

OnWisconsin

FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS **SPRING 2025**

Bucky Badger's Big Day

Being the mascot at Camp Randall is equal parts work and play.





Vision

Alumni over 40 may not recognize this, but it's a concert at the Rathskeller. Since Madison banned indoor smoking 20 years ago, you've actually been able to see the stage during a performance. It smells better, too. The group is Deep Dive, which describes itself as Madison's "most newest band."

Photo by Bryce Richter



IF YOU WANT TO BE A BADGER ...

SHOP THE UW ALUMNI STORE



SHOP TODAY AT UWALUMNISTORE.COM

OnWisconsin

UW students and staff provide care for the pets of low-income owners. See page 50.

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Vision
- 6 Communications
- 9 Salutation *In the Kitchen with Patricia Wells*

OnCampus

- 11 News
- 12 Bygone *"It's Dark on Observatory Hill"*
- 14 Calculation *Birds on Campus*
- 16 Exhibition *Dolley Madison Portrait*
- 21 Conversation *Black Males in Engineering*
- 22 Contender *Volleyball Star Sarah Franklin*

OnAlumni

- 56 News
- 57 Tradition *The 80 Bus*
- 58 Honor Roll *Gabriela Cezar*
- 59 Class Notes
- 64 Diversions
- 66 Destination *Best Bathroom*

What if the greatest UW football stars from all eras played together? See page 36.



UW ATHLETICS



BRUCE RICHTER

FEATURES

24 Bucky Badger's Game Day

See how the UW mascot team handles a Camp Randall appearance, from planning to execution to last-minute tweaks. *By Doug Erickson*

32 The Food Lover's Guide to Living in Season

Patricia Wells MA'72 has become one of the world's foremost voices on French cuisine. *By Megan Provost '20*

36 The All-Time Badger Football Team

Here's our dream lineup, position by position. *By Preston Schmitt '14*

44 The Magnificent Magnus Swenson

The 1880 grad was the UW's first major inventor, persuaded the city of Madison to create a sanitary water system, and saved multitudes from postwar famine. *By Niki Denison*

50 For the Love of a Pet

WisCARES provides veterinary services to clients experiencing homelessness or financial hardship. *By Meghan Lepisto '03, MS'04*



WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The achievements of polymath alumnus Magnus Swenson have largely been lost to time, but they still shape Madison. See page 44.

Cover

For those who play Bucky Badger, nothing tops the thrill of a home football game. Photo by Bryce Richter

Reflections on Frank Lloyd Wright

Great candid article on Frank Lloyd Wright [“UW–Madison’s Most Famous Frenemy,” Winter 2024 *On Wisconsin*]. I recall attending his last lecture in Washington, DC (1958). Wright was extolling his “Mile High” building concept. He took a moment to mention the UW students that he said spent their time “lollygagging” on Bascom Hill while avoiding a meaningful education. I wondered how he knew I was in the audience.

Lewis Nelson Wolff ’57

Los Angeles

The article on Frank Lloyd Wright’s relationship with the UW remarked that his “imprint on campus proved almost cruelly elusive.” This reminded me of being a newly arrived graduate student from Ireland in 1979, culturally adrift in a bewildering new environment. It had been some years since I left my studies of architecture, but my intense admiration for Wright’s work remained. While exploring campus, I could not believe what I saw. I wanted to grab people and say, “Do you know what that is? A world-famous building!” Sitting there was Wright’s Unitarian Meeting House. In this exquisite building, I thought, “Maybe I can live here after all.”

Declan Quinn MA’82, PhD’85

Jamesville, New York

I was intrigued by your article on Frank Lloyd Wright. As a 1955 graduate, I watched him receive his honorary degree at my graduation. Then I was disappointed to see him get up and walk off the stage in the middle of the ceremony.

Jolene Johnson Hansen ’55

Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

I very much enjoyed your well-researched, interesting article on Frank Lloyd Wright. He may have been prickly, contro-

versial, colorful, and insufferably arrogant with a huge ego, but he nevertheless was a Wisconsin son and a very famous one. I think many would say he is the most famous architect the United States has ever produced. And what a character! The porkpie hats, the cape, the cane — it all gave us an unforgettable image.

I was surprised your article did not mention the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. Wright gave the City of Madison his architectural vision for this stunning structure in 1938, but the project wasn’t realized until 1997.

Please keep publishing your excellent periodical. Long ago I left the heartland, but part of me is still there. *On Wisconsin* always gives me much-needed refreshment.

Roger J. Olson ’57

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

I enjoyed reading your article on Frank Lloyd Wright for two reasons. I grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, where he lived and worked for a number of years and where a large number of buildings were erected very near his home and studio. Oak Parkers have many stories about this unique genius.

But also, I was one of the hosts for a 1965 open house at our Phi Gamma Delta house at 16 Langdon Street. I was stationed in front of a glass cabinet containing the usual sports trophies and the like, when a group of faculty visitors approached. I began a short recitation about Frank Lloyd Wright’s doing a plan for the house, never executed, as the contract went to another architect.

As I pointed out his original plans in the case, someone who identified himself as faculty from the architecture program pushed me aside, reached into the case, and grandly declared that he was taking possession of the plans “in the name of the university.”

Randy Kadlec ’67

Oak Park, Illinois

Fabulous Issue

I read the profile of Professor Barry Burden [“The UW’s Political Sage”] in the Winter *On Wisconsin* and thought it would have been great to have taken a class with him during this momentous election season. And that’s exactly what I did as a senior guest auditor. His classes were every bit as sharp as the article described, and I learned a lot.

Then I read the story on Frank Lloyd Wright [“UW–Madison’s Most Famous Frenemy”] and thought it would be fun to tour his home at Taliesin, which my wife and I did last summer. We learned so much more about Wisconsin’s greatest architect.

And then I read the article about computer genius Brent Seales [“Unsealing Ancient Mysteries”], who is virtually unrolling ancient scrolls through computer wizardry, and thought how great it would be to have him on my radio program, which I did eight years ago and several times since. What a fabulous issue! On, Wisconsin!

Gordon Govier ’73

Madison

Remembering University Square

My favorite article in the Winter 2024 *On Wisconsin* was the Bygone piece about the University Square shopping center. Not only was I reminded about the Discount Den, Paisan’s, and the Madhatter bar, but it made me think about the TYME machine that was also located there.

As a freshman living in Witte, I remember a night when I stopped with friends to get some money and got the surprising and embarrassing “Insufficient Funds” message. Although TYME stood for Take Your Money Everywhere, I sadly would not take any money anywhere that night.

Kristin Kramer VanDen

Heuvel ’92

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Communications

What a blast from the past the University Square article is! I worked at Discount Den around 1979–80, and Tim (the owner) was a great guy to work for.

We knew pretty much everybody who worked at the Square because they came to us for everything. The theater folks would come over to chat for a few minutes while the movies were playing, the UW students shopped there all day every day, and a lot of UW employees were daily customers as well.

If you were working the closing shift, somebody would run around the corner to the liquor store that faced University Avenue and grab a couple of beers to drink after we closed out the tills. We all spent a lot of time at Uncle Stanley's sandwich shop, too. The whole experience was fantastic, but I think I had the most fun working at the Den.

John McClellan '81
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

It was fun to read about University Square and take a walk down memory lane. My dad, Arnold Bertelsen '52, expanded his gift-shop empire when he opened Nesletrebs in University Square. He already had a thriving shop on State Street, Pillar to Post. The shops gave him an excuse to make regular visits to Madison. He loved the atmosphere there. My brother Dave and I worked shifts at both shops for extra cash while going to school. It was always a fun place to work, especially at holiday time.

Robert Bertelsen '78
Hopkins, Minnesota

Next Stop, the Twilight Zone!

Wonderful story by Dean Robbins recalling Rod Serling's deep, dark voice inviting viewers into *The Twilight Zone* [Exhibition, "Entering *The Twilight Zone* — via UW–Madison," Winter 2024]. I, too, was surprised to find Serling's scripts as a UW student working at the Wisconsin

Historical Society. I utilized one of his episodic *Twilight Zone* scripts for my communication arts studies.

Klaus Trilek '81
Portola Valley, California

I remember hearing Rod Serling speak on campus, I believe at the Union. The auditorium was packed. His voice was instantly familiar, and we didn't want to miss a word. Unfortunately, I don't remember specifics, but I do remember how interesting he was and that he gave us clues about the way his very creative mind worked.

Linda Gunter Wolfe '66
Indianapolis

Free Speech — and Thoughts on Sizing

[Re: Salutation, "The Robust Exchange of Ideas," Winter 2024]: I was ashamed of the UW because of the way it responded to the Palestinian protesters. They used no sense at all, had no knowledge of the First Amendment or human rights, and obviously had not learned anything from the 1960s. Protesting Israel is not anti-Semitism. Any country can be protested because of its action, not its beliefs. They acted better after protests and legal actions, but they were forced, not doing it of their own design.

[In regard to "Unfiltered," Winter 2024], size 12 and above is not plus size. Marilyn Monroe wore a size 12. It is vanity sizing that has decreased sizes while women's actual size has increased. Size 14 is the actual size of most women in America, so that is not "plus" but average.

Dianne Post '69, JD'78
Phoenix

Protecting the First Amendment rights of all students is imperative for a democracy regardless of how distasteful that speech may be interpreted by others. The problem, however, is rarely the speech itself, but rather how

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.

it's delivered. When it involves looting, vandalism, or it interferes with the rights of others, it is no longer protected speech. Why not appoint an area as a "free speech zone" where anyone can lease the space (\$1) for a set period of time. It would need to be centrally located. People/groups can then say whatever they want in a safe place, protecting their rights and the rights of others as well.

Mark Klapperich '86
Easley, South Carolina

WLHA Lives On

[RE: "State-of-the-Art Station," Destination, Winter 2024]: WLHA [radio station] is still on the air online, with alumni handling live shifts nearly 24/7. It's a highly professional product with an international impact at Lakeshore64.com. Lakeshore dorm alumni from the seventies will thoroughly enjoy the sounds and connect with staff, too.

Brian Carter '83
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Online



ALL THINGS BUCKY

You've read our cover story on Bucky Badger, and you want to know more about the charming mascot with a taste for red-and-white leisure wear. Search for the best Bucky-themed articles on our website, including "Creating the Badger Brand," "Becoming Bucky," and "The Birth of Bucky Badger's Push-ups." Or just type "Bucky Badger" into the search box for a deep dive into headstands and human pyramids.

Visit us at onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.

MY UW

*Rose
Schultz*



MY EDUCATION HAS ALLOWED ME TO LIVE MY LIFE AS I WISH.

And that's the greatest gift anyone could hope for. Now I feel it's my turn to help students who have similar aspirations. That's why I put the UW in my will. My hope is that a more enlightened generation will make the world a better place.

*Rosemary Schultz '80,
MS'82, MD'85*

planmygift.supportuw.org

OnWisconsin

Spring 2025

COEDITORS

Niki Denison, Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA)
Dean Robbins, UW–Madison Office of Strategic Communication (OSC)

ART DIRECTOR

Danielle Lawry, OSC

PUBLISHER

Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association
1848 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53726-4090
608-263-4545
Email: onwisconsin@uwalumni.com
Web: onwisconsin.uwalumni.com

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

John Allen, WFAA

SENIOR WRITER

Preston Schmitt '14, OSC

CLASS NOTES/DIVERSIONS EDITOR

Megan Provost '20, WFAA

DESIGNERS

Christine Knorr '97 and Danielle Lamberson Philipp, OSC

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Althea Dotzour, Jeff Miller, and Bryce Richter, OSC

DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND PRODUCTION

Kate Price '09, Julie Schroeder '94, Andrea Schwerbel, and Nick Weaver: OSC; Nicole Heiman, Hayden Lamphere, Esther Seidlitz, and Erin Sprague '94: WFAA

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

Madison Magazine: 608-270-3600

ADDRESS CHANGES AND

DEATH NOTICES

888-947-2586

Email: alumchanges@uwalumni.com

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

The Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA) is open to all alumni, students, and friends of the university. WFAA encourages diversity, inclusivity, and participation by all of these groups in its activities and does not discriminate on any basis.

Printed on recycled paper.

Please recycle this magazine. Please read it first.

In the Kitchen with Patricia Wells

A culinary icon's Provençal menu was right at home on my Wisconsin table.

Patricia said I would forget, and I did.

In her 2017 book, *My Master Recipes: 165 Recipes to Inspire Confidence in the Kitchen*, Patricia Wells MA'72 notes in her list of tips for roasting chicken that, according to legendary French chef Joël Robuchon, it's best to salt and pepper the buttered bird after about 10 minutes in the oven, but that "most cooks would forget to do this!"

I am most cooks.

When I talked to Patricia last fall for "The Food Lover's Guide to Living in Season" (page 32), I asked her what she might prepare for a friend or loved one — not someone she was trying to impress but someone she wanted to nourish. Her answer: roasted chicken, salad, toasted bread, a seasonal cheese, and sorbet. I turned to Wells's recipes and philosophies to re-create the meal.

Forgetting the 10-minute trick was the least significant way in which my preparation departed from Wells's. I procured sourdough starter too late to have a home-baked loaf ready for dinner and settled on store-bought. My new roasting rack didn't fit into my pan, so my bird (prepared according to Wells's recipe for roasted chicken with lemon on page 35) rested in the pan instead of being suspended above it. And when our neighbor stopped by with holiday treats, my partner's dog bolted out the front door, and I gave chase in my stocking feet through Wisconsin's first proper snow of the season.

None of this sullied the experience. Patricia Wells's approach to cooking is not solely defined by the Provençal setting in which she honed it, but more by its tenets of seasonality and thoughtfulness. I purchased as many ingredients as I could from local producers. The salad was an apple, candied pecan, white cheddar, and spinach affair befitting winter in Wisconsin. The locally sourced chocolate-peppermint sorbet, admittedly more decadent than the fresh, fruit-forward creations of Wells's repertoire, was still seasonally appropriate for December. And while I couldn't get my hands on a bottle of Wells's own Clos Chanteduc Côtes-du-Rhône, I wasn't sorry to sip a Burgundy per her recommendation on another recipe.

When I sat down to share the meal with my partner, I truly felt at home with Patricia Wells (to borrow the name of her renowned cooking school). As a Midwest-reared writer and home cook who loves her people by feeding them, I found myself channeling Wells through easy conversation over carefully curated courses that said "here, sit, eat, enjoy" — the effortless translation of the love language of food. My dining companion and I left the table fully sated and in higher spirits than a winter weeknight usually inspires.

The naughty dog even got some chicken, too.

MEGAN PROVOST '20



TOGETHER, WE'RE BUILDING A STRONGER WISCONSIN.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we believe in working together to address real-world challenges, like reducing the teacher shortage by investing in the next generation of teachers through our Teacher Pledge.



Dan Evans '01
Class of '01
sousaphone/tuba

ONE WISCONSIN. **ON WISCONSIN.**



Learn more about how we're working with people like you to make life better for everyone in Wisconsin at [impact.wisc.edu](https://www.impact.wisc.edu)

OnCampus

News from UW-Madison



GABRIEL UGUETO

North America's oldest dinosaur was the size of a chicken.

A Major Dinosaur Discovery

UW paleontologists adjust the reptile timeline — by a few million years.

How and when did dinosaurs first emerge and spread across the planet more than 200 million years ago? That question has been a source of debate among paleontologists faced with fragmented fossil records. The mainstream view has held that the reptiles emerged on the southern portion of the ancient supercontinent Pangea, called Gondwana, millions of years before spreading to the northern half, named Laurasia.

But now, a newly described dinosaur whose fossils were uncovered by UW-Madison paleontologists is challenging that narrative, with evidence that the reptiles were present in the northern hemisphere millions of years earlier than previously known.

The UW team has been analyzing the fossil remains since they were discovered in 2013 in present-day Wyoming, an area that was near the equator on Laurasia. The creature has been named *Ahvaytum bahndooiveche*, and its fossils are estimated to be around 230 million years old.

“We have, with these fossils, the oldest equatorial dinosaur in the world — it’s also North America’s oldest dinosaur,” says **Dave Lovelace PhD’12**, a research scientist at the UW Geology Museum who co-led the work with graduate student **Aaron Kufner ’16, MS’21, PhDx’25**. (See our story “Fabulous Fossils” at onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.)

It took years of careful work by Lovelace and his colleagues to analyze the fossils, establish them as a new dinosaur species, and determine their estimated age.

“It was basically the size of a chicken but with a really long tail,” says Lovelace. “We think of dinosaurs as these giant behemoths, but they didn’t start out that way.”

Lovelace and his colleagues performed high-precision radioisotopic dating of rocks in the formation that held the dinosaur’s fossils. They also found an early dinosaur-like track in even older rocks, demonstrating that dinosaurs or their cousins were already in the region a few million years earlier.

“We’re showing that the ideas we’ve held for so long — supported by the fragmented evidence we had — weren’t quite right,” Lovelace says. “We now have this piece of evidence that shows dinosaurs were here in the northern hemisphere much earlier than we thought.”

WILL CUSHMAN MS’16



HANNAH LYONS

RADIATION’S EFFECT ON ASTRONAUTS

How will radiation affect astronauts who travel to Mars? UW-Madison postdoc **Kaylin Didier** and Professor **Bill Schrage** in the UW School of Education’s Department of Kinesiology are exploring that question, thanks to a NASA grant. Didier exposed immune cells in flasks to proton radiation, which is the type predominantly encountered in space travel.

Radiation exposure can have numerous physical effects, from nausea and burns to cell damage and an increased likelihood of cancer. Helping NASA understand how different cells respond to radiation could help the agency build better equipment, such as radiation shields, as well as potential medical interventions before, during, and after traveling to Mars.

“It’s exciting to be a part of something that will benefit all astronauts as they prepare for the journey to Mars and to support their long-term health when they return home,” Didier says.

Didier used cells taken from both men and women to help determine how radiation might affect astronauts’ immune cells differently. She hopes that the research will also help people closer to home — for instance, patients undergoing proton radiation treatment for cancer.

LAUREL WHITE



The UW Lovers' Lane

A once-racy song immortalized a campus hot spot.

In the early 20th century, Observatory Hill was renowned in scientific circles as the site of UW–Madison’s Washburn Observatory. But in popular lore, it was known less for science than for seduction.

In the 1920s, an uptick in car ownership transformed once-quiet Observatory Drive into a lovers’ lane. Couples flocked to the romantic overlook on Lake Mendota, chugging up the hill in their Model Ts. Everybody had a good time — everybody but the UW astronomers, that is. The cars’ lights interfered with their celestial observations, and the noise (not to mention the necking) distracted from scientific research.

By the early 1930s, Observatory Hill had become nationally

notorious, according to *Chasing the Stars*, a history of UW astronomy by **James Lattis MA’87, PhD’89** and **Kelly Tyrrell MS’11**. Even conservative *Time* magazine referred to it with a wink and a nudge: “University of Wisconsin’s Observatory Hill at night.”

Even conservative *Time* magazine referred to it with a wink and a nudge: “University of Wisconsin’s Observatory Hill at night.” In 1934, the site achieved pop-culture immortality with the release of “It’s Dark on Observatory Hill.” Describing “a stroll to the hilltop where college sweethearts go,” the song was written by **Johnny Burke 1927** and Harold Spina and popularized by Bob Crosby and the Dorsey Brothers, among others. To the astronomers’ dismay, hordes of couples suddenly wanted to “look at the lights on the campus down below” while contemplating “what the stars do have in store.”

Faculty members complained, and by 1937 Observatory Drive had been rerouted away from Washburn Observatory. Finally, the astronomy department could

Washburn Observatory and environs achieved pop-culture immortality with the release of 1934’s “It’s Dark on Observatory Hill.”

To hear “It’s Dark on Observatory Hill” and see the sheet music, visit [this article on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com](http://thisarticleonourwebsite.onwisconsin.uwalumni.com).

chart the galaxies in peace.

Today, Observatory Hill is nothing if not respectable, but the once-racy song survives in multiple versions on YouTube. To modern ears, the melody is so stiffly metronomic that it’s hard to believe “It’s Dark on Observatory Hill” once titillated young lovers. And the cloying lyrics are now more likely to elicit a snort than a sigh: “They don’t have to know arithmetic / To figure why you and I would click.”

The Lettermen, Mel Tormé, and others continued recording the song into the 1960s, but only one interpretation hints at its potential. In 1953, Martha Tilton drew on her experience in Benny Goodman’s orchestra to loosen up the ticktock rhythms with languorous jazz phrasing. Tilton also provided an essential ingredient lacking in the other versions: sultriness. “The moon may mean romance,” Tilton sings — and for once, you believe it.

DEAN ROBBINS



DANIELLE LAMBY

A Thriving Hub of Innovation

A new plan will boost entrepreneurship at the UW.

UW–Madison is positioning itself to strengthen entrepreneurial experiences, drawing on the findings and recommendations of a study commissioned by Chancellor **Jennifer L. Mnookin**.

The comprehensive plan outlined in the study aims to create a thriving entrepreneurial environment, leveraging the university’s existing strengths and capabilities along with its ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurship across campus.

Mnookin has made entrepreneurship a key priority for the university. In 2023, she charged a working group, composed of entrepreneurial and innovation leaders from campus and industry, with reviewing current practices and making recommendations.

“The UW already is a thriving hub of innovation and entrepreneurial excellence, and we have an opportunity to make it even stronger,” Mnookin says. “This report, and its recommendations, provide a roadmap not just to unify our existing programs, but to chart a new direction to further empower our entrepreneurial community to lead in ways that truly differentiate us on a national and global scale.”

Titled *Empowering the Wisconsin Idea: The Future of Entrepreneurship at the University of Wisconsin–Madison*, the report delineates four recommendations: commit to excellence in entrepreneurship; establish campus leadership and structure to bolster entrepreneurship; create a culture to promote and celebrate entrepreneurship; and expand access to capital.

The recommendations call for establishing a signature on-campus entrepreneurship unit to coordinate efforts and foster collaboration among partners, industry, students, alumni, and faculty. They also call for streamlining policies to reduce barriers for entrepreneurs, as well as exploring investments in new physical spaces to foster entrepreneurship and engagement with outside expertise.

RODÉE SCHNEIDER '04, MA'11



RALPH PH

Coldplay (above) will perform at Camp Randall Stadium on July 19 and Morgan Wallen on June 28 and 29, marking the venue’s first concerts since the Rolling Stones rocked it in 1997 and offering a darn good excuse for students to stick around for summer term.



UW ATHLETICS

How good is the UW men’s cross-country team? Bob Liking x'25 (above) was named the Great Lakes Region Athlete of the Year after winning four consecutive individual Big Ten championship titles. Mick Byrne was named Coach of the Year, and the Badgers won the Big Ten championship for the seventh year in a row. We’d congratulate them in person if only we could catch up with them.

In 2022, Jake Piekarski '24 started shoveling snow to help pay for college. Before long, the UW business major founded the company Snow Scholars, which now offers flexible snow-shoveling employment for students in six college towns. Piekarski’s operation recently earned a \$150,000 investment on the reality series *Shark Tank*.

Nesting and Resting

The UW campus is a popular pit stop for migratory birds.

For birds migrating through the Mississippi flyway, the Madison area's four lakes signal a welcome reprieve. According to **David Drake**, a UW professor of forest and wildlife ecology and UW Extension wildlife specialist, the habitats surrounding the lakes are crucial to migratory species' survival, providing a safe place for birds to rest and refuel during stopovers. Hundreds of these migratory bird species nest on the UW campus.

The UW is an even safer avian haven thanks to the construction of species-specific nesting structures and new building ordinances that require bird-safe glass to reduce collisions. Careful listeners can hear the promising results of these efforts. "Learning birdsong is like learning a new language and rewiring your brain," says UW professor of avian ecology **Anna Pidgeon PhD'00**. "It's scaffolding to build knowledge and appreciation of nature for your whole life."

At right are some of the birds that Badgers might hear throughout the year.

MEGAN PROVOST '20

Data collected from eBird at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS

- American Crows
- American Goldfinches
- American Herring Gulls
- Bald Eagles
- Barred Owls
- Belted Kingfisher
- Black-Capped Chickadees
- Blue Jays
- Canada Geese
- European Starlings
- Great Blue Heron
- House Finches
- Mallards
- Mourning Doves
- Northern Cardinals
- Red-Tailed Hawks
- Song Sparrows
- White-Breasted Nuthatches
- Wild Turkeys
- Wood Duck
- Woodpeckers

SPRING/FALL MIGRATION

- Blackpoll Warblers
- Blue-Winged Teal
- Common Loon
- Gadwall
- Great Egret

SUMMER RESIDENTS

- American Robins
- Baltimore Oriole
- Eastern Bluebird
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Indigo Bunting
- Northern Shoveler
- Osprey
- Purple Martin
- Red-Headed Woodpeckers
- Rose-Breasted Grosbeak
- Sandhill Cranes
- Scarlet Tanager
- Tree Swallow
- Vireos
- Warblers

HARBINGERS OF WINTER

- Dark-Eyed Junco
- Tundra Swan





ALTHEA DOTZOUR

Thirteen Spiritual Spaces

Campus makes it easier to find locations for prayer and reflection.

UW–Madison has had a map of prayer and reflection spaces on campus, but there was no process for keeping track of changes, communicating with site administrators, or advertising new offerings. Now, the Center for Interfaith Dialogue is trying to change that.

Established in 2023, the center is devoted to supporting students’ religious and spiritual life. One of its first initiatives has been to take over administration of the map, along with creating a video tour to help students learn about the variety of prayer and reflection spaces at the Memorial Union, Engineering Hall, and other locations. The map and video are available online at interfaith.wisc.edu.

“These prayer and reflection spaces within the community can be seen as an oasis for students, staff, faculty, visitors, and others to gather themselves and collect the internal resources needed to meet each moment of their day,” says center staff member **seigen johnson**.

The map’s 13 designated spaces include Union South’s new foot-washing station in the third-floor bathroom. Foot-washing stations are particularly significant to Muslim students, who may use them to perform ritual washing before prayers.

“We prioritize our five daily prayers in our everyday lives,” says **Diyaa Manasrah x’26**, president of the UW–Madison Muslim Students Association. “We may have to step out of class and pray, sometimes in the middle of the street or inside a random building. But having these prayer and reflection spaces means we can go to designated areas and pray with our friends, as well as have a safe and clean space to pray. It truly does mean a lot to me, as well as the Muslims all across campus who step into these spaces.”

While some people use the prayer and reflection spaces several times a day, others can stop in spontaneously for a moment of rest and quiet reflection. As part of UW–Madison’s campus, they are not specific to any one religion or tradition.

TALIA IVRY



NATIONAL INVENTORS HALL OF FAME

Molly Paras ’24, Zach Spears ’24, and Lauren Fitzsimmons x’25 won first place in the 2024 Collegiate Inventors Competition, presented by the National Inventors Hall of Fame. The trio earned the \$10,000 top prize in the undergraduate division with an ingenious tool called “Nerve Ninja,” used to reduce injuries during carpal tunnel surgeries. The project originated in the UW Department of Biomedical Engineering, presumably earning an A+.



MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

Lest you doubt the brilliance of UW–Madison alumni, Loka Ashwood PhD’15 (above) and Keivan Stassun MS’99, PhD’00 have each received a prestigious MacArthur “genius grant.” Ashwood, a sociology professor at the University of Kentucky, sheds light on rural culture. Stassun, a physics professor at Vanderbilt University, expands opportunities for under-represented populations in science, technology, engineering, and math.

UW–Madison improved to 56th in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, edging out the University of Amsterdam. This continues the UW’s two-year surge in the ranking, which assesses performance on the global stage in terms of research, impact, and teaching.

First Photo?

The Chazen Museum of Art owns what might be the earliest photograph of a First Lady.

In 2012, the Chazen Museum of Art acquired what might turn out to be a very valuable bit of photographic history. The museum received the Baker/Pisano Photograph Collection, and included among its images is a daguerreotype of Dolley Madison, wife of the nation's fourth president.

First the good news: the daguerreotype of Madison may be one of the oldest photos of an American First Lady — making it a pricey bit of history. When a similar image was sold at auction in 2024, it fetched \$456,000.

Now the bad news: when the daguerreotype came to the Chazen, it was initially believed to have been shot by legendary photographer Mathew Brady. It's now unclear if that is correct: Madison's clothing and pose seem to match the auctioned daguerreotype, which was created by John Plumbe, an early photography enthusiast. The Chazen's picture may have come from Plumbe's studio as well.

But this isn't certain. "There are differences between the two photos," says **James Wehn**, the UW's Van Vleck Curator of Works on Paper. "For example, I noticed the shawl's pattern seems to be the same but is draped differently. ... More research would need to be undertaken before updating the attribution of the Chazen's example, if appropriate."

The daguerreotype photographic process uses silver-plated copper and mercury vapor to



TOP: BAKER/PISANO PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION. BOTTOM: GETTY/SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY



make images. A subject often had to sit very still for several minutes, facing into the sun, to create a detailed portrait.

Dolley Madison's husband, James (namesake of Wisconsin's

capital), served as president from 1809 to 1817, and Dolley established many traditions we associate with the role of the First Lady.

Only four Dolley Madison daguerreotypes are known to exist today. The Chazen's was created in 1846, when Madison was 78. The daguerreotype process had been invented in 1839, meaning this image is among America's oldest photos in general.

The Chazen's photograph is part of the museum's permanent collection, and it can be seen online at chazen.wisc.edu.

JOHN ALLEN

Say cheese! Above is an example of a daguerreotype camera, alongside Madison's image, one of the oldest photos of a First Lady.

“A Hopeful Sign for the Future”

Siblings get financial help from the UW’s new Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise Program.

Brothers **Gavin x’26** and **Mason x’27 White Eagle** are among the beneficiaries of UW–Madison’s new Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise Program. The initiative offers financial support to cover the full cost of pursuing an undergraduate degree for state residents who are enrolled members of federally recognized Wisconsin Indian tribes.

The commitment covers not only tuition and fees but also housing, meals, books, and other educational expenses. It was offered to current students as well as incoming freshmen and transfer students. In this inaugural year, the White Eagle brothers are two of 73 undergraduates in the program.

“The Tribal Promise is our commitment to ensuring that Indigenous students have the opportunity to receive a top-notch education here at UW–Madison,” says **Carla Vigue**, the university’s director of tribal relations. “But it’s also a way to get Indigenous students to bring their talent, their voice, and their unique perspective to campus. UW–Madison is a better place because of it.”

The program is not based on financial need and is funded by private donations and other institutional resources rather than taxpayer money.

The White Eagle brothers grew up in Auburndale, Wisconsin, and are enrolled members of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Gavin (below right) is a junior majoring in legal studies and communication arts, and Mason (left) is a sophomore kinesiology major. The two are first-generation college students.

Gavin, who aspires to attend law school and possibly work for the Ho-Chunk Nation, sees the Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise Program as a big step forward for UW–Madison.

“The university is always talking about how it is located on Ho-Chunk land,” he says. “Well, this is them actually doing something about it. It’s a hopeful sign for the future.”

Mason, who is interested in being an athletic trainer, says the financial aid has been a huge relief. And both brothers think the program will inspire other Indigenous students to set a goal of attending UW–Madison.

“We want to be good role models and good representatives of this new initiative,” says Gavin, “so that it is here for other Native students when they need it.”

DOUG ERICKSON



BRUCE RICHTER



DANIELLE LAMRY

UW–Madison now ranks sixth nationally in research expenditures. The UW has moved up two spots among 920 public and private universities in the United States, according to the National Science Foundation. For the first time, the university has topped \$1.7 billion in research expenditures, including increased support for research into Alzheimer’s, childhood asthma, the fentanyl crisis, and traumatic brain injuries.

“I feel like if Madison was a dish, it would be macaroni and cheese. ... with really good cheese, really saucy and some nice breadcrumbs on top. Just comforting, warm, and welcoming.”

— **Dan Jacobs**, *Top Chef* competitor and UW–Madison winter 2024 commencement speaker



ALEX HOLLOWAY

A MAKEATHON FOR MOBILITY

Last semester, dozens of UW–Madison volunteers created assistive mobility devices for toddlers as part of a “makeathon” at the Grainger Engineering Design Innovation Lab. The recipients were children who aren’t yet big or old enough for standard wheelchairs.

Volunteers worked on fabric seat cushions, assembled frames, and used a laser etching machine to add designs to the wheels. They distributed six mobility trainers (above) to families and four to local clinics.

“We had information about the kids and the kinds of cartoons or music they like, and we put some of those into elements like the wheel cover designs so they will have something that’s tailored to them specifically,” says **Peter Noonan ’24, MSx’25**, a mechanical engineering graduate student who helped organize the makeathon.

Makeathons primarily draw students but are also open to staff, faculty, and alumni. About 50 people participated in the 2024 initiative.

Makeathons encourage collaboration across disciplines and allow volunteers to use the equipment in the Design Innovation Lab while working toward a common goal. The lab coordinated with the UW’s doctor of physical therapy program to host last year’s event.

Madison-based architectural firm Erdman was a supporting partner for the makeathon, and CEO Rustin Becker joined in the volunteer efforts.

“This has been a wonderful opportunity to work with the students, who are leveraging their skills to actually bring something together and see the impact it’s going to have for the children who get these chairs,” Becker says.

ALEX HOLLOWAY

USING AI TO FIGHT BRAIN TUMORS

For years, cancer researchers have noticed that more men than women get a lethal form of brain cancer called glioblastoma and that the tumors are often more aggressive in men. UW–Madison scientists are turning to artificial intelligence to learn more about those risk factors.

Pallavi Tiwari, an associate professor of biomedical engineering and radiology, leverages the computational power of AI models to probe large volumes of medical images. She’s looking for patterns that could help oncologists and their patients make better-informed decisions.

Glioblastoma is one of the most aggressive forms of cancer, with a median survival of 15 months after diagnosis.

According to Tiwari, “a big challenge is prognosis — identifying how long patients are actually going to live and what their outcome is likely to be. This is important because the outcomes ultimately govern the treatments that they’re getting and their quality of life after diagnosis.”

Tiwari and former graduate student **Ruchika Verma** built an AI model that can identify even subtle patterns in pathology slides that might never be apparent to the naked eye. Using data from more than 250 studies of glioblastoma patients, they trained the model to recognize tumors’ unique characteristics, such as the abundance of certain cell types and the degree to which they invade surrounding healthy tissue.

The model identified tumor characteristics that appear to translate to worse prognoses for both men and women.

The study could help lead to more individualized care for glioblastoma patients.

WILL CUSHMAN MS’16



BRUCE RICHTER

Cybersecurity Central

UW–Madison plays a leading role as a research and education partner for national cybersecurity. Last semester, the university welcomed a delegation from the United States Cyber Command, which is responsible for the Department of Defense’s cyberspace capabilities. They participated in talks, visited research labs, and toured Morgridge Hall (above), the future home of the School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences. The building is set to open this summer.

Everyone's Badger Mom

Erin Warner helps students navigate an increasingly challenging housing market.

Officially, **Erin Warner '95** oversees Off-Campus Housing Services as an assistant director in the Division of University Housing. Unofficially, she strives to be everyone's Badger mom. In helping students negotiate Madison's complex and sometimes anxiety-inducing housing market, she brings to bear whatever is needed — TLC, common sense, tough love. Sometimes she sounds like a therapist, other times a 911 operator.

"Okay, first I need you to take a deep breath and stop panicking," she told a distraught undergraduate who approached her at a recent campus housing forum. The student was having difficulty finding an affordable apartment. "No one has ever gone homeless on my watch, and I'm not about to let you be the first."

The Division of University Housing established the Off-Campus Housing Services unit in 2023 to help students and families navigate Madison's increasingly challenging, highly competitive housing market. The effort, which built on a previous program in Campus and Visitor Relations, now has a designated office and full-time staff member.

Warner (below) is the mother of two Badgers, **Jamie '24** and **Chase '26**. She approaches her job squarely from the perspective of someone who's been there, experienced that.

"Trust me, if there was a way to make it complicated, my Badgers found it," she says. "When I tell students and families that I've learned a lot of lessons the hard way, I truly mean it."

Warner prefers meeting students wherever they are — the Starbucks at Smith Residence Hall is a favorite spot. She reviews budgets and housing options and offers suggestions on how to find properties that might make the most sense for them.

"I want students to feel like they have someone in their corner who understands that this process can be very stressful," she says.

And to all the Badger parents out there across the country or across the world, Warner wants you to know she's on it.

"I hope that if one of my children ever ends up in your backyard, you'd do the same."

DOUG ERICKSON



JOEL NINMANN/UNIVERSITY HOUSING

ARE BULLIES IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE?

A UW–Madison study explores the ways that elementary and high school administrators disrupt or enable bullying of transgender students.

The study, published in *Educational Administration Quarterly*, divides harmful actions into four categories: direct action, facilitated support, accommodation of external stakeholders, and resistance to education or external support that would help disrupt bullying.

Mollie McQuillan, lead author of the study and an assistant professor in the School of Education's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, says the study provides a broader definition of administrative bullying than had previously existed. She also says it makes clear how crucial school leaders' actions are in enabling or dismantling a culture of bullying in their schools.

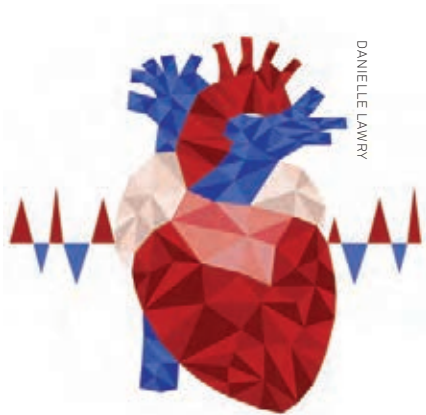
"Administrators compose a small but mighty part of school systems," she says. "The need for school administrators who understand their role in perpetuating transphobia has heightened in the midst of well-coordinated, international campaigns targeting transgender people in schools."

Drawing on data from court cases across the country and dozens of interviews with school administrators and policy consultants, the study also looked at how administrators successfully stop bullying. These leaders proactively collaborate with students, supportive parents, and supportive community organizations when developing and implementing school policies.

"As attacks on transgender youth intensify in legislatures and classrooms alike, district leaders stand on the front line of protecting students from continued bias-based bullying," McQuillan says. "Students need well-informed and dedicated leaders who will help sustain student education and safety in these difficult times."

Earlier this year, McQuillan received the Emerging Scholar Award from the division of the American Educational Research Association that focuses on administration, organization, and leadership. She also received the organization's Outstanding Policy Report award in the division of educational policy and politics.

LAUREL WHITE



STEM CELLS COULD TREAT HEART DISEASE

Stem-cell treatment may one day delay or prevent the need for heart transplants, and a UW–Madison collaboration with Mayo Clinic is paving the way.

A research team led by **Marina Emborg**, professor of medical physics in the UW–Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, and Timothy Nelson, physician scientist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, found that heart muscle cells grown from stem cells can integrate into the hearts of monkeys with a condition resembling congenital heart disease.

The researchers used human induced pluripotent stem cells, which are cells collected from human donors, coaxed back into a stem cell state, and then developed into cell types compatible with heart muscle. They transplanted the cells into rhesus macaque monkeys with a surgically induced heart defect, and the cells successfully integrated into the muscular layer of the heart.

“We delivered the cells to support existing cardiac tissue,” Emborg says. “Our goal with this particular study, as a precursor to human studies, was to make sure that the transplanted cells were safe and would successfully integrate with the organization of the surrounding tissue.”

The research proved the feasibility and safety of using stem cells in the first congenital heart disease–like monkey model.

JORDANA LENON '84



ANDY MANIS

There’s a Map for That

Self-guided tours share Indigenous history and enduring Native presence with the UW–Madison community.

Scattered across campus are markers that tell the story of Indigenous history at UW–Madison, a region long known as Teejop. But those who pass these plaques, sculptures, and landmarks regularly may not give them much thought.

The digital mapping tool Mapping Teejop puts this history, and the ongoing presence of the Ho–Chunk Nation and other Native peoples, front and center. Multiple self-guided tours highlight histories of the Ho–Chunk people who, like other tribal nations across the U.S., were forced to cede their lands in the 19th century during the creation of land-grant universities.

The six tours, each approximately 50 minutes, feature histories collected from UW–Madison and Teejop community members that encourage learning and self-reflection.

Kasey Keeler '05, an assistant professor of civil society and community studies and American Indian and Indigenous studies, has led the creation of Mapping Teejop. The project is a cross-campus collaboration among the School of Human Ecology, the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program, and the Department of Geography’s Cartography Lab.

“I saw a need for an accessible learning tool that offers students an opportunity to get out of the classroom and learn about the Indigenous past and presence at UW–Madison,” says Keeler.

Mapping Teejop also shares the history of American Indian military service and student activism, and the ways dispossession and non-Native settlement across Teejop altered the landscape.

“I didn’t really know much about the history of the Ho–Chunk people here until I took the tour,” says sophomore **Joslyn Salamanca x’27**. “The UW reads a land acknowledgment statement before events, but I didn’t know much else. I learned a lot from the tour.”

While the tool has so far been largely used by students, Keeler says anyone can benefit from taking the tours.

“The hope of the project team is that Mapping Teejop is accessible to all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to UW–Madison, and that even seasoned history buffs can walk away having learned something or having paused and engaged in some critical reflection,” she says. “We hope the project opens avenues for ongoing dialogue on and off campus.”

HANNAH BLACK

Do Talent and Brilliance Have a Color?

Professor Brian Burt addresses the underrepresentation of Black men in STEM fields.

As a graduate student, **Brian Burt** attended social gatherings with students of color who worked in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). He heard about their struggles in classrooms where no one else looked like them. “People made an assumption that they weren’t good enough,” he says.

Now, as a professor in the UW School of Education, Burt has drawn on 10 years of research for Black Males in Engineering, a web initiative (BlackMalesInEngineering.org) that aims to increase the number of Black men in STEM.

“Black males make up only 2 percent of graduate students in STEM, and it’s been stagnant for more than five decades,” Burt says. “So even with millions of dollars going toward changing these numbers, it isn’t working.”

What is the Black Males in Engineering project?

It’s a website that has articles based on

my work with Black male graduate students, along with five short videos. With each video, there’s an interactive handout that offers context, statistics, and a series of questions for

Burt’s project is giving people hope.

reflection. Parents, K-12 teachers, advisers, and college faculty can use them with individuals or groups.

Each video and handout targets a different audience. For example, one set talks about how to play with children and increase their curiosity. Another handout offers a question for college advisers: “What assumptions do I make about what talent, brilliance, and high achievement look like?” This asks them to reflect on whether they think talent and brilliance have a color, a race, a gender. Throughout the project, we’re asking people to interrogate their assumptions.

How can your approach lead to progress?

The website is a tool for conversation and self-reflection and also something that can be put into action with workshops, panels, and community events.

My barber was a panelist at one of our events, and it was touching to hear his response to the videos. He wondered if he might have gone into STEM if he hadn’t been disciplined as a child for breaking things and putting them back together — if somebody had helped him to think of that as an asset rather than as something bad. The videos also made him reflect on how he might have parented his sons differently. So the project is giving people hope.

What is a key takeaway from Black Males in Engineering?

Increasing the number of Black males in STEM would increase the number of brilliant thinkers who could contribute to solving the nation’s and world’s grandest challenges. Everyone — parents, siblings, peers, mentors — can play a role.

*Interview by Dean Robbins
Photo by Bryce Richter*



A Volleyballer Goes Hollywood

Sarah Franklin x'25 isn't just a star on the court. She's a star on ESPN, too.

The news came as a complete surprise.

When UW volleyball player **Sarah Franklin x'25** received an email telling her that ESPN had nominated her for an ESPY (Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly) award, she felt confused by the subject line.

"I was in the Dominican Republic at the time with Team USA," she says. "And I was going through my emails. I see an email from [UW coach **Kelly Sheffield**], and it said ESPYs. I'm like, 'Why does it say ESPYs? There is no way that this is happening.'"

Franklin texted Sheffield to confirm that the nomination was real, and she found out that the network had named her a finalist for best female college athlete of 2024, up against Iowa basketball sensation Caitlin Clark, Louisiana State gymnast Haleigh Bryant, and Northwestern lacrosse player Izzy Scane.

The nomination marked a high point in Franklin's career. When she was a high school volleyball player in Florida, she wasn't highly recruited, and she began collegiate play at Michigan State, where her freshman season ended early due to injury.

After the UW volleyball team won the 2021 national championship, Franklin decided to transfer to Madison.

"I was looking for something that I knew was going to challenge me, skills-wise, character-building-wise, on the court, off the court. [The UW volleyball program] just has a very, very strong culture. When I visited, I could tell that all of the coaches and all of the

players were so invested in being their best selves."

An outside hitter, Franklin quickly became a team leader, earning All-Big Ten and All-American honors. She was named the 2023 American Volleyball Coaches Association player of the year. But an ESPY nomination meant glamour — a trip to Beverly Hills and a televised ceremony.

"I had two weeks' notice," Franklin says. "I had two weeks to find a dress. And then my mom was coming with me, so she had to do the



Franklin was a scoring force for the Badger volleyball team. She led the squad in kills for the third straight season.

same thing. And all during this time I had a busted ankle. But it was a great red, sparkly dress — absolutely perfect.”

ESPN flew Franklin to California first-class and put her up in a luxury hotel. There was a speaking engagement and a red carpet. Ultimately, Franklin didn’t win the award — it went to Clark.

After just two days, she was on a plane back to Madison for summer training.

She and her teammates had another solid season in 2024, finishing 26-7 overall and 17-3 in the Big Ten — good for third place and an invitation to the NCAA national tournament.

However, the two schools that finished ahead of the UW in the Big Ten standings — Penn State and Nebraska — continued to thwart the Badger squad. The UW lost to rival Nebraska in the quarter-

finals, and Penn State defeated Nebraska in the semifinal round.

But Franklin is treasuring her ESPY memory, because this was her last season of collegiate play — going forward, she may try to play professionally, and she may try coaching. But most likely, she will never again experience anything quite like the ESPYs.

“I tried to slow it down as much as possible to be able to enjoy it,” she says, “because it did go by very fast. I just kept turning to my mom and saying, ‘This is awesome. This is really, really cool.’”

JOHN ALLEN

PHOTO BY BRYCE RICHTER





BUCKY BADGER'S GAME DAY

Performing as the legendary mascot is a high-pressure gig that — if all goes well — pleases a stadium's worth of UW fans.

BY DOUG ERICKSON

PHOTOS BY BRYCE RICHTER



When the students step into the suit, the world narrows and fades.

There's a moment that seems to happen to every student lucky enough to portray Bucky Badger, the University of Wisconsin–Madison's beloved mascot.

They step into the suit and the world narrows and fades. Nothing else matters but bringing joy to others.

"It's like every difficulty you might be having in your own life completely melts away," says Cecil '26, a third-year Bucky who is pursuing a teaching degree. "Your only job is to be a giant magnet of love."

This year, eight students get to be that giant magnet. For these select few — chosen during three days of intense tryouts each spring — nothing tops the thrill of a home football game at Camp Randall Stadium. It's the marquee event, a massive canvas for Bucky's wildest stunts, best dance moves, and most inspired improv shtick.

"It's your own playground you get to goof around on," says Nolan '26, a biomedical engineering major and a third-year Bucky. "You just try to forget that you're doing it in front of nearly 80,000 people."

Last season, the September 7 matchup between the UW and the University of South Dakota Coyotes showed the complex Bucky Badger operation in action, from planning to execution to last-minute tweaks. It provided an object lesson in being Bucky: on the one hand, the overwhelming physical demands and performance anxiety; and on the other, the indescribable joy of pleasing a stadium's worth of cheering UW fans.

"BUCKY GETS AWAY WITH A LOT"

A Badger football home game activates the entire Bucky squad — all eight students are required to be at Camp Randall. Three will take turns portraying Bucky during the game (a nod to the exertion required), while the others will retrieve props, run interference, film Bucky for highlight reels, or help hoist the "Bucky board" for the mascot's popular airborne push-ups.

Bucky's workday starts hours before kickoff at tailgate parties across campus. On this day, five students fan out to groups that have requested a Bucky appearance, including the ROTC Badger Battalion and the School of Veterinary Medicine. The students are careful never to intersect. (If you ever see two Buckys at once, something has gone seriously wrong in the universe.)

Later, in the warm-up to kickoff, Bucky works the crowd at Badger Bash, the rollicking tailgate party at Union South. Today, Cecil is in the suit. New Buckys revere the veteran. "He's a blueprint for what Bucky should be — very animated, never still, great with props," says Charlie '27, a legal studies major and a first-year Bucky.

Despite the costume's limited vision, Cecil careens full throttle through Union South, high-fiving fans. He arm-wrestles a burly guy, gives a

grumpy man a back rub, seizes a plate of food and balances it precariously atop three soda cans.

"Bucky gets away with a lot," says Zach '27, a pre-nursing major and first-year Bucky.

All the while, fans beseech Bucky for attention, some grabbing and jostling him as if there isn't a real person inside. Michelle Brayer Gregoire '95 of Milwaukee couldn't be more respectful. She asks Bucky to pose for a photo with her and her mother, Mary Kathleen Conway Thurow '65, age 81, of Baraboo, Wisconsin. Afterward, Gregoire squeezes Bucky's paw. "Thank you for bringing so much happiness to so many people," she tells him.

The scene repeats itself about 1,000 times on this day.

"BUCKY POOL PARTY!"

Once Bucky finishes his Badger Bash duties, all eight students gather an hour before kickoff at the McClain Center, the indoor training space next to Camp Randall. It's a high-stakes moment. During the fourth quarter of each home game, Bucky gets to put on a skit in front of the student section. But first, Bucky must perform it to an audience of one: Josette Jaucian '97, director of the Wisconsin Spirit Squad.

Think of her as Bucky's overlord, in a good way. (See sidebar.) She manages everything from the tryouts to requests for appearances. She's not Bucky's coach — there isn't one; the veterans show the ropes to newcomers — but she is his protector.

"I remind the students that they're not just representing the athletic department, they're representing the university and the entire state," she says. "They need to be family-friendly and smart about their choices."

That's all to say that if there's any controversial or questionable content in the skit, it's not going to happen.

The eight students have a lot of autonomy in coming up with skit ideas, and they throw everything they have at it weeks before each game.

"It's our two minutes during the game to really shine, to show off what we can do — props, crowd involvement, a well-crafted storyline," says Jacob '26, a mechanical engineering and data sciences major and a third-year Bucky.

At a brainstorming session for the Coyotes game, Zach, who will be the primary Bucky, pitches his skit idea to the rest of the Buckys.

"The weather is likely to be hot," he tells them. "I think we should take advantage of that: Bucky Pool Party!"

The others love the idea. The next 30 minutes are electric. Ideas fly back and forth and build off each other. It's decided: Bucky will wear a swimsuit and goggles and dive from the top of a milk crate into an inflatable kiddie pool filled with real water!

Two days later, it falls to Jacob to run the idea past Jaucian for preliminary approval. The other

Top: The Buckys brainstorm skit ideas. Bottom: Preparing for a football game at Camp Randall Stadium.

For video of Bucky Badger in action at Camp Randall, see this article on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.





Buckys are there, too, anxiously awaiting her answer.

“No water,” she says immediately.

The Buckys are deflated but take it surprisingly well.

“We learned early on that when Jo says no, stop talking,” Jacob says. “You do not change Jo’s mind.”

There is grudging respect for her authority.

“She’s like our parent,” Nolan says. “There has to be a person who says you can’t have 10 lollipops for dinner.”

The skit is revamped — Bucky will jump into a dry pool filled with pillows. At the McClain Center before the Coyotes game, Jaucian gives the revised skit the thumbs up.

Zach and Cecil grab each other and jump up and down. “She said yes! She said yes!”

“I’VE EXPERIENCED SO MUCH AS BUCKY”

The game clock reads seven minutes to kickoff. Bucky is waiting in a tunnel on the back of the Bucky Wagon, the restored fire engine that will take him onto the field. Zach is now suited up. (For logistical and sanitary reasons, there are eight suits, one per Bucky.) This is his first home game, and he has the biggest role of the day.

“When you hit the field on the Bucky Wagon, the whole world goes quiet,” Cecil says. “It’s like someone has put the volume on mute. Nothing else matters for a span of four hours.”

Despite the pressure, Zach has been calm in the days leading up to his Camp Randall debut. He was a three-sport athlete in high school and thrived off the energy of crowds. That’s part of the appeal of being Bucky. “I was missing that feeling of a big game,” he says.

The Bucky Wagon zooms onto the field, sirens blazing and faux smoke billowing. Bucky disembarks at the 50-yard line and makes a figure eight with a giant *W* flag. He beelines toward the opposing sideline, then takes a sharp turn and heads to his rightful home in front of the Badger student section. The Buckys practice this maneuver many times, partly because they need to be prepared for the physical toll of carrying a massive, drag-creating flag while sprinting in a suit that weighs 33 pounds. “Brutal,” Nolan says.

Another physical test comes just minutes into the game when the Badgers score a touchdown. Zach cranks out seven push-ups atop the Bucky board as fans yell each number: “one ... two ... three ...”

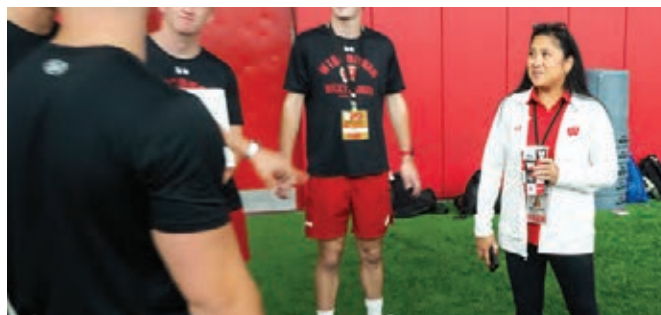
“The crowd will try to make you go faster,” Cecil had warned Zach before the game. “Don’t fall for it.”

The push-ups become cumulative as the Badgers continue to score. Once, Bucky had to do close to 600 at a single game. To prepare, each Bucky commits to doing at least 100 push-ups a day. They are also required to lift weights twice a week with the rest of the Spirit Squad.

Top: Bucky works the crowd at Badger Bash. Bottom: When the game starts, nothing else matters but bringing joy to others.

By the end of the first quarter, the air temperature has climbed to the mid-60s — mild for fans but hot for Bucky. “It’s an extra 20 to 30 degrees inside the suit,” Nolan says.

In a seamless swap, Jacob wears the suit for the second quarter. He’s a pro, unflappable. “I’ve experienced so much as Bucky that nothing really fazes me anymore,” he says. “I went skydiving and felt no adrenaline.”



THE BOSS OF BUCKY

She’s known affectionately as “Bucky’s Mom.” And sometimes “Bucky’s Parole Officer.”

Perhaps no one loves Bucky quite as much as Josette Jaucian ’97 — or reins him in quite so expertly when he strays.

“Sometimes, as Buckys, the students think they’re invincible,” she says. “They’re not. There are rules.”

Jaucian, as director of the Wisconsin Spirit Squad, oversees the cheerleading, dance, and Bucky teams. She handles all the behind-the-scenes administrative tasks for Bucky, including coordinating some 600 appearances a year. She’s celebrating her 25th anniversary in the role.

“Day in and day out, Bucky’s all around me all the time,” she says.

Jaucian, a kinesiology major, was a Badger cheerleader throughout her undergraduate years, then stayed on as an assistant and rose up the ranks.

She fields complaints about Bucky (“He broke a table!”) but also gets to hear the praise — for example, “Bucky got my child to come out of his shell.” She zealously guards Bucky’s image. Once, when a fan from an opposing team tried to claim that Bucky had flipped him off, Jaucian enjoyed letting him know that the UW–Madison mascot has only four digits on each hand. It is mathematically impossible for Bucky to give someone the middle finger.

The Buckys speak of Jaucian with immense respect and a wee bit of fear.

“She’s the boss,” Nolan says. “You don’t want to get on Jo’s bad side.”

“As much as Jo is the person who has to say no,” adds Cecil, “she’s also the one who fights for us when we need something.”

Jaucian has done the job so long that she must occasionally remind herself of its specialness.

“If I step back a bit,” she says, “I realize how amazing it is to be able to make sure Bucky is out there making people happy.”

— D. E.

“BUCKY IS THE GOLD STANDARD”

Halftime finds the crew in a locker room taking a lunch break and consorting with “the enemy” — Charlie Coyote, the mascot for the opposing team.

“We try to be very hospitable, because we’d want that, too,” Jacob says.

Charlie Coyote is portrayed on this day by Caleb, a University of South Dakota law student. Turns out the Buckys know him from college mascot summer camp. Caleb is the opposite of a trash-talker.

“Bucky is the gold standard for Big Ten mascots and mascots in general,” he says. “No one beats Bucky in keeping the energy of the fans going.”

Caleb is also a little jealous. He points to his costume’s massive lower paws.

“Bucky gets to wear regular shoes. I’ve got these clunky feet. They’re awful. I can’t do push-ups with them.”

“The best part of Bucky on a game day is the unpredictability of it. Sometimes you think you’ve seen Bucky do everything, and then you see something new.”

For the third quarter, Charlie is in the Bucky suit. Together with Zach and Jacob, the three have displayed an impressive range of creativity during the game. Bucky rides a cooler like a horse, bumps bellies with a member of the event staff, pretends to vacuum the end zone.

“The best part of Bucky on a game day is the unpredictability of it and the sheer spontaneity,” Cecil says. “Sometimes you think you’ve seen Bucky do everything, and then you see something new.”

PRESERVING THE BUCKY BADGER MYSTIQUE

You’ll notice that we use only first names in this article and show no faces. The anonymity was a requirement of our behind-the-scenes access. The eight Buckys insisted on it. In this age of relentless self-promotion, these students are refreshingly ego-free.

“It’s never about us,” says Jacob. “Our goal is to uplift the character.”

There’s a practical reason, too. “We don’t want people coming up to us on campus and saying, ‘Is that Jacob in there?’ It takes away from the magic.”

Each Bucky decides how far to take anonymity. Most tell only family members and close friends about their special campus role. But sometimes not even that. Zach didn’t tell his sister for months. Nolan still hasn’t told his little brother.

The secrecy extends to other aspects of being Bucky, like the process for putting on the suit, which we weren’t allowed to witness. “Some things,” says Cecil, “need to remain a mystery.”

— D. E.

Top: The pool-party skit is a big success. Bottom: During the postgame Fifth Quarter, Bucky is joined by the other seven students.

Zach, back in the suit, performs the skit during the fourth quarter. Atop the milk crate, Bucky cannonballs into the kiddie pool after getting fans to clap wildly and yell, “Jump! Jump!” Five front-row fans raise scoring cards giving Bucky across-the-board 10s. Snippets of the skit appear on the jumbotron, visible to the sellout crowd of 76,061. This is the Holy Grail for a Bucky skit.

The game ends with the Badgers triumphant: 27–13. During the postgame Fifth Quarter, Bucky is joined on the field by the other seven students out of costume. They release the stress of the game by roughhousing and tackling each other. All eight do headstands together and sway back and forth to “Varsity.”

“There is so much that goes into being Bucky that you can’t tell other people about,” says Cecil, who lives in a house near Camp Randall with four other Buckys. “To be able to share life with these guys inside and outside the suit is so special.”

“Sometimes when we’re together, we talk about Bucky way too much and have to say, ‘Okay, let’s cut it out,’” Zach says.

“MAKING BUCKY BETTER”

Back in the locker room after the game, the Buckys sit in a circle and debrief. There’s universal agreement that this performance was among the all-time greats.

“That was what I would want every game day to look like,” Jacob tells the group. “Every single one of us was in the suit at some point today. The amount we did, and the cohesiveness on the field, felt amazing.”

“In my three years here, I’ve yet to see a moment like what I witnessed during the skit,” Cecil says. “The whole crowd was into it. The chanting started at the bottom of the stands and went all the way to the top. Zach, I was so proud of you.”

Everyone wants to hear from the first-timers.

Charlie cops to having been nervous before the game but says he “became entranced in a flow state” by the end of his quarter. Zach feels like he started off a little stiff during the first quarter but gradually improved.

“Every time we have an event like this,” Zach tells them, “it shows the dynamic we have together and why I want to be a part of this and keep making Bucky better and better, because it’s all about Bucky.”

Not all games go this well. Sometimes there are communication problems or suit malfunctions. Regardless, every home game ends the same for the Buckys.

“No matter what happens during the game,” Jacob says, “we leave it in the locker room and walk out together.” ●

Doug Erickson is a writer for the UW Office of Strategic Communication and — full disclosure — a South Dakota native, ever so slightly sympathetic to the Coyotes.



.....

THE FOOD LOVER'S GUIDE TO LIVING IN SEASON

*Renowned cookbook author
Patricia Wells MA'72 went to
France to learn haute cuisine
and developed a signature
taste steeped in simplicity.*

BY MEGAN PROVOST '20

.....



In the introduction to her James Beard Award–winning cookbook *Simply French*, Patricia Wells MA'72 describes the cuisine of acclaimed chef and restaurateur Joël Robuchon as *cuisine actuelle*, an approach to cooking that celebrates and elevates the essential flavors of seasonal ingredients.

“His rule was that our jobs as cooks — as chefs — is not to make a mushroom taste like a carrot,” she says. “Our job is to make a mushroom taste as much like a mushroom as it can.”

Wells credits her time shadowing the late Robuchon, considered one of the greatest chefs in the world, with a profound influence on her own cooking. But her reverence for simplicity and her thoughtful appreciation of seasonality — in food, in places, and in people — can only be described as *Wells actuelle*.

Over the course of almost 50 years, most of which have been divided between a chic Paris apartment and a charming Provençal farmhouse, Wells has traversed the culinary world with elegance and humility, regarded it with admiration and fascination, and rewarded it with sparkling homages to the life's work of people who, like her, know what it means to truly love food.

“If you're a food lover, you get something out of every meal,” Wells says. “Food offers so much pleasure every single day.”

In *Wells actuelle*, loving food is a timeless art form, and throughout her career, Wells has become an international authority on both fine cuisine and simple pleasures.

Well-Read and Well-Fed

Wells didn't set out to be a food journalist, but *Wells actuelle* was in the works long before her first culinary byline was published. Growing up in Milwaukee in the 1950s, Wells (née Kleiber) can't recall a meal that came from a freezer or a takeout bag.

“I grew up thinking I'd always have great food to eat,” she says. “Everything was homemade, and the cookie jar was always full.”

Wells's mother, Vera, was a first-generation Italian American. Her maternal grandfather, Felix Ricci, came to the United States from the Abruzzi region of southern Italy in 1915. After landing in New York City, he traveled to Wisconsin to join a growing population of southern-Italian immigrants and established a dairy farm in Cumberland. Wells and her family paid regular visits there throughout her childhood.

Wells was also as well-read as she was well-fed. Her father worked for Gimbels department store and returned from buying trips in New York City with stacks of daily newspapers that his children pored over. “When I was in third grade, I remember we were writing on the blackboard, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ ” Wells says, “And I wrote, *journalist*.”

She followed the scent of newsprint to the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee for an undergraduate degree in journalism before heading to UW–Madison for a master's in reporting, specializing in art history. She moved to Washington, DC, where she was hired as a part-time editor at the *Washington Post* (the very same week as the Watergate break-in) and was given a column on art galleries.

It didn't take long for Wells to tire of the art beat. In 1976, she moved to New York City to work as a copy editor for the *New York Times*, where she landed her first gig as a food writer under editor Craig Claiborne. It was also at the *Times* that she met her husband of nearly 50 years, Walter Wells.

In 1980, the couple moved to Paris for Walter's new job as managing editor of the *International Herald Tribune*, an English-language newspaper with readers in 164 countries. Wells joined him as the *Herald Tribune*'s global restaurant critic. The move, a two-year sojourn that's lasted 45 years, marked the beginning of Wells's storied career as one of the world's foremost voices on French cuisine.

An American in Paris

If Julia Child brought French cuisine to American kitchens, *Wells actuelle* teaches Americans to think like French chefs.

In addition to penning her restaurant column in the *Herald Tribune*, Wells became a prolific author. Just four years after moving to Paris, she released *The Food Lover's Guide to Paris*, a robust collection of eateries and culinary storefronts that has gone through five editions and turned into an app. *Paris* was followed quickly by *A Food Lover's Guide to France* (1987), *Bistro Cooking* (1989), *Simply French: Patricia Wells Presents the Cuisine of Joël Robuchon* (1991), and 14 more cookbooks and memoirs.

From 1988 to 1991, Wells was the restaurant critic for newsweekly *L'Express* and became the first American woman to hold such a position on a French-language publication. She's won four James Beard Awards and has been recognized by the French government for her service to the country's culture and cuisine.

But before Wells was embraced as an ambassador of France's culinary scene, its old guard bristled at the prospect of their new American colleague.

“The French critics hated me!” she says. “They wouldn't believe that not just a woman, but an American woman, was going to supersede them or compete with them.”



Patricia and Walter Wells sample olives at a Provençal market in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France, in 1987. The couple purchased their 18th-century Provençal farmhouse, Chanteduc, in 1984.

Fortunately, Wells could only laugh.

“I remember one of the famous French chefs who was on TV said, ‘Oh, that woman, she’s just a hamburger lady from America.’”

None of this deterred Wells, who endured sexist sommeliers and research excursions during which she and her assistant were the sole women eating lunch in restaurants clouded with cigar smoke. As in her cooking, she remained diligent and meticulous in her research.

“I remember one of the famous French chefs who was on TV said, ‘Oh, that woman, she’s just a hamburger lady from America.’”

“I would go three times to a restaurant,” she says. “One time with a female friend at lunch; one time with my husband on a weeknight; and one night on a weekend with another couple.” After the third visit, she would introduce herself (having made the reservation under another name) and ask to spend a day in the kitchen.

“Spending a day in the kitchen would teach you a whole lot about the restaurant,” she says. “That was such a luxury.”

It was through these kitchen visits that Wells

forged many of her relationships with France’s esteemed chefs, including Robuchon. Observing the preparation and execution of a recipe and re-creating it in her home kitchen was also an invaluable culinary education that, true to her Midwestern generosity, she couldn’t help but share.

In 1995, Wells, along with Walter, opened At Home with Patricia Wells, an intimate cooking school hosted in their 18th-century farmhouse, Chanteduc, in Provence. Wells led small groups in weeklong classes designed to impart kitchen skills and techniques, and to deepen participants’ appreciation and understanding of French cuisine. Later, they opened a second school out of their Paris atelier.

In January, nearly 30 years after the first At Home with Patricia Wells cohort convened at Chanteduc, Wells taught her final class — Black Truffle Cooking Extravaganza, her favorite — officially closing the book on her culinary career.

Always in Season

“I was listening to a friend who’s a singer the other day. And I had thought earlier in the day: I don’t cook the things I used to cook 30 years ago,” Wells says. “And I was wondering, do you still sing the songs you sang 30 years ago?”

While Wells’s skill set may not suffer the strains of age like a vocalist’s pipes, her cooking has

nonetheless shed its former extravagance in favor of something better suited to her present lifestyle.

“If I taught the recipes I’m making today, they’d say, ‘Why’d I pay for this cooking class? I’m only learning to steam or I’m only learning to sear!’ ”

But Wells isn’t teaching cooking classes anymore. She doesn’t have any more books coming off the press, and she won’t be reviewing a restaurant any time soon.

“I’m not sure I could be a restaurant critic for the modern cuisine of France right now,” she says. “Those chefs have a totally different palate than mine.”

Instead, her tastes have returned to the ones she knew before France, and the ones that have always endeared her to her adopted country. In a serendipitous antecedent to her later classification of Robuchon’s cuisine, Wells wrote in a 1979 *New York Times* column titled “Fish Boil: Culinary Tradition in Bunyan Country” that Midwestern meals are measured, in part, on the “unpretentious use of what is fresh and at hand.”

Today, she and Walter sear sea bass in oil, butter, salt, and pepper in their home kitchen and serve it with salad and wine. Dessert, no longer the show-stopping pastries of her heyday, is a homemade sorbet. Meals are prepared with ingredients from the timeless mainstay that has enchanted Wells in every season of the year since she first came to France: the local market.

“Thank God France still does everything in terms of season.”

“We were out this afternoon having lunch in France, in Le Marais, and we were passing markets, and I just thought, ‘Thank God France still does everything in terms of season,’ ” she says. “People get excited about the opening of something, and it’s great that there’s a seasonality with everything.”

People includes Wells, who enthusiastically rattles off the bounty that featured in market stalls during their visit: walnuts, grapes, figs, sea scallops, and Vacherin Mont d’Or (a cheese only available from September through March). She laments the merchants who disappeared after markets were disrupted during the pandemic — including the peppercorn vendor who dubbed her “Madame Timut” after her preferred variety — and commends young people for taking up traditional trades like farming and cheesemaking.

“Sometimes I go to the market even when I don’t need anything,” she says. “Sometimes I go to the market and spend five euro just for the experience.”

Apart from the author herself, perhaps her beloved markets are most emblematic of *Wells actuelle*: gregarious, generous, good-natured, humble, home-grown, and at once both seasonal and timeless. ●

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

Roasted Chicken with Lemon

Poulet Rôti au Citron

Four to six servings | Equipment: One oval roasting pan, just slightly larger than the chicken (about 9 x 13 inches; 23 x 33 cm), fitted with a roasting rack

-
- 1 best-quality farm chicken (about 5 pounds; 2.5 kg), with giblets
 - Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
 - 2 lemons, preferably organic, scrubbed, dried, and quartered lengthwise
 - 1 small bunch fresh thyme
 - 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
 - 6 onions, halved but not peeled
-

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C; gas mark 8).
2. Generously season the cavity of the chicken with salt and pepper. Place the giblets, the lemons, and bunch of thyme in the cavity. Truss. Rub the skin of the chicken with the butter. Season all over with salt and pepper.
3. Place the onions, cut side down, in the roasting pan.
4. Place the chicken on its side on the roasting rack in the roasting pan. Pour about ½ cup water into the bottom of the pan to help create a rich sauce later on. Place in the center of the oven and roast, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Turn the chicken to the other side, and roast for 20 minutes more. Turn the chicken breast-side up, and roast for 20 minutes more, for a total of 1 hour roasting time. By this time, the skin should be a deep golden color. Reduce the heat to 375°F (190°C). Turn the chicken breast-side down, at an angle if at all possible, with its head down and tail in the air. (This heightens the flavor by allowing the juices to flow down through the breast meat.) Roast until the juices run clear when you pierce a thigh with a skewer, about 15 minutes more.
5. Remove from the oven and season generously with salt and pepper. Transfer the chicken to a platter, and place on an angle against the edge of an overturned plate, with its head down and tail in the air. Cover loosely with foil. Turn off the oven and place the platter in the oven, with the door open. Let rest a minimum of 10 minutes and up to 30 minutes. The chicken will continue to cook during this resting time.
6. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce: place the baking dish over moderate heat, scraping up any bits that cling to the bottom. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, scraping and stirring until the liquid is almost caramelized. Do not let it burn. Spoon off and discard any excess fat. Add several tablespoons cold water to deglaze (hot water will cloud the sauce). Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until thickened, about 5 minutes.
7. While the sauce is cooking, remove the lemons from the cavity of the chicken. Carve the chicken into serving pieces and transfer to a warmed platter. Squeeze the lemons all over the pieces of poultry, extracting as much juice as possible. Strain the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve and pour into a sauce boat. Serve immediately.

When Wells wants to serve a delicious and nourishing meal to loved ones, she roasts a chicken. Read about our writer’s attempt at making Wells’s recipe on page 9.





THE ALL-TIME BADGER FOOTBALL TEAM

*Our fantasy lineup of
Wisconsin's gridiron greats.*

BY PRESTON SCHMITT '14

This spring, the NFL draft will be held in Wisconsin for the first time since 1939. Inspired by the rare occasion, as well as the increasing popularity of fantasy sports, I decided to conduct a draft of my own: building the greatest Wisconsin Badgers football lineup of all time, position by position.

Considering the UW's historic program, including its 10 Rose Bowl rosters, this proved to be no simple task. Thousands of players have put on the red and white. Hundreds of them have earned a place in the conversation of all-time Badger greats. But only 22 could make this starting lineup. Such is the price of success.

With apologies to long-ago legends like Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch x'45, I had to draw an imaginary line somewhere. And the most logical cutoff year is 1946, which the UW record books consider the start of the modern era of college football.

But even so, much has changed in the sport over the past 80 years. Players have only gotten bigger, faster, and stronger. Linemen from prior decades would look cartoonishly small next to today's 300-pounders. Fullbacks, once the featured runners and then important lead blockers, are now nearly extinct. Not that long ago, quarterbacks could throw as many interceptions as touchdowns and still be widely celebrated by fans. Try to imagine that in our age of social media.

So for this exercise, I did my best to judge the players by the standards of their time. I factored in hall of fame inductions, All-American honors, school records, college stats, draft selections, and pro career success.

Of course, imagining this squad taking the field requires some suspension of disbelief. And yet, it's surprisingly fun to visualize Russell Wilson MSx'13 scrambling out of the pocket and throwing one of his patented moonballs to a streaking Lee Evans '14 down the sideline. Or Joe Thomas x'07 and "Iron Mike" Webster x'74 clearing the running lanes for Ron Dayne '17. Or brothers J. J. x'12 and T. J. x'17 Watt teaming up to terrorize opposing quarterbacks.

What other fantasy scenarios await a starting lineup of all-time Badger greats? Read on to find out — and then assemble a UW dream team of your own.

These dream-team picks factor in All-American honors, school records, college stats, draft selections, and pro career success.

THE OFFENSE

QUARTERBACK: Russell Wilson (2011)

Russell Wilson wasn't here for a long time, but wow, was it a good time. The graduate senior transfer from North Carolina State arrived in 2011 and infused the Badger offense with a passing attack that could, at long last, match its elite run game.

With veteran calm, Wilson threw for the most passing yards (3,175) and touchdowns (33) in a season in school history, all while completing 73 percent of his passes and giving away only four interceptions. Beyond the obvious arm talent, Wilson could almost magically scramble out of trouble and extend plays. His dual-threat mobility — novel for a UW quarterback — added 338 rushing yards and six touchdowns. For good measure, he even caught a touchdown.

Wilson led the Badgers to a Big Ten Championship and Rose Bowl appearance in his lone season in Madison. Overcoming questions about his height — 5'11", short for a pro quarterback — he became a Super Bowl champion with the Seattle Seahawks in 2014 and has climbed to 12th in NFL history in passing touchdowns.

Many UW teams have found success with a run-first mentality and a steady-but-un-spectacular game manager at quarterback. But on this fantasy team, I'm going to — as the saying goes — let Russ cook.

HALFBACK: Ron Dayne (1996–99)

Welcome to Running Back U. You could throw a dart at the board of the UW's all-time leading rushers and never go wrong with this selection. How about Melvin Gordon x'15, who ran for school records 408 yards in a game, 2,587 yards in a season (behind only Barry Sanders and Ashton Jeanty in NCAA history), and 7.79 yards per carry over his college career? There's Jonathan Taylor x'21, who surpassed a 2,000-yard season twice (and nearly thrice) in college and then led the NFL in rushing in 2021. And don't forget Montee Ball x'13, who bulldozed his way into the end zone a school-best 77 times.

But there's only one running back who remains larger than life in Badger lore: Ron Dayne. The "Great Dayne" led the UW to consecutive Rose Bowl victories after the 1998 and 1999 seasons, picking up a Heisman Trophy along the way. Defying first impressions, the 270-pound halfback could just as easily dance around defenders as plow right through them, and he did plenty of both on his way to 7,125 career rushing yards — still the most in NCAA history,

if you count his postseason games (and, ahem, the NCAA *should*).

Although he couldn't replicate his success in the NFL, Dayne paved the way for the run-first, ground-and-pound style that became synonymous with Badger football excellence for decades. And for that, he remains the GOAT.

FULLBACK: Alan Ameche (1951–54)

You can't blame Badger football for the demise of the dedicated fullback. The UW has been a fullback factory, producing more than a dozen NFL contributors at the position — most recently Alec Ingold '18, who made the Pro Bowl in 2024.

But only one Badger fullback has won the Heisman Trophy. Back when bulky fullbacks were the primary ballcarriers, the Badgers rode "The Iron Horse"

Alan Ameche '56 all the way to their first Rose Bowl appearance in 1953. Ameche led the Big Ten in rushing in both his freshman and sophomore seasons with his physical, lumbering style, setting a then-NCAA record for career rushing yards (3,345). Drafted by the Baltimore Colts, he scored the game-winning touchdown in the NFL's 1958 championship — often called the greatest game ever played.

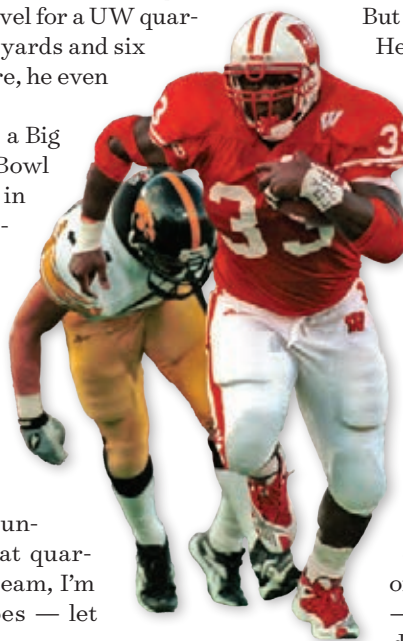
Ameche is one of two fullbacks to have won the Heisman Trophy, and it's only fitting that he joins Dayne — the only other UW player to win the award — in this team's backfield. Good luck, defenses, bringing down these freight trains.

WIDE RECEIVERS: Lee Evans (1999–2003); Jared Abbrederis (2009–13)

I need a receiver who can actually track down Russell Wilson's deep throws, and fortunately, the UW was home to one of the greatest vertical threats of his time: Lee Evans.

By just about every statistical measure, Evans leads the way for Badger receivers. His 3,468 career receiving yards and 27 touchdowns are school records, and his average of 19.8 yards per reception is second only to Tony Simmons '97. With field-stretching speed, he didn't just outrun opposing cornerbacks — he occasionally outran his quarterback's arm, only to come back to the ball, make an absurd body adjustment in the air, and complete a contested catch.

In 2003, after quarterback Jim Sorgi '04 got knocked out of the game from a cheap shot, Evans caught a game-winning, 79-yard touchdown from backup Matt Schabert '04 to break Ohio State's 19-game win streak. Later that year against Michigan



Ron Dayne could dance around defenders or plow right through them.

The Offense



Pat Richter
TE • #88 • 1959-62



Russell Wilson
QB • #16 • 2011



Joe Thomas
LT • #72 • 2003-06



Ron Dayne
HB • #33 • 1996-99



John Moffitt
LG • #74 • 2006-10



Alan Ameche
FB • #35 • 1951-54



Mike Webster
C • #51 • 1970-73



Lee Evans
WR • #3 • 1999-2003



Kevin Zeitler
RG • #70 • 2008-11



Jared Abbrederis
WR • #4 • 2009-13



Aaron Gibson
RT • #79 • 1995-98

See this story on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com, to view our selections for special teams plus a list of honorable mentions at each position. Then email your own thoughts on all-time Badger football greats to onwisconsin@uwalumni.com, and we'll publish a selection in our next issue.

State, he hauled in 10 catches for single-game school records 258 yards and five touchdowns. A first-round draft pick in 2004, Evans enjoyed an eight-year NFL career and still ranks among the Buffalo Bills' top five in most receiving categories.

It's tempting to reunite Evans with high school and college teammate Chris Chambers x'01, another formidable deep threat who compiled 7,648 yards and 58 touchdowns in the pros. However, his stats at the UW weren't as eye-popping, in part due to injuries. Both father and son Al '95 and Nick x'11 Toon also deserve consideration, since each racked up enough receiving yards at the UW (while running varsity track) to rank among the school's top 10. But I'll give the other starting nod to Jared Abbrederis '13, whose 202 career receptions rank first in school history (tied with Brandon Williams '16) and whose 3,140 receiving yards are second only to Evans. It doesn't hurt that Abbrederis was one of Wilson's favorite targets in real life.

TIGHT END: Pat Richter (1959–62)

Who's the best Badger tight end of all time? That stirs a debate between old school and new school.

There's Pat Richter '64, JD'71, who put up big receiving numbers in an era when teams were just starting to open up the passing game. As a hybrid tight end and wide receiver, he finished with 1,873 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns over three seasons — numbers that would still make for a solid contributor today. In 1961, Richter led the nation in receiving yards (817) and touchdowns (eight). He also set Rose Bowl records with 11 catches and 163 receiving yards in the all-time classic 1963 game.

And then there's Travis Beckum x'08, a dynamic pass catcher for the Badgers in the mid-2000s. At 6'3", 240 pounds, he looked the part of a tight end while flashing the moves of a wide receiver in the open field. Even after a broken leg cut his senior year short, Beckum finished his college career with 159 catches and 2,149 yards — both ranking among the top five in UW history.

Each of these impact players made it to the NFL. So my tiebreaker? I'll take the guy who later became UW athletic director, hired head coach Barry Alvarez, and helped usher in a proud new era of Badger football.

TACKLES: Joe Thomas (2003–06); Aaron Gibson (1995–98)

Joe Thomas is widely considered one of the best left tackles in NFL history, so he's the no-brainer pick to protect Russell Wilson's blind side on this team. Thomas was simply dominant at the UW. He was the first true freshman to play on the offensive line during the Alvarez era, and he earned the 2006 Outland Trophy as the best lineman in college football. The Cleveland Browns wisely selected him with the number three overall pick in 2007.

At 6'6", 312 pounds, Thomas combined elite footwork and a unique "shot put" technique with his hands, leaving even the best pass rushers visibly frustrated. He allowed only 30 sacks over 6,680 pass-blocking plays in the NFL, a rate of less than half a percent, while playing a league record 10,363 consecutive snaps over 11 seasons. He also made 10 straight Pro Bowls. It's no surprise, then, that he was voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2023.

At right tackle, give me big Aaron Gibson x'99. At some 400 pounds, Gibson went on to become the largest player in NFL history. But before then, he used his size — and shocking agility — to maul open Mack Truck-sized holes for the Great Dayne. As a senior in 1998, Gibson became a consensus first-team All-American, a finalist for the Outland Trophy, a Rose Bowl victor, and a first-round NFL draft pick.

GUARDS: Kevin Zeitler (2008–11); John Moffitt (2006–10)

A whopping 25 UW linemen have been drafted to the NFL since 2000, including several star guards. Rising to the top of my list is Kevin Zeitler x'12, who garnered All-American honors in 2011, became a first-round draft pick, and recently earned a Pro Bowl selection in his 12th NFL season.

The other guard spot can go to Zeitler's college linemate John Moffitt x'10, who was an All-American in 2010. Together that year, they cleared the way for a trio of 1,000-yard rushers (Ball, James White '21, and John Clay x'11). If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

CENTER: Mike Webster (1970–73)

The UW has churned out many NFL-caliber centers over the years, including Travis Frederick x'13, a five-time Pro Bowl player with the Dallas Cowboys. But only one Badger center has made it all the way to the Pro Football Hall of Fame: Mike Webster. In the early 1970s, "Iron Mike" anchored a star-studded offensive line that opened big holes for running backs Rufus Ferguson '73 and Billy Marek '77. But he earned his nickname in the NFL with the Pittsburgh Steelers, with whom he played 15 years, started 150 consecutive games, and won four Super Bowls.

Tragically, his legendary durability came at a steep price, as Webster became the first person officially diagnosed with CTE — the neurodegenerative disease linked to repeated head trauma — after his death in 2002. That legacy off the field has proven as important as the one on it, with growing emphasis on player safety in recent years.

THE DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN: J. J. Watt (2008–10); Tim Krumrie (1979–82); Wendell Bryant (1998–2001)

It's hard to imagine that J. J. Watt — one of the best

pass rushers in NFL history — was ever an underdog. But so he was when he arrived at the UW as a walk-on after giving up his football scholarship at Central Michigan.

Converted from tight end to defensive end, Watt bull-rushed onto the scene in 2009 with four and a half sacks and 16 tackles for loss. He led the Badgers with seven sacks and 21 tackles for loss the following season, earning him All-American honors. Proving his freakish athleticism at 6'5", 290 pounds, he also blocked four kicks in college.

A first-round draft pick by the Houston Texans, Watt went on to win NFL Defensive Player of the Year three times and compile 114.5 sacks over his 12-year pro career.

Think Watt is tough? Meet Tim Krumrie x'83. When he suffered a gruesome fracture in the 1989 Super Bowl, he asked for only a beer and a TV in

the locker room, refusing painkillers (so he could remember the game) as the medical team reset his mangled leg. It was assumed his football career was over, but he was ready to play by the start of the next season — with a 15-inch steel rod in his leg.

Before that, Krumrie both wrestled and played football at the UW. An undersized nose guard, he used a wrestler's intensity to wreak havoc on the field and lead the Badgers in tackles in each of his four seasons. His 444 career tackles were then a school record and contributed to his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Last but not least on this beast of a line is Wendell Bryant '08. As a freshman, the 300-pound defensive tackle clinched the 1999 Rose Bowl with a sack of UCLA quarterback Cade McNown. After that, Bryant was a magnet for double teams from opposing linemen, but he still managed to power his way

It's fun to imagine stars from very different eras playing together in our fantasy lineup.



The Defense



Chris Borland
LB • #44 • 2009–13



J. J. Watt
DL • #99 • 2008–10



Tarek Saleh
LB • #42 • 1993–96



Tim Krumrie
DL • #50 • 1979–82



Jamar (Fletcher) Israel
CB • #2 • 1998–2000



Wendell Bryant
DL • #77 • 1998–2001



Troy Vincent
CB • #22 • 1988–91



T. J. Watt
LB • #42 • 2013–16



Jim Leonhard
S • #18 • 2001–04



T. J. Edwards
LB • #53 • 2014–18



Matt Vanden Boom
S • #94 • 1979–82

to 24 career sacks — fifth most in UW history — including five in a single game against Penn State in 2001.

LINEBACKERS: Tarek Saleh (1993–96); Chris Borland (2009–13); T. J. Edwards (2014–18); T. J. Watt (2013–16)

Rounding out this fearsome front seven are Tarek Saleh '97 and T. J. Watt x'17 as pass-rushing outside linebackers, with Chris Borland '13 and T. J. Edwards '18 patrolling the middle of the field as inside linebackers.

Saleh is the UW's career leader in sacks (33) and tackles for loss (58). In the 1996 Copper Bowl against Utah, the dependable All-American won defensive MVP with six tackles, a pass breakup, and a blocked field goal.

Watt, just like his older brother, started as a tight end in college before finding his true calling on defense. Watt exploded for 63 tackles and 11.5 sacks as a junior in 2016. He then declared for the NFL, turning into one of the league's most-feared pass rushers with more than 100 sacks over eight years (leading the NFL in three of those seasons). Imagine T. J. and J. J. running right at you.

Borland, a tenacious field general and heavy hitter, became Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year his senior season in 2013. His 15 forced fumbles over his college career are a UW record — more than doubling any other player — and his 420 tackles rank sixth in school history. His first year in the pros, Borland led the San Francisco 49ers in tackles and was named to the All-Rookie Team. He then abruptly retired from the sport over long-term concerns about head injuries, sparking mainstream awareness of the subject.

Edwards showed off both consistency and versatility with the Badgers. From 2015 to 2018, he compiled 367 tackles, eight sacks, and — surprising for a line-



backer — 10 interceptions. As a junior he was runner-up for the Butkus Award, given to the nation's top linebacker. He somehow went undrafted, but his steady production continues in the NFL, with four consecutive 100-tackle seasons.

CORNERBACKS: Jamar (Fletcher) Israel (1997–2000); Troy Vincent (1988–91)

How about these guys for shutdown corners?

No defender in Badger history has had a flair for the dramatic quite like Jamar (Fletcher) Israel x'02. His 21 career interceptions (in just three seasons) tie a UW record, and he returned five of them for touchdowns — the most by any Badger. As a freshman in the 1999 Rose Bowl, his fourth-quarter interception return for a touchdown proved decisive. In the next year's Sun Bowl, the clutch cornerback sealed another victory with an interception in the final minute. Against Purdue in October 1998, he scored the go-ahead touchdown after intercepting one of Drew Brees's record 83 pass attempts.

Israel won the 2000 Jim Thorpe Award for the nation's best defensive back. A decade prior, Troy Vincent x'92 had set the standard as a runner-up for the award. Vincent was a standout when Alvarez was just starting to turn the UW's struggling program around in the early '90s. In 2023, he became the latest Badger to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

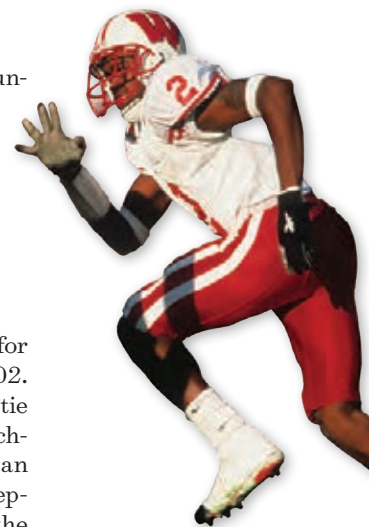
Both of these ball hawks became first-round NFL draft picks with long careers, and Vincent is now the league's executive vice president of football operations.

SAFETIES: Jim Leonhard (2001–04); Matt Vanden Boom (1979–82)

Jim Leonhard '06 didn't look too intimidating as a 5'8" free safety. But the UW walk-on made up for his size with a whole lot of heart and speed, earning playing time as a true freshman and then putting together three consecutive All-American campaigns.

By the time he left for the NFL, Leonhard had tied the UW record with 21 interceptions, set the single-season record of 11, and was named a semifinalist for the Jim Thorpe Award. Leonhard also broke school records as a prolific punt returner.

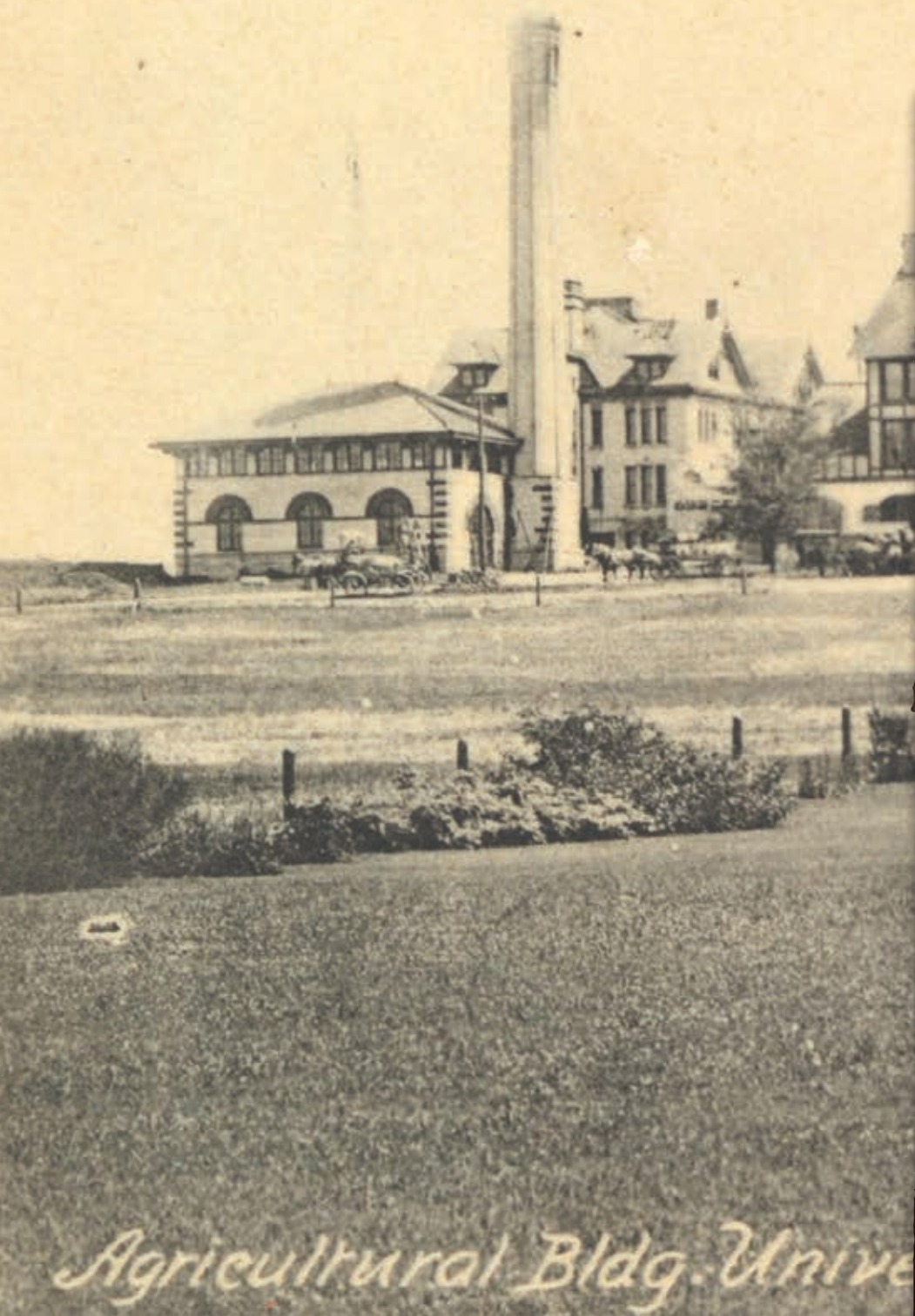
Securing the other safety spot is fellow walk-on and overperformer Matt Vanden Boom '83 (who would also qualify for the team of all-time best names). The receiver-turned-safety became a first-team All-American in 1981 with six interceptions — including three in a season-opening win against top-ranked Michigan. His interception in the 1982 Independence Bowl against Kansas State secured the UW's first-ever bowl victory. And he could also deliver a big hit, so he'll fit right in leading the UW's own Legion of Boom. ●



Jamar (Fletcher) Israel (top) had a flair for the dramatic. T. J. Edwards (left) showed both consistency and versatility.

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

THE *MAGNIFICENT* MAGNUS SWENSON



Agricultural Bldg. Unive

As a UW senior in 1880, Swenson realized that Madison residents were being sickened by their wells and convinced the city to install a modern water system.

The UW's first prolific inventor was also a visionary businessman and humanitarian with an outsized impact on the world around him.

BY NIKI DENISON



X26 2146

The End of a Colorful Career

Magnus Swenson, noted pioneer scientist and business man worked with Dean Henry in founding the Wisconsin College

by Walter Hayman '36

THE long and useful career of Magnus Swenson, one of Wisconsin's most versatile and colorful citizens, was ended on March 29, two weeks before his 82nd birthday.

His was the life of a Norwegian immigrant boy, who worked his way to an education with highest honors, to become a chemist, inventor, administrator, capitalist, and builder.

Determined to enter the University of Wisconsin, he heard that "commencement" was to be held June 20, 1876, and came to Madison to "commence" his college education. He was disappointed when he learned that commencement meant the end rather than the beginning of the school year, but he returned in the fall and worked his way through the university, graduating four years later with the highest honors in metallurgical engineering.

Wins \$2,500 Prize

One of the first agricultural chemists at the university, Mr. Swenson's varied career also included the management of the large sugar factory in southern Texas. In 1883 he won the United States department of agriculture prize of \$2,500 for the best paper on the chemistry and manufacture of sugar.

In the death of Magnus Swenson, Wisconsin has not only lost one of its first citizens but one of its foremost business men as well as one of its pioneer scientists," declared Chris L. Christensen, dean of the College of Agriculture. "Swenson belonged to the group of young men who at the very beginning of the Wisconsin College of Agriculture laid foundations for the unsurpassed scientific work in the fields of plant and animal chemistry which have won for the University of Wisconsin recognition throughout the scientific world.

Dean Henry's Assistant

"It was to this immigrant from Norway who had just graduated from the university, that Dean William A. Henry turned for an assistant to engage in experimental work dealing with processes and products of importance to Wisconsin agriculture. Swenson's first assignment was upon amber cane and ensilage of fodders. To carry on the work with cane, a small sugar plant was built on the Mendota lake-

shore northwest of Washburn observatory. About the same time a silo was built and filled and a feeding experiment with corn silage was conducted largely under the direction of Henry and Swenson.

"In reporting to Governor Jeremiah M. Rusk upon these experiments, Dean

the driving mind was t operations,"

During the son served a consin council was with Her Copenhagen, v tor of food su rope. He was mission which capitol building ally directed con er dams at the Prairie du Sac.

He had not li he saw the enor the Wisconsin riv nancing and buil the two largest cle the state.

Motto—"Save"

It was in 1912 v organizing the stea rned to Norway f the first big ship bu He was a director of many years and chair ory board.

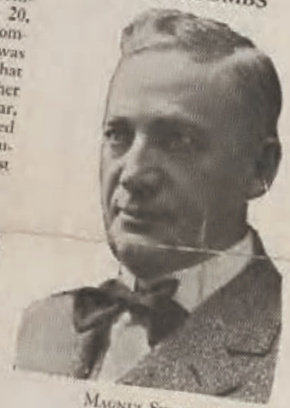
In 1889 he began of special machinery of other chemical industri practically every manu had an enormous wast motto, "Save the waste fortune with it. He inv and constructed improv for the manufacture of sugar, of milk, glycerine soda, paper pulp, glue, many other products of c

Coming to this country at the age of 13, Magn worked his way westward York with all his worldly fitted into a little woollen l

Upon his return to Norw he was knighted by the Kir way, one of the few decor stowed on persons of Norwe for world-renowned achieve the field of science.

For the past 50 years Mr. has been widely recognized for ative abilities, engaging success various lines of business, pow duction and shipping. Althoug in all of these fields, Mr. S found time to participate in pa

SUCCUMBS



MAGNUS SWENSON
—Courtesy, State Journal

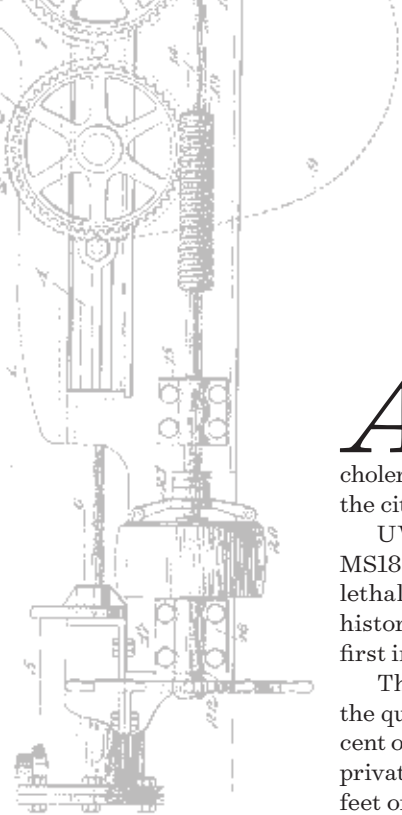
Henry insisted that too much credit could not be given to Swenson for his untiring zeal in the difficult task to which he had been assigned. "Such an experiment as securing sugar from am-ber cane in anything like a practical way is a most difficult undertaking," wrote Henry to Rusk. "Every step in the process is a long and unknown road and the many failures in past years show that scores of people who thought they were certain of success only attained defeat."

"Dean Henry regarded as most fortunate the fact that Mr. Swenson understood machinery as well as chemistry, a combination which enabled him to design and superintend the construction of the machinery used."

Frank Lauds "Triple Genius"

President Glenn Frank lauded the "triple genius" of Mr. Swenson—the restless curiosity of the scientist, the practicality of interest of the inventor,

He is a man of extraordinary ingenuity. There is nothing in the mechanical line beyond his power of construction. Mr. Swenson is one who is bound to succeed in life. Of kind, familiar disposition, he is liked by all.



“To the restless curiosity of the scientist, he added the practicality of interest of the inventor and the driving force of the organizer.”

As Madison’s population began to grow in the 1860s and 1870s, its residents increasingly suffered from outbreaks of typhoid fever, cholera, and other diseases that particularly ravaged the city’s children.

UW undergraduate Magnus Swenson 1880, MS1882 had a hunch about what was causing the lethal infections. He soon initiated what Madison historian David Mollenhoff MA’66 believes was the first instance of a town-gown collaboration.

The engineering student did his senior thesis on the quality of Madison water, claiming that 96 percent of it was unfit to drink. The city’s residents had private wells and privies, often located within mere feet of each other, and they did not yet connect diseases such as typhoid with contaminated water. As Swenson took samples for his study, insulted citizens pelted him with stones and bottles, requiring a police escort.

To help Swenson complete his analysis, the Common Council encouraged him to set up a lab in the basement of the capitol — the predecessor to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. Soon after that, Madison had a central artesian public water supply and a sewage system.

It was the first of many remarkable achievements for Swenson. Although the Wisconsin newspaper archive has some 2,200 entries about him, few people today have heard of him. And that is partly by design. The Norwegian immigrant cared little for getting personal credit or attracting attention to himself.

Yet he was a textbook example of the Wisconsin Idea, even before the concept officially existed, since he used the knowledge he gained at the university to benefit the city, the state, and the world.

Not bad for an impoverished boy who emigrated from Norway at age 14, narrowly escaping death.

Overcoming Stormy Seas

Swenson was born in 1854 in Langesund on the southern coast of Norway. His mother died when he was two, and he suffered neglect and occasional abuse at the hands of his stepmother. When Swenson was 14, his father’s rope factory burned down, so he and his two older brothers boarded the small ship *Victoria* for America to seek their fortune. Bad weather delayed their arrival, and provisions for what should have been a six-week journey ran out as storms tossed the now rudderless vessel about for 12 weeks. Swenson often escaped the misery on deck by curling up in the crow’s nest. Twenty-two of the 60 passengers died of starvation and exhaustion,

and Swenson weighed only 48 pounds when he got off the boat on Anticosti Island in Quebec.

Swenson and his brothers made their way to Janesville, Wisconsin, where they lived with an uncle and aunt while recovering from their ordeal. Swenson attended school to learn English, and once he regained his strength, he became an apprentice to his uncle, who was the foreman in the blacksmith shop of the Northwestern Railroad. There he mastered multiple aspects of metalworking and was promoted to mechanic.

While Swenson was sharpening tools for workers who were building a bridge over the Rock River, he decided that he, too, wanted to become an engineer. So he came to Madison in June 1876 during commencement, only to find that commencement actually marked the end of a college career, not the beginning. But he returned to campus in the fall and threw himself into earning a degree, graduating with honors in metallurgical engineering.

Early on, Swenson manifested a relentless drive for efficiency. During a summer job surveying for a proposed railbed in the Dakotas, he noticed that his pack mule took even steps and virtually never deviated from its straight-line course. Instead of measuring the ground, Swenson decided to measure the mule’s step, and he and his partner took turns riding the animal and counting its paces. The two young men covered territory much more quickly than other surveyors, and it wasn’t until 50 years later that their technique was found out. Amazingly, when the roadbed was measured again decades later, the mule measurements were found to be accurate to within a fraction of an inch.

Swenson met his wife, Annie Dinsdale 1880, MA1895, at the UW during an astronomy class at the Washburn Observatory. She had fainted, and the chivalrous Swenson carried her outside for some fresh air. They encountered each other again at a UW picnic and were soon engaged. Their marriage lasted for more than 50 years, and his letters attest that even decades later, he was still very much in love with her.

Leonardo-Level Inventor

After graduating, Swenson taught chemistry for three years at the UW. He helped found the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) along with William Henry, the college’s first dean, and the pair served as the first two faculty members of the college, which had only two students in its first year.

Their first research project sought to improve processes for extracting sugar from sorghum.



Engineer magazine, he visited multiple plants around the country and encouraged manufacturers to install waste-saving devices.

Although Swenson was awarded more than 200 patents in 10 years for various machines and processes, according to his biographer, UW chemical engineering professor Olaf Hougen PhD 1925, “He willingly turned over his inventions and his factories to others, without much regard to adequate compensation or credit. ... He was interested in theory only insofar as it could be applied to practical uses.” Once he had mastered a machine or process, Swenson moved on and rarely even bothered to document his methods. Hougen credits this extreme pragmatism for Swenson’s exceptionally productive career.

Civic and Business Giant

By 1902, Swenson was wealthy, and he moved with his wife back to Madison so that their four daughters could attend the UW. But he couldn’t stay retired for long. He soon proved to be as proficient at civic work and business as he had been at science and invention.

In 1905, he chaired the building commission for the Wisconsin state capitol. The black labradorite stone at the base of the columns in the rotunda came from Larvik, Norway, “a bit of Swenson’s sentiment to the place of his birth,” according to Hougen. That same year, Swenson was named to the UW Board of Regents and served for 15 years, 10 of them as president. He was also instrumental in creating the UW’s Department of Chemical Engineering in 1905 and served on the building committee for the university’s Memorial Union.

Recognizing an underutilized resource in the Wisconsin River, Swenson financed and built the first hydroelectric plants west of Niagara Falls at Wisconsin Dells and Prairie du Sac, saving 200,000 tons of coal annually. Lake Wisconsin, created by damming the river for the plant in the Dells, was originally named Lake Swenson.

He also became president of the Norwegian-American Steamship company, returning to Norway for the first time in 1912 on the first steamship that

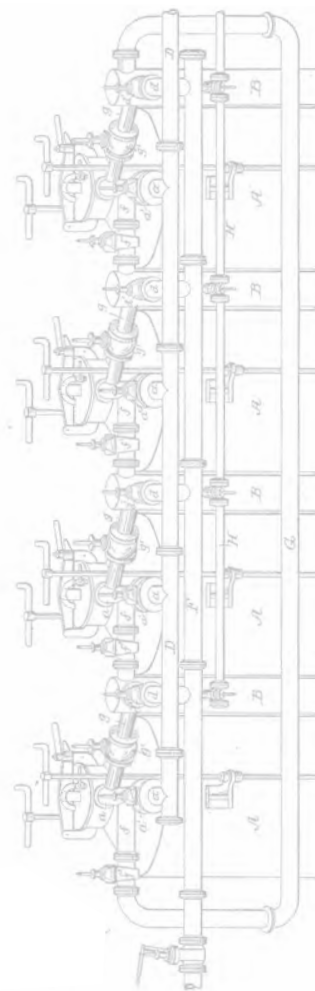
Swenson met his wife, Annie Dinsdale, at a class in the UW’s Washburn Observatory. Inset: The couple are shown during one of their trips to Norway.

Swenson proved adept at combining chemistry and engineering before chemical engineering was even recognized as a field. His thesis on the chemistry of sugar won him a \$2,500 prize from the USDA and an offer of a job running a sugar plant in Texas. Following a public experiment with a faulty centrifuge that sprayed sorghum molasses all over 400 of Madison’s leading citizens and local farmers, Swenson concluded it was a good time to leave town.

In his first year on the job, Swenson doubled the Texas plant’s output. He went on to design machinery that revolutionized the sugar industry, improving cane and beet processing so much that he became known as the Eli Whitney of sugar.

Swenson then turned to manufacturing all sorts of industrial equipment, and he set up factories in Kansas and the Chicago area. He was best known for his evaporators, which significantly improved manufacturing processes and were shipped all over the world. He invented a mining ore concentrator that became industry standard, as well as a cylindrical cotton baler, achieving a goal that had eluded the cotton industry for 50 years.

He also designed improved equipment and processes for the manufacture of soap, caustic soda, glycerin, glue, paper pulp, fertilizers, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, and other products. He even invented one of the first “horseless carriages.” After moving to Chicago, he turned his attention to ways to utilize waste byproducts, serving as a consultant to the meatpacking industry and to companies such as Procter & Gamble, Swift, and Colgate. His motto was “save the waste,” and conserving resources was a hallmark of his career. According to the *Wisconsin*



Swenson's introduction of Wisconsin food conservation measures, such as meatless and wheatless days, became a national model used during both world wars.

the company built. According to his friend C. J. Hambro, Norway's representative to the League of Nations, Swenson was so overcome with emotion to see his homeland again that "he threw himself on the soil of Norway and kissed it and wept." During the visit, the king of Norway made him a Knight of St. Olav for his contributions to industry and science.

Like many successful entrepreneurs, Swenson could have a prickly side. He often clashed with his former classmate Robert "Fighting Bob" La Follette 1879, LLD 1901, the storied Wisconsin governor and senator. When La Follette requested that Swenson, in his role as regent, remove Dean Henry from the agricultural college, Swenson asked if Henry had been inefficient. Upon being told no, Swenson said, "Well, then he remains, and so do I. I am not here to do your bidding."

Both Henry and Swenson kept their posts.

Impressive on the World Stage

During World War I, Swenson chaired the Wisconsin State Department of Defense in an unpaid position. His organizational talents soon earned him a role as federal food administrator for Wisconsin. He encouraged citizens to grow gardens and observe meatless and wheatless days, making the state a leader in the efforts to conserve food for the war effort. His strict enforcement of food laws caused big businesses to try, unsuccessfully, to oust him.

When future U.S. president Herbert Hoover was named national food administrator, he adopted many of Swenson's ideas. The measures that Swenson developed in Wisconsin not only guided national efforts during the First World War, but they also became a model for food conservation during World War II. When Hoover became the director of post-war relief in Europe, he chose Swenson to distribute food aid to the Baltic countries, and the two remained good friends for the rest of their lives.

Swenson threw himself into relief work, perhaps due to his own experience with hunger. In Denmark, according to Hougen, the Danes admired the "tall, stately man with gray hair and blue eyes. ... They marveled at his capacity for getting things done."

When the American Relief Administration arrived in Libau, Latvia, with food supplies, the Copenhagen press reported that "it encountered complete chaos and the most abject helplessness on the part of the populace." It seemed impossible to find any way to transport the desperately needed food. But Swenson was undeterred. When asked how he planned to distribute the supplies, one news report marveled, Swenson calmly answered, "By building a railroad." And in an incredibly short time, the road was completed and relief trains departed regularly for stricken parts."



UW ARCHIVES (3)

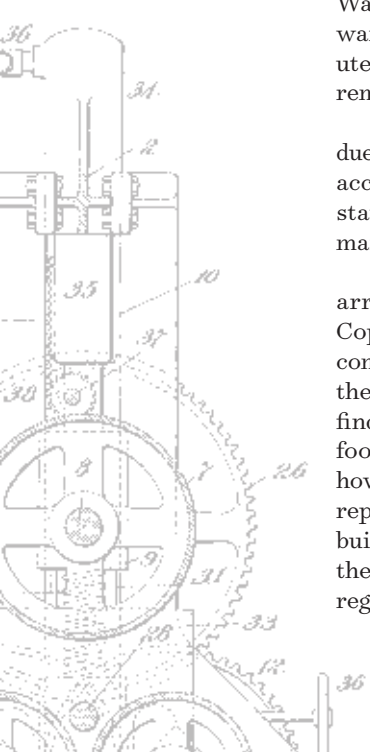
Under Hoover's orders, Swenson bent the rules to get food to starving people. He ignored official ports of entry, and when other countries became indignant, Hoover sent a telegram in code saying: "Lie about everything. Keep food moving." When Swenson discovered that the Swedish government was engaging in price gouging with American-supplied salt pork, he reported it to the press, which resulted in an immediate end to the practice.

But Swenson focused his initial efforts on Finland, which was the hardest-hit country. When he arrived, 60 percent of Finnish children had already died. In a letter to Wisconsin governor Emanuel Philipp in 1919, Swenson wrote, "The people of eastern and northern Finland have been subsisting almost entirely on bread made from the inner bark of trees and ground birchwood. ... I think I am not overstating the case in saying that one-half of the population of Finland would have succumbed and the other half reduced to extreme weakness had it not been for the help that we were able to give them."

When Swenson left, the grateful Finns declared a national holiday and feted him with music and bouquets of roses, moving him to tears.

An effort to respond to a Russian request for food aid did not go as well. Swenson negotiated with dictator Vladimir Lenin on behalf of Hoover, but Lenin angrily refused to meet Hoover's terms, instead responding with a lengthy telegram directing abuse at Hoover and America.

While Swenson was admired for his ironclad integrity, Hambro said that he could be "hard to manage" in his service to what he saw as the truth. Swenson once defied a request from Hoover and President Woodrow Wilson to retract a statement





that England had been unfair in its policies toward the Scandinavian countries. Swenson worked with an editor to craft a retraction, but in the end, he just couldn't do it. "I will not correct that which everyone knows to be true, and I know that Hoover will agree with me," he said.

Triple Genius

When Swenson died in 1936, the UW awarded him an honorary doctorate, his third UW honorary degree. "To the restless curiosity of the scientist, he added the practicality of interest of the inventor and the driving force of the organizer," UW president Glenn Frank said in a eulogy. "To this hour the tradition and service of the college of agriculture bear the marks of this triple genius he brought to its early development."

Swenson's legacy lives on — not only as the originator of the industrial-efficiency movement but also in CALS and the Wisconsin River, in Madison's water system, and in generations of Scandinavians whose ancestors survived because of his relief efforts. Swenson House in the UW's Kronshage Residence Hall is named after him, and his Madison estate on Lake Mendota, Thorstrand, still stands.

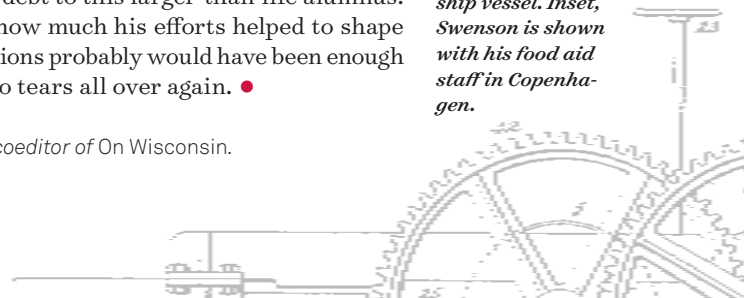


But his name (Magnus appropriately enough means *great* or *the great* in Latin) is slowly fading from memory. A street off Thorstrand Road once called Magnus Swenson Drive was renamed in 1995. Circumstances have conspired to obscure our collective debt to this larger-than-life alumnus. But knowing how much his efforts helped to shape future generations probably would have been enough to move him to tears all over again. ●

Niki Denison is coeditor of On Wisconsin.

Top: Magnus (fifth from left) and Annie attend a christening for a Norwegian-American Steamship vessel. Inset, Swenson is shown with his food aid staff in Copenhagen.

COURTESY OF MARY OHARE LEWIS (2)





For the Love of a Pet

Most people would give everything for their furry friends, even when they don't have much. A UW clinic honors that bond by providing affordable care for those experiencing hardship.

**BY MEGHAN LEPISTO '03, MS'04
PHOTOS BY BRYCE RICHTER**

One thing you notice about WisCARES is the kindness. It's a place where happiness abounds, even among some of life's most unhappy circumstances.

In a sparkling-clean silver cage, a black kitty rears up like a tiny lion, front paws in the air, jostling a shiny pink ball that a student just selected for her. A few feet away, a wiggly gray puppy tosses an oversized toy and smooshes it until it squeaks.

Through a door and down the hall, the owners of these and other animals wait patiently in exam rooms. As they pass the time, many concerns — not limited to their pet's health — might weigh on their minds. At this veterinary clinic, those facing tough challenges seek care for their treasured companions.

Wisconsin Companion Animal Resources, Education, and Social Services, or WisCARES for short, provides veterinary medical care, housing support and advocacy, and other social services to Dane County pet owners experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or financial hardship.

"WisCARES serves people who would not be able to seek care for their pets," says Lyn Empey DVM'98, a veterinarian with the clinic. "Seeing how much [WisCARES clients] love their pets and would do for their pets, then being able to provide services for them and seeing them be so incredibly grateful — there's nothing better than that."

The program is led by the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, with support from the Schools of Social Work and Pharmacy. Its mission has four parts. The clinic works to keep pets with their families and empowers people to care for the animals through free or low-cost veterinary medicine. The team helps clients gain access to housing, social support services, and human health care. Student training is constant, preparing well-rounded veterinarians and other health professionals. And because the same societal challenges occur nationwide, WisCARES shares what it learns and models what is possible.

The team says a "one health" approach — connecting the dots between people, animals, and their environment — guides its work. It's veterinary medicine with the utmost compassion for people, too.

At left, a pooch named Tugz waits patiently while staff discuss his case. If not for WisCARES, clients such as Tugz's owner would likely have nowhere else to turn to treat their treasured companions.



WisCARES veterinary assistant Madison Edens '24 (above) examines Yoki, the program's resident cat. Kristin Baert DVMx'25, veterinarian Kelly Schultz, and certified veterinary technician Haidi Rodriguez (right) assess Foxy, a Bichon Frisé mix, for leg injuries.

Pets and Poverty

Based in south Madison, WisCARES is taking a local approach to a problem that is national in scope.

Within Dane County, one-third of households can't afford basic needs. That number grows to 41 percent nationally.

About two-thirds of U.S. households have a pet, a segment that varies only slightly based on socioeconomic status.

In a recent national poll, the Humane Society found that 43 percent of pet owners couldn't pay for their pets' needs at some point due to financial reasons. Moreover, the organization estimates that 20 million pets in the U.S. live in poverty with their families, and 70 percent of those animals have never seen a vet.

"There is a huge group of people who simply cannot afford to go to a regular veterinary clinic," says Empey.

Ruthanne Chun '87, DVM'91, a veterinary oncologist and the program's director, knows what you might be thinking.

"If you don't have the money to take care of an animal, you shouldn't have it. We hear that a lot," she says. "Well, if I don't have \$10,000 to put my animal through a chemotherapy protocol, should I not have that animal? That's crazy, right? So, where's the cutoff when you make that kind of a statement?"

WisCARES encourages a more compassionate approach that acknowledges the causes of poverty, the downstream impacts of financial hardship, and the immense benefits that pets and people gain from life together.

"Any client who comes in, that human-animal bond, that connection, is so real and so beneficial," says Liddy Alvarez, a primary care veterinarian who directs the program's curriculum.

Willow Williams '21, DVMx'25, now in her fourth year as a veterinary medical student, has worked at the clinic since 2019. The core of its mission, she says, is making sure that "we are able to support both animals and humans. WisCARES and other places that provide access to care are allowing people to stay with their pets, and that is invaluable."

So Few Options

To qualify for WisCARES services, clients share proof that they have low income or are experiencing homelessness. About 10 percent of current clients are without housing. Many also face transportation, disability, and language barriers to care.

Clinic staff do what they can to reduce clients' obstacles, providing cab service, Spanish translation, or accommodations for people with limited mobility — "little things to help when the physical task of treating their animal is difficult," explains Kelly Schultz '05, MS'11, DVM'15, WisCARES's medical director and lead clinical instructor. "I hope the pet owners feel cared for and seen, because a lot of our clients move through the world in a way that is uncaring and invisible. ... I want them to feel like any other pet owner."

WisCARES was founded as a student initiative (see sidebar). The School of Veterinary Medicine adopted and expanded the program in 2013, starting humbly through street outreach. Next, it hosted two-hour veterinary clinics at the Tenant Resource Center and Salvation Army twice a month. Then came a physical space — a donated Quonset hut — where for several years they built their client base by word of mouth.

In 2018, the clinic relocated to a newly renovated facility. Its footprint grew dramatically, as did its services. It added surgery, dentistry, an X-ray machine, and in-house lab testing. It also expanded its hours to Monday through Friday and hired additional staff. Then the economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic brought an influx of new clients.

On the heels of its 10th anniversary, the team sees more need than ever.

"A lot of people call us every day, and we can't see a lot of them. That can be tough," Schultz says. "We would like to increase our capacity. There are so few options if you can't afford veterinary care."

WisCARES is an early adopter of serving vulnerable communities within veterinary medicine.

"As an interprofessional program that has a brick-and-mortar clinic open five days a week, we're one of the first and only clinics leading that charge," Schultz says. The team shares its experiences and knowledge nationally through presentations, publications, advisory panels, and more.



Veterinary assistants Kiera Christensen x'25 (left) and Edens work with Dart, a Great Dane mix, prior to administering vaccines. For the past 10 years, donations have boosted WisCARES's ability to provide no- and low-cost care and allowed the program to expand its services.

An Absolute Blessing

On average, WisCARES sees 80 to 100 pets per week. Appointments range from wellness exams and vaccines to disease management or dental work.

Sarah Laverty has used the clinic three times, most recently visiting with her 11-year-old cat, Princess. The onset of a chronic illness of her own in 2017 changed Laverty's life course.

"I had worked a job for 19 years, made a good income, and then suddenly I'm disabled," she says. "My income is not what it used to be."

The clinic has "been an absolute blessing" to Laverty and her two cats, who she says mean the world to her. "Everybody's so friendly and really engaged in the care of the pets."

Elisa Rosas and her blue heeler, Rexy, have been clients of the clinic for about four years. "Everybody's

very nice. This place is great," Rosas says while petting Rexy's head after his checkup and nail trim.

Rexy is 14 years old and blind but still sets his inner clock to a daily walk with Rosas. "He's waiting for me. We have a certain time, around three o'clock. So he's ready," she says. "He's a good boy."

Besides veterinary care, WisCARES provides clients with pet supplies. Toys, collars, leashes, pet food, crates of all sizes, beds, and practically anything else one might need for a pet are organized tidily from floor to ceiling in a warehouse space at the back of the clinic. Stacks of dog and cat food sit on rows of shelves nearby. Puppy and kitty packs are in another set of bins containing essential supplies for new animal family members. Donations make it all possible.

Social Supports

Sometimes, by caring for pets, WisCARES helps people care for themselves.

Their pet fostering program allows clients' dogs and cats to stay for up to three months in a volunteer foster home. This temporary care helps pet owners find housing or emergency shelter, access health care, seek mental health services, or enter treatment programs — options that can otherwise be out of reach for people with pets who lack housing or social support.

In 2023, the organization fostered 43 animals. Among them was a cat belonging to a man who required open-heart surgery but refused the procedure until he was sure his cat would be well cared for.

Earlier this year, a local organization that assists individuals facing domestic violence approached WisCARES. "They came to us for help because they have a lot of clients who are fleeing domestic abuse situations and have pets," says Schultz.

The support organization now covers the cost of a package of veterinary care at the clinic for pet owners trying to leave an abusive partner. This includes an exam, core vaccines, and other essentials that a landlord might ask to see — so the animal is ready to move once the owner is.

Real-World Experience

Veterinary medical students get critical training at WisCARES through hands-on care and client interactions. "There is so much the students gain and learn through experiencing even just briefly the lives of the clients they're working with," Alvarez says.

About 70 veterinary medical students train in the clinic annually in groups of three to five for two weeks at a time. Students manage all cases, communicating with clients, examining patients, and providing care to the animals in coordination with veterinarians and technicians.

Others train at the clinic, too. Pharmacy students fill prescriptions and stock medications. And



social-work students help identify social service resources and counsel clients. “A lot of times, our clients are not treated well in the world,” says Jennifer Wheeler Brooks, the organization’s director of social work and outreach. “They come here, and they’re treated well.”

Student trainings cover topics ranging from poverty, homelessness, and the social determinants of health to ways of approaching client conversations with empathy and an open mind. How to help people keep their pets as healthy as possible within a budget is a significant point of emphasis.

“Every client that comes in, we teach the students to work with them where they are,” explains Alvarez. In recent years, veterinary medical schools have prioritized training graduates for a full spectrum of care or a broad range of diagnosis and treatment options from state-of-the-art to more conservative. Again, the UW and WisCARES are at the forefront. Alvarez says a spectrum of care has been a central focus of their curriculum “in an organic, natural way” for a decade.

“Not every client is going to be able to do the most advanced and amazing things, and that’s okay,” she says. “So, let’s figure out how to treat the patient in front of you.”

Understanding and Openness

Maura Enright DVM’24 began working at WisCARES as an undergraduate who hoped to attend vet school — a dream that culminated with her graduation in May. Her time at the clinic made her aware of the challenges facing many pet owners.

“It’s been so transformative in how I view the veterinary field,” she says. Her mindset as she enters her career: “How can we support this patient and the owner, regardless of what they can bring to the table that day?”

Alvarez wants students to leave with an understanding that veterinary medicine isn’t solely about working at an upscale clinic where clients can pay full price when they walk in the door. “There’s more to veterinary medicine than that, and there’s more to society, people, and pets than that,” she says.

The team finds purpose in WisCARES’s dual approach of veterinary medicine and social justice, helping to change the trajectory daily for pets and people. Teaching students adds extra inspiration, and Schultz sees potential for long-term impact. “I like to think that I’m making a difference every day and that because we have the students with us, maybe four decades from now, a past student will think about WisCARES and make a different medical decision.”

What kind of decision would that be? “A kinder, more thoughtful decision,” she says. ●

Meghan Lepisto ’03, MS’04 is a writer based in Madison. She treasures the bond shared with her own affectionate mutt.



WisCARES Started with Students

As a veterinary student at UW–Madison, Katie Kuehl DVM’12 knew she wanted to help vulnerable pet owners.

At the time, there was a pervasive attitude in the medical field that considered pets unsafe for people who were immunocompromised. But a lecture by Professor Chris Olsen opened Kuehl’s eyes to ways to make pet ownership safer for these patients.

Along with fellow student William Gilles DVM’13, she was inspired to approach the AIDS Network of South-Central Wisconsin to provide training for AIDS Network clients and case managers about safe pet care.

They named their venture WisCARES. Following graduation, Gilles served for several years as director of WisCARES, helping to build the program in its broader iteration as a School of Veterinary Medicine initiative. (Above, veterinary-degree seniors Kristin Baert and Abigail Martinson ’21 prepare Princess for surgery.)

In 2017, Kuehl joined the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine to lead the university’s Shelter Medicine program and help found the One Health Clinic, where she serves as veterinary director. The clinic provides human and animal health care side by side in a shelter for people and their pets experiencing homelessness.

“If you think about folks who are houseless,” she says, “they have this animal that’s literally their best friend and support. Maybe the dog is the reason they get up in the morning and even try, because they want to be able to care for their special friend. Being able to receive care for their animal can make such a huge impact for their own well-being.”

Kuehl was in close contact with WisCARES during the One Health Clinic’s creation and as she incorporated student training. Their paths continue to intersect as collaborators on veterinary continuing education around access to care.

She’s grateful for ongoing connections with UW–Madison mentors and peers and aims to embody the same compassion and drive she experienced at her alma mater. “It goes full circle,” she says.

— M. L.

On Alumni

News from Home and Abroad

Spotlight on Moments of Happiness

A WAA event provided an inside look at the career of former UW band director Mike Leckrone.



ANDY MAINIS (2)

Doug Moe, left, chats with Mike Leckrone about his half-century leading the UW bands.

The Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA) hosted a special Wisconsin Idea Spotlight event in December featuring former UW–Madison director of bands **Mike Leckrone** and Madison author **Doug Moe ’79**, celebrating their new book, *Moments of Happiness: A Wisconsin Band Story*.

The event gave attendees an intimate look into Leckrone’s 50-year career and the evolution of the university’s bands, which the legendary director transformed into the celebrated institutions we know today.

The book’s title stems from Leckrone’s speech to band members before his first Rose Bowl (1994), encouraging them to cherish positive moments to help them through challenging times. “‘There are going to be some bad times, but think about the moments of happiness.’ And it’s just kind of stuck with me ever since,” he reflected. This philosophy, along with lessons learned from his father about pushing beyond perceived limitations, shaped Leckrone’s transformative leadership of the program.

That first Rose Bowl is among Leckrone’s most cherished memories. “It wasn’t just a moment. It was everything that was going on at that time. The whole state came together,” he remembered.

Leckrone explained that he credits his grandfather for part of his philosophy of life. “My grandfather used to say, ‘If you think you can’t, you can’t.’ And I firmly believe that, so I used that philosophy to push the kids.”

Throughout his tenure, Leckrone developed lasting traditions, including the band’s motto, “Eat a rock,” which emerged from an impromptu pep talk about toughness. Even during the football program’s challenging years, the band maintained its reputation for excellence and became a main attraction at games.

Now retired, Leckrone told the audience that what he misses most is daily interactions with band members, whom he still views as “kids” even decades after their graduation. “I still can see that kid in them, even if they come back and they’ve been out of the band for maybe 20 years,” he said.

TOD PRITCHARD



ANNUAL GIVING EVENTS

Fill the Hill famously features plastic flamingos planted on Bascom Hill to mark gifts made to UW–Madison in the run-up to Homecoming. In October, the event raised \$511,877 from a total of 3,334 gifts. It also featured fun high jinks, such as a race between Bucky Badger and a staffer in a flamingo costume, and even attracted gifts from some Penn State students in town for the football game who got into the Badger spirit. Be sure to mark your calendar for April 8–9 for another annual giving opportunity, Day of the Badger. This spring event lasts for 1,848 minutes to commemorate the year the university was founded.

12

Years since the university has built a new residence hall

52,097

Number of students attending in 2024 (record high)

\$869

Average monthly rent per bed for on-campus housing

\$1,273

Average monthly rent per bed for off-campus housing

FROSTY FUN

In February, the Wisconsin Alumni Association hosted its seventh annual family-friendly event at Alumni Park in conjunction with the Wisconsin Union’s Winter Carnival. Frosty Fun included winter-themed storytelling, a photo booth, art activities, and an outdoor dance party with a DJ.



BRUCE RICHTER

All aboard the Campus Bus

For a university situated on an isthmus, transportation is no easy matter.

Whether it's to avoid walking up Bascom Hill, to evade the worst of Wisconsin weather, or to get home safely at night, one thing is certain: Badgers love to take the bus.

Nearly 30 percent of UW–Madison students report riding the bus to campus on nice days, and that percentage doubles during bad weather, according to a 2023 survey by Transportation Services. It's hard to beat the convenience and cost: the four campus routes serviced by Madison's Metro Transit — 80, 81, 82, and 84 — are free to use for all riders. Students can also acquire special bus passes, funded by segregated fees and other sources, that allow them to hop on other city routes at no additional cost.

On a university sandwiched between lakes, access to public transportation is all-important. There are only 13,000 campus parking spaces for some 80,000 students and employees (and even more visitors), which means that most students can't keep cars.

The UW has been encouraging students to use other modes of transportation — including their legs — since at least 1924, when massive traffic jams behind Bascom Hall resulted in the university's first parking restrictions. The rules forbade students from

Despite major changes to Madison's transportation system, the good old 80 bus continues its traditional route through campus.

parking on campus east of the Stock Pavilion, freeing up space for faculty and visitors.

By 1963, campus bus lines were carrying more than 1.5 million passengers during the academic year. But UW students briefly revolted against their favorite motor vehicle. In fall 1966, the City of Madison converted University Avenue into a one-way street pointing west while allowing buses to use a “wrong way” lane heading east. A female student was soon struck by an oncoming bus. That spring, hundreds of UW students — already mobilized by the Vietnam War — protested the wayward lane by blocking an approaching bus with their bodies. The event led to a brief suspension of citywide bus service.

In the late '60s, some feared that the city would lose its bus service altogether, with ridership rates dropping and the private Madison Bus Company nearing insolvency. The City of Madison purchased the business and formally took over the operation of the bus system in 1970.

Metro Transit has been a steady caretaker of the campus lines ever since. The unlimited-ride student bus passes arrived in the 1990s, and the campus bus routes became fare-free in the early 2000s.

Preparing for its Bus Rapid Transit program, the city launched a massive network redesign in 2023. Most of its routes were reconfigured and renamed with letters instead of numbers, but not the campus lines. So the 80 bus — reliably running every five minutes at peak times — lives on.

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

Stem-Cell Visionary

Gabriela Cezar takes stem cells from bench science to business.

The door to major breakthroughs in human health and medical care opened in 1998, when a UW researcher first cultured human embryonic stem cells. **Gabriela Cezar PhD'02** walked right on through, using stem cells to evaluate drug safety and create tests for developmental disorders.

While she was an assistant professor of animal sciences at the UW from 2005 to 2012, Cezar led a research team that showed that the chemicals generated by stem cells — called biomarkers — could be used to warn pharmaceutical companies about the potential side effects of new drugs. Biomarkers might also help scientists to unlock what causes birth defects or create tests to predict the onset of disease.

Academic environments, Cezar noted at the time, offer a powerful opportunity for collaboration, and “more freedom to create, to discover, and to test these ideas.”

In 2007, Cezar cofounded Stemina Biomarker Discovery, Inc., to further develop drug-screening methods. The nascent company, which she named to represent stem cells and the stamina of the human body, garnered \$1 million in aid from the State of Wisconsin.

“I’m a very pragmatic scientist,” she said, explaining that her time working in the pharmaceutical industry fed her desire to get better drugs to patients.

Dan Schaefer '73, MS'75, a UW professor emeritus of animal sciences, praised Cezar’s ability to adeptly network in the realms of biotechnology and biobusiness, and to “[carry] our name back into these circles with a very modern, high-impact research topic.”

Cezar speaks four languages,

Gabriela Cezar examines vials of human embryonic stem cells. Learn more about exceptional UW grads at alumnipark.com.

including her native Portuguese, and no matter where she is, she has always understood how to chase success — whether she’s leading a research lab or seeking a path to take her findings to the world. After she became CEO of Panarea Partners, a New York-

based company that specializes in investment banking for health care and the life sciences, she said, “I need to understand the science, know what it takes to build a company, and understand the needs of the market.”

CINDY FOSS



JEFF MILLER

70s

For her book *No Right to an Honest Living: The Struggles of Boston's Black Workers in the Civil War Era*, **Jacqueline Jones MA'72, PhD'76** of Concord, Massachusetts, received the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for History. The book examines the discrimination of white abolitionists and Republicans against Black Bostonians well after the Civil War and the ingenuity of Black entrepreneurs who persevered to forge their own career paths. Jones is a two-time Pulitzer finalist. She is a professor emerita, Mastin Gentry White Professor of Southern History, and the Ellen C. Temple Chair in Women's History at the University of Texas–Austin and served as president of the American Historical Association in 2021. She won a Bancroft Prize from Columbia University for her book *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present*.



From Lake Mendota to the Mediterranean Sea: former college roommates **Lisa Henderson '02** of Chicago and **Kari Kleist '02** of Walnut Creek, California, were hiking, biking, and kayaking their way around Corsica, France, and Sardinia, Italy, when they befriended fellow Badger **Ruth Lazarus '73** of New York City. A coffee break in Levie, Corsica, wasn't complete without flashing some

proud Wisconsin *W*s. Thanks to Kari for sharing this fun memory with us!

“Ajibola Tolase [MFA'21] exemplifies the essence of creativity and resilience, using his poetry to shed light on the beauty and complexity of the Black experience.”

— Lynne Thompson, Los Angeles poet laureate

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

Kari Kleist '02, Ruth Lazarus '73, and Lisa Henderson '02 throw up their *W*s in Corsica, France.

BOOK NEWS? See page 64.

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

Step aside, Wright brothers: **Tom '76** and **Tim '81 Smart** are making a Badger-sized impact on the future of engineering with the Smart Brothers Design Awards in the UW's Department of Mechanical Engineering. The awards for best overall design, best prototype, and most significant impact are presented to exceptional seniors during each semester's Mechanical Engineering Design Showcase. The brothers presented the inaugural awards at the spring 2024 showcase. Tom Smart was a mechanical engineer with Ford Motor Company for 30 years before joining consulting firm Automotive Insight as technology and strategy director, retiring in 2019. Tim Smart retired in 2022 after nearly 42 years with 3M Corporation, where he most recently served as global industry program manager.

After 25 years with the U.S. Department of State, **Lawrence Bartlett '77** of Bethesda, Maryland, has retired. Bartlett spent the past 15 years leading the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, which helped resettle more than one million refugees to the United States. He also directed U.S. humanitarian assistance for Syria and worked on humanitarian operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Prior to joining the State Department, Bartlett served as Peace Corps director in Jordan and Bulgaria and worked in international education and earthquake relief. He was recruited by the Peace

Corps in Madison after graduation and served as a volunteer in Yemen, helping to implement the country's first national immunization campaign.

80s

Virginia Diggles Buckles PhD'81 is celebrating five years since retiring from the Washington University School of Medicine in Saint Louis. She was most recently a professor of neurology and executive director of the Knight Alzheimer Disease Research Center.

In the 2023 Netflix docuseries *Big Vape: The Rise and Fall of Juul*, **Lynn D'Andrea '83** shares her medical perspective in warning of the potential danger of vaping in young populations. In the fourth episode of the series, she recounts a cluster of cases of severe lung injury in adolescent patients at Children's Wisconsin in 2019, all of which were eventually linked to e-cigarettes or vaping. D'Andrea is medical director of pulmonary services and program director of tracheostomy and home ventilator at Children's Wisconsin in Milwaukee. She is also a professor and chief of pediatric pulmonary and sleep medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Robert Wilger '84 was named office-managing shareholder of the San Jose branch of labor and employment law firm Littler Mendelson. Wilger has been a shareholder with the firm since 1993 and represents clients in all aspects of employment law.

“Refusing to retire gracefully,” **Charles Seavey PhD'87** got himself elected to the Housing Authority Board of Rockport, Massachusetts, after campaigning as a write-in. Congrats on your third act, Charles!

Bryan Smith '87 joined the Middleton, Wisconsin, office of Ameriprise Financial Services as vice president and financial adviser in September 2024. He comes to the role with more than three decades of experi-



ANDY MANIS

Fantasy Fanatic

If you're into virtual sports, he's your man.

Like many boys, young **Nick Whalen '14** had dreams of becoming a professional sports star.

But by the time he was in eighth grade in the Wisconsin village of Wrightstown, near Green Bay, he says he realized “it wasn't in the cards,” and he started to think about other ways he could stay connected to sports.

Unlike most boys, Whalen had tried to start a fantasy sports league when he was in fourth grade. Fantasy sports players assemble imaginary teams of real athletes and win or lose virtual contests based on those athletes' real-life performances.

When Whalen came to UW–Madison, where he double-majored in journalism and communications, he learned that a pioneering fantasy sports operation called RotoWire had relocated from Los Angeles to Madison just a few years earlier. RotoWire provided fantasy players the latest information on the real athletes who populate fantasy leagues.

Whalen landed an internship with the company in 2012, and today, he is RotoWire's senior media analyst, cohosting its radio shows and podcasts. He's a star in a company that regularly taps UW–Madison graduates for talent and has itself reached the heights of the fantasy sports world, partnering with the likes of ESPN and CBS Sports. (Whalen estimates that roughly 20 full-time RotoWire employees are UW–Madison graduates.)

In a recent 12-month period, RotoWire had more than 22 million unique visitors to its subscription-based website. Whalen feels that the company's ongoing success is due to the reputation it established early on for being first and factual with player information.

“We have a number of revenue streams at this point,” Whalen says, “but our core business is still that news aggregation, making sure we're accurate and providing good analysis.”

One of the new revenue streams involves sports gambling, in rapid ascendance since the leagues and media networks reversed an earlier aversion to it.

In 2022, RotoWire was acquired by Gambling.com Group, and its website now has a sports betting section along with its fantasy sports section.

“There's a natural overlap,” Whalen says. “If you're somebody who plays a lot of fantasy sports, you're probably interested in sports gambling.”

Does Whalen still enjoy the job? “I'm as passionate as I've ever been,” he says. “Sports have been my life as long as I can remember. It's something I'd be doing in my spare time, anyway — and I get paid for it.”

DOUG MOE '79

ence in financial and retirement planning services. Smith also works with Greater Dane Financial Partners in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

90s

Michael Staudenmaier

'91, MS'93 is helping Americans beat the heat with a new approach to identifying dangerous heat events. Staudenmaier spent 10 years as the program lead for HeatRisk, a collaboration between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Weather Service (NWS) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). HeatRisk considers upcoming heat waves in the context of a region's climate while incorporating heat health statistics from the CDC. It is the first high-resolution heat-alert system to service the entire continental U.S. using both meteorological and heat-health data, and it is intended to provide risk guidance to heat-sensitive populations. Staudenmaier is chief of the Science and Technology Infusion Division in NOAA/NWS Western Region Headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Since 2019, **Sarah Metzger '92** has taught watercolor painting and paper arts classes at the Atelier 830, an art studio and community space hosted in Adrian and Nancy Smith's renovated David Adler estate in Lake Forest, Illinois. Metzger is currently working on a watercolor and oil-painting series of national and state parks. (Pictured below: *Cathedral Arch.*)



On Alumni Class Notes

Classic movies and media enjoy refreshing musical revivals in the hands of **Andrew Abrams '94**. Abrams is the artistic director of Madison-based theater company Capital City Theatre. He most recently composed the music for a stage production of *It's a Wonderful Life* that premiered in November 2024. His original *Shining in Misery*, a musical parody of Stephen King novels, opened for the World Premiere Wisconsin festival in 2023 and was played in concert in New York City in 2024. He also wrote the music for *But I'm a Cheerleader: The Musical*, which ran in London and won the 2022 WhatsOn-Stage Best Off-West End Production Award. Bravo!

In August 2024, **Danielle Skupas MA'96, PhD'07** helped make history as a dancer in the United States' first sanctioned World Para Dance Sport wheelchair ballroom dance competition. The event, held in Dearborn, Michigan, welcomed nearly 80 wheelchair dancers from 20 countries to compete, including four dancers from Wisconsin. Skupas, an adjunct foreign-language instructor at Edgewood College in Madison, danced in the nonsanctioned portion of the event.

Agatha Christie meets old-fashioned and fish fry in *Murder Girl*, the latest production from actor and playwright **Heidi Armbruster '98**. The play, which premiered with Forward Theater Company at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison in November 2024, follows six characters trying to solve a murder at a family-run supper club in Wisconsin's Northwoods. Armbruster is also the author of *Dairyland*, a comedy set on a Wisconsin dairy farm inspired by her father's; *Mrs. Christie*, a dramatization of Agatha Christie's brief disappearance in 1926; and *Scarecrow*, a one-woman show about grief that featured Armbruster

in its Milwaukee premiere. She most recently starred in Forward Theater's production of *Summer, 1976*.

Evan Goldstein '98 gets cheeky about anal health in his new book, *Butt Seriously: The Definitive Guide to Anal Health, Pleasure, and Everything in Between*. Goldstein is a nationally renowned anal surgeon and the founder and CEO of Bespoke Surgical, a private practice specializing in sexual health and wellness care in New York City.

00s

Roger Daniel '01 is celebrating the management of more than 4,000 units through his Chicago-based real estate firm, Daniel Management Group. Daniel founded the company in 2013 with the purchase of a single multifamily building on Chicago's northside. Today, the group manages properties across three states and has expanded into both leasing and real estate investment.

Dan Fischer '04 is helping combat cybercrime and disinformation as chief technology officer of Madison software company Medex Forensics. He most recently worked as the lead developer on embARC, an application from the Library of Congress's Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative that helps users analyze and correct embedded metadata in media files. He also led development of a media analysis approach for the FBI Forensic Audio, Video, and Image Analysis Unit in Quantico, Virginia. Prior to joining Medex in 2023, Fischer was a developer with software agency PortalMedia and a programmer with the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

Butzel Attorneys and Counselors welcomed **Christopher Zdarsky '05** as a shareholder in its Grand Rapids, Michigan, office in August 2024. Zdarsky is a trial lawyer who represents individuals and businesses in

DEATH NOTICES • NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, AND EMAIL UPDATES alumnichanges@uwalumni.com • Alumni Changes, WFAA, 1848 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726 • 888-947-2586

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.

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.

commercial disputes. He has served as a volunteer faculty member for the Hillman Trial Advocacy Program, an annual training program sponsored by the Western Michigan Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, and has been named to The Best Lawyers in America in commercial litigation and banking and finance; Michigan Super Lawyers Rising Stars in business litigation; *Grand Rapids Magazine* Top Lawyer in commercial litigation; and Illinois Super Lawyers Rising Stars in business litigation.

Forbes named **Michelle Place '06** of Northbrook, Illinois, to its 2024 Top Next-Generation Wealth Advisors lists both in-state and nationally. Place is a managing director and wealth management financial adviser with Merrill Lynch. She is also the founder and principal of the company's Place Wealth Management Group.

Congratulations to **Michael Stauder MD'07**, who was promoted to professor of radiation oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Stauder joined the MD Anderson Radiation Oncology Department in 2011 and is a Morgan Welch Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Program and Clinic member. His research focuses on the design and development of clinical trials for the evaluation of immunotherapy in combination with radiation in treating rare and aggressive forms of breast cancer.

10s

Elle Box '11 of Brentwood, Tennessee, is the new chief compliance officer at health care network Lifepoint Health. Box joined Lifepoint in August 2024 after serving as chief health care compliance and privacy officer at UConn Health in Connecticut. She was previously the chief compliance officer at Tuscon Medical



LAUREN PAGE

Pro Hockey's First Couple

These former Badgers haven't let their careers get in the way of love.

How do two professional hockey players on separate teams make a romance work? For **Luke Kunin x'19** and **Sophia Shaver '19**, the difficulties of a long-distance relationship made their bond stronger.

The two met in the summer of 2015, when Kunin, from suburban Saint Louis, and Shaver, from suburban Minneapolis, arrived at UW–Madison. Housed in Merit Hall, they started hanging out and quickly became friends. She was drawn to his goofy, easygoing nature. He liked her kind and caring manner. The friendship deepened in the fall, when he asked her out on their first proper date. “I finally figured it out and took her someplace nice — the Tornado Room,” Luke says.

Their relationship blossomed alongside their success on the ice. In 2016–17, Luke captained the UW men's team — an unusual accomplishment for a sophomore. After that season, he turned pro, splitting time between the Minnesota Wild and their minor league affiliate in Iowa.

Sophia stayed at Wisconsin two more years, captaining the women's team her senior year, 2018–19, and scoring the winning goal in the NCAA championship final. After graduating with a major in real estate and urban land economics, she turned pro, making her and Luke the only couple in professional hockey.

Sophia played four seasons with the Professional Women's Hockey Players Association (PWHPA) and this last year with the Minnesota team of the newly formed Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL).

Luke was traded to the Nashville Predators in 2020. Sophia was able to join him for a period when the Olympic schedule put the PWHPA season on hold. But when she resumed her career and he got traded to the San Jose Sharks in 2022, it was back to FaceTime calls and sporadic visits. “It's not easy,” Luke says, “but if you get through it, it makes your relationship stronger.”

After eight years of dating, they got married in July 2023. Going into the 2023–24 season with the Minnesota PWHL team, Sophia knew it would be her last. So it was extra special when her team won the season championship and Luke was able to be there to watch in person.

In June 2024, Sophia announced her retirement, and two weeks later Luke signed a one-year, \$2.75 million contract with the Sharks. “I'm ready to settle down, live in the same area, and start a family,” Sophia says.

They'll spend the season together in San Jose and eventually settle in Minnesota, where they recently bought a home — so they can live in the same city at last.

JOHN ROSENGREN

Center in Arizona and director of compliance for Merit Laboratory Partners in Tennessee.

The Mississippi River Basin Ag and Water Desk is a collaboration of more than 20 local news outlets covering agriculture and the environment across one of the country's most utilized inland waterways. Badger journalists contributing to the project include **Bennet Goldstein MA'12** of Madison, a reporter with the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism; **Tegan Wendland MS'14** of New Orleans, editorial director of the Ag and Water Desk; **Madeline Heim '18** of Madison, environment reporter with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*; and **Kate Rose PhD'19**, research faculty with the Ag and Water Desk and assistant professor of strategic communication and science communication at the Missouri School of Journalism in Columbia, Missouri.

The future of children's health equity is in excellent hands with **Kristen Obiakor '13**, a member of the 2024–26 cohort of National Clinician Scholars. As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California–Los Angeles, she is researching early-intervention strategies to reduce adverse pediatric health outcomes in historically marginalized populations. Obiakor received her medical degree from Rush University Medical College in Chicago, where she founded the West Side Walk for Wellness. She completed her pediatric residency at Yale New Haven Hospital in Connecticut, where she founded the Medical Specialty Exposure Pipeline, a program that helps expose Black and Latino high school students to career paths in the medical field. “I hope to inspire our students to become our next generation of medical providers that truly represent the communities that we serve,” Obiakor told the Yale School of Medicine.

20s

Stop — it's hammer time in the Badger football locker room thanks to **Keegan Nesvacil MBA'20**. Nesvacil is the cofounder and executive vice president of Woodland Tools, a Madison-based gardening tool manufacturer that designed custom sledgehammers for the Badgers to use in training exercises and smaller models to be gifted during ceremonies throughout the 2023 football season. Woodland Tools was founded in 2022 and donates one percent of its gross sales to environmental nonprofits and initiatives.



Nigerian essayist and poet **Ajibola Tolase MFA'21** received the 2024 Cave Canem Prize for his poetry collection *2000 Blacks*. The award recognizes exceptional, unpublished manuscripts by Black poets. Through the lens of an African emigrant, *2000 Blacks* considers the mass migration of skilled professionals from their home countries in search of opportunities abroad, the transatlantic slave trade, Africa's exploitation by the Global North, and Tolase's complex relationship with his father. "Ajibola Tolase exemplifies the essence of creativity and resilience, using his poetry to shed light on the beauty and complexity of the Black experience," says Los Angeles poet laureate and Cave Canem board member Lynne Thompson.

Megan Provost '20 is attempting homemade sourdough. Again.



ERIC DIECKMAN

Seeds of Greatness

A local business has long supported farmers of the future.

For nearly 30 years, the family behind the Renk Seed Company in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, has supported UW–Madison agriculture students. The Renk Agribusiness Institute, housed in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), was established in 1996 through an endowed gift from **Walter and Martha Renk** and **Richard and Sharon Renk**. The institute has managed agribusiness education, research, and outreach at CALs and the Division of Extension.

In 2013, the same gift created the Renk Scholarship for students interested in agriculture or agribusiness. (Above, members of the Renk family are shown with students, faculty, and staff at a scholarship luncheon.) In addition to receiving financial support, students are connected to an expansive network of top internships. Over the last 11 years, the institute has awarded \$520,000 to CALs undergraduates. Renk Scholars receive \$2,000 for tuition assistance, which is a game changer for many agriculture-minded Badgers.

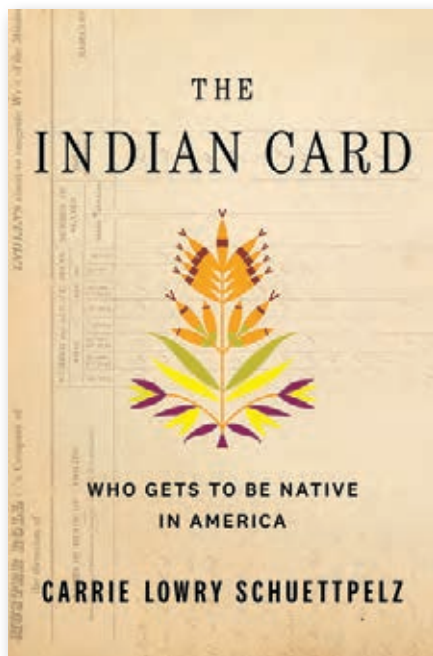
"I am delighted and immensely grateful to have been chosen for the Renk Scholarship," said **Zirui Zhou '23**. "This is not only the first scholarship I have been awarded, but it is also an incredible honor. It's fulfilling to have my academic achievements and career aspirations acknowledged in such a significant way."

The Renk Seed Company was started by Joseph and Katherina Renk after they left Germany in 1846 and made their way to Wisconsin. The family has historically been innovative and passionate about the science of farming. In 1898, they raised the first silo in Dane County, and they were one of the first to utilize a tile drainage system for farm fields in 1916. Today, the independent, family-owned seed company continues to thrive.

Over the next five years, an average of 26,600 jobs are expected to open annually in the field of agricultural management and business. Richard and Sharon Renk, along with their son, **Jeff**, helped expand the original endowment to support students pursuing degrees in agriculture and agribusiness while empowering them to gain additional business expertise and encouraging future leaders in the field.

Kelly Herness x'26 says that it wouldn't have been possible for her to attend UW–Madison without aid. "I am beyond grateful for the Renk Scholarship," she says. "This scholarship has allowed me to obtain a high-quality education without putting additional financial strain on my farming family. Thank you, Renk family!"

NICOLE HEIMAN



Schuettpelz explores a Native American person's questions about belonging.

What Does It Mean to Be Native American?

Carrie Lowry Schuettpelz MFA'18 investigates an identity crisis in *The Indian Card*.

Carrie Lowry Schuettpelz MFA'18 is an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and she has the card to prove it. But for some Native Americans, claiming their tribal identity can be far more complicated. In *The Indian Card: Who Gets to Be Native in America*, Schuettpelz examines the disparity between the number of Americans who claim Native heritage and those enrolled in tribes; the qualifications for tribal membership according to federal guidelines; and the challenges of identity within Indigenous communities.

Schuettpelz analyzes the ways in which the federal government controls membership in sovereign tribal nations by imposing standards, such as blood quantum, that effectively serve as tools of Native erasure. She interviews other Indigenous people about their efforts to develop their Native identity outside of the bureaucratic definitions of belonging and reflects on her own experiences with enrollment for herself and her children.

"Every person carries multiple identities. ... And I know that blood cannot be divided into fractions like an apple — clean-cut and cored; separate and distinct pieces of a whole," Schuettpelz writes. "But the validation; the evidence: I can't shake the feeling that this is unique to Native people. That we, uniquely, have been forced into needing to constantly prove our identities to ourselves and others."

For her work on *The Indian Card*, Schuettpelz was awarded a 2023 Whiting Creative Nonfiction Grant, which recognizes ambitious and essential nonfiction book projects. She is an associate professor of practice and director of undergraduate studies at the University of Iowa's School of Planning and Public Affairs and was previously a policy adviser in the Obama administration focusing on homelessness and tribal policy.



Turning to Stone: Discovering the Subtle Wisdom of Rocks

MARCIA BJORNERUD MS'85, PHD'87

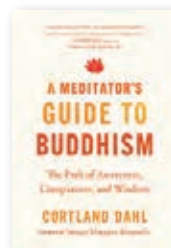
Earth has a story to tell for those who know how to listen. In her latest book, Bjornerud teaches readers about the dynamic lives of rocks, the functions they serve, and the things they can tell us about our planet and our place in its history. Bjornerud is the Walter Schober Professor of Environmental Studies and a professor of geosciences at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.



Willkie Sprint: A Story of Friendship, Love, and Winning the First Women's Little 500 Race

KERRY HELLMUTH JD'94

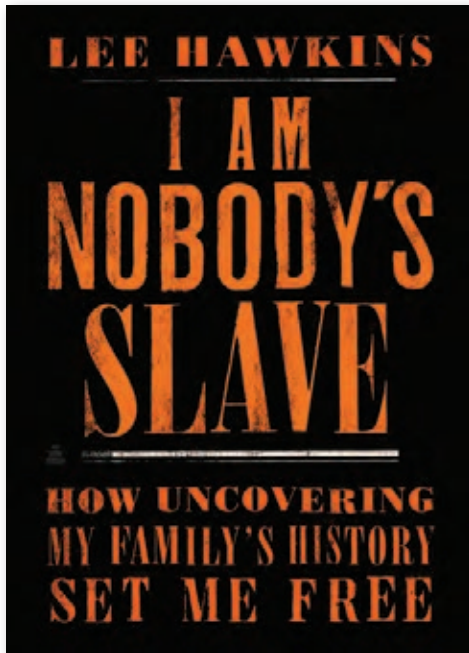
In 1988, Hellmuth was a freshman at Indiana University when she helped Willkie Sprint, her cycling team, make history by winning the first women's Little 500, the country's largest collegiate bike race. Her book recounts the 100 laps that took Willkie Sprint from underdog status to unforgettable victors. Hellmuth went on to become a professional cyclist and attorney.



A Meditator's Guide to Buddhism: The Path of Awareness, Compassion, and Wisdom

CORTLAND DAHL PHD'16

Dahl offers both experienced meditators and curious readers an introduction to the core principles of Buddhist tradition as a means of navigating life's challenges. Dahl is a contemplative scientist with the UW's Center for Healthy Minds and the chief contemplative officer with Healthy Minds Innovations. He is also the cofounder and executive director of Tergar International, a global network of meditation groups.



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

Hawkins's book sheds light on the enduring consequences of slavery and systemic racism.

Reclaiming a Legacy

In *I Am Nobody's Slave*, Lee Hawkins '01 recounts his family's tradition of resilience despite generations of racial violence.

When **Lee Hawkins '01** was young, he witnessed his father's rage in response to wrongdoing. Thirty years later, Hawkins recognizes it as a product of the fear and violence that have followed his family for generations. In *I Am Nobody's Slave: How Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free*, Hawkins identifies the brutality and oppression imposed upon each generation of his family and their undeterred pursuit of the American dream.

As a child in suburban Minnesota, Hawkins knew about the hardships his father faced growing up in Jim Crow-era Alabama. But his research uncovered the violent deaths that occurred in every generation of his family since slavery, including the murder of his great-grandfather when his grandmother was just nine years old. Using genetic testing and historical data, he saw how systemic racism and chronic stress shortened the lives of his ancestors, how the weight of these collective tragedies was passed down, and how his family forged a life in America despite it.

"It was really the ancestors, people who are now ancestors who passed away after giving these interviews, that pushed me along and said it's important for you to do this," Hawkins told Minnesota Public Radio in May 2024. "And mainly because of [my great-grandfather] and the fact that he was murdered 100 years ago ... by a white man who was never brought to justice. Now I'm a journalist, and I have the power to tell this story."

Hawkins is also the creator of *What Happened in Alabama?*, a limited-series podcast in which he examines the intergenerational effects of slavery in his family and his efforts to heal from them. He spent nearly two decades with the *Wall Street Journal*, where he was most recently a news editor and on-camera reporter. In 2022, he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist as the lead reporter on a story series about the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.



Incoming

ADAM CUTHBERT '03 AND MARK KORSHAK '08

In the tradition of the coming-of-age comedies of the early 2000s, *Incoming* follows the antics of four freshmen preparing for their first high-school party. The movie, which premiered on Netflix, features industry veterans like Bobby Cannavale and Kaitlin Olson alongside a cast of new faces. Cuthbert was the first assistant director on the film, which Korshak helped produce.



Bluff

DANEZ SMITH '12

Written in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in 2020, this collection reckons with Smith's responsibility to the community as a Minneapolis poet, while interrogating the form of poetry itself. *Bluff* is at once a ruthless self-reflection and an ode to artistic resilience in times of despair. The poems invite readers to imagine new and better futures despite the harsh realities in which they presently exist.



Consider the Rooster

OLIVER BAEZ BENDORF MFA'13, MA'15

In his latest poetry collection, Baez Bendorf uses an ecological lens to explore the intersections of the human and nonhuman worlds. True to the rooster of its title, the book is described as a "catalyst for awakening, both literally and figuratively." It was named one of the best poetry collections of 2024 by Lit Hub and Electric Literature and was longlisted for the 2024 National Book Critics Circle Award in poetry. Baez Bendorf teaches in the MFA program at Warren Wilson College.

MEGAN PROVOST '20



The UW's Best Bathroom

Nature Calls in Nancy Nicholas Hall is a stream-like, dreamlike experience.

At UW–Madison, you can spark a debate by asking about favorite study spots or local hangouts. But there's broad consensus when it comes to the best place to freshen up between classes: the wryly named *Nature Calls* bathrooms on the first floor of Nancy Nicholas Hall, home to the School of Human Ecology.

The topic of the most pleasant lavatory on campus pops up with amusing frequency on the UW–Madison Reddit channel. Invariably, the top commenters nominate *Nature Calls*, with praise that seems over the top for a washroom.

"The cans ... are legendary."

"It's a tropical experience you'll not soon forget."

"It is truly a magical experience."

Once you walk into the facilities, you can see — and hear — why. The soothing sounds of nature, from chirping birds

and a babbling brook to rain and thunder, emanate from overhead speakers. The sights are equally captivating: a swirling, stream-like floor design embedded with river rock; a tree stump propping up a pebble-filled countertop; resin-paneled walls wrapped with a prairie-grass design; a deep blue ceiling with twinkling fiber optic lights that mimic a starry mid-night sky.

Quirky touches round out *Nature Calls*, including bright red stalls that imitate English telephone booths (a droll reference to "calls"). Mounted above each stall is another artistic spin on nature, with scrap-metal sculptures of animal heads. The men's and women's bathrooms have identical layouts, save for a urinal replacing a stall in the former.

Nature Calls debuted in 2012 with the opening of the new wing of Nancy Nicholas Hall, designed by Sasaki Associates in

Nature Calls is legendary for quirky touches such as a prairie-grass wall design and scrap-metal animal sculptures.

For a virtual tour of the *Nature Calls* bathrooms, see this story on our website, onwisconsin.uwalumni.com.

Boston and local architect Diana Dorschner. But its inspiration dates to the School of Human Ecology's original building. After an orange velvet couch and an inflatable cow mysteriously appeared in the women's bathroom, visitors started to leave behind their own whimsical decorations. It became such a source of pride that Professor **Beverly Gordon '68, PhD'84** wrote a nearly 10,000-word academic article on the phenomenon in 2003, titled "Embodiment, Community Building, and Aesthetic Saturation in 'Restroom World.'"

Nature Calls preserves this communal spirit and even includes a wall of shelving in the entryway, inviting visitors to continue the tradition of creative contributions.

As the entry sign reads: "A touch of humor. A play on words. A destination for all."

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

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.

Here For Every You. | uwcu.org



UW Foundation
Address Correction Department
1848 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53726-4090

Change Service Requested



START PARTY PLANNING

APRIL 8-9



Scan to add to your
online calendar.

Get ready for the **Party to Pay It Forward** – an online day-of-giving shindig celebrating the UW. Plan now to join Badger nation in all the fun and philanthropy. **Jump in at dayofthebadger.org**