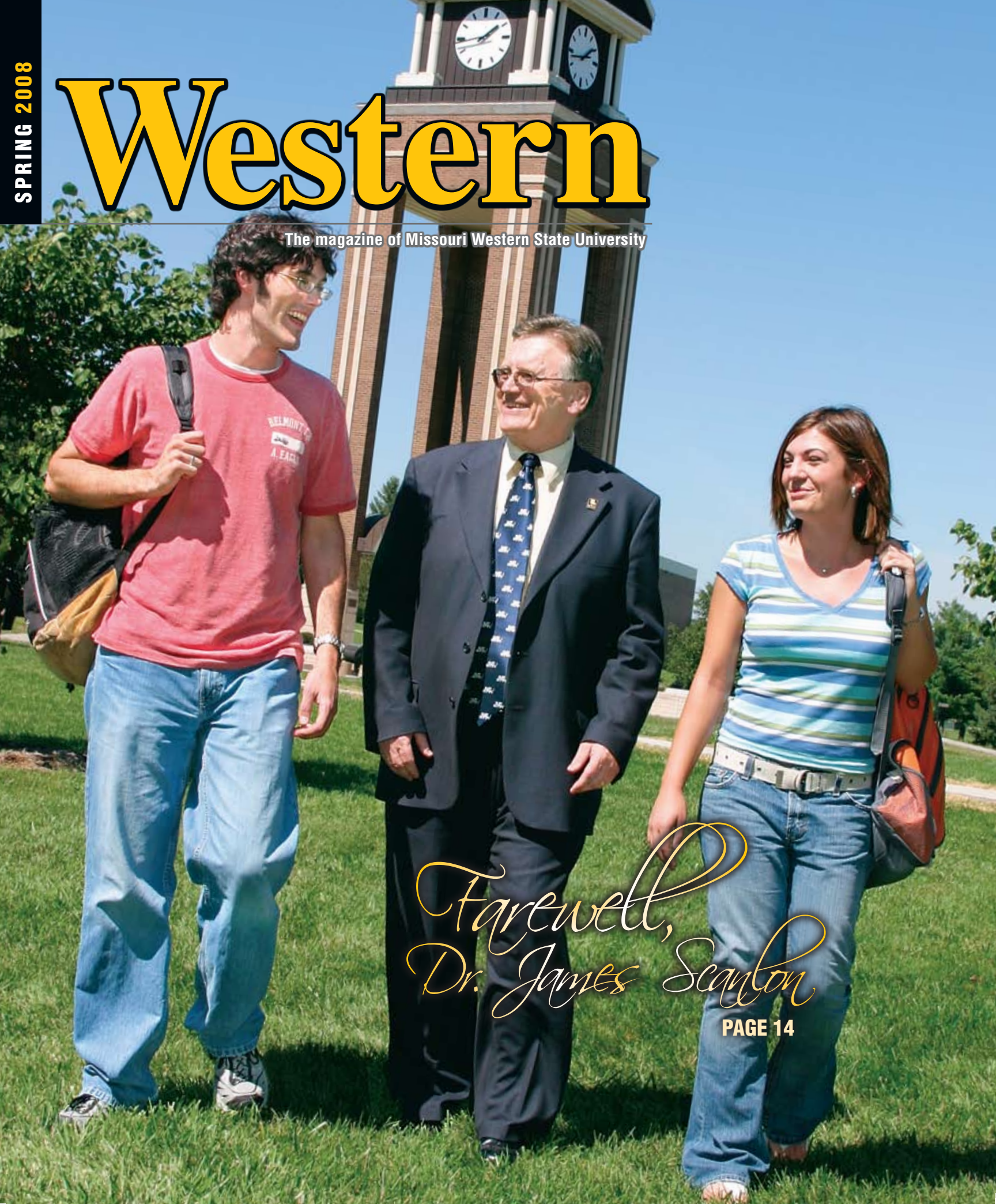


# Western

The magazine of Missouri Western State University



*Farewell,  
Dr. James Scanlon*

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The Missouri Western Magazine is a publication of the University Advancement Office for alumni and friends of Missouri Western State University and the St. Joseph Junior College.

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### WESTERN MAGAZINE

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## President's Perspective



Dear Friends,

*The most important aspect of working on a college or university campus is watching students learn, mature, and develop from what they are into what they are meant to be. Over the past seven years, I have had the opportunity to watch hundreds of students define their dreams, learn through hard work, and move to reach their potential as learners, persons, and citizens.*

*As I reflect on my time here, I am reminded of one student. She is the student who, in fact, convinced Lauren and me to come to Western. She “sealed the deal,” and I doubt that she even knows it. Gini Fite '01, was the student VIP who gave us our campus tour in 2000. Her enthusiasm for what was happening on campus and for Western's future was compelling. At the end of the tour, we knew that we wanted to join what Gini described as her “family.” We wanted to come to Western.*

*Like most students, Gini graduated, but she did not stop learning. She did not stop growing. She did not forget her “family.” Gini is now a successful physical therapist in Overland Park,*

*Kan., a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, and chair of the Kansas City alumni chapter. When we spoke with her this year at Homecoming, Lauren and I realized that Gini's enthusiasm for Western is as genuine and compelling today as it was in 2000. She continues to be representative of the great good that comes from a Western education; a true representative of the students we graduate.*

*Leading Western has been a privilege. I am inspired each and every day not only by our students, but also by our faculty and staff—especially by their commitment to making Western a leading regional public university, serving students well through applied learning and serving the region well through applied research and service. From participating in student-faculty research projects, to volunteering for community service, to connecting the right student with the right internship opportunity, our faculty and staff are dedicated to helping our students and our region become what they are meant to be.*

*Among other things, when I came to Western, I saw three opportunities to build our future: developing a forward-thinking strategic plan focused on applied learning and applied research and service; obtaining university status as a vehicle for serving students and the region; and acquiring more equitable state funding for our students. I am fortunate to say that, with the assistance of many people on campus and beyond campus, we have successfully created not one but two forward-thinking strategic plans; attained university status; and are now on the path toward more equitable state funding. There is still much to accomplish at the*

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*Dr. James J. Scanlon, president, has been serving students in higher education for more than 35 years.*

*Photo: Eric Callow '97/Double E Images*

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# Western names Dr. Robert Vartabedian president

In December, the Board of Governors named Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian Western's president to replace Dr. James Scanlon who is retiring June 30.

"Dr. Vartabedian's 22 years in higher education administration have prepared him well to be Western's next president," said Dirck Clark '85, chair of the Board of Governors. "He has outstanding communication skills and a record of meaningful engagement with the communities where he has lived. He is the right person to lead Western into the future."

"My experiences are a good fit for the university," said Dr. Vartabedian, describing Western as a blossoming state university that is student-centered with a focus on applied learning and community involvement. "I welcome the opportunity to shape the future of the university and the region, and to communicate Western's mission throughout the state."



*Dr. Bob Vartabedian poses with his wife, Dr. Laurel Vartabedian, and their daughter, Sarah.*



*Student leaders Natalie Bailey and Harold Callaway present Western gear to the Vartabedians at a campus reception to announce the new president.*

Dr. Vartabedian has been vice president for academic affairs at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) in Portales, N.M., since 2005. In that role, he is chief academic officer for a university with a total enrollment of about 9,500. He has recently overseen re-accreditation efforts in six departments. The university's 2007 evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association was accepted without any deficiencies and is being showcased as a model application.

Previously, Dr. Vartabedian was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C., from 1999 to 2005, serving eight months as interim vice chancellor for academic affairs in 2004. As dean, he oversaw 14 academic

departments and four centers. As interim vice chancellor, he was the chief administrator for all academic programs for the 8,400 students enrolled.

**"Dr. Vartabedian's 22 years in higher education administration have prepared him well to be Western's next president."**

- Dirck Clark '85, chair of the Board of Governors

Both ENMU and Western Carolina created several new academic programs under Dr. Vartabedian's leadership. He has also overseen building renovation projects at ENMU for science, technology and music and five major building projects at Western Carolina totaling \$60 million, including a \$30 million Fine and Performing Arts Center.

Previous administrative experience for Dr. Vartabedian includes a department head and director of graduate



studies in communication at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas, and a division head, coordinator of graduate studies in communication, and assistant dean of graduate studies at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kan. He has received numerous teaching awards throughout his career.

Dr. Vartabedian graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of arts in speech communication from California State University, Fresno, in 1974. He received a master of arts in speech

communication from Wichita State University, and a doctorate in communication from the University of Oklahoma. He and his wife, Dr. Laurel Vartabedian, have two children: Rob, of Amarillo, Texas, and Sarah, of Chicago.

“Dr. Vartabedian will bring a number of strengths to Western’s presidency,” said R. Patt Lilly, vice chair of the Board of Governors and chair of the 20-member screening committee that reviewed applications and selected three finalists who were interviewed on campus in December. “He has a strong record of integrity, of building consensus and of seeking and valuing the opinions of others.”

Dr. Vartabedian will begin his duties July 1. He will be Western’s fifth president, following Dr. Scanlon, Dr. Janet Gorman Murphy McCarthy, Dr. M.O. Looney and Dr. Milburn W. Blanton. ■

## President’s Perspective

*continued from inside front cover*

*university. Western, like all of us, continues to grow and change. I look forward with confidence to Western’s continuing evolution as the model of the new American regional university.*

*As Lauren and I prepare for our retirement, we think of the words of William Shakespeare. It is only now, after many years of teaching Shakespeare, that I fully understand the meaning of “parting is such sweet sorrow.” We will miss the members of the campus community who have become friends and, yes, “family.”*

*We will miss participating actively in creating a future for Missouri Western State University. But, like Gini Fite and scores of alumni, it is our turn to graduate. We trust that we leave Western as our predecessors did – better than it was when we came and with a hopeful and enthusiastic future. Lauren and I wish Bob and Laurel Vartabedian, as they succeed us, the very best in the future. We thank everyone in the Western family for their love and support during the past seven years. Missouri Western State University will now be our “alma mater.” We will always, always be proud Griffons.*

*Yours sincerely,*

James J. Scanlon  
President

## Ice – not nice

Since 1969, when Western moved to its present location, more than 600 trees have been planted across the campus, and many of those beautiful trees were damaged when an ice storm hit St. Joseph in mid-December. Branches littered the campus and the tree-lined sidewalks became impassible. Fortunately, unlike many homes throughout the region, the power outage on campus was limited, and residence halls relied on generators until their power returned.

The campus closed for two days in the midst of the storm to allow physical plant crews to begin their clean-up efforts. Unfortunately, it was finals week, so one day of finals was held on a Saturday and the second day was on Monday of the following week.

Lonnie Johnson, director of the physical plant, said many trees across campus had to be cut down because of the damage, and employees are still assessing the damage to see if more need to be removed. ■

## New emergency notification system

In the wake of the recent tragic campus shootings across the country, the Board of Governors recently approved an investment in the safety of the university’s students, faculty and staff, authorizing the purchase of a comprehensive emergency notification system.

The system is comprised of four parts: text messaging service, emergency beacons, both inside and outside of buildings; an outdoor public address system and telephones in each classroom. Initial equipment and installation costs are estimated to total \$203,010. ■



# Foundation begins planning campaign

The results are in and the enthusiasm is evident. In a study conducted to assess community attitudes regarding a capital campaign for Western, consultants found that 95 percent of the respondents indicated they were personally in favor of Western embarking on a fund-raising campaign.

“There is a sense of urgency, momentum and enthusiasm to address Western’s needs and expand its impact on the community and region,” said Todd Bragg of the Steier Group of Omaha, Neb. The Steier Group was hired by the MWSU Foundation last fall to conduct the study. Todd personally interviewed 76 individuals and/or couples throughout the

community, and an additional 73 participants returned a written survey.

“Western has good relationships with the community,” he said. “The university is considered to be a good citizen of the region.”

Todd noted that 90 percent of the respondents believed they were moderately informed, well informed or very well informed regarding the needs of Western, and 86 percent of respondents said they would financially support a capital campaign for Western. Additionally, 53 participants said they would accept a leadership position or assist with the solicitation of gifts.

The Steier Group recommended that Western move forward with a five-

year capital campaign. Some of the priorities for funding outlined by respondents include life science projects, endowment expansion, an emerging needs fund, expanded resources for the arts and enhanced athletic facilities.

“We are very pleased with the results of the study,” said Dan Nicoson, vice president for university advancement and executive director of the MWSU Foundation. “We knew that Western was well respected and we are happy that the community is willing to support a capital campaign.”

Dan said the Foundation plans to begin a campaign in the fall and will announce a monetary goal at that time. The campaign will be part of “Beyond Excellence,” an initiative that includes a \$5 million gift from Wes and Patsy Remington and \$30.1 million from the state, both for the renovation and expansion of Evan R. Agenstein Hall; and a \$2.5 million federal grant for the science and technology incubator that is currently under construction.

“Both campus and community members realize that when Western excels, the entire community and region benefit. They also understand that in order for the university to continue to improve, we must rely on private donations in addition to state funding,” said Jerry Pickman ’85, director of development. “And we truly appreciate their support.”

For more information, contact Jerry at 816-271-5648 or [pickman@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:pickman@missouriwestern.edu).



*An addition to Agenstein Hall is one part of the Beyond Excellence Initiative. The addition, to be named Remington Hall, will approximately double the original square footage of Agenstein Hall.*



*A Western student helps with an art project at St. Francis Xavier School in St. Joseph, Mo. Learning Community students volunteered at the elementary school three times throughout the semester.*

## Gathering visitor views

Visitors to St. Joseph, Mo., really like the Glore Psychiatric Museum, Patee House Museum, Pony Express Museum and the Jesse James Museum. They also like to shop at St. Joseph's latest retail attraction, the Shoppes of North Village, and most say they will visit the city again.

Those findings and more came about as a result of a yearlong visitor profile study conducted by students in Dr. Jitendra Tewari's Workplace Research course for the St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Students conducted surveys at city museums, the Shoppes, the CVB visitor center and local hotels.

Marci Bennett, executive director of the CVB, said the information gleaned from the study helps them make decisions regarding marketing, advertising and product development; and helps them improve their services. She said

the results will be shared with the city, county, the state tourism board, and museums and organizations throughout St. Joseph.

Other results showed that 70 percent of visitors believed St. Joseph has several unique attractions for visitors and 66 percent said the city was easy to navigate. Only 29 percent feel that directional signage needed improvement.

Marci said the last study was conducted four years ago by Purdue University students, but she felt they didn't understand Missouri or St. Joseph. So she was very interested when Carol Roever, associate professor of business and department chair, suggested that Western students conduct the study.

"They did a great job," Marci said. "They are really bright students and they have a very good work ethic. It was a wonderful partnership with the university." ■

## NEWS Briefs

### New Board members announced

Four new members were recently elected to the Foundation Board of Directors and one new member was appointed to the Board of Governors.

Foundation Board members include Ted Allison, president and CEO of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce; Drew Brown, director of Brown Investments in St. Joseph, Mo.; Pat Dillon, director of retail for Heartland Health in St. Joseph; and Corky Marquart '84, executive vice president for Commerce Bank in St. Joseph.

Kylee Dillon Strough '03, was appointed by Gov. Matt Blunt to the Board of Governors. She is the resource development director at United Way of Greater St. Joseph. Kylee replaces Carol Moya, whose term expired. ■

### Officers to carry firearms

At their December meeting, the Board of Governors gave its approval for campus police officers to carry firearms. Arming officers was one of the recommendations that came out of a study that began in 2005, and the recommendation found widespread support on campus. The study reported that Western was the only university or college in the state with commissioned officers that did not carry firearms. The public safety department has also changed its name to University Police, another of the study's recommendations.

Prior to the approval of armed officers, all campus police officers were already POST (Peace Officer and Standards Training) – certified by the state of Missouri and allowed to carry weapons, just not on campus. Many serve as auxiliary officers for the St. Joseph Police Department. ■

# Donors create scholarship funds

**The Foundation recently reported that they had received gifts totaling \$240,000 for scholarships and programs:**

## Reed Scholarship

Dr. Louis Juden Reed established a \$50,000 permanently endowed scholarship in memory of his mother, Sally Juden Reed. The scholarship is for full-time undergraduate or graduate students in good standing. Preference will be given to residents or former residents of the Noyes Home for Children, St. Joseph, Mo.

Sally Juden Reed, born in 1907 in Cape Girardeau, Mo., was an active community volunteer and very interested in the field of social welfare. She served as president of the Missouri Council of Social Welfare Agencies and in 1947 became a member of the Buchanan County Welfare Commission. Sally helped organize a child welfare advisory committee for Buchanan County and was a former member of the Family Guidance Center Board and the Office of Economic Opportunity Board. She died in 1969.

## Coleman Scholarship

Don and Diane Coleman, founders of Coleman Industrial Construction, Inc., Kansas City, Mo., have established a \$25,000 permanently endowed scholarship for full-time juniors or seniors who are majoring in construction engineering technology with an emphasis in construction management.

"We've had a number of Missouri Western grads that have come to our company and made great contributions

to our success," said Don, who graduated from the University of Missouri.

Don hopes the scholarship will help the recipients work less hours at a job and concentrate more on their studies. "I would never have finished my degree without financial aid, and my wife and I felt that it was payback time."

## Goppert Scholarship

The Goppert Foundation of Kansas City has given the MWSU Foundation \$100,000 to establish a permanently endowed scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded annually to one or more full-time students at Western, with preference given to students from Lathrop, Mo., or Norborne, Mo. Financial need will be a consideration.

"We appreciate the Goppert Foundation's support of higher education," said Jerry Pickman '85, Western's director of development. "Their gift will benefit Western students for years to come."

The Goppert Foundation was formed nearly 50 years ago to meet the needs of communities served by Goppert-owned banks in Missouri and Kansas.

## Logan Donation

The John Sublett Logan Foundation recently donated \$65,000 to support programs and scholarships in the business department. Additionally, the foundation funded a new scholarship for students enrolled in Western's graduate programs. ■

# Student interns in Washington, DC

**S**eth Logston is having the time of his life. The government and public affairs major is spending his spring semester as an intern for Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond in Washington, DC.

"To be a part of this is an awesome experience. It's a great opportunity to be involved at this level," said Seth, who will graduate from Western this month. "Anyone who has a chance to do this, should."

He said the first week was a little overwhelming as he took in the extensive



operations of the Senate, but now he is thoroughly enjoying drafting letters and working with staffers on legislation. Seth said his experience as a tour guide

for prospective students at Western for two and a half years has come in handy, too, as he has also been giving tours of the Senate building to visitors.

Seth, of Jefferson City, Mo., said he was familiar with the workings of the state legislature in his hometown, but is grateful for this experience in the nation's capital. "It's so huge. It's like Jefferson City on steroids," he said with a laugh. "But I have learned so much."

As a high schooler, Seth thought he might want a law career, but a class where he learned about the Missouri legislative process changed his mind and career goals. After his internship, he hopes to continue working in Washington, DC, and eventually serve as a government consultant or lobbyist. ■





# CSI: Western

**F**or almost 20 years, Kip Wilson, associate professor of criminal justice, has been setting up just such scenes in the apartment in Truman Wilson Hall for his students in Criminalistics and Police Photography classes to diagram, document, photograph and piece together the “crime.” The blood is cow’s blood, the “victim” is a dummy and evidence is always planted.

“If they go to a crime scene, they have to know what they are looking at,” the former police detective says. “Students have to learn how to apply what they learned as well as knowing the theory.”

The bloodstained walls do “talk” at a violent crime scene, Kip explained, as their pattern indicates the number and direction of blows, and investigators can tell if the blows were delivered in self-defense. In fact, bloodstain patterns are so important to crime scene investigators that Kip arranged for the Southern Institute of Forensic Science (SIFS) out of Mississippi to teach a weeklong class on bloodstain patterns over spring break a couple years ago, and he plans to offer the course again.

Kip couples the crime scene investigation with work in Western’s criminalistics lab, where students learn how to identify fibers, soil and explosives; how to collect and

The walls were splattered with blood in the small apartment. Furniture was overturned. A body was lying in the bedroom. It looked like a horrible crime had occurred. Time to call in the CSI: Western team, headed by Kip Wilson, to investigate.

analyze DNA samples; and how to analyze drugs.

“We demonstrate the principles of the crime lab, so students know what is done with evidence,” Kip says. “Then they have a better understanding of how to collect it.”

He has also recently set up a research facility on the western edge of campus along Woodbine Road. Last summer, he and Dr. David Ashley, professor of biology, worked with several students on a Summer Research Institute project to study ... well ... bugs on pigs.

Kip noted that pigs and humans decompose in a similar manner, so the researchers observed and recorded what types of insects could

be found on the pig carcasses at the different stages of decomposition.

“You can talk about it all you want in class, but if students can go out and see it, they can learn so much more,” Kip says.

He is excited about the research facility and hopes to increase its usage in the future. This month, the SIFS will teach a class on the search, recovery and identification of human remains, studying plastic skeletons that Kip buried on the grounds several months ago. He is also encouraging students to take on independent research projects.

“I love police work,” Kip says. “I enjoy helping people be as successful as they can be in their careers.” ■



## Basketball Alumni Night

**G**reat memories and great performances of the past were among the many items shared by fans, athletics staff and alumni as part of Griffon Basketball Alumni Night held in the fieldhouse in February.

Men's and women's basketball alumni from all eras attended the activities, which included a chili supper prior to tip-off, recognition during both men's and women's games and a post-game social at D & G Restaurant.

One of the returning alumni was men's basketball great Arthur Cooks '87, the all-time leading scorer for men's basketball. Arthur played for the Griffons from 1983-1986 and holds 13 individual or season records including career points scored (2,214), career free throws made (544), career assists (473) and career steals (196). His point records are even more impressive considering there was not a three-point line during his era. He also holds the distinction as the only Griffon basketball player to have his jersey and number retired (#12). Arthur now lives in Omaha, Neb., and has a son who plays basketball at Omaha Central High School. ■

## Griffon golf outings

**May 19 - 6th annual MWSU Athletics  
Celebrity Golf Classic, St. Joseph  
Country Club**

**July 19 - Griffon Golf Classic, Fairview  
Golf Course**

For more information or to reserve your foursome, contact the athletics department at 816-271-5926.



## Griffon basketball accolades

**T**he 2007-2008 Griffon men's and women's basketball season garnered some record breaking individual performances.

On the women's side, senior forward Jill Johnson from Rockwell City, Iowa, scored her 1,000th career point in the Griffon's season opening victory against Texas Woman's University. She finished the season with 1,472 career points, fourth on the all-time women's basketball scoring list at Western. Jill set two more career bests scoring 39 points (one off the all-time mark for points in a game) and grabbing 16 rebounds in the Griffon's 93-78 victory over Truman State Feb. 20. Lisa Hughes '90, is tops on the career scoring list with 1,750 points. Jill was named to the second team All-MIAA.

Senior guard Yanique Javois, St. Joseph, Mo. (pictured above), has turned in some great performances as well. Named to the first-team All-MIAA team, Yanique tallied a career-high 39

points against Emporia State on Feb. 9. She poured in 32 more points against Truman State on Feb. 20. Coupled with Jill's 39 points in that game, this is the first known time that two Western women's basketball players have scored more than 30 points in the same game. Yanique was named MIAA Player of the Week twice.

Senior guard Chemia Woods, of Menifee, Ark., was named to the MIAA's All-Defensive Team, and led the MIAA with 2.63 assists per game.

On the men's side, sophomore forward Reggie Bunch, Racine, Wis., and junior guard Lonnel Johnson of St. Louis, were named Honorable Mention All-MIAA for their season performances. Reggie finished second in the MIAA in points (18.1) and rebounds (8.3) per game. Reggie owns the conference's best rebounding game this season, pulling down 18 at Southwest Baptist Jan. 29. ■



# Jill Johnson honored at Wooden Cup Award ceremony

In front of a crowd of more than 200 at Ansley Golf Club in Atlanta, Griffon basketball player Jill Johnson, along with four other candidates, was showcased as part of the fourth annual Coach John Wooden Cup Award ceremony. The Wooden Cup, a national award, is given annually to one collegiate and one professional athlete who have made the greatest difference in the lives of others and have been an outstanding role model among athletes.

Before the presentation of the award, each candidate delivered a five-minute speech on their experience as a student athlete and why they enjoy community service.

"It was an amazing day," said Jill, a native of Rockwell City, Iowa. "Today's activities sum up everything you do as a person and why you do this as a student athlete. This experience allowed me to meet other amazing people that devote their time both on and off the court and touch the lives of others."

William B. Bruce of Williams College won the award, and the



committee called it the toughest selection of a winner they have had to make since the award's inception in 2005.

For being named a finalist, \$1,000 will be donated to a charity of Jill's choice. ■

# Football team wins Mineral Water Bowl

Griffon football capped off another outstanding season by defeating Wayne State (Neb.) in the 2007 Mineral Water Bowl 20-13. Western competed in the game, one of two NCAA Division II bowl games nationwide, for a record fifth time. With the win, the Griffons finished the season with an overall record of 9-3, which ties the school record for wins for the fourth time in the last five years.

Kicker Dustin Strickler, junior from Bellevue, Neb., kicked a 48-yard field goal, which tied the Mineral Water Bowl record for the longest made field goal in the 43-year history of the game.

For his efforts, LaDarrian Page, freshman from Lee's Summit, Mo., was named the Offensive MVP of the game, while senior linebacker Jacob Schoonover of Mound City, Mo., was named Defensive MVP. ■

## Griffons honor 193 scholar athletes

The annual Student Athlete Honors Night recognized 193 Griffon student athletes at the Feb. 9 basketball game. Those honored had achieved a 3.0 semester GPA in either the fall 2007 or spring 2007 semesters.

Included in that number are 55 student athletes who were named to the Dean's List for achieving a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher and 32 student athletes named to the President's Academic Honor Roll for achieving a semester GPA of 4.0. ■

## Fall sports accolades

Twenty Griffons were recognized as All-Conference by the MIAA for their performance during the fall season. First-team selections included football players Roger Allen, junior offensive lineman, Raytown, Mo.; J.R. Graham, senior safety, Plattsburg, Mo.; and Jamie Hanson, junior punter, Hamilton, Mo. To see a complete list of honored athletes, visit [www.gogriffons.com](http://www.gogriffons.com). ■

## Annual Gold Coat Drive kicks off

Show your support for Griffon athletics by joining the Gold Coat Club! The Gold Coat Club is Western's athletics booster club, and helps provide needed support for all athletics endeavors. The annual drive takes place during the month of May, but anytime throughout the year is a good time to join. Packages start at just \$300 and include two season tickets to all of Western's 10 sports. Don't need tickets? You can make a 100 percent tax deductible donation of any amount to a Griffon sports team of your choice. Join today by calling 816-271-5904, or for more information, visit [www.gogriffons.com](http://www.gogriffons.com). ■





# FROM THE DAYS

of "Footlights," folk operas and "Murder Mansion" at the St. Joseph Junior College, to "The Importance of Being Earnest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Grease" and "The Rocky Horror Show" at Western, students have been wowing the campus and community with outstanding theatrical productions for the past 93 years.

*Students Jesse Boley and Tara Duckworth perform on stage in the one-act show "Sure Thing" in the MWSU Black Box Theatre, fall 2007.*



"I AM WILLING TO  
TAKE A BACK SEAT  
SO STUDENTS HAVE  
THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO DEVELOP."

Deny Staggs, assistant professor of theatre

These audience pleasers of Western's past have also produced a host of wonderful memories and valuable experiences for the students who were a part of them.

"I felt really good at Missouri Western. I am grateful for the experience," Tom Geha '90, of Los Angeles, said in a recent interview. "I remember the people. There was a cast of characters both on and off the stage, and they were never boring."

As a student at Western, Tom had 11 roles in productions such as "The Wool Gatherer," "Zoo Story," and "Foiled on the Muddy Mo!" He said he entered graduate school at Indiana University with a wealth of experience.

Gerald Plummer '78, of Los Angeles, said one of his valuable experiences was building sets on a meager budget. For "The Lark," dozens of locations throughout the play were pulled off with levels, lighting, and "a lot of paint and imagination."

"I got a real chance to be exposed to many, many things as a student," said Gerald. "Missouri Western opened a lot of avenues."

Offering that wealth of experience for students is just as important today as it was when Tom and Gerald were students, according to Deny Staggs, assistant professor of theatre. He said the communication studies/theatre department works very hard to provide students a broad range of experiences so they are prepared for careers or graduate school.

In an expansion of that concept this past theatre season, students directed all the main-stage productions. Two students directed "Angel on My Shoulder," and 15 students from the Introduction to Directing class each directed a one-act play for the main stage. Students have always directed a play as part of that class, but the plays hadn't been for public viewing before this year.

As directors, the students were responsible for not only working with actors, but also the sets, costumes and marketing. "They realized the director is bombarded with questions and choices, and that was a big awakening moment for students," said Deny. "But they were good. They made the choices."

He noted that although the students directed, there was still a great deal of faculty oversight throughout the process. "We're the safety net. We create the guidelines and the structure."

Daisy Buntin, a senior from Clarksdale, Mo., majoring in both biology and theatre video and performance, said she really enjoyed her role as a director of one of the one-act plays. "I liked getting to work with the actors. The important part for me was learning the process." This spring, she was also assistant director for St. Joseph's Robidoux Resident Theater's production, "Agnes of God."

Senior Julie Summa of Lathrop, Mo., said she enjoyed directing a one-act play and was grateful for the experience. "The department takes great pains to make sure you are cross-trained," she said. "They want their students to be marketable when they graduate."

"I am willing to take a back seat so students have the opportunity to develop," said Deny. ■

# WESTERN'S MASTERPIECE THEATRE



# FLASHBACKS!

## We asked alumni to share favorite memories of their theatre days at Western:

My most wonderful memory is meeting my husband at the first read-through of "A Man for All Seasons." He had been cast as Sir Thomas More and I had been cast as his daughter - but we had auditioned at different times so had not met.

We will celebrate our 34th anniversary this summer!

**Karen Durst**

I was involved in one play at Western. I was in the "Vagina Monologues" the first time it was presented on campus. I had an absolute blast doing this play. My favorite memory was rehearsals as we got closer to the show. Everyone just really got into their monologues. I remember practicing mine on the stage and tossing my papers and almost having

them land in the candles. It was hilarious!

**Tari Elder '06**

On one production, I had put together the master sound tape and ran the sound for the show. All through the run of the production, the light guy and I had a marathon game of Battleship going. We never missed a cue, but people waiting backstage for their entrances would occasionally hear from the stagehand's headset, "You sunk my battleship."

I moved to Kansas City in 1989 and still perform in community theatre and at the Kansas City Renaissance Festival. My college days were the best!

**Vicki Kerns '88**

My most memorable theater experience was seeing Larry Linville on campus. We were assigned by a substitute to attend the presentation by Larry (Major Frank Burns - MASH) that evening and have a 500-word report on it the next day. When our professor returned the next day and found out about the assignment, he said it was ridiculous and everyone in the class got an automatic A. I was inclined to agree with him, but that didn't improve my fatigue from staying up late the night before to finish the assignment.

**Sue (Lambkin) Coulter '89**

I recall coming to Missouri Western fresh from four years in the Navy and three tours of duty in Vietnam. Given the public reaction to our country's presence in Southeast Asia, I was prepared for a less than welcoming environment, but nothing could have been further from fact. The theatre faculty made each of us feel like real people and respected us as individuals.

This was a small college theatre program but an interesting mix of exceptional creative artists. I still consider Lu Durham to be one of the finest theatre directors I've worked with in what is now nearly 40 years as a professional and an academic. She was so gentle yet able to get some pretty spectacular results from actors. Larry Dobbins was pretty new to Mo West and my wife, Karen, and I did "The Rainmaker" with him - we still have a photo of the two of us in rehearsal hanging on our wall at home.

Charles Grimsely, who remained a friend for many years, was the scenery designer and technical director and got me involved with the United States Institute for Theatre Technology. He talked about that organization as THE place to make friends and connections in the theatre world of designers. I have been a member since 1971, including a term as president, all thanks to Charles' guidance.

We had some wonderful productions during my few short years there - "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" still ranks as the best college production of that musical I've ever seen. I was proud to be part of "A Man for All Seasons" - maybe it ranks highly in my memories because that's where Karen and I met. We've now been married nearly 34 years.

So many wonderful memories and great friends, even though I've lost touch with most of them over the intervening years. Thanks for encouraging me to remember those years.

**Richard Durst '72**



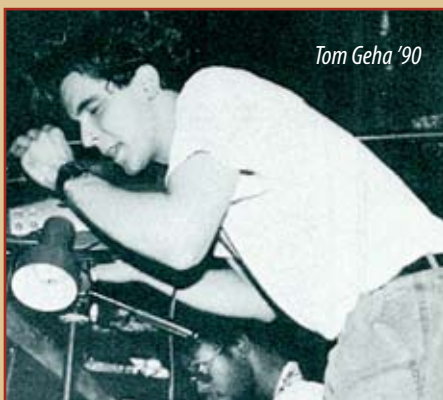


## Alumni Profile

### ON CUE: TOM GEHA '90

In the 1990 Griffon yearbook, Tom Geha '90 talks about his philosophy as an actor. "My biggest fear is to stay stagnant and stop learning," the theatre major was quoted as saying. "Some actors get satisfied with themselves and their acting. I don't want to get into that."

Eighteen years later, his attitude hasn't changed. Tom, who lives in Los Angeles, is not only still involved in theatre, but continually engages in a variety of experiences to enrich his acting.



Tom Geha '90

After graduating from Western, Tom attended graduate school at Indiana University. Armed with a master's degree in theatre, he and two friends moved to LA and started up and operated a theatre company for several years. He continues to be involved in theatre in LA; he has done commercials and films, and he also teaches theatre classes at Santa Monica College (SMC).

And how does he keep his acting skills from getting stagnant? He said he likes to play a variety of roles on stage, and in his spare time, he runs. And runs. Tom has competed not only in marathons, but in ultra marathons of 50 kilometers, 50 miles and more. Last fall, he completed his first 100-mile race on mountain trails through California's Angeles National Forest.

"When you're acting, you give, give, give, so you have to fill up," Tom said. And for him, distance running is a good way to do just that. "I'm testing myself to see how far I can take my body and my mind. It's extreme but I love it."

Tom, who also teaches health and fitness classes at SMC, finished the 100-mile race one week before he and his wife, Echo's, first child was born. "Little did I know having a baby would be like running another 100-mile run," he said with a laugh. ■

## Alumni Profile

### SPOTLIGHT ON GERALD PLUMMER '78

Whether in front of or behind a camera, serving as an understudy or stage manager, creating a purple dinosaur or Spiderman special effects, designing sets or teaching, if it has anything to do with theatre, Gerald Plummer '78, has probably done it.

"I've done television, theatre and major films. There's not a lot of jobs (in the business) that I don't understand because I've done them," the St. Joseph native said.

Gerald's love for theatre began in high school. When he started at Western, he was interested in the sciences, but Sir Thomas More quickly changed his mind. "I was cast as the understudy for the lead in "A Man for All Seasons," and I never looked back. I found out theatre people were a lot more fun."

His love of theatre led to numerous roles in community theatre and teaching technical theatre as a graduate student. But Gerald, who has lived in Los Angeles for more than half his life, said the job that was the most fun was directing and producing the television show - "Could it be a Miracle?" - for one season. "We were at a new location every day, and there were new problems to solve every day. Nothing could be more fun than jumping over those hurdles."

His career has also included designing interactive, animated and electronic displays for Universal Studios Florida, Taiwan National Museum of Science & Technology and Sentosa Heritage Museum in Singapore, to name a few. "I like to tell people my stuff is hanging in museums all over the world."

One of his biggest design challenges was a loveable purple dinosaur. "Barney - A Day in the Park" at Universal Studios Florida amazed crowds not only with the lighting effects, but with Barney's seemingly instantaneous appearance on stage. "That was a tricky one. We had to build a lot of fail-safes into it."

Gerald also built the special effects for the Spiderman ride at Universal Studios Florida.

Today he is a senior estimator for a management and consulting firm in Los Angeles, where he says he estimates building projects ranging from \$5 to \$50 million. Although he hasn't been on stage for awhile, he hopes to change that this year, as one of his New Year's resolutions was to fit theatre into his schedule.

"I don't recommend having the acting bug bite you. It really is infectious," Gerald said. "There's nothing like being in front of a crowd and having them in the palm of your hand." ■



Gerald Plummer '78

# Happy Days

*"When* I reflect on things,  
I really mean this – I believe it's  
providential that I came  
to Western. It's been a  
wonderful experience.  
I couldn't think of a better  
way to finish out my career  
in higher education."

Those words were spoken by Dr. James Scanlon, who has served as Western's president since 2001. He announced his retirement last year, and his last day on campus will be June 30.

Ask anyone who knows Jim Scanlon to describe him, and invariably, the same words are repeated over and over: a man of integrity, a visionary, a great leader, a humble man.

"I have tremendous respect for Dr. Scanlon. In virtually every measure he leaves behind a great legacy," said

Ted Allison, president and CEO of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce.

"Jim will be most remembered as a gentleman of unquestionable integrity and great intellect. I will always consider him my friend," said Melody Smith '87, superintendent of the St. Joseph School District.

Western was Dr. Scanlon's first college presidency, culminating a more than 30-year career devoted to students in higher education. With him came his dream of guiding the college to become a new American regional university, which means

focusing on using Western's resources for both the good of the student and the good of the community and the region. He accomplished that and so much more in just seven short years.

Today, due to Dr. Scanlon's leadership, Western is recognized nationally for its commitment to continuing quality, its strategic plan and its focus on applied learning.

Since his arrival, there are three new buildings on campus, one building currently under construction, one building renovation and addition in the planning stages, a new university plaza and several remodeled campus spaces for students. And perhaps most importantly, Western is now a university.

Dr. Scanlon truly understands the value of a college education, not only for the student, but for the community, the region and the greater good, and he has guided Western by that value since he became president.

Seven years ago, when he stepped up to the podium to greet the campus community for the first time, he said the phrase, "Oh, happy day!" just popped out without him thinking about it; he hadn't planned on saying it.

But those words became his trademark exclamation as he has led Western for the past seven years through a few rough patches, but mostly happy days. ■





# Dr. James J. Scanlon

## What you'll be remembered for

I'd like to be remembered as someone who really cared about the people of Western and who cared about our role in the community and region.

**Most proud of** The achievements of our students. The most critical point about higher education is not what our students look like when they come in the door (ACT scores, etc.), but what happens to students while they are with us and as they graduate.

**Best day** It's hard to choose the best. The celebration of university designation was a very good day. Another very good day was when we announced the very generous gift (\$5 million) of Wes and Patsy Remington, that, along with state funding, will enable us to expand and renovate Agenstein Hall.

Both of those were statements from outside the institution that say, 'We believe this is a very good place in which to invest.'

**Worst day** No one was smiling when we had to deal with major budget cuts. But those weren't bad days, those were just challenges.

## *In his own words -*

### Dr. James Scanlon

#### What you'll miss the most

I'll certainly miss the people. I have a very strong emotional bond with the people on campus.

#### Words for your successor

Bob is a very good person. I hope he feels the foundation left here is a good foundation to help the university mature. When his time here is finished, I hope he has the same level of satisfaction that I have. This is a great place, and it is a privilege to be president.

#### Retirement plans

The week after I retire, a group of Western biology and math students will be in North Carolina (where we are moving). I told Todd (Eckdahl, professor of biology) that the group can come to the beach and visit us.

When I retire, I want to volunteer, but I don't want to

be in charge of anything. I just want to be a worker bee. I also want to write mystery novels, even if the only ones who read them are Lauren and me.

**Final thoughts** I've had seven-plus years of happy days, but it won't be a happy day for me when I leave. ■

**“He was a motivator, an educator, a mentor. I came to Missouri Western as a student and I left as a leader, and I credit Dr. Scanlon for some of that. He inspired me.”**

Sylvester Brandon '05, former SGA president



# Outstanding Achievements

## 2001-2008



*“Everything  
he’s done, he’s done with  
the highest integrity,  
transparency and respect.  
That’s Jim Scanlon,” said  
Dirck Clark ’85, chair of the  
Board of Governors. “Every  
decision he made was based  
on two things: What’s the right  
thing to do? What’s the best  
for the students?”*

### ■ University Designation - “Oh, happy day!”

One of Dr. Scanlon’s most significant accomplishments, and what many say will be his legacy, was the designation of Western as a university by the state legislature and the governor. Western officially became a university on Aug. 28, 2005. In the fall of 2007, the university began offering master’s degree programs.

“Dr. Scanlon’s leadership in communicating Western’s accomplishments to the state legislature and community helped promote this change,” said Dan Nicoson, vice president for university advancement. “He put a lot of pieces in place for that to happen.”

### ■ Applied Learning

A component of Dr. Scanlon’s vision of the new American regional university is a focus on applied learning. During his time at Western, he made applied learning, which includes internships, clinical experiences, study away and faculty-student research, the university’s statewide mission and signature. The percentage of graduates completing these experiences has grown to 85 percent during the past five years, and in the new strategic plan the goal is to reach 100 percent by 2013. In addition, the university now hosts an annual Applied Learning Conference.

“Under Jim Scanlon’s leadership Western’s statewide mission in applied learning came to full fruition,” said Dr. Joseph Bragin, provost and vice president for academic and student affairs.

### ■ A Strong Community Partner

Dr. Scanlon has strengthened Western’s efforts to become a committed partner to the community and the region. During his tenure, Western’s economic impact in the region grew from \$118 million to \$160.9 million. Additionally, the university partners with more than 60 community organizations in many areas, especially workforce and economic development.

“I think he has done an outstanding job of not only representing the interests of the university, but also engaging with other leaders in the community to address issues and move us forward,” said Ted Allison, president and CEO of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of



“He always had good advice for us. He was always willing to listen, and that was important.”

Natalie Bailey '08,  
former SGA president

Commerce. “Dr. Scanlon understands that Western is a critical component for positive economic growth in the community.”

### ■ Strategic Planning

Dr. Scanlon successfully led Western through the creation of two five-year strategic plans, involving more than 400 members of the campus and the community in each plan. Implementation of the second plan, “Building the New American Regional University,” began in 2007.

“Dr. Scanlon knew exactly what we needed to do to get people involved in the strategic plan and carry it through,” said Dr. Jeanie Crain, special assistant to the president. “But he’ll be the first to say it was others who did it.”

### ■ AQIP Brings National Recognition

Western voluntarily joined the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) in 2003. This program aligned Western’s accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools with the strategic planning process. It focuses the university’s efforts on strategic improvements and continuous quality improvement.

When Western applied for AQIP admission, the university received word that its application was a “model application.” Western has successfully completed its first systems portfolio, or progress report on improvement, for the project.

### ■ Life Sciences

Under Dr. Scanlon’s leadership, Western became a partner in the newly created Institute for Industrial and Applied Life Sciences, a partnership of several community businesses and individuals whose mission is to enhance life science training in the region and foster workforce development in the life sciences field.

The construction of the Christopher S. “Kit” Bond Science and Technology Incubator and the expansion and renovation of Evan R. Agenstein Hall are important means to that end.

### ■ State Funding

During lean budget years when universities saw their state funding continue to shrink, Western maintained its quality programs and staffing levels,

and continued to keep a high proportion of its budget, about 83 percent, directly serving students.

The university also maintained one of the lowest tuition levels in the state at the time. In fact, Western did not raise tuition in three of the last seven years, even with a decreased level of state funding.

Although state funding was tight, Dr. Scanlon also made progress toward leveling the state funding inequity between higher education institutions.

“Dr. Scanlon was here during very difficult financial times for the state and university,” said Ron Olinger, vice president for financial planning and administration during Dr. Scanlon’s tenure. “He is a very sound fiscal manager.” ■

Happy Days  
President James J. Scanlon



MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
AUGUST 28, 2005



## Farewell, *Lauren*

Dr. Scanlon likes to tell the story of a conversation he had with Dr. James McCarthy, then interim president, when he and his wife, Lauren, were on campus for his initial interviews. He ran into Dr. McCarthy while Lauren was off with a separate group.

“Jim said, ‘we’ve already decided to hire Lauren. We just haven’t yet decided to hire you,’” Dr. Scanlon said, laughing. “And I believe that is absolutely true.”

For the past seven years, Lauren has been at her husband’s side for the dinners, the speeches, the athletic events and more. His retirement June 30 means the campus and community lose her, as well.

“Lauren has been a real asset to Dr. Scanlon and to Western,” said Beth Wheeler, director of external relations. “She and Dr. Scanlon will both be missed.”

Lauren said from her first visit she was impressed with the friendliness and warmth of both the campus and community. “Missouri Western is a great institution. It was nice for it to be the pinnacle of our academic career.”

As a university president’s wife, she said she liked to stay in the background and play a supportive role. “I’m here to make Jim’s life a little easier. His job is a very demanding job. I think I provide balance to that.”

“Lauren is an extraordinary person,” said Dr. Scanlon. “She is perpetually encouraging and optimistic, and her enthusiasm for what we’re about here has been inspiring to me.” ■



## *Before Western*

Dr. Scanlon took the helm of Western in March 2001. Prior to that, he had served as provost and English professor at Youngstown State University in Ohio since 1993. Previous positions included dean of the college of arts and sciences at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, and academic planning provost and professor of English at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau. He came to Western with over 30 years experience in higher education, having also served at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and Brown University, Providence, R.I.

A native of New York, Dr. Scanlon earned his doctorate in English from Brown University and his bachelor of arts in English from Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y. ■



# Dr. Scanlon's building projects



Commons Building

## Commons Building -

Located in the residence hall complex, it includes a lounge area, coffee shop, convenience store and 24-hour service desk. It opened in fall 2004.

## Living Learning Center -

Opened in fall 2005, the new \$17 million, 400-bed residence hall features semi-suite double and single rooms, study areas, lounges and kitchenettes.

## Fulkerson Center -

The center, attached to Leah Spratt Hall, features banquet and conference facilities and opened in March 2005.

## University Plaza -

A 10-foot bronze Griffon atop a black granite base and a beautiful new plaza area were dedicated in June 2007.

## Christopher S. "Kit" Bond Science & Technology Incubator -

Scheduled to open this summer, the two-story, 25,000 sq. ft. incubator can house up to 15 high-technology start-up firms.

## Agenstein Hall/ Remington Hall -

Ground was broken this spring for Remington Hall, an addition to the 39-year-old Evan R. Agenstein Hall,



Living Learning Center



Library lounge

“He was always willing to let someone else take credit but he was always willing to take the blame himself.”

Bob Hughs '06,  
former student regent

which houses science and math departments. Agenstein Hall will also be renovated.

**Student spaces** - The cafeteria, the library, the first floor lounge in the Nelle Blum Union, three residence halls and several student spaces all over campus have been remodeled during Dr. Scanlon's tenure. ■



## From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Those of you who know me know that I have three jobs. I work at Mercantile Bank in St. Joseph, Mo., as vice president and trust officer. I co-own Norty's Bar & Grill in St. Joseph, and I am a captain in the Missouri Air National Guard. I say good-bye this month to what many (my family included) consider my fourth job – president of the Alumni Association.

Over these last two and a half years, I've had the privilege of leading the Alumni Association's Board of Directors. This is a group of 26 alumni from different generations who dedicate countless hours planning, organizing, and developing programs and other ways to keep alumni involved and in touch with our alma mater.

I've seen our organization grow and change. When I first became involved on the Board of Directors, most of us were from the St. Joseph area. Today, the Board is made up of representatives from across the country. We have alumni chapters and plan monthly alumni activities in St. Joseph, Kansas City, Columbia and St. Louis. The number of graduates volunteering for the Alumni Association has more than doubled from our original 26 board members and now includes those who work with our chapter committees, our career development programs, and our reunion and Homecoming events.

We have come a long way since my first year on the Alumni Board of Directors and we will continue to move forward. Greg VerMulm '89, vice president of the Alumni Association, recently chaired a strategic planning initiative for the Alumni Association. Under his leadership, members of the Alumni Board and Alumni Association members at large developed a five-year plan for the Association.

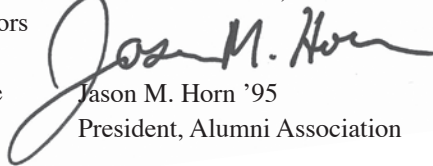
The plan asks alumni to participate in programs that will strengthen and assist



the university as well as current and future alumni. You will hear more about this plan in the months to come. I can assure you that it is exciting and fun and I look forward to participating in many of these new ventures.

In closing, I want to thank you, the members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, and our alumni volunteers who work each and every day to keep us connected with our alma mater and with one another. I will miss my "job" as president of our Alumni Association, but I look forward to new leadership and new ideas. I wish my very best to the new Executive Committee and offer them my continued support.

With Griffon Pride,

  
Jason M. Horn '95  
President, Alumni Association

**PS:** If you would like to become involved in the activities of the Alumni Association, contact Colleen Kowich, director of alumni services, at 816-271-5650, [ckowich@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:ckowich@missouriwestern.edu), or me at [jmhorn@griffonalumni.org](mailto:jmhorn@griffonalumni.org).

## Alumni reach out to students

**T**welve alumni plus 24 students equals a great opportunity for those students. This spring, Alumni Services and Career Development began a pilot program for sophomores and juniors: the Griffon Alumni Career Network.

"We're really pleased to get this program up and running," said Robin Hammond '93, Alumni Association board member and chair of the Student Involvement Committee. "The students will find it very beneficial, and our alumni are excited about helping."

Two networking events were held this spring and three will be held in the fall. The events include career panels, resumé reviews, practice interviews and a business networking social.

Colleen Kowich, director of alumni services, said the 24 students that are participating on campus are a good cross-section of Western students – several different majors, traditional, nontraditional, residential and commuters.

Colleen said that the St. Louis and Kansas City alumni chapters hosted similar events for students from those cities, and they were very successful. She said the entire program will be evaluated after the last fall event and hopefully will not only continue, but expand.

"This program is an excellent opportunity for both students and alumni," Colleen said. ■





## ALUMNI NEWS Briefs

### Homecoming preview

Mark your calendar now! Homecoming 2008 is **Oct. 17 & 18**. Join us Friday evening for the annual Awards Banquet and All-Greek reunion. Saturday's activities include the parade and the big game against Emporia State. A pre-game tailgate will be held with reunions for Resident Assistants, Communication Studies/Theatre alumni, Physical Therapy Assistants, and the alumni members of the SGA. More information in the next issue or online at [www.griffonalumni.org](http://www.griffonalumni.org). Book your hotel now! ■

### Are you a member of the Griffon Alumni Social Network?

Don't miss the opportunity to connect with friends, register online for events, and check out what's happening at Western. Go to [www.griffonalumni.org](http://www.griffonalumni.org) and follow these steps:

1. Click "First Time Log In"
2. Enter your last name
3. Verify your name
4. Enter your ID number - the "A" number on your mailing label.  
E-mail [sleslie@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:sleslie@missouriwestern.edu) if you don't have it. ■



Alumni and friends gather for a group photo on the alumni trip to Branson, Mo. last fall.

## Branson gets rave reviews

**"G**reat shows, good food and a lot of fun" were the most common phrases used by participants to describe the alumni trip to Branson, Mo., last fall.

"I can't say enough good about it," said Joyce Rochambeau '47, who hadn't been to Branson in about 20 years. "It was a happy experience for me."

"It was a great opportunity for alumni and friends to get together and enjoy the sights and sounds of Branson," said Colleen Kowich, director of alumni services. "It was a jam-packed weekend of a lot of fun."

Jerry Benitz '05, said she had a great time, too. "Colleen chose such a variety of shows, everyone had to be pleased," she said. Although Jerry was the most recent graduate on the trip, she thinks she may have been the oldest.

"I was always the last one on the bus, but I thought this could be my last hurrah - I'm 82. I think I did pretty well keeping up with the 'younguns.'" She invited her sister and brother-in-law along on the trip, and Jerry said they had a great time, too.

Colleen said she would like to make a trip to Branson an annual event. ■

**Take me out to the ballgame!!**

**Royals vs. Cardinals**  
**3 p.m. - June 28, 2008**  
**Kauffman Stadium**

**\$29 per person includes a game ticket and a pregame tailgate in the parking lot (alcohol will not be provided, but is permitted).**

**Parking - \$7 in advance, \$9 at the gate.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class year \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I want to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$29 each and a parking pass for \$7.00. TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Already have tickets? Taligate only - \$10

I have enclosed: ☐ Check made payable to MWSU Alumni Services OR ☐ Credit Card Information:

Type of card: ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Discover 3-digit verification code on back \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card # \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Alumni Services, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507.

Since this is a premium game, tickets are limited - order soon! For more information or questions, call 816-271-5646, email [ckowich@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:ckowich@missouriwestern.edu), or order online at [www.griffonalumni.org/cardsroyals2008](http://www.griffonalumni.org/cardsroyals2008).





## Alumni CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 28** Western Wednesday! Check out [griffonalumni.org](http://griffonalumni.org) for details.
- June 25** Western Wednesday! Check out [griffonalumni.org](http://griffonalumni.org) for details.
- June 28** Cardinals vs. Royals at Kauffman Stadium, see page 21.
- July 23** Western Wednesday! Check out [griffonalumni.org](http://griffonalumni.org) for details.
- August 23** Volleyball alumni match and dinner. Contact Tiffany Mastin at [tmastin@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:tmastin@missouriwestern.edu) or 816-271-4209.
- August 27** Western Wednesday! Check out [griffonalumni.org](http://griffonalumni.org) for details.
- Labor Day Weekend** 3rd annual AlumNight at the Drive In
- September 13** Tailgate at Northwest Missouri State University
- September 20** Hall of Fame game; 2008 Athletics Hall of Fame class honored.
- October 4** Family Day
- October 11** Tailgate at University of Nebraska - Omaha
- October 17 & 18** Homecoming 2008



*Approximately 75 alumni and friends celebrated Mardi Gras at the second annual Griffs on the Bayou at Boudreaux's Louisiana Seafood and Steaks in St. Joseph, Mo.*



*At the November Western Wednesday, the St. Joseph Alumni Chapter collected toys and clothes for needy families. Zach Ramsay '02, holds a couple of the items that were collected.*





## 1960s

DON LENTZ '62, is funeral director, pre-need sales representative for Clark-Sampson Funeral Home in St. Joseph, Mo.

## 1970s

JEAN ANN JOHNSON '73, is the warden at the Western Missouri Correctional Center in Cameron, Mo.

Ted Utz '78, and Linda Brainerd were married July 17, 2007. Ted also retired after 27 years with the Andrew County Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## 1980s

DEREK CONARD '82, was re-appointed by Gov. Matt Blunt to serve on a statewide child abuse and neglect board.

BRETT BURRI '84, is the president of Providence Bank, Columbia, Mo.

RHONDA (ROBERTS) EVANS '85, is the chief operating officer at Community Hospital, Fairfax, Mo.

DEAN BROOKSHIER '88, is the city administrator of Chillicothe, Mo.

JENNIFER KNEIB '89, was appointed by Gov. Matt Blunt to the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority's board. She is branch manager for First Horizon Loan Corporation in St. Joseph, Mo.

PAUL RHOADS '89, is the defensive coordinator for Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.

## 1990s

KEVIN MOSS '90, was promoted to Lt. Col. in the U.S. Marine Corps. He is a commanding officer of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 at Miramar, Calif.



JOHN HICKMAN '91, and his wife, Wendy, announce the birth of a son, William Stearns, born Dec. 26, 2007.

The family resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

DIRK ALLSBURY '93, and Jennifer Kerner were married Sept. 29, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

DAVID ELMS '94, and Cori Elifrits were married July 14, 2007. The couple resides in Platte City, Mo.

CRAIG MILLER '94, is the Memphis, Mo., Market President for U.S. Bank.

TRACY (SCHEMMER) WELCH '95, and her husband, Jason, announce the birth of a son, Samuel Oscar, born Nov. 26, 2007. He joins a sister, Amelia. The family resides in Cameron, Mo.

CHRIS '97, AND LARA (PEPPERS) '97, ARCHER relocated to Sydney, Australia, for three years. While there, Chris will serve as zone quality manager with responsibility for Asia, Oceania and Africa for Nestle Purina.

DUANE BRUCE '99, was named Western's associate dean of student development this spring. His chief responsibilities include advising the Student Government Association, revising and enforcing the student code of conduct and developing student leadership programs.

## Two nursing graduates earn awards

MELISSA BUSH '00, received the 2007 Paragon Award from CVS/Caremark Corp., the highest honor a colleague can achieve in the organization. Only 29 people nationwide received the 2007 award. Melissa was praised as a "visionary," always trying to optimize her performance as a nurse practitioner.

Melissa earned a master of science in nursing from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2005 and is a certified family nurse practitioner with Minute Clinic.

GABRIEL BAILEY '04, received the Heart of Healthcare award for excellence in the nursing profession from the University of Kansas School of Nursing. He was one of 10 winners from among 450 nominees from the state of Kansas and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Gabriel was recognized for his work in the emergency department at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., and for his 17 years of volunteer service at Camp Quality Northwest Missouri, a summer camping experience and year-round support program for children with cancer. ■



CHAD CARLSON '99, and his wife, Cailey Auxier-Carlson, announce the birth of a son, Macormick Grey, born Aug. 30,

2007. He joins a sister, Molly Grace. The family resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

WENDY (FISHER) JOHNSON '99, and her husband, Justin, announce the birth of a son, Cooper, born June 30, 2006.

MARTIN KELSEY '99, participated in the Northrop Grumman-sponsored Weightless Flights of Discovery. He was the only teacher from Missouri or Kansas chosen for this program. While weightless, he conducted experiments that he took back to share with his fifth-grade students in Liberty, Mo.

ANDREA SOWARDS '99, and Christopher Rivers were married June 10, 2007. The couple resides in Federal Way, Wash.

## 2000s

MARCUS '00, AND ERIN (KIMBLE) '00, FIZER announce the birth of a son, Dawson Cole, born Dec. 10, 2007. The family resides in Shawnee, Kan.

1st LT. RICK FRESE '00, is serving in Kosovo with the Missouri Army National Guard. He is the platoon's executive officer.

CHRIS HEARD '00, is the city administrator of Ashland, Mo.

KEVIN LINVILLE '00, and Dawn Brown were married Sept. 1, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

BRIAN POELMA '01 & '07, is a tax staff member for Williams-Keepers LLC in Columbia, Mo.



MATT GROWCOCK '01, and his wife, Jennifer, announce the birth of a son, Evan Matthew, born Nov. 3, 2007.

JOHN MORRIS '01, AND KELLY STANTON '02, were married Oct. 13, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

TAI (AREGBE) AJANI '02, and her husband, Tunde, announce the birth of a son, Jibola Majeed, born April 12, 2007. Tai also earned a master's degree in health care administration from the University of Maryland.

ANGELA BEISINGER '02, AND TRAVIS SMITH '04, were married July 7, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

JASON DAVISON '02, and Ashley Miljavac were married June 23, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

BRANDI (PHILLIPS) FULLER '02, and her husband, Jardin, announce the birth of a son, Jadin. The family resides in Memphis, Mo.

J.D. '02, AND KARA (SPALDING) '05, PARTRIDGE announce the birth of a daughter, Morgan Elizabeth, born Oct. 7, 2007. The family resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

## Alumnus' CD wins Grammy

A CD by the Kansas City Chorale, under the direction of CHARLES BRUFFY '81, won a 2008 Grammy Award for best engineered classical album. Two of the chorale's discs were nominated for Grammy awards.

"Grechaninov: Passion Week" won the Grammy and was also nominated for Producer of the Year, Best Classical Album, and Best Choral Performance. "Eternal Rest" was nominated for Producer of the Year (classical).

Charles has been Artistic Director of the Kansas City Chorale since 1988 and the Phoenix Bach Choir since 1999, and the choirs have been praised for both their live performances and recordings.

Charles has been recognized by many as the next great American choral conductor. In 1999, The New York Times named him as a potential heir apparent to the late great Robert Shaw and in 1996, he was asked by National Public Radio to help celebrate Robert Shaw's 80th birthday with an on-air tribute. In 2005, Fanfare magazine called him "one of the next big things in American choral music."

A board member of Chorus America, Charles conducts workshops and clinics across the U.S. Also an active tenor soloist, he performed with the

Robert Shaw Festival Singers in recordings and concerts in France, and in concerts at Carnegie Hall. He is a featured soloist on the Robert Shaw release "Appear and Inspire."

In July, Charles will conduct a chorus of American choirs in Prague in a performance of the Durufle Requiem.

After earning his bachelor's degree in music with majors in piano and voice from Western, Charles earned a master's degree in vocal performance from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he also completed all course work for the doctor of musical arts degree in conducting. He received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1999 and was the speaker at Western's spring commencement ceremonies in 2006. ■



LORI SMOOT '02, and William Jester were married Feb. 14, 2008. The couple resides in Independence, Mo.

STACY (CALCOTE) WILLIAMSON '02, earned a master of science in education in curriculum and instruction from the University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg. She is also president of the Missouri Middle School Association for a two-year term.

JASON BUSS '03, is a senior human resources manager for Vishay Intertechnology in various countries including Mexico, Costa Rica and Canada. He recently attained the certification and title of Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR). The pass rate of the GPHR for the year was 53 percent, and he is one of only nine people in Nebraska, 733 in the U.S., and 826 in the world to attain a GPHR. He and his wife, MONICA LEE-BUSS '03, a training manager for Carneco Foods, reside in Columbus, Neb.

J. BRENT '03, AND THERESA MARIE (HELM) '04, GERLING announce the birth of a daughter, Ava Louise, born Sept. 11, 2007. She joins a sister, Isabella Rose.

PARKER RICE '03, earned a master of science in criminal justice administration from Columbia College, Columbia, Mo.

LAVELL RUCKER '03, received a 2008 Drum Major for Justice Award from Western's Center for Multicultural Education.

JOHN EIMAN '04, earned a master's degree from the Truman Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia.

ASHLEY GRAY '04, and Casey Hayes were married Nov. 3, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

BARBARA (KRUSE) HIRSCH '05, and her husband, Greg, announce the birth of a daughter, Emma, born Sept. 30, 2007. She joins a brother, Michael.

LINDSAY FOWLER '05, AND SHADOW EVANS '06, were married Sept. 22, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

## Alumna finds HeR passion

**D**espite two not-so-great memories, PAMELA (ALDEN) FREEMAN '96, said her student days at Western were great. "I really did enjoy my experience there. I had great professors."

Pamela is the human resources (HR) director at Tucson-based CyraCom, and was recognized last fall as a 2007 Inside Tucson Business Up & Comer. The award recognized nine people in their 20s, 30s and 40s who have made an impact on the region. Since she joined CyraCom almost five years ago, the number of employees has increased 400 percent and the company has received several awards for its innovative HR practices.

Pamela graduated with a history degree and a secondary education certificate and taught at an area high school for two years before moving to Tucson, Ariz. She accepted an HR position until she could find a teaching job, but she realized HR work combined her love of teaching with business, and she liked that.

She encourages college freshmen and sophomores to explore several careers, try new things and take odd classes before deciding on a major. "Young people don't say, 'I want to be an HR director someday,'" she said with a laugh. "They limit themselves. They don't see what all is out there."

The Up & Comer award also recognized Pamela's community volunteerism, which includes raising awareness about orphans around the world and raising funds to help parents afford international adoptions. She and her husband, Brian, adopted a boy from Russia almost two years ago and recently adopted two special-needs girls. She has made four trips to Russian orphanages.



"Seeing it firsthand made me realize the great need of the orphans," she said. "Orphanages are doing the best they can, but they're limited."

Where does she see herself in five years? Busy enjoying her family and still in HR. "I love HR. I'm very passionate about helping people with career choices."

Oh, and what about those two not-so-great memories? The first one involves a "horrible" photo of her that ended up in a brochure, and the second involves walking across campus when it was 20 below. "Now I live in Arizona and 60° is freezing." ■

**2000s continued**

LESLIE KORTHANKE '05, and Clayton White were married July 21, 2007. The couple resides in North Liberty, Iowa.

ANGELA TILL '05, and Travis Hollars were married Aug. 18, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

ALLISON COOKSEY '06, AND CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON '06, were married July 21, 2007. The couple resides in Savannah, Mo.

ADAM BROWN '06, AND TARA GNUSCHKE '07, were married July 7, 2007. The couple resides in Kansas City, Mo.

JENNIFER HALL '06, and Dallas Wood were married Oct. 20, 2007. The couple resides in Falls City, Neb.

VANESSA KEISER '06, and Benjiman Boyer were married June 30, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

JESSICA RUARK '06, and Ryan Klinetobe were married Sept. 29, 2007. The couple resides in Omaha, Neb.

NOLLEE UNDERWOOD '06, and Kyle Luke were married Sept. 29, 2007. The couple resides in Topeka, Kan.

JOHN WACHTEL '06, AND DANIELLE TWIGG '07, were married July 7, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

KARI DICKINSON '07, is attending the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health at A.T. Still University's Mesa campus. The program received more than 3,300 applications; 350 applicants were interviewed and 60 were accepted.

RYAN HARDIE '07, and Sarah Armstrong were married Sept. 15, 2007. The couple resides in St. Joseph, Mo.

TOCARRA (JASINSKI) MCCONNELL '07, is a counselor and community support worker for the adolescent substance abuse outpatient rehabilitation for Preferred Family Healthcare in Trenton, Mo. ■

## Recognizing Excellence

**You know excellence when you see it.** The MWSU Foundation does too, and it's a fact: Western has excellent support from alumni and friends! To show how much you're appreciated, the Foundation has created the **Western League for Excellence**.

The Western League for Excellence is an honorary society for donors who have expressed the intent to contribute undesignated funds at a particular level each year in support of Western's unique mission. Members of the Western League help maintain the day-to-day excellence at Western, giving the Foundation the flexibility to meet the current needs of the university and the assurance of a consistent level of support in order to plan for the future.

Your membership in the Western League says you believe in Western – the mission, the programs, the students – and that you want to be part of the tradition of excellence. Join today by returning the Western League for Excellence enrollment form secured in this issue of the Western Magazine and be recognized for your excellent support! ■

## Community organization directed by Western alumna

**R**OBIN HAMMOND '93, always knew she wanted a career helping people, but her perseverance, hard work and skills have led to her running a nonprofit organization with an operating budget of a little over \$1 million per year.

Robin is the executive director of St. Joseph Youth Alliance, a community partnership with a goal of helping children and families. Since 1995, the Alliance has contributed more than \$16 million for family crisis intervention, substance abuse prevention, educating daycare providers, youth mentoring and more.

"I like knowing that hopefully, at the end of the day, we made a difference," said Robin. "We want to give children the skills to make good choices."

Robin, a native and current resident of Helena, Mo., said that as a high school student, she had always planned on attending Western. In 1991, she earned an associate degree as an executive secretary, but had trouble finding a job that paid well.

She ran into one of her teachers, Sharon Downey, shortly after she graduated, and Sharon convinced her to

return to Western for her bachelor's degree. "If Sharon Downey hadn't caught me that day, I don't know where I'd be today. I can attest to the importance of building relationships with your professors."

Robin, a member of Western's Alumni Association Board of Directors and chair of the Student Involvement Committee and the Griffon Alumni Career Network, began working for the Alliance in 1995 and became the executive director in 2001. She earned her master's in administration from Central Michigan University in 2001, taking the classes on Western's campus.

Robin's advice to current students? "You can't dream too big." She remembers taking an aptitude test in high school that told her she really wasn't college material. A bachelor's and a master's degree later, she can laugh at that assessment. "You can do many things if you set your mind to it. It takes that strong determination to do things. And you can ask for help along the way." ■



# Alumnus jumps feet first into career

**D**R. RUSS GRIMES '96 and '98, said he enjoyed his college days in St. Joseph so much that when he had the opportunity to move back to the community, he didn't hesitate. He's had a podiatry practice here for more than two years.

"I feel blessed to get back to St. Joseph. I enjoy serving the community and I feel privileged to come back," Russ said. He said he likes the interaction with his patients and taking care of them.

Russ, a Griffon quarterback for three years, meets several of his former fellow football players for lunch about once a week. "I liked the competition, the friendships I made and doing things with

teammates. I have a lot of good memories."

Having a nurse for a mother and a football coach who dealt with a lot of

sports injuries for a father made becoming a physician a natural career choice, said Russ. "I always wanted to do something to help people; I couldn't think of doing anything else." His first major in



1996 was in exercise and health science, and his 1998 degree was in biology.

"The biology department was fantastic. They set you up for success. It was hard work, but they prepared you for graduate school or a profession."

Russ' advice for current students? "Work hard and then play hard." Did he follow that advice as a student? "No, not at all," he said with a laugh. ■

## Russ' advice for current students? "Work hard and then play hard."

## Western flag in Iraq

Lt. Col. Greg Mason '89, and Sgt. First Class Paul Frey '96, proudly display their alma mater's flag more than 10,000 miles from home at Camp Liberty in Iraq. "We are proud to represent our country and Missouri Western

as a part of bringing some of the freedoms we enjoy in America to the Iraqi people," said Greg. The flag is displayed in the dining facility at the camp. ■



## Drive with pride!

A \$25 donation to Western allows you to purchase a special Missouri Western State University license plate. Call the Alumni Services Office for details - 816-271-5646.



## In Memory ...

*We honor those alumni who have recently passed away. If you want us to include someone in this listing, please call 816-271-5651, mail to Alumni Services Office, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507, or e-mail holtz@missouriwestern.edu.*

NORMAN CLARK '90, Los Angeles, Sept. 13, 2007.

FRANCES I. HIRTLE '41, St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 9, 2007.

FRANCES HOSKINSON '80, Creston, Iowa, Jan. 28, 2004.

JULIA FUNKHOUSER COX JC, St. Joseph, Mo., Nov. 18, 2007.

CHARLES C. CUTLER '38, St. Joseph, Mo. Sept. 24, 2007.

LARRY D. MALSON '72, Kansas City, Kan., Dec. 30, 2007.

ROSCOE J. MCDONALD JC, Aurora, Colo., Jan. 4, 2008.

JUDY MCGRAW '94, St. Joseph, Mo., Jan. 2, 2008.

MARGARET "BABS" (KELLY) MONAHAN '82, St. Joseph, Mo., Oct. 18, 2007.

VINCENT MOORE '03, Agency, Mo., Dec. 15, 2007.

SCOTT DEAN SMITH '80, Leawood, Kan., Sept. 20, 2007.

MAXINE (PHILLIPS) SWYHART '31, Overland Park, Kan., Jan. 16, 2008.

ELIZABETH A. THOMPSON '06, St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 8, 2007.

## Western loses three outstanding volunteers

Three of Western's most ardent and longtime supporters passed away recently, leaving behind many people who will greatly miss and fondly remember them: PEGGY CRAVENS IFFERT, JC, HERB IFFERT '35, and EDNA (SWAFFORD) PUMPHREY '32.

Peggy died Nov. 28, 2007 at the age of 90. A 22-year member of the Alumni Association Board, she was always ready to lend a hand. She was one of the best fund-raisers for the annual Phonathon, making hundreds of calls each year.

Herb died Jan. 28, 2008.

He was 92. Herb was also an active volunteer, and had served as a member of the Foundation Board of Directors.

Herb, who was vice president of finance for St. Joseph Light and Power, and Peggy, a retired nurse, established two scholarships - one for the nursing department and one for the business department.

Last year, the Western Alumni Association established the Herb and Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University in an effort to recognize their dedication and service to Western.

Edna, a longtime member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, died Dec. 13, 2007. She was 94. Edna had served on the board as secretary and treasurer and was best known for her service on the social committee. She was a very active volunteer and helped plan many alumni events.

In 2006, Edna and Peggy received the Outstanding Volunteer Award from the Alumni Association for their years of service and commitment to Western. Edna is survived by her daughter, Billie '66, and son-in-law, Robert Sporhase, of Albuquerque, N.M.

"The Western community will miss Herb, Peggy and Edna," said Dan Nicoson, vice president for university advancement. "They were three of Western's greatest friends." ■

## Tell us what's new!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

What's New \_\_\_\_\_

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# KILLER SCIENCE!

**A PROFESSOR'S KEEN EYE** in a microbiology class has led to an interesting and unusual laboratory discovery. Dr. Jason Baker, associate professor of biology, observed that a bacterial species growing on a Petri dish was killing its neighbors, but so far, the species' exact identity remains a mystery.

In an effort to demonstrate the pervasiveness and abundance of microorganisms, students in Jason's Medical and Public Health Microbiology class were charged with swabbing everyday items throughout Agenstein Hall to see if they contained microscopic organisms. While studying the samples brought in by the students, Jason noticed two different bacterial colonies under the microscope that had nothing growing around them.

He explained that the colonies were likely producing bacteriocins, which are toxic proteins produced by bacteria to protect themselves and out-compete their neighbors for limited food resources. The find was exciting, he said, because it might be possible that the bacteria species he thought he was looking at was not previously known to have a killing effect.

Senior Judy Knadler, who works full time at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, an animal health business in St. Joseph, sent the two samples through an automated microbe identification system there, and only one of them could be identified. So identifying the mysterious bacteriocin became a project in the Summer Research Institute last summer.

"We're narrowing it down, but we're still not 100 percent confident what the species is," said Jason. "People probably have studied this bacterium before but there is nothing in the

literature that describes this species producing a killing effect."

Along with Judy, Western senior Susan Brock and St. Joseph's Central High School senior Meredith Triplet worked on the project all summer and throughout the fall and spring semesters. The researchers also set up experiments to learn just what the microbe could kill.

"It kills almost every bacteria that we have challenged it with – several species of staphylococcus, some E. coli, salmonella and more," Jason said. Additionally, he said they've tried to heat it, freeze it, thaw it and subject it to extreme pH level changes. "Nothing stops it."

But he cautioned science fiction aficionados not to get too excited by that.

"This is a normal, natural microorganism. We come across them every day and we are not harmed by them."

This summer's research goal is to isolate the pure bacteriocin so it can be sent out for an amino acid sequence analysis. After the sequencing, the students will study a protein database to see if anything identical or similar has been found.

"I'm trying to explain it to my family," Meredith said with a laugh. "First of all, no one knows what a bacteriocin is, and then I have to try to explain what I'm doing. But," she added, "it's really exciting. It's been a cool opportunity for hands-on lab work."

"I think it's really awesome," said Susan. "It's going to be fun to figure out if it's really something new."

"They are excellent researchers," Jason said of his students. "They deserve lots of credit and big pats on the back." ■



*Dr. Jason Baker and student Susan Brock work on the killer bacteriocin.*





# WESTERN'S BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS

No matter the season, our  
campus offers a dazzling  
display of nature's beauty.  
Have you visited lately?  
It's worth the trip to  
enjoy the scenery!

