

# EAGLEEDGE

LEAD. EDUCATE. COLLABORATE. INNOVATE.

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 2 | FALL 2021

## LESSON OF A LIFETIME

Grad overcomes car accident to pursue her passion for teaching





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**A**s I reflected on the stories brought to you in this Eagle Edge, I was reminded how UWL's various School of Education programs offer something special and distinct — they prepare our graduates to be servant leaders. In this issue, you will read about current students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends who have risen to the occasion. As our tagline says, "Lead.Educate.Collaborate.Innovate." That is exactly what these individuals have done. Individuals who graduate from the School of Education most often demonstrate the following characteristics:

- **Resilience** to overcome challenges in their lives and the communities they serve;
- **Advocacy** for themselves and others when responding to emerging needs and innovations; as well as
- **Reflective practice and lifelong learning** as core principles that guide who they are personally and professionally so that when opportunities present themselves, they are positioned to soar.

I hope the stories highlighted will offer inspiration and illustrate some of the ways that our graduates reach beyond themselves to serve and lead. Our alumni and friends make us proud as they impact the communities they serve by staying grounded, yet curious and brave in their work. Excellence in educator preparation is alive and well at UWL.

*Marcie Wycoff-Horn*  
**Marcie Wycoff-Horn**  
**Dean**



# TEACHING ANTI- RACISM

## SOE faculty have new perspective after intensive training

Some School of Education faculty are bringing a new perspective into the classroom this fall, thanks to an intensive workshop on anti-racist teaching. The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Across the Curriculum facilitated by Dr. Victor Rodriguez and Dr. Emily Drew from Aug. 16-20, with the following outcomes:

- deepen participants' understanding of how racism is embedded in the educational system, how it affects their teaching and classroom, and ultimately, impacts students;
- participants will be introduced to a framework for understanding racism and consider its implications in their work as educators; and
- participants will (re)designing one of their courses to incorporate antiracist learning outcomes, strengthen curricular materials to include an understanding of racism, and develop more effective multimodal teaching practices.



*Faculty members discussing the Continuum: Assessing the Traits of an Anti-racist Educational Institution. Left in maroon Dan Hyson (School Psychology), Tom Jesse (English/English Education), Ashley Zehner (Educational Studies/Special Education), Jennifer Kosiak (Mathematics and Statistics/Math Education).*



**Marcie Wycoff-Horn**

Marcie Wycoff-Horn, SOE Dean, and Dina Zavala, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Diversity & Inclusion, shared their takeaways from the training.

**Q: What were some of the primary themes explored?**

**A:** The training covered organizing for institutional transformation, culture and the genealogy of racialization in higher education, racial/ethnic issues within the discipline, a racially inclusive classroom, racial identity development, classroom culture and dynamics, and encountering resistance. The external trainers were Victor Rodriguez and Emily Drew, Ph.D.

**Q: Who attended the training?**

**A:** Attendance was limited to 20 faculty members, primarily from the SOE. We were joined by colleagues from Diversity & Inclusion, as well as partners from the School District of La Crosse.

**Q: How can the training be applied to real-world classroom scenarios?**

**A:** Those who attended the training used a framework to outline how they plan to incorporate their learning into their college classrooms this fall. Plans include learning goals and outcomes, curricular materials, teaching/learning methods, classroom culture, and learning assessment.

**Q: How does this fit within the values and strategic plan of the SOE?**

**A:** The School of Education's Conceptual Framework, as well as the strategic plan are grounded in diversity, equity, and social justice. Faculty members want the skills and support to be on the forefront of meeting the needs of future teachers around these topics. This training

allowed them to engage in analyzing systemic racism, as well as developing strategies for their classes with support.



**Dina Zavala**

**Q: What was the reception among staff and faculty?**

**A:** Faculty reported the training was one of the best they have engaged in. It started with important historical and theoretical context that led into institutional and classroom culture, but unique to this training, reflective and applied activities were used to take learning to another level. Everyone left with a plan to implement new approaches in fall semester courses.

# Lesson *of a* Lifetime

UWL grad overcomes accident to pursue her passion

**E**mily Stephenson was driving east on Wisconsin Highway 21, enroute from La Crosse to her home near Green Bay, when a driver in the westbound lane fell asleep.

Their vehicles collided at 65 mph, crushing the front of Emily's Volkswagen Passat and sending the dashboard into her legs. She broke both femurs in three places, split a kneecap, tore a meniscus, sustained a cartilage defect and broke both tibias at the knee.

Emily was taken to the trauma center at Marshfield Clinic, where doctors prepared her for emergency surgery. In those turbulent moments on May 17, 2020, Emily Stephenson was fortunate simply to be alive.

"I still struggle with everything that happened, and sometimes the thoughts and memories come back to me," says Emily, who at the time of the accident had just completed her junior year in the Middle Childhood-Early



*The head-on accident crumpled the front end of Emily's Volkswagen Passat.*

Adolescence educator preparation program at UW-La Crosse. "But I also know it could have been worse. It could have been so much worse."

Emily's road to recovery meant many long days in bed or a wheelchair. It meant PTSD and the uncomfortable grip of powerful medication. It meant lifting herself up and relearning to walk, painstaking step by painstaking step.

As difficult as it was, that road led Emily to one of the most gratifying moments of her life. On May 15, 2021, she walked across the La Crosse Center stage to receive her bachelor's degree — nearly a year to the day after her life-altering accident.

## **A mother's promise**

A good Samaritan stopped at the scene of the accident and called Emily's mother, Carla Loritz.

Carla grabbed her phone and keys and rushed to the hospital — a two-hour drive from the family's home in Suamico, just north of Green Bay. Her only stop was to pick up Emily's stepmother, who had also dropped everything to go to the hospital.

"It was an awful drive. My mind just went crazy, expecting the worst," recalls Carla, a nurse at Aurora Fertility Center in Green Bay. "Shortly after I left, they called and said they were

making a pitstop so they could give Emily fluids in Wisconsin Rapids. As a nurse, my mind went nuts. I knew it was not good if they had to stop and stabilize her.”

The mothers arrived in Marshfield early that night but were not allowed to see Emily due to COVID-19 restrictions. So they sat in the car and waited. The cold rain outside only dampened their spirits.

Late that night, hospital staff agreed to let Carla see her daughter minutes before she was wheeled into surgery.

“The visit was very short. We talked for a bit, and she told me how scared she was,” Carla remembers. “When I turned to leave the room, she said something I’ll never forget. She said, ‘God is good — all the time.’ I mean, we’re a family of faith, but it’s not like we go to church every week. That, to me, was such a powerful statement.”

During the first procedure, surgeons cleaned her wounds to prevent infection. The next day, they inserted rods, plates and screws to reconstruct her legs.

Not wanting Emily to be alone, Carla made a promise to herself and her daughter: As long as Emily was at the hospital, she would be by her side.

### **Road to recovery**

Carla made good on her promise by accepting a furlough at work, opening up her schedule.

The hospital allowed Carla to stay with Emily as long as she didn’t leave the room — not to eat, not to get fresh air, not to use the restroom.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





*Carla Loritz, Emily's mother, accepted a furlough at work so she could see her daughter in the hospital each day.*

If she stepped away for even a moment, she wasn't allowed back until the next day.

For Emily, the following weeks brought more pain, more surgeries and only modest progress.

She was used to being spry and active, playing volleyball and going on long walks with her mother. Losing all of that devastated her — until she had a change of perspective.

"I was using a certain kind of wheelchair meant for someone who is paralyzed," Emily remembers. "They took it away and gave it to someone else — a young woman who had been paralyzed in a car accident a week after mine. That made me realize it could have been so much worse. I was lucky I could feel the pain I was in and that I had an opportunity to gain everything back."

UWL instructors Charlotte Roberts and Deanna Maynard sent Emily care packages, which included a UWL tumbler,

Emily's favorite candy (Reese's Peanut Butter Cups) and activity books.

When it came time to plan her field experience and student teaching placement, Cindy Duley arranged for Emily to teach virtually at a school in La Crosse, and later face to face at an elementary school two blocks from the family's home.

"Everyone at UWL has been so understanding and accommodating," Emily says. "They've been models for who I want to be as a teacher."

By the end of summer — after weeks of physical therapy, massage therapy, counseling, exercise and healing — Emily was beginning to walk again.

She had her own promise to fulfill: She was going to graduate in May, and she was going to walk across the stage.

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### **Back in the classroom**

Unlike most children, who might change their dream job a dozen times, Emily was always set on becoming a teacher.

Carla remembers her young daughter standing at the bottom of the basement stairs, giving instructions to dolls and stuffed animals she had arranged on the steps — her first classroom.

"There were many people who discouraged Emily from being a teacher," Carla notes. "After all, she was smart and could be anything in life, could make more money. Her response was, 'The world still needs good teachers.'"

In the fall, Emily completed a semester of virtual field experience at Longfellow Middle School in La Crosse. Remote teaching allowed her to recover at home, but it wore on her mentally. Sitting at home, looking at her students' faces on a screen, was not how Emily imagined her first classroom experience.

Everything changed in the spring, when Emily started a student teaching placement in Miranda Zyguel's third grade room at Bay Harbor Elementary School in Suamico.

"I really loved teaching in person that semester," she says. "It provided a nice distraction for me and good experience for the rest of my career."





*Commencement was an emotional day for the Stephenson family, as they celebrated Emily's degree nearly a year to the day of her life-altering accident. "It went by quickly, but I remember being so happy," Emily says of receiving her degree on stage. "It was an incredible feeling."*

Zygiel, who had never worked with a student teacher previously, says she couldn't have been paired with a better student.

"Emily has taught the students in our class so much about strength, finding the positive in life, working hard for your dreams, the importance of education and celebrating what makes you special," Zygiel says.

### **A dream becomes reality**

Throughout her recovery, Emily walked back and forth, back and forth, down her family's driveway, as if she were practicing for something.

"Everyone knew that was my goal — to walk across the stage at commencement," Emily says. "I worked really hard to get to that point. It always seemed like such a far-off thing."

On May 15, that distant dream became reality.

Emily found herself inside the La Crosse Center with hundreds

of other soon-to-be graduates, a socially distanced sea of maroon caps and gowns.

"Looking around and realizing I had made it, I got emotional just sitting there," Emily remembers. "To be in that space, surrounded by everyone ... I was just thanking God that I was there."

Emily heard her name. She walked across the stage. She received her degree. To her, it was all a blur — a moment she had envisioned for nearly a year, gone before she could fully absorb it.

"It went by quickly, but I remember being so happy," she says. "It was an indescribable feeling."

While commencement brought closure to Emily's challenging year, it did not signal the end of her recovery.

On June 15, she underwent what will hopefully be her final surgery — bone and cartilage grafting to strengthen her knees. If everything goes according

to plan, she won't require additional operations for the foreseeable future.

Emily can take comfort and confidence in how far she has already come.

She has a mind and body that heal a little more each day.

She has a renewed appreciation for her life and health.

And she recently began her dream job — teaching first grade at Bay Harbor Elementary, where she did her student teaching.

She hopes to use the lessons she learned during her recovery, including the love she felt from UWL, to help students for years to come.

"This has really shown me that it's not just about what happens in the classroom," Emily notes. "It's about valuing relationships and being there for your students when things happen in life."

# In the middle

Scott Noet, Altman Award winner, finds success as Owatonna educator

Owatonna Middle School teacher Scott Noet gets it.

During football season, Noet does class picks with the teams playing the hometown Huskies. He connects geography, the historical significance of mascots, and even adds in a little math.

To connect with a Muslim student, Noet asked about Ramadan. He and others in class joined the student in fasting that month. All fasting took part in an impromptu Rock 'n' Roll Ramadan for those not heading to the lunchroom one day.

And, Noet pits class against class in friendly contests with charts and graphs. Students don't even realize they're learning how to use and read them.

The longtime educator even gives students catchy nicknames they relish and cherish. One who snacked on carrots quickly became the "Carrot Queen," a title that helped her feel important despite being just outside the "cool" middle school circle.

Students remember Noet for making their lives better socially and academically.

"He connects kids with content. He makes learning real, relevant and fun," notes colleague and Owatonna Education Association President Todd Andrix. "He meets all challenges while putting the child first."

Along with students, colleagues recognize Noet's talents. Past accolades include being a 2017 finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year and the 2019 Minnesota History Teacher of the Year. He's known for steering his success back to his students and peers.

"His humility is rooted in a deep appreciation for the gifts his students bring to the world, and in the brilliance of his teaching community, here and around the globe," explains Jessica Ellison, president of the Minnesota Council for Social Studies. "Mr. Noet's awareness of our interdependence on one another to ensure a better future is central to his classroom and his own learning."

At Owatonna since 1996, Noet has traveled worldwide to learn new teaching concepts. He's worked with orphaned kids in Mongolia, spearheading a "Yes we Khan" student-run school supplies drive that sent materials from Owatonna to the Asian country.

With Sustainable South Africa, he promoted ecologically sound lifestyles through schools, youth and family networks. And Noet took middle schoolers to Bosch in Burnsville, Minnesota, so they could discover how the STEM skills they were learning could be put to use.

"If all of the kids realized that they could apply their talents in any field and pursue any happiness they chose to pursue, there would be myriad benefits for humanity," Noet told the Owatonna People's Press during a STEM event.



*Scott Noet, '90, is the recipient of the 2021 Burt and Norma Altman Teacher Education Award. Noet, who teaches seventh and eighth grade social studies in Owatonna, Minnesota, has traveled the globe to learn new concepts.*

### **Scott Noet, '90**

- Dedicated and respected long-time educator.
- Recipient of the Goethe Institute Transatlantic Outreach Program Fellow of the Year for U.S. & Canada; Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Minnesota Teacher of the Year; state and school Teacher of the Year; others.
- Currently a 7th and 8th grade social studies teacher at Owatonna, Minnesota, Public Schools.
- Bachelor's in history; master's in education, Southwest State, Marshall, Minnesota.

**“His humility is rooted in a deep appreciation for the gifts his students bring to the world, and in the brilliance of his teaching community, here and around the globe”**

**Scott Noet**



# ALUM CONFIRMED AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Marten graduated from UWL in 1988

Cindy Marten

**A** UW-La Crosse alum is now the country's second-ranking education official.

Cindy Marten, who earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from UWL in 1988, was confirmed May 11 as the deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

Marten, who had been serving as superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, is responsible for helping develop and implement the Biden Administration's education agenda.

Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona praised Marten for her career of service and her leadership during the pandemic. During COVID-19, Marten helped secure technology necessary for virtual instruction, and provide more than 20 million free meals to students in need.

"I am thrilled that Cindy has accepted this challenge, and I look forward to working with her as she continues to serve our nation's students as Deputy Secretary," Cardona said.

Marten has been a dedicated educator throughout her career, having served as a classroom teacher, instruction leader, principal and superintendent.

She has cited her years at UWL as a formative time in her development as an educator.

"I give credit to UWL for providing me with a very solid education," she said in 2013. "UWL started as a teacher's college, and those roots run deep — providing me with a traditional and strong foundation."

# ENGAGING **ENGLISH** EDUCATOR

## Merideth Garcia wins Eagle Teaching Excellence Award

**Started at UWL:** 2018

**Courses:** I'm an SOE-affiliated faculty member in the English Department, and I teach literature, composition, linguistics and English teaching methods courses. I also supervise teacher candidates in their middle and high school field and student teaching placements.

**Background:** I completed my PhD at the University of Michigan in 2018, where I was a Graduate Student Instructor, teaching first-year writing, upper-division critical theory and writing courses, and both undergraduate- and graduate-level English teaching methods courses. Before that, I spent 10 years teaching English and English to Speakers of other Languages in K-12 classrooms — everything from second grade ESOL to dual-credit high school courses. I spent

one year teaching in India and one year teaching at a community college.

**Favorite part of teaching:** I am most excited when students discover that they enjoy reading, that they write beautifully, that they think critically or that they love teaching. I love learning new things, and so I try to structure my classes to maximize opportunities for all of us to learn from each other. Having taught so many different grade levels and topics, I have a special appreciation for how learning across the lifespan develops and how learners at every stage can contribute to our community and common resources. At UWL, it's been especially satisfying to see my students become teachers who foster curiosity and critical engagement. I'm honored to receive this award and grateful for the colleagues and students who make my work possible.



*Merideth Garcia, an assistant professor of English and English education, was one of six UWL faculty to earn a 2021 Eagle Teaching Excellence Award.*



**Mai Chao Duddeck,  
former senior equity  
advisor/recruiter in the SOE**

# Redefining Hmong American Women

## **Pump House features art by alum, former employee Mai Chao Duddeck**

**A**ll her life, Mai Chao Duddeck has made art.

That inspiration started years ago in Thailand, where she was born and lived for 10 years. This summer, following research for her dissertation on Hmong American women in higher education for her dissertation, others got to experience her artwork, too.

Mai Chao was featured in “Redefining Hmong American Women” May 19-July 17 in the Front Gallery at the Pump House Regional Arts Center in downtown La Crosse.

Mai Chao recalls her world in Thailand as a youngster divided into two seasons: wet and dry.

“During the dry season, my sketchbook was the hard-packed earth where I dipped my fingers into a bucket of water to draw my mother and her friends sewing story cloths about their experiences during the Vietnam War and life in Southeast Asia,” she explains. “In the wet season, when the



*“Embracing and Relearning,” a mixed-media piece by Mai Chao Duddeck.*

earth became muddy, I found fallen branches to chicken-scratch on the soft ground with scenes of neighborhood children racing boats made from sticks and cloth down small streams.”

For Mai Chao, the world around her has always been a source of inspiration.

“From a young age, I loved recording stories with the tools I found around my environment, even if they were temporary,” she notes.

Her exhibition included 11 pieces of mixed media that were available for purchase. Mai Chao hopes her art inspired visitors to think about their own stories, along with giving them a better understanding of Hmong American women’s experiences in higher education.

“I hope they will be inspired to tell their own stories and lived experiences; have a deeper understanding and appreciation for Hmong American women; and build stronger cultural bridges with the Hmong community and Hmong American women college students,” she says.

La Crosse and UWL are special places for Mai Chao. She holds three degrees from UWL: a Bachelor of Science

in Art Education in 2006; a Master of Education-Professional Development in 2008; and a Doctor of Education in Student Affairs Administration Leadership in 2021.

She served as the senior equity advisor/recruiter in the School of Education until May 2021. She recently began a new position with Gundersen Health System.

### **Artist’s statement**

Mai Chao’s research centers around the experiences of Hmong American women in higher education. In her dissertation, she used critical reflection and participant observations combined with scholarly research to explore Hmong history, assimilation, hopes and dreams, and sense of belonging as a Hmong American woman. The art show was part of her research using the visual art to share new knowledge about how Hmong American women navigate, negotiate and affirm self-identities in post-secondary education.



*Mai Chao’s art was inspired by her experiences growing up in Thailand. As a child, she often made use of natural objects — water, dirt, branches — while creating her art.*



# *Innovator on ice*

Gale Tanger elected to U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame

**G**ale Tanger owes her career in figure skating, at least in part, to her fashion sense.

Growing up in a family of winter sports enthusiasts, she used to admire the bright white skates she saw figure skaters wearing on TV.

"I'd been speed skating since I was five or six, and I told my dad I wanted to wear white skates," says Tanger, '68. "But my dad told me that speed skaters wear black skates, and figure skaters wear white skates. Eventually, my parents bought me white skates and gave me figure skating lessons."

The rest, as they say, is history.

Over the past 50 years, Tanger has built a reputation as one of the most influential and innovative voices in the world of figure skating. She has judged countless international competitions; contributed to six Olympics; and built lasting friendships with Peggy Fleming, Scott Hamilton and other renowned figures in the sport.

In January 2021, it was announced that Tanger will be inducted into the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame.

"I can't believe that I'm still alive and going into the Hall of Fame," she jokes, noting that many people have been inducted posthumously. "I'm just so honored by it."



Tanger had been a competitive figure skater while enrolled at UWL, but because the university didn't have an indoor rink, she found it hard to stay sharp.

She gave up competitive figure skating and focused on her studies, earning her degree in physical education. Soon after, U.S. Figure Skating reached out to ask if she was interested in judging.

"I was so much younger than the average judge, so part of me thought: 'Why would I want to hang out with those people?'" she says. "But I loved skating, and it had become a void in my life. I really missed it."

Tanger passed the tests and trials required to become an international judge.

The young girl who had dreamed of reaching the pinnacle of her sport had done exactly that — albeit in an entirely different capacity.

She spent two decades judging and doing TV work before accepting her first significant role with the Olympics.

For the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway — her father's home country — Tanger served as the U.S. Team Leader for Figure Skating. This involved managing Tonya Harding's infamous feud with Nancy Kerrigan and the public relations crisis that ensued.

"Even though there were challenges with Tonya and Nancy, it was an incredible opportunity and a great Olympics," she notes. "And it was such a great place for it. Where else could you have such a pristine Olympics? The snowflakes were like diamonds coming out of the air. To me, it was just wonderful."

Tanger made plenty more Olympic memories.

She had a hand in every Winter Olympics from 1994 to 2018 — most notably as assistant "chef de mission" for the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City.

"It was the only opportunity I'd ever have to serve in the Olympic Games in my home country," she explains. "Boy, was my timing right."

But her work was not done.

After allegations that the pairs' figure skating competition in Salt Lake City had been fixed, Tanger was part of a



## Gale Tanger

five-person team that developed the new International Judging System.

She has never lost her innovative spirit.

When COVID-19 disrupted figure skating competitions last year, she was among the early proponents of virtual competitions in which skaters filmed themselves on their home ice.

"I had a team of 35 people working with me, and it was like finding the Holy Grail when we realized it would work," she explains. "No one had ever done this before. But if we did it, we knew others would follow."

Even after 50 years, Tanger's passion for figure skating continues to burn. The sport's constant evolution means there will always be another challenge — or, in Tanger's view, another opportunity.

"I've been lucky enough to have so many wonderful opportunities in my path," she says. "When you see one, and you think you could make a positive contribution, you just have to take it."



# A love of learning lives on

Kristine A. Mason Scholarship Fund supports SOE students with financial need

**S**ome people leave a mark that lingers long after they're gone.

Kristine Mason was one of those people.

Mason, '73 & '79, had an impactful career as a media specialist in the Eau Claire Area School District, inspiring hundreds of students — many from underprivileged backgrounds — to love reading and learning.

Mason died in 2001 at age 50, but her spirit lives on through the Kristine A. Mason Scholarship Fund, which supports School of Education students with financial need.



**Kristine Mason**

"I look forward to making those gifts every year," says Jane Schley, '78, Mason's longtime partner and the benefactor of the scholarship fund. "Kris was an amazing woman who loved learning. She came from a poor family. It's nice to know that she will live on through the gifts, and that because of the scholarship fund, students don't have to go through the financial hardship she went through."

Schley and Mason first discussed the idea of creating a scholarship fund when they were young women.

They had met at UWL's Sanford Hall in 1974, when Schley was a first-year student and Mason was a graduate student.

*Left: Alums Kristine Mason (left) and her partner, Jane Schley, during a bike ride in the 1990s. After Mason died in 2001 at age 50, Schley established a scholarship fund in her honor, supporting School of Education students with a financial need.*

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They were close friends and excellent students, but neither had an easy path to a degree. They each struggled financially, especially Mason, who had taken a few years between her bachelor's and master's programs so she could save enough money to make it through school.

After graduating and settling into their careers, the couple began looking for ways to give back.

"I told her to imagine that a student working three jobs can apply for a scholarship from someone like you — a person who loves kids and loves reading and loves nature," Schley explains. "She thought it was a great idea, but she died before we could set up a fund."

Mason left an indelible mark at Longfellow Elementary School in Eau Claire, where she was the library's media specialist.

Before the internet made lesson plans and teaching practices easy to share, Mason independently developed two programs that would spread nationwide.

First, she used a Microsoft community technology grant to develop a program in which Longfellow students taught senior citizens how to use a computer, and the seniors used their new skills to share their stories with the Chippewa Valley Museum. She presented this approach at two



*Mason (right) was passionate about helping children in her role as a school library media specialist in Eau Claire. "She was a visionary," her partner, Jane Schley, says. "She was always thinking about what was best for kids."*

national conferences: one at Microsoft headquarters in Seattle and another in Washington, D.C.

Second, after lamenting that many students returned to locked or empty houses after school, she created Longfellow's "The Lighted School House" after-school program and hosted it in the library. The program provided a safe place where students could have a snack and receive homework help from volunteers, rather than return to an uncertain situation at home.

"She was a visionary," Schley says. "She was always thinking about what was best for kids."

Now, Schley is sharing Mason's love of learning with future generations of educators.

Over the past two decades, the Kristine A. Mason Scholarship Fund

has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to dozens of School of Education students — many of whom have gone on to successful careers in the classroom.

One of the best parts of funding the scholarships, Schley says, is the chance to meet the recipients and tell stories about what a wonderful person her partner was.

"I remember the day I knew I was in love with Kris. I was walking from Sanford to North Hall, and I had to look down to make sure my feet were touching the ground," Schley says. "When I meet these students and they announce these gifts, I get the same feeling. It's like walking on air."



# Accessible advisor

**Valerie Krage  
wins 2021  
Eagle Excellence  
in Academic  
Advising Award**

**Position:** Lecturer, Educational Studies

**Started at UWL:** 2019

**Advising responsibilities:** I advise approximately 30 students. In addition to guiding them each semester in selecting the courses that will ensure that they progress through the program, I support them in any way that I can — sharing resources, providing support and cheering them on. I make sure they are aware of the various benchmarks throughout the program, such as applying to the School of Ed and taking the standardized tests required by the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for licensure.

**Background:** Prior to coming to UWL, I was at Viterbo University for six years, and previous to that I was with the La Crescent-Hokah School District for 21 years.

**Favorite part of advising:** My favorite part of being an advisor without question is making connections with students and getting to know them as individuals. I have all of my advisees in classes at some point during their program, so it is fun to see them from two perspectives.