



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

CLASS NOTES

JANUARY 2024

CLASS NOTES SUBMITTED OCTOBER 15 - DECEMBER 15, 2023

'79

Scott R. Gilbertson recently assumed the role of associate dean of faculty for the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Houston in Texas.



Nicole A. Mullaney, '97

'82

Matt P. Woychek is retiring after serving as senior vice president for General Beer Northeast in Appleton.

Terri Zeh is retiring after 30 years of a rewarding career as club manager at Songbird Hills Golf Club in Hartland, Wis.

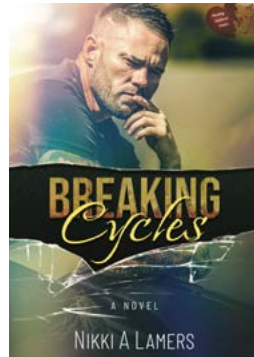
'90

Kris Ackley is the senior director of strategic partnerships for the Center for Workforce Inclusion in Washington, D.C.

'97

Nicole A. Mullaney released her latest novel, "Breaking Cycles," on Oct. 10, from publisher Atmosphere Press. "Breaking Cycles," written under Mullaney's pen name and given name, Nikki Lamers, "is a steamy contemporary romance addressing difficult issues." Book reviewer Literary Titan gives the novel high praise, saying, "Lamers delivers a romance rich in depth, ticking all the boxes for ardent fans of the genre: a beguiling and enigmatic lover, a seemingly insurmountable love, fervent connections, and challenges that threaten to overturn all precon-

ceptions. Enhanced by its meticulous narrative and characters with compelling backstories, this book promises to captivate from its opening lines." This year, Lamers also released "Dating Santa's Sun," a small-town holiday romance that received a Firebird Book Award for best holiday novel and best romance. Both books, as well as other titles by Mullaney, are available for [purchase on Amazon](#).



'01

Phillip Spearo, JD, is the founding member of Workplace Investigations Now in Waukesha, HR's trusted workplace investigation partner. Before founding Workplace Investigations Now, Phillip was a senior vice president of people for a 1,700-person early childhood organization.



Kelliann Blazek, '09

'05

Kristine Van Handel recently wrote and self-published a children's book called "Penny's Ice Age Trail Adventure." Copies of the book can be purchased on her website, www.hiking-withhairtie.com.

'07

Rachel Hanson Epp is the volunteer experience director for Girl Scouts of Wisconsin-Badgerland.

'09

Kelliann Blazek is serving as President Joe Biden's special assistant for Agriculture and Rural Policy. Blazek previously served as the inaugural director of Wisconsin's Office of Rural Prosperity, created by Gov. Tony Evers in 2020 to support the state's rural communities.

'12

Andrew Sailer is the assistant commissioner for External Relations & Marketing for the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference in Burnsville, Minn.

Shari Schoohs is a TRIO career advisor for the University of Oregon.

'15

Ben Frailing recently moved back the Milwaukee area after spending several years in Vail, Colo. Frailing is a project manager for Global Power Components in Milwaukee and was previously an employee of the Milwaukee Brewing Co.



Sam Pierce, '15

Sam Pierce, associate director of Admissions at UWL, was named a Rising Star Under 40 by the 7 Rivers Alliance in partnership with River Valley Media

Group. In his role, Pierce coordinates the **STudent Advising Registration and Transition program**, oversees campus visits, advises Admissions counselors and the **Vanguard Organization**, and spearheads recruitment efforts at high schools and college fairs. Pierce was also recognized for his community involvement, which includes volunteering with Rotary Lights, the Grandad Marathon, local Juneteenth festivities and the Oktoberfest Grenadiers. "I struggle with receiving this kind of recognition, but it's an honor to be recognized," Pierce says. "It's great to know that the people I work with think I'm doing a good job."

'17

Nicholas Schmidt is a teacher for the School District of Holmen.

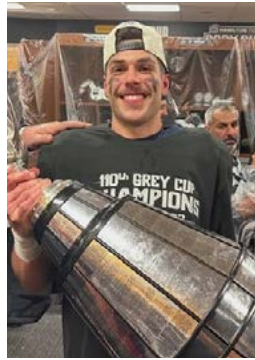
'19

Kennedy Kitelinger is an HR Generalist I for Electronic Theatre Controls in Middleton, Wis.

Nolan B. Rohrer is a training center instructor for Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. He is in his second year of physician assistant school.

'23

Isaiah J. Voiland is a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army in La Crosse.



Great on the gridiron

Former UWL wide receiver Cole Spieker, '20, played a key role in the Montreal Alouettes winning the Grey Cup in the Canadian Football League. Spieker caught three passes for 62 yards, including a fourth-quarter touchdown, to lift the Alouettes over the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in the championship game. Spieker, originally from Brainerd, Minnesota, was a stand-out during his time on the UWL football team. He was named the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Year in 2019, his final season with the Eagles.

Documentary earns critical acclaim

A short film about the life and art of UWL alum Truman Lowe is receiving critical acclaim. Discover Wisconsin's piece, "Exploring the Artistic Process of Truman Lowe: A Journey Through Native American Art & Education" recently won a Midwest Regional Emmy Award. The film covers Lowe's upbringing and accomplished career as

an artist, culminating with the dedication of the UWL Truman T. Lowe Center for the Arts in October 2022. Lowe, '69, passed away in 2019. "It's gratifying to know that there are people out there that admire Truman and the work he did so much that they wanted to make a documentary about him," says Tonia Lowe, Truman's daughter.



Tying the knot in Thailand

A group of UWL alumni met in Phuket, Thailand, in late November for the wedding of Thanaporn (Beaut) Thepsiriamnuay and Ikaika Au. Front row, left to right: Kelsea Groves, '12; Mei Sunano,

'13; Brenda Lai; Ana Isla; and Mei Sunano, '13. Back row, left to right: Melissa Wheeler, '12; Kat Klima, '13; Prathyusa Papanna, '13; Ikaika Au (Groom); Thanaporn Thepsiriamnuay-Au, '13

(Bride); Peiqing Chen, '13; Duy Nguyen, '13; Alex Vissoky; Beatrice Steinhilber, '14; Laura Ledman-Kerkman, '84; and Jeff Kerkman, '86.



In Remembrance

Alumni

1946 – Phyllis (Rieple) Kramer, La Crosse
1956 – Curtis Allen, La Crosse
1958 – Edwin Larkin, Lansing
1960 – Karen (Nelsestuen) Larson, Racine
1964 – Steven Fossum, Viroqua
1965 – Carol (Ormsby) Munk, La Crescent
1966 – David Rudolph, La Crosse
1968 – Jerry Boggs, La Crosse
1969 – Robert Benson, Des Moines
1969 – Jane (Coley) Molstad, La Crosse
1974 – Ted Lucksted, Mauston, Wis.

1977 – Daniel Hopfensperger, Sun Prairie
1978 – Lavonne Bekkum, Two Rivers, Wis.
1978 – Nancy Simonson, Rochester, Wis.
1981 – Jill (Bullis) Thompson, Boise
1981 – Joann (Schultz) Duckworth, Trempealeau
1985 – Russell Gilbert, Soldiers Grove, Wis.
1988 – Susan Voigtschild, Onalaska
1990 – Patty Hall-Sprain, West Salem
1998 – Janice (Beckman) Boldt, Onalaska

Charles J. “Chuck” Forer

Charles J. “Chuck” Forer, 70, of La Crosse, died Oct. 31, 2023. Forer was a distinguished staff member at UWL for 37 years, retiring from Document Services in 2011. He was known as a faithful husband and a wonderful father, grandfather and friend. He enjoyed attending his grandchildren’s many concerts, musicals, Christmas concerts and sporting events. Forer was a member

of the Holy Trinity Men’s Club and the Aquinas Booster Club. An avid sports fan, he was a longtime participant on the Schumacher-Kish-sponsored bowling team and the Forest Hills “Duffers” golf league, and won two city championships in racquetball. He also enjoyed riding his Harley with his brother Tom. Chuck loved to travel and took many trips within the U.S. and abroad with his loved ones.

Faculty & Staff

Joan Ray Yeatman

Joan Ray Yeatman, 83, of La Crosse, died Sept. 26, 2023. Yeatman, originally from Beaumont, Texas, began her professional career in 1968 in UWL’s English Department. She was a professor of literature and women’s studies until her retirement in 2000, when she earned the title of professor emeritus. A founding member of the Women’s Institute and the Women’s Studies Department, Yeatman was an active, longtime supporter of programs intended to support students from diverse backgrounds. In the early

1980s, she chaired a committee charged with investigating allegations of racial discrimination on campus. The committee’s findings and recommendations led to important changes in how the university supports students of color. Off campus, Yeatman loved creating quilts with her friends in the La Crosse Area Quilters. Musically, she was an avid fan of Grand Opera, and for many years she participated with the Shape Note Singers. She loved birds, flowers and travel, having visited most of Europe as well as Egypt and Easter Island.





Submit UWL Class Notes

Online

www.uwlax.edu/alumni/about/whats-new-with-you

Phone/email

Brad Quarberg | University Marketing & Communications
608.785.8572 | bquarberg@uwlax.edu

Class Notes Policy:

Class notes and obituaries are published online in January, April, July and October.
The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the month of quarterly posting.

JOIN AT WWW.UWLAX.EDU/ALUMNI