

Missouri Western

The magazine of Missouri Western State University | Winter 2017

Greetings From...



DC



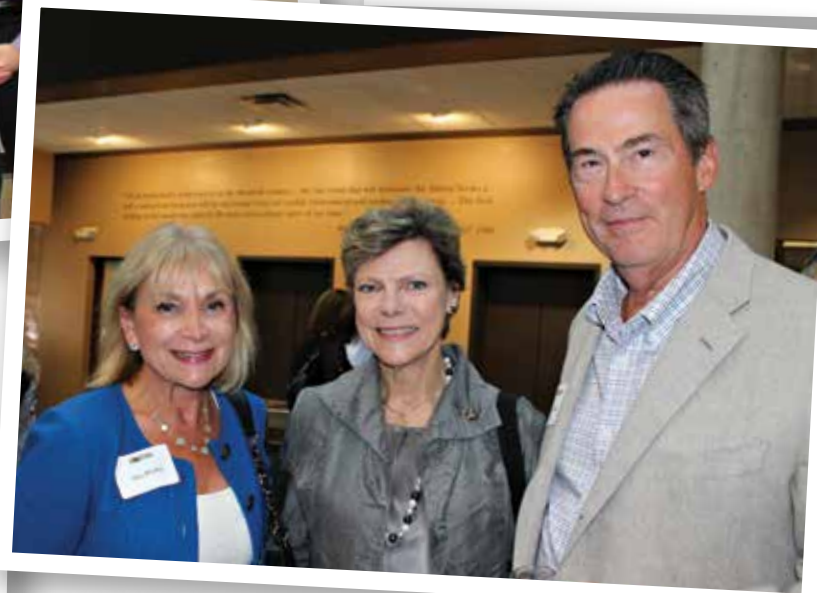
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Cronkite shows
on the road, p. 10.

2016 R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues

Cokie Roberts is featured speaker



| *President's Perspective* |

Dear Friends,

We have had a very exciting fall semester at Missouri Western!

In September, two professors and their undergraduate students were able to continue their synthetic biology research, thanks to a \$1.1 million research grant from the National Science Foundation. You can read all about the grant, which is the largest in Missouri Western history, and the cutting edge research it funds on p. 4.

Also, this fall marked the 10th year of Missouri Western's offering graduate programs. Our stellar Graduate School has grown in both enrollment and offerings, and I am proud to have witnessed this testament to our University's outstanding academics. An article about that is on p. 12.

In September, I was privileged to accompany several members of our staff to New York City and Washington, DC for performances of our live, multimedia productions as part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial. The New York City performance of all three shows was attended by two of Walter Cronkite's

children, Nancy and Chip, and I was honored to spend time with them while we were there.

Two days after the New York performance, we moved our entourage on to Washington, DC, where we performed "Cronkite" at the Newseum as part of the celebration of the centennial of Walter Cronkite's birth. This was particularly special because several Missouri Western students joined us. You can read all about our fantastic trip and see photos on p. 10.

We closed the fall 2016 semester with our traditional Commencement ceremony in the M.O. Looney Complex. That ceremony always makes me realize that I have the great honor of witnessing firsthand students achieving their goals and reaching their dreams because of Missouri Western.

As we begin 2017, I hope the new year brings you the fulfillment of your dreams and the achievement of your goals.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Vartabedian

Robert A. Vartabedian
President
Missouri Western State University

Dr. Robert Newhart, '83, superintendent of the St. Joseph School District; Alec Guy, president of the Student Government Association; Dr. Vartabedian; Bill Falkner, mayor of St. Joseph; and Harry Roberts, presiding commissioner of Buchanan County; at the pool dedication ceremony in August.



| **ON THE COVER** |

The live, multimedia shows that are part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial were performed in New York City and Washington, D.C. Photos by Ed Collier.

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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 its predecessor institutions.

**WINTER 2017
VOLUME 15
NUMBER 1**

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Missouri Western State University is an equal opportunity institution.

Student earns University's new degree

Lauren Patton '16 knew she always wanted to work in health care, so she was really excited when her advisor told her about a new bachelor's degree in population health management (PHM) at Missouri Western. Patton knew that that was what she wanted to do.

This past December, Patton, from Kansas City, Missouri, was the first to graduate from Missouri Western with the new degree, which is also one of the first undergraduate degrees offered in that field in the country.

"I want to help people live healthier lives, and I have a passion for public health," she said. "This degree was a perfect fit for me."

In 2014, Mosaic Life Care (formerly Heartland Health) gave a gift of \$1.5 million to Missouri Western to endow a professorship for a PHM degree. The program was approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education in 2015, and Fiona Sansone '94 was hired as the endowed director for population health this past summer.

Population health is an approach to health care that steps beyond the individual-level focus of traditional clinical and preventive medicine by addressing a broad range of factors that impact health on a population level. It's about preventing illnesses rather than just treating them, Sansone says, and focusing on controlling health care costs and patient satisfaction.

"The degree is very forward-thinking," Sansone said. "Graduates will help ensure that our healthcare system of care is proactive rather than reactive."

She has more than 20 years of health care experience in northwest Missouri, and most recently had been the director of patient-centered home care management at Mosaic.

There are four concentrations for the University's PHM degree – business, health information management, computer information systems and

human health. The options prepare graduates for a wide variety of career fields in health care, including population health analyst, health coach, quality improvement specialist, care coordinator and more. Sansone noted that the program offers courses from several academic departments across campus. Unlike the nursing program, the PHM degree is non-clinical, but a senior-year internship is required.

Along with Mosaic, Missouri Western worked closely with Cerner Corporation in Kansas City to develop the curriculum.

Sansone, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Missouri Western and a Master of Social Work from the University of Missouri, will teach courses as well as direct the program.

"It was an opportunity of a lifetime," she says of the position. "I have a true passion for health and prevention, and holistic care."

Patton met most of the core requirements for the degree by the end of the spring 2016 semester, and taking a full load of courses this past summer and fall put her on track to graduate last month. She had also completed an internship at the Kansas City Health Department and completed another internship this past fall, as well.

Patton plans to attend graduate school in the public health field.

"I'm really excited to be the first to receive the degree, but I am more excited that I can help people live healthier lives," Patton said. "Missouri Western has given me the platform to be the best that I can be, and I really appreciate that." ■

Lauren Patton '16 helps at her sorority's booth at Western Warmup this past fall.



Missouri Western receives largest research grant in its history

The National Science Foundation awarded the largest grant in University history – \$1,106,896 – to two Missouri Western professors, Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology, and Dr. Jeff Poet, professor of mathematics, and two Davidson College (North Carolina) colleagues, Dr. A. Malcolm Campbell, professor of biology, and Dr. Laurie Heyer, professor of mathematics, to continue their synthetic biology research with students for three more years.

The grant amount eclipsed a \$1 million-plus grant that the professors received in 2013 for the synthetic biology research.

“This grant application succeeded because we have a track record of producing results,” Dr. Eckdahl said. “Our students are publishing papers in professional journals, presenting at professional conferences and making genuine contributions to an emerging field of science.”

Dr. Eckdahl explained that the field of synthetic biology is only about 15 years old. He describes it as a re-invention of genetic engineering, which came about in the 1970s, with more emphasis this time around on the engineering.



The grant, “Broadening the Application of Programmed Evolution for Metabolic Engineering,” is a collaboration between Missouri Western and Davidson College. It began in September 2016 and funds 36 full-time, 10-week summer research positions for undergraduate researchers – 18 at Missouri Western and 18 at Davidson. The grant also pays for faculty member summer stipends, research supplies and equipment, and research-related travel.

“We are satisfying NSF that we are advancing science while delivering educational value for our students.”

– Dr. Todd Eckdahl
Professor of Biology

The Missouri Western team will travel to Davidson for a week and the Davidson team will travel to Missouri Western for a week each summer. The grant also funds travel to national conferences where students and faculty will present the results of their research.

Some of their research involves using recently developed technology, Dr. Eckdahl said, and Missouri Western and Davidson are two of just five universities worldwide that are using it (see “The cutting edge research explained,” next page.)

This is the fourth grant the synthetic biology program has received from NSF. The teams were awarded \$342,900 in 2007, \$400,000 in 2011, and \$1,045,965 in 2013. The professors also received a \$269,700 grant in 2011 to conduct three summer workshops to train faculty across the country on how to use synthetic biology in undergraduate teaching and research.



Dr. Eckdahl noted that the research grants are very competitive, and when they apply, they are competing with large and small institutions from across the country. Fewer than 10 percent of submitted grant proposals are funded. Additionally, for the last two grants, the NSF funded the full amount of the application, which he said was very unusual.

“We are satisfying NSF that we are advancing science while delivering educational value for our students,” Dr. Eckdahl said.

The undergraduate synthetic biology research at Missouri Western and Davidson began in the summer of 2006 with collaboration among the two biology and two mathematics professors.

Dr. Poet noted that the Missouri Western students who have been involved in the program have gone on to graduate school, medical school or have become high school teachers, and many are currently working in the St. Joseph region.

“None of the four faculty could imagine in 2006 where this would lead us 10 years later,” Dr. Poet said. “The opportunities for our students

The cutting edge research explained

We asked Dr. Todd Eckdahl, the principal investigator on the recently awarded \$1.1 million National Science Foundation grant, and Dr. Jeff Poet, professor of mathematics, to explain the research that the grant is funding for the next three years, in collaboration with Dr. Laurie Heyer and Dr. A. Malcolm Campbell from Davidson College in North Carolina, and students from both institutions.

Synthetic biology research, which came about around 15 years ago, uses mathematical modeling and molecular biology methods to design and construct new biological parts, devices and systems. The students, all undergraduate math and biology majors, are working to engineer E. coli bacteria to produce new products, such as pharmaceuticals and biofuels.

“How do you tell bacteria how to do that? What is the best way for E. coli to make a drug?” Dr. Eckdahl says. “We decided that bacteria would know best.” So the researchers program the E. coli cells with a number of variations in the genetic elements that encode the new metabolism, and the bacteria figure out which is the best, which is a different process than most researchers have been using. “The E. coli are rewarded for making our protein by living and reproducing,” he said.

The team named their process “Programmed Evolution,” and published a paper about it in 2015. The paper was also the subject of a popular “Ask Me Anything” event on Reddit.

A key component of Programmed Evolution is a riboswitch, which is an RNA molecule that controls the expression of genes. In order to develop Programmed Evolution for new applications, the researchers needed new riboswitches. The group uses riboswitches, Dr. Eckdahl explained,

to detect a desired product of bacterial metabolism and turn on genes that allow bacteria to survive.

The group learned there were very few riboswitches that functioned well, so the Missouri Western-Davidson team invented a method to discover better riboswitches. Their method, however, didn’t have the capacity to explore the number of sequences of RNA that they needed to explore.

So, early in the summer of 2016, they requested permission from Harvard University to use a method that its researchers had created less than five years ago – PACE (phage-assisted continuous evolution). Phage, or bacteriophage, are viruses that infect bacteria.

“This is right on the cutting edge,” Dr. Eckdahl said of the PACE technology. He noted that only five universities in the world are conducting research with PACE, and Missouri Western and Davidson are two of them. Additionally, the other three universities have graduate students and post-doctoral researchers conducting the research, whereas Missouri Western and Davidson are conducting PACE research with undergraduates.

By the end of the 2016 summer research, students had conducted experiments with PACE, which is very complicated, and developed a way to use PACE for riboswitch discovery. Next summer, they will focus on using it for riboswitch discovery so they will be able to return to Programmed Evolution to make useful products in E. coli bacteria.

So where does the math come in? Dr. Poet said his math students conduct mathematical modeling and statistical analysis to support the biology research.

For example, there are millions of factors to consider in their research, and



the mathematicians create simulations that narrow down the range of variables.

“We try to use math to help inform the biology,” he says. “We give them better starting points.”

Nature and biology are very difficult to understand, but the math component makes it more understandable, Dr. Poet said.

So next summer, if you happen to be in Remington Hall and see students diligently working in the labs, it may be the NSF-funded cutting-edge researchers from Missouri Western and Davidson College, making an impact on our future. ■

Since the synthetic biology research began in 2006, Dr. Jeff Poet and Dr. Todd Eckdahl and their Davidson colleagues have had three unwavering goals for their undergraduate research group, in this order:

- 1. Provide a quality educational experience for everybody in the group.**
- 2. Have fun.**
- 3. Contribute to the advancement of science and math.**

Campus improvements greet students this past fall

Several renovation and improvement projects greeted students when they returned to campus this past fall. The largest, most noticeable projects were in the Blum Union, Looney Complex and Potter Hall.

Blum Union

Improved services for students was the purpose behind recent renovations of the second floor of the Blum Union. Over the summer, several offices, including the Multicultural Education Center, Center for Student Involvement and International Student Services, were reconfigured and rearranged.

The hallways were also painted and new carpet was installed, as well as ceiling tiles.

By the time the renovation was complete, three new offices were built, two small offices were removed, and one hallway was closed off and became part of a new suite of offices.

International Student Services, which had been sharing offices with the Center for Multicultural Education, now has its own office suite.

Additionally, the new suite of offices for the Center for Student Involvement has a new glass front wall and greets students when they come up the stairs that are located between the cafeteria and food court on the first floor.

New furniture for the second floor lounge was also purchased.

Just outside of the Blum Union, a large Griffon now enhances the sidewalk.

Senior Jacob Teasley, who served as a student senator, said he and a fellow senator were walking around campus a couple years ago looking for ways to improve its appearance and add more color to the campus. They wanted something that would raise school spirit, and also benefit both students and alumni.

They decided on a Griffon, and figured that the circular juncture of



A large, circular area of the sidewalk outside the Blum Union is spruced up with a painted Griffon.

several sidewalks outside the union was a good place for it. The artwork was placed in an approximately 40-foot-diameter circle.

“We consider it a gift to Missouri Western from the Student Government Association for the centennial,” Teasley said. “We wanted a ‘wow factor,’ and I think we got it.”

Teasley said he heard great feedback from students when they arrived back on campus for the fall semester. He credits the physical plant; Shana Meyer, vice president of Student Affairs; and Jessica Frogge, administrative coordinator for SGA; with helping him with the project.

“I’m really happy with it,” he said. “It was a great gift for the centennial.”

Looney Complex Pool

Major repairs were made to the Looney Complex pool over the summer, the area surrounding it received a major renovation and the pool was named for a former United States Senator.

At the Aug. 30 dedication ceremony to unveil the pool renovation, it was announced that the pool would be named “Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool.”

Sen. Eagleton, a native of St. Louis, served as the Attorney General of Missouri from 1961-1965, the Lieutenant Governor of Missouri and President of the Missouri Senate from 1965-1968, and as a United States Senator from Missouri from 1968-1987.

In 1965, as Lieutenant Governor, he was instrumental in passing the House bill that made Missouri Western a four-year institution.

As a U.S. Senator, he secured federal building funds to help with the construction of Missouri Western’s new campus. Some of those funds enabled the college to build a swimming pool in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER) Building (now the M.O. Looney Complex) which opened in 1970.

Sen. Eagleton was also the guest speaker at Missouri Western’s 1974 commencement ceremony.

In 1987, Sen. Eagleton returned to Missouri as an attorney, political commentator, and professor of public affairs at Washington University in St. Louis.

In 2003, he gave the eulogy at the memorial service that was held on campus for State Sen. John Downs ’35. Sen. Eagleton passed away in 2007.

A plaque and display in Sen. Eagleton’s honor is in the entryway of the pool.

Total cost for the project was nearly \$600,000, which was paid for with student fees.

Thanks to a partnership between Missouri Western, the City of St. Joseph, Buchanan County and the St.

Joseph School District, the pool is now open to the public at least 30 hours per week.

Because of that change, a new storefront entry and ticket office were created that allows patrons to enter directly from the outside. Also, the entire pool shell interior, pool deck and locker rooms were renovated, and a family restroom and changing area were added.

Discussions about the future of the swimming pool began in 2014, and at that time the future didn’t look promising, according to Shana Meyer, Missouri Western’s vice president for student affairs, who spoke at the dedication ceremony.

“At that time, we were facing lifeguard shortages; pool usage was at an all-time low; and the pool was leaking an astronomical five gallons

of water every 45 seconds,” Meyer said at the dedication ceremony. “Multiple public forums, petitions, letters, and discussions later, it seemed that the closing of the Looney pool was inevitable.”

Meyer and Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western’s president, thanked St. Joseph Mayor Bill Falkner

and the Missouri Western Board of Governors for stepping in with an 11th-hour proposal to save the pool with the assistance of the community partners.

Potter Hall

Thanks to a Missouri House bill to fund capital improvements, \$325,000 was spent on Potter Hall over the summer of 2016 for new ceiling tiles and carpeting in the main corridors, and heating and cooling improvements. Additional funds that had been raised in the Centennial Capital Campaign were used to carpet and paint the band and choir rooms, a classroom and a conference room.

Potter Hall is one of the focuses of the Centennial Capital Campaign. As funds are raised, classrooms will be expanded and renovated as Phase I. Phase II includes plans for an addition of a performance center and lobby.

The state Legislature recently provided \$150,000 as a 50/50 match for the design, planning and architectural study of the renovation. The matching funds will be provided from donations raised in the Centennial Capital Campaign. ■



The renovated Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool.



Campus Kudos

- **Dr. Elise Hepworth**, associate professor of music and director of choral studies, received the Arts Educator Award at the Mayor’s Awards for the Arts this past summer. Dr. Hepworth also received the St. Joseph News-Press’s Shine On Award for the month of October 2016.
- **Jason Bell ’01**, a police officer for the University Police Department, received the Respect for Law Enforcement Award from the Sunrise Optimist Club of St. Joseph.
- Missouri Western faculty, staff and alumni earned second place in the Kansas City 48-Hour Film Project. For the project, teams have just 48 hours to complete a film four to seven minutes in length. Teams select one of two genres, and each film must contain the same prop and the same line.
Missouri Western’s team drew “Fable,” and its film was “The Dinner Party.” Team members included **Robert Hanson, Sonia Hanson, Jeff Stover**, all faculty members in the Department of Theatre, Cinema and Dance; **Shaun Agnew ’04** and **Jonathan Robertson**, Missouri Western instructors; **Jessica Agnew**, administrative assistant for the Department of Theatre, Cinema and Dance; **Brandt Shields**, director of external relations; **Chris Rayle ’16** and **Riley Bayer ’16**.
- **Minerva Correa Torres**, executive administrative associate for Student Affairs, received the 2016 National Association for Student Personnel Administrators IV-West Support Staff Award for her special interest in student success. **LaToya Fitzpatrick**, coordinator for the Center for Multicultural Education, received the 2016 NASPA IV-West Social Justice and Inclusion Award. The two received the awards at the regional conference this past fall.
- Nine faculty members in the Department of Art exhibited work at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph, Missouri from Sept. 16 through Nov. 6. Participants included **Peter Britton, Rebecca Foley, David Harris ’79, Teresa Harris ’82, Eric Fuson ’88, Matt Hepworth, Peter Hriso, Neil Lawley** and **Kathy Liao**.
- Staff member **Carol Hare**, advisor for Sigma Alpha Iota, an international music fraternity for women on campus, received the National Advisor Award for 2015-16 from the fraternity. She was recognized for her dedication, outstanding leadership, and support of college students. Hare is a patroness member of the organization, and she won the Sword of Honor Award last year. ■



Bradley loan fund helps entrepreneurs

A mainstay on the square in Savannah, Missouri, will stay open, thanks in part to a loan program administered by the Center for Entrepreneurship in the Craig School of Business.

The Sports Page, 411 W. Main Street, was recently purchased by Leigh ’12 and Stacy Spicer. It was started by the late Terry Powell and then run by his wife Julie Powell for more than 20 years. The Bradley Entrepreneur Loan Fund was used to secure financing from Farmers State Bank for the Spicers’ purchase of the business.

“It is wonderful that Stacy and Leigh Spicer have been able to purchase the business and continue the service to the region,” said Annette Weeks ’87, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship. “Thank you to the Bradley family for establishing this program to support entrepreneurs.”

The Bradley family, owners of the News-Press & Gazette Company, pledged \$300,000 earlier this year to establish the fund that helps Missouri Western students and alumni get financing to start or acquire a business.

“One of our goals this year is to help family-owned businesses begin succession planning early enough to bring prospective owners into the business prior to their anticipated retirement,” Weeks said. “This is a great example: we were able to bring together a current business owner and one of our alumni to help maintain a 20-year cornerstone of the Savannah community.”

For more information on the loan program or to begin the application process, contact Weeks at (816) 271-4283 or aweeks@missouriwestern.edu. ■

Visitors enjoy the exhibits of nine Department of Art faculty members at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph.

Students support comfort corners

“When you feel comfortable and safe, you can learn.”

That, says Jean West ’88 LCSW, ACTP CT, is why she is working to get “Comfort Corners” in every school in the St. Joseph School District, and Missouri Western’s Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW) donated funds for two corners that were set up in elementary schools this past fall.

West, the district’s homeless social worker and trauma consultant and trainer, said when children act out, the teachers try to calm them down, but sometimes they have to be sent to the principal. A comfort corner, usually set up in the back of the room, allows the child to stay in the classroom, go to the corner and try to calm down.

Each corner contains a big, comfy chair and items that can help the child calm down – stress balls, crayons and paper, books (one is called “Calm Down Time”), and several sensory items like small craft pom poms and stuffed animals. A liquid, 10-minute timer tells the students when they need to leave the corner. West introduced the concept to the school district and set up five during the 2015-16 school year in elementary school classrooms.

She said many children face a lot of trauma and stress in their homes, and when something in the classroom triggers the stress, they may act out as a way to deal with it. The comfort corners help them learn coping skills.

“Our kids need to be mentally well in order to learn. We want to do whatever we can do to help them be successful.”

Each corner cost approximately \$150 to set up, West said, and she hopes to set up at least one in every elementary school.

Ashley Buzzard, president of OSSW, said the Missouri Western student group is always looking for community projects they can help support. In the past, they have coordinated a walk for the homeless, adopted a highway, and



Jean West ’88 talks to Bessie Ellison Elementary students about their new Comfort Corner. The corner was funded by Missouri Western’s Organization of Student Social Workers.

adopted a family during the holidays. When they heard about the comfort corners, they knew it was something they wanted to support.

Buzzard said she volunteers in her son’s school, and she can understand how a comfort corner would help some of the students, and the teachers, as well.

Missouri Western faculty members in all her classes were supportive of Buzzard’s talking about comfort corners to her classmates when the student group was trying to raise funds for it.

“That’s what social work is all about – networking and building community, and working together to get things done,” Buzzard said.

“I’m so thankful to OSSW,” West said. “It meant we could help more children.” ■

| Griffon Edge |

Students enjoy making a craft with children as part of the community service component of Griffon Edge, the University orientation for new students last fall.



WALTER CRONKITE

MEMORIAL NEWS

Cronkite shows performed in New York City and Washington, D.C.

The live, multimedia performances that are part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial traveled to New York City and Washington, D.C. for performances in September.

“And That’s the Way It Is: Cronkite’s Journey,” a 90-minute trilogy, was performed for invited guests, including members of Cronkite’s family, Sept. 23 at Lincoln Center’s Stanley Kaplan Penthouse in New York City. A reception followed the performance.

“Cronkite,” a 25-minute show, was performed Sept. 25 at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. Several Missouri Western students who were journalism and political science majors, student leaders, and two professors attended the Newseum performance and toured D.C.

The shows combine video, still photographs, music and live actors. They are each between 20 and 25 minutes long and can be performed separately or as a trilogy. “Harry & Walter: Missouri’s Native Sons” explores the parallel lives

of President Harry S. Truman and Walter Cronkite, “King & Cronkite” features the words of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and the reflections of Cronkite on the civil rights movement, and “Cronkite” is based on an interview of Cronkite on CNN’s “Larry King Live” one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Cronkite reflects on that event and other events he covered during his career.

The shows were conceived and written by Dr. Vartabedian. “Cronkite” is directed by Dr. Bob Willenbrink, founding dean of Missouri Western’s School of Fine Arts. “Harry & Walter” and “King & Cronkite” are directed by Dr. Vartabedian. Tara Stoll ’00 is the multimedia producer and director. Jake Kelly ’08 is the technical director. Ryan Menley is music supervisor.

For more information on the Memorial or performances, go to missouriwestern.edu/wcm or its Facebook page – Walter Cronkite Memorial. ■



Walter Copping, Jim Korinke and Ken Remmert, the three Kansas City-area actors in the trilogy. Copping plays Martin Luther King Jr., Korinke plays Walter Cronkite, and Remmert plays President Harry S. Truman.



Jim Korinke, who plays Walter Cronkite, is pictured with Walter Cronkite IV, the grandson of Walter Cronkite, at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

Photos by Ed Collier



Chip Cronkite, Dr. Robert Vartabedian and Nancy Cronkite at the New York City performance on Sept. 23. Chip and Nancy are Walter Cronkite's children. Dr. Vartabedian presented them with bronze replicas of the Cronkite bust in the Walter Cronkite Memorial on campus.



Anita Reed, Nancy Reed, Louis Reed, Dorothy Wenz, Richard DeShon '54, and singer-songwriter Melissa Manchester at the New York City performance.

Cronkite Centennial celebrated

2016 marked the centennial of Walter Cronkite’s birth, and Missouri Western celebrated with a live performance of the trilogy, “And That’s The Way It Is: Cronkite’s Journey,” and a private reception on what would have been Cronkite’s 100th birthday, Nov. 4, 2016.

A new sculpture by Eric Fuson ’88, artist-in-residence, was unveiled. “We Came in Peace ...” represents an Apollo 11 rocket to reflect Cronkite’s interest in the NASA space missions, especially the moon landings. The Apollo 11 mission in 1969 carried the first astronauts to walk on the moon.

On Nov. 5, the doors were opened to the public with tours and screenings of the trilogy. ■



A new sculpture representing the Apollo 11 space flight, “We Came in Peace ...,” is now a part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial. The sculpture is sponsored by Commerce Bank, with additional support from the Daisy Najarian Charitable Fund and Midland Steel.

Object Spotlight – Mickey Mouse

Walter Cronkite received a Mickey Mouse caricature in return for his support of the Disney-MGM Studios theme park, which opened as part of the Walt Disney World complex in 1989. It was later renamed Hollywood Studios. Cronkite also

starred with Robin Williams in “Back to Neverland,” a short film about the animation process shown as the introduction to “The Magic of Disney Animation” attraction.

The caricature is on display in the Memorial. ■

Graduate School turns 10

When Missouri Western received university designation from the state Legislature in 2005, it was given the green light to offer graduate programs, and this past fall marked the 10th year of the University's offering master's programs.

The first programs offered in the fall of 2007 were a Master of Applied Science in Chemistry and a Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Management (later changed to Information Technology Assurance Administration).

Dr. Ben Caldwell, who became dean of the Graduate School in 2012, said that in the past 10 years, both enrollment numbers and program offerings have grown every year.

First master's degrees

The first post-bachelor's degree was awarded at the May 2007 commencement ceremony, when Deb Schwebach '74/'07 received a Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing. The certificate had been offered on campus for several years from Northwest Missouri State University through Missouri Western's Prairie Lands Writing Project, but Schwebach was the first to earn the certificate from Missouri Western.

Two years later, at the spring 2009 Commencement ceremonies, 12 students participated in the University's first hooding ceremony for master's degrees. Receiving the first master's degrees from Missouri Western were James Blevins '04/'09, Darcie Elder '07/'09, Kelly Gant '06/'09, Deborah Jeffries '07/'09, Kimberly Kallauner '05/'09, William



The first master's hooding ceremony was held at the May 2009 commencement.

Kountz '00/'09, Gregory Lawson '09,
LeeAnn Schuster '06/'09, Timothy
Slominski '07/'09, Jill Steinmetz '08/'09,
Summer Theus '06/'09 and William
Wright '06/'09.

Jeffries, who was a nontraditional student, realized that earning a master's degree would help her advance in her career more quickly, so she immediately enrolled in the new chemistry graduate program after she earned her bachelor's in chemistry. She completed an internship in the Christopher S. "Kit" Bond Science and Technology Center on campus, and was hired as the laboratory manager there after she earned her master's. Last year, she began teaching full-time in the Department of Chemistry.

“A lot of universities don’t have programs like Missouri Western’s that are hands on,” Jeffries said. “The applied

nature of the program really puts you ahead in your career by several years. It gives you the edge to get you to the next level.”

Kountz, a validation senior specialist at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. (BIVI) in St. Joseph, earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Missouri Western in 2000. He said he had always wanted to pursue a master's degree, so when the University began offering the Master of Applied Science in his field, he immediately enrolled.

“The courses were very beneficial in regards to seeing an overall picture from research and development, to production, to quality control and to the safety stages,” he said. “Receiving my master’s provided me with knowledge that opened new opportunities in my career.”

He said he received a promotion at BIVI while he was earning his master's degree.

Nursing programs fill needs

The Department of Nursing and Allied Health offers two master's programs and one graduate certificate. The Master of Science in Nursing – Health Care Leadership began in 2012, and a Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Educator and a Nurse Educator graduate certificate began in 2014.

Dr. Carolyn Brose, director of the graduate programs for nursing, said the development of its master-level programs was driven by the health care needs of the region. She said they developed the MSN's Nurse Educator option and Nurse Educator graduate certificate because of the critical need for nurse educators not only in this region, but across the country.

"It's important that we work to sustain and build a workforce for nursing," Dr. Brose said.

Missouri Western also began offering its nursing graduate programs in the Kansas City area at the request of hospitals there. In the spring of 2015, a cohort for the MSN program began at Liberty Hospital. The classes, Dr. Brose said, are a combination of faculty teaching on site alternating with video conferencing.

“This approach has truly opened the door for metropolitan-based students who are challenged both by time and distance to attend classes on campus,” she said.

Last year, Missouri Western was approached by North Kansas City Hospital with a request to provide a master's program there, and they plan to begin the courses this spring, Dr. Brose said.

Education programs

Like the nursing programs, the graduate programs in the Department of Education were developed to address area needs in the field.

Since 2010, the department has offered a Master of Science in Assessment with options in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Autism Spectrum Disorders, and two graduate certificates with the same options.

“Both areas are identified as critical areas of need,” said Dr. Susan Bashinski, director of the graduate programs for the department. “English language learners are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States.”

She added that the department's programs also offer a great opportunity for teachers to advance their education, which usually leads to higher salaries in most districts.

Dr. Bashinski said Missouri Western faculty stay abreast of new developments in the ever-evolving field of education, and the programs will continue to grow and change to meet the demands of school districts.

The graduate programs in the Department of Education are also 100% online, and their students are from across the United States and foreign countries, including recent graduates from Jamaica and South Korea.

International Students

Along with international students in the Department of Education's programs, several other graduate programs have attracted international students, which have helped grow the University's overall international student enrollment. When the master's programs started 10 years ago, there were just a handful of international

students on campus, and none were enrolled in the graduate school. But by the fall of 2016, there were 132 Missouri Western international students, and 63 were enrolled in graduate programs.

Currently, the Information Technology Assurance Administration program has the largest number of international students – 12.

Recruiting international students for graduate programs is a good thing, said Ann Rahmat, director of International Student Services. Along with increasing Graduate School enrollment, it helps to further “internationalize” the campus and provide more opportunities for intercultural experiences.

Beyond 10

So what's ahead for Missouri Western's Graduate School as it moves into its second decade?

In the near future, a new MBA program will begin this fall, in response to community requests and input.

Beyond that, Dr. Caldwell said plans are to continue to grow the enrollment, both nationally and internationally, and continue to develop programs that fit the needs of the area.

“We have always focused on serving the local industry, and that will not change,” Dr. Caldwell said. “We try to fill needs in the area and will continue to listen to people in local and regional businesses.”

He said the Graduate School will also look at academic departments on campus that do not currently offer graduate programs, and explore if there is a need for programs in those areas.

“There have been challenges in the past 10 years, and there will be challenges in the future,” Dr. Caldwell said. “But offering graduate programs has absolutely been worth it for the University.” ■

Timeline of graduate programs

Master of Applied Science in Chemistry Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Management (changed to Information Technology Assurance Administration) Graduate Certificate – Teaching	Master of Applied Science in Assessment – Writing Master of Applied Arts in Integrated Media (changed to Digital Media)	Master of Applied Science in Human Factors and Usability Testing Master of Applied Arts in Written Communication – Technical Communication, Writing Studies	Forensic Investigations Master of Applied Science in Assessment – Autism Spectrum Disorders, TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Graduate Certificates – Autism Spectrum Disorders, Forensic Investigations, TESOL	Master of Applied Science in Engineering Technology Management	Master of Applied Science in Sport and Fitness Management Graduate Certificate – Professional Skills Master of Science in Nursing – Health Care Leadership	Master of Applied Science in Industrial Life Science Masters of Information Management in Enterprise Resource Planning Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Educator Graduate Certificate – Nurse Educator	Graduate Certificate – Digital Media	Master of Business Administration (MBA) – Forensic Accounting, Enterprise Resource Planning, Animal and Life Sciences
Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2017

Graduate School snapshot

Applied Learning

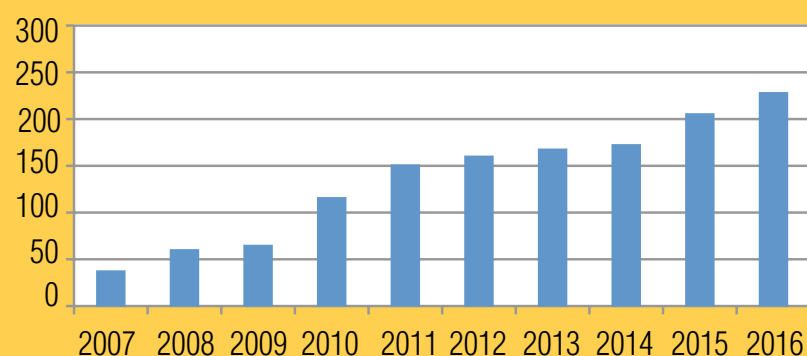
The first graduate degrees were Professional Master's Degrees with an emphasis on applied learning, providing advanced disciplinary knowledge like traditional master's programs, but also training in business fundamentals, project management and communications.

Today, the majority of programs have an applied learning focus and include a capstone experience.



Deborah Jeffries '07/'09, right, teaches a lab in the Department of Chemistry. Jeffries was one of the first to earn a master's degree from Missouri Western.

Graduate School Enrollment Fall 2007- Fall 2016



Student input

Missouri Western's graduate programs are designed with the students in mind. Most classes are offered in the late afternoon and evening. Programs also offer online courses, and some of the degrees can be earned totally online.

Student input is also valuable. The Master of Applied Science in Information Technology was phased out and replaced with the Master of Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration because students expressed the need for the change.

Many of Missouri Western's graduate programs have been developed because of requests received from prospective graduate students, including the new MBA program.

By the numbers

- 17 Master's Programs
- 7 Graduate Certificate Programs
- 242 Graduate Students in Fall 2016
- 12 Academic Departments offer graduate programs

Community input

Since Missouri Western began offering graduate programs, every degree has been developed with input from business and industry throughout the region. For example, the Master of Science in Industrial Life Science was created in response to St. Joseph's location in the Animal Health Corridor, whose businesses account for about one-third of the global animal health market.

SYLVESTER BRANDON '06: REMEMBERING HIS FATHER

When Sylvester Brandon '06 was a student, he was involved in a lot of co-curricular activities, including president of the Campus Activities Board his sophomore year and president of the Student Government Association his senior year. He says his involvement was all because of his father's encouragement and guidance.

When his father passed away in December 2014, Brandon wanted to honor his memory, so he recently established the Sylvester Brandon, Sr. Memorial Scholarship.



Sylvester Brandon '06

"He's the reason I got so involved and why I graduated," Brandon said of his father. "We want to recognize his dedication to education and community service."

Brandon graduated with a speech communications degree from Missouri Western and a masters in higher education and student affairs from the University of Northern Colorado.

Brandon's father was a U. S. Army veteran and served as a project manager for the City of St. Louis. He also coached and mentored youth basketball and baseball, always encouraging his family and players to pursue higher education.

SCHOLARSHIP CREATED IN MEMORY OF STUDENT

A Missouri Western student will be remembered through a scholarship established in her memory by Cabana in St. Joseph, Missouri. The first Jordan Swearngin



Jordan Swearngin

Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Blair Griffin.

Jordan Swearngin, a senior physical education major from Lee's Summit, Missouri,

passed away on Sept. 6, 2015 at the age of 22. During Missouri Western's commencement ceremony in May, her parents, Nick and Jennie Swearngin, accepted a posthumous bachelor's degree on her behalf.

Swearngin was an employee of Cabana, and owner Scott Burns created the scholarship in her memory to help other students pursue their goals with the same passion as Swearngin.

To receive the scholarship, full-time students must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5. Preference is given to current employees of Cabana. If no current employees qualify, preference is given to students with a declared or intended major in physical education with an emphasis in health and exercise science.

Griffin, the first scholarship recipient, is a junior nursing major from St. Joseph

who worked with Swearngin at Cabana.

Swearngin's family is hoping to create a permanent endowed scholarship fund. Family and friends who would like to contribute to the scholarship fund can send donations to the Missouri Western State University Foundation; 4525 Downs Drive; St. Joseph, Missouri 64507. Please specify that your gift is intended for the Jordan Swearngin Memorial Scholarship Fund. ■

LONGTIME SUPPORTER PASSES AWAY

Shirley (Wyeth) Bradley, who served as the first woman on Missouri Western's Board of Regents, passed away Nov. 6, 2016.

In 1988, the College received \$1 million from the David R. Bradley estate, the largest gift it had ever received to date. The funds assisted in the construction of a 30,000 square-foot addition to the Hearnes Center, and it was named the Shirley and David R. Bradley Wing. She also helped underwrite the Walter Cronkite Memorial in 2013.

Shirley Bradley received an honorary doctorate and was also named the Missouri Western Foundation's first Life Member for her many years of service to the Foundation.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of Bradley, please contact the MWSU Foundation at (816) 271-5648. ■



Shirley Bradley



100 YEARS of TRANSFORMING LIVES

The scholarship will give preference to applicants from the St. Louis area.

Brandon is senior vice president and managing director of operations for Valeo Management Limited, a real estate investment company that specializes in accommodations for college students. His job takes him all over the world, and as he travels, he said, he remembers his father's advice.

"He told me to use every opportunity, every class, every relationship as a chance to advance myself and make the world a better place."

Alexis Carr, a digital animation major from a St. Louis suburb, was the first recipient of the scholarship. ■

Behind the screen: The Griffons' new video board

It was Sept. 1 and it was the second half of the first football game of the 2016 season. Fans were enjoying the newly renovated Spratt Memorial Stadium, especially the new video board.

Suddenly, the 2,500 square-foot video screen went black. After a few seconds, an error message appeared on the screen.

The crowd groaned. This was the board's big debut. The components had arrived on campus on eight semi-trailers in June, and everyone had been working furiously since then to get it up and running by the first game.

And now the screen was totally black.

Slowly, slowly, a ticker message appeared at the bottom of the screen: "I am broken. I need noise to fix me. I am broken. I need noise to fix me."

The crowd erupted.

The image on the screen rose higher and higher as the crowd got louder until it was again on full display.

"Yes, it was a prank," said Ryan Menley, who is the amazing talent behind the crowd-pleasing video board. And the prank was just one of the ways that Menley and his video board team make sure that fans enjoy this new addition to Spratt Memorial Stadium.



For every football game this past season, he and his team of nine worked behind the scenes and on the field to enhance the crowd's game day experience.

Menley's office/broadcast booth on the third floor of the stadium building is a technology-lover's dream, filled with computers, a large control board, computer monitors everywhere and, in the back of the room, two electronic equipment racks (each as big as a refrigerator). If you don't want to look out the wall of windows at the real thing, a television screen on the wall shows what's playing on the video board.

One computer monitor, two cameras and two filing cabinets, Menley says, are the only remnants of his old office in the Looney Complex that moved into his new space with him. (He was hired in 2010 as a videographer for Athletics.)

"I was both excited and terrified about this project, but it worked out better than I could have ever imagined. It's stressful, but it's fun. We'll keep learning, keep improving and keep pushing the bar. We want to try to get better with everything we do, every year."

- Ryan Menley

Everything else is new, including the video editing software, so he said he had to manage quite a learning curve.

He will readily admit that he is not a tech guy, so it was up to Jake Noyd '04, operations engineer for the Instructional Media Center, to figure out exactly what was needed to get the video board up and running by the first football game on Sept. 1. Noyd, on the other hand, readily admitted that he was not a football



guy. (Menley says Noyd's first question was, "How long is an average college football game?")

So football guy and tech guy started talking about two years ago, and it was a beautiful thing. Noyd conducted extensive research to pick the best and most cost-effective products, and the design and installation of equipment was all done in house. (Menley calls Noyd one of the smartest people he knows.)

Just about the time Menley started wondering how he was going to afford to pay someone to produce the large number of graphics needed for the video board, Jeff Meyer '11 called him. Meyer graduated with a theatre and video degree and is a videographer/editor for the Miami Dolphins NFL team. He saved the day when he volunteered to create graphics for the new board, and he kept sending new ones throughout the entire football season.

"Jeff offered to do it for free; he just wanted to give back to Missouri Western," Menley said. He estimates that Meyer created about 20 graphics for the video board.

Menley said he decided right from the start to use the video board to broadcast the football games rather than

continued on next page

Ryan Menley, left, directs the video board room.

Behind the screen: The Griffons' new video board

continued from pg. 17

just show “fan prompts,” such as “First down!” “Touchdown!” and “Make some noise!”

“I am a storyteller first, and this is a very cool way to tell a story,” he said. “I wanted to take fans to the middle of the action.”

With that in mind, Menley hired a crew of five camera operators. For every home game, three filmed the action on the field from the third floor of the stadium building (just down the hall from Menley) and two moved all over Craig Field.

In the broadcast booth with Menley are four more on the team who work behind the scenes, including Ivan Baida, a junior computer science major.

“I loved it. I learned about video production, replays and how to go from one camera to another,” he said. Baida is interested in a career that combines computer information with sports, so this position gave him great experience.

When he found out about Missouri Western's video board, Trevor Moss '11 volunteered to help. At first, Menley

thought Moss would be a runner for him, but 10 minutes into the first game, Menley realized he needed a spotter to call out downs and distance information.

“I always loved being involved in game day operations,” said Moss, who graduated with a recreation sport management degree. He currently officiates at high school football games, so he was a good fit for the spotter role.

Menley is pleased that four of those involved in game day production were Missouri Western students. “You can't duplicate the hands-on experience,” he said. “Between broadcasting, video and sports, we are teaching them how to be pretty well rounded.”

For the games last season, Menley arrived about five hours ahead of kickoff. About 30 minutes prior to game time, he started directing the camera operators and broadcast booth crew, and he didn't stop or slow down until the game was over. He stood the entire time and directed nonstop for four quarters and straight through half-time.

We're feeding the wrong feed, switch cameras!

Ready 5, nice job.

4 and 5, I need to cut to you.

Okay, there's Max, Max is up.

Fumble, fumble. Somebody get me a replay. Good job.

Get ready, defense, in case we get a good stop.

Pan down, please.

If that's the worst that can happen today, then we're okay.

2 go wide; wide shot, please.

Wow. We almost know what we're doing here.

- Ryan Menley on the job on game day

He admitted that prior to each game, he apologized in advance to his crew for any angry outbursts that may happen during the game.

“But I'm lucky. I've got a group that you don't have to tell something to twice.”

When the games were over, Menley worked on video highlight clips and got them out on social media. After one game, he ran into a technical glitch and didn't leave the stadium until 3 a.m. Sunday.

“I was both excited and terrified about this project, but it worked out better than I could have ever imagined,” Menley says. “It's stressful, but it's fun.”

“We'll keep learning, keep improving and keep pushing the bar. We want to try to get better with everything we do, every year.” ■



Homecoming 2016 offered fun activities for students, employees, alumni and their families, and the weather cooperated all weekend. On Friday of Homecoming weekend, the 34th annual Alumni Association Awards Banquet was held on campus, and eight were honored (see p. 24). The weekend also included the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. 25th anniversary celebration.



Griffon fall sports

Football

A new experience for Griffon football fans was ushered in this season as the football team played on Craig Field in the completely renovated Spratt Memorial Stadium.

Unfortunately, the 2016 season saw the program's streak of 11 straight winning seasons fall. Missouri Western finished the season 4-7, its first seven-loss season since 1991, and Jerry Partridge's '86 run as head coach of the team ended after his 20th season (see article, "Partridge relieved of coaching duties; Williamson hired," p. 22).

Thirteen Griffons were named All-MIAA, including unanimous first-team selections Josh Caldwell and Travis Anderson. Caldwell picked up an armload of postseason honors after leading the MIAA with more than 1,400 yards rushing as a sophomore. It was the third consecutive year for



Anderson, a senior, to be named to the conference first team.

The 2017 Griffon football team is set to return 18 starters, nine on each side of the ball, and 11 of the team's 13 All-MIAA selections from this year's team.

More than 51,000 fans attended football games at Spratt Memorial Stadium this season, setting a new Missouri Western attendance record for a season with five home games.

Volleyball

The volleyball team under head coach Marian Carbin '07 finished a winning season with a 17-15 record and postseason play in the MIAA tournament. It was the team's fifth consecutive winning season. The team came just three wins short of completing three straight 20-win seasons.

With an almost completely new starting rotation, the Griffons still managed to go 9-9 in the daunting

Coach hired for University's new sports

Missouri Western's first-ever head coach for the men's and women's cross country and track and field teams was hired in August 2016. The teams will begin competing in fall 2017.

Marc Bierbaum, who was an assistant women's cross country and track coach at the University of Nebraska Omaha, was selected from a pool of more than 100 candidates. Prior to UNO, he had served as the head men's and women's cross country coach and assistant track coach at Dana College, in Blair, Nebraska.

"We're very excited to have Marc lead our new programs," said Kurt

McGuffin, director of athletics. "Marc's enthusiasm really stood out and I think that will be a great attribute as he starts these programs."

At UNO, Bierbaum coached 36 all-conference performers and helped the Mavericks break 13 school records. At Dana, he coached a national champion in outdoor track and field, three national qualifiers in cross country, 17 national qualifiers in indoor track and field, 20 national qualifiers in outdoor track and field, two All-Americans in indoor track and field, and 43 all-conference selections. He also saw eight school records fall.

"Everyone that was involved in the process, everyone I've met, the campus, it's all amazing. I can't think of a better place to start a program," Bierbaum said when he was hired.

Bierbaum, a 2001 Dana College graduate, was a two-time national qualifier as a marathoner for the Dana track team and a 1999 national qualifier in cross country.

"Marc has a proven record of success at this level and knows the Midwest. We were really impressed by his knowledge of the area and the MIAA, along with his strategies for building a program that Missouri Western can be proud of," McGuffin said. ■

MIAA volleyball schedule and placed five members of the team on the All-MIAA squad, including first-team selection Rachel Friedrichs.

The team swept Lindenwood on Senior Day in November, with 25-13, 25-13 and 25-15 wins. At the Washburn Invitational in September, Stephanie Doak and Friedrichs were named to the All-tournament team.

Soccer

For the third consecutive season, Griffon soccer had its best season in program history.

Head coach Chad Edwards' team set a new Missouri Western soccer record, winning 11 games in the regular season, earning a record-breaking 10th win of the season on Oct. 28 against Northwest Missouri State. Both goals in the 2-1 game were scored by Cassidy Menke, who broke the single-season scoring record during the game and who later became Missouri Western's first-ever first-team All-MIAA selection for soccer.

Five members of the team were named All-MIAA; 13 were named to the MIAA Academic Honor Roll with four receiving MIAA Scholar-Athlete awards. Paige Phipps was also named CoSIDA Academic All-District for her performance in the classroom and on the field. ■

Griffons' NFL presence grows

Two members of the 2015 Griffon football team gained positions on the 2016 regular season NFL team rosters.

Michael Jordan (Rams) and Leonard Wester (Buccaneers) joined Greg Zuerlein (Rams) and Davis Bass (Titans) as Griffons in the NFL this season. Wester made the active roster in Tampa Bay out of training camp while Jordan earned a practice squad spot before being promoted to the active roster later in the season. ■



Basketball seasons underway

The 2016-17 Griffon basketball seasons are underway as the Griffon women look to defend their 2015-16 MIAA Championship and the Griffon men look to continue their climb in the MIAA standings.

The home games that remain in the season are all MIAA doubleheaders.

Along with the excellent basketball action and fun promotions, fans can see the newly refinished court.

Call the ticket office at (816) 271-4481 or visit gogriffons.com for tickets and schedule information. ■



Partridge relieved of coaching duties; Williamson hired

On Nov. 17, 2016, Director of Athletics Kurt McGuffin announced that football head coach Jerry Partridge '86 was relieved of his coaching duties.

“Coach Partridge has been a part of Griffon football for most of his adult life as a player, assistant coach and head coach, and I thank him for his hard work, his passion and his loyalty,” McGuffin said. “Our goal is to find a coach who can build on the foundation Jerry established to position our student athletes for continued success on the field and in the classroom.”

Prior to becoming head coach in 1997, Partridge was the defensive coordinator at Missouri Western for five seasons under head coach Stan McGarvey. Partridge was also an assistant at Murray State (Kentucky) University and Austin Peay University in Tennessee. He served as a graduate assistant coach at both the University of Notre Dame and the University of Missouri.

On Dec. 5, McGuffin announced that Matt Williamson '96 was hired as

Missouri Western's sixth head football coach.

Williamson began his coaching career at Missouri Western in 1997 as a graduate assistant and, in 2000, returned as a defensive line coach before becoming defensive coordinator in 2005, a position he held for two seasons. Since leaving Missouri Western, Williamson spent 10 seasons at the Division I level, most recently serving as defensive coordinator at Stephen F. Austin (SFAU) University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

“We're very happy to see Matt come home,” McGuffin said. “Clearly, Matt is familiar with Missouri Western, the region and the MIAA, which is a very important foundation to have as a head coach in this league. Matt will also bring a wealth of knowledge from coaching experiences outside this conference and at various levels of NCAA football.”

“It's a blessing and an honor, to be selected as the new head coach at one of the top Division II programs in the



Matt Williamson '96

country,” Williamson said when he was hired. “I'm ready to go black and gold again.”

In three seasons as defensive coordinator at SFAU, Williamson had the Lumberjack defense among the top of the Southland Conference in rushing and scoring defense. He also served as defensive coordinator at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) during the 2010-13 seasons after serving as defensive line coach and special teams coordinator for three seasons. Williamson's UCA defenses led the Southland Conference in scoring defense three straight seasons.

The three-time All-MIAA defensive lineman was named honorable mention Don Hansen All-American for the Griffons in 1995. Williamson and his wife, Andrea, have two sons, Zach and Brock. ■

**For athletics news
and schedules,
go to
gogriffons.com.**



Seven former student athletes became members of the Athletics Hall of Fame on Sept. 30. The class of 2016 included, from left, George Hayward '75 (Meritorious Service), Eric McDowell '04 (football 2000-03), Jill (Johnson) Brock '08 (women's basketball 2004-08), Michael Cobbins '07 (football 2003-06), Eric Keeler (men's basketball 1995-97), Lindsey (Predovich) Christenson '07 (softball 2004-07) and Sherri (Lang) Pendergras '02 (volleyball 1997-98).

| *Seven join Athletics Hall of Fame* |

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Wow, what a wonderful homecoming celebration. We had a great turnout of alumni during the weekend activities. Thank you for making it a huge success and showing that Griffon pride. You Griffons really did bring home the Black and Gold!

The Alumni Association also sponsored our first webinar on Oct. 6, 2016 with approximately 23 participants registering for Understanding Social Media.

That is just the beginning of our year together. We have more events to come and more alumni to reach. As I stated in the last edition, our main goal this year is to get people involved. This means inviting other alums to join us at events. Take advantage of the many special opportunities coming up.

Remember to join us for the next webinar scheduled for Feb. 15; the subject is contact marketing and is a free one-hour webinar. More information will be coming out soon.

In St. Joe, we will once again celebrate Future Griffis at the Chocolate Factory on Feb. 20, and Griffons Uncorked April 20. Events are also planned throughout the year in our various chapters in Kansas City and St. Louis. These are all great ways to connect with your fellow alumni and old friends. Most activities are scheduled around athletic events and/or local events.

We also have a number of networks that are very active and meet a number of needs: Mama Griffis (alumni with children and/or grandchildren), Forever Griffons (alumni who have celebrated 40 or more years since graduation), Craig School of Business, Griffon Band Alumni and the Black Alumni Network. They are



Mary (Sprake) Vaughan '79

all planning events and activities to pull people together.

I strongly encourage you to get involved on some level. Whether it's volunteering or attending the events, it will make you more aware of what's going on with Missouri Western and appreciate the great asset it is. It will also help you remember

the great education you received and the connections you made while attending Mo West.

Our alumni are our greatest assets. No university is strong without having passionate and committed alumni. So make a plan today to get involved, show your spirit and be a part of this outstanding University and alumni association. You can be a part of the excitement!

Sincerely,

Mary Vaughan '79

| *Alumni Board meeting* |

Members of the 2016-17 Alumni Association Board of Directors gather on campus for their annual retreat.



Coming Events

Jan. 16 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day, campus closed

Jan. 17 | First day of spring 2017 semester

Feb. 20 | Future Griffis at the Chocolate Factory, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, 3715 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph, Missouri
Presidents Day, campus open

Feb. 24-26 & March 2-4 | “Macbeth,” Potter Hall Theater

March 12-19 | Spring Break, no classes, campus open

April 20 | Griffons Uncorked, Tipple Hill Winery, Highway 36, Easton, Missouri.

April 21-23 & 27-29 | “The Wedding Singer,” Potter Hall Theater

May 6 | Commencement

Homecoming 2016

Jerry '71 and Linda Myers Herb '35 and Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University

For Jerry '71 and Linda Myers, it's all about the Griffons. They have been faithful supporters of Missouri Western Athletics for more than four decades. You can always count on seeing them at both home and away games of several sports.

Jerry became sports information director for Missouri Western in 1973 and served in that role for six years. In fact, it was he who created the Griffon logo that is still in use today.

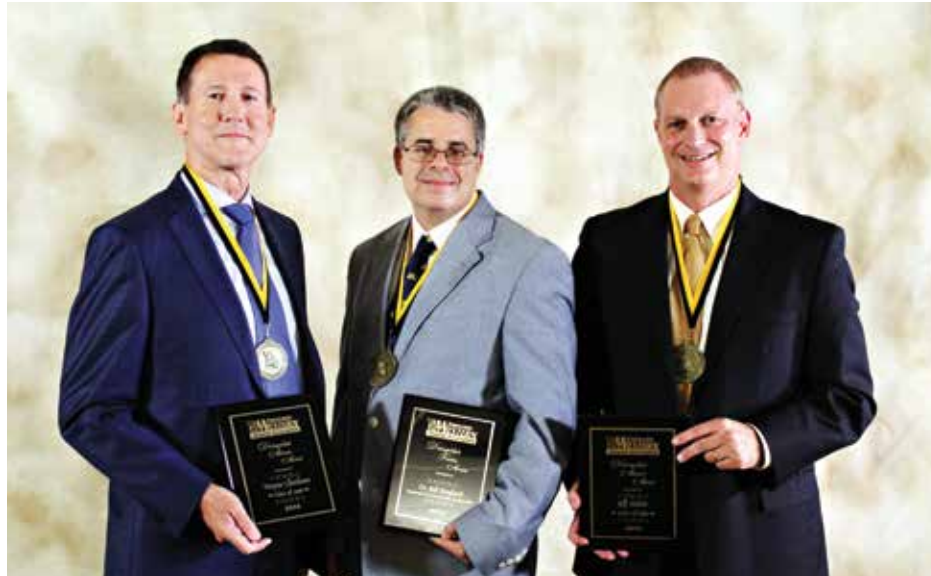
He stepped down from the Gold Coat board this past year after serving on it for 30 years (as president some of those years). He remains a longtime member of the Athletics Hall of Fame committee.

The couple owns and operates Jerry and Linda Myers Shelter Insurance in St. Joseph, Missouri. Son Jay '89 and daughter Kelley (Myers) Schenk '92 are both alums.

Shannon Swanson White '06 GOLD Award (Graduate of the Last Decade)

Armed with a graphic design degree from Missouri Western, Shannon Swanson White '06 was hired as a graphic designer at Populous in Kansas City, Missouri. She wasn't there very long when she was given the opportunity to help with signage for major events.

To date, she has been involved in nine Super Bowls, five NCAA Division I Final Fours, an MLB All-Star Game and a Democratic National Convention. She also helped with signage when Kauffman Stadium was renovated in 2009.



Alumni Association Award recipients Wayne Chatham '90, Dr. Bob Bergland and Jeff Mittie '89.

White fondly remembers her college career and considers some of her professors friends to this day. She wasn't sure what to major in, so she took a graphic design class as an elective and found her career path.

"I'm very humbled and excited that I was chosen for this award."

Jeff Mittie '89 Distinguished Alumni Award

When Kansas State University Head Women's Basketball Coach Jeff Mittie '89 was hired in that role at Missouri Western in 1992, he was hired for just one year while Athletic Director Ed Harris searched for a permanent coach. Mittie was just 25 years old.

In the first year, the team made it to the Sweet 16 in the national postseason tournament, and he got the job. Before he left Missouri Western in 1995, he had compiled a 76-17 record and a Division II Final Four appearance, his team finishing third in the nation.

Mittie, one of the winningest active coaches in NCAA Division I with accolades too numerous to mention,

played both baseball and basketball as a student all four years.

He and his wife, Dr. Shanna Mittie, have two daughters and one son.

Wayne Chatham '90 Distinguished Alumni Award

Wayne Chatham '90 is the vice chairman of Card Compliant, in Kansas City, Missouri, a company that provides regulatory compliance solutions for prepaid card programs. Chatham also co-founded and previously worked as an executive for Stored Value Solutions, the company that started magnetic stripe Gift Cards, and worked as an executive for National Processing Company and Discover Card.

Chatham earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Management, playing basketball on a scholarship.

During his sophomore year of college, his father was killed in a car accident, and he credits two coaches – Gary Filbert and Roy Tewell – and Athletic Director Charlie Burri for helping him through that tough period.



Howard McCauley, Jerry '71 and Linda Myers, and Shannon White '06 were honored at the 2016 Alumni Association awards banquet in the fall.

He and his wife, Nanette, who Wayne met during his sophomore year at Missouri Western, have a son and a daughter.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this prestigious award, and I am proud to be a Griffon for life."

Ellen Sommer '93 Distinguished Alumni Award

On the day Ellen Sommer '93 was born, a piano tuner was working in her parents' home, which delayed the trip to the hospital. Ellen was born just 20 minutes after they arrived at the hospital. That, quite possibly, was



a portent of her career as a renowned pianist.

Today, Sommer is a full-time lecturer in piano in the School of Music at the University of Kansas. She performs extensively throughout the

United States, Canada, Central and South America and Europe, and serves as a pianist for regional, national

and international competitions and festivals. She is also a founding member of the Allegresse trio, and has collaborated on several recordings.

Along with her bachelor's degree in music from Missouri Western, she earned a master's from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. She taught at Missouri Western for 10 years and joined the KU faculty in 2008.

Sommer is the mother of one son.

Dr. Bob Bergland Distinguished Faculty Award

Dr. Bob Bergland, professor of journalism and digital media, became advisor for Missouri Western's student newspaper, Griffon News, when he was hired in 1997.

When he began working on the student newspaper, "cutting" meant with a scissors and "pasting" was done with glue. "The field is continually evolving, and it forces me to learn new things," he says. "It's challenging, but I really enjoy it."

He also directs the Master of Applied Arts in Digital Media program and has guided many student

research projects. Some of those students presented the results of their research at international conferences, as he has coordinated several study away trips overseas.

Dr. Bergland earned a Bachelor of Arts in Writing from Millikin University, and Master of Arts in English/Rhetoric and a Ph.D in English/Rhetoric and Composition from Purdue University. In the spring semester of 2005, he was a Fulbright Scholar and taught at Luts'k Liberal Arts University in Ukraine.

He and his wife, Tammy, have two sons.

Howard McCauley Honorary Alumni Award

Howard McCauley served the Office of Admissions for more than three decades before retiring this year.

When McCauley began guiding Admissions in 1985, there were approximately 3,900 students, he had two full-time and two part-time employees working for him. Under his tenure, enrollment grew to just under 6,000.

From his earliest days as director of Admissions, McCauley stressed customer service. He noted that, at the time, public universities did not focus on customer service, and McCauley knew that if they did, it could help grow Missouri Western's enrollment.

McCauley earned a Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education and a Master's in School Administration from Northeast Missouri State University (now Truman State).

"It's been a privilege to represent Missouri Western State University," he said. "Alumni should be very proud to be a Griffon."

He and his wife, Beth, have two sons and one daughter. ■

Dr. Judy Grimes: Faithful, Proud and True

After Dr. Judy Grimes interviewed for a position on Missouri Western's campus in 1996, she was pretty surprised when Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy, president from 1983-2000, called her with a job offer for a different position.

"I loved my job in Kansas City, but Dr. Murphy was very persuasive," said Dr. Grimes, now associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students. She immediately accepted the position to help students succeed, and she has been doing a great job of that ever since.

She started out as the director of Missouri Western's Freshman Year Experience (FYE), a newly created office that was part of a \$2.2 million state-funded program called Access Plus that had just begun at the College (see "Looking Back: Access Plus for student success"). Two of the main focuses of the program were an

intensive freshman advising program, which included faculty advisor training, and support services for freshmen.

Throughout her more than 20-year career at Missouri Western, Dr. Grimes has held several different positions, but student success has always been at the forefront of her responsibilities. She has overseen a range of programs including residential life, student conduct and student development. Currently, she oversees the health and wellness program for students and the international programs. She also works with the college completion, accreditation and assessment programs.

"I'm continually learning and I am never bored," Dr. Grimes said. "It's really rewarding to work for student success, and I've been given many opportunities to increase my boundaries."

She received Missouri Western's Drum Major for Justice Award in 2006, and was nominated for the YWCA's

"A complement of academic departments and student affairs offices is critical. For many students, a big part of their college career is outside of the classroom."

- Dr. Judy Grimes

Women of Excellence Women in the Workplace Award last year.

Dr. Grimes, who is originally from Minneapolis, noted that Missouri Western's Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have always worked well together.

"A complement of academic departments and student affairs offices is critical," she said. "For many students, a big part of their college career is outside of the classroom."

The FYE office she started working in eventually changed to the Student Success Office, and the advisement programs and many of the services that were started with Access Plus continue to this day.

"To be able to see the transition that our incoming students make to graduation is indescribable," she said. "For so many of them it is a very difficult road to travel, and finding ways to support them while enabling them to become autonomous learners and handle their many challenges on their own is very rewarding." ■



Pictured from left at the R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues is Dr. Judy Grimes, Bert Greener, featured speaker Cokie Roberts, and Jean Greener, Dr. Grimes' sister. The Greeners are from Minneapolis.

Looking Back: Access Plus for student success

Throughout her presidency from 1983 to 2000, Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy was committed to Missouri Western's open admissions policy, but she realized the challenges of helping underprepared students succeed. In the mid-1990s, Dr. Murphy McCarthy began requesting funding from the state so the College could provide programs for its at-risk students.

"A commitment to open access must be linked to a commitment to enhanced learning competencies and success in navigating through the academic requirements of the institution," she told the Board of Regents. "With the commitment of open admissions comes the responsibility to work with students to succeed."

In early 1995, House Bill 442 was filed by Rep. Gary Witt, Rep. Charlie Shields, Rep. Dan Hegeman and Rep. Glenda Kelly '89 to provide Missouri Western \$2.2 million over three years to assist the College in enhancing its mission and improve retention and graduation rates. A companion bill, SB 320, was filed by Sen. Sydney Johnson and Sen. Marvin Singleton. Gov. Mel



Gov. Mel Carnahan signs the bill for Missouri Western's Access Plus program in 1996. He is pictured with Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy, Missouri Western's president at the time.

Carnahan signed the bill to fund Access Plus at Missouri Western for fiscal years 1997, 1998 and 1999. Prior to FY 1999, the state reduced the amount of funding for it that year and extended the program for a fourth year, FY 2000. Over the program's four years, the money funded 28 new faculty members, 22 staff positions, technology support, telecommunications equipment and several new initiatives.

New programs

In the summer of 1996, as part of Access Plus, the College opened the Freshman Year Office, and Dr. Judy Grimes was hired as its director.

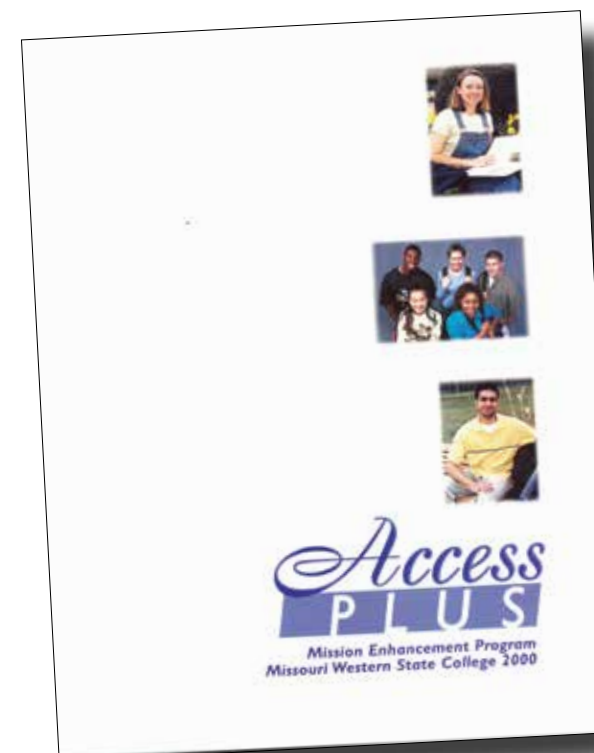
That fall, as part of Access Plus, faculty member Dr. Diane Gorceyca was named coordinator of the Freshman Interest Group program, where up to 20 freshmen took the same three courses that were taught around a common theme. In the first year, more than 250 freshmen enrolled in a FIG, and in the second year, more than 400. FIGs were the predecessor to Learning

Communities, which developed at Missouri Western in the early 2000s.

Additionally, College 101, a freshman seminar course that had begun in 1988, was expanded from an eight-week, two-credit-hour course to a full semester, three-credit-hour course. The Center for Academic Support also increased its tutoring in math, reading and writing, and added tutors for biology, geology, chemistry, political science and foreign languages.

Missouri Western had always held an orientation program for new students, but Access Plus funds were used to make the program more comprehensive. In 1995, before Access Plus, a program was only held for students who were going to live on campus, but in 1996, it became Griffon Edge, a one-credit hour, two-day orientation course, open to all new students. Approximately 500 attended the first year, and in the fall of 1999, more than 800 new students participated.

continued on next page



Looking Back: Access Plus for student success

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Intensive advising was another focus of the Access Plus program. Nearly 150 faculty and staff advisors received advisement training and resources, and they maintained a relationship with their advisees throughout the semester.

“The reality of the situation is that Missouri Western is an open admission institution and some of our students need an additional foundation,” Dr. Murphy said in a speech to faculty and staff at the start of the 1996 academic year. “Therefore, I believe that we have an obligation to do more than merely accept tuition and fees from students, wish them well and stand back.”

In its third year, 1998-99, Access Plus funded the hiring of a special needs coordinator and an adaptive technology specialist, a Unity Services Center (now Center for Multicultural Education) director and a night program/tutor coordinator for the Center for Academic Support. Access Plus also made it possible to add extra tutoring courses.

In its fourth year, 1999-2000, funding provided additional faculty, the development of a website to assist

in advising students, more outreach to high school students and more operating and computer support for the program. The Freshman Year Office changed its name to Student Success Programs/Freshman Year Experience. They also opened a satellite office in Logan Hall and established evening hours in order to be more accessible to students.

Quantitative measures revealed that Access Plus was a success over its four years: There was a 10 percent increase in freshman to sophomore retention, a 13 percent decrease in academic probation for freshmen, a 6 percent decrease in freshman suspension, a 27 percent increase in Freshman Seminar Enrollment and a 55 percent increase in Griffon Edge enrollment. The number of hours that students used the Academic Support Center increased nearly 60 percent from 1995.

National recognition

The College received three national awards for the Access Plus program, including being recognized as one of America's top 100 effective programs

by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Dr. Murphy was honored with the National Academic Advising Association's Pacesetter Award for the Access Plus program in 1999, which is given to just one college administrator each year. Also in 1999, the College was one of five American Association of State Colleges and Universities institutions presented with a Retention Excellence Award at the National Conference on Student Retention. The program was also featured in a national newsletter on first-year experience, and proclamations about the program were made by the Missouri House, Senate and governor in 1999, as well.

In 2000, the London School of Economics requested Access Plus materials from Missouri Western, which were reviewed to assist policy makers in formulating new higher education initiatives for the United Kingdom. Dr. Murphy McCarthy and Dr. Grimes also made a presentation on Access Plus at the 2000 American Higher Education Conference. ■

Ryan Rumpf '02: Helping English language learners

For those not familiar with the field of teaching English as a second language, it may just seem like a lot of alphabet soup – ESL, ELL, ESOL, TESOL, MELL – but to Ryan Rumpf '02, it's a career he wouldn't trade for anything.

It's a career that took him to Vietnam for three years and most recently, to Jefferson City as the director of ELL (English Language Learner) Curriculum for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Rumpf earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with a minor in German from Missouri Western and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction/English

as a Second Language from the University of Phoenix in Phoenix. His degrees took him to Lexington, Missouri; Arizona and Colorado before he was hired by Hickman Mills C-1 School District in Kansas City, Missouri as ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages)

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Ryan Rumpf '02 and his family.

1980s

David Slater '82 received an award for outstanding service from the Missouri Municipal League. He is currently serving his sixth two-year term as mayor of Pleasant Valley, Missouri. He is also serving his fourth one-year term as chair of the Metro Mayors Caucus, representing 84 communities in Jackson, Clay, Platte and Cass counties. He is past president of the Missouri Western Alumni Association and continues to serve on the board.

1990s

Greg Gildersleeve '93 was recently the subject of a feature article on the Grantham Blog. Gildersleeve is a member of the English faculty at Grantham University and the author of two books.

Sherry Heckman '93, fourth-grade teacher at North Andrew School District (Rosendale, Missouri), was nominated for Regional Teacher of the Year. She has been teaching for 24 years, including special education in the Polo (Missouri) School District and North Andrew before teaching fourth-grade. She earned a master's in education from Northwest Missouri State University.

Kendy (King) Jones '94 and Paul Scudder were married November 24, 2016. Kendy is the Director of Campus Printing and Design Services at MWSU and the design editor of the magazine.

We recently changed our e-mail platform. Because of this, our e-mail may be filtering to your Spam folder. We ask that you please check your Spam folder to verify our e-mail messages. If you are not currently receiving our e-newsletter “Griff Gab” and would like to, please go to missouriwestern.edu/alumni/update-your-records.

| *Alumnotes* |

Jim '95 and Lora (Van Emmerik) '95 Tenpenny: Jim works for the U.S. Army Inspector General at the Pentagon and was recently selected for promotion to Colonel. Lora was hired by the Federal Investigative Services in Arlington, Virginia.

Mary Elizabeth Schmitz '99 and Jeffrey Alan Porter were married April 16, 2016 in Kansas City, Missouri. Mary Elizabeth earned a Doctorate of Pharmacy from University of Missouri-Kansas City and is a clinical pharmacist manager at Liberty Hospital in Liberty, Missouri.

2000s

Nicole (Lindsey) Collier '03 is the assistant women's basketball coach at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois.

LaShaundra Randolph '03 is the project coordinator in the Campus Life and Leadership Office at Metropolitan Community College – Penn Valley. She focuses on campuswide retention initiatives and co-advises the Student Government Association. (Her supervisor is a fellow Griffon, Shelby Coxon '99!)



Angela (Till) Hinojosa '05 began working at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. She graduated with an associate of applied science degree

in health information technology. “I just want to thank my instructors, especially my advisor, Marsha Dolan, during my time at MWSU. They not only gave me the education that I needed to graduate, but life lessons that gave me the tools to be successful.”



Sarah (Jones) Mollus '07 and her husband, Trent, announce the birth of a daughter, Rylan Marie, born May 16, 2016.

2010s

Billy '11 and Lanna '11 (Stubbs) Burnich announce the birth of a son, Callen Anthony, born Sept. 11, 2016.



Meagean (McCloud) Weldon '11 and her husband, Ben, announce the birth of a son, Oliver Scott, born May 23, 2016.

Lindsey Stubbs '14 and Jake Edwards '15 were married Sept. 17, 2016. The two had met when they were both student workers in the Office of Admissions. The couple resides in Parkville, Missouri.

Cagney McDonald '15 was hired as an audit associate with Anders CPAs + Advisors, a company that provides full-service accounting, tax and audit services.

Taylor Bryant '16 and Heaven Stewart were married Aug. 27, 2016. Heaven is a Missouri Western student. Taylor's parents, Jim '07 and Elaine Bryant '04; and Heaven's parents, Corey and Stephanie Stewart '97; all are Missouri Western employees.

Volunteer patients wanted

Dawn Rinehart '08, simulation lab manager for the School of Nursing and Health Professions, is seeking volunteer standardized patients to help student nurses in Missouri Western's simulation lab.

A standardized volunteer patient, she said, is an individual that has been trained to accurately portray a patient and participate in a simulated health care encounter with student nurses. The students will interact with the “patients,” ask questions and/or conduct a basic non-invasive physical exam.

She said no prior acting experience is required, but the individuals need to consistently recall the script and background of the patient that they are portraying. Volunteers must be dependable, have basic computer knowledge and respond to email or phone calls in a timely manner.

For more information, contact Rinehart at (816) 271-4415 or drinehart@missouriwestern.edu. ■

Melissa Cairns '16: Adventurous internship

Challenging. Adventurous. Fun. And outdoors. That's what Melissa Cairns '16 was looking for in an internship this past summer. She found all that and more when she was hired as a Class V whitewater rafting guide at Ace Adventure Resort in West Virginia.

For those not familiar with whitewater rapids designations, there are six classes, and the higher the number, the wilder the ride. According to americanwhitewater.org, Class V, which Cairns guided and was the highest level offered by Ace, is "extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to added risk. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness."

Cairns wouldn't argue with that description. One of the most harrowing experiences for her, she said, was when a raft flipped at a Class V rapid. "We had kids all over the place. I was able to pull one kid back to the raft, and three other guides were throwing ropes to get other people out of the water," Cairns said. "I ended up standing on a rock holding a raft of three people from going downstream into a feature we call 'meat grinder.'"

In an internship like hers, she said, you have to be someone who can stay calm and level-headed in a situation that requires you to be. That situation required it, and she was.



When Cairns wasn't taming the Class V rapids, she served as a guide for paintball, high ropes, mud obstacle courses, kayak tours and stand-up paddle board trips.

"The internship gave me a lot of room to try new things and step outside my comfort zone," she said. "I think what I enjoyed most was the challenge. Every day was different."

Cairns, from Tauranga, New Zealand, came to Missouri Western in 2012 to play volleyball because she liked the size of the school and

the city. She loved her experience as a student athlete and said it taught her a lot of life skills, especially time management.

"I also got to be with a team that was as close as a family, and for me that was important. Living so far from my own home, I was glad that I had a team

there to support me." Cairns played volleyball for three years, but decided to give it up her senior year because of several injuries.

She started out as a biology major, tried philosophy for a while, and then found her niche in recreation sport management.

That degree, Cairns says, gave her an understanding of what is really needed to effectively run a business, including all the planning and organizing that goes into it. She also completed an internship as intramural games manager for Missouri Western's recreation program.

Since she enjoyed both internships, she said her immediate career plans included looking for a job with high adventure, but eventually she'd like to run a college recreation program.

"I intend to move into a management position sometime, but I do enjoy working as a guide. Rafting through white water is dangerous because the water is powerful, but it can be the best time of your life." ■

Oh, the places you'll go: Rick '11 and Cindy '05/'15 Dierenfeldt

When Rick Dierenfeldt '11 enrolled at Missouri Western, he had a plan. At the time, he was working full-time as a police officer, and he wanted to earn an associate degree so he could get promoted. It was a good plan, but it didn't quite work out that way.

He wasn't a student very long before he met Dr. Greg Lindsteadt, associate professor of criminal justice. Dr. Lindsteadt didn't think Dierenfeldt should stop with an associate degree, and he encouraged him to continue his education beyond the associate degree. Dr. Lindsteadt also suggested he begin to pursue research projects.

Dierenfeldt took Dr. Lindsteadt's advice and continued his education and research. And then he continued his education and research some more. In 2016, he earned his Ph.D. in criminal justice and this past fall, began his career as an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University Wilkes-Barre.

"Greg Lindsteadt and Joanne Katz fostered and facilitated those research opportunities," he said. "They put me on the path and opened the doors, and it is a debt I will never fully repay."

Dr. Dierenfeldt, a Bethany, Missouri native, said he was "heads above" his cohorts in his doctoral program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, thanks to his research experiences and several of his courses at Missouri Western.

In 2007, about a year before he enrolled at Missouri Western, he married Cindy Peters '05/'15, who had graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry/natural science and was working as a chemist for IVX Pharmaceuticals.

Cindy, originally from Linn, Missouri, returned to Missouri Western to earn a Master of Applied Science in



Cindy and Rick Dierenfeldt and their family.

Forensic Investigations and today is a forensic chemist for a private lab. Prior to moving to Pennsylvania, she worked for the Missouri State Highway Patrol crime laboratory.

"My goal was to work in forensics. I liked science and math, but also crime theory. If I could use science and math to solve crimes, I knew it was a good fit for me," Cindy said. "I'm constantly learning about new drugs or different ways to analyze, and each case is different. I'm solving a mystery."

Although the couple attended Missouri Western at different times, Cindy said their experiences were similar.

"The professors (for both degrees) helped me a lot," she said. "They were easy to approach, and I had a lot of one-on-one interaction."

"Student success was their top priority," Rick said of his and Cindy's professors.

Cindy said she really enjoyed a research class that was taught by Dr. Lindsteadt as part of her graduate program.

"He made it interesting, and it was a real research study," she said. "He did a good job of opening my eyes to research and different opportunities."

Both also appreciated the opportunities they had to present their research results and attend conferences.

Cindy attended an American Chemical Society meeting in San Diego and presented at a criminal justice meeting in New York. Rick not only presented twice at national conferences as a student, but published two articles in peer-reviewed literature.

"I will always miss police work, because of the opportunities to effect meaningful, positive changes in people's lives," he said. "But now as a researcher and a teacher, I can have an effect not just in a particular jurisdiction, but regionally and nationally." ■

Ryan Rumpf '02: Helping English language learners

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teacher. That position, which earned him a Building Teacher of the Year and Mayor's Shining Star of Education awards in 2009, and a promotion to ESOL program coordinator for the district, made him realize how much he loved the field.

After two "fantastic" study away trips as a Missouri Western student, he was bitten by the travel bug, and in 2013, he decided to visit an international teacher placement fair. There he was hired by the American International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The majority of students at the school were not fluent in English, and Rumpf was hired to design and implement its first organized ELD (English Language Development) program for grades one through 10.

A favorite memory from Vietnam, which he calls "a lot of untouched paradise," is when he would walk into

a classroom and students would run up to him and enthusiastically explain a new concept or English skill they had learned. He originally committed to the school for two years, but signed on for a third when he felt his work wasn't completed.

While overseas, he and his wife, Lucinda, visited all of Southeast Asia, New Zealand, Australia, Greece, Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Iceland. They were celebrating Christmas in Germany in 2015 when he accepted the job in Jefferson City.

Since he started at DESE last July, Rumpf has been supervising the migrant and English language learners across the state, and creating professional development opportunities for teachers, among others duties.

"It all revolves around improving the education of students with limited English proficiency," he said.

And there are plenty of students to keep him busy. Currently, there are more than 29,000 students in Missouri with limited English proficiency, up from approximately 21,000 in 2011, Rumpf said. In St. Joseph, the current number is more than 600, which is more than double the number in 2011.

His job also requires visiting with teachers throughout the state, and this past fall, he came to campus and met with Dr. Adrienne Johnson, assistant professor of education who teaches several courses in Missouri Western's TESOL (Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages) graduate program.

"The field is changing and evolving," he says of the English language learning field. "It's come a long way. It has a long way to go, but I'm glad to be a part of the conversation." ■

In Memory

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

Miriam H. Arnold '46, Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 26, 2016.

Karen (Sisk) Baskins '94, Wathena, Kansas, Aug. 2, 2016.

Dr. David Benz, Longwood, Florida, July 17, 2016. Dr. Benz was a music professor and director of choral studies at Missouri Western. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann '81.

David Bird '92, Falls City, Nebraska, Sept. 28, 2016.

Ann Conway '73, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 7, 2016.

April Jean Eiman '96, Savannah, Missouri, Sept. 7, 2016.

Achsah Mickey Heckel, Nevada, Missouri, Aug. 12, 2016. Heckel was a longtime chemistry professor at Missouri Western, retiring in 1987.

Beulah (Smith) Hoover '50, Rushville, Missouri, Oct. 31, 2014.

William J. Hurley, St. Joseph, Missouri, Aug. 25, 2016. Hurley was a former member of Missouri Western's Board of Regents.

Crystal Justus '86, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 4, 2016.

Oscar Kirschner '55, Chicago, Nov. 27, 2015.

Jennifer (Murphy) Pyatt '82, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 11, 2016.

Thomas Robertson '53, St. Joseph, Missouri, Aug. 8, 2016.

Shannon K. Smither '06, Weston, Missouri, Sept. 4, 2016.

James B. Stoneburner, Jr. '98, Maysville, Missouri, Aug. 24, 2016.

Blaine J. Yarrington '37, Lafayette, California, Jan. 15, 2016. Yarrington received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1983, its inaugural year.

Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool

For more details, see article on p.6.





Victory Plaza

Victory Plaza was created as part of the renovation of Spratt Memorial Stadium. Bricks are still available for purchase! Go to missouriwestern.edu/foundation and click on "Order a Brick" for pricing and order information, or, call Kim Weddle '00 at (816) 271-5648.

