

WINTER 2022-23 | VOL. 49, NO. 1



# LANTERN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE ALUMNI MAGAZINE



IT ALL  
STARTS **HERE**

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# FEATURES

**On the cover:** For Dr. Paul Molling, it all started at UW-La Crosse. Over the past 25 years, Molling has put the lessons he learned on campus to good use, rising the ranks at Mayo Clinic Health System while never losing touch with what matters most: his patients.



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# LANTERN

UW-LA CROSSE ALUMNI MAGAZINE WINTER 2022-23 | VOL. 49, NO. 1

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Lantern magazine. See: [digitalcollections.uwlax.edu](http://digitalcollections.uwlax.edu)

## CLASS NOTES ONLINE

Go to [uwlax.edu/alumni](http://uwlax.edu/alumni) for complete class notes each quarter. Click on "News," then "Class Notes."

Class notes policy: The UWL Alumni Association publishes class notes and obituaries online in January, April, July and October. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the quarterly posting. See [uwlax.edu/alumni](http://uwlax.edu/alumni) for details.

## HOW DO YOU BUILD A STRONGER WISCONSIN?

### Start with the much-needed science building at UWL

If you want to light up the eyes of a UWL professor, just ask about their students – especially alumni and their post-graduate accomplishments.

I'm honored to work with faculty and administrators on behalf of the UWL Foundation to seek support for Prairie Springs Science Center Completion Project, the overdue and sorely needed second phase of the science complex on campus.

As we're rallying support from the UW System, state and legislative leaders, it's incredible to see the reach that UWL alumni have throughout Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

And it's impressive to see the pride that faculty and administrators show when discussing how UWL students and alumni are making a difference.

Like the Wisconsin Idea, UWL alumni clearly make Wisconsin stronger from border to border.

That's true in all disciplines, but UWL's excellence in STEM education positions the campus as a leader.

At a time when business leaders and educators need more science graduates, it's clear that replacing Cowley Hall with Prairie Springs Science Center Completion Project is crucial to helping fill the state's huge workforce needs.

As we rally alumni, it's clear that graduates have fond memories and true praise for the professors who helped prepare them for the workforce and life beyond campus.

The sense of pride – on campus and among alumni – is incredibly evident.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author David Maraniss, who has strong Madison roots, wrote the best-selling book, "When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi."

Thankfully, pride still matters at UWL. It's woven into the campus DNA.

*Rusty Cunningham*

*Rusty Cunningham, retired editor of the La Crosse Tribune, advocates for the Prairie Springs Science Center Completion Cowley Hall Demolition Project with the UWL Foundation.*





# MOVIN' ON UP

## UWL now among national U's

You're only as good as the company you keep. For UWL, that company has grown to nationally known major universities. US News & World Report's ranking of the Best Colleges for 2023 has promoted UWL to its "Top Public Schools Among National Universities." The result: UWL is the top-ranked comprehensive university in the UW System, outside the land-grant research campus, UW-Madison.

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# Best Wis college town

(You already knew that)

La Crosse is Wisconsin's best small college town and among the best in the country, says online language learning company Preply. In its best small college towns in the U.S. list, La Crosse was No. 4 – the only Badger State city to crack the top 10. Preply noted La Crosse's natural beauty, recreational opportunities, arts and culture, ease of transportation, safety and security, and low cost of living.

 **Read more: [uwlax.edu/news/posts/best-small-college-town](http://uwlax.edu/news/posts/best-small-college-town)**

*Riverside Park, downtown La Crosse*





# NEW DEAN

Ju Kim is the new dean of UWL's College of Science and Health. Kim says one of his early initiatives is working with faculty and staff to collaborate across campus to create new, interdisciplinary options for students.



[Read more: uwlax.edu/news/posts/new-dean](http://uwlax.edu/news/posts/new-dean)



## RECORD CLASS

For the second consecutive year, UWL welcomed the largest first-year class in school history. First-year enrollment was 2,308 on the 10th day of the fall semester, eclipsing last year's record of 2,207. Overall enrollment held steady, dropping slightly from 10,314 students to 10,302 students. UWL's strong, stable enrollment contrasts national higher ed trends.



## A 'BEST VALUE'

Students get their money's worth at UWL. Finance technology company SmartAsset lists UWL among the top 4 in Wisconsin and No. 50 in the U.S. for affordability, high-quality academics and ROI.



# LEGACY BENEFACTOR

Student says scholarship relieves stress,  
helps her focus

*Elle Hersperger, a junior minoring in public communications and advocacy, received the Alumni Association's Continuing Student Legacy Scholarship.*

**E**lle Hersperger nearly missed applying for the Alumni Association's Continuing Student Legacy Scholarship. While scanning UWL Foundation scholarships, Hersperger realized that with her mom, Jill, being an '86 graduate, she qualified. She applied — and was selected.

"The scholarship has already impacted my experience at UWL," says Hersperger, a junior. "The \$500 each semester will help pay for about one class each semester, which is huge."

Hersperger says the \$1,000 for 2022-23 has relieved stress and allowed her to focus on grades.

"I take college very seriously," the marketing major from Schofield explains. "I've been on the dean's list all four semesters I've been at UWL and am on track for my fifth semester on the dean's list to finish out the semester."

Hersperger says the scholarship helps her do even more during college. With money for tuition, she's more at ease about paying the yearly American Marketing Association fees — a club that offers many opportunities.

"Since the scholarship is going toward tuition, I won't be beating myself up for paying club dues with money that would have gone toward my tuition," she notes.

Hersperger, who is minoring in public communications and advocacy, hopes to work in marketing or public relations after graduating in spring 2024. The scholarship, made possible by generous alumni, is helping her achieve her lifelong goal of earning a degree and getting hired.

"I just wanted to thank the Alumni Association donors again for their generous donation and for helping fund my education at UWL," she says.

# THEY'RE DISTINGUISHED

**C**hancellor Joe Gow joined alumni recognized by the Alumni Association from the previous three years for a formal picture when they returned to campus in September. It was the first in-person Distinguished Alumni Award event since the start of the pandemic.

Nominations are accepted year-round and must be received by Oct. 1 to be considered for the following year. Make nominations at: [www.uwlax.edu/alumni/about/awards/nomination](http://www.uwlax.edu/alumni/about/awards/nomination).

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*Alumni recognized included, front, from left, Margaret Van Bree, '82, 2021 Graff Distinguished Alumni Award; Chancellor Gow; James Burkhart, '68, 2020 Graff Distinguished Alumni Award; back, from left, Jeremy Richter, '94, 2022 Graff Distinguished Alumni Award; Marquell Johnson, '04, 2022 Parker Distinguished Multicultural Alumni Award; Anna Hatch, '09, 2021 Rada Distinguished Alumni Award; Bryan Heiderscheit, '94, 2022 Graff Distinguished Alumni Award; Scott Noet, '90, 2021 Altman Teacher Education Award; Mary Lee Vance, '79 & '83, 2022 Altman Teacher Education Award; and Justin Schmitz, '11, 2022 Rada Distinguished Alumni Award.*



## ONE TEAM. ONE MISSION. ONE UNIVERSITY.

New organization will promote UWL



**T**wo campus philanthropy organizations are “Optimizing Alignment” to form a new, stronger operation to promote UWL.

The UWL Foundation and UWL Alumni Association will join to become the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Alumni & Friends Foundation. The target date for the new organization is July 1, 2023.

The Foundation and Alumni Association boards of directors have been discussing the new organization for more than a year. Both approved a resolution to proceed during their November 2022 meetings.

Janie Morgan, '85 & '86, executive director of strategic engagement, is excited to see the Alumni Association and Foundation office align.

“These two organizations have worked hand-in-hand over the past 50-plus years, and

I believe this new structure will help us serve our students, alumni, friends and UWL in the best possible way,” says Morgan. “Our alumni and friends deserve the very best, and we plan to deliver.”

Greg Reichert, vice chancellor of Advancement and president of the UWL Foundation, says the new arrangement aligns with best practices in the industry today.

“It will allow the activities that we do to advance UWL to be seamless and should create a more fulfilling experience for our alumni and benefactors,” he explains. “We are very excited to see it in action.”

Todd Taylor, '80, current chair of the UWL Foundation, will chair the new organization July 1, holding that role for the first two years of the new organization. Lynda Kohler, '83, current chair of the UWL Alumni Association,





will serve as vice chair of the new organization for its first two years, followed by two years as chair.

The new board of directors will include between 18 and 40 members serving three-year terms, with at least half of them being alumni. New committees will encompass all areas currently covered by the two organizations. The new organization's fiscal year will run July 1-June 30, with annual meetings in May.

The UWL Foundation was incorporated in 1967 to promote charitable and education activities to support scholarships, awards, grants, projects and programs to advance UWL's mission. UW-La Crosse Scholarships Inc., formerly the La Crosse State College Foundation, and the State College Student Welfare Association, merged with the

UWL Foundation in 1986. By 2020, the Foundation's assets were \$39.6 million.

The UWL Alumni Association was formed in 1969 to build and maintain relationships among students, alumni, friends and the university.

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*Upper left: Leadership of the new organization will include, from left, Greg Reichert, vice chancellor of Advancement and president of the UWL Foundation; Todd Taylor, '80; Lynda Kohler, '83; and Janie Morgan, '85 & '86, executive director of strategic engagement.*

*Above: Tony, '73, and Nancy, '72, Christnovich pose with Stryker during reunion weekend in October. Alumni are the focus of the UWL Foundation and UWL Alumni Association joining to become the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Alumni & Friends Foundation in 2023.*

# NINE ENSHRINED



Seven former student-athletes, an Athletics administrator and a longtime supporter entered the Wall of Fame in October 2022. They included, from left:

**Tyler Foos** (1998-2003)  
cross country and track & field

- WIAC All-Time Cross Country Team
- three-time NCAA III All-American; third in 2001
- won 2001 WIAC Cross Country title

**Dan Laurent** (2006-10)  
wrestling

- finished 124-27 in his career with 50 wins by fall
- three (2008-10) NCAA III championships at 285-pounds
- won four WIAC titles

**Steve Fleis**, '74, owner of Fleis Insurance Agency in Onalaska, Donald Gordon Merit Award

- graduated from Onalaska High School, 1968; U.S. Navy, 1970
- bachelor's degree in business administration
- involved in the insurance business since 1974

**Angie Riedel** (2003-07) tennis

- named to WIAC All-Time Women's Tennis Team
- won three WIAC titles at No. 1 singles (2004-06), one of two in league history to capture at least three No. 1 single crowns
- won pair of conference championships at No. 1 doubles

**Brianne (Stankus) Marcum** (2006-09) volleyball

- second in school history in kills (1,521) and hitting attempts (4,256)
- named to WIAC All-Time Team
- Two-time AVCA All-American

**David Johnson**, '92 (2000-present) Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations

- responsible for every aspect of athletic program's media relations strategy
- media coordinator at several national championship events at UWL
- chair of the WIAC Sports Information Directors Committee

**Chelsea (Hoff) Endres**  
(2007-10) Swimming & diving

- finalist for the 2010 NCAA Woman of the Year
- 18 career NCAA III All-American honors
- named to WIAC All-Time Team; won 9 individual conference titles

**Maggie May**, accepting for **Ashton May** (2006-10)  
Track & field, honored posthumously

- 10 NCAA III All-America awards
- 2010 WIAC Outdoor Field Performer of the Meet
- earned 10 All-WIAC honors

Not attending—**Jenny (Fiedler) Davenport**  
(1996-2000) cross country and track & field

- WIAC All-Time Cross Country Team
- three NCAA III All-American honors; placed eighth in 1999
- won 1999 WIAC Cross Country individual title



The Wall pays tribute to former athletes, coaches and staff for exceptional ability and enhancement of school tradition. The Merit Award honors UWL friends who have actively supported intercollegiate athletic programs and activities.

**For more information about the recipients and their athletic careers see: [uwlax.edu/news/posts/wall-of-fame-inductees](http://uwlax.edu/news/posts/wall-of-fame-inductees)**

# COULEE CONSTRUCTION

## Building Champions Kid's Coulee Project



UWL Athletics has joined the City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department and 15 area businesses to upgrade Kids Coulee in Myrick Park. The Building Champions Kids Coulee Project groundbreaking was held at the site in August. The program's first phase includes playground restoration, with the second and third phases adding amenities. It's the second Building Champions project among UWL, the city and local builders. The Building Champions Trail in Hixon Forest opened in 2017.

## ATHLETICS NEWS

### GOAL! SUPPORT BUILDING DEDICATED

Chancellor Joe Gow cuts the ribbon on the new Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex Soccer/Lacrosse Support Building Sept. 17 during a halftime ceremony of the Eagles' 4-3 soccer win over Wheaton College. On the west side of the field, the building includes a press box, officials room, team meeting rooms, restrooms, equipment storage and a first aid/training room. Soccer started playing on the artificial turf in 2017. Lacrosse played its first home game in 2020, its first year as a varsity sport.



### ASTUTE ATHLETES

UWL student-athletes earned the 2021-22 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference All-Academic Award. It's presented to institutions with a GPA of its student-athletes that is equal to, or greater than, the GPA of the overall student body. UWL student-athletes compiled a 3.299

cumulative GPA, beat the overall student body at 3.260. It's the 20th time in the last 21 years UWL student-athletes bested the overall student body GPA.



## '22 FALL TEAM FINISHES

TEAM	WIAC FINISH	NCAA III FINISH
WOMEN'S GOLF	2ND	---
WOMEN'S TENNIS	4TH	---
WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	1ST	15TH
MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	1ST	8TH
SOCCER	1ST	NCAA III 3RD ROUND
VOLLEYBALL	TIED 7TH	---
FOOTBALL	TIED 1ST	NCAA III 1ST ROUND

# FACULTY FAVES

JASON  
SUMONTHA

Assistant Professor, Psychology | Began at UWL: 2019

2022 Eagle Teaching Excellence Award

Major in college: Psychology

- Favorite class to teach:** PSY 495 Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice. It was a senior seminar course with about 14 students. For their final project, students made educational games that taught others about the juvenile justice system and the experiences of youth in it. On the last day of class students played their games with faculty and staff—teaching about what they learned. Everyone loved it. It was a super fun, and I was so proud of my students and what they made.
- Favorite class in college:** Cross-Cultural Psychology because I felt like I could see myself in psychology for the first time.
- Class you'd like to retake:** My first graduate statistics course because I hated learning R (a coding language) and that's how we learned statistics in grad school. Now I really love this skill and programming in R is less of a nightmare and more a fun puzzle. I feel I could learn even more going back.
- Favorite spot at UWL:** 100% — Global Grounds Coffee. It's a chill vibe for meetings, holding office hours, working and just relaxing. I try to hold as many meetings as I can there!
- Favorite pastime when not working:** Playing Dungeons and Dragons. It's a collaborative storytelling game that lets you exercise creativity and imagination in ways you normally don't get to in everyday life!
- Favorite place to visit:** Any museum. They are amazing places filled with rich history and incredible knowledge. There's something that just fills the soul as you walk through exhibits and slowly take time to read and learn.





From left, Avery Frankl, Gretta Kraus and Samantha Meister are UWL's inaugural Community Engaged Fellows.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGED FELLOWSHIPS

They're a win-win for students, nonprofits

**A**s a senior management major, Avery Frankl is getting a solid education.

However, Frankl knows that not everything can be learned in class.

That's why she jumped at participating in UWL's new Community Engaged Fellowship program, which provides students with high-impact learning opportunities at local nonprofit organizations.

"Whereas topics learned in the classroom seem to be an overview, during my fellowship I have been able to get hands-on experience with different processes, forms of communication and more," says Frankl, who started her internship with WisCorps last summer. "I now have a better understanding of how to apply and implement what I have learned in a more hypothetical setting to real-world situations and scenarios."

Frankl is one of three inaugural Community Engaged Fellows. Marketing major Samantha Meister also interns with WisCorps, while psychology and Spanish major Gretta Kraus is with the La Crosse Community Foundation.

While the fellowships differ in focus, each student worked at least 30 hours a week during summer. They worked about 10 hours a week in fall and in spring each receive a \$12,000 stipend.

The Community Engaged Fellowship program is funded by Professor Emeritus Ron Rada and his wife, Jane. Recently, Mike McGinley '82, and his wife, Kathi, joined to support the program.



Find out more: [uwlax.edu/  
community/fellowship](http://uwlax.edu/community/fellowship)

# ONE (SUCCESSFUL) DAY FOR UWL

Third-annual giving day  
sets donors, dollars records

**T**wo thousand donors contributed more than \$355,000 during One Day for UWL Oct. 18 and 19, – the university’s most successful giving day yet.

Alumni, employees, students and friends of UWL teamed up to support a variety of campus causes: scholarships, research, academic programming, athletics and more.

In 24 hours, UWL had comfortably eclipsed its two previous giving days, both in number of donors and dollars raised.

“I think it went really, really well,” says Taylor Wilmoth, assistant director for strategic engagement. “We smashed our goal of 1,400 donors, which was incredible. And we had a great celebration and presence on campus, which was really exciting.”

The 2,005 donors came from 39 states and all walks of life. The largest donor demographic was parents and families, followed by alumni, employees, students and friends.

After pandemic-adapted festivities in 2020 and 2021, this year’s event had a larger in-person component. Activities included a UWL “Cash Cab” trivia game, lunch on the Wittich Hall lawn, and an evening reception at the Cleary Alumni & Friends Center.

“It’s been my dream to have a presence on campus, especially for students, and we were finally able to do that,” Wilmoth says. “Students are our future donors, and we were really able to educate them about the importance of philanthropy.”

While One Day for UWL comes and goes in 24 hours, its impact is year-round. Things that make UWL so special, says UWL Foundation President Greg Reichert, would not be possible without philanthropy.



*Students took part in One Day for UWL in October. “Students are our future donors, and we were really able to educate them about the importance of philanthropy,” says Taylor Wilmoth, assistant director for strategic engagement.*

“One Day for UWL makes a huge impact, and we are so grateful to each donor for playing a part,” Reichert says. “Donors’ collective giving power makes it possible for UWL to provide an outstanding experience – one where students become well-rounded citizens, learn new fields of study, and engage in top-notch programs and services.”

# It all starts here.

## Then, Wisconsin benefits.



**W**isconsin's top-notch students deserve to learn in top-notch labs and classrooms.

Top-notch faculty deserve to teach in a top-notch facility.

That's the perfect prescription for success at UWL – allowing us to better train the next generation of Wisconsin educators, health care workers and STEM professionals.

And a key to continued success is completing the university's new science complex – replacing the outdated Cowley Hall, whose learning spaces are much worse than any of the state's 673 public high schools.

When the Prairie Springs Science Center opened in fall 2018, students and faculty alike praised the building's state-of-the-art laboratories that enhanced science learning. Now, the Prairie Springs Science Center Completion and Cowley Hall Demolition Project is needed to complete the complex, creating active learning and innovative instructional

spaces, along with faculty advising areas – all free from mold and Wisconsin's weather.

Alumni know why it's important. They speak highly of their "La Crosse Experience." They know where and how they learn was key.

Faculty and administrators continue to modify and update ways students learn – from classrooms on campus conducive for group study to those out in the field that make them career ready when they join Wisconsin's workforce.

A recent Memorandum of Understanding with J.F. Brennan Company, for instance, strengthens research, curriculum and the company's talent pipeline.

It's all adding up to more graduates heading out into the state's vast health and science businesses and organizations. And around 87% of College of Science and Health graduates each year stay in the Badger state.

That's how Wisconsin benefits.

**WANT TO HELP? FIND OUT HOW AT: [UWLAX.EDU/CAMPAIGN/PSSC](https://uwlax.edu/campaign/pssc)**



# Just what the doctor ordered

Mayo's Dr. Paul Molling calls UWLa education key to his success

**A**s a family medicine physician at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse, Dr. Paul Molling has cared for generations of local families.

He has seen the miracle of birth, the inevitability of death and every stage of life in between.

And for Molling, it all started at UW-La Crosse.

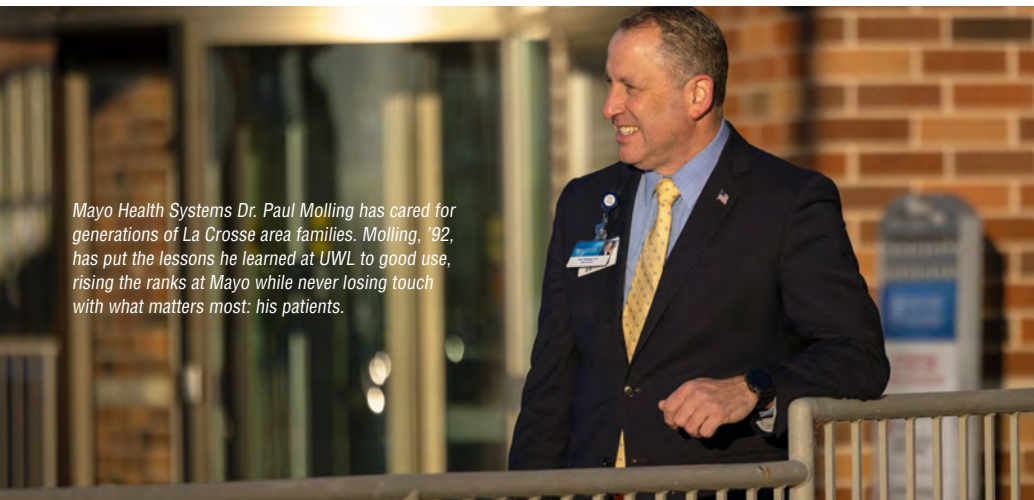
"UWL was known for having a strong science program, and as a local kid, that's where I ended up," says Molling, '92 (chemistry and microbiology). "I can say that all the faculty in

the Chemistry and Biology and Microbiology departments – they were second to none. They really took a vested interest in the students and pushed you to do your best. They more or less became your friends, and to this day, we still catch up when we run into each other."

Over the past 25 years, Molling has put the lessons he learned at UWL to good use, rising the ranks at Mayo while never losing touch with what matters most: his patients.

In addition to his work as a physician, Molling holds several leadership roles with Mayo –

*Continued on next page*



*Mayo Health Systems Dr. Paul Molling has cared for generations of La Crosse area families. Molling, '92, has put the lessons he learned at UWLa to good use, rising the ranks at Mayo while never losing touch with what matters most: his patients.*



including medical director for the Primary Care North Division, physician recruitment leader for southwestern Wisconsin and chair of the Southwestern Wisconsin Primary Care Independent Multidisciplinary Program.

Since 2018, he has also taught the next generation of health care professionals as an assistant professor of family medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science.

"In order to be a good leader, I've always believed that you need to keep that patient contact," Molling explains. "That's why we do what we do, and as I've gotten into more administrative work, I've always tried to remember that. As a physician, you care for people from 0 to 100, from A to Z. Meeting with patients is what keeps me humble and grounded."

Across a quarter century, Molling has seen health care evolve and transform – from the emergence of telehealth to the proliferation of life-saving technology, such as medical imaging.

He also helped guide Mayo and the broader La Crosse community through the COVID-19

pandemic, leading efforts to establish drive-thru testing and vaccination programs in southwestern Wisconsin.

"I may have helped lead these initiatives," Molling notes, "but the most important thing is building good teams and support systems around you."

Personally and professionally, Molling maintains close ties to UWL. He has played a key role in several UWL-Mayo initiatives, including creation of a research partnership in 2019 and Mayo's new role as service provider at the UWL Student Health Center.

Molling is also an advocate for UWL's most pressing capital need: the Prairie Springs Science Center Completion and Cowley Hall Demolition Project.


The new building would house state-of-the-art classrooms, specialized learning spaces, faculty advising offices, and more. These facilities are critical to the quality of science education at UWL and the future of STEM-related industries throughout Wisconsin.

"I grew up in Cowley Hall, spent a lot of time there," Molling says. "But like all buildings, it served its purpose and is at the end of its time."

With world-class education, health care and recreational opportunities, La Crosse is an excellent place for young professionals to put down roots and raise a family, Molling says.

It's part of the reason he returned to La Crosse after medical school and has never left.

"What a great community we have here, with so many great opportunities and people," Molling says. "The fact that I can be a family physician – this amazing career where I get to help individuals – is special. I've been so fortunate, and I'm really grateful for that."



Sara Frank, '17, a physical therapy assistant with Gundersen Health System's Sparta Clinic, is bummed she missed an opportunity to study and conduct research in the new state-of-the-art laboratory building.

# Compelling case

## Alum shares story of science classroom need

**S**ara Frank doesn't have to be convinced that a new science classroom building needs to be built to replace Cowley Hall. She knows it.

Frank, a physical therapy assistant with Gundersen Health System's Sparta Clinic, took an anatomy and physiology class in the metal "shed" outside of Cowley because the science student population had burst at its seams.

Back in Cowley, Frank recalls trying to maneuver the building when a mass of people standing outside one of the large lecture halls by the main entrance doors caused crowd control problems. Then there were the HVAC issues in the nearly 60-year-old building.

"It was always a toss-up if you'd be freezing or sweating depending on the classroom," Frank explains. "The classrooms were dated and then retrofitted to have updated technology, which still got in the way and never looked quite right."

Frank, '17, an exercise science pre-PT major and Spanish minor, was bummed she missed studying and researching in the new state-of-the-art laboratory building, which opened as Prairie Springs Science Center in fall 2018.

"I was jealous of the younger students who were able to utilize the new Prairie Springs Science Center as Cowley was somewhat unpleasant to have class in," she says. "Some of my friends showed me pictures of the inside of the new building after I had graduated, and it looked beautiful."

Frank says despite Cowley Hall's deficiencies, faculty went the extra mile to work around them. Assistant Professor Naghmeh Gheidi helped her with research — always pushing Frank to dream bigger.

"She saw my worth as a professional before I even did and pushed me to think outside of the box," notes Frank.

On campus, she developed soft skills, as well as hard skills across many formats — solo, group and presentation-style work.

"I have used my learned critical thinking skills that I developed at UWL to help me truly understand the 'why' behind what I try to accomplish each day with my patients and coworkers," Frank says. "I have also utilized my communication skills by presenting new research to my peers, explaining complicated topics to my patients and developing my professional relationships inside and outside of my workplace."

Confidence in those skills set her off on a journey that could have gone anywhere. But Frank chose to stay in Wisconsin.

"I felt like I could support myself comfortably, enjoy a great lifestyle, afford to travel and explore, and start a family in a safe and community-driven location," the West Salem native says.

*Continued on next page*

# POWERFUL PARTNERS

## Brennan agreement strengthens college experience

**T**he Mississippi River has become much more than a recreational mecca. In October, UWL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with J.F. Brennan Company to strengthen research, curriculum and the company's talent pipeline.

The agreement gets students on the river to use technology they'll find in the workforce — and gives them an opportunity to experience what it's like to work for a company like Brennan.

"Our business, like any business, is fundamentally based on the ability to recruit, train and retain good people," says Matt Binsfeld, president and CEO of Brennan. "It's going to be a great opportunity to get the technology that we use into the hands of students."

The new public-private partnership is engineered to expand students' growth through experiential learning outside the classroom. Roger Haro, associate dean in the College of Science and Health, says students will benefit from real-world situations.

"They see how people engaged in these large projects have to be focused on effective communication, not just the technical skills in

terms of running the instrumentation," explains Haro. "But basically, how does one set those instruments up so that the job is effective, and the data is collected? They're working with people who have to problem-solve all the time, every day and in the work setting."

The partnership was expanded through the initiative of Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust and the College of Science and Health, with the assistance of the La Crosse Community Foundation. In early 2022, Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust gave the La Crosse Community Foundation \$430,000 to construct a new research vessel for UWL's River Studies Center. Brennan will provide maintenance support, storage and instrumentation expertise for the new vessel.

For many years, Brennan has opened its doors to UWL students for paid internships. In return, the company is able to recruit interns as reliable, full-time employees. The MOU further expands the partnership to provide even more job-ready employees.

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*Below: Chancellor Joe Gow, front, left, shakes hands with Matt Binsfeld, president and CEO of J.F. Brennan Company, at the company's headquarters in La Crosse.*





## Alum named top adapted PE teacher in the Midwest

**A**lum Sadie Brown, '09, is the top adapted physical education teacher in the Midwest. The National Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America) recognized the Sun Prairie Area School District teacher this spring.

"It was very humbling and unexpected," Brown says.

UWL professors and experiences inspired Brown's career choice and allowed her to hit the ground running.

"UWL was amazing in preparing me to be an educator," she explains. "I feel so lucky to have been able to attend an amazing university of high-quality professors. I was given so many opportunities to experience working with students in the real setting very early on."

In addition to teaching, Brown is a leader in and advocate for the adapted PE profession. However, her favorite moments are making differences in her students' lives.



**Sadie Brown, '09**

"I love when my students with disabilities don't feel different from their peers – when they get to play right with their peers and feel just like everyone else," she says. "I also love seeing kids grow in their skills and confidence over time. I love watching them learn to advocate for themselves as well. That is very rewarding."

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*Above: Sadie Brown, '09, the top adapted physical education teacher in the Midwest, works with a Sun Prairie Area School District student.*



# A Truman tribute

Center for the Arts named for alum, artist Truman Lowe

**A** day to remember, and to build upon.

That's how friends and family of Truman Lowe described the Oct. 3 building dedication — a chance to honor the late Ho-Chunk artist and alum, and to inspire future generations of Native American students.

The Truman T. Lowe Center for the Arts is the first campus building named after a person of color.

It's a fitting tribute to a man who avoided the limelight but knew the significance of Native representation in art, education and American life.

"Truman was very soft-spoken, unassuming and modest. He was a sculptor, but if you asked him what he did, he'd say he made sawdust," said

Jo Ortel, professor emerita of art history at Beloit College.

Ortel was close friends with Lowe and authored the book, "Woodland Reflections: The Art of Truman Lowe."

"He was also always mindful of the significant milestones for Native America ... and this most certainly marks a significant milestone," adds Ortel. "Truman would be very pleased."

Lowe, '69, experimented with art of all kinds but became widely celebrated for his large installations. These sculptures were often constructed from natural materials and explored Ho-Chunk culture through a contemporary lens.

Lowe's art was displayed in major galleries around the world. In 1998, his

*Left: Friends and family of the late Truman Lowe gathered on campus Oct. 3, as the university dedicated the Center for the Arts in his honor. While Lowe often avoided the limelight, those who knew him say he would have considered the dedication a significant milestone for Native America.*

sculpture “Bird E gy” was selected for a yearlong exhibit at the White House.

At UW-Madison, Lowe shared his gifts with thousands of aspiring artists. He spent 30 years in the Art Department – serving as chair from 1992-95 – and was the coordinator of the university’s Native American Studies Program.

Lowe had a keen artistic eye and a deep knowledge of art history.

In 2000, these qualification helped him become the curator of contemporary art for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. – a position he held until 2008.

While Lowe’s talent carried him to high places, he came from humble beginnings.

He grew up in Black River Falls – poor in material possessions but rich in familial bonds and Ho-Chunk tradition. He was groomed from an early age to be the family’s first o attend college.

“My dad was a baby, but they decided he would be the one to go to college – the only person who didn’t have a say in it,” joked Tonia Lowe, Truman’s daughter. “It’s funny how it happened, but what a difference it makes growing up knowing you should go to college.”

Lowe’s path was riddled with challenges. He changed majors and briefly dropped out to work and save money. It took him seven years to complete his degree.



*The dedication began with traditional Ho-Chunk music from the Thundercloud Singers.*

Those experiences illustrated Lowe’s perseverance – they also showed him the importance of supporting students through difficult times.

“He took those lessons of how important encouraging words were ... and turned it into a superpower,” Tonia said. “He knew the exact right thing to say at the exact right time.”

Ryan John Crain Sr., ’18, a demonstration grant administrator with the Ho-Chunk Nation, called Lowe an inspiration.

“A life of service has created a domino effect that will inspire indigenous youth for years to come,” Crain said. “Truman’s name being placed on the front of this building is historic. Representation matters.”

The ceremony began with a blessing from Ho-Chunk Nation Traditional Chief Clayton Winneshiek and Ho-Chunk music from the Thundercloud Singers. It ended with a signage unveiling and reception.

Lowe’s family also announced the Truman T. Lowe Scholarship for Native American Students, launching in 2023.

Renowned hypnotist  
Chris Jones got his  
start here

# MAGIC

**C**hris Jones remembers one of his first times performing in front of an audience.

It was the mid-2000s, and he was representing the now-defunct Baird Hall in the Mr. UW-La Crosse competition.

His mind-reading trick failed. His card trick flopped. Then it was time for his final act: levitation.

"I tried to levitate a woman's driver's license, and I did," Jones, '08, recalls. "Unfortunately, with the spotlight, everyone could see the shadow of the string."

From inauspicious beginnings, Jones applied himself and slowly but surely learned to captivate. Today, he is a world-renowned hypnotist and comedian with his own prank show, "Double Take," on Facebook Watch.

"Life is fascinating to me," says Jones, reflecting on his career. "With hypnosis, you can't really practice.



# MAN

create a scholarship for underrepresented students.

The scholarship honors Ron Rochon, a former UWL faculty member and mentor to Jones.

Jones, who majored in sociology, didn't set out to be a hypnotist. He was inspired after seeing hypnotist Fred Winters perform at Cartwright Center.

After college, Jones did shows all over the U.S.

There were nights he failed to hypnotize anyone.

And there were nights he was almost too effective.

"Once, I was driving back from a show, and I got a phone call," he recalls. "Someone was still a little bit hypnotized. I had to get them on speaker phone and guide them out of it."

In 2015, Jones received a phone call that changed his life.

"America's Got Talent," one of NBC's most popular

You can try practicing with a friend, but you're always going to wonder: 'Did I really hypnotize you? Or were you just pretending?' The only way to get better is to go out and do it."

Over the past decade, Jones has done exactly that, reaching a level of success many entertainers only dream about.

All that time on the road has afforded Jones the luxury of spending more time with his family, while doing fewer shows and focusing on bigger projects. It has also allowed him to give back — in the form of a \$10,000 donation to the UWL Foundation to





*Chris Jones, '08, has become a nationally known hypnotist.*

programs, wanted to feature a hypnotist.

"I didn't watch the show, but I knew Howie Mandel was one of the judges, and he is famously afraid of germs," Jones remembers. "I thought, 'OK, I'll hypnotize him, and I'll get him to shake my hand.'"

During his audition, Jones used several techniques, including turning back an invisible clock, to hypnotize Mandel. Eventually, Jones convinced Mandel to shake not only his hand — but hands of fellow judges Howard Stern, Heidi Klum and Mel B.

While Jones was ultimately eliminated during judge cuts,

his viral performance was a major boost.

He was able to raise his rates. He was invited to perform at bigger venues and overseas. And he was offered a show on Facebook Watch, in which he demonstrated the power of hypnotism by working with celebrities such as John Cena, Pamela Anderson and Gabriel Iglesias.

Jones uses his platform not just to share his passion for hypnotism, but to be a positive role model.

If he could hypnotize humanity and issue one command, he says, he would tell people to travel the world

and experience different cultures.

He established the scholarship for a similar purpose: enriching lives through education.

"I want to support students who will get their education and go on to help people," Jones says. "It's like an elevator. Once you make it up, it should go back down for the next person."



**See more:**  
[hypnotistchrisjones.com](http://hypnotistchrisjones.com)

Paige Forde, '19, and her Kwik Trip social media team have quickly become a stand out, witty voice of the La Crosse-based company.

1



2



# KWIK QUIPS

Alum Paige Forde shares some of Kwik Trip's popular social media posts

**F**rom witty one-liners to comments on current events, Kwik Trip's social media account is at the top of its game.

And it's all thanks to social media supervisor Paige Forde, '19, and her team, who have worked together to establish the voice of Wisconsin's favorite convenience store.

Forde recently shared some of the company's favorite and top-performing posts. Some give a

playful nod to Midwestern quirks. Some reference current events such as traffic etiquette during COVID-19. And some poke fun at rival gas station chain QuikTrip.

Based on engagement, all struck a chord with Kwik Trip's loyal following around the Badger State and Beyond.



**See more memes at:**  
[uwlax.edu/alumni/lantern/kwik-quip](http://uwlax.edu/alumni/lantern/kwik-quip)

**1. "The Rock"**  
 3.8 million views,  
 24,000 engagements

**2. Roundabouts**  
 1.5 million views,  
 21,000 engagements

**3. Midwest words**  
 1.1 million views,  
 18,000 engagements

**4. No KT in Illinois**  
 1.3 million views,  
 19,400 engagements

3



4



# OPEN DOOR

## Sanchez's passion provides opportunity for those crossed off the list

**V**ickie Sanchez was visiting a suburban Milwaukee high school in 2006. A recruiter for UWL at the time, she remembers being handed a list of about 20 students. Sanchez was pumped to meet with such a big group, but then noticed about half the names were crossed out.

Sanchez, '07, has devoted about 15 years of her career to working in the UW System and keeping the doors of higher education open — even to students living in remote areas, struggling with academics, or lack self-confidence to imagine themselves in college.

She didn't like that the names were crossed out.

"We thought we'd save you some time," the staff person told her. "They didn't meet the profile of UWL students."

Direct, but professional, Sanchez let the counselor know she would stay an extra hour to meet with all of the students. "You cannot close a door on a student and not know their story and not know what else they have to bring," she says.

Sanchez talked to students for a long time that day, telling them if they applied UWL looks at the whole student — not just the ACT score or class rank. She told them about support programs to get more academically prepared. She told them that even if they didn't get in on their first try, they could start somewhere else and transfer.


"There will be times when people think you are not good enough and you are going to have to prove them wrong," she told the students. "I don't know you, but I was you."

Sanchez grew up in Milwaukee's northside. While her older sister had perfect grades and planned for college, Sanchez took harder courses only because her friends did. But hearing her sister's talk about college turned out to be an advantage, and Sanchez was admitted to Winona State University.


There she encountered new challenges like learning how to navigate as a student of color at a predominantly white institution and found pockets of support through campus involvement. After graduating, she entered the corporate world before returning to the region in 2005 to earn a graduate degree in Student Affairs Administration from UWL and starting her higher education career. She left for UW-Stout about a year ago before returning to become UWL's Office of Multicultural Student Services interim director.

Now her work is coming full circle as she mentors UWL students. She shows them the support structures in place for them on campus, shares the advantage of having a growth mindset, and reminds them what they can achieve.

"I love what I do," she says. "It is my life's mission — working with students and being that source of support, however it may look."

A portrait of Vickie Sanchez, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a red jacket over a black and white striped turtleneck. She is looking slightly to the left with a gentle smile. The background is a blurred wall with a colorful abstract painting.

*Vickie Sanchez, '07,  
UWL interim director  
of Multicultural  
Student Services.*

A portrait of Louise Janke, a woman with short blonde hair, smiling and wearing a light blue textured blazer over a white top. She has her arms crossed and is standing outdoors with green foliage in the background.

**Louise Janke,**  
retired director  
of Financial Aid  
'84 elementary  
education  
'87 college  
student  
personnel

Louise Janke, '84 & '87, retired in December after serving 28 years in the Financial Aid Office, the last 17 as director.

# A lasting legacy

Financial head has appreciable impact over 3 decades

**S**he never set out to leave a legacy. But that's exactly what Louise Janke has done.

Empathy and compassion aren't two words most college students think of when dealing with finances. But with Janke, they did. She left that impression after serving 28 years in the Financial Aid Office, the last 17 as director, when she retired in December.

Janke led campus efforts to provide students an array of financial literacy resources, the most notable being the It Make\$ Cents program. There, students craft Christmas gifts, learn credit card pitfalls, and hear warnings about unneeded debt. The first program of its kind in the UW System, it earned citations from the state's governor three times.

Janke has been a key advocate to provide students with emergency funding when financial crises like unanticipated car repairs or family hardship knock. She also helped to spearhead an emergency resource webpage to help students maneuver financial hardships.

Janke led the initiation of the campus Scholarship Resource Center to help students navigate through an array of available scholarships and financial awards. Those garnering \$10,000 or more become members of Maroon Tycoons, a select group recognized for acquiring financial awards.

Incoming students can earn an Eagle Apprenticeship through another program Janke helped initiate. They not only get tuition money, but research experience with a faculty member.

Another undertaking Janke spearheaded is Eagles Helping Eagles, which provides students with donated new and gently used household goods, furniture and school supplies. Those needing a power suit for a job interview, or just something to wear to class, can turn to Campus Threads, an on-campus clothing closet—another project Janke participated in.

In her Midwestern humbleness, Janke is quick to point out these and other financial efforts have flourished under collaborative, team effort. And they have.

"We're really very grateful for our campus partners and for the support we have received from our administrators to get these initiatives off the ground," she says.

But, Janke's leadership is behind all of them. And her giving didn't stop there. She also created the Larson Family Scholarship, an endowment honoring her family that awards \$1,000 to a first-year student that can be renewed for four years.

That's empathy. That's compassion. That's a legacy. That's Louise Janke.

 **Create your own legacy**  
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