PHD’77

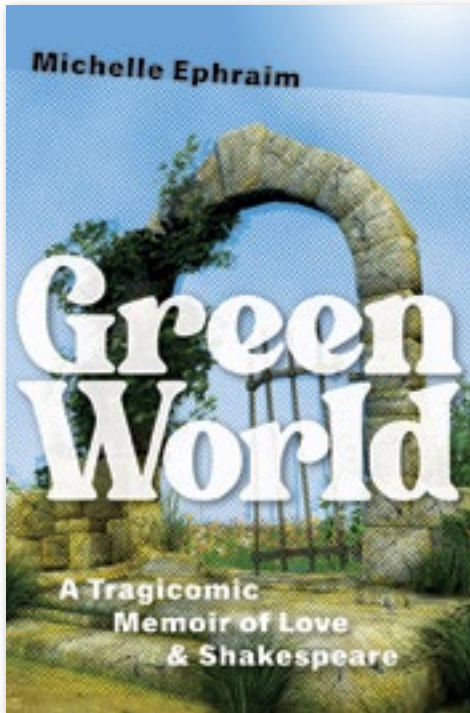
If you’ve been wanting to spend less free time on your phone, consider reading this deep dive into the evolution of a beloved but beleaguered state of being. From peasant festivals and aristocratic pleasure gardens to movie theaters and surfing the web, Cross analyzes 250 years of leisurely activities and their relationships to consumerism and capitalism. He is a distinguished professor emeritus of modern history at Penn State University.



When I’m Dead

HANNAH MORRISSEY ’11

One girl is dead, another is missing, and medical examiner Rowan Winthrop is determined to get to the bottom of both cases, even if it means reckoning with long-buried pasts. Working in her niche of “Midwestern noir,” Morrissey conveys the frigid cold of northern winters — rivaled only by the bone-chilling subjects of her thrillers — as only a tried-and-true Wisconsinite can. *When I’m Dead* is the third installment of Morrissey’s Black Harbor mystery series.



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

Attending a Shakespeare-recitation party in college got Ephraim more than she bard-gained for.

Saved by the Bard

Michelle Ephraim MA'93, PhD'98 looks at her life through Shakespearean eyes in *Green World*.

In literary analysis, a “green world” is a whimsical realm that provides respite from and resolution to characters’ real-world dilemmas. In *Green World: A Tragicomic Memoir of Love and Shakespeare*, **Michelle Ephraim MA'93, PhD'98** reflects on how discovering the Bard gave her scattered life a new direction — and a green world of her very own.

As the daughter of Holocaust survivors, Ephraim was frequently subjected to her parents’ volatile emotions and overprotective tendencies. Eager to escape her oppressive upbringing, she pursued a degree in poetry and, eventually, a doctorate in literature. But grim reality haunted Ephraim: her boyfriend dumped her, and she struggled to keep up with her studies. Hope was nearly lost for our headstrong heroine until she stumbled upon a Shakespeare-recitation party and dedicated her career to studying his works.

Green World chronicles Ephraim’s journey to becoming a Shakespeare scholar, a winding path riddled with humor and heartbreak that rivals the best of the Bard’s stories. Ephraim even finds a kindred spirit in Jessica, the strong-willed Jewish daughter of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, and she finally achieves the ever-elusive peace of a green world right here in Wisconsin.

“In a culture where artificial intelligence is ever-encroaching, *Green World* reaffirms our love of reading, enforcing how vastly literature can transform us,” writes author Jennifer Gilmore. “It changed Michelle Ephraim, and the joy and urgency of that discovery, shown through her own life, is breathtaking.”

Green World received the 2023 Juniper Prize in Creative Nonfiction from the University of Massachusetts. Ephraim is a professor of English at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts.



The End of Everything and Everything That Comes after That

NICK LANTZ MFA'05

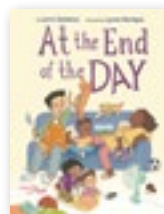
In his latest poetry collection, Lantz eschews punctuation in order to evoke the “disruption and disorder” of enduring events that feel world-ending. His poems remind readers of the ways in which we carry our traumas day to day. Lantz is an award-winning poet and an associate professor of creative writing at Sam Houston State University.



Surely You Can't Be Serious: The True Story of Airplane!

JIM ABRAHAMS X'66, DAVID ZUCKER '70, AND JERRY ZUCKER '72

Movie buffs of all ages may be able to quote the Zucker brothers’ iconic *Airplane!* from memory, but there’s still more to learn about one of Hollywood’s most beloved comedies. In this behind-the-scenes tell-all, the directors share the trials and triumphs of moviemaking in the 1970s, along with fun facts and stories. They even touch on their early days in Kentucky Fried Theater, their Madison comedy troupe.



At the End of the Day

LISL DETLEFSEN '03

Some days just never seem to end: errands to run, homework to do, messes to clean. Who has the time and energy for it all? But no matter how busy and bustling a day may be, the end can still be cozy and sweet. This children’s book reminds readers to reflect on their reasons to be grateful and to be hopeful for new days ahead. Detlefsen is the author of several children’s books, including *Right This Very Minute* and *Time for Cranberries*, each of which was a Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Book of the Year.

MEGAN PROVOST '20

Wisconsin Ideas, Korean Actions

A formative five years in Madison shaped the career of Dong-One Kim MS'91, PhD'93, who now heads Korea's leading university.

In June, Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin** and other UW-Madison administrators will travel to Korea and Thailand to explore partnerships with alumni and leaders in academia and industry. The UW has a long history of connections with Asia, and many Badger grads hold important positions there. **Dong-One Kim MS'91, PhD'93**, one of the people Mnookin plans to meet, is the president of Korea University, and between 1988 and 1993, he made Madison his second home. His UW experience taught him principles that guide him as he helms one of Korea's foremost educational institutions.

What made you decide to enroll at UW-Madison?

The home of labor relations is Wisconsin. [Economist] **John R. Commons** was the founding father of that discipline, and he was a professor at the University of Wisconsin. Wisconsin also initiated many progressive labor policies like [the Occupational Health and Safety Agency] and final-offer arbitration. Naturally, the University of Wisconsin was the first name that appeared when I began looking at programs.

What professors did you find particularly influential?

Paula Voos was my PhD adviser. She is very pragmatic and rational. I always admired her. **Ken Mericle [PhD'74]** was a professor at the UW's School for Workers. He was very considerate and cared for his students deeply. And **Donald Schwab** ... was a strict professor who taught research methods. He always emphasized academic rigor. He was a great

guy academically who made us work very hard.

As president of Korea University, what's your focus?

Universities all over the world are confronted by crisis. I want to make a financially sound university, and I want to make Korea University a model for all private universities in Korea to follow. This includes considering how we manage the local population decline and the broader lack of interest in university education. One solution is to make the campus truly global. Right now, around 15 percent of our students are international. I would like to make this number 30 percent.

What do you see as the importance of a global university?

When I attended Korea University, it was very unusual for students to go overseas for study, but nowadays, I think about 30 to 40 percent of students go overseas for various reasons. Globalization is the new paradigm, one that cannot be reversed or ignored. Our students will be global citizens. We have to teach them how to behave and how to pursue their goals in an interconnected world. If we cannot globalize, our university is not going to be very competitive.

Do you see the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea at Korea University?

The Wisconsin Idea is that the university should provide a practical ben-

efit to society. I always strive to provide practical solutions, and I also set practical goals. The Wisconsin Idea should be a model for all colleges and universities. Wisconsin and similar universities were the forefront of the industrial university in America, really starting to research and teach practical values such as agriculture, labor relations, and engineering in the 19th century. There is a prevailing thought today that universities are not aligned with society — they are isolated; they pursue their own interests. That's what I believe is the essence of the crisis facing universities. Therefore, we need to teach [subjects that] people really want. ... We have to make our universities more adaptable

to ever-changing societies. That mission is more important now than ever.

UW-Madison is an international university. The alumni association currently claims 16,887 grads living outside the U.S., and the UW had 7,626 international students in 2023. It has 2,668 alumni in South Korea and 542 in Thailand.

Interview by
Steve Barcus
Photo by Chul-Young Jang





Father of the MRI

Raymond Damadian '56's discovery gave doctors more insight into their patients. Literally.

No scalpels required. Thanks to **Raymond Damadian '56's** remarkable invention, it's no longer necessary to open up the human body to detect cancer or pinpoint an injury.

Damadian built the world's first magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine and performed the first full-body scan in 1977, after he discovered that tumors and normal tissue emit response signals that differ in wavelength.

"I thought if we could do on a human what we just did in that test tube, maybe we could build a scanner that would go over the body to hunt down cancer. It was kind of preposterous," Damadian admitted, "but I had hope."

That initial scan of a colleague's thorax took nearly five hours to complete in Damadian's machine, which he dubbed *Indomitable* in a nod to achieving what many thought couldn't be done. Indomitable now resides at the Smithsonian Institution.

Damadian took a unique path to making his contribution to the medical field. As a boy, he attended public school but studied violin at the Juilliard School on weekends. When he was 15, the Ford Foundation gave him a full scholarship to the University of Wisconsin, and he left Juilliard behind. "It was okay," he said. "I was no Itzhak Perlman."

But later in life, controversy swirled around him. Damadian wasn't selected to win a 2003 Nobel Prize when two fellow scientists received recognition for their role in MRI development — and he didn't take the snub lightly. In keeping with what has been called his "exuberant" per-

Raymond Damadian is shown here with an MRI machine and without a Nobel Prize.

sonality, Damadian took out full-page ads in the *New York Times* and other newspapers with the headline, "The Shameful Wrong That Must Be Righted." The scientific community was abuzz about this unprecedented step, taking sides about whether he deserved a Nobel.

"If I had not been born, would MRI have existed? I don't think so," he said.

His supporters believe that he was passed over for the prize in part because of his belief in creationism. A full explanation may come to light when the Nobel's archives from 2003 are opened in 2053, though Damadian will never see it. He died in 2022. But the debate doesn't matter to those experiencing pain or facing the possibility of cancer. Some 60 million MRI scans are performed each year, and patients are simply grateful for the machine that provides the answers.

CINDY FOSS



JEFF MILLER

The Perfect Summer Spot

What's your favorite campus hangout for the sunny season?

It's a summer afternoon on the UW–Madison campus. You have a book, a Bucky Badger–branded cap, and a bottle of sunblock. Where's the best place to hang out before the sun sets over Picnic Point?

Obviously, the problem is not finding the perfect place. The problem is choosing among *many* perfect places. Here are our top choices; send yours to onwisconsin@uwalumni.com, and we'll compile responses in the Fall issue. It'd be fun to hear about secret spots and heavenly hideaways, but if 99.9 percent of readers pick the Terrace, who would argue?

DEAN ROBBINS

The Terrace (above): What's not to love?

Library Mall (center): No better place to have a snack.

Bascom Hill: The ideal study slope.



TAYLOR WOLFRAM



BRUCE RICHTER

Here For Every Rah-Rah.

Founded by Badgers, for Badgers, UW Credit Union has been proud to support UW-Madison academics and athletics with endowments and scholarships for over 90 years. But what makes us even more proud? Helping every member reach their financial goals for every stage of life, with best-in-class mobile banking, low fees and more.

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// ALUMNI PARK *Celebrate ON*

Photo: Joe Leute



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