

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

MWSU



SPRING 2018

**8 Brains, birds and flu bugs :
student/faculty research abounds**

**16 Hurricane catastrophe
times three**



The Clock Tower Society



Jake Cunning '16

**Coordinator, Learning and Organizational
Development
Boehringer Ingelheim**

After committing to continuing his Griffon legacy on Legacy Day, Jake knew he wanted to do even more for his alma mater. He wanted his legacy to have an impact years from now, not just in the coming semester.

“ We all want to leave the world a better place than we found it, and I thought what better place to give back than my alma mater that means so much to me. ”

Jake's dedication led him to make a personal financial commitment of more than \$100,000 to Missouri Western State University through a planned gift, making him the youngest member of Missouri Western's Clock Tower Society.

This gift will impact students through scholarships and grants throughout the next century and beyond.

Thanks, Jake!

missouriwestern.edu/foundation



SPRING 2018

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■ ON THE COVER

Dr. Michael Grantham, Dr. Julie Jedlicka and Dr. Corey White. Photo by Jeni Swope '16. Also on the cover – a new name for the magazine! You may also notice some redesign changes throughout the issue. We hope you like the new look!

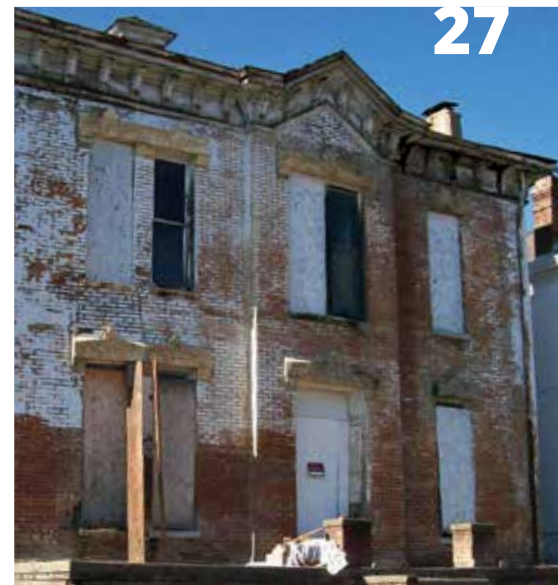
■ FEATURES

- 8** Brains, birds and flu bugs: student/faculty research abounds

Three professors' research projects with students are standing out and worth a read.

- 16** Hurricane catastrophe times three

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria affected thousands in the fall of 2017. Read about several Missouri Western alumni who endured the storms in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.



The MWSU Magazine is a publication of the University Advancement Office for alumni and friends of Missouri Western State University and its predecessor institutions.

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Missouri Western State University
is an equal opportunity institution.

president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

As this issue of the magazine went to press, the Missouri Legislature was still working on the state budget for fiscal year 2019. We don't know what the final amount of state appropriations for Missouri Western will be, but there is a real possibility that our funding will be less than fiscal year 2018.

I want to assure you that when we receive final figures regarding our state appropriation for the coming fiscal year, we will look at our budget strategically and with a long-term focus. With campus and community input, we are currently in the process of creating a five-year strategic plan to prioritize our goals and ensure that we remain true to our mission. That will guide our budget decisions.

I do want to give credit to the legislators in the General Assembly. They are supportive of higher education in Missouri, and they understand the value of it and what an educated workforce means to the future of the state.

Providing a high-quality education and hands-on, life-

changing experiences for our students remain our top priority.

Please read the article that begins on page 8 about two of our professors who received National Science Foundation grants last year – one for approximately \$249,000 and one for \$566,000 – and another professor who is conducting research on the influenza virus with our students. We are very proud of our outstanding faculty, but more importantly, we appreciate that they are providing great research opportunities for our students.

Those research projects are just three examples of how our students are gaining experiences outside of the classroom to prepare them for careers when they graduate. Those types of activities – faculty/student research, internships and practicums – help jumpstart their careers, and we appreciate our faculty members' commitment to applied learning. Sincerely,

Robert A. Vartabedian
President
Missouri Western State University

Dr. Robert Vartabedian, John Nave and Jerry Pickman '85, vice president for University Advancement. Nave, a St. Joseph native, is on the board of Living the Dream, Inc. and helped arrange a performance of "King & Cronkite," the Walter Cronkite Memorial's live, multimedia performance for Living the Dream, Inc. in Topeka, Kansas.



Recent graduate creates new Potter sculpture

Everything fell into place one morning when Jake Proffit '17 walked out the front door of his home. In the weeks prior to that, he had been pondering and drawing up plans for a new sculpture for Potter Hall. When he walked out his front door and saw a cocoon that morning, he knew what he wanted to do.

That was how Kacoon came into being, and the nine-foot-tall stainless steel and concrete sculpture will grace the west lawn of Potter Hall.

Proffit, a Savannah, Missouri native, graduated in December 2017 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio with a sculpture emphasis. Last fall, when he was enrolled in his last sculpture class with Eric Fuson '88, artist-in-residence, Fuson asked if he would be interested in creating a sculpture to replace the one that was currently



on the west lawn of Potter Hall. That sculpture, also created by a student, had been in place since the early 2000s, and it was showing signs of age, Proffit said. He readily agreed to create a new piece and got right to work planning what the sculpture might be.

Then he walked out of his front door and saw the cocoon. "I wanted to do something the students could relate to," Proffit said. "Incorporating the idea of a cocoon and

transition, the sculpture represents the journey of students throughout their college experience."

Kacoon, he said, suggests that each student entering Missouri Western encounters events, relationships and experiences that shape them into well-rounded individuals as they "transition" into the adult world when they graduate.

The sculpture is made with a pin-rod frame and expanded metal mesh, covered with two layers of concrete. The interior space contains a stainless steel half-dome. Proffit says the entire sculpture is maintenance-free and should last for many years.

Kacoon is just the latest of several great sculpting opportunities he said he has had. Proffit worked on "We Came in Peace ...," the sculpture in the Walter Cronkite Memorial.

"I loved that. Without that, I would not have been able to work on this one by myself." He said both sculptures contain the same interior framework.



Jake Proffit '17 with his sculpture-in-progress, Kacoon.

And, in 2015, he and student Heather Lafromboise, Dustin Lafromboise and former assistant professor of art Neil Lawley won a public vote to be one of four pieces installed as part of the Canoe Art Imagine Art installation in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"I've had a lot of big opportunities," Proffit said. "I don't know that I would have gotten those anywhere else. My portfolio is pretty awesome."

Proffit hopes to continue sculpting and is currently exploring his options; one certainty is that he will always work with his hands.

But for now, he appreciates that his work is on display in front of the building that houses the School of Fine Arts on the campus of his alma mater.

"It is definitely a good feeling that I am leaving something behind after all the opportunities I've been given here." ■

Campus Kudos

- For the third year in a row, students in Dr. William Russell's Research Methods course won the McSwegin Research Award at the Missouri Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Convention in Lake Ozark, Missouri. Student winners in 2017 were **Miranda Migletz**, **Paige Mathews** and **Camile Banez**.
- Honors student **Laney Hayward** was awarded a research grant from the National Beta Beta Biological Society. The \$400 grant funded her independent honors thesis studying avian foraging behavior using the campus nest boxes.
- **Annette Weeks '87** was named one of 2018's 50 Missourians You Should Know by Ingram's Magazine. Weeks is the director of the Center for Entrepreneurship in the Craig School of Business. She was an entrepreneur for 14 years and worked for the Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation for seven years before joining Missouri Western in 2014.
- Missouri Western received a bronze seal from the ALL IN Challenge Awards for achieving a student voting rate between 50 and 59 percent in the November 2016 election. The effort was primarily driven by the **Student Government Association**. Student **Zaneeta E. Daver**

was the campus director of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

- Art Day 2017 was held in Potter Hall last fall, and more than 1,200 high school students attended. The day consisted of workshops and exhibits of the high school students' work. Art Day is coordinated by Department of Art faculty members **David Harris** and **Eric Fuson '88**.
- The **Golden Griffon Marching Band**, directed by **Dr. Nate Gay**, led the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer's Holly Jolly Christmas Light Parade for the opening of the Old Time Christmas Festival at Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri.
- The fall 2017 **Multidisciplinary Research Day** included 89 projects from 176 students and 27 faculty members. The student/faculty research projects were from nine academic departments.
- **Dr. David McMahan**, professor of speech, was elected second vice president elect for the National Communication Association. He will serve as president of the association in 2020.
- The campus chapter of **Beta Gamma Sigma**, an academic honor society in the Craig School of Business, earned the Highest Honors Chapter for the 2016-17 academic year. That made the group eligible for one chapter honor roll scholarship, which covered the cost for

"King & Cronkite" on the road



The Walter Cronkite Memorial's live, multimedia show, "King & Cronkite," was performed in Topeka, Kansas as part of the Living the Dream, Inc.'s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship and Awards Banquet. Pictured is Jim Korinke, who played the part of Walter Cronkite, and student Robert Vardiman, who played the part of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students assist in wildfire base camp

students to attend the 2017 Global Leadership Summit in Orlando.

- The Craig School of Business's business fraternity, **Alpha Kappa Psi**, earned more than 100,000 points to receive Chapter of the Year for the 2016-17 academic year. The group earned its points through recruitment, membership, officer training, professional events and community service.
- At the Associated Collegiate Press/College Media Association fall 2017 convention in Dallas, media students brought home eight national awards:
 - ◆ Pinnacle Writing Awards, Best Editorial: **Austin Bauer**, third place, Griffon News
 - ◆ Pinnacle Broadcast Awards, Best Television Newscast: **Brooke Anderson**, third place, Griffon News; Best TV Special Event Coverage: **Brooke Anderson**, third place, Griffon News
 - ◆ Pinnacle Yearbook Awards, Best Yearbook Cover: **Bryant Scott**, honorable mention, Griffon Yearbook; Best Yearbook Entertainment Page/Spread: **Adeeb Alsaawi**, second place, Griffon Yearbook; Yearbook Best of Show: Griffon Yearbook, 10th place
 - ◆ CMA Film Festival Awards, Video Newscast: **Elijah Smith**, first place, The Griffon Newscast; Long Documentary: **Bailey Ketcham**, first place, "The Comeback." ■

A long-time Missouri Western relationship with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs led to several students joining crews to fight wildland fires or participate in prescribed burns for the past several years. That relationship has now expanded to give students the opportunity to also work in wildfire base camps.

Dr. Cary Chevalier, professor of biology, said he has always had students interested in joining a hand crew to fight fires, but he has also had several students who wanted to participate, just not on a fire-fighting hand crew.

The Bureau suggested those students work in the base camps, and last summer, after participating in a weekend training session and taking online courses, Caitlin Glore and Jackie Herron were two of several Missouri Western students who participated. The women, both wildlife conservation management majors, spent three weeks in Rangely, Colorado; Durango, Colorado; and Keystone, Wyoming; helping set up, tear down and making sure the firefighters had the equipment they needed.

"I wanted to do it at first because the pay was good, but I liked it," Glore said. "I met a lot of people, made new friends and got to see a lot of places, and it was good for networking."

However, she said you did earn your pay because camp days started around 5 a.m. and ended around 10 p.m. every day.

"It's about the money in the beginning," Herron added, "but you see different areas of the United States and meet a lot of great people, too."

The training and the actual work give the students an excellent skill set, Dr. Chevalier said. "It makes them superiorly competitive in the job market."

For many of the students, the summer work with the Bureau pays them enough so that they do not have to hold down a job during the school year, he said.

Both Glore and Herron said they would like to work at a base camp again this coming summer. "I liked getting to see behind the scenes of how a camp is run and what it takes to fight a fire," Glore said. "It's worthwhile work." ■



Multidisciplinary Research Day on campus drew a large crowd of both student participants and attendees.

New graduate certificate begins this fall

A graduate certificate in technical communication will begin this fall. The 15-credit-hour program is 100% online, and students in the program do not need undergraduate coursework in technical communication.

The program can be completed in one academic year, and a student can start at the beginning of any semester – summer, fall or spring. Courses cover topics such as technical writing and editing, writing for managers, proposal and grant writing, creating training materials, and documenting procedures.

Dr. Kaye Adkins, coordinator of the program, said the certificate is designed for professionals who want to enhance their current careers and to add technical communication expertise to their skill set.

She said it will be especially valuable for engineers, software programmers, scientists and medical workers, but it will add value for anyone who wants to improve their writing and communication skills for business, industry, government or nonprofit organizations. ■

Development Office welcomes major gifts officer

Last fall, Christina McCan joined the Development Office as a major gifts officer. McCan had been working as a senior market development specialist for Brightergy in Kansas City, Missouri.

“It is a thrill and a privilege to be serving the Missouri



Western mission Christina McCan in this new role

as major gifts officer,” McCan said. “I am excited and inspired to get to work with such a talented, creative, energetic and collaborative team and am looking forward to building new and lasting relationships with staff and Missouri Western supporters alike.”

She and her husband, Chris, have three children. ■

Foundation CFO hired

Andrew Molloy '13, CPA was named associate executive director and chief financial officer of the MWSU Foundation in December 2017.

Prior to joining the University, Molloy had been the senior associate,



Andrew Molloy '13

assurance services for CliftonLarsonAllen LLP in St. Joseph since 2014. He graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with three majors – accounting, finance and management.

Molloy and his wife, Megan '12, have one daughter. ■

Kansas City Chiefs renew contract

The Kansas City Chiefs and Missouri Western have reached an agreement that will keep the Chiefs in St. Joseph, Missouri, for training camp in 2018. The agreement also includes an option for an additional one-year extension term that would cover training camp in 2019.

Under the extension, the Chiefs and Missouri Western have agreed to cost-reducing measures related to rental equipment and labor expenses to help drive down operating costs. Other conditions of the 2015 contract amendment and the original 2009 contract remain in place.

The Chiefs have held training camp on the campus of Missouri Western every year since 2010, when the club returned its training camp to the state of Missouri for the first time in 20 years. The 2018 training camp will mark the ninth year on campus. ■

Online MBA now enrolling

A 100 percent online MBA option will begin in the fall of 2018. This option is in addition to Missouri Western's onsite MBA that began last fall. Now with the online option, students accepted into the MBA program can choose to earn the 30-credit-hour program all online or all in the classroom.

The onsite MBA offers four concentrations: General Business, Forensic Accounting, Enterprise Resource Planning or Animal and Life Science. The online MBA offers a General Business concentration.

The AACSB-accredited professional degree program gives students of all educational and professional backgrounds a broad business education to help launch or advance their professional careers. The programs focus on applied academic education to develop a student's analytical and decision-making abilities, said Dr. Logan Jones, who directs the MBA program.

For more information about the MBA, email mba@missouriwestern.edu. For more information about all of Missouri Western's graduate programs, go to missouriwestern.edu/graduate. ■

Superscoring allows for more scholarships

Missouri Western has adopted the "superscore" method to evaluate the ACT scores of incoming freshmen for admission and scholarship offers, beginning for applicants who enroll for fall 2018.

Previously, if a student took the ACT more than once, Missouri Western would evaluate admission and scholarship applications based on the best composite score (the average of the test's four sections) on a particular date. For example, if a student took the ACT in

September and again in February, Missouri Western would consider the highest composite score from either of those two dates.

The superscore, however, takes the best score from each section, regardless of the test date. So now, Missouri Western will determine the student's composite score using the highest section scores, such as English and math from September and reading and science from February. ■

Drum Major for Justice awards

A Missouri Western student, Missouri Western employee and a community member were honored with 2018 Drum Major for Justice awards at Missouri Western's Martin Luther King, Jr. banquet in January: student Andrea Gordon, sophomore cinematography major from Kansas City, Missouri; Derek Evans, academic advisor in the

Student Success and Academic Advising Center; and Heather Gladhart, principal at Coleman Elementary School in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The awards, given by the Center for Multicultural Education, honor those who demonstrate a commitment to social justice and multicultural education service. ■

International fair



The 2017 International Fair was held in October. Sixty students from 25 countries set up displays and served native food samples. More than 600 people from the campus and community attended.



BRAINS, BIRDS AND FLU BUGS:

STUDENT/FACULTY RESEARCH ABOUNDS

It's not uncommon for students and faculty to work on research projects together, but the recent work of three faculty members this past year – Dr. Corey White, Dr. Julie Jedlicka and Dr. Michael Grantham – truly stand out.

Dr. White, assistant professor of psychology, received a \$566,000 CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) last year and began working with students in the fall of 2017.

Dr. Jedlicka, assistant professor of biology, was awarded a \$249,424 NSF grant with faculty colleagues at Humboldt State University in California, and a Missouri Western student was one of a team that conducted research in Kenya. And, a published article about Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Michael Grantham's research on spreading the influenza virus gained nationwide attention during the flu epidemic this past winter.



Student Justin Ross spent his 2017-18 semester break conducting research in Kenya. He is pictured in the front, second from right, with a group of Maasai women of a village he and the team of researchers from Humboldt State University met when they visited the Maasai Mara Conservatory.



Dr. Corey White discusses his grant-funded research project with students, from left, Taylor Robinson, Bingxin Song and Lauren Muir.

BRAINS: Dr. Corey White

Dr. White's project, "Validating and Applying a New Class of Drift-diffusion Models for Investigating Individual Differences in Executive Control," will develop and test new mathematical models of executive function, which allows us to control our thoughts, impulses, etc. He wants to provide new analytical tools for investigating individual differences in cognitive function to improve our understanding of how and why certain individuals have impaired ability to control their thoughts and actions.

Dr. White, who joined Missouri Western in the summer of 2017, wrote the grant when he was an assistant professor at Syracuse University. Because it was a CAREER grant, he was able to bring the grant with him to Missouri Western.

The five-year grant will fund scholarships for students each year and also provide funding for laptops and travel to professional conferences to report on their research. This past fall, he hired four students – Alexis Guyton, Kyle Kammerer, Lauryn Muir and Bingxin Song – and the group attended a Psychonomics Society Annual Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. Taylor Robinson joined the group in the spring semester.

Song spent the 2014-15 year at Missouri Western as an exchange student from Jiaying University. After she earned her mathematics degree at Jiaying, she decided to return to the United States to pursue a psychology degree from Missouri Western.

"I had never done research," she said, "and I knew it would be a very good opportunity."

Song said her mathematics degree has helped a lot, and she is also appreciative that she is learning computer coding and getting to design some experiments as part of the research. She plans to attend graduate school and knows this research experience will make her more competitive when she applies for it.

Muir, a sophomore from St. Joseph, noted that Dr. White was working with graduate students on research at Syracuse, so she is grateful for the opportunity as an undergraduate.

"I am so happy to be part of the team and possibly contribute to the field of psychology," she said.

Like Song, Muir believes this experience will place her ahead of her colleagues in graduate school. "It will also help me better understand when I am reading about other research projects."

BIRDS: Dr. Julie Jedlicka

Dr. Jedlicka's research also began this past fall. Her project, "Birds, Beans and Bugs: Modeling a Warming Climate's Effect on the Natural Enemies Hypothesis," studies the roles of birds, insects and climate change in the ecology of coffee production in Kenya. The grant allows the professors and students from Humboldt and Missouri Western to travel to Kenya for five weeks each year for the next three years.

Justin Ross, a Bachelor of General Studies major from St. Joseph, conducted research in Kenya for the first year this past December and January, and Dr. Jedlicka will be part of the team in Kenya in 2018 and 2019.

She said one purpose of the grant is to give as many students as possible an opportunity for international research, so different students from Missouri Western and Humboldt will go each year.

"Students will benefit from collaboration with U.S. and foreign mentors while being fully immersed in the research process, from field work to analysis to writing for publication and presentation," she said.

The goal of the research is to investigate what birds are eating on coffee farms, to see if they are eating pests that

harm the plants. Dr. Jedlicka said they will gather data from both coffee farms in the sun and those in the shade, and they will study birds near coffee farms at a variety of elevations.

Ross found out about the opportunity when he was a student in Dr. Jedlicka's ornithology class last year. His role in year one was to observe the foraging of birds on the coffee farms. The team of five students recorded information about the variety of birds they observed, and by the end of the five weeks, they had recorded information on 353 different bird species.

In year two and three, the researchers will select four to eight sites and set up misting nets to collect birds and bird droppings. Data will be recorded about the birds and they will be released, and the droppings will be shipped back to Missouri Western. Several students will extract the DNA from the droppings to determine the birds' diets.

"The DNA analysis of the fecal matter allows us to know much more precisely what kind of bugs the birds are eating, and in this case whether they are eating insects that are pests to the coffee farmers," Dr. Jedlicka said.

Ross said he enjoyed everything about his experience – the research, his colleagues from Humboldt, the culture, the Kenyans and the food. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

continued on next page



Dr. Julie Jedlicka and student Justin Ross discuss their research project that took Ross to Kenya this past winter.



Dr. Michael Grantham oversees student researchers Joe Giles and Savannah Lewis.

FLU BUGS: Dr. Michael Grantham

A research project that Dr. Michael Grantham was a part of at the University of Maryland a few years back was in the national news this past flu season, and he continues to conduct related research with Missouri Western students today.

Dr. Grantham, who joined Missouri Western as an assistant professor of biology in fall 2016, worked with Dr. Don Milton of the University of Maryland School of Health on researching the spread of the influenza virus during the 2012-13 flu season. Their research results, “Infectious Virus in Exhaled Breath of Symptomatic Seasonal Influenza Cases from a College Community,” were published in January 2018 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.

The publication caught the eye of the national media (including Time Magazine) since the article came out in the midst of the

2017-18 flu epidemic. The group studied how the flu virus spread through exhaled breath. Interestingly, their results seemed to indicate that the flu virus could be spread by an

infected person merely breathing and that coughing was not required.

“We were able to measure the amount of infectious virus in exhaled breath, and I don’t think that had been done before,” Dr. Grantham said.

He noted that most people believe the flu virus is spread by either coughing or by direct contact, such as a handshake, but the research seems to show that it may just spread by exhaling.

“If we find that this transmission is the most important,” he said, “we have to rethink how we prevent and control the flu.”

Last summer, Dr. Grantham worked with four Missouri Western students on research related to the flu virus, and is continuing his research with one of the students, Savannah Lewis, a biology health science major.

The research involves a complicated process of cloning viruses that have been grown in a tissue culture, and working to create a new lab strain in order to compare it to older strains that are being used in most research.

Since she plans to continue in medical school after she graduates, Lewis, from Gilman City, Missouri, said she appreciates the experience she is gaining through the research.

“Students gain practical experience in a lab,” Dr. Grantham said. “They learn critical thinking and troubleshooting, and those skills are extremely important no matter where they go.” ■

**VIRUS
FUN (?) FACT:**
Grantham says if all known viruses in the world were stacked end to end, the length would be 1,000 times larger than the width of the Milky Way Galaxy.

MWSU gains BioZyme Scholar in Residence

A partnership between a local animal health company and Missouri Western has brought an international researcher to campus.

At the invitation of Bob Norton '73, CEO and chair of the board of BioZyme Inc. in St. Joseph, Dr. Ignacio Ipharraguerre became a BioZyme Scholar in Residence at Missouri Western this past fall. He is conducting research, primarily for BioZyme, in the Innovation Stockyard at the University's Kit Bond Science and Technology Incubator.

Dr. Ipharraguerre, who earned his master's and doctorate from the University of Illinois Department of Animal Sciences, is a research associate at the Institute of Human Nutrition and Food Science at the University of Kiel in Kiel, Germany. He was conducting collaborative research for BioZyme at Kiel when Norton asked him to bring his

work to St. Joseph.

Norton met with Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western's president, and Ronan Molloy, president of Innovation Stockyard, to arrange for Dr. Ipharraguerre to utilize the lab equipment in the Innovation Stockyard to conduct his research. He and his wife and three children moved to St. Joseph in July 2017.

"Our goal is not only to bring world-class scientists to our company, but to bring their families to the community, and Ignacio is a world-class scientist," Norton said.

"Places like the incubator are right at the interface between academics and business," Dr. Ipharraguerre said. "They make research projects affordable."

The research involves *aspergillus oryzae*, a fungal organism that has been used in Asia since ancient times in food production. The

fermentation process of the fungus and the extracts it produces, Dr. Ipharraguerre said, generates compounds that are beneficial for intestinal health.

BioZyme, which develops and manufactures natural, proprietary products focused on animal nutrition, health and microbiology, has primarily focused on products for digestive health for ruminants – animals with four stomach compartments, such as cattle. Dr. Ipharraguerre's research has determined the fermentation extracts can produce gut health products for non-ruminants (monogastrics), such as poultry and swine.

By this fall, Dr. Ipharraguerre plans to begin training Missouri Western students on the lab equipment he is using for his research. He will also guest lecture in classrooms and collaborate with science faculty members.

"We felt like this was a good opportunity to give students valuable experience in an applied real-life environment," Norton said. "Local animal health companies desire local graduates with good academic and applied credentials." He noted that BioZyme has hired several Missouri Western graduates in the past.

"We're lucky to have the University and Innovation Stockyard," Dr. Ipharraguerre said. "Everything was a perfect match."

"We are extremely appreciative to have Dr. Vartabedian's, Dr. (Jeanne) Daffron's and the entire Missouri Western staff's support and collaboration on projects for our community like this one," Norton said. ■



Dr. Ignacio Ipharraguerre, Biozyme Scholar in Residence, conducts research in Missouri Western's incubator.

Men's basketball falls in MIAA tournament

The men's basketball team finished the regular season strong to make the MIAA tournament on a tie-breaker as the No. 12 seed. Unfortunately, there was no underdog run for the Griffons who saw their season end in the first round of the tournament with a loss to No. 5-seed Central Missouri. The Griffons ended with an overall record of 6-21 and a 4-15 record in the MIAA. After five years as head coach, Brett Weiberg resigned following the season.

Cole Clearman became the program's all-time leader in three-point field goals with 233, breaking the 27-year old record of Heath Dudley '93 (217) on Feb. 7 at Washburn. In the same game, the senior guard became Missouri Western's 15th member of the 1,000-point club. Guard Lavon Hightower was named honorable mention All-MIAA. ■

**YWCA/Missouri
Western
Charity Golf Classic**
June 2 and 4

**Contact Brett Esely
for all the details!**
(816) 271-5904
esely@missouriwestern.edu



**For all Griffon sports
schedules, check out
gogriffons.com**



Griffon Melia Richardson

Challenging season ends on high note

It was a season plagued by injuries and bad luck for the women's basketball team. After a 9-1 start to the season, the promising team lost three starters and finished the regular season 11-17. On a second tie-breaker, the Griffons qualified as the No. 12 seed in the MIAA Championships. Missouri Western became the first-ever No. 12 seed to win in the conference's postseason tournament with an upset of No. 5 seed Nebraska Kearney in the first round. The Griffons then became the lowest seed to ever advance to the semifinals with an upset of No. 4 seed Central Oklahoma at

Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri. The Cinderella run ended with a semifinal loss to eventual tournament champion Lindenwood.

The Griffons ended with a 13-18 overall record, 4-15 in the MIAA. Head coach Rob Edmisson won his 500th game as a collegiate head coach on Dec. 2 against Northeastern State. On Feb. 3, Edmisson earned his 100th win as head coach at Missouri Western. Forwards Cera Ledbetter and Dossou Ndiaye, along with guard Melia Richardson, were all named honorable mention All-MIAA. ■

Verduzco becomes all-time wins leader

With a 2-1 win on a walk-off single over Washburn on March 3, Head Coach Buzz Verduzco became Griffon baseball's all-time wins leader. It was his 541st win at Missouri Western, moving him past the only other man to ever lead the program, Doug Minnis.

Verduzco's Griffons have seen just one sub-.500 season since 2001 and only three in his 19 years leading the program. Last season

marked the program's fourth trip to the NCAA Division II regional tournament and the second consecutive regional qualification. Verduzco was named MIAA Coach of the Year in 2013 after leading the program to its first MIAA regular season championship. Verduzco's 541st win was the first in a three-game sweep of Washburn on the way to likely yet another successful season for his Griffons. ■

New men's basketball head coach

Sundance Wicks was hired as the new head men's basketball coach in March.

Wicks joins Missouri Western fresh off the NCAA Division II national championship game as the associate head coach at his alma mater, Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota. He brings extensive experience to Missouri Western as an assistant coach at the Division II and Division I levels.

Wicks served as associate head coach at Northern State since 2016. While there, he helped lead the Wolves to the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference regular season and postseason championships this year. Northern State also claimed the Central Region championship en route to the program's first-ever appearance in the national championship game.

"When this search process started, our mission was to find a coach who possessed two defining characteristics: someone who was a relentless recruiter and someone who has been part of building a championship culture at the NCAA Division II level," said Josh Looney, director of Athletics. "With Sunny, we not only found a proven recruiter and winner, but we also found someone with an unwavering commitment to engaging and motivating communities through basketball. His energy and passion for basketball are unmistakable and he is the perfect fit to lead the resurgence of our men's basketball program."



Sundance Wicks

"This is an exciting time for Griffon Athletics," Wicks said. "You can tell by all the energy and enthusiasm throughout the athletic department and the campus community that Missouri Western is ready for the fight and about to take flight."

After lettering four years as a student athlete and graduating with

a bachelor's degree in international business at Northern State, Wicks held assistant coaching positions at his alma mater, Colorado (2006-07), Northern Illinois (2007-11) and San Francisco (2015-16). Wicks also built the Arizona Power

Basketball Academy, serving as a skill instructor and director from 2011-15. Prior to launching the APBA, he spent five months training NBA pre-draft prospects at the Impact Basketball Academy in Las Vegas. Wicks' draft class trainees included Kawhi Leonard, Alec Burks and Isaiah Thomas.

As a student-athlete, Wicks was twice named first team All-NSIC, scoring 1,174 points and pulling down 665 rebounds in his career. He was also a two-time All-NSIC performer in the 400-meter hurdles at Northern State. After graduation, Wicks played for the Sodertalje Kings in Sweden. He led the team in points and rebounding.

He also holds a master's degree in health, physical education and coaching from Northern State. ■

First track and field All-American

A solid first-ever indoor track and field season for Missouri Western ended with an outstanding accomplishment. Senior Phil Thompson finished third in the triple jump at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field National Championships to give the program its first-ever All-American in year one.

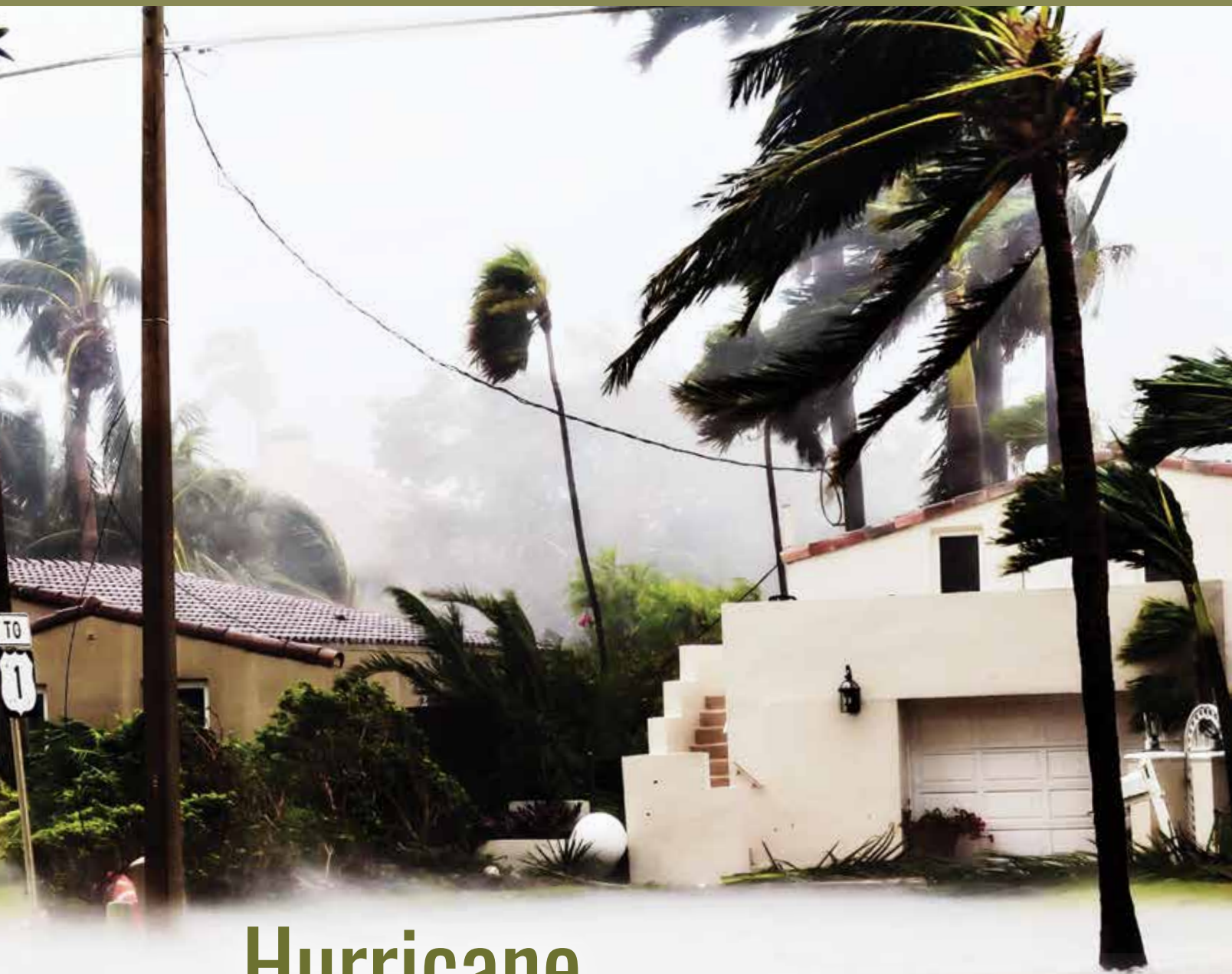
Thompson bested the top-three finishers from the 2017 national championships, finishing third despite being seeded 14th out of 16 national qualifiers. His accomplishment was one of many for the first-year program. Other season highlights included the Fred Beile Classic on Feb. 3 where Griffons won seven events. On the season, Missouri Western posted 11 event championships, including six by freshmen.

The team is coached by Marc Bierbaum. ■



All-American Phil Thompson





Hurricane catastrophe times three:

Seven alumni share their experiences with Harvey, Irma and Maria

Three major hurricanes, Harvey, Irma and Maria, hit the Caribbean and southern United States within a few weeks, causing loss of life, injuries and billions in damages. We spoke with several alumni in those areas who were affected, and what follows is an accounting of their experiences with the storms.

Yevgeniy Kondratenko's street in Houston; page 19, park rangers who cleaned up Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park in Naples; page 21, hurricane damage in Puerto Rico.

“My husband and I have lived in Houston since 1971. We lost electricity for four days because a tree had fallen across the electric lines in our subdivision. To our surprise, we looked out our front door and there were four trucks parked at our curb from the Neosho, Missouri Power Company. Our thanks goes to the guys from Neosho. We were fortunate to escape the flooding so many Houstonians are still dealing with. I know some people who had 11 feet of water in their house.”

- Shirley (Reid) '55 and Richard Davis



Hurricane Harvey H20: Yevgeniy Kondratenko '03

“It’s pretty unnerving when you hear talk about the reservoir and see the name of your subdivision (on the news),” said Yevgeniy Kondratenko '03, who lives in Houston near the Addicks Reservoir. For him, the unrelenting rainfall after Hurricane Harvey meant watching the water levels – on his street, on his lawn and in the reservoir. For two nights, he and his wife took turns sleeping two hours at a time to keep an eye on the water, planning their escape route if evacuation was necessary and determining what needed to be carried upstairs in case the water came into their home.

Kondratenko, who is a process engineer for BP America, figured out the elevation of both his house and the emergency spillway on the reservoir. Since his house’s elevation was above the spillway, that was enough to keep the water about five feet from his front door when it finally stopped raining. He estimated that if the water had risen just one more foot, they would have had water in their house. “I learned a lot more about that reservoir than I ever knew before,” he said with a laugh.

Several houses near him did take on water, and the street in his subdivision was only navigable by boat for about two weeks, but his family stayed dry and never lost electricity.

“We were stressed, but we felt very blessed.”

And, he said, it felt good to see that as soon as the water subsided, volunteers arrived to help Houston residents.

Kondratenko said he would be working from home for several months since BP’s office building flooded.

Irma beachfront cleanup: Brittany Bremer '16 and Tony Bender '82

Florida residents Brittany Bremer '16 and Tony Bender '82 endured Hurricane Irma on each coast, Bremer in Fort Myers on the Gulf of Mexico side and Bender in Indian Harbour Beach on the Atlantic side.

“About a week ahead of the hurricane, you started to see lines to get fuel and empty shelves that used to hold water, canned goods and carpentry supplies,”



Bremer said. "Most gas stations were starting to run out of fuel, as well."

Both Bremer and Bender live in mandatory evacuation zones, but decided to prepare their homes and ride out the storm there.

Bremer said she decided not to evacuate because she is a couple blocks away from an un-evacuated zone, her building is concrete and several neighbors were staying.

"My neighbors were kind enough to keep checking on me, and eventually I stayed in their apartment most of the time during the storm," Bremer said. "There were a few times I was frightened, especially during the eye of the storm."

Bender, who has been in Florida for a decade, lives about two blocks from the beach. He said his family had earlier thought about going to his brother's in St. Petersburg, but then Irma seemed to be heading that way, so they stayed put.

"When you see those guys on the Weather Channel on your beach, it's not good," Bender said with a laugh.

Bremer, a native of St. Joseph and a park ranger at Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park in Naples, moved to Florida after earning her wildlife conservation management degree in 2016. This was her first hurricane experience.

She said she didn't have any damage from Hurricane Irma to her apartment, but the beachfront state park received substantial damage.

The park was closed three weeks for cleanup, and employees from other parks were called in to help. Most of the damage was from downed trees and the storm surge, she said, and clean-up consisted of sawing down trees, wood chipping and digging out buried tables and grills. She also helped for a week at Koreshan State Park in Estero to help clear campsites so FEMA trailers could be moved in.

Bremer is working on her master's in environmental studies at Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, and her classes were cancelled for a week after the hurricane, too.

Bender, a Cedar Falls, Iowa native and president of TNT Online Sales, said his family only lost electricity for about 24 hours, although a lot of neighbors were out for 10-14 days. He also said some solar panels on his house were damaged. And, of course, many trees were down all over the area.

"We love it here except when there's a hurricane," Bender said.

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"Occasionally the rain would let up and I would be hopeful, but then it would begin raining again and just as heavily as before. The water kept rising in my street and it began to creep up my driveway toward my house. That was the most frightening time. I live in a one-story home, so my grandson and I put everything up as high as we could and I gathered all of my important papers to take with me in case we had to evacuate.

The water was about two feet from my garage when it finally stopped raining. I had been praying throughout the ordeal because I had no idea how I could begin to deal with a flooded home as, unfortunately, many have had to do. I truly believe it is only by God's grace that I was spared and I am truly grateful.

When you live in the Houston area, you expect floods, but this flood has been the most devastating, and I hope Houstonians never have to experience such as this again. We were fortunate in my area that we never did lose power throughout the ordeal."

- Beverly Smith '57

Beverly retired as assistant to the director of instruction at Cypress Lakes High School in Katy, Texas in December 2017 after 52 years in public education. She taught high school in St. Joseph for 29 years and served in Texas 23 years.

Three Hurricanes in three weeks

Hurricane Harvey

Texas and Louisiana
Maximum Strength: Category 4,
with 120 mph winds
At least 82 deaths
\$180 billion in damage
40-61 inches of rainfall
27 trillion gallons of rainwater
An area larger than the state of
Delaware got more than
40 inches of rain

Hurricane Irma

Florida, Georgia, South Carolina
Maximum Strength: Category 4,
with 130 mph winds
At least 61 deaths
\$150-200 billion in damage
First major hurricane to make
landfall in Florida since 2005

Hurricane Maria

Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands
Maximum Strength: Category 4,
with 155 mph winds
Official death toll 55, but could
be up to 500
\$5-95 billion in damage
Approx. 200,000 homes damaged
Worst natural disaster on record
in Puerto Rico

Information from CNN.com





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Hurricane Irma and the zoo: Dr. Mark Wilson '80

The hyenas were not laughing; they hate the wind. So do jaguars. Monkeys, too – they'll form a circle with their backs to it.

That, Dr. Mark Wilson '80 said, is what to expect when a zoo is in the path of a hurricane, and that is what happened when Hurricane Irma hit the Florida International Teaching Zoo in Bushnell, about 60 miles from the Tampa area.

Dr. Wilson, a veterinarian at the zoo, said no animals were lost or hurt as a result of the hurricane, but a lot of preparation went into ensuring that outcome.

First, he said, they needed to make sure the zoo stocked up on four or five days of food post-hurricane. Preserving the meat for the carnivores required a generator for a refrigerator. Then, because running water is a must and wouldn't be available if power was lost, they needed a generator for that, too, to ensure that the animals didn't overheat and had clean water to drink. Then, Dr. Wilson said, they had to think about the humans who would be cleaning up after the hurricane – they needed a cool room to rest and eat. Yes, that meant another generator.

"We all work to make sure the animals are alright," said Dr. Wilson, who has lived in Florida for about 30 years and been through 10 hurricanes. "You prepare for the worst and hope for the best. This was a scary one."

He and the zoo's general curator spent the night at the zoo when the Category 3 hurricane hit Sept. 10, one at each end in their vehicles, driving around throughout the night to check on the animals and facilities.

The zoo had a lot of downed trees and no power for nine days, so the generators were put to work.

"One thing that always gets me is the debris," Dr. Wilson said. "You're up to your shins in debris from the trees, and you're never quite ready for that."

Maria's island devastation: Erick Bracero Serrano '95

Erick Bracero Serrano '95 said enduring Hurricane Maria's 12 hours of driving rain and howling winds was the worst experience he's ever had in his life.

continued on next page

The Convocation that almost wasn't

You wouldn't think a hurricane in Florida would affect Missouri Western, but when Hurricane Irma was predicted to hit Florida and then head for Georgia, the University Advancement staff had to consider canceling the R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 12.

On Friday, Sept. 8, staff got a call from the speakers bureau to let them know that, if the hurricane affected Atlanta, the Convocation speaker, Martin Luther King III, may not be able to fly out of there on Monday, Sept. 11.

Staff decided not to cancel on Friday, but to wait and see what Monday brought. As it turned out, King was able to travel to St. Joseph and return safely back to Atlanta, so the Convocation events went on as planned. ■

From Puerto Rico to Missouri Western

For Eric Bracero Serrano '95, the journey from growing up in Puerto Rico to graduating from Missouri Western began when he was a 12 year-old baseball player. In 1983, his team won the Puerto Rico championship, which qualified it to play in the World Series. That year, the World Series was held in St. Joseph.

During the games, Bracero Serrano, a lefty first baseman, caught the eye of Michael Bray '73, who had played baseball for Missouri Western, and that sparked a friendship for Bracero Serrano and the Brays that included the family visiting Puerto Rico in 1984 and the young man visiting St. Joseph again in the summer of 1986.

When it was time for college, Bracero Serrano attended University of Missouri-Columbia, but realized it wasn't going to work out to play baseball there. So Bray invited him to try Missouri Western. He came, he played baseball for four years, and he stayed on one more year as an assistant baseball coach.

"It was a great time. The people treated me so well," Bracero Serrano said.

As a student, he joined the business fraternity and took advantage of a Global Viewpoint trip to London.

Bracero Serrano returned to Puerto Rico after he received his degree and worked for his father's engineering and development firm for 15 years. Since 2010, he has been the new projects and OREO department manager with Reality Realty, PSC. ■



Erick Bracero Serrano '95 and his family

Bracero Serrano, who lives in Gurabo, Puerto Rico, said for the past 30 years, hurricanes have bypassed the 3,500 square-mile island, but Maria was a Category 4 direct hit on Sept. 20.

He said the hardest part for his wife, Michelle, and him was trying to stay calm so their three children wouldn't be upset. "We had to keep a poker face

even though we knew it was very dangerous."

Hunkered down from about 3 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the master bedroom, the safest room in the house, they were worried about windows and doors breaking, and debris clogging their rain gutters.

Evacuation wasn't an option. When Puerto Rico officials realized Maria was going to make landfall on the island, the airport closed.

"The island is so small and the hurricane was so big, there was no safe place to go on the island," he said.

Following the storm, Bracero Serrano's family was without power or water for about a month, but many homes were without power for much longer. The family had some broken windows and roof tiles, and a little water in the house, but he said they feel blessed.

One of the difficulties for several months was that there were no working stoplights throughout the island, so Bracero Serrano's normal 40-minute commute to San Juan turned into up to an hour and a half with multiple four-way stops.

He said when his business, Reality Realty PSC, got power back two weeks after the hurricane, the company offered shelter for employees' families, so Bracero Serrano's family went to work with him every day for about two weeks. Because of the gasoline shortage, the company also set up a shuttle to get him to the office.

When mail service was restored about mid-October, Bracero Serrano said they began receiving packages from long-time St. Joseph, Missouri friends, Mike '73 and Sandy '91 Bray (see "From Puerto Rico to Missouri Western"). "They kept in touch with us and sent provisions (including a portable camping shower) that were impossible to get on the island," Bracero Serrano said. "We are grateful for both the necessities and the emotional support."

"I'll never forget the wind and seeing the damage after," he said. "It made a big impression that will last forever."

The good

The three hurricanes were devastating, but out of adversity came some good, said Bremer, Kondratenko and Bracero Serrano.

"I saw how tragedy unites people," Kondratenko said. "Neighbors were looking out for each other. I sent more text messages in those two weeks than I had in the past year."

"One bad thing brought a beautiful thing," Bracero Serrano said. "All the neighbors started coming out and sharing things. Everyone joined forces and was helping each other. It was a very interesting and beautiful time."

"The most memorable experience will probably be the community coming together after the hurricane," Bremer said. ■

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

In my letter in the last issue, I mentioned the success of Homecoming, some of the new things we started and changes we made to enhance Homecoming. Special thanks to all of the many alumni who attended or volunteered with the 2017 Homecoming. Big shout out to Emily Baumann '10, our newest Alumni Board member and the GOLD Network for starting the first Legacy Day and raising over \$10,000!



Natalie Redmond '00

We have several alumni events in the spring and summer, from a fishing event with Future Griffons, to a reception with the Craig School of Business, to Griffons Uncorked and to Alumni Day at the K. We would love to get you involved in alumni events and – even better – to volunteer at an upcoming event. If you would like to get involved, feel free to reach out to me personally, follow up on social media or visit the website www.missouriwestern.edu/alumni.

It's hard to believe my term as president will be over in a few months; it feels like it just started! I would really like to thank my fellow Alumni Board members for the time and energy they give! They make me proud to be a Griffon!

Again, I welcome your feedback and/or involvement in the Alumni Association. Please reach out to me personally if you like at (816) 261-3610 or redmond@saintjoseph.com.

With Griffon Pride,

Natalie Redmond

Natalie Redmond '00
President, Alumni Association

Correction: *In the Winter 2018 issue, we mentioned three alumni who are/were college presidents. After publication, Dr. Michael Smith '60, notified us that he, too, served as a college president – from 1999–2005 at Our Lady of the Lake College (now Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We apologize for the error!*

Calendar of Events

May 5 Commencement

May 19 Alumni Day
at the K, Royals vs. Yankees

May 29 Summer session begins

July 4 Independence Day,
campus closed

July 5 Campus closed

Sept. 21 & 22
Family Weekend

Oct. 12 & 13 Homecoming 2018

Oct. 26 & 27 Athletics Hall of
Fame Weekend

Campus will be closed
on the following
Fridays over the summer:
June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6 and 13



Do you have St. Joseph Junior College or Missouri Western yearbooks you don't want anymore?

We would love to have copies of any Griffon Yearbooks dated 1921–1966. Additionally, from 1916–1920, Junior College yearbooks were combined with Central High School's Wakitan, so if you have any of those years of Central yearbooks, we would love those, too! Contact Diane Holtz at holtz@missouriwestern.edu or call (816) 271-5651.

Planned gift creates golf scholarship

There's one thing that everyone who knew Kenneth Jameson could say about him with certainty – the man loved golf. Even before he retired from Hillyard as traffic manager after 27 years of service, he was a regular fixture at St. Joseph's Fairview Golf Course. He was still a familiar face at Fairview when he passed away at the age of 93 in 2017.

Because of his love of the sport, it should come as no surprise to his friends that the MWSU Foundation received approximately \$340,000 as a gift from his and his wife's estate that will benefit the University golf team.

The Kenneth R. Jameson and Marjorie C. Jameson Scholarship Fund will award scholarships for students with financial need, with first consideration given to members of Missouri Western's golf team.

"They wanted to do something to give back to the community and help kids in college," said Clark Tally, longtime friend of the Jamesons.

Marjorie and Kenneth, both St. Joseph natives, met Tally and his family when they became neighbors in the early 1990s. Since Kenneth and his wife had no children and the Tallys had no extended family in St. Joseph, Clark and his wife, Susan, and their two daughters "adopted" the Jamesons as family, celebrating holidays with them and spending a lot of time together.

"I thought of him as a father and he thought of me as a son," Clark said.

The Jamesons' connection to Missouri Western came about through their friends

Mike and Cathy Habermehl, who coached golf teams at Missouri Western for several years. Kenneth met Mike in 1985, when Mike became the golf pro at Fairview, and they remained friends until Kenneth passed away. When Kenneth was no longer able to golf, he still visited Fairview every morning Monday through Friday to play cards.

"This will help the golf team a lot," Mike said. "I am so pleased."

Both Mike and Clark say the Jamesons were two of the kindest people you could ever know. "Honest," "friendly" and "sweet" were descriptors they used.

"No one would not consider him a friend," Mike said of Kenneth.

"Of all the good things you can say about somebody, you could say it about them," Clark said. ■



Kenneth and Marjorie Jameson

Thank you

Thank you to the John Sublett Logan Foundation for their gift of \$80,000 to the Foundation! The funds will be distributed as follows:

- \$30,000 for the Logan Undergraduate Scholarship
- \$30,000 for the Logan Graduate Scholarship
- \$20,000 for Craig School of Business faculty research

First Legacy Day meets goal

A committee of young alumni teamed up to plan and execute a successful day of giving for the University. The GOLD (Griffons of the Last Decade) Network set a goal of raising \$10,000 in just 24 hours during Homecoming week. Thanks to a \$5,000 match by the Danford Family Excellence Fund, a total of \$10,800 was raised.

"We had a powerhouse team of GOLD champions who created Legacy Day," said Rachel Graves '03, development officer. "It was their voice, their passion and their energy that made it a success.



They sincerely love their alma mater and believe in the mission of the Missouri Western Foundation."

Additionally, committee chair Emily Baumann '10, Graves, and Colleen Kowich, director of Alumni Relations, gave a presentation at a regional conference about the collaboration between development, alumni relations and alumni volunteers. Kowich said several people in the audience liked hearing from a volunteer.

"We appreciate our volunteers and our donors," Graves said. "Their collaboration created a very successful first Legacy Day." ■

Legacy Day By the Numbers

\$5,800 raised plus **\$5,000** match

Average gift **\$75**; two **\$1,000** gifts

26 first-time donors

Donations: **75%** from Missouri, **7%** from Kansas
3% from Texas

GOLD Network members:

Gary Baumann '09/'12

Emily Baumann '10

Aubry Carpenter '14

Jake Cunning '16

Drew Fisher '11

Jess Jackson '13

Kaleb Johnson '15

Paige Klocke '16

Elliot Swope '14

Jeni Swope '16

Reyhan Wilkinson '17

Scholarship honors biology professor

Mike McKenzie '77 recently established an endowed scholarship in memory of Dr. Leo Galloway, professor emeritus of biology who passed away in 2012.

McKenzie graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and fondly remembers Dr. Galloway.

"Dr. Galloway impacted the lives of many students during his tenure," he said. "I was fortunate to be a student and a lifelong friend of his."

McKenzie, of Omaha, Nebraska, is a project manager at Sirius Solutions LLC, a company that serves animal feed and health industries.

Dr. Galloway taught at Missouri Western from 1972-80. In a 2005 interview with him, it was noted that, along with his love of botany (Missouri Western's herbarium is named in his honor), he was an avid bicyclist, logging more than 135,000 miles. Dr. Galloway was also an excellent birder with more than 300 Missouri birds on his life list (a record of the bird species he successfully identified). He was an active member of the Audubon Society of Missouri for many years.

"I had a good rapport with the students; I enjoyed them all," Dr. Galloway said in the interview.

McKenzie said he hopes that other students of Dr. Galloway will want to contribute to the scholarship fund. ■

Dr. Sharon Kosek '77: Faithful, proud and true

Dr. Sharon Kosek '77 has a true passion for the arts and has turned that passion into extraordinary volunteerism. As a testament to her devotion, she recently received the 2018 Missouri State Award for Leadership in the Arts from the Missouri Arts Council, and in June, Kosek will receive a YWCA Women of Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award.

The St. Joseph native said, when she was in high school, she wanted to be a band director just like her director at Lafayette High School. When she arrived on campus and learned that Missouri Western didn't offer that option at the time, she decided on a business major.

But changing her major didn't dampen Kosek's love or commitment to the arts. She has spent her life volunteering for the arts and currently, she serves as a charter member of the Missouri Western Arts Society, a St. Joseph Symphony Board member, St. Joseph Symphony Friends Board president, Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art Board member, Allied Arts Council member, including a stint as the fund drive chair, Mount Mora Cemetery Restoration and Preservation Association, Mount Mora representative for the St. Joseph Museums, and more.

When Kosek came on campus to be interviewed for this article, she had just come from

volunteering at a fundraiser for the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art. After the interview, she was heading to do some work for Mount Mora Cemetery.



Dr. Sharon Kosek played a large role in founding the St. Joseph Symphony's Instrument Infusion. Rico McNeela, conductor and director of the St. Joseph Symphony, with a student.

"The arts are my passion because of the wonderful experiences I had. They bring so much to someone's life."

She credits her love of the arts to her mother, who was a professional musician. "I just assumed everyone listened to music all the time at home."

Because of her childhood experiences, Kosek says instilling the arts in children is where her real passion lies. In 2007, she helped found the St. Joseph Symphony's Instrumental Infusion, where fifth-graders are introduced to musical instruments. She has also been involved over the years in the Trails West!® children's arts

tent and the Performing Arts Association's annual children's theatre.

"Every student is gifted in some way, and I want to help steer them to what they are good at."

She especially appreciates that Instrument Infusion is now held at Missouri Western, and music education students have the opportunity to work with the elementary students.

Although Kosek has a master's in business education from Northwest Missouri State University and a doctorate of education in educational leadership from University of Missouri-Columbia, Kosek says her heart belongs to Missouri Western.

When she names the great arts programs across the community, the University's are definitely on the list.

She also has a profound respect for Walter Cronkite and is ecstatic about Missouri Western's Walter Cronkite Memorial that teaches about his journalism career.

And what does the future hold for Kosek? She says she'll continue to volunteer, and promote and enjoy the arts.

"I like being busy and making a difference in St. Joseph," Kosek says. "If you're not trying to lift things up in St. Joseph, you should be. I'm looking to change lives to the positive. Arts does that." ■



Leah Swindler, Wickie Utley and Lauren Manning, who are all interested in preserving the Cracker House.

Preserving St. Joseph's heritage: Leah Swindler '13

Leah Swindler '13 says there are not really any manuals on how to save severely dilapidated properties, but she is learning and learning quickly.

The St. Joseph native said she grew up admiring all of St. Joseph's beautiful, historic buildings, so it should come as no surprise that she is knee deep in trying to preserve one of the community's 19th century gems – the Frank L. Sommer residence, affectionately known as the Cracker House, at 914 Main Street.

After she graduated from Missouri Western with a biology degree and began working for Nestle Purina Pet Care Company, Swindler began attending local Landmark Commission meetings. In January 2015, she was asked to serve as secretary of the Cracker House Project, a nonprofit group

Want to help save the Cracker House or want more information?

Check out these sites:
facebook.com/CrackerHouseProject
gofundme.com/CrackerHouse
 Email: crackerhouseproject@hotmail.com

Or, join them for an upcoming goat yoga session on the house's lawn (yes, with goats, real live goats).

formed to save the crumbling house. One-and-a-half years later, she became the group's president.

Sommer, the house's original owner, was a St. Joseph baker and owner of the F. L. Sommer Biscuit Company. In 1876, he invented the saltine cracker and began producing it in his bakery at 103

Francis Street (now the Robidoux Landing Playhouse). The house on Main Street, just 0.4 mile from the bakery, was built in 1882.

Sommer later took his family, his cracker recipe and his bakery to New York, and there, his company merged with other companies to form the American Biscuit Company. That company became part of Nabisco in 1898 as a result of more mergers. Nabisco's popular saltine cracker today owes its beginnings to Sommer.

One hundred years after it had been built, the Cracker House sat vacant and neglected, but the real damage started when a leaky roof was ignored. Later, when ownership fell to the city and talk of demolishing the home surfaced, a local group stepped up,

continued on next page

established a nonprofit and began working to save and restore it.

About the time Swindler joined the Cracker House Project, it was determined that the collapsing roof had to be removed because it was putting too much stress on the walls. That was done in 2017. Now the brick walls need some support. Tuckpointing the brick structure has been ongoing, and many of the concrete exterior windowsills have been repaired. Heartland Truss in Plattsburg is willing to donate truss materials for a new roof, so the group is searching for someone to install the trusses, or raise enough money to pay for the work.

"It's a precarious balancing act and a race against time," Swindler says.

Last summer, Adventures in Preservation, a nonprofit group from Colorado that arranges "hands-on preservation vacations," sent a team of eight to St. Joseph to work on and learn about the Cracker House.

"They were flabbergasted at what was in St. Joseph, and they have

been all over the United States," Swindler said. "St. Joe is one of the most architecturally diverse towns in Missouri. We have a gold mine here."

She said Adventures in Preservation wants to return to St. Joseph in the future to complete more work on the Cracker House.

Swindler, now assistant environmental services supervisor for the City of St. Joseph Water Protection Division, says the group is in need of both funds and volunteers. Last fall, Missouri Western freshmen spent some time working at the house as part of the Griffon Edge orientation program, and she hopes to connect with more volunteers at the University.

For now, they are focused on saving the house, and they are open to ideas for its future use.

"We want to create a place that the community can use and be proud of," Swindler said. "Preserving our past is an investment in our future." ■

1970s

Gary Patterson '76, founder of the Patterson Legal Group, opened a branch of his Wichita, Kansas law office in St. Joseph, Missouri.

1980s

Charles Bruffy '81, Grammy-award winning conductor, received the Signature Sinfonian award from the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America. The Signature Sinfonian award is conferred upon Sinfonian members who have achieved a high standard of accomplishment in their field or profession, thereby bringing honor to Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. Bruffy's award was bestowed specifically for "displaying an outstanding commitment and dedication to his field; demonstrating himself as a successful role model and helping others realize their potential; and exhibiting high standards of excellence in representing the Fraternity as an alumnus."

Bruffy retired as artistic director from the Phoenix Chorale, but continues full-time in his roles as artistic director and conductor of the Kansas City Chorale, chorus director for the Kansas City Symphony Chorus, and director of music at Rolling Hills Presbyterian Church in Overland Park, Kansas.

Jim Finley '83 will retire June 30, 2018 as superintendent of the Blue Springs (Missouri) School District. Finley started his education career as a coach for the football team at Missouri Western and went to Blue Springs as a coach and teacher in 1994.

1990s

Melissa Birdsell '92 was appointed to the board of directors for The Children's Trust Fund, Missouri's foundation for child abuse prevention. Birdsell is the executive director of Northwest Missouri Children's Advocacy Center.

Short and Sweet



Students Bonnie Bouc and Nathan Gonder perform in "Clara and the Gambler," by Jason Milligan. The play was part of Short and Sweet, the theatre program's fall production of student-directed plays. "Clara and the Gambler" was directed by Kara McGhee.

Rick Stepanek '92 was promoted to warden at the Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (WRDCC) for the Missouri Department of Corrections in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Greg Gildersleeve '93 published "The Power Club," an action-adventure novel. Gildersleeve is senior foundations faculty at Grantham University, where he teaches English and general education courses.



Jon Brady '94 is the supervisor of security for St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. He is responsible for security at St. Luke's 109 properties and 12 hospitals in Kansas City, northwest Missouri and Kansas.

Robert Haberle '94 is semi-retired as a travel nurse and plans to substitute teach.

Geoff Heckman '97, a school counselor at Platte County High School in Platte City, Missouri, was named a 2018 School Counselor of the Year finalist by the American School Counselor Association. The ASCA honors professionals who devote their careers to advocating for the nation's students and addressing their academic and social/emotional development and college- and career-readiness needs. He has been a school counselor for 14 years and has been at Platte County High School since 2014.

2000s

Stacy Williamson '02 is at the Northland Center for Advanced Professional Studies, which serves the 14 Northland high schools in Kansas City, Missouri. She teaches medicine and healthcare at Liberty Hospital.

Dustin Holcumbrink '05 is the director of sales and marketing at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown. The convention hotel is

the largest in Kansas City and plays host to numerous men's and women's basketball teams (including the Griffons!) every spring for the MIAA Tournament. Dustin and wife, Blair '05, live outside of Kansas City with their three daughters.

Leah Richardson '04 was hired as principal of Lindbergh Elementary School in St. Joseph, Missouri, for the 2018-19 school year.



Christy (Fuenfhausen) Todd '05 and her husband, Clinton, announce the birth of a daughter, Eleanor Christine, born Nov. 16, 2017. She was welcomed by three brothers, Morgan, Lucas and Austin.



Charles G. Baxter '06 was promoted to director, Missouri State Veterans Cemeteries. He is responsible for five state veterans cemeteries and compliance audits of Veterans Service Offices throughout the state. After he graduated, he began as a veterans service officer and in March 2012, took over duties as the cemetery director at the State Veterans Cemetery in Fort Leonard Wood.



Tara (Stull) '05 and **Aaron '07/'17 Westlake** announce the birth of a son, Declan Cole, born Oct. 27, 2017. Aaron joined Cerner Corporation as a software engineer in July 2017.



Michael O'Neal '06 and his wife, Kyleigh, announce the birth of a daughter, Emmerson Grace, born Sept. 18, 2017.



Darcie '06 and **Jason '06 Searles** announce the birth of a son, Jones Gavin, born July 7, 2017. He joins two big brothers, Jaxon and Jensen.

Jaxon and Jensen.

Justin McCarthy '07 was hired as principal of Hosea Elementary School in St. Joseph, Missouri for the 2018-19 school year.

2010s



Capt. Brian Turner '10 currently serves as the administrator, Department of Surgery at Brooke Army Medical

Center in San Antonio, Texas. The medical center is the only Level 1 Trauma Center within the Department of Defense. Since graduating from Missouri Western, Capt. Turner earned an MBA from Oklahoma State University and a Masters in Healthcare Administration from Weber State University, graduating summa cum laude. He is the recipient of numerous military awards including the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards) and the Army Commendation Medal (two awards). Additionally, he is Board Certified in Healthcare Administration as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Kathryn Karjala-Curtis '11 is the county attorney for Faribault County, Minnesota.



Ethan Kelly '14 and **Kaitlyn Fisette '14** were married Oct. 7, 2017. The couple met at Missouri Western through their Greek

life organizations (Phi Delta Theta and Alpha Sigma Alpha). ■

In Memoriam

We remember those who have passed away. If you want to include someone in this listing, please call (816) 271-5651, mail the information to Diane Holtz, Missouri Western State University, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507, or email holtz@missouriwestern.edu.

Beatrice R. Anderson '76, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 15, 2018.

Donna L. Bromley '84, Cameron, Missouri, Jan. 22, 2018.

Billy J. Collier '89, Cameron, Missouri, Dec. 2, 2017.

James W. Doyle '40, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 12, 2017.

Brooke A. English '11, Liberty, Missouri, Nov. 25, 2017.

Marjorie Fletcher '74, Union Star, Missouri, Dec. 10, 2017.

Gaylord Garrison '65, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 15, 2017.

Ronald P. Hardy '90, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 11, 2018.

Clifford V. Hill '75, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 12, 2018.

Laura E. Hutton '15, North Kansas City, Missouri, Jan. 23, 2018.

Donna S. Jarecki '90, Turney, Missouri, Oct. 27, 2017.

Lesley (Dunham) Johnson '84, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 29, 2018.

Jon S. Kepler, Dekalb, Missouri, Nov. 13, 2017. He retired from Missouri Western as a history professor in 2003.

Michael D. Kepner '76, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 29, 2017.

Kevin M. Kobett '81, Savannah, Missouri, Nov. 5, 2017.

Nancy A. (Canaday) McQuerry '60, Grandview, Missouri, June 14, 2016.

Franz A. Meier Jr. '58, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Feb. 15, 2018.

William "Joe" Mockbee '73, Mesa, Arizona, Oct. 8, 2017.

Gregory L. Monach, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 17, 2018. Monach was the custodial supervisor at Missouri Western for nine-and-a-half years and retired in 2015.

John A. Mullinax '50, Kansas City, Missouri, Jan. 19, 2018.

Jeanne L. Nicholson '80, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 2, 2018.

Dr. Philip Nitse, Georgetown, Texas, Nov. 20, 2017. Dr. Nitse was the first permanent dean of the Craig School of Business from 2010-12. Additionally, he served as the dean of Professional Studies, beginning in 2011.

George Noble, Savannah, Missouri, Nov. 4, 2017. Noble retired from Missouri Western's physical plant in 2010.

Patricia J. North '79, Ocala, Florida, Jan. 24, 2018.

Ruth Ann (Thornton) Paulsen '60, Overland Park, Kansas, Aug. 5, 2017.

Timothy G. Riley '78, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 31, 2018.

Jacqueline (Jackson) Ritter '88, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 18, 2017.

Joyce A. Schutte, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 9, 2018. Schutte was a reference librarian for Missouri Western 1987-99.

Robert Dale Simpson, Savannah, Missouri, Dec. 17, 2017. He retired from Missouri Western as building supervisor after 23 years.

Vincent L. Singleton '73, Lewiston, Maine, Jan. 4, 2018.

Teresa M. Tannheimer '87, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 9, 2017.

Phillip S. Trotter '84, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 18, 2018.

Arthur W. Van Meter '75, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 4, 2017.

Beth Wheeler '77, Jameson, Missouri, Nov. 13, 2017. She was Director of External Relations for Missouri Western for 13 years, retiring in 2012.

Charles L. White '73, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 9, 2017. ■

Arts advocate passes away

Bill Wright, an ardent supporter of Missouri Western arts programs, passed away March 21, 2018. He was 79. Wright, a St. Joseph native, left his hometown when he went to college at University of Kansas.

He returned to St. Joseph about 50 years later, he became involved in the University and helped found the Missouri Western Arts Society in 2011, serving as its chair until February 2017.

He graduated from KU with a degree in architecture and began his career as an associate for CRS Design, Inc. in Texas. He ended his career as executive director of the Wharton Center of Performing Arts in Michigan. Positions in between included president of the New Brunswick Cultural Center,

Inc. in New Jersey; assistant vice president at Rutgers University; and vice president of operations at the University of Houston. He also served as a Tony Award voter for 12 years.

Wright's \$500,000 gift to the MWSU Foundation established an endowed scholarship fund for students in the arts programs. At that time, he also notified the Foundation that it would be a beneficiary of his estate of almost \$500,000 for the scholarship fund. ■



Bill Wright



Robert Feder in the Walter Cronkite Memorial

Journalist reviews the Walter Cronkite Memorial

Long-time Chicago Sun-Times journalist Robert Feder is one of Walter Cronkite's biggest fans, so it's no surprise he had great things to say about the University's Walter Cronkite Memorial when he visited this past February.

Feder's blog (robertfeder.com) post encourages people to visit the on-campus Memorial that honors the renowned broadcast journalist who died in 2009.

"The Walter Cronkite Memorial is more than a fitting tribute to the life and times of one of St. Joseph's most famous native sons," Feder noted in the blog post in March. "It's also an inspiring shrine to the values he embodied throughout his career."

Feder said he loved every part of the Memorial, but was most impressed with the replica of the news studio. "Sitting at Walter's anchor desk and looking into that

CBS camera was like an out-of-body experience for me."

At age 14, Feder started a fan club for Cronkite, the first and only of its kind. For many years, Feder sent Cronkite a tie for his birthday, and Cronkite would wear it on the CBS Evening News.

"I've appreciated and respected Walter Cronkite for as long as I can remember," he said. "Even as a child I found myself drawn to him. Night after night he brought the

world to us in our living room. And at times of national triumph and tragedy, he was always there, too, as a calm and reassuring presence. I suppose it was his unique combination of rock-solid integrity and authority along with his warm, avuncular manner that I came to admire most. He remains the gold standard of the business and an inspiration for all journalists to this day."

Feder worked for the Chicago Sun-Times from 1980 to 2008, ending his career as its television and radio columnist, and he said it was Cronkite who inspired his career choice.

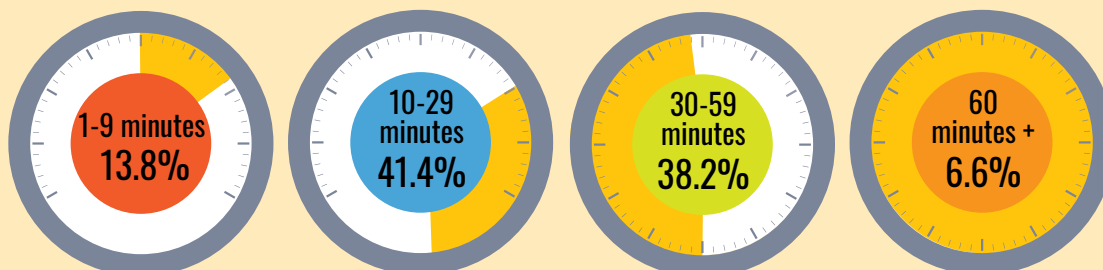
"I've spent the last 38 years reporting full-time on the media as both a newspaper columnist and a blogger. It all stemmed from my interest in Walter Cronkite and television news. I can't think of anything else I would have rather done." ■

Max Armstrong, director of broadcasting for Penton/Farm Progress Companies, is another fan of the Walter Cronkite Memorial: "I was in awe when I visited the school a couple of years ago. I walked out the door feeling I had been in a special place."

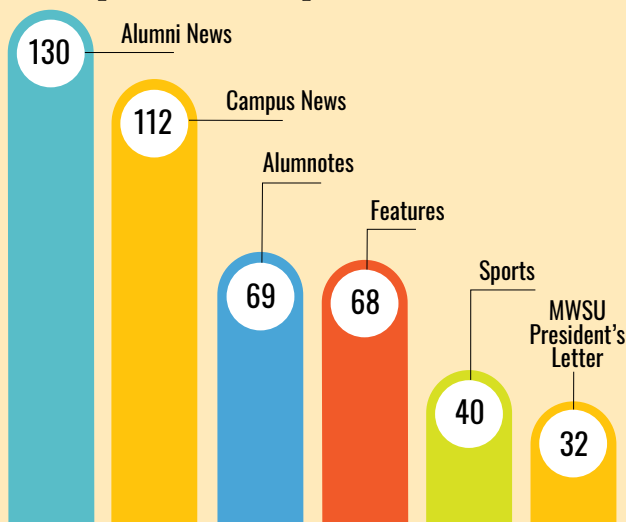
Fall 2017 Magazine Survey Results

Number of respondents – 152

How much time do you spend with an issue?



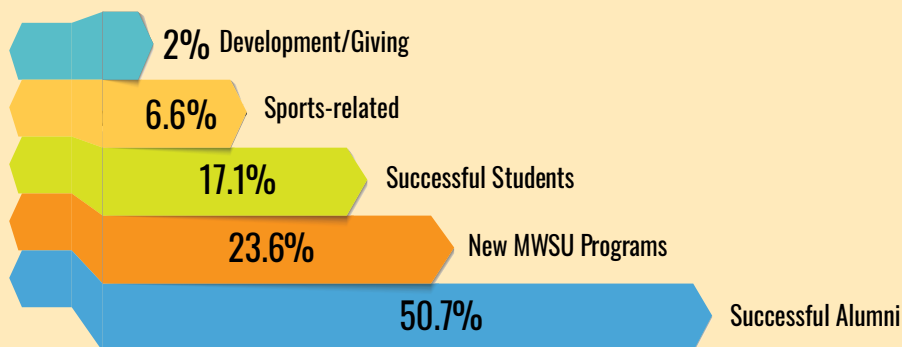
Top 3 Sections (respondents selected 3):



How do you prefer to read your magazine?



What type of feature interests you most?





Summer reading recommendations

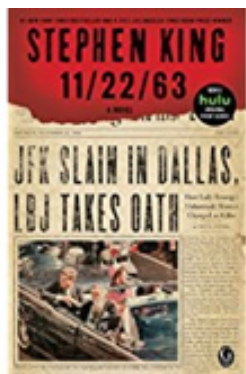
Hey, summer's just around the corner! Check out some recommended reading from staff members, including three who work in the library:

"11/22/63," by Stephen King

I love suspense, thrillers and historical fiction, and Stephen King succeeds in all of those categories in this book! It's a long one, as most Stephen King books are, but I became so engrossed in the story I found it impossible to put down! In 2016,

Hulu created a miniseries based on the book, but the series left out a lot of details. This book is definitely in my Top 10!

Aubry Carpenter '14
Public Relations and Marketing Assistant

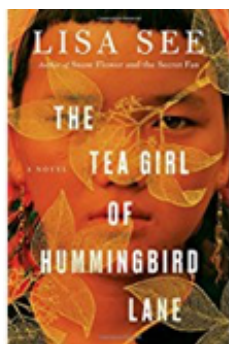


"The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane," by Lisa See

Li-yan lives in a remote mountain village in the Yunnan Province.

Circumstances force her to leave her newborn baby at an orphanage. The child, Haley, is adopted by Americans and raised in California. The story follows the lives of Li-yan, Haley, and the transformation of Li-yan's village in the tea-producing region of China. Its compelling characters and details make it a fascinating read.

Sally Gibson
Director of Library



"Where'd you go, Bernadette," by Maria Semple

This is a really fun, touching, and creative read and is now a major motion picture starring Cate Blanchett. Follow the unbelievable adventures of an agoraphobe/heroic genius/mom.

Jennifer Callow
Cataloging Librarian



"The Woman in Cabin 10," by Ruth Ware

Lo Blacklock, travel writer for the magazine, Velocity, is on assignment to cover a voyage aboard a small luxury cruise liner, the Aurora. The cruise's glamorous champagne-infused setting is shattered when Lo witnesses a body being thrown overboard during the night. With all passengers accounted for and ship security doubting her, will anyone believe Lo?

Michelle Diaz
Acquisitions/Collection Management Librarian



"Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs," by Johann Hari

This very interesting and enlightening book will make you rethink everything you believe about the war on drugs and drug users. It is written in narrative style and an easy read, except for blowing your mind.

Diane Holtz
Editor





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Happy 100th birthday, Griffon!

One hundred years ago, the St. Joseph Junior College was housed in St. Joseph's Central High School, as they had been since the junior college opened in 1915. Sometime during the 1917-18 school year, in an effort to declare just a bit of independence from the high school, the college students decided they needed a mascot to call their own. Student Norman Knight '18, who was serving as the art editor of the 1917-18 yearbook, suggested a Griffon as a mascot.

He said that because the Griffon is a mythological guardian of treasure, it would be a good mascot because education is a precious treasure that can be gained through hard work. In the 1970s, he sent Missouri Western his original doodles of the Griffon, which are pictured.

The other drawings shown here, signed by Knight, are from the 1918 yearbook.

Happy birthday to our mascot! ■

