

# The Art of Giving

When John Magerus came home to Oklahoma City from grad school, he walked into an empty room. His parents had given away all of his bedroom furniture to a nearby family who had lost their belongings in a tornado.

That was his parents' style. They saw a need and if they could help, they did.

That's just what Magerus did when he retired as CLS dean in 2004. As leader of one of the university's younger colleges, he noticed the college's top graduate wasn't getting the same recognition as students in other colleges.

When he retired, he saw his chance to change that. Magerus didn't want a traditional retirement party, so his CLS colleagues organized a performance by faculty, staff and students. He asked friends and colleagues to attend and show appreciation by donating to a fund created to honor the top CLS graduate.



*From the CLS Dean Ruthann Benson*



## CLS: HELPING STUDENTS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

One of the primary purposes of a public university is to serve the people of the state and local community. In the College of Liberal Studies (CLS), we take this purpose to heart as our faculty and staff offer learning opportunities to students that will provide a foundation for their life-long learning and professional success.

Barbara McClure White, the first woman ambassador to the United Nations from the U.S., stated “The basic purpose of a liberal arts education is to liberate the human being to exercise his or her potential to the fullest.” Our goal is to work with students so that they are knowledgeable, creative and globally competent — qualities that will help assist them in achieving their personal and professional potential.

One of the ways we measure our success is through the achievements of our alumni. The students who graduate from departments in the CLS exercise their potential, in part, through their professional accomplishments. Our students go on to follow their passions and have successful careers in fields such as business, education, politics, social services, the arts and more.

In this issue of the Capstone, we are initiating a new feature that will introduce you to some of our alumni. In our “Capstone Comments” alumni share their thoughts about memorable experiences at UW-L and how their education in the liberal studies helped them with their current jobs and life goals.

We continue to appreciate the generosity of our alumni, faculty, staff, and students as they share their experiences and perspectives. If you have a story you’d like to share, please contact Associate Dean Julia Johnson at [jjohnson2@uwlax.edu](mailto:jjohnson2@uwlax.edu).

Sincerely,

*Ruthann E. Benson*

# CAPSTONE

INSPIRING | ACHIEVING | UNITING

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The Capstone is published biannually for UW-La Crosse College of Liberal Studies alumni and friends. Send comments to: Associate Dean Julia Johnson, UW-L College of Liberal Studies, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601, or 608.785.8113 or [jjohnson2@uwlax.edu](mailto:jjohnson2@uwlax.edu).

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- [www.uwlalumni.org](http://www.uwlalumni.org)
- UW-La Crosse Alumni Association, Cleary Alumni & Friends Center, 615 East Ave. N., La Crosse, WI 54601



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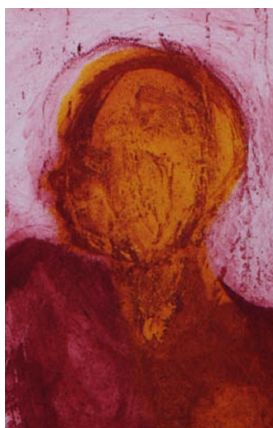
# Features



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## *Clothing Diva*

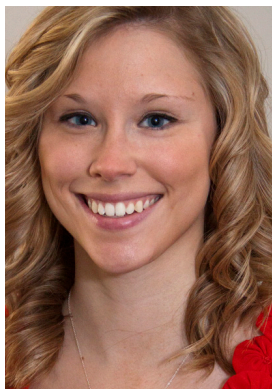
Find out how Michele (Graf) Billingsley, '97, became a clothing diva for families facing hard times in Milwaukee.



.....10.....➤

## *An Irish Impetus*

Professor Joel Elgin explores his Irish ancestry in etchings.



.....12.....➤

## *That's Excellent!*

This year's top CLS graduate shares how UW-L became her home away from home.



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## *Encore Cast*

Randy Meier, '84, is back on the air anchoring a major Twin Cities TV station newscast. Find out what keeps bringing him back to the studio.

## Retired CLS Dean John Magerus' generosity is a legacy

# The Art of Giving

They responded and Magerus added to the fund to endow it, creating the John E. Magerus Award for the Outstanding Graduating Senior from the College of Liberal Studies. Colleagues insisted on the award's name, but a humble Magerus thought it was too much. "I'm somewhat embarrassed it has this long title," he says.

Magerus is proud the award is given for more than academics. Service to the university and community are key. Those criteria fit well with the values of his parents. "They were incredibly generous," he notes.

Magerus' parents grew up on Oklahoma farms. His dad was a factory worker, while his mom worked raising the family. "They were ordinary, hard-working people," he explains.

To honor them, Magerus and his sisters established an Oklahoma City Community Foundation endowment to fund projects dear to them. Since 2000, the award has helped children and homeless people.

Magerus' generosity didn't stop there. He established other endowments with community foundations in La Crosse and Racine, where he lives part of the year. The awards fund diversity and multicultural efforts in La Crosse, and arts and education in Racine.

Magerus is a member of the UW-L Foundation Legacy Guild, which recognizes those who have made planned and estate gifts to the university. Magerus says it's the least he could do to honor the place where he spent much of his life.

"The university was a good place for me. I enjoyed my time there," he explains. "It's just a continuation of giving that everyone should undertake. Besides, I've never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse."

Magerus encourages others to give too. When he gives gifts to nieces and nephews, it's with an understanding that they give at least 10 percent of it away. "All of us have more stuff than we need," he notes. "It feels good to give back."

### THE TEACHING ADMINISTRATOR

John Magerus always wanted to be a teacher. He never thought he would become an administrator.

Magerus came to UW-L in 1976 at the urging of Mary Gayle Pifer, a fellow University



of Kansas colleague, to teach French. Just over a decade later, he began chairing the department. It was the initial step for 15 years as an administrator.

“The wonderful thing about being an administrator is that it opens up the richness of the university to you,” Magerus explains. “You realize the wealth of talent and what people are doing. It provides a new spectrum that’s so rich.”

But Magerus stuck to his roots. He taught at least one course a year — even taking on a new course the year he retired.

“To me, teaching was an important part of my life,” he says. “If I hadn’t done that, I couldn’t have been a good administrator.”

## *The John Magerus File:*

- Earned a bachelor’s in French, magna cum laude, Oklahoma City University, 1965; master’s (1971) and doctorate (1978) in French, University of Kansas.
- U.S. Army, 1967-69.
- Fulbright Fellow to France, 1970-71.
- Joined UW-L faculty in 1976 as a lecturer in French in the Modern Languages Department (formerly Foreign Languages Department). Also taught courses in women’s studies and international education.
- Chair, Modern Languages Department, 1989-92.
- Interim Director of International Education, 1992-93.
- Interim Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Studies, 1994-96.
- Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Studies, 1997-98. Named dean, 1998; retired, 2004.
- Member of numerous campus and community committees.
- Established the John E. Magerus Award for the Outstanding Graduating Senior from the College of Liberal Studies, 2005.

# ETHNIC AND RACIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT HAS COMPLEX HISTORY

In the late '60s only one course on campus about Ethnic and Racial Studies was being taught – English Professor Jim Lafky's "African American Authors." The world was changing – and UW-L had to become more inclusive to prepare students.

"We thought the almost perfect campus would include an ethnic studies major and department," recalls History Professor Emeritus Jim Parker.

That would take time. In 1972 the Institute for Minority studies was formed and included multicultural programming and academic offerings. But it wasn't until 2000 when ethnic studies minor became a reality. And on March 22, 2012, the ethnic and racial studies became a department.

## STUDENTS EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER A MORE DIVERSE FUTURE

As the U.S. has become more diverse since the '70s, each new generation of students realizes the growing need to expand what they know about various cultures. "There is a demand by students for this curriculum as they realize how important this knowledge is going to be to their careers," explains Carol Oyster, ERS Department Chair.

A recent survey conducted by the department with local employers shows that regardless of a student's major they will be asked questions about their knowledge of cultural diversity in job interviews. "Anyone who will work with people will need to be able to deal with those who are unlike themselves as the diversity in the American population continues to increase," notes Oyster.

Since fall 2009, the ERS minor has seen an increase in students jumping from 18 to 52 students. Oyster says now that the department is established, expanding the program to offer a major will be considered in the near future.

## COLLABORATION REACHES ACROSS COLLEGE

Associate Professor Sarah Shillinger has been involved with establishing the department since 1995. "I have felt honored to be in on the ground floor of the creation of a new

department here at UW-L," she says.

Shillinger says ERS department faculty have been involved in cross listing courses with a number of other departments including History, Sociology and Philosophy. "We have also worked closely with the Office of Multicultural Student Services to enrich non-white students experience on campus," she notes. "UW-L has worked very hard over the last decade and a half to become more diverse and welcoming and the creation of the ERS department is part of that movement."

Students can discover ethnic experiences in a number of ERS courses. Among them: "Introduction to Ethnic and Racial Studies," "Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes in the Media," "Introduction to Wisconsin Indians" and "Ethnic and Racial Relations."

This fall, the department has welcomed a full-time assistant professor, Richard Breaux. His teaching and research interests include: 19th and 20th Century African American Social History; Black Intellectual and Cultural Studies; History of Black Womanhood and Manhood; History of the Civil Rights Movement; Black Migration and Community Formation; History of African American Education; African American Urban History; Comparative History: African American and South African; and Hip Hop and the Politics of Black Popular History.



Click above to watch the video about Ethnic and Racial Studies.

## ERS Department Staff:

- Carol Oyster, Department Chair, Professor
- Richard Breaux, Assistant Professor
- Sarah Shillinger, Associate Professor
- Audrey Mouser Elegbede, Lecturer

[www.uwlax.edu/EthnicStudies](http://www.uwlax.edu/EthnicStudies)

Retired faculty who planted the seeds for an Ethnic and Racial Studies Department decades ago joined current staff in April to celebrate the official formation of the department. Among those attending were, from left, Sarah Shillinger, Audrey Mouser Elegbede, Carl Wimberly, Bruce Mouser, Carol Oyster, Jonathan Majak, Jim Parker, Bob Treu and Marty Zanger.



# UNIVERSITY IS THE LAB FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

UW-L Graduate Student Richard Anderson owes his undergraduate degree to an academic adviser. The adviser prevented him from dropping out, along with developing a four-year grad plan.

“That person quite literally changed my life, and I would love the opportunity to do the same for other students,” he explains.

That’s part of the reason Anderson applied to UW-L’s Student Affairs Administration Program, which prepares students to work in student affairs positions in higher education.

Founded in 1968, it’s the oldest graduate program on campus and it’s growing. The program became a department in late 2011 and enrollment continues to grow — particularly for the online program. Last year, 36 students took the program on campus; 54 were online.

Unlike many other graduate programs, SAA isn’t connected to specific undergraduate degrees. Majors of current students range from music to pre-med. Students study the gambit from the history of the field, administration, leadership, theoretical foundations, diversity, research design, technology, finance and governance, legal issues, and counseling. They have a minimum of a 20-hour assistantship and a 140-hour internship.

Most SAA instructors work in student affairs on campus and share real-world experience. “The university is their laboratory,” explains Jodie Rindt, SAA department chair.

“That makes the department distinct,” says Assistant Professor Jörg Vianden. “The strength of the department is the practice-oriented approach to student affairs work with a total of 13 faculty, 10 of whom are leading higher education and student affairs practitioners at UW-L,” explains Vianden. “The key here is that these folks can teach our students using the daily situations they encounter. At other institutions students in our discipline are taught by researchers who have perhaps heard of such situations, but have not experienced them in the depth our faculty have.”

While graduates work across the U.S., more than 30 have stayed on campus. Among them: Corey Sjoquist, Admissions; Will Van Roosenbeek, Pride Center; and Jan Von Ruden, Records and Registration.



Richard Anderson graduated in May following his thesis on “Becoming Men: How Gay and Bisexual College Males Navigate Masculinity on Campus.” He is currently area coordinator for Residential Education at the University of New England in Maine.

## *SAA graduates work in ...*

- residence life
- international education
- career services
- academic advising
- admissions
- other student services

[www.uwlax.edu/saa](http://www.uwlax.edu/saa)

Billingsley, '97, was a social work major, women's studies and sociology minor when she started helping women find clothing to wear to work. Billingsley is now director of DIVA/DIVO in Milwaukee.

Image courtesy of Info Magazine



# CLOTHING *Diwa*

“Diva/Divo – at Christ Church, 915 E. Oklahoma Ave., Milwaukee – looks like a boutique and all clients are treated with respect and dignity,” explains Billingsley. “It is a feel good time after all their hard work and we encourage them to feel positive about what lies ahead.”

[Learn more at divadivo.org](http://divadivo.org)

**M**ichele (Graf) Billingsley, '97, has spent more than 15 years helping people in poverty find the clothing and confidence needed to re-enter the workforce.

As a student in 1996, she launched The Woman's Clothes Closet, which provides free, gently used clothing to low-income women, especially those entering or in the workforce. Her interest was sparked after she met a woman on a community committee who asked if anyone had something to wear to a job interview.

“We realized this was an immediate need that hadn't been considered,” recalls

Billingsley. The Woman's Clothes Closet is still located at Our Savior's Lutheran Church on Division Street in La Crosse.

When Billingsley moved to Milwaukee in 2000, she noticed a similar need and started another. First, she started a clothes closet in Milwaukee under the umbrella of the Squirm Foundation's 501c3. Then, in 2004, she became director of Meta House's closet called DIVA. She expanded it from a service exclusively for Meta House clients to a service for women in the community participating in job-readiness programs.

DIVA has continued to expand, providing free work-appropriate clothing, mentoring

programs and other employment-related resources. It now includes men's clothing with the name DIVA/DIVO.

The organization has established itself as a final step in the job readiness programs in Milwaukee, says Billingsley. However, during the economic recession, DIVA/DIVO lost its funding. Billingsley, a social worker by day, has run the organization voluntarily for the last two years. She is now in the process of applying for 501©3 status once again.

“Community organization and helping families in poverty is my passion,” she says.



# LONDON IN SPRINGTIME

**T**wenty students from English, theatre arts and archaeology classes spent spring break in London. They took part in the annual program that uses London as a stage for CLS classes during spring break.

Archaeology Professor Joe Tiffany has taken students to London three times. He focuses on archaeological sites from the Stone, Bronze and Iron ages, as well as Roman and Medieval stops.

“Students get to see the sites and artifacts we discuss in our classes such as Stonehenge, Avebury, Old Sarum, and Salisbury Cathedral,” notes Tiffany. “The tour provides students with many opportunities to explore and experience London and the English countryside packed into a 10-day tour.”

The tour also incorporates culture. “The primary objective for the London study portion was to bring Shakespeare’s literature, history and culture to life so students could gain a deeper and more nuanced

appreciation of what they were studying in class,” explains Assistant Professor of English Natalie Eschenbaum.

The group took a walking tour of Shakespeare’s London, along with taking in Shakespearean-influenced theatre and visiting his birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. Students were in awe and loved the trip, reports Eschenbaum.

“A number of them were shocked — in a good way — to attend a Shakespeare performance that involved food fights with the audience and had them laughing out loud during the fantastic Lyric Hammersmith’s production of ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream,’” she reports. “They discovered just how alive, current and entertaining Shakespeare can be.”

Eschenbaum noticed a student’s jaw drop while touring Anne Hathaway’s cottage and being told the group was standing next to a bench Shakespeare sat on while courting Hathaway. “That’s good stuff,” she notes.



# An Irish Impetus

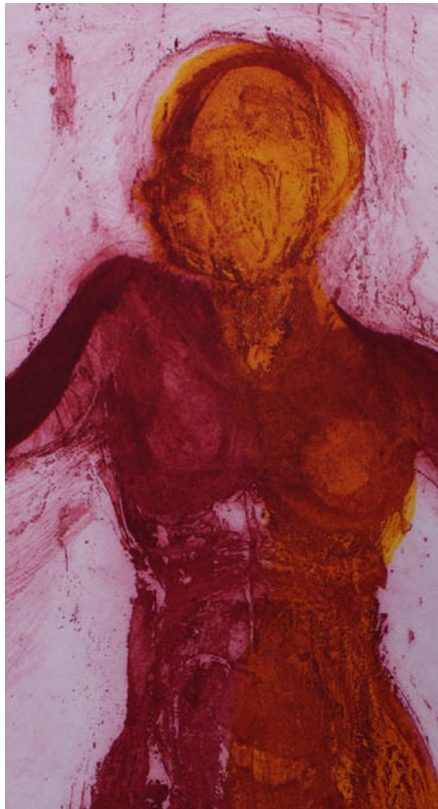
Prof's prints inspired by Irish myths, legends



Professor Joel Elgin, center, met with Irish dignitaries, Irish Ambassador to Poland Declan O'Donovan, left, and Ireland's Minister for Social Protection Éamon Ó Cuív, at the opening reception for his art in Warsaw, Poland, in March 2010. Elgin's etchings have been the focal point of exhibitions at galleries in Serbia, Turkey, Greece, Malaysia, Poland, Ireland and Mexico during the last four years. This fall he will exhibit in Finland. He is finalizing future exhibits in Slovenia and Croatia.

Joel Elgin's exploration of his Irish ancestry has led to exhibitions featuring his artwork around the world. The professor of printmaking and drawing at UW-L produces etchings based on Ireland's ancient sites and legends — a motivation that stems from his Irish roots.

Elgin says the Irish myths and legends inspire a physical exploration of the specific sites and the creation of a new print. He has worked closely with the Irish government and, as a result, is one of the few people who has been allowed access to all of the passages of Ireland's most ancient monuments at Brú Na Bóinne. Brú Na Bóinne pre-dates both the Great Pyramids and Stonehenge and is the epicenter of much of Ireland's lore.



Joel Elgin | Tuatha Dé Danann 1 | detail

See more of Elgin's work at:  
[www.olsonlarsen.com](http://www.olsonlarsen.com)  
[www.gracechosygallery.com](http://www.gracechosygallery.com)



## COREY SJOQUIST '96 & '03

UW-L Director of Admissions  
Major/minor: Bachelor's: Mass  
Communications/Political Science;  
Master's: College Student Development  
and Administration

"My liberal studies education was valuable immediately in my first job as an admissions counselor, which required me to communicate with prospective students and families in many ways. My experiences in college certainly helped me develop the strong presentation skills I use nearly every day. I also attribute my ability to work effectively with individuals from different backgrounds and with a variety of perspectives to my liberal studies education."

# UW SYSTEM HONORS

## Professor earns women of color award



Lalita Pandit Hogan, English, with UW-L Chancellor Joe Gow after his announcement of Hogan's award during the Chancellor's All-University Address in January 2012.

Lalita Pandit Hogan, Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, is being honored with the 2012 UW System Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award. Chancellor Joe Gow announced the award during the January 2012 All-University Address. Hogan receives statewide recognition at the annual UW System Outstanding Women of Color in Education Awards ceremony at UW-Oshkosh in October.

Hogan is grateful for the system-wide honor. "As active teacher-scholars we invest incessant time and energy in trying to explore, teach, and create values and meanings," she says. "When some part of that effort is recognized, valued and given a meaning, it is very fortunate. Hence, I feel fortunate and grateful."

Each UW institution identifies at least one recipient annually. It is given to

students, faculty and staff to recognize contributions to diversity and the status of women. Recipients have consistently demonstrated ability to rally diverse forces to advance the agenda of women and have created positive changes at their institution.

Sandra Krajewski, professor emerita in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, calls Hogan a "world-class scholar" with a growing expertise in Shakespeare and ability to excite others.

"Every time Lalita stopped in my office to share her latest project, I was always impressed with her intellect, creativity and insight," says Krajewski. "It is clear to me, novice that I am about Shakespeare, that her students must benefit greatly from her careful explanations of her latest research findings."



### LUKE J. A. KONKOL, '12

Major/minor: Philosophy / Anthropology  
Adjunct Tutor Philosophy

"I will always be thankful for a newfound ability to solve pressing problems in a way which is relevant to my life. Logic, philosophy, anthropology, and liberal studies as a whole, serve one in appealing to the masses (including the job market) by learning to appreciate the perspectives of others.

"My courses have helped me to develop an aptitude for reasoning analytically, methodically, logically, synthetically, and beyond, and have afforded me the opportunity to advance a charitable faculty for grammar and vocabulary. The beauty is in an ability to mark the familiar as novel – redefining the all-too-commonly unrefined into a froth of delectable dilemmas, wittedly wonderful wisdoms and unquieted quips.

"Perhaps most importantly, a liberal studies education hones the ability to reason, analyze the relations between factors, grasp broad concepts and think with a higher purpose, as well as both quantitative- and qualitatively; the ability to communicate and be empathetic are key in 'the job search.'

"My long-term career path is to attend graduate school and teach philosophy. This is both the assumed 'natural' course for philosophy majors and the least common among them, but a liberal studies education opens doors for a much wider range of possibilities – and prepares students for what they'll find on the other side of each door."

# That's excellent!

## Grad finds home, amazing future at UW-L

May graduate Vanessa Schwartz, who earned a bachelor of arts in psychology, was this year's John Magerus Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior.



**M**ay graduate Vanessa Schwartz remembers those homesick feelings her freshman year at UW-La Crosse.

"I wanted to leave," she recalls. "I made my mom come and get me almost every weekend."

Little did the Darlington, Wis., native know she would one day become a stand-out student in psychology honors classes and winner of John Magerus Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior in the spring of her senior year.

Schwartz was recognized along with 30 other students and six faculty and staff members at a College of Liberal Studies "Recognition of Excel-

lence" Awards ceremony in April. (For faculty and staff honored, see p. 14.)

Schwartz notes her homesick feelings melted away when she started to get involved on campus. Mentors such as Psychology Professor Bianca Basten encouraged her to explore her many questions.

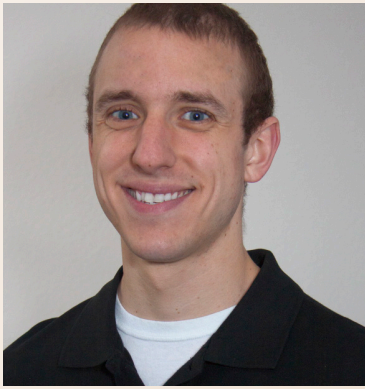
"Professor Basten pointed out how most research starts with a common interest — we ask ourselves, 'Why does this happen?' I do that a lot," explains Schwartz.

Schwartz says Basten "turned me into a research nerd." She became the professor's research assistant, which led to being offered a place in the psychology honors program and the

McNair Scholars Program. Schwartz also found time to volunteer as a childrens' advocate for New Horizons Shelter in La Crosse and pursue a part-time job working with autistic children. Schwartz began to see that she was surrounded by a new group of friends and people with common interests.

"I'm kind of a nerd," says Schwartz. "I like school a lot, but it wasn't until I found something I really loved that I wanted to stay."

She discovered psychology was that love. She'll continue to pursue it even after she leaves. Schwartz started her doctorate in school psychology this fall at UW-Madison.



## **KEVIN LEWANDOWSKI**

### **Graduate Student Academic Achievement Award Winner**

May graduate Kevin Lewandowski is finishing up a paid internship in school psychology working with people from birth to age 21. Lewandowski is motivated by thinking about his future as a school psychologist. “I like the idea of working with kids,” he says. “You’re able to help them develop skills academically, physically, socially and emotionally, and help get them on the right path to a successful future.”

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## **RICHARD ANDERSON**

### **Graduate Student Excellence Awardee**

May graduate Richard Anderson says a lot of faculty mentors in the Student Affairs Administration program held him to a high standard and provided him with real-world insights into a profession in higher education. Now he is using that knowledge to take his first steps into a full-time career as area coordinator for Residential Education at the University of New England in Maine. “This is what excites me. It’s the reason I went to graduate school,” he explains. “I get to take all of this information and apply it to students and see the impact of working with them.”

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The CLS “Recognition of Excellence” Awards recognize outstanding achievement by students in the college’s departments.

For a full list of awardees, visit:

<http://news.uwlax.edu/uw-l-college-honors-faculty-and-staff-students>

The CLS “Recognition of Excellence” Awards honor faculty and staff who have made outstanding contributions to the college. Faculty and academic staff are honored for innovative teaching; outstanding research, scholarship and creative endeavors; and continuous service. Staff members are recognized for noteworthy performance and positive impact on the college.

## Faculty, Staff Honored

CLS honored these six faculty and staff members, along with 31 students, during its annual “Recognition of Excellence” Presentation in April:



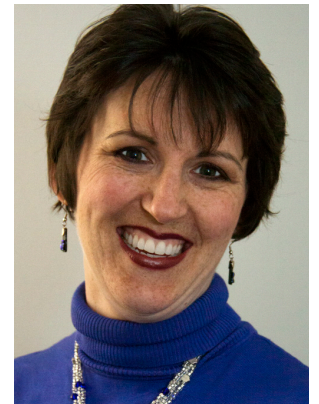
CLS Faculty “Recognition of Excellence” Award for Teaching

**JO ARNEY**, Political Science and Public Administration



CLS Faculty “Recognition of Excellence” Award for Research/Creative Endeavors

**RAY BLOCK**, Political Science and Public Administration



CLS Academic Staff “Recognition of Excellence” Award

**AUDREY MOUSER ELEGBEDE**, Ethic and Racial Studies



CLS Faculty “Recognition of Excellence” Award for Service

**JEREMY ARNEY**, Political Science and Public Administration



CLS Faculty “Recognition of Excellence” Award for Research/Creative Endeavors

**CHRISTINE HIPPERT**, Sociology/Archeology



CLS Classified Staff “Recognition of Excellence” Award

**CINDY GEORGE**, Institute for Professional Studies in Education

# Faculty Research and Teaching



Assistant Professor Grace Deason received a \$6,500 faculty research grant in fall 2011 to do research from July 2012 to December 2013 to determine whether differences in prejudice toward mothers and women in general stem from differences in the content of stereotypes of the two groups. “The research will help interpret discrepant research findings and pave the way for clearer theoretical predictions in the future,” she says. “It will provide guidance for women — mothers and non-mothers alike — to navigate gender stereotypes at work, and for organizations to stop gender prejudice before it begins.”

## Deason Studying Prejudice Toward Mothers, Women

## Granados Studies Child Narratives in Post-Revolutionary Cuba



Omar Granados received a \$6,800 faculty research grant in fall 2011, providing him a stipend to travel to Cuba to interview filmmakers and conduct archival research on Cuban films made after 2006 — the year Cuban President Fidel Castro handed over power to his younger brother Raul. Granados is examining the development of children’s narratives in Cuban film from 2006-11 and their consequences for Cuban children’s understanding of their own society. He would ultimately like to write a manuscript tracing the evolution of the relation between narrative, film and the symbolisms imposed on childhood by the political processes of the Cuban Revolution since 1959.



## Epstein Earns Wis. Teaching Award

Ann Epstein, assistant professor of early childhood education and Early Childhood Education Coordinator, received the Student Wisconsin Education Association Outstanding Teacher Educator of the Year Award in April. “UW-L teacher candidates are dedicated and passionate about teaching. To be part of their journey is really wonderful,” says Epstein, who has been on campus for two years. “As a former teacher of young children, I appreciate both the amazing opportunities and the awesome responsibility teachers have, particularly with young learners.”

Ann Epstein, assistant professor of early childhood education and Early Childhood Education Coordinator, left, works with Toni Hanson, a senior in the Early Childhood - Middle Childhood program, who will be student teaching this fall.

# A GREAT AUDITION

## Theatre students earn lucrative grad school packages

**F**ive UW-L students came out of theatre auditions last winter with a ticket to graduate school.

Each winter the University/Resident Theatre Association attracts more than 1,000 students from across the country to audition in San Francisco, Chicago and New York City. They vie for entrance into graduate school theatre programs and seasonal employment with companies, festivals and producing organizations.

All five of the UW-L students who auditioned were accepted into prestigious graduate school programs with generous packages worth tens of thousands of dollars. Some students were given multiple offers.

“It speaks very highly of the caliber of student we are producing within our department,” says Joseph Anderson, chair of UW-L’s Department of Theatre Arts. “These positions are sought after by artists from all over the country. Obviously, the entire department is extremely proud of these students and their accomplishments.”

Here are the students and the amount of money they received for their entire graduate program. The average MFA program is three years: Ellen Danforth – University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign – costume design – \$99,522; Vicky Halverson – University of Nebraska at Lincoln – scenic design – \$105,000; Justin Schmitz – North Carolina School of Arts – Sound design — in-state tuition, about \$12,000 per year savings; Kara Waala – University of Maryland – costume design – \$142,578; Anna Wooden – Northwestern University – costume design – \$131,184.

Candidates at the auditions, many from prestigious undergraduate programs or theatre company schools, are interested in future careers in acting, design, directing, theatre technology, stage management and theatre management.



TOP: Kara Waala, seen here at a costume workshop, was awarded a graduate school package to study costume design at Northwestern University. ABOVE: Anna Wooden, pictured during her undergraduate research trip to Prague, was awarded a package to study costume design in graduate school at the University of Maryland.



Click above to watch UW-L Theatre students in action in this preview for "Urinetown."



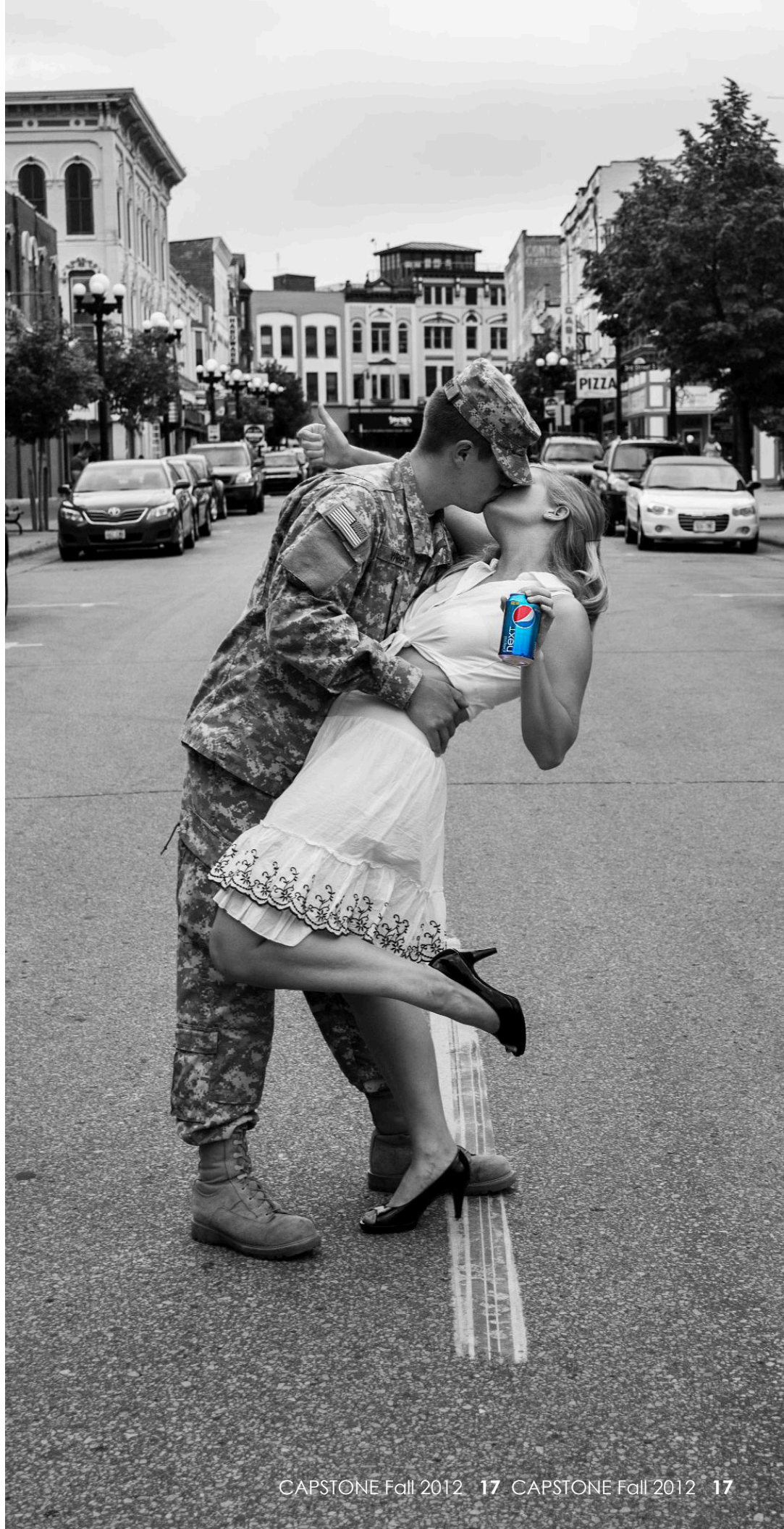
# The 'Next' Kiss

Photography minor Analese Nechvatal re-created a famous American photo downtown La Crosse and won a local contest for her creativity.

Nechvatal reconstructed the famous photograph, "The Kiss," taken by Alfred Eisenstaedt that shows a soldier kissing a nurse in Times Square at the end of WWII. The contest required a photograph taken at a La Crosse landmark with a person posed standing on one leg with the other leg raised behind them. They also had to have their hand in thumbs up position, while drinking Pepsi Next with the other hand.

Photographs were judged on the following: Is it cinematic, exciting, light-hearted, fun, tongue-in cheek, convincing, unbelievable and/or exaggerated?

As grand prize winner in radio station Z-93's "Pepsi Next" photo contest, Nechvatal took home \$3,993.



# ENCORE CAST

## Randy Meier back on Twin Cities TV

Randy Meier, anchor for Fox 9 in the Twin Cities, and his wife, Kami (Potterton) Meier, '86, both graduated from UW-L and now live the Twin Cities metro area with their youngest daughter. Their other four daughters are in college.



As the workday winds down in the Twin Cities, Alum Randy Meier, '84, is just getting ready to go. He takes a seat in the anchor chair, turns on his microphone and watches the camera operator count down. "Starting out a live, TV newscast is a lot like delivering the first pitch at a baseball game," he says.

"You need to do what you do as well as you can during that hour," he explains. "Much like the athlete who knows the play and strategy, I need to know that copy as well as I can."

After nearly 30 years as an anchor, Meier has a natural confidence. He worked in large markets such as KSTP-TV in the Twin Cities and MSNBC in New York before starting as an anchor at FOX

9 in the Twin Cities in September 2011. What has kept him coming back to TV is variety.

One day he could be at ground zero discussing 9-11 aftermath and the next at the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge exploring the environmental impact of oil drilling. He likes that while it's exciting work, he doesn't have to take it home with him.

"By time you leave the studio, what you did or said is halfway to Mars," he says. "You can reflect on whether it was a good or bad show and make corrections. We get a do over every day."

His first taste of TV came as a UW-L freshman and camera operator for WKBT News 8 in La Crosse.

"My first time looking though camera and watching a newscast unfold in front of me, I knew I wanted to be a reporter and anchor," he says.

He entered the UW-L mass communications program and had mentorship from professors such as Joe Zobin, Pat Turner and Roger Grant. He worked his way up the ranks to weekend anchor at WKBT his senior year. The real-world experience helped him launch his career.

Meier occasionally returns to share his experience with broadcast students. He always advises not to go into the profession for fame.

"It's not enough to sustain you," he notes. "You need satisfaction from doing the work. We get to influence and make a difference in communities."

# Students to Train on New Broadcast Equipment



Cole Gallagher, a senior communication studies, tries out new equipment in Wing Technology Center.

Communication Studies students will see a welcome sight when they return in fall. UW-L has invested in new equipment for TV production classes, as well as the student-run TV station and radio station.

“I want to go into sports broadcasting and this equipment is similar to what we’ll be using in the real world,” says Cole Gallagher, a senior communication studies major with a broadcast and digital media emphasis.

Teaching in the broadcast field demands regular replacements to keep up with technology. The purchase includes 22 new computers, a new studio TV camera, professional editing software, a new printer and chairs. The equipment is housed in the Wing Technology Center TV

rooms and radio facilities. It will be used not only in broadcast classes, but also by RAQ Racquet Radio, the new, student-run radio station, and WMCM TV, the student-run TV station.

“Obviously, it enhances their learning experience at UW-L and gets them ready for a smoother transition into their first job,” says Pat Turner, assistant professor of Communication Studies. “Broadcast is an extremely competitive field, so the stronger background you have, the better the chance you have of finding employment when you graduate.”



### JOANNE E. BERG, '78

Major: Sociology Minor: Anthropology  
Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, UW-Madison

“I was determined to follow in the footsteps of Margaret Mead. I was given that opportunity at La Crosse – including a month-long excursion to Western Samoa (where Mead had done much of her research) with Professor Dean Sheils where I explored the lives of young women who were considering migrating to the U.S. And, even though there wasn’t yet an anthropology major available, I took full advantage of the anthropology curriculum, became president of the Anthropology Club and, one day, found myself in the faculty lounge sitting next to none other than Margaret Mead. There is no doubt that the curriculum, role modeling and mentoring I experienced at La Crosse were foundational to my subsequent successes.

“Although life led me down unexpected paths – and away from a career in anthropology, a day doesn’t go by that I don’t appreciate my UW-L experience and all of the terrific people who supported me. Three of the great ‘takeaways’ from my UW-L experience are now guiding principles for how I lead: consider all points of view, engage in possibility, and be able to articulate what you value – and why.”

# Inclusive Excellence

## ACTIVITIES

The College of Liberal Studies continues to play a leading role in inclusive excellence efforts on campus. Inclusive Excellence is a UW System initiative to “bridge differences with understanding and respect so all can thrive.” CLS continues to bring guest speakers to campus and conduct research related to issues such as identity and inclusion.

“One of the ways to try to promote Inclusive Excellence in the college is by supporting our faculty and departments in initiatives designed to create more inclusive environments in our classrooms and throughout the university,” explains Julia Johnson, CLS associate dean.

Among the college’s latest inclusive excellence efforts:

### CLS Will Read Two Books as Part of IE Series

College of Liberal Studies faculty, staff and students are invited to read two books for the Inclusive Excellence book series this year. The first book “Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity” by Brenda Allen is an “analysis of six social identity categories” and “reveals how communication establishes and enacts identity and power dynamics.” Get more information and resources at [www.differencematters.info](http://www.differencematters.info).

The second book for spring 2013 will be “Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity” by Julia Serano, a biologist and transsexual woman. Serano “shares her experiences pre-and post-transition, and reveals the ways that fear, contempt and dismissiveness toward femininity shape society’s attitudes toward trans women, as well as gender and sexuality as a whole.”

Last year the Inclusive Excellence books included “The New Jim Crow” and “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.”

### Diversity and Inclusion Expert Visited in August



Guest speaker Brenda Allen, associate vice chancellor for diversity at the University of Colorado Denver, gave a lecture on campus Thursday, Aug. 30, and did a workshop for CLS department chairs on Aug. 31. She focused on recruiting and retaining a diverse community of faculty and staff. Learn more at [www.differencematters.info](http://www.differencematters.info).

# TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES SERIES EVENTS



SPONSORS FOR THE TRANSGENDER IDENTITY SERIES INCLUDE: COLLEGE OF LIBERAL STUDIES, CAMPUS CLIMATE, THE SCHOOL OF ARTS & COMMUNICATION, THE PRIDE CENTER, THE LA CROSSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BRIDGE BUILDERS GRANT, THEATRE ARTS, SOCIOLOGY/ ARCHAEOLOGY AND WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES



## 'THE NAKED 1 | SEPT. 18, 2012

The 20 % Theatre Company performed "The Naked 1" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 18, in 260 Graff Main Hall.

"The Naked 1: Wide Open" is made up of monologues and short scenes, and the world premiere production featured the talents of over 50 Twin Cities artists. Filled with fresh, sexy, humorous, gut-punching, and unbelievably honest and true stories by transgender/gender non-conforming individuals and allies, "The Naked 1: Wide Open" explores gender identity far beyond the land of "male" and "female."

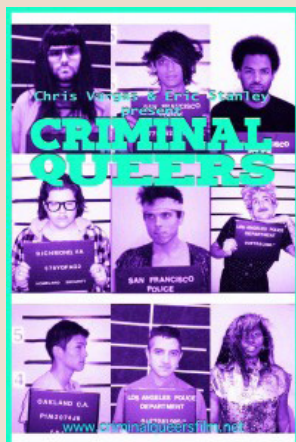


## PANEL PRESENTATION | NOV. 6, 2012

A panel presentation featuring Owen Daniel-McCarter, Esq., and Fatima Arain will be at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, in 339 Cartwright.

Owen Daniel-McCarter, Esq. is one of the founding collective members of the Transformative Justice Law Project ( TJLP ) of Illinois, which provides free legal services to poor transgender and gender non-conforming people. Daniel-McCarter is also an adjunct professor at DePaul University.

Fatima Arain is the Capitol Hill Case Manager, Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS) in Seattle and has extensive experience in non-profit organizing. She is a case manager for homeless youth and works with her clients to achieve their self-identified goals around housing, education, employment, mental health, chemical dependency. She regularly leads workshops on topics such as LGBT youth homelessness, the non-profit industrial complex and community organizing. She created the Queer Youth Fund for LGBT homeless youth's specific needs.



## CRIMINAL QUEERS | OCT. 3, 2012

Filmmakers Chris Vargas and Eric Stanley bring a traveling film and lecture program "Criminal Queers" to campus Wednesday, Oct. 3.

The program centers around the devastating effects the prison industrial complex has had on transgender/gender non-conforming and queer communities. Hidden in the shadows of mainstream LGBT movements, the program critiques the mass imprisonment of queer folks, specifically poor and queer folks of color, and envisions, through radical form and altered visions, a world without walls.

This event was made possible through a collaboration with Dr. Karma Chávez, assistant professor of Communication Studies at UW-Madison.

# THE COUNTRY WAS HIS STAGE



By age 2, Reed Grimm was singing and playing air guitar on stage with the family band. This spring, the 26-year-old showed that same spirit and spontaneity on FOX TV's hit show *American Idol* 2012. Grimm, '08, who studied music and philosophy, made the top 24. He plans to return to La Crosse for this year's Oktoberfest with his band, Shoeless Revolution.



Pictured above are the members of the UW-L Vocal Jazz Ensemble I. They have been invited to perform at a state music conference in October.

## *Jazzin' Up the State*

### Vocal jazz invited to Madison performance

**U**W-L's Vocal Jazz Ensemble has made the cut for the annual Wisconsin Music Educators Association conference in Madison in October.

It's the second time Professor Gary Walth's vocal jazz ensemble was asked to perform before an audience of mainly high school directors and collegiate colleagues.

"Being invited to perform at these conferences gives an excellent boost to UW-L's recruiting and visibility in the region," notes Walth.

Walth's Concert Choir was invited to perform at the event twice and Männerchor once. His choirs have also performed at North Central American Choral Director's regional conferences.

UW-L has had two vocal jazz ensembles since 2010. Each auditioned group of eight-10 singers performs acappella and accompanied jazz and pop

standards. Several student-run contemporary acappella groups rehearse and perform as well.

"I am blessed to be able to work with outstanding young men and women in the choral ensembles which I have the privilege to teach," says Walth. "Not only are these students each individually talented, but they are respectful of each other, the art form and the learning process. They each want to make a difference now and after they graduate, and that is what motivates me."

Catch them at 8:15 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 25, in the Monona Terrace Convention Center's Community Terrace. If that's too early, hear them on YouTube or on the Vocal Jazz I's 2010-11 CD — only \$10 by contacting Walth at [gwalth@uwlax.edu](mailto:gwalth@uwlax.edu).



# Smile!

## Students spread the YWCA word

Four student photographers helped get the Coulee Region YWCA in focus for promotions and its clients.

Photography minors Ashley Brader, Zachary Iler, Thong Vang and Brianne Wienkers created group and individual portraits for YWCA brochures and the girls' personal use. The four in last spring's "Lighting and Photography" special projects course used orange throughout the shoots because it's significant in the YWCA's "Orange Doors." The students and teens met for group portraits and for individual portraits.

Besides the technical and logistical value of the collaboration, the students had an opportunity to work directly with teenage girls in the "Bridges" program, says Assistant Professor of Art Linda Levinson. For these teens the YWCA is a safe place to sort out struggles and challenges of identity and self-discovery at a critical point in their lives.

"The UW-L students remarked how they forgot what it was like to be high school," notes Levinson. "They were trying to relate to girls whose personalities were at times outgoing and at other times shut down. They recognized the dramatic shifts of energy in the times they were with them. This gave the UW-L student-photographers the experience of making portraits of young people who revealed their securities and insecurities in front of the camera."

Levinson says photography students will work with YWCA again this fall. Take a look at last year's results:

