

Missouri Western

The Magazine for Alumni and Friends • Spring 2006



Graduating Champions page 14

The Disaster Named Katrina page 16



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Western Magazine
4525 Downs Drive, Spratt Hall 106
St. Joseph, MO 64507
(816) 271-5651
email: holtz@missouriwestern.edu

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President's Perspective

Dear Alumni and Friends,

At Western, one of the focuses of our five-year strategic plan is to encourage students to develop

a habit of community service and become leaders in their communities. This spring issue certainly reflects our commitment to this goal.

I am especially pleased to see on the back cover of this issue, photos of our students engaging in community service. Whether it is through an organization or as individuals, students have numerous opportunities throughout their college careers to volunteer and serve others. Many students are taking advantage of those opportunities.

Hurricane Katrina was so devastating not only to the residents of Louisiana and Mississippi, but also for many throughout the United States. Starting on page 16 are articles about alumni from Louisiana who were affected, and alumni who volunteered to help hurricane victims. One Western student was particularly affected by hurricane Katrina, and there is an article about how the Western campus and St. Joseph community responded to his plight. I am so proud of the Western staff and alumni who reached out to help. They, too, are committed to our focus on community service.

The athletic department is featured on pages 14 and 15, and included in the article is evidence of their strong commitment to volunteerism. From baseball camps to delivering holiday baskets to serving in a food kitchen, every athlete has the opportunity to participate in community service during his or her college career.

Western is committed to community service. I think you'll see our commitment in this issue. It is a great time to be associated with Missouri Western State University!

James Scanlon
President

Contents

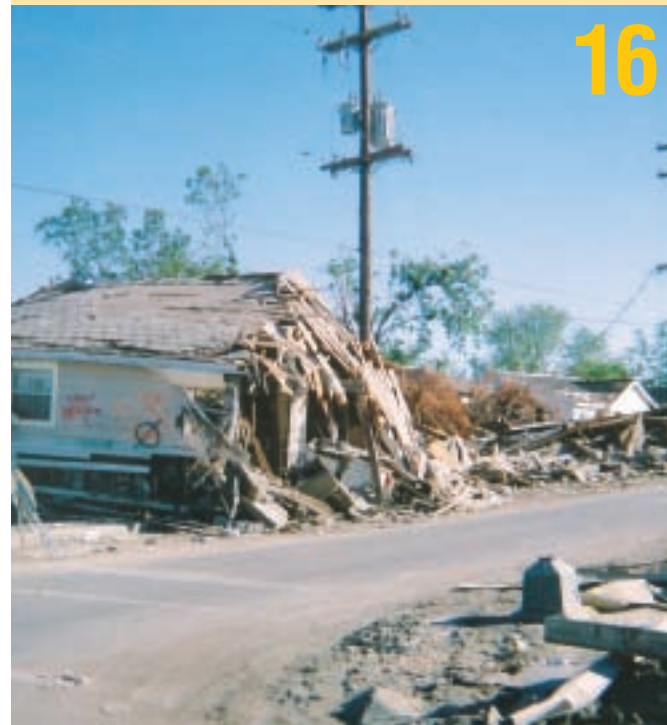
6



Departments

- 2 Campus News
- 12 Calendar of Events
- 13 Sports
- 19 Alumni News
- 24 Alumnotes

16



On the cover:
Western's 2005 All-American
athletes: Marian Broderick, Selma
Barbosa, Jeremiah White, Brice
Garnett and Amy Beverly.
Photo by Eric Callow



Features

6 Taking Knowledge Abroad

Two professors and a retired Western vice president share their experiences of teaching abroad for a semester.

14 Graduating Champions

Under Athletic Director Mark Linder's leadership, Western Athletics is achieving greatness on every level.

16 The Disaster Named Katrina

The effects of hurricane Katrina will be felt for years to come; read about how alumni were affected, how they volunteered to help, and how a Western student felt the effects of one of the most damaging storms in history.

26 Perseverance Personified

Last fall, alumnus Dennis Atkins, '77, accomplished a feat that few even dream of accomplishing, but that was only one in a long list of Dennis' amazing achievements.

14



M. Jones Photography



JC Watts speaks at Convocation on Critical Issues

“We can’t keep doing things the same old way.” That was the recurring theme of JC Watts’ presentation, “In-Depth Political Analysis,” to the more than 2,000 in attendance at the 12th annual Convocation on Critical Issues Oct. 6.

Weaving in lessons learned from his parents, his church and his experiences as a football quarterback and a former Congressman, he spoke about issues facing our government today and how we need to address them.

JC, now chair of JC Watts Companies, believes that many of our country’s problems, such



JC Watts, featured speaker at the 12th annual Convocation on Critical Issues, speaks with student leaders at a breakfast before his talk.

as poverty, the high cost of health care, and the Social Security system, will not be fixed until we can come up with new models.

“We’ve had critical issues facing us for the last 25 years

and the problem is, we’re trying to deal with the issues the same old ways.”

JC spoke to almost 300 at a dinner on Oct. 5, and to 20 student leaders at a breakfast before his presentation. ■

Campus hotspots

With more and more students utilizing laptop computers, Western began offering wireless network hotspots in six locations around campus last fall. Faculty, staff and students can connect to the wireless network after a simple registration process.

Wireless connections are available on both floors of the library in the Warren E. Hearn Center, in the Fulkerson Center, Nelle Blum Student Union first floor lounge, Leah Spratt Hall atrium and the residence hall Commons Building. ■

WESTERNwireless



Phonathon '05 wrap-up

By the time Western’s phonathon was over last fall, students had made almost 25,000 calls to alumni and friends, raising over \$36,000.

Jerry Pickman, director of development, said the phonathon was a success in many ways. He noted that they had over 200 first-time donors, and callers were able to update many records.

“We truly appreciate the generosity of those who supported the phonathon,” he said. ■



The 2005 Phonathon callers want to thank all those who contributed to the Phonathon this year!

Professor researches effects of international job displacement

Surprising results, outstanding research experience and an affirmation of career plans are some of the outcomes of a research project that Dr. Dan Cox, assistant professor of government, has been working on for more than two years.

The research involves surveying displaced workers in order to examine the effectiveness of worker retraining programs under the U.S. Trade Act. Two students, Will Kariker, who graduated in 2004, and Tara Duckworth, a government and public affairs major, worked with Dan.

The research results surprised him. “Originally, we all thought retraining would help, but that the workers would still make less than before,” Dan said. “It shocked us that they could retrain in two years and make more money.”

Even for those earning less after retraining, he said most were happier because the retraining had led to a more fulfilling career.

Tara has worked on the research project since its inception, first as a high school senior as part of Western’s Summer Research Institute and then as a college student.

“The research was a very different experience than the classroom. It was more hands on, and I really learned how to research,” Tara said. “It was more fulfilling than any class has been.”

Although most of the information was gathered through written surveys, Tara said participating in focus groups of local displaced

workers last summer really opened her eyes.

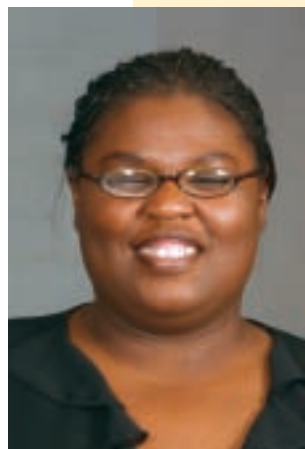
“When you are doing research, you only see the numbers, and the focus groups helped me see the people,” she said. “I saw their lives were really affected (by the layoffs). It was disheartening.”

“I realized that in the past two years of research, every number I had worked with was a real person with a story.”

- Tara Duckworth, government & public affairs major

She was surprised at the number of people who could have taken advantage of the program but were unaware of it. Also, because health care benefits were not offered, many could not participate.

“I saw the effects that public policy has on people’s lives. I’m excited for my future career in the public area. It (the research project) affirmed my major.” ■



Tay Triggs

Western names director of multicultural education center

Tay Triggs, former minority achievement coordinator at Western, was named the director of the Center for Multicultural Education (CME) last fall. CME’s programs include The Big Event day of service, the Martin Luther King Jr. luncheon and the Drum Major for Justice awards, and RHYME, where students are given the chance to express themselves in a public forum through music and poetry. Last fall, Tay initiated Expanding our Horizons, a brown bag lunch discussion series.

“Part of my goal is to ensure that Western is a dynamic, challenging and comfortable place for all,” said Tay. “I will work diligently and compassionately to guarantee that multicultural awareness, understanding and fairness are the norms, not the exceptions.” ■



2005 Distinguished professors named

Dr. James Scanlon, Western's president, said the university is committed to excellence in teaching, professional service and scholarship, and creative activities of its faculty.

To recognize outstanding faculty members, the Board of Governors presents Distinguished Professor Awards each year, and in 2005, 10 received the award.

Dr. Scanlon said the awards recognize the outstanding performance of individual faculty members over a substantial period of time in three areas - teaching, scholarship and service.

The 2005 awardees are Dr. David Ashley, professor of biology; Dr. Jason Baker, associate professor of biology; Dr. Evelyn Brooks, professor

of nursing and director of the Western Institute Center for Health and Wellness; Dr. Michael Cadden, associate professor of English; Dr. Kelly Henry, associate professor of psychology and the director of applied learning; Dr. Shiva Nandan, associate professor of marketing and director of the Western Institute Center for Business and Economic Development; Dr. Jeffrey Poet, assistant professor of mathematics; Carol Roever, associate professor of business; Dr. Dennis Rogers, professor of music; and Dr. Ann Thorne, associate professor of journalism.

In October, a dinner was held for the Board of Governors and the Distinguished Professor awardees from 2005, 2004 and 2003. A campus reception was also held. ■



Dr. Ben Caldwell, associate professor of chemistry, enjoys Western's annual Family Day with his daughter, Abby.

TKEs honored

The Western chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) Fraternity was recognized with seven awards from their international headquarters.

The chapter received six "Awards of Excellence" for community service and outreach, average chapter size, extra-curricular involvement and achievement, recruitment results, initiation rates and alumni involvement and relations.

The chapter also took first place in the TKE international fraternity's "Rush Expo." ■

Western: It's all in the family

Every day seems like family day at Western for Donna Marr's family. Three of her children are Western alumni, another attended, and now, six grandchildren are current students.

"I'm proud of all of them. Education is very important to us," said Donna.

Her children and grandchildren with Western ties include Thad Marr, son of Steve Marr, '85; John Matthew, Sara and Emily Fisher, children of Julie (Marr) Fisher, '92; Barbara and Mary Meyer, children of Jaime (Marr) Meyer, who attended Western. Donna's other alumna daughter is Mary Catherine (Marr) Vollmer, '77. ■

Campus KUDOS

- Biology major Ghazala Saleem was selected as the top recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from the Omicron Psi Honor Society, a national honor society for nontraditional students.
- Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity took first place and won \$1,000 at a step show competition in St. Louis.
- Chemistry major Justin Tone-Pah-Hote was awarded one of 30 national scholarships presented by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society.
- Carol Roever, associate professor of business, received an award for extraordinary contributions to the Association for Business Communication.
- Marsha Dolan, associate professor of nursing, was named president of the Missouri Health Information Management Association, a 1,000-member professional organization.
- Art major Mary Sullwold had a photo juried into the 25th annual College Photography contest. Her photo was one of five percent chosen from 30,000 entries.
- Peggy Ellis, director of non-credit programs and business and industry training, has been appointed to the Northwest Workforce Investment Board for a five-year term.



Biology professor aids in undergraduate education reform

Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology, is co-author of an article for Science magazine, the world's leading journal of original scientific research.

Todd said the article is the first in a new series that addresses the reformation of undergraduate science education. He said there is a growing national consensus among scientists and science educators that change is needed.

"There are a lot of institutions that are teaching the same way they taught 20 years ago," said Todd. For example, he said microarray technology, which analyzes DNA genes, is revolutionizing biological research in the life science industries, and undergraduate science education must teach the new technologies to keep pace.

He said students at Western study microarray technology in their molecular biology classes, and several conduct research projects involving the technology. He believes the experience with microarray technology is necessary for students to be prepared for careers in the life sciences fields when they graduate.

Todd is part of an organization called the Genome Consortium for Active Teaching, GCAT, that provides materials and support for faculty to engage their undergraduates in research involving microarray technology. The article in Science described GCAT's program as a creative solution to the challenges of training undergraduate students in the new technologies.

Throughout this academic year, the GCAT program will provide approximately 750 microarray chips to more than 2,200 students on 63 different campuses across the country. Microarray experiments are conducted by undergraduate students on those campuses, and the chips are then sent to Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., for the collection of data using a chip scanner.

The scanner was paid for with a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant and matching funds from Davidson, Pomona College in Claremont, Calif., and Western.

Todd and six other members of GCAT were asked to write the article for Science after they conducted an NSF-sponsored workshop in Atlanta where Todd served as laboratory coordinator. During the workshop, 43 faculty from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. learned to conduct and analyze DNA microarray experiments. ■



*Dr. Todd Eckdahl
professor of biology*

Taking knowledge abroad

Fulbright scholar experiences Ukraine

"Are all American families like the Simpsons?" That was one of the first questions associate professor of journalism Dr. Bob Bergland was asked when he arrived at the Luts'k Liberal Arts University in Ukraine to teach last year.

Dr. Bob Bergland and his family with a Ukrainian English Professor.

"My first reaction was to laugh. But then I thought, 'Oh, my gosh!'"

Bob, who was awarded a Fulbright scholarship and taught three courses for a semester in Ukraine last year, said that question made it very clear to him that, along with teaching, he had a responsibility to be an ambassador for the United States, and show Ukrainians how families really were.

Unlike his fellow Ukrainian professors, Bob seized opportunities to interact with his students outside the classroom so they could learn about the United States. He and his wife, Tammy, and their children hosted movie nights for students and served "American" food, and Bob often played basketball with them.

"The students loved it. For them, you just don't play basketball with your professors."

Bob called his semester a "fantastic experience." He said he has begun to include discussions about state-owned media in Ukraine and Russia in the basic news reporting class he teaches, and has talked about the contrast in Ukraine and American design principles. This spring, he is teaching an honors colloquium on Ukraine at Western, and he has been invited back to lecture in Ukraine in May as part of the Fulbright Senior Specialists Program.

Bob did give several public presentations while he was there. Many Ukrainians, he said, believe all Americans are millionaires, so at some of his speaking engagements he explained how his income may seem high, but it really isn't when taxes and expenses are taken into account.

However, after spending six months in Ukraine, Bob said he and his family do feel quite wealthy. He noted that very few Ukrainians own cars, and many students cannot afford to buy their textbooks. The average income is approximately \$130 per month.

"We left with a real appreciation of what we have and how fortunate we are," Bob said. "We realized how rich we are." ■

Roevers spend semester in Istanbul

Jim and Carol Roever found out that when you are teaching at a Turkish university, the American attitude of planning ahead and being on time just does not work. Jim, who retired last year as vice president for institutional advancement, and Carol, associate professor of business, spent the fall semester each teaching two undergraduate courses and one graduate course at Yeditepe University in Istanbul.

"The Turkish culture does not look at time the same way we do in the United States," said Carol. "Adjusting to that was interesting and challenging."

Jim agreed. He said precise time is not important in Turkey, and the rules are much looser. "The first



Carol and Jim Roever in Turkey

three weeks of getting classes and students in place was organized chaos. I rewrote a syllabus four times."

Carol and Jim were invited to spend a semester teaching in Istanbul by a professor at the university who is a colleague of Carol's in the Association for Business Communication.

Jim said the difference in technology between Western and Yeditepe is significant also. "At Western, we are spoiled because a variety of technology is available in every classroom. At Yeditepe, the equipment is delivered to the classroom 'as needed,' and equipment is limited."

The Roevers took advantage of opportunities to travel and enjoy the sights of Istanbul and Turkey. "The contrast in Istanbul between the old and new is striking," said Carol. "We can be driving by a five-star hotel under construction and pass a woman driving a horse-drawn cart."

One of the most interesting visits was to Cappadocia in central Turkey, where underground cities were dug as deep as five stories.

Jim and Carol said they missed their daughter, family and friends the most, but they also missed living in a neighborhood where English is understood and spoken.

"No one in our neighborhood understood English," said Carol. "And the danger of learning a

"We left with a real appreciation of what we have and how fortunate we are. We realized how rich we are."

- Dr. Bob Bergland, Fulbright Scholar

few words of Turkish is that once we say them the listener thinks we understand Turkish and rattles off a response we cannot understand!"

This semester the Roevers are teaching a Global Viewpoint class on Turkey at Western, where the study of international business culminates in a visit to a foreign country.

Carol said many of the graduate students they taught in Istanbul volunteered to help Western students when they travel there this spring.

That offer and many other experiences left Carol impressed by how many people reached out to make them feel welcome. One student invited the Roevers to her home for a traditional Turkish meal. A maintenance worker in their building wrote English phrases on a piece of paper. "When he saw me, he would pull the paper out and try to speak some English," Carol said.

The Roevers said although they have visited many countries as tourists, living in a foreign country for an extended period was an outstanding experience. Carol said she has talked about Turkey in her Business Communication course, so it was great to experience it over an extended length of time.

"The opportunity to live in a culture, and not just be an occasional tourist, has provided an amazing intercultural experience from an academic, social, cultural and political point of view," said Jim. ■

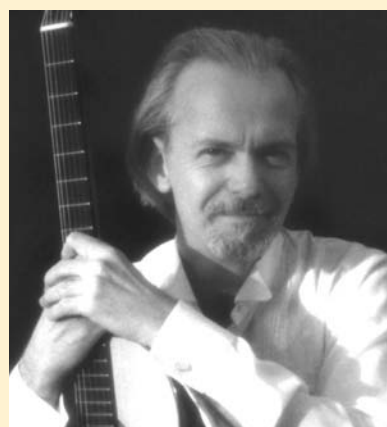


Music instructor named “Individual Artist of the Year”

Anthony Glise, adjunct instructor of music and classical guitarist, was named recipient of the 2006 Individual Artist of the Year Award by the Missouri Arts Council.

This is the first time that a classical guitarist has been honored with this prestigious statewide award and the first time anyone from the St. Joseph area has been cited for the Individual Artist Award.

Anthony, a native of France, is the director of the International Guitar Festival that has been held for the past two years in St. Joseph. He also helped arrange the exchange program between the St. Joseph Community Chorus and the Chorale Divertimento from Lille, France last year. ■



Anthony Glise
Instructor of Music



Geneva Long, '27, enjoys a giant birthday card from Western. She celebrated her 99th birthday last fall.

Alumnus' stock gift establishes scholarship

When Jamie Waldren, '78, looks back on his experiences as a student athlete at Western, he remembers the challenges of balancing his academic workload with football practices and games.

“Looking back now, I have good memories, but at the time it seemed like cruel and unusual punishment,” he said. “But it prepared me to do well in my career.”

Jamie, a certified financial planner, practitioner and a vice president, wealth manager for Smith Barney, recently established a scholarship at Western through a stock gift in memory of his mother, Joan M. Waldren-Banks, who died last year. The scholarship is for a student athlete who is a finance or economics major, with preference given to students from where Jamie grew up – the southern Kansas City area.

“I wanted to set up something to establish a legacy for my mother, and I wanted to give something back to Western,” he said. “I’m where I am today because of what I went through as a student.” ■

Scholarship may lower out-of-state tuition costs

Students in three of Missouri’s neighboring states now have an additional incentive to attend Western. The Western Neighboring State Scholarship allows students in Iowa, Nebraska or Kansas who meet certain criteria to pay Missouri in-state tuition.

To be eligible, students from those states must be full

time, live in Western’s residence halls and meet the criteria for ACT scores and GPAs. Grant recipients must continue to live in the residence halls and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA for renewal. ■



Western Institute offers GIS training to inmates

Reducing the inmate recidivism rate and providing a service to small towns that they otherwise could not afford are the goals behind the Community Information Service program recently initiated by the Western Institute.

Western Institute staff train inmates at the Western Reception Diagnostic Correctional Center in St. Joseph in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and computer mapping. The data entered by the inmates is customized by Institute staff and Western students for use by small towns in Missouri for economic development.

“I know from experience that all cities in the United States want GIS data for community economic development,” said Dr. Chris Shove, Western Institute Executive Director. “And the small towns would never be able to afford this.”

Dr. Shove noted that careers using GIS and Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) skills are some of the fastest growing industries in the United States. When released from prison, he said the inmates with this skill would have the ability to work in GIS operations or start their own businesses. ■



Johntell Young and Latoya Sherrer make calls to set up focus groups for Sprint in the Western Institute's survey research lab. Communities and businesses have been working with the Institute on applied research projects.

Junior College alumnus is first member of Clock Tower Society

“I always wanted to establish a scholarship for some deserving person to go to college.” Those are the words of Ed Vincent, the first member of Western’s Clock Tower Society, an honorary society of Western donors that was created last year.

Membership in the Society is extended to all who have made or will make an estate or deferred gift commitment, such as a bequest, charitable lead trust, life insurance, remainder interest in property, or other individual estate plans.

Ed, a 1939 graduate of the St. Joseph Junior College, set up the trust to honor his parents and his sister, who was a 1935 graduate of the Junior College.

Ed’s endowed gift will be permanently invested and only the accumulated earnings will be used to support the scholarships annually.

Establishing the trust now meant that Ed could choose the criteria for the scholarship.

The St. Joseph native retired from Quaker Oats in Fullerton, Calif. in 1985, and moved back to St. Joseph in 1990.

“I’m pleased to be able to have a potential scholarship fund,” said Ed. “I hope it can help some worthy student.” ■





Their hearts are big and their mission is simply stated: deal with any problem that impedes academic progress and academic goals. That describes the four counselors at Western's Counseling Center, a campus fixture since the 1960s.

The counselor is in!



Dr. Tim Crowley speaks at a staff retreat.

The Center has evolved from a focus on course advising and career counseling; today's counselors - Dave Brown, Dr. Tim Crowley, Steve Potter and Dr. Vincenza Marash - handle issues from time management to homesickness to alcohol abuse; teach classes, coordinate programs and serve as student organization advisors.

"The clients work so hard on issues. It's so neat to see them progress and change," said Vincenza. "They do the work. I try to provide a safe place for them to do it in."

Dave, center director, noted that unlike most campus counseling centers, Western's counselors have several years of counseling experience - a combined total of 65 years.

Tim said when he was hired, he planned to stay at Western just one year. That was 18 years ago.

"I found my niche - working with college students. It's been one of the greatest blessings of my life."

Survey responses have indicated that the counselors see one out of four students sometime throughout their college careers, but the counselors touch the lives of many more students through their advising and teaching.

"I owe a lot of my success to Dr. Crowley," said Amber Bauer, '03, who was a student in one of Tim's classes. "I would have never made it through college without the inspiration and faith he gave me. He is an amazing man."

"It's rewarding seeing the changes in students, and to see them overcome the struggles they face," said Steve. "Ninety-nine percent of the students we see are normal, average students just trying to work through something." ■

League gift honors brother's memory

John Raymond Yancey served students as a biology professor at the Junior College in the 1960s. When he died at the age of 57, his sister, Frances Meidinger, decided to continue the tradition of serving Western students in his memory.

This year, Frances, who lives in Hiawatha, Kan., became a member of the Founder's Circle (\$5,000 and above) of Western's new League for Excellence, an honor society of donors who contribute unrestricted funds with the intent to support Western annually. To date, the League has 243 members. ■



Frances Meidinger with her Western League for Excellence plaque.



Eight members of Western's improvisational theatre group perform at a national peer education conference.

Western students share their stories

Touching lives, making a difference, helping out - those are the goals of Western's student group Sharing Our Stories. Last fall, eight student members of that group more than fulfilled those goals when they presented a workshop at a national peer education conference in Orlando, Fla.

They presented skits and monologues, and held question-and-answer and audience participation segments on topics such as date rape, alcohol awareness, low self-esteem and relationships.

"The feedback on the presentation was phenomenal," said Dr. Tim Crowley, Western counselor who accompanied the group. "It's a powerful medium to get across tough information and they do it really well."

He said several colleges and universities approached them about not only performing on their campuses, but also training their students.

"The monologues touched people in a way I never realized."

- Mignon Wilkins, psychology major

Dr. Crowley said the eight students are part of the improvisational theatre group of Sharing Our Stories, which is also comprised of peer counselors and a student speakers bureau. The theatre group often performs in area elementary, middle and high schools.

"All three groups are driven by students' motivation and desire to help and serve others," said Dr. Crowley. "They get to help people and they gain great leadership and communication skills." ■



"It Begins with U"

The Development Office has kicked off "It Begins with U," its 2006 Annual Fund drive.

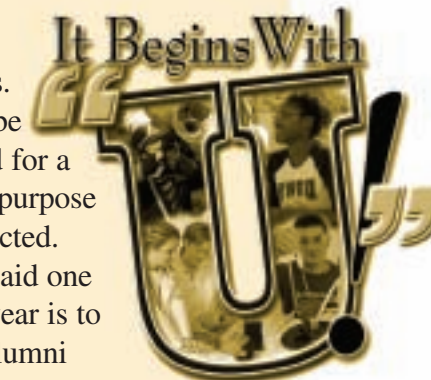
"The Annual Fund is very important in building a strong foundation of support at Western," said Jerry Pickman, director of development. "While we are grateful for the state funding we do receive, it is simply not enough to support all of Western's needs. Gifts from our alumni and friends help bridge that gap. Annual support is a great way to show Western pride."

Gifts to the Annual Fund provide scholarship assistance, enhance academic programs, fund research projects and sponsor activities and events. Gifts can be designated for a particular purpose or unrestricted.

Jerry said one goal this year is to increase alumni participation in the Annual Fund. Alumni have the opportunity to donate online, in response to a mailing or through the phonathon.

"Becoming a university has been an exciting time for Western," he said. "It's a great time for alumni to get involved."

For more information, contact Jerry at 816-271-5648. ■



Check out www.griffonalumni.org for information on upcoming alumni events

March 1- 31	Faculty Exhibit, Mixed Media, Thompson E. Potter Hall, Gallery 206
March 9	Concert Band and Chamber Ensembles Concert, 7:30 p.m., Thompson E. Potter Hall Theater.
March 15	Eggs & Issues, 7 a.m., Fulkerson Center. "Economic Development Issues in St. Joseph."
March 16	Alumni Social at Uncle D's Sports Bar and Grill, 5-8 p.m., St. Joseph.
March 30	Alumni Association Brown Bag Lunch, noon – 1 p.m., Leah Spratt Hall, Enright Rooms, 214-216.
April 2	Music Department Collage Concert, 3 p.m., Missouri Theater, 717 Edmond.
April 3-14	Senior Exhibits, Mixed Media, Thompson E. Potter Hall, Gallery 206 and Foyer Gallery. Opening reception, 7 p.m. April 3.
April 6 - 9	New York Art and Culture trip. Call 816-271-4100 for more information.
April 9	Junior College Brunch, 12:45 p.m., Fulkerson Center.
April 13	Eggs & Issues, 7 a.m., Fulkerson Center. "Owner's Manual for Success: How to Create the Life you Really Want ... Today."
April 17-28	Senior Exhibits, Mixed Media, Thompson E. Potter Hall, Gallery 206 and Foyer Gallery. Opening reception, 7 p.m., April 17.
April 20	Symphonic Winds Concert, 7:30 p.m., Thompson E. Potter Hall Theater.
April 20-23	"Lone Star/Laundry & Bourbon" theatre production. 8 p.m. April 20, 21 and 22; 2 p.m. April 23. Thompson E. Potter Hall Black Box Theater.
April 27	Alumni Association Brown Bag Lunch, noon – 1 p.m., Leah Spratt Hall, Enright Rooms, 214-216.
April 30	Choral Concert, 3 p.m.; Jazz Ensemble Concert, 7:30 p.m., Thompson E. Potter Hall Theater.
May 1	Orchestra Concert, 7:30 p.m., Thompson E. Potter Hall Theater.
May 4	Kansas City Alumni Event, TBD. Check www.griffonalumni.org for more details.
May 13	Commencement ceremonies, 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., M.O. Looney Complex. Commencement Reception for graduates and families, TBD.
May 14-June 3	Study/Travel in Mexico. Call 816-271-4100 for more information.
May 18	Alumni Networking Social, 5-7 p.m., Fountains at Corby, St. Joseph.
May 21-22	Athletic Department's Johnson Controls Celebrity Golf Classic, St. Joseph Country Club. Call 816-271-5926 for more information.
May 25	Alumni Association Brown Bag Lunch, noon-1 p.m., Leah Spratt Hall, Enright Rooms, 214-216.
June 5	Summer 2006 semester begins.
June 5-26	Study/Travel in France. Call 816-271-4100 for more information.
July 6-21	Study Abroad in Yalta. Call 816-271-4100 for more information.
July 29	Athletic Department's Family and Friends Golf Tournament, Fairview Golf Course, St. Joseph. Call 816-271-5926 for more information.
August 28	Fall 2006 semester begins.

Griffon Sports

Fall Sports Shorts

Football. The football team had a season to remember in 2005, tying the school record for wins with a 9-3 overall record. The Griffons barely missed the NCAA Division II playoffs, but were selected to participate in the 2005 Mineral Water Bowl for the fourth time in school history. They defeated Concordia-St. Paul 35-23.

Several football players were recognized for their efforts in 2005. Seven Griffons were selected to the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) First Team while a total of 16 Griffons were named All-MIAA. Freshman offensive lineman Roger Allen was selected as the co-Freshman of the Year in the MIAA as well.

The accolades did not stop at the conference level, however. Junior running back Jeremiah White was named to the American Football Coaches Association First-Team, All-America squad after setting Western's single season rushing record with 1,801 yards, breaking the mark set in 1995.

Jerry Partridge is the head football coach.

Become a Gold Coat member! Gold Coat Fund Drive during the month of May Call 816-271-4481 for more information.

Enjoy two upcoming Golf Events!

Johnson Controls Celebrity Classic

May 21-22
St. Joseph Country Club

Family and Friends Tournament

July 29
Fairview Golf Course, St. Joseph

For more information, call 816-271-5926

Volleyball. The Griffon volleyball squad, coached by Cindy Brauck, finished the season at 17-15 overall in 2005 and qualified for the MIAA postseason tournament for the first time ever. Five Griffons were selected to the MIAA's honorable mention list.

Seniors Therese Hand and Marian Broderick ended their Griffon careers on high notes as Therese finished ranked third all-time at Western in assists, and Marian ranked seventh all-time at Western in digs.

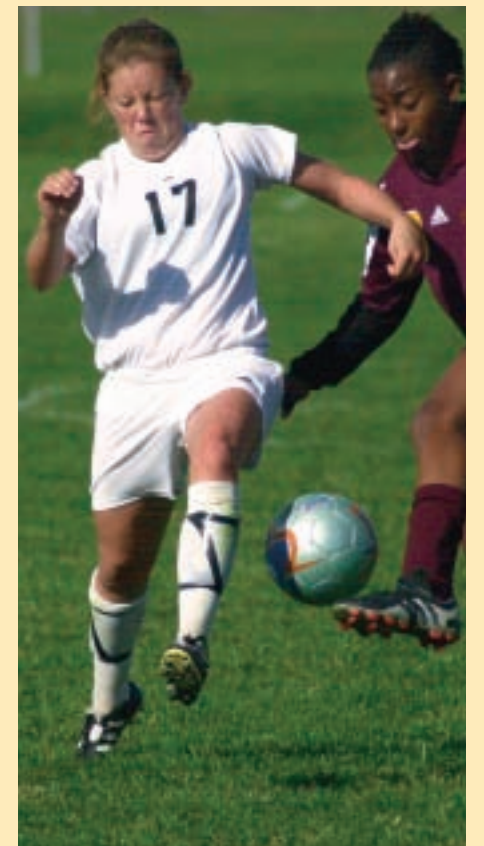
Marian was also named to the 2005 ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America® Women's Volleyball Team - College Division.

Soccer. Western began its inaugural women's soccer season last fall. The Griffons finished

campus news

the year at 3-15-1 overall, 2-11-1 in the MIAA. Two Griffons were named honorable mention All-MIAA. Jeff Hansen, formerly of Central Missouri State University, was named the new soccer coach for 2006. Chip Wiggins coached the 2005 team.

Basketball. The basketball teams got off to a hot start. Prior to the semester break, the Western women were 10-1 overall while the Griffon men went 10-3. Griffon men's coach Tom Smith is in his 18th season at Western while head women's coach Josh Keister is in his second season. ■



Women's soccer joined the Western sports lineup last fall. The team plays at the St. Joseph soccer complex on Riverside Road.



Western Athletics - Graduating Champions. That is the recently created mission statement of athletics, and every day, examples emerge that confirm the department's commitment to that mission. At Western, athletes are succeeding in the classrooms, in the community and in their sports.

GRADUATING CHAMPIONS

Mark Linder, athletic director since 2003, can quickly list recent athletic accomplishments – a nine-win football season and a bowl victory, a golfer finishing fourth in the nation, the baseball team qualifying for MIAA playoffs and the softball team qualifying for the national tournament.

However, many people are becoming familiar with Western athletes not on the courts or playing fields, but throughout the community as volunteers, because the Student Athlete Advisory Committee is very focused on community service.

"We want our student athletes to be mindful of the community in which they live. They have a responsibility to be engaged," said Mark, who joined Western athletics in 1999. "When they leave Western, we want them to understand there is a responsibility of individuals to give back to their community."

Last fall, athletes delivered food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas, helped at the Second Harvest Food Bank, raised money for Make a Wish Foundation, and offered an annual "Night Out with the Griffs," where they hosted free activities for elementary school children.

Athletes also "e-mentor" several local middle school students, where they correspond via e-mail with the younger

students throughout the year and host a social event for them.

Leon Douglas, senior football player, attended a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) leadership seminar last summer and returned with a well-received proposal to increase the athletes' community service commitment. Leon's proposal, "Serving It Up, Griffon Style," calls for each athlete to perform 10 hours of community service each year, and for each sports team to complete a service project.

On the academic front, the department was also recognized for its high graduation rate for athletes compared to the national average of both private and public institutions. It was also one of three institutions honored in the conference for graduation rates. "We're very proud of that," said Mark. "We've put programs in place to help our graduation rates."

Last fall, the Western football team placed 10 athletes on the MIAA Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll and the volleyball team placed six. Senior volleyball player Marian Broderick was named First-Team, "ESPN The Magazine" Academic-All America by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

The athletic department has also been recognized for their NCAA compliance record. Last fall, the NCAA visited campus for three days to review compliance policies and procedures, and Mark said the department

received a lot of praise for the system that is in place.

"Western has always had a very good compliance program," Mark said.

Western's athletic department has a strong showing on national committees, also. In 2003, Mark was selected as one of 11 to serve on the NCAA Legislative Committee, and was recently chosen as committee chair. Brenda Blessing, acting dean of professional studies, serves on NCAA's national membership committee.

Two student athletes also served this past year on the national Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and one of those was vice chair of the committee.

Despite all the accomplishments, Mark believes there's always room for improvement. Since he took over as director, he has focused on continuous improvement of three components of the department: relationships with its

constituents, its image, and its "product" - the athletic teams.

Last summer, he facilitated an "Image Summit," drawing together focus groups from throughout his department, the campus and community.

"We asked two questions: What is the perception of our athletic department? and How do we fix it?" Mark said. Several goals and plans emerged from the group discussions, as well as the new mission statement.

Mark believes the department and its athletes are headed in the right direction to continue to improve and achieve their mission of graduating champions.

"Our number one goal is that when athletes get their diplomas, they can say, 'I graduated as a champion - a champion in my community, a champion in the classroom and a champion in my sport,'" Mark said. ■

Mark Linder, Western Athletic Director



"Our number one goal is that when athletes get their diplomas, they can say, 'I graduated as a champion - a champion in my community, a champion in the classroom and a champion in my sport.'"



THE DISASTER NAMED



Hurricane Katrina, considered one of the most damaging storms in U.S. history, devastated areas in Louisiana and Mississippi that will never be the same, and Katrina's effects will be felt across the country for a long time. The stories below tell of three families affected by the storm, and many who compassionately came to the aid of hurricane victims.

Western alumni vs. Katrina

The Carltons

"We lost 22 years of everything."

Those six words sum up the hurricane Katrina experience of Jim and Carol Carlton, both 1984 graduates of Western who lived in Slidell, La. for the past 18 years.

Slidell, a community of 90,000 on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, was one of the hardest hit in the hurricane. "Katrina picked up Lake Pontchartrain and

dumped it on our city," Jim said.

He and Carol and son, Brett, evacuated Saturday afternoon before the storm, finding a vacant motel eight hours away.

When they first returned home a few days later, they

thought maybe their home had been spared. But when they opened the door to their pickup truck that was in their driveway and watched in dismay as rancid water spilled out, they knew what they would find in their house.

The Carltons estimate that about four feet of muddy, fishy-smelling, stagnant water occupied their home for more than two days, ruining all its contents.

Carol and Brett retreated to family members in the Kansas City, Mo. area to enroll Brett, a high school senior, in school. Their older son, Chris, had already returned to play football at Lehigh University for the fall semester.

Jim, a senior business development manager for Merck KGaA of Germany, stayed in Slidell and spent 13 days at the house. Armed with rubber gloves, he spent the first few days sifting through three inches of mud looking for anything salvageable, and the next 10 days were spent gutting the house.

Since he had no water or electricity, National Guardsmen provided Jim with military MREs, (Meals-Ready-to-Eat) and water for several days. "It was like being in a war zone," he said. He even had a gun pointed at him two times because everyone was so skittish after dark.

By the time he and his neighbors finished

cleaning up, Jim said the piles of debris that lined the streets were so tall you couldn't see any houses.

Since his job does not require him to live in Slidell, the family doesn't plan to move back. They have rented a townhouse in Kansas City, Mo.

Jim and Carol said having their son miss out on his senior year in the city where he grew up was their greatest loss. They said Brett was looking forward to his final year of football, and he was being heavily recruited by several universities. Carol said Brett was eligible for a lot of awards and community scholarships, and ranked high in his class.

He was allowed to play for Park Hill High School when he transferred, Jim said, and he had a pretty good season, but it was difficult. "You can imagine being 17 or 18 years old and losing everything, but he handled it well."

"It makes you realize nothing is a sure thing," said Carol. "What you bank on today may not be here tomorrow. Life can change in a flash."

Jim said their skirmish with the hurricane changed him. He was the type of person who always planned way ahead, and several years earlier he had set his career and life goals. "I had my life all planned out, and I was right on track. Then I got up on Aug. 29 and there wasn't anything left.

"I don't worry anymore. People have noticed I don't plan ahead anymore. It's no good to think about five or 10 years ahead. I now just go day to day."

The Schlozes

Lisa Schloz, '88, has lived in LaPlace, La., a suburb on the west side of New Orleans, for two years. She said she and her husband, Daryl, and daughter, Kaitlyn, evacuated to Memphis, Tenn. before the storm, but returned home shortly after Katrina to a damaged, but livable home.

Lisa said they did not remove the boards from their windows right away for fear of looters. But without electricity, the house became unbearably hot, one day reaching 103 degrees.

"There were no lights at all. It was very eerie and quiet," she said. "We were frightened because our town was basically a ghost town and the stories of looting had us pretty scared." She said a law enforcement officer suggested they buy a gun, but all the gun shops had been looted.

When grocery stores finally reopened, National Guard personnel had to escort customers because so many people were fighting for the limited goods.

In the days following the storm, Lisa said, she helped out wherever she could, feeding hurricane victims and opening their home to people who needed a place to stay.

Lisa has spent a lot of time since the hurricane volunteering at Kaitlyn's school. The Catholic school of 400 accepted 140 displaced students after the

Photos by Sheila Bradham, '94

Left, a destroyed home and vehicles in Slidell, La. Below, a New Orleans home destroyed; St. Bernard Parish



hurricane, and 100 will most likely remain for the rest of the school year.

"It definitely makes you want to be more prepared - having your documents in order, etc. We talk a lot about disaster planning now," Lisa said.

Western student vs. Katrina

The campus and community come to the aid of a student and his family

When Brad Landrum enrolled in 18 credit hours for the fall 2005 semester at Western, the husband and father of three knew it would be a hectic semester. But "hectic" didn't begin to describe his days after hurricane Katrina hit on the first day of classes. In the days following, 32 of his family members from the Mississippi area found refuge in St. Joseph.

When the campus and community found out about Brad's unexpected guests, they responded in a big way.

He was in Professor Emeritus Jim Grechus' class when he received a call from his family. "Jim could tell I was stressed. After class he asked me about it, and I told him 16 of my family members were coming up."

Jim and his wife, Debbie, bought 16 bags of clothing for the hurricane refugees. Dr. James Scanlon, Western's president, quickly provided snacks, cold cuts and styrofoam coolers to the first contingent of arrivals. The MWSU Foundation also

provided free evening meals in the university cafeteria for Brad's family for several weeks.

St. Joseph's Ramada Inn offered his family unlimited free rooms for as long as they needed them, and a local resident paid \$600 for repairs when Brad's car broke down.

Several student organizations held fund-raisers for hurricane relief, and Western's nontraditional student organization donated a Thanksgiving dinner to Brad and his extended family.

By mid-semester, things had settled down considerably for him, and 22 family members had moved into apartments and decided to put down roots in St. Joseph.

"There was so much catastrophe that the storm caused, but there's also some positive things. It was a time in my life I'll never forget," said Brad. "I was so proud to be connected with this university."

He noted that after an 18-hour course load and all that happened with his family last semester, the rest of his college career "should be downhill from here."

Alumni volunteers vs. Katrina

Allan Slavin, '84, has been to Iraq three times, but the Red Cross volunteer was not prepared for the sights that greeted him in Louisiana in the wake of hurricane Katrina. "It was the most devastating thing I have ever seen in my life. Every direction you looked, everything was demolished. It was unbelievable."

Allan, a logistics officer in the Air Force, served as a volunteer for almost three weeks in one of the hardest hit areas of Louisiana. He started out working in a warehouse, loading and driving trucks filled with food, water, blankets and cots. "We'd just find some place to set up, like a parking lot, and the people would come."

He said they often had to drive over downed power lines and trees to get into the affected areas.

After about three days of driving and loading, he took over the management of the warehouse from a volunteer who was leaving.

Allan, who had never volunteered for the Red Cross before, said, with the approval of his wife and commander, he called the Red Cross after watching news reports of the hurricane damage.

continued on page 27



Photo by Sheila Bradham, '94
Row of homes in Kenner, La.



*Julie Fiedler
Director of Alumni Services*

When I ask the Alumni Board about the best way to communicate with them, they tell me - "Just send me an e-mail." We use it a lot in our office, and I know e-mail is the communication method of choice for a lot of alumni to communicate with each other.

In fact, according to a recent study, more than 68 percent of Americans are

Director's Voice

Internet users! In our busy society today, electronic mail is a part of our everyday life.

The Internet has definitely changed our communication with alumni. We can now send out e-news briefs that are current events instead of ones that happened a few months ago. It was definitely an important tool for us when we gained university status, as we wanted to share the news quickly with as many alumni as possible!

Another exciting opportunity for alumni to connect via the Internet is now in full launch from our office - the **Griffon Alumni Online Community!** We are very excited to have this new vehicle for alumni communication, and

I hope that you will be just as excited to log into the site and update your information, post photographs, class notes and other information! Many of your fellow alumni are already members of the online community and have given us a lot of great feedback about the community. An article about it is on the next page.

As technology continues to grow, Western will continue to look at opportunities available to stay connected with alumni and to create opportunities for you to connect with each other. I look forward to seeing your photos and updates on the online community in the upcoming weeks at **www.griffonalumni.org!** ■

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

When the new year began, I took a brief moment for reflection, and I was once again reminded what a significant role Missouri Western has played in my life and in my career.

When I graduated from Western, it became very important to me to continue my relationship with my alma mater. I have always enjoyed receiving mail from the university, letting me know what is going on since I graduated.

Therefore, I was very excited to learn that Western is now offering an online community for all of its alumni - www.griffonalumni.org (see next page). The great thing about it is that it's absolutely free for all alumni, so everyone can be connected! Be sure to check it out! Your login ID number is above your name

on the address label. Many thanks to Julie Fiedler, Alumni Services Director, for working so hard to get this set up!

Western holds a special place in my life, and I hope you can say the same.

Now, more than ever, it's a great time to be involved with your alma mater!

See you online!



Kristine Smith

Kristine L. Smith
Kris Smith
MWSU Alumni Board President

The alumni online community is here!

Join us at www.griffonalumni.org

Have you lost touch with old classmates and would like to find them again? Do you have an opinion to share? Are you looking for a career change? Want to check out a fun website? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you may want to log on to Western's new online alumni community - griffonalumni.org.

The site offers alumni an opportunity to submit class notes, register for events, post a message, make a donation, post photos, update contact

information, and more.

The online community also features a career center, where alumni may post their résumés if they are job hunting, or post job openings from their place of employment.

When alumni log in for the first time, they will be asked to enter an ID number, and that can be found above their name on the magazine address label.

"I'm excited about it. It's a great opportunity for alumni to reconnect with each other or to stay connected," said Julie

Fiedler, director of alumni services. "Now they can do that through Western rather than an outside community." She said several alumni outside the St. Joseph area had inquired about an online community to help them reconnect with fellow alumni and the university.

If anyone has problems logging into the online community or needs their ID number, they can e-mail the alumni services office at sleslie@missouriwestern.edu or call 816-271-5646. ■

Alumni and students connect in mentoring program

Sharing experiences, making connections and networking for job opportunities are the goals behind the revival of a mentoring program between alumni and students.

The program, sponsored by the Alumni Services Office and Career Services Office, kicked off in November with 15 alumni matched with current Western students.



Criminal justice major Chantell Dupree and Dan Kellogg, '82, visit at the kickoff reception for the alumni-student mentoring program last fall.

Alumni meet with students between 10 and 20 hours throughout the academic year, and students are encouraged to visit the workplace of their mentor.

Circuit Court Judge Dan Kellogg, '82, said he got involved in the program because he takes every opportunity to give back to Western and its students. The student he mentors shadows him at his work to observe and ask questions. "I hope she gains a better appreciation of what goes on at the Courthouse and in the real world," he said.

If you are interested in serving as an alumni mentor, contact Julie Fiedler, alumni services director, 816-271-5650. ■

A call for nominations!

Now is the time to submit nominations for Alumni Association Board members. You may mail names (with contact information) to the Alumni Services Office, or submit an application online at www.griffonalumni.org. Deadline is April 1.

Alum Profile

Who: *Tom Norsworthy, class of 1975*

Degree: *BSBA, Accounting*

A Western flag greets customers in the entrance foyer, Western umbrellas adorn the ceiling, and banners and large flags from the university are dotted among the memorabilia at the 54th Street Grill & Bar in St. Joseph.

Tom Norsworthy, owner of the ten 54th Streets and Jeremiah Johnson's Restaurant and Tavern in the Kansas City northland, said when he opened the St. Joseph location, he wanted to make sure memorabilia from his alma mater was part of the restaurant's decor.

"I had a great education there," said Tom. "I still contend they have one of the best accounting and finance programs in the area."

Tom enrolled at Western in 1969 after serving in Vietnam. He was married and had a son when he began his studies, and he commuted from Kansas City.

"I enjoyed the campus and my courses, but I didn't have a lot of time for outside activities," he said.

That is an understatement. During his first two years at Western, Tom worked full time on the third shift at a manufacturing plant in Kansas City, and

then drove to St. Joseph for classes when he got off work.

Fortunately, he said, the nature of his job allowed him to study at work.

"I'd work 15 minutes, and then had to wait 15 minutes, so I'd study," said Tom. "By the end of the night, I got a lot of studying done."

After graduating he worked as a certified public accountant for several years, and within 10 years of his college graduation, became president and CEO of RFD Incorporated, a direct-marketing company.

But in 1989, Tom decided he wanted to own a business, and he bought his first restaurant in 1990.

"I think it's a fun business; it's very challenging," he said of the restaurant field. "It's kind of an entertainment business."

The company is expanding in the St. Louis area, and plans to dot the midwest landscape with several 54th Street Grill & Bars within the next five years.

Last fall, Tom and his wife, Ann, were named 2005 Restaurateurs of the Year by the Kansas City Restaurant Association.



Tom Norsworthy, '75

Today, Tom leaves the day-to-day operations of the restaurants to his son, Michael, who serves as CEO; and instead concentrates on the research, development and building of new restaurants.

"My financial background is a tremendous asset," he said. "When you spend approximately \$3 million to open a new restaurant, you really need to know what you're doing."

Although it's been 15 years since he bought his first restaurant, Tom said he still loves the business.

"The only way you'll be successful is if you're really passionate and doing what you love. If you're doing it only for the money, you won't be successful."

Want to help plan an alumni event in your area? Contact Julie Fiedler, director of alumni services, at 816-271-5650, or e-mail her at fiedler@missouriwestern.edu.

Cold temperatures and rain did little to dampen the spirits of the 2005 recipients of the Distinguished Service Awards Homecoming weekend.

The awardees were honored at the annual awards banquet Friday evening, October 21 and at Saturday's football game. They also braved the inclement weather and rode in the parade Saturday morning.

Col. Stephen Cotter, '78

Stephen is commander of the 139th Airlift Wing, Missouri Air National Guard in St. Joseph. As wing commander, he is responsible for the management, administration and employment of over 1,000 assigned unit personnel. He has received numerous awards and decorations throughout his 30-year military career. He currently serves on Western's Foundation Board.

"I credit Missouri Western with providing me a quality of education that has permitted me to not only compete, but compete successfully and advance in a very competitive career."

Dr. Robert Couldry, '71

Robert served the education community in northwest Missouri for 33 years and retired as superintendent for the Mid-Buchanan R-V School District in 2001.

He also served in the Missouri Air National Guard and United States Air Force, and retired after a 36-year military career in 2003 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He currently works part time as the director of Platte



2005 Alumni Association Distinguished Service Awards

Valley Educational Cooperative.

"The foundation I received while attending Missouri Western prepared me for my career which I truly enjoyed."

Esther George, '80

Esther is a senior vice president at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, where she has been employed since 1982. She heads the bank's division of Supervision and Risk Management and currently serves on Western's Foundation Board.

"The critical thinking skills I developed at Missouri Western, combined with an appreciation of global influences, allowed me to effectively contribute in the workplace and continue to grow and develop professionally over the 25 years since I graduated."

Tegwin Pulley, '63

Tegwin, of Dallas, joined Texas Instruments (TI) in 1966, and currently serves as vice president.

Since 2001, she has been responsible for workforce development, diversity and WorkLife Strategies. Under Tegwin's leadership, TI's Diversity and WorkLife Strategies have received significant external recognition. She is a founding co-chair of the Dallas Fort Worth Regional Workforce Leadership Council.

"I fondly remember St. Joseph Junior College as the 'concrete campus,' a big difference from today's beautiful campus. Still, the concrete campus was a beautiful place to get an education."

Melody Smith, '87

Melody is the director of secondary education for the St. Joseph School District and interim superintendent. She has served in the district since 1987 as a teacher, as coordinator of seven -12 communication arts, as

assistant principal and secondary instructional principal.

She is currently a doctoral candidate in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri - Columbia.

"Not only was I challenged academically to become a lifelong learner, but Western also taught me the meaning of community."

Sharon Gray, Associate Professor of Music

Sharon has been a Western faculty member since 1967 and the director of vocal studies since 1971.

Nomination Deadline Change

Take note! The deadline for nominating someone for Distinguished Faculty and Alumni Awards has changed from June 30 to May 1. For criteria and a nomination form, go to www.missouriwestern.edu/alumni and click on "Alumni Recognition," or call 816-271-5651 for information or an application.

The Alumni Association 2005 Distinguished Service Award recipients are Robert Couldry, '71, Melody Smith, '87, Sharon Gray, Esther George, '80, Tegwin Pulley, '63, and Col. Stephen Cotter, '78.

She is a 1962 graduate of the St. Joseph Junior College. She earned her bachelor's degree in secondary music education and master's degree in vocal performance pedagogy from the University of Missouri - Kansas City.

Sharon serves on many university committees and holds several professional memberships, and has been a member of the St. Joseph Community Chorus for 12 years. Sharon has performed as a soloist throughout the region. In 2001, she received the Mayor's Award of the Allied Arts Council for Individual Artist.

"As a teacher and performer, I aim for the absolute highest standards of performance," said Sharon. "It is my objective to provide the student with the

necessary tools for success. I take the student where they enter and guide them to where they need to be in order to be successful in graduate school, teaching and performing." ■

Attention, alumni!

The deadline to apply for the Alumni Family Scholarship is June 15, 2006.

Scholarship Criteria:

- An incoming freshman son or daughter of an alumnus
- 3.0 high school GPA
- Involvement in at least four extra-curricular activities in high school

Call 816-271-5651 for more information.



"The Griffon Who Stole Christmas" was the theme of the Alumni float for Western's "University Studios" Homecoming 2005.

ROUNDBALL REMINISCENCES

Next to the definition of “perseverance” in the dictionary, Webster’s might want to place a photo of Dennis Atkins.

The 1977 Western graduate’s life, a story of grit, determination, resourcefulness, and just plain not giving up, is a laundry list of amazing accomplishments and fulfilled goals.

Last October, Dennis completed an amazing New Year’s resolution that he had made 15 years ago: He logged his 50,000th running mile.

Those 50,000 miles, a distance equal to more than 100 round trips between Kansas City and St. Louis, or more than five times the distance between New York City and Sydney, Australia, included five marathons. In three of those, Dennis helped raise more than \$43,000 for a local charity.

And along the way, Dennis, who has worked for American Family Insurance since 1978, earned a doctorate in business administration in 2002.

That should be enough to inspire anyone, but there’s more.

At the age of 23, Dennis was diagnosed with a progressive eye disease, and his vision has steadily worsened over the years. He has lost his peripheral vision and his ability to see at night; what

remains is a blur.

Here is his story.

After graduation and a short stint at the American Family office in St. Joseph, Dennis began working in Topeka, Kan., where he joined a competitive softball team. That’s when he began running, and after three months, he decided to start keeping track of his miles.

In 1979, still playing softball, he began having a hard time seeing fly balls during night games, and he made an appointment to get glasses.

But a routine eye exam quickly became more when it was followed by a battery of tests. Dennis was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic disorder that starts with decreased night vision and later progresses to diminished peripheral vision. Doctors told him to learn Braille because he would be blind in two years.

He and his wife, Brenda, had been married less than three months.

“You have three choices when you get a diagnosis like that,” said Dennis. “You deny it, you let it destroy you, or you say, ‘I’m going to continue to be successful regardless.’”

He chose option three.

“The Lord has blessed me. It’s 26 years beyond that diagnosis and I’m still working and functioning

continued from page 18

“That hurricane was so devastating. Seeing all those people desperately in need, it just didn’t seem like there was enough help,” he said.

“It was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done. I’ll never forget what it looked like, but I’ll also never forget the people.”

When **Cyndra Lorey’s, ’02**, employer, the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, offered their employees time off to volunteer after hurricane Katrina, she knew this was her chance to do something she had been wanting to do for a long time. So she called the Red Cross and offered two weeks of her time.

Cyndra assumed she would be deployed to the Gulf region, but when the Red Cross found out she was a former United Way campaign director, they assigned her to their Washington, DC headquarters to help with one of their donor programs.

She said that experience made her appreciate the work of the Red Cross, and realize how important the fund-raising effort is.

“Those who work in the forefront of a disaster are very important, but we often forget about the work that goes on behind the scenes to make it possible.”

Sheila Bradham, ’94, and **Stacy Dunn, ’89**, spent two weeks in October in a sweltering New Orleans airport parking lot accepting applications from hurricane Katrina victims and directing them to resources.

They endured the smell and the “blistering” heat, they lived in tents, they showered in semis or tents, and they saw unbelievable destruction, but Sheila said she wants to go back. “Mold and death, that’s all we smelled for two weeks,” she said. “But we met so many wonderful people, we didn’t want to leave. We’d do it again in a heartbeat.” ■

Roundball Reminiscences

Griffon basketball has been making great memories for its players since it began at the Junior College in 1920, when, according to the yearbook, every available man tried out for the squad and the team won one game. Recently, several alums reminisced about their days as a Griffon.

Charlie Burri, ’55, who played as a student, was a head coach and later became the four-year college’s first athletic director in 1969, said the basketball team became a national contender by 1974, and has been playing at that level ever since. Last season, Tom Smith, head coach since 1988, chalked up his 500th career win.

Heath Dudley, ’93, said the Griffons were ranked #2 in the nation one of the seasons he played, and they added a lot of games to Coach Smith’s victory column. He calls his basketball career at Western a great experience.

“I was really taught how to become a man through sports. It prepared me for what life would be about.”

George Hopkins, ’46, said he would have liked to win more games as a student, but it was hard to have a good team when so many male students were being called up to serve in World War II. George, who was just 16, signed on for the Griffons in 1944 just so the school would have enough players for a team, although he had never played basketball in high school.

“I don’t think I ever scored. I don’t even think I shot the ball,” the retired St. Joseph dentist said. “But it was wonderful playing with the guys.”

Mike Flowers, ’67, a retired elementary school principal, said he did “everything” when he was team manager. His duties not only included hauling all the equipment around in his car because of lack of storage space, but also trekking to the YMCA early every morning to wake up two

basketball players who “loved basketball, but not classes.”

But Mike said he wasn’t the only one pulling double duty back then. Charlie, then head coach, taught several courses at the college and even took the uniforms home and washed them after each game.

Charlie said even though coaches today have no time to teach courses (or wash uniforms!), high demands on their time and the players’ time are still a part of the game.

Heath, now a child abuse investigator for Missouri, agreed. He said playing basketball in college required a huge time commitment that forced him to become good at time management. “It taught me a lot - I am now good at multi-tasking.”

All the alums agree that probably the biggest change in basketball over the years has been the more extensive training for the athletes.

“In the old days, if you could run some, shoot some, and happened to be blessed by being really tall, you could play,” said Mike. “But today, the game focuses so much more on speed and endurance and athletic ability.”

But no matter how much has changed, some constants have remained throughout the roundball’s 85-year history at Western.

“The thing that remains the same is the teamwork and team balance,” said Mike. “There never has been an ‘I’ in ‘team.’” ■

"I don't think I ever scored. I don't even think I shot the ball, but it was wonderful playing with the guys."

George Hopkins, '46

