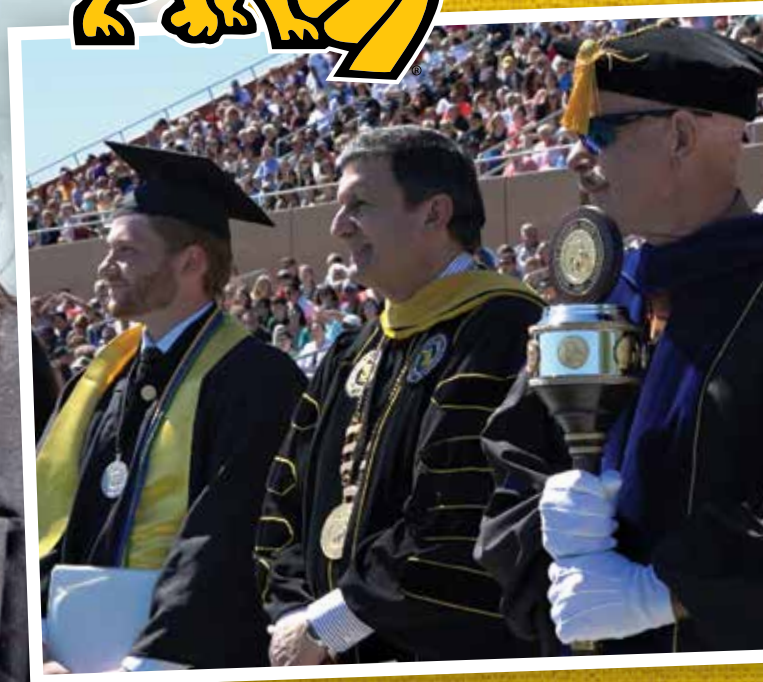


# Missouri Western

The magazine of Missouri Western State University | Fall 2017





# GOLD

GRADUATES OF THE LAST DECADE

Dear Alumni,

We are creating our #GriffonLegacy by using our passion for Missouri Western to host the University's first-ever digital event to raise funds that provide grants and scholarships to current faculty and students.

We want to help you create your #GriffonLegacy by giving back to your alma mater. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 in 24 hours! Over the last decade, more than 6,800 students have graduated from Missouri Western. If we each gave \$5 on Legacy Day, we would raise over \$34,000—more than triple our goal!

Your #GriffonLegacy has already begun, and we hope you continue that legacy on Oct. 26 by participating in our first Legacy Day.

It's as easy as

- 1) visiting [missouriwestern.edu/legacyday](http://missouriwestern.edu/legacyday) to make a donation of any amount.
- 2) sharing with your friends on social media.
- 3) encouraging other Griffon alumni of all ages to do the same.

While on campus, these funds have provided us with invaluable opportunities. We want to ensure the same for future generations.

There are many causes to support, but only one is your alma mater. Small donations add up to big possibilities! Think of it as crowdfunding for your University.

This is our first event, and there will be more! If you graduated from 2007 to 2017 and would like to join our cause, please email [mwalumni@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mwalumni@missouriwestern.edu).

With Griffon Pride,  
GOLD Champions



## #GRIFFONLEGACY

# 10.26.17

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MISSOURIWESTERN



## | In this issue |

*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.*

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#### MISSOURI WESTERN MAGAZINE

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#### | ON THE COVER |

Spring 2017 Commencement on Craig Field in Spratt Memorial Stadium.  
Photos by Elliot Swope '14 and Raghavendra Kotakonda.

## SECTIONS

### 2 Campus News

### 20 Sports

### 22 Alumni News

### 31 Alumnotes



12



16

## FEATURES

### 10 ATLAS: All About Success

ATLAS (Advising, Tutoring, Learning and Academic Support) has several initiatives to increase retention and ensure that students receive the help they need to succeed.

### 12 Griffons Away

The University's study away trips are more popular than ever; read about those who experienced trips to China, Ireland and France.

### 16 University Fills Workforce Development Needs

Addressing workforce development needs has always been at the forefront of Missouri Western's mission, and recent happenings speak of its continuous efforts.



20

| **President's Perspective** |

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, our campus is abuzz with activity because incoming freshmen are here for the summer Griffon Orientation programs. As these students are signing up for classes, I know that they have the expectation that they will graduate and be prepared for a career.

We take that expectation and responsibility very seriously, and we intend for all of our graduates to have the knowledge and skills they need to make them effective in the workforce.

That basically describes "workforce development," and a feature that begins on p. 16 talks about Missouri Western's role in the community and the region regarding our dedication to that mission.

To that end, we consistently seek input from area businesses, industries, organizations and agencies in all fields to ensure that we are preparing our students to be productive and valuable employees. Additionally, we partner with several entities to ensure that our workforce development efforts succeed. We commit resources toward this cause because it is vital to our region's vitality and growth.

On a more somber note, my letter in the spring issue gave you an idea of

the budget challenges we were facing for Fiscal Year 2018. First of all, I want to assure you that our cash position is such that we do not anticipate having any issues covering our expenses. We also continue to find efficiencies and cost savings in anticipation of further decreases to our state allocation.

The University's FY2018 budget, approved by the Board of Governors in June, reflects some of these efforts, including a 3 percent reduction in operating budgets, the closing of Logan Hall and 18 open employee positions remaining unfilled.

This past spring, we also created a budget advisory committee to continue to study efficiencies across campus and pursue revenue sources. As a University, we are looking at the long-term rather than the short-term. With these actions and your continued devotion to Missouri Western, we will weather the financial challenges ahead.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Vartabedian  
President  
Missouri Western State University



Martin Luther King III

## Martin Luther King III to speak

Martin Luther King III will be the featured speaker at Missouri Western's R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues. His presentation, "Embracing the Ideals of Freedom, Justice and Equality," will be held at 10 a.m. Sept. 12 in the Looney Complex.

A human rights advocate and community activist, King is the son of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and was 10 years old when his father was assassinated in 1968. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Morehouse College in Atlanta.

In 1997, he was elected to head the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization that his father founded. In 2010, he became president and CEO of The King Center for Nonviolent Social Change that was established in 1968 by his mother.

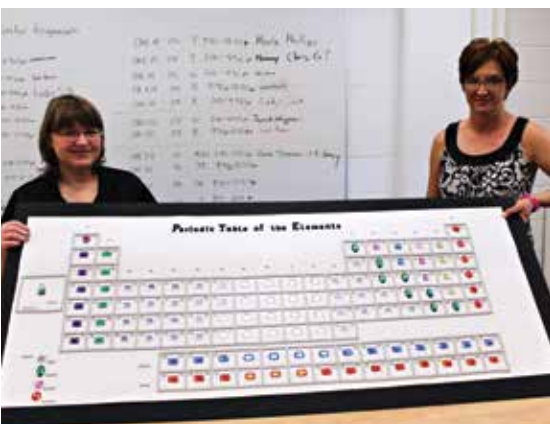
He was one of the founders of Bounce TV, the first African American broadcast network, in 2011.

He and his wife, Arndrea, have one child, Yolanda Renee, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s only grandchild. ■

Dr. Robert Vartabedian, second from right, is pictured with, from left, U.S. Representative and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Missouri Western benefactor Steve Craig and U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, from Missouri's sixth district. Rep. McCarthy, an entrepreneur before he went into politics, was the guest speaker at the celebration of entrepreneurs dinner in June, and Rep. Graves introduced him.







Dr. Shauna Hiley and Katie Jenkins '12

## Elemental accessibility

What do you get when a student who is a lab assistant to a visually impaired person starts talking to a chemistry professor who is all about accessibility? You get a tactile periodic table, complete with three-dimensional “jewels” to designate the elements’ properties.

In spring 2012, Katie Jenkins '12 was enrolled in Dr. Shauna Hiley’s Chemistry Teaching: Methods and Techniques class while also serving as a personal assistant to a visually impaired student in a biology lab. Jenkins and Dr. Hiley, professor of chemistry, decided to work together over the summer to create a tactile periodic table.

“We both learned a lot beyond the construction of it,” Dr. Hiley said. “It really hit home the importance of universal design (accessible to all, not just people with disabilities).” By keeping that in mind, she said, the tactile periodic table is helpful to sighted students, as well.

The periodic table, which Dr. Hiley calls “the most important tool in chemistry to explain the physical and chemical properties of elements,” used four different shapes of jewels and different colors to denote metals, metalloids, nonmetals and noble gases. (Hydrogen, stands alone with a

## Walter Cronkite Memorial



A new display in the Walter Cronkite Memorial on campus is celebrating the return of a CBS affiliate to St. Joseph. The St. Joseph News-Press & Gazette Co. reached an affiliation agreement with CBS Corp. to create KCJO-TV. The first broadcast was June 1 and was held in the Memorial, hosted by Alex Flippin, the morning anchor.

The last time St. Joseph had a CBS affiliate was in 1967, so the exhibit displays items and television show titles from that year. One big event for Missouri Western in 1967 was the groundbreaking ceremony for the present campus, which was held on Aug. 22.

**Attention, Alumni! You are invited to help develop Missouri Western’s next strategic plan! Go to [missouriwestern.edu/strategicplan](http://missouriwestern.edu/strategicplan) and click on Submit Feedback. The page will be open for feedback until Sept. 30. Thank you for helping shape our future, we value your input!**

heart-shaped jewel.) Sighted students can easily spot the groupings and the reasoning behind them because of the jewels.

Additionally, each element shape is listed with its atomic number and name in Braille, which was printed by Missouri Western’s Adaptive Technology Services.

“One of the positives of working on this project and as a personal assistant was that I had to learn to be a better auditory communicator, and I really had to listen,” said Jenkins, who teaches

at Mid-Buchanan High School.

“The whole process made me a better teacher.”

The pair also created an Aufbau board to help students understand the Aufbau principle of how electrons move to energy levels.

“The idea is to come up with creative solutions to bring science to everyone,” Dr. Hiley said. “We ignored the disability and focused on accessibility.” ■

# Campus Kudos

## Computer science students bring home the hardware

Students brought home a record number of awards from the Association of Information Technology Professionals National Collegiate Conference and Career Fair in St. Louis last spring. The 31 students earned two first-place awards, two second-place awards, two third-place and four honorable mentions in competitions at the conference.

Missouri Western's AITP students swept the awards in the Enterprise Systems category, with Alex Davis taking first, Trey Scarborough second, Elayne Colvin third, and Lisa Ye, honorable mention.

In the IT Research Posters category, the team of Drake Nelson, Ryan James, Evan Miller and Yacine Bensouna took first place for their Boy Scouts of America Jamboree Tent Reservation System. Josh Royle, Casi Paolillo, Isaiah Miller and Zachary Czarnecki took third for their Buchanan County Emergency Response Management System. Three graduate students

received honorable mention in the category: Darshan Rahashekar for a Specialty Industries project, and Hitesh Allam and Sanhith Chinta for Match by Sketch.

In the Web Application Development category, the team of Royle, Paolillo, Isaiah Miller and Czarnecki took second place for their emergency response project; while Nelson, James, Evan Miller and Bensouna received honorable mention for their BSA project.

In addition to competing, Missouri Western joined the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Missouri State University, and the AITP St. Louis and Capitol Chapters in co-hosting the event.

Connie Hecker, assistant professor of computer science, chaired the poster competition, which was new to the conference. J. Evan Noynaert, assistant professor of computer science, was one of the judges for the poster competition, which was sponsored by Herzog. ■

- Matt Scholz, a member of Missouri Western's Shotgun Club, competed in the ACUI Collegiate Clay Target national championships this past spring. In trap, he shot 96/100 targets, tying for 100th out of 820. In skeet, he shot 87/100 targets, placing him around 250th out of the 860. The following week, at a trap meet hosted by Missouri Western, he shot 100 out of 100, earning the High Over-All Award. Student Taylor Houx earned High Over-All for females at the home meet.
- Senior Sara Maxey was named Outstanding HIM Student at the Missouri Health Information Management Association during its annual meeting this past spring. The award recognizes the best of the new talent being trained in Missouri's health information programs. Recipients must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 and be involved in student activities, leadership and attendance at MoHIMA events.
- Congratulations to Missouri Western 2016-17 retirees:
  - Andrew McGarrell, library, 29 years
  - Dr. Catherine Lawson, Department of Economics, Political Science and Sociology, 21 years
  - Dr. Dale Krueger, Craig School of Business, 29 years
  - David Jones, physical plant, 14 years
  - Debbie Johnson, Campus Printing and Design Services, 28 years



Students in a sculpture class had their entry, Square Dome, accepted into the 2017 St. Joseph Sculpture Walk. The sculpture was set up downtown in May and will be on display for a year.



Student Aung Moe Kyaw from Myanmar (formerly Burma) was invited to perform in a special concert in Washington, DC in April 2017 in support of the fourth annual Myanmar Music Festival that was held in Myanmar in June. Kyaw is the only Myanmar-raised pianist currently studying music at an American university. Front, from left, Erina Iwasaki, associate director of the Myanmar Music Festival; Mrs. U Aung Lynn; and Min Lee. Back, from left, Derek Mitchell, former U.S. Ambassadors to Myanmar; Kyaw; U Aung Lynn, Myanmar Ambassador to the U.S.; Kimball Gallagher, founder and director of the Myanmar Music Festival; and Dr. Nathanael May, associate professor of music.

- Deborah Becker, Department of Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics, 15 years
- Joanne Katz, Department of Criminal Justice, Legal Studies and Social Work, 26 years
- Dr. Marilyn Hunt, Department of Communication and Journalism, 20 years
- Marsha Dolan, School of Nursing and Health Professions, 21 years
- Ronnie Hodge, Physical Plant, 13 years
- Missouri Western honored 10 at its annual ceremony in May 2017. Award recipients include:
  - Missouri Western Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence – Dr. Pam Clary, assistant professor of social work and director of the BSW program; Dr. Shauna Hiley, professor of chemistry; and Dr. Mark Mills, associate professor of biology.
  - Missouri Western Foundation Award for Staff Service to Students – Susan Garrison, director, Center for Academic Support.
  - Missouri Western Foundation Award for Staff Service to Colleagues – Hawley Rumpf, procurement card/employee reimbursement, Accounting Services.
  - Missouri Western Foundation Award for Staff Service to University – Stacy Turner, special credit programs coordinator, Western Institute.
  - Missouri Western Foundation Dr. James V. Mehl Award for Outstanding Faculty Scholarship – Dr. Pi-Ming Yeh, associate professor of nursing.
  - Dr. James J. Scanlon Award for Staff Service to the Community – Brett Esely, associate director of athletics for external relations.
- Dr. James J. Scanlon Award for Faculty Service to the Community – Dr. Teddi Deka, professor of psychology and Honors Program director.
- Student Employee Supervisor of the Year – Jessica Frogge, administrative coordinator, Student Government Association.
- The Student Government Association held their annual spring awards banquet, which included the swearing-in of incoming SGA president Kyle Fuson, a junior business major from St. Joseph, and vice president Reece Christensen, a sophomore political science major from Cameron, Missouri. Organizational award winners were as follows:
  - Most Outstanding Academic & Departmental Organization: The Wildlife Society
  - Most Outstanding Fraternity: Phi Delta Theta
  - Most Outstanding Sorority: Alpha Sigma Alpha
  - Most Outstanding Special & Social Interest Group: The Wildlife Society
  - Most Outstanding Faith-Based Organization: Catholic Newman Center
  - Glenn Marion Community Service Award: Phi Delta Theta
  - Best New Organization: Legal Studies Association
  - Most Active Organization: The Wildlife Society
  - Spirit of the Griffon Award: Alpha Sigma Alpha ■



# Faculty excellence: A

## Fulbright Scholar and Fulbright Specialist

Two legal studies faculty members were selected to teach as part of the U.S. Department of State's Fulbright Scholar Program. Joanne Katz, professor of legal studies, received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award to Vietnam to teach mediation and restorative justice this fall. David Tushaus, professor of legal studies, was appointed as a Fulbright Specialist to assist the University of The Gambia Faculty of Law with its clinical legal program this past summer.

Katz is teaching at the School of Law at Foreign Trade University in Hanoi. A Missouri Western faculty member since 1991, she has conducted training and workshops, received grants and published on the subject of restorative justice across the globe for almost two decades.



## State Association honors social worker

Dr. Pam Clary, assistant professor of social work and director of the BSW program, was named Missouri Social Worker of the Year by the state chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

The Social Worker of the Year Award honors a member of the NASW Missouri Chapter who exemplifies the best of the chapter's mission through extraordinary and specific professional accomplishment in areas such as leadership, advocacy, adherence to the Code of Ethics and promotion of the profession.

**"Growing up in the 1960s, Vietnam was on the television every night. I have long dreamed of going to visit this nation, where we see that our enemy can become our friend."**

- Joanne Katz, Fulbright Scholar

## Musician serves in Kazakhstan

Dr. Nathanael May, associate professor of music, travelled to Almaty, Kazakhstan for several events this past spring. He was a featured clinician for the five-day Central Asian Honors Music Festival, held at the Almaty International School, where he presented a series of lectures, workshops, lessons and a recital to high school students from the region.

He was also a guest lecturer at the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory, where he presented a solo recital of American music and gave a piano master class. At the Author School of Musician Jania Aubakirova, he served as a music education consultant. The school is a K-12 private school for gifted students.

## Professor earns Distinguished Service Award

Marsha Dolan, professor and coordinator of the Health Information Management program, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Missouri Health Information Management Association during its annual meeting this past spring.

The Distinguished Service Award is MoHIMA's highest honor. It is awarded to an individual whose record

in the HIM field over many years is truly exceptional.

Dolan, at Missouri Western since 1995, served as the coordinator of the health information program since 1997. She retired this past summer.





# hallmark of Missouri Western

## Two professors awarded NSF Grants

Dr. Corey White, assistant professor of psychology, received a \$566,000 CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation and Dr. Julie Jedlicka, assistant professor of biology, and faculty colleagues at Humboldt State University in California were awarded a \$249,424 NSF grant.

Dr. White's project, "Validating and Applying a New Class of Drift-diffusion Models for Investigating Individual Differences in Executive Control," will develop and test new mathematical models of executive function (thoughts, impulses, etc.) to provide new analytical tools for investigating individual differences in cognitive function.

The five-year grant will fund four \$3,200 scholarships for undergraduate students each year and also provide funding for travel to professional conferences to report on their research.

Dr. Jedlicka and her colleagues will study the roles of birds, insects and climate change in the ecology of coffee production in Kenya. The grant, "Birds, Beans and Bugs: Modeling a Warming Climate's Effect on the Natural Enemies Hypothesis," will allow the researchers and students from each university to travel to Kenya for five weeks each year for the next three years.

Justin Ross, a Bachelor of General Studies student from St. Joseph, will travel to Kenya in December as part of the research project.



## Mentor of the Year

Faculty athletics representative Dr. Regan Dodd was named 2017 MIAA Student Athlete Advisory Committee Mentor of the Year in June.

Dr. Dodd has served as Missouri Western's representative since 2015, and is the second winner from Missouri Western to receive the award in the past three years. Dr. Brenda Blessing received the distinction in 2015. Dr. Dodd was nominated by members of the Missouri Western Student Athlete Advisory Committee board who noted her infectious positive attitude and complimented her tireless efforts in mentoring student athletes. ■

**"Working abroad builds bridges and relationships with interesting people who can help you see the world in a much richer way."**

- Dave Tushaus, Fulbright Specialist

**"Students need to look at ecological problems from a global perspective. They'll have the opportunity to benefit from collaboration with U.S. and foreign mentors while being fully immersed in the research process, from field work to analysis to writing for publication and presentation."**

- Dr. Julie Jedlicka

### In the 2016-2017 Academic Year:

**83.9%** of full-time faculty with terminal degree.

**105** professors published articles, exhibited their works or held public performances.

**144** professors made presentations or conducted workshops at local, regional, national and international venues.

**[missouriwestern.edu/facultyexcellence](http://missouriwestern.edu/facultyexcellence)**

## Scholarship established in memory of consummate volunteer

The children of Jerene E. (Snuffer) Thomas recently established a scholarship – the Jerene E. Thomas Memorial Scholarship – in memory of their mother, who passed away May 11, 2017.

Her remarkable life included more than seven decades of volunteer work, beginning as a Brownie Scout leader and continuing with a variety of organizations, said Sherry Watkins, her oldest daughter. Thomas dedicated 55 years of her life (1960-2015), until she was 92, to volunteering with AFS (formerly the American Field Service) to manage its program for the entire state of Virginia.

In that role, she oversaw placement in Virginia households of thousands of foreign students (often as many as 40-50 in a given year) who attended a year of high school in America. She also selected American students to go abroad and matched them with host families overseas.

Thomas was selected as the winner of the Galatti Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service, the most prestigious commendation an AFS volunteer can receive.

She also “tirelessly, lovingly and enthusiastically supported her children’s interests,” Watkins said. Thomas was managing director and costume designer of one her daughter’s dance school, The Theresa d’Alessandro’s School of Theatrical Dance, for several years; was president of the Langley High School PTSA for several years and was awarded a lifetime membership; was a Brownie leader, Girl Scout troop leader, camp director for several summers, trainer, and member of local and international Girl Scout committees for the Girl Scouts of the National Capitol Area; was President of the Great Falls, Virginia Woman’s Club; and was active in the American Red Cross and the Great Falls Grange.

Thomas, who was a resident of Great Falls, Virginia at the time of her death, was born April 5, 1921 in Amity, Missouri and spent her early years in St. Joseph. She met her husband, Clayton James Thomas, in 1939 in a psychology class at the St. Joseph Junior College (predecessor to Missouri Western) and they were married in 1942.

“Mom and Dad met through the kindness of one of their professors,” Watkins said. “Mom and Dad had the highest test scores on a national standardized test, so, Mary Robinson, their psychology professor, introduced them.”

When Clayton Thomas passed away in 2000, his wife and children established the Clayton J. Thomas Scholarship at Missouri Western in his memory, as well. To date, 10 students have benefited from these scholarships.

“It is the hope of the five Thomas children that these and future scholarship will facilitate spreading the spirit and joy of learning throughout this country and, ultimately, the world,” Watkins said. ■

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### | *Donor appreciation reception* |

Joe '58 and Jean Mazur enjoyed the Missouri Western Foundation's Donor Appreciation Reception this past spring. The annual event features student projects and performances from academic departments across campus.





# New campus kiln for art students

When David Harris '79, associate professor of art, was a junior at Missouri Western, he and Robert Weidmaier '75 built a salt kiln that was used in the old ceramics house on the east side of campus. Fast forward almost four decades, and Harris has done it again.

This time, he and Patrick Larsen '15 built a wood-fired kiln on the west side of campus and fired it up for the first time in November 2016.

The kiln joins a variety of kilns on campus, including two kilns donated by the City of St. Joseph this past spring. Harris explained that each type of kiln produces a different finish, and students had been saying they would like to create wood-fired pieces.

So a few years ago, the Department of Art's student Clay Guild started "Cups for Kilns," making and selling coffee mugs in an effort to raise money for the kiln. When they had raised half the funds, the MWSU Foundation funded the rest as a special allocation. Total cost was between \$12,000 and \$14,000.

"I want students to learn a variety of techniques," Harris said. "It's good that they can try a lot of different things."

The kiln, boasting a stacking space approximately 4½ feet tall and 5 feet deep, stands on a concrete pad west of the interstate near the physical plant, where a dairy barn once stood. For



Patrick Larsen '15 adds wood to a new kiln on campus that he helped build with David Harris '79, associate professor of art. Larsen also rebuilt the Department of Art's salt kiln while he was a student.

the firing in November 2016 and April 2017, it held between 80 and 120 pieces.

The kiln heated up to approximately 2,500° F, which took about 12 hours to reach, stayed at that temperature for almost three hours, and then was allowed to cool down for at least two days. Each firing uses three-quarters of a cord of wood.

The first time the kiln was used, Harris said he wasn't happy with

the results, and the students were disappointed, too. But they made some changes in the spring firing, and students "were very, very pleased. I think the next one will be even better," Harris said.

Although the ceramics created in the spring weren't ready in time for the semi-annual student art sale, pieces from the next batch this fall will be offered in the December sale. ■

## Corrections

### Pool clock caption correction

The photo caption of the clock that overlooks the Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool contained incorrect information. The clock honors John A. Latosi who was an accomplished swimmer. During summers, he served as a lifeguard on Lake Erie, one of the Great Lakes subject to high waves, and he was also a member of the Swim Team at Syracuse University where he majored

in journalism. Latosi was the father of retired English professor, Dr. Elizabeth Latosi-Sawin, who made the donation of the clock in his memory.

### Yes, you can: BGS Degree

The article about Missouri Western's Bachelor of General Studies mentioned that the degree began in 2013, but actually, two people graduated with the degree in December 2012. ■



**Answer  
the call.  
Phone-a-thon**

**Calling kicks off September 14**

# ATLAS: All about success

Elaine Bryant '04, director of ATLAS (Advising, Tutoring, Learning and Academic Support), says she and her staff are here to make sure students have a successful college experience and persist to earn a degree, and office personnel recently began some new initiatives toward that end.

One was a pilot program that began in the spring 2017 semester to improve student retention – Pathways to Academic Student Success (PASS) – for first-time, full-time freshmen who started at Missouri Western in the fall 2016 semester and were placed on academic probation. Bryant explained that it is a voluntary program for students, but a great way to help them achieve academic success.

“We needed to address those students on probation in the fall who struggle a lot the next semester,” she said. “And we wanted to find a way to best focus our resources.”

As part of PASS, students meet with a tutor for two hours a week at the Center for Academic Support, attend a time management workshop, study three hours per week in the library (they slide their ID card to log their hours), and meet with their peer mentor in Student Success and a counselor in the Counseling Center. They are also assigned a staff guide to help them access campus resources.

The program offers opportunities for struggling students to meet with several staff members and fellow students, Bryant says, which gives them a chance to make connections.

“Sometimes they just need one person who cares. The big thing is getting them connected with others and with resources to help them succeed.”

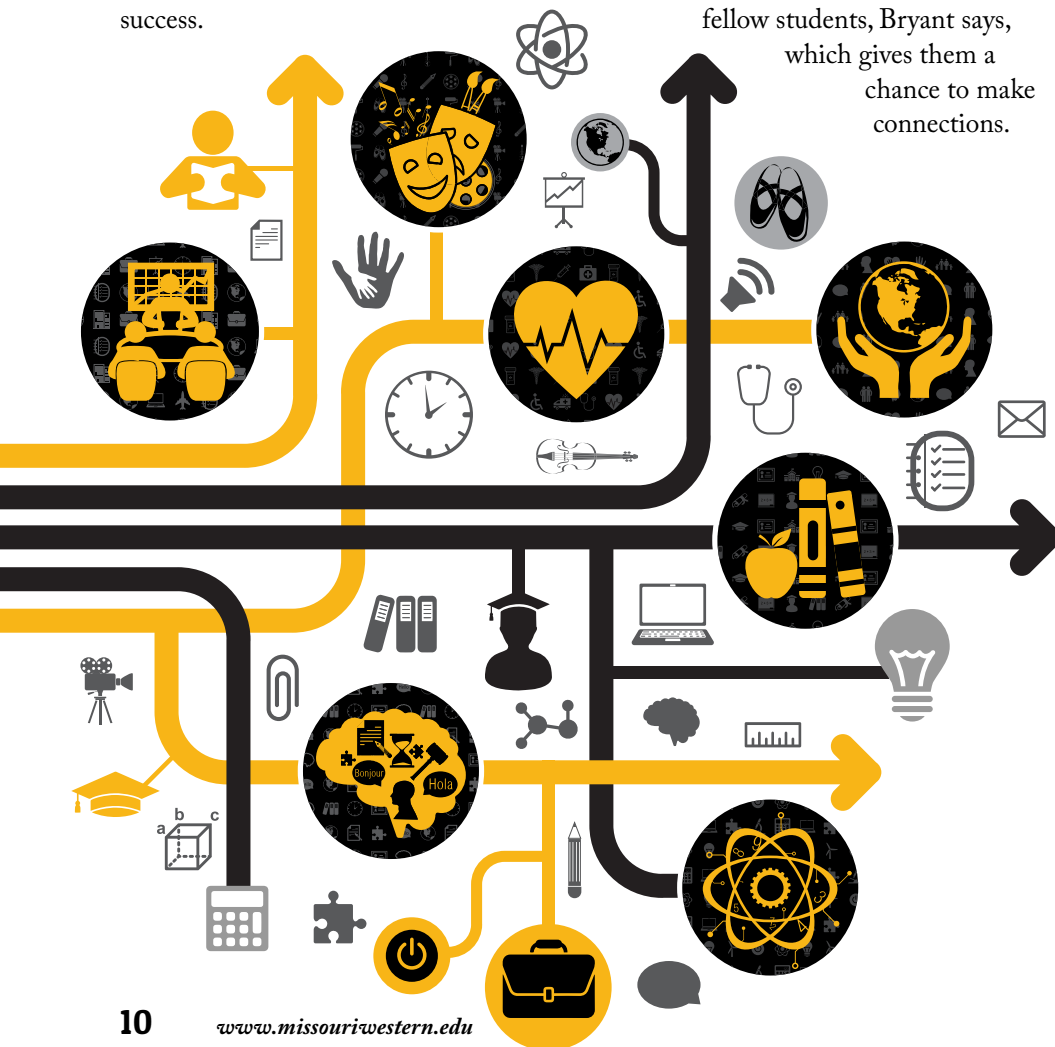
In its inaugural semester, 59 students were given the opportunity to participate. Of that number, 33 students, or 61%, earned a higher GPA in the spring compared to their fall GPA. Fifty-two of the students logged 1,052 hours in the library, 38 visited the Center for Academic Support for 223 hours, 47

## Colleges and social mobility

A recent New York Times article noted that colleges who enroll students from all economic backgrounds, which Missouri Western does, are doing a great job of educating students from low economic levels. Those students are graduating and landing good paying jobs, lifting them out of poverty.

One study on the website [equality-of-opportunity.org/college](http://equality-of-opportunity.org/college) compared student future earnings with their parents' incomes. The study found that open-access colleges (like Missouri Western) do a better job of moving students from lower-income classes into the middle class and beyond than selective, elite colleges.

Statistics also show that a college education is still an effective vehicle to a higher income. A New York Times article a few years ago, Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say, noted that earnings gap between four-year college graduates and those without a degree has soared in recent decades, according to Labor Department figures by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington. In fact, the gap reached a record high in 2013 (see chart next page). ■







**Business & Entrepreneurship**



**Education**



**Health Sciences & Health Careers**



**Humanities**



**Social & Behavioral Science**



**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics)**



**Visual & Performing Arts**

met with their peer mentor and 40 met with their staff guide.

"The pilot program was deemed a success," Bryant said. "And we have some ideas for changes for next year." She noted that the staff guides and peer mentors will definitely be a part of next spring's program since both ranked highly on student evaluations.

"Students told us, 'this saved me,'" Bryant said of PASS.

Several people worked on PASS for more than a year before it was rolled out, and Bryant gave credit to Susan Garrison, director of the Center of Academic Support, for her work on it.

Another initiative involved creating a larger role for student mentors. This fall, they were introduced to students in the University 101 classes, a three-credit seminar class for freshmen. The mentors are meeting one on one with each student in the class over the course of the semester.

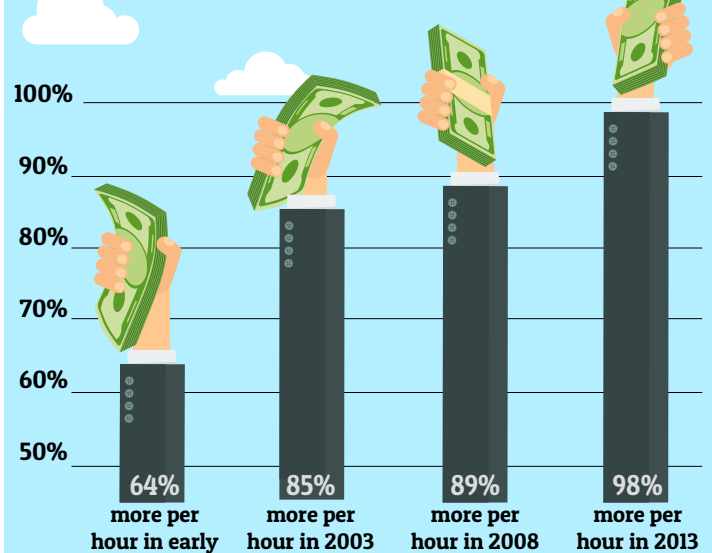
"If a freshman is having a problem with a teacher, sometimes they will tell a fellow student rather than talk to the teacher," Bryant said. "So we want to give them that opportunity with the mentors."

Also this fall, a Focus Area program for newly enrolled freshmen began. Focus areas are a cluster grouping of majors that have related courses and careers, and seven were developed to help students who are undecided about a major make a decision sooner and get connected to an academic department.

Freshmen enrolled in the University 101 classes were placed into a specific section based on their interest in a focus area. The seven areas include business and entrepreneurship; education; health sciences and health careers; humanities; social and behavioral science; science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and visual and performing arts.

With the University 101 sections divided by focus areas, it gives undecided students an opportunity to connect with like-minded students and also learn about choices for majors in the

## Americans with four-year college degrees made:



Based on an analysis of Labor Department statistics by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington

particular focus area, Bryant said, which hopefully will lead to choosing a major sooner. Students are also encouraged to meet with an advisor to discuss the focus areas that pique their interest so they can learn about degree requirements in a particular major.

She noted that if a student selects a major early in their college career and stays with it, they have a better chance of graduating in four years.

"With all our programs, we try to be proactive, not reactive," Bryant said. "There are so many wonderful people on campus who want to help students succeed." ■

**"Sometimes they just need one person who cares. The big thing is getting them connected with others and with resources to help them succeed."**

- Elaine Bryant, director of ATLAS



*Missouri Western's Study Away Office offers a variety of trips and exchange opportunities every year, and destinations in the past academic year included Panama, New York, England, Scotland, Norway, France, India, Ireland, China and Oregon. We recently spoke with professors and students who took advantage of the travel opportunities..*

## Ireland: Singing in the Emerald Isle

Dr. Elise Hepworth believes that choral programs should provide students an opportunity for an international experience, and the associate professor of music and director of choral studies made it happen this past spring. She traveled with 23 Missouri Western students to Ireland, performing in cathedrals and churches across the Emerald Isle.

"I want our students to say that they got everything they wanted out of the Missouri Western choral program," Dr. Hepworth said. "It was an amazing trip."

Along with performances in Dublin, Kilkenny and Killarney, the eight-day trip included tours of Kilkenny Castle, Trinity College, the Blarney Castle and Blarney Stone, the Rock of Cashel, House of Waterford Crystal, and a sheep farm. The second of the students' two performances in Killarney helped raise money for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

Dr. Hepworth said two of her students got engaged to each other at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, their first performance. The group told the engagement story at all their subsequent stops, and Waterford gave the couple a beautiful piece that was engraved with their names and the date of their engagement.

Lauren Thomson, a music education major from Faucett, Missouri, said she signed up for the trip as soon as she

heard about it. "I never would have dreamed I'd get to go to that part of the world," she said. "It was an opportunity I didn't want to miss."

Thomson said that tour guides at some of the historic sites who requested the group sing were brought to tears when the students performed the Irish Blessing. She said she loved sharing their music not only with audiences, but with fellow students.

"I loved watching the students experience all the history," Dr. Hepworth said. "I wanted them to learn more about the world and foster their curiosity. I wanted to open their eyes to life outside the United States."



Students in Ireland, top left and below; top right and middle, Global Viewpoint Griffons in China.





Thomson thinks that was achieved. "It was an unforgettable experience and something I will always look back on. The trip took me out of my comfort zone, and it was great." ■



## China: A Global Viewpoint

Because China's economy is one of the largest and one of the fastest growing, Dr. Mike Lane said it was a pretty easy decision about where to travel for Missouri Western's Global Viewpoint this past spring.

The dean of the Craig School of Business and his wife, Dr. Peggy Lane, co-taught the Global Viewpoint class and ended the semester traveling with 11 students on a 14-day trip to Shanghai, Xi'an and Beijing. The trip included visiting seven businesses and a host of historical sites such as the Great Wall, Yuan Gardens and Terra Cotta Warriors.

The Lanes had traveled to China two times in the past and knew it would be unique opportunity for the students.

"If you want to learn about business, you learn about China," Dr. Mike Lane said.

Courtney Kipping, who was on the trip,

is majoring in both marketing and management with minors in entrepreneurship and international studies. She said she hopes to someday have a career in international nonprofit marketing, so Global Viewpoint was a great opportunity to travel and learn new things.

"It was interesting to see different aspects of business in China, especially how their marketing techniques differ from those in the United States," she said. "One of the most fascinating parts was getting to see how rapidly China has grown economically."

The business visits included meeting with company principals and usually a tour. They went to international businesses with locations all over the world, United States companies with a Chinese location, and one company that was founded in China. That company, Dr. Mike Lane

*continued on next page*







continued from pg. 13

said, generated the most discussion among the students.

Josh Ross '17, who also traveled with the group, said he learned a lot at all the business visits, but he was

fascinated meeting with principals and touring the CityOn Shopping Center. "Every time we went into a business, I was thinking, 'This is great stuff.'"

Ross says he would love to own his own business someday, so the opportunity to visit such a fast-growing economy had him onboard for the China trip as soon as he found out about it.

The Craig School of Business plans a Global Viewpoint class and trip every two years. The program began in 1987 as New York Viewpoint and has included travel to Ecuador, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Poland and others.

"It was a good learning experience," Ross said. "I didn't want to leave."

"It really was a marvelous experience for the group," Dr. Peggy Lane said. "Other classes talk about global business, but these students got to experience it."

## France: Cami Pendleton

Cami Pendleton had such a great experience when she studied in France last year, she decided to make a video about Missouri Western's Study Away Office as an assignment in her Multimedia Authoring class last spring.

"I could have made it about anything, but I'm so passionate about study away," said the St. Joseph, Missouri native. "France was an incredible life-changing adventure."

The English technical writing major with minors in general business, literature and French studied in Saint-Étienne, France for a month during the



Cami Pendleton in Grenoble, France (top) and with friends she met on her study away trip.

summer of 2016. She lived with a host family and took French classes at Jean Monnet University.

"Everything I learned in the classroom came to life over there," Pendleton said.

She said she learned a tremendous amount about French culture, but also about other cultures by studying together and taking weekend trips with students in her class that were from around the world. In fact, a student from South Korea stayed with the same host family as she did.

Although Pendleton says the

food was incredible ("The French take their food seriously"), her most memorable takeaway was meeting new

friends and learning about their cultures.

For her video, which now resides on Missouri Western's Study Away page, she interviewed two other students who had studied overseas and Tammy (Glise) Norris '79, who coordinates the University's study away and exchange programs. She also asked professors to give advice for travelers in the language they teach on the video.

And her advice to fellow students who are considering foreign travel? Keep an open mind and take a lot of photos. "Don't be ashamed of having a selfie stick," she added with a laugh.

Pendleton says her French trip gave her the travel bug, and this past summer, she traveled to Norway and Italy to visit friends. "All I want to do now is travel." ■





# Missouri Western Magazine Readership Survey

## *Fall 2017*

Please let us know what you think!

To fill out this survey online, go to [missouriwestern.edu/magazine/survey](http://missouriwestern.edu/magazine/survey).

1. What percentage of information about Missouri Western would you estimate you receive from the magazine?  
☐ Less than 25%  
☐ Between 26% and 50%  
☐ Between 51% and 75%  
☐ Between 76% and 100%
2. How often do you typically read the Missouri Western Magazine?  
☐ Every issue  
☐ Most issues  
☐ Occasional issues  
☐ Never read it
3. If you do read it, how much of each issue do you read?  
☐ All of it  
☐ Most of it  
☐ Some of it
4. If you do read it, how much total time to you typically spend with an issue?  
☐ 60 minutes or more  
☐ 30 to 59 minutes  
☐ 10 to 29 minutes  
☐ 1 to 9 minutes
5. How long do you typically keep an issue?  
☐ More than one month  
☐ Up to one month  
☐ Up to one week  
☐ Discard immediately
6. Please mark the top three sections you like to read:  
☐ Campus News  
☐ Alumni News  
☐ Alumnnotes  
☐ Features  
☐ Sports  
☐ MWSU President's letter
7. What type of feature interests you the most? **Select one.**  
☐ Successful alumni  
☐ New MWSU programs  
☐ Sports-related  
☐ Successful students  
☐ Development/Giving
8. Do you prefer to read your magazine:  
☐ In print  
☐ Online  
☐ Both
9. If there were additional content online, how likely are you to go to the website and read it?  
☐ Not at all likely  
☐ A little likely  
☐ Moderately likely  
☐ Very likely
10. Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Please mail completed survey to**  
**Missouri Western State University**  
**Diane Holtz**  
**4525 Downs Drive**  
**St. Joseph, MO 64507**

*Thank you!*



# University fills workforce

Throughout its 102-year history, Missouri Western has never lost sight of its mission of preparing students for careers and providing work-ready employees for businesses and organizations.

A past News-Press/Gazette article about the St. Joseph Junior College noted that many people returned to college in the 1930s during the Great Depression, seeking higher education as a key to occupational success. And a look at notes from the 1950s and 1960s reveals that many courses and programs were added at the Junior College so that graduates could quickly obtain a job once they graduated.

Today, the University's current mission statement continues to reflect that focus, said Dr. Jeanne Daffron, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs: *Missouri Western State University is a learning community focused on students as individuals and as members of society. Missouri Western offers students at all stages of life the opportunity to achieve excellence in the classroom and beyond, as they prepare to be leaders in their work and in their communities. As a leader itself, Missouri Western is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the people and the region that it serves.*

"As a four-year regional university, workforce development is an important focus for us," Dr. Daffron said. "It has always been a core mission to be responsive to workforce needs."

Dr. Daffron sees Missouri Western's mission statement in action every day, as the University partners with the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, the school district, businesses and organizations on workforce development issues. She noted that additionally, several academic departments have advisory councils that are made up of business leaders in the region and are consistently asking for feedback on curriculum. All those partnerships, she said, help Missouri Western prepare students for graduation.

"We are continually thinking of the future. We want to know that what we are teaching is in tune with what employers are going to need," she said. "Our interactions with businesses are critical."

Academic departments also meet with students who are completing internships at area businesses to make sure what they are learning is lining up with what they need to know in the workplace, Dr. Daffron said. Additionally, graduate programs and new degree concentrations have been developed in response to area employers' input and regional workforce needs. A new MBA program in the Craig School of Business that started this fall is the most recent example.



Dr. Gary Clapp, coordinator of workforce development and grants procurement at Missouri Western, said a critical part of his job is meeting with businesses and industries across the region to discuss their needs.

"It's our responsibility to make sure we are listening to employers and employees," he said. "We want to match employee talent with employer needs."

Dr. Clapp is a member of the Northwest Workforce Development Board, which serves 18 counties in northwest Missouri, and the Heartland Foundation's e2 Pathways to Prosperity Action Team. During the 2015-16 school year, he taught the inaugural class for the Manufacturing Technician Level 1 certificate at Hillyard Technical Center to prepare students to work in manufacturing plants, and he is still involved in that certification program.

Missouri Western is also a member of the St. Joseph Workforce Development Alliance with the school district, Hillyard Technical





# development needs

Center, the United Way of Greater St. Joseph, local businesses and the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce.

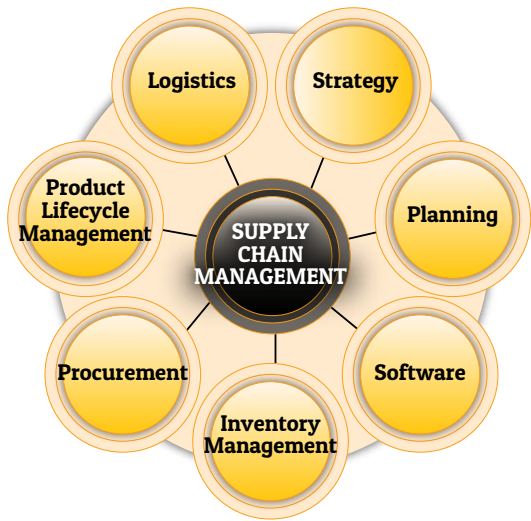
Kristie Arthur, director of workforce development for the Chamber, said the purpose of the alliance is to coordinate local training and educational initiatives to support a prepared and engaged workforce, which will in turn lead to successful local businesses. She says the creation of her position at the Chamber when she was hired in November 2015 speaks to the importance of workforce development to the region.

Arthur said that technological advances in manufacturing now require employees to have a higher skill level, and there is currently a shortage of employees with those skills. Recent Chamber initiatives to close the gap have included setting up tours of area manufacturing facilities for high school students to learn about what such jobs entail, and coordinating a Manufacturing Day for 300 high school students in October 2016. They also hold the My Success Event each year, an opportunity for high school sophomores to learn about the educational and technical skills necessary to pursue their career interests in the local economy.

In response to the employee shortage in the manufacturing fields, in addition to Dr. Clapp's work with the Manufacturing Technician Level 1 certificate, Missouri Western continues to explore new programs to address those needs. Dr. Jinwen Zhu, chair of the Department of Engineering Technology, said they work with regional employers to design curriculum and programs to teach the skills that employers tell them they are looking for.

Additionally, a concentration in supply chain management for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration began last fall in the Craig School of Business.

## Supply Chain Management New BSBA Concentration



Supply chain management is the study of the movement of materials, information and finances as they flow from supplier to manufacturer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer, explained Dr. Michael Lane, dean of the Craig School of Business. He added that supply chain management is one of the highest paid areas for professional positions both in the United States and globally.

The program was developed, Dr. Lane said, in response to requests from local and regional employers.

Dr. Daffron said that although most people think of manufacturing jobs when they hear “workforce development,”

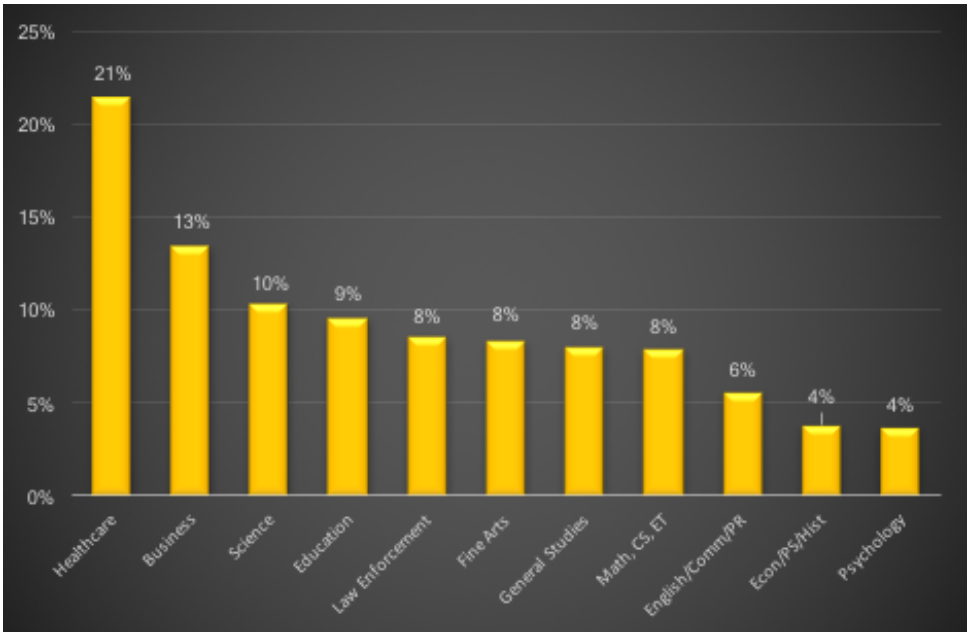
for Missouri Western, the term really encompasses a broad array of career fields, such as health care, law enforcement, entrepreneurship and social services; and the University partners with businesses and organizations in those fields, as well.

The chart at left shows the variety of degrees earned by students who graduated from the University in 2016.

“We need all our students to be prepared to succeed as employees and we want to do what helps the region be successful,” Dr. Daffron said.

*continued on next page*

## Missouri Western Graduates 2016



## New options and agreements prepare students for careers

Two initiatives in the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation mean greater opportunities for students and better preparation for their careers. This fall, the department began offering a new concentration for its physical education degree – Personal and Commercial Fitness. And, department personnel recently signed articulation agreements with the University of Nebraska Omaha and Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri for early review processes for Missouri Western students who plan to



pursue an advanced degree.

### New concentration

Dr. Justin Kraft, associate professor and department chair, said the new concentration was created with their graduates' careers in mind. For those who are interested in being a fitness professional, such as a personal trainer or working in corporate wellness, the concentration allows for more targeted content because it offers courses in management, marketing and sales; "all essential skills within the fitness industry," Dr. Kraft said.

Dr. Kraft said he wasn't in the department very long when a recent graduate in the exercise science program told him that he was well prepared for the exercise aspect of his career, but he wished he had some background in marketing and communication, and Dr. Kraft has never forgotten that.

"Personal trainers need to market themselves; they are basically managing their own business, and they need business skills. Now students will learn the managerial skills they need to be successful."

He said the concentration was also designed to make it easy to pair with a minor in Recreation/Sport Management, General Business or Entrepreneurship. When students

complete the courses they need for the concentration, Dr. Kraft said they would be halfway to one of those minors, which will "further enhance their skills and employability," he said.

Dr. Kraft noted that the new concentration will also open up new avenues for careers in sales for medical or exercise equipment.

### Articulation agreements

The department's articulation agreements with two universities are also a great benefit to students, Dr. Kraft said. Qualified students who plan to pursue a Doctor of Physical Therapy from Rockhurst University or a Master of Arts in Athletic Training from University of Nebraska Omaha now will know a lot earlier if they are accepted into those programs. The two universities will also hold a minimum of two class seats each year for Missouri Western students.

"This gives students a level of certainty early in their senior year," he said.

Along with the agreements, the department also changed its curriculum for students in the health and exercise science program. Prerequisites for getting into a graduate program for physical or occupational therapy are now built into the program as electives.

"We see a lot of students who are interested in these graduate programs," Dr. Kraft said. "These agreements give them a clear path to that, and they know what they need to do. We've cleared the hurdles."

## Collegiate entrepreneurs

Who said, "I can't help but think about designing things and coming up with ways to make things better"? Thomas Edison? Nikola Tesla? No, Missouri Western student Justin Turner, who will graduate this fall with a biology degree, minors in business and entrepreneurship, and his own business that he started this year.

His friend, Michael Babbitt, who graduated this past spring with a degree in personnel psychology, says he is fascinated by people and enjoys creating and building. He is involved in two entrepreneurial initiatives.

Welcome to the world of Turner and Babbitt, entrepreneurial Griffons who have two inventions, three current businesses, one past business, and a wealth of enthusiasm and initiative between them.

Turner, from St. Joseph, recently developed the technology to produce high resolution photos from a microscope slide, and he sells large, spectacular canvas prints of epithelial tissue, glandular tissue, mammalian skin and more. He is currently applying for a patent for his technique.

On the day I interviewed him about his business, Elegant



Epithelium, Turner had sold a canvas print to a customer in Japan, his first global sale. (In case you're wondering, epithelium is the cellular covering of internal and external surfaces of the body, including the lining of vessels and other small cavities, according to an online medical dictionary.)

Turner's innate talent for invention and design is not new.

When he was a sophomore, a lab in his genetics class inspired him to improve on a design he had found online. He designed a superior adapter and manufactured the components to build it with a 3-D printer; the new device enabled students to take photos of slides with their smart phones. Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology and department chair, purchased 12 of the adapters for students.

Turner earned early admission into medical school thanks to agreements

## elegant epithelium



that Missouri Western has in place, but after one semester, he decided to return to Missouri Western and add business and entrepreneurship to his education. His return to Missouri Western brought him in contact with Babbitt.

Babbitt, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, is the owner of Black Swan Social, which helps businesses with digital marketing and advertising; and founder and co-owner of CheckMeOut.Business, which creates videos for businesses.

"Everyone is competing for everyone else's attention, and little things can make a big impact," he says. "We bring companies up to the 21st century."

And the company's name? Babbitt says he was intrigued by the story of the black swan when he heard the term used by author Chris Voss. No one in Europe ever believed a black swan existed until Dutch explorers saw them in Australia in the late 1600s.

"Black swans were the 'unknown unknowns,' and I think social media is like that," Babbitt said. "Unearthing facts can be a game-changer, and that's motivating to me."

Babbitt played baseball for two years at North Central Missouri College in Trenton before transferring to Missouri Western. He played two years as a Griffon and called his four years on collegiate baseball teams the "best time of his life."

The entrepreneurs both say they appreciate the support they received from Annette Weeks '87, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship. They also gained a lot of information when they attended workshops on campus as part of the center's Entrepreneurship Week this past spring.

Turner said he attended a panel that featured three successful alumni entrepreneurs – Brent Porlier '82, Wayne Chatham '90 and Zack Workman '74 – and he was inspired by their message. Babbitt appreciated the opportunity to hear Missouri Western benefactor and entrepreneur Steve Craig speak to students and answer their questions.

"The whole week was filled with amazing information through and through," Babbitt said. "It was a full-on boot camp of business."

As one entrepreneur has already graduated and the other is close to finishing his degree, both say they plan to continue developing and expanding their businesses.

"I learned from playing baseball that you need to stay on your path no matter what, and that failures are just a part of it," Babbitt said. "I look up to people who tell me to not be afraid to make mistakes." ■

## Franchise Program



Steve Craig, at the podium, introduces the 2017 winners of the Craig School of Business's entrepreneurship program: Jacob Blaylock and Jorge Belcher. Blaylock was awarded a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory Store in Petaluma, California. Belcher will be given the program's first non-franchise opportunity. Support from the program and the Craig School's Center for Entrepreneurship will help him expand a vehicle sales business he started in 2013. Blaylock and Belcher join 21 other program alumni who have opened 29 businesses in 10 states, with net sales of over \$17 million and 376 employees.

# Spring 2017 sports wrap

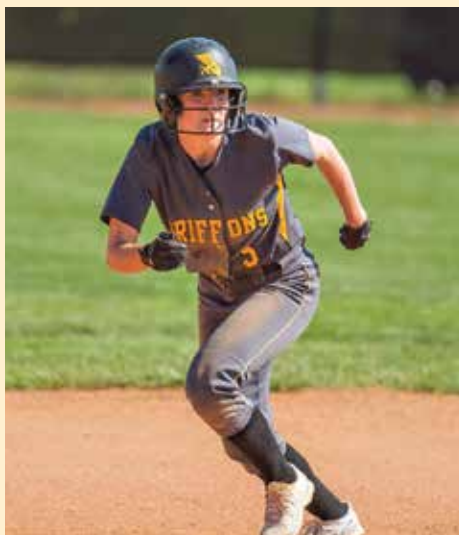
It was an unprecedented spring for Griffon Athletics; four of five competing teams were represented in NCAA Division II postseason play: baseball, softball, women's golf and men's golf. Overall, 23 spring sports student athletes were named All-MIAA with four all-region selections, two CoSIDA Academic All-District selections and one CoSIDA Academic All-America selection.

## Softball

The softball team under Coach Jen Trotter made a program-record fourth straight trip to the NCAA Central Region tournament and wrapped up its season with a 38-20 record.

Morgan Rathmann was named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America second team. It was the first all-American honor for Rathmann, who left the program as its all-time leader in hits (68), runs (43), stolen bases (23) and triples (11). She also broke the MIAA career triples record this past season and was a four-time All-MIAA selection. Rathmann was named first team All-MIAA as a junior and senior.

*Softball Griffon Morgan Rathman*



*One of David Glaude's eight home runs this season.*

## Baseball

When the spring issue of the Missouri Western Magazine went to press, it reported a 15-15 record for Coach Buzz Verduzco's baseball team spring season. But the Griffons pulled off a mid-season rally and finished second in the MIAA regular-season standings and qualified for their second straight NCAA Central Region tournament. The team finished the season 32-22.

Seniors Nick Gawley and David Glaude were named 2017 ABCA/Rawlings second-team All-Region. Gawley led Missouri Western on the season with a .364 batting average, 79 hits, 46 runs scored, 39 stolen bases and 18 doubles. His 39 stolen bases were a single-season record, third best in Division II and sixth in all NCAA divisions. He also ranked second on the team with 36 RBIs and 21 walks.

Glaude earned his second straight ABCA/Rawlings All-Region honor as he led the team with 114 total bases, 47 RBIs, 29 walks and eight home runs.



*Women's golfer Chong Yong*



*Men's golfer Patrick McCarthy*

He was second to Gawley with a .340 batting average, 73 hits, 44 runs scored and 13 doubles. Glaude also broke school career records for home runs, RBIs, doubles and walks this season.





## Women's Golf

Women's golf also made its second straight NCAA regional appearance with freshman Chong Yong qualifying for the NCAA National Championships as an individual. She clinched her spot in a sudden death playoff. Yong finished nationals tied for 58th with a four-round total of 327. She was selected as All-MIAA second team, finishing in the top 10 in four of her six tournaments. Greg Dillon is the women's golf coach.

## Men's Golf

For the first time in the history of the men's golf program, a freshman qualified for NCAA postseason regional play – Patrick McCarthy. He shot a season-best 3-under-par 69 in his final round of the Super Regional. McCarthy finished the tournament with a 213, another season best for him. Men's golf is coached by Greg Dillon.

## Tennis

Although women's tennis finished the season 5-17 overall, the team had a strong finish, winning 8-1 against Nebraska Wesleyan University. The team is coached by Shawn Becker. ■

# New athletics director named

Josh Looney is the University's new director of athletics, replacing Kurt McGuffin, director of athletics since 2011, who became director of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Looney, who was director of athletics at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania, began his duties in August.

Looney served as the associate director of NCAA Division II from 2012 to 2015. He worked for the Kansas City Chiefs from 2006 to 2012, which included spending time on Missouri Western's campus for the team's summer training camp.

"We are thrilled to be joining the Missouri Western family," Looney said. "The opportunity to help shape the future vision of Griffon athletics is an honor. I look forward to working with all of our fans and constituents to build an athletic program that is recognized for excellence in the classroom, in competition and within the community."

As director of athletics at East Stroudsburg, he oversaw 20 NCAA

Division II sports. Under his leadership, student athletes had a grade point

average of 3.22 last year, the highest in department history, with 40 percent earning Athletic Director's Honor Roll honors by earning a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher.

He led the athletic department to the school's highest Pennsylvania State Athletics Conference all-sports trophy finish

in 21 years. Annual athletic scholarships awarded increased 22 percent, and the school secured its largest athletics unrestricted cash corporate sponsor.

Looney earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, which is a member of Missouri Western's MIAA Conference. He holds an MBA with an emphasis in organizational leadership from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and is nearing completion on a doctorate in Interdisciplinary Education from Creighton University in Omaha.

Looney and his wife, Jenna, have one daughter, Parker. ■



Josh Looney

# Hall of Fame class announced

Six individuals and one team will become the newest inductees into the Missouri Western Athletics Hall of Fame. The Rogers Pharmacy Hall of Fame banquet will be held Oct. 20 with the Hall of Fame game on Oct. 21 against Fort Hays State.

The class of 2017 includes the 1981 men's basketball team; Chris Ball, football; Clint Gilliland, baseball; Nick Jenkins, men's basketball; Gijon Robinson, football; Lindsey Palaia, volleyball; and Patsy Smith '95, athletics administration. For more information, call (816) 271-4481. ■

## From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

It is a great honor to serve as the Alumni Association president. A little about me: I am originally from Boonville, Missouri. I loved every minute of my four years at Missouri Western (1996-2000) and still have many close relationships from those days. I now live in St. Joseph with my little boy and work at the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce. I am very excited to represent all alumni this year and work with the board to make it a great year.

It is a challenging time for all Missouri universities due to budget cuts. Now more than ever we need to do more with less, and we need our alumni to be successful. We need your voice, your time, your stories, your talent and your resources. Please remember your roots, and when asked to consider giving back, we hope you will consider it and help to continue a strong legacy for Missouri Western.



Natalie Redmond '00

I am excited to continue the great work we have been doing. I would like to continue on Mary Vaughan's goal from last year and work to get more alumni involved in the University and events planned by the Association. Also, I want to get feedback from our chapters and

members to make sure we are offering events that alumni want to participate in and leveraging events already taking place on campus.

Please watch for upcoming events; we have a great year planned. I want to personally invite each of you home for Homecoming the weekend of Oct. 27-28.

This is your Association. Near or far, we want you to feel proud of your time at Missouri Western and a part of the Alumni Association. If you would like to share ideas or give feedback, I can be

## Coming Events

**Sept. 12** | R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues presents Martin Luther King III, 10 a.m., Looney arena, "Embracing the Ideals of Freedom, Justice and Equality," free.

**Sept. 23** | Family Day

**Oct. 21** | Hall of Fame football game

**Oct. 22-28** | Homecoming Week (see p. 24-25)

**Nov. 19-26** | Fall Break, no classes/ campus closed

**Dec. 16** | Commencement, Looney Complex

**Dec. 24-Jan. 1** | Campus Closed

**Jan. 16** | Spring 2018 semester begins

reached at [redmond@saintjoseph.com](mailto:redmond@saintjoseph.com). I look forward to hearing from or seeing you soon.

With Griffon Pride,

*Natalie Redmond*

Natalie Redmond '00

President, Alumni Association

## An email from an alumna

*Thank you for the "Looking back-student publications" article that was printed in the recent Missouri Western magazine. I enjoyed that glimpse into the history of some of the publications where I first learned how to edit, do design and layout, and perhaps most importantly, write. The article reminded me, too, of some of the staff members with whom I had the opportunity to work while I was a student at Missouri Western. From 1983-85, I worked on the Griffon News, first as a writer, then as news editor and then as editor-in-chief, and I also did editing and production work for "Icarus" for a year. After*

*Icarus became "Mochila Review," I contributed a couple of short stories, one of which was awarded a prize named in John Gilgun's honor.*

*Alas, the article mentions that a student, Sue Ferguson, submitted the winning entry for the renaming of the college's literary magazine. While it's true that I submitted the winning entry for the renaming, I was not a student by the time the renaming of "Icarus" came about. I had graduated in 1985, with a B.A. in English-Writing (Journalism minor), and had gone on to become a rather unremarkable journalist before fading into obscurity.*

*I realize the writer of the piece had a lot of information to break down for such a short article, and the least of his or her concerns was the task of discerning whether a name on a piece of paper needed the adjective student or alum to further define it. Just the same, it would be great to make note somewhere that Ferguson was actually an alum at the time of the contest. Thanks.*

- Sue Ferguson '85

**Editor's note: Thank you, Sue, for setting the record straight! ■**



# MIM's the word for families

It seems to be all in the family for one of the Craig School of Business's graduate degrees. In the Masters in Information Management – Enterprise Resource Planning program, a pair of brothers recently graduated and a husband-and-wife team are currently enrolled.

For Denice '14 and Tyson '14 Hector, enrolling in one of Missouri Western's programs was nothing new. The two had both earned some college credits from Missouri Western right out of high school, and had always wanted to finish. So they enrolled together as nontraditional students in 2006. They worked full-time and attended college part-time, earning their bachelor's degrees in 2014 – she in marketing and he in economics.

Denice, who has worked at the Belt Sports Complex since 1999, said Dr. Peggy Lane, former director of the MIM-ERP program, spoke about the program in one of Denice's business classes shortly before she graduated.

Tyson, who has worked at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. in St. Joseph for 11 years, said BIVI uses enterprise resource planning software so he was interested in the master's program, which uses SAP.

"I thought it was a good opportunity to learn more," he said. "The graduate program has given me an understanding of how everything is tied together and how to implement it. Knowing the background of SAP has been beneficial."

In the first class they took together, Project Management, Dr. Lane had them work in separate groups, but they were on the same team in their second course.

Although they said the dual schooling hasn't put a strain on their relationship, it has been a "balancing act" between work, school and home, which includes 6 year-old twin boys. Last semester, Denice had



Denice '14 and Tyson '14 Hector



Marcus Sutton '13/'15



Michael Sutton '16

night classes on Monday and Thursday, and Tyson on Wednesdays. "We do the shuffle," Denice said with a laugh.

Denice passed the SAP certification test this past summer and will graduate in December. She is thinking about continuing on to earn an MBA, which Missouri Western began offering this

fall. She would only need to take five more classes to earn the second master's degree.

Tyson hasn't taken courses every semester, so he has three more semesters to go. "But I don't stop something once I start it."

And just to keep up the family tradition, daughter Madison is currently working on her undergraduate degree at Missouri Western.

Marcus Sutton '13/'15 began the MIM-ERP program immediately after graduating from Missouri Western with an undergraduate degree in political science. He earned his master's in December 2015. His brother, Michael '16, who is two years older than Marcus, graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2011 and earned a graduate degree from Missouri Western a year after his brother.

"I always wanted to get my master's," Michael said, "and my brother recommended this program."

The Suttons, who grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri, just had a couple of MIM courses together in Michael's first year, but Michael said he appreciated that his brother was a good resource for information when he first started the program.

Both were pleased with the education they received.

"The professors were second to none. They were experts in their fields," Marcus said.

Marcus began working for Cerner in Kansas City, Missouri as a solutions analyst a few months after he graduated with his master's.

Michael believes the graduate degree helped him gain a lot more job interviews after graduating, and, in what seemed to be a perfectly natural next step, he was hired by Cerner and began working there this past summer. ■



## **Tuesday, October 24** **Griffon Employee Alumni Breakfast**

Enjoy breakfast with fellow alumni who work at Missouri Western and register to win prizes!

7-8 a.m., Blum Union Food Court  
**#GriffonAlumEmployee**

## **The Griffula Blood Drive**

Help us beat Northwest Missouri State in our annual blood drive competition.

All day, Blum Union.  
Can't get to campus? Consider giving blood where you are.  
**#GriffulaBloodDrive**

## **Wednesday, October 25** **Support a Griffon Business Day**

From pretzel shops, restaurants and bars to paint and tire stores, Griffons own and manage businesses all over the country. Visit or shop a Griffon Business today! For a list of participating Griffon Businesses, go to [www.missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming)  
**#SupportGriffonBusiness**

## **The Griffula Blood Drive**

Help us beat Northwest Missouri State in our annual blood drive competition.

All day, Blum Union.  
Can't get to campus? Consider giving blood where you are.  
**#GriffulaBloodDrive**

## **Sunday, October 22** **Forever Griffons Luncheon –** **A Howlin' Good Time!**

Join alumni from the 1940s to the 1970s as we celebrate the class reunions for the classes of 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972 and 1977. All alumni who graduated 40 or more years ago are welcome. There will be entertainment, and the stadium will be open for tours.

11:30 a.m. arrival, lunch at noon  
Hall of Fame Room in Spratt Memorial Stadium (Park in Lot I, watch for signs).  
**#ForeverGriffons**

## **Monday, October 23** **Black & Gold Day**

Griffon alumni all over the world are encouraged to reach out to fellow alumni living in your area. Go to lunch, dinner or have a social hour and send us your group photos. Promote Missouri Western all day by wearing your black and gold or your Griffon Wear.  
**#Black&GoldDay**



*football game*



## Thursday, October 26

### Legacy Day

We want to help you create your Griffon Legacy by giving back to your alma mater. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 in 24 hours. Over the last decade, more than 6,800 alumni have graduated from Missouri Western. If each one gave just \$5 that day, we would more than triple our goal! Visit [missouriwestern.edu/legacyday](http://missouriwestern.edu/legacyday). #Griffonlegacy

### The Griffula Blood Drive

Help us beat Northwest Missouri State in our annual blood drive competition.

All day, Blum Union.

Can't get to campus? Consider giving blood where you are.

#GriffulaBloodDrive

## Friday, October 27

### Alumni Golf Outing

9:30 a.m. Registration

10 a.m. Shotgun start

Fairview Golf Course

\$45 per person or \$180 per team of four



parade

### Alumni Awards Banquet

All alumni and friends are invited to celebrate our award winners and introduce the new Great Griffon and Student Leadership awards.

5:30 p.m. Reception

6:15 p.m. Dinner and Program

Fulkerson Center

\$30 per person or \$180 for a table of 6

- Distinguished Alumni Award: James Sheehan '78



arts, beats & treats

- Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) Award: John Klindt '11
- Herb '35 & Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University: Tom and Patsy '95 Smith
- Distinguished Faculty Award: Dr. Jeff Poet
- Great Griffon Awards:
  - Craig School of Business* – Corky Marquardt '84; *Liberal Arts and Sciences* – Mary Beth Porter '99; *Nursing and Health Professions* – Diane Waddell '66 & '91; *Professional Studies* – LaShaundra Randolph '03; *School of Fine Arts* – Marrita Black '75.
- Student Leadership Awards: *Clifford Hughes '55 Award* – Bre'Auna Watkins '17; *International Student of the Year* – Déir Montiel Dominguez '17; *Graduating Student of the Year* – Reyhan Wilkinson '17.

## Saturday, October 28

### Future Griffons Costume Breakfast

8 a.m.

American Red Cross

401 N. 12th St.

### Parade

9 a.m., parade begins at 22nd and Frederick

### Arts, Beats & Treats

Free family fun – crafts, activities and more!

10:30 a.m., Remington Hall

### Free Tailgate

11 a.m., Parking Lot H

### Football Game –

#### Griffons vs. Washburn

**University Ichabods**, the battle for the Legend of Griffon Hollow!

2 p.m., Craig Field at

Spratt Memorial Stadium



family fun

# Alumni listen and help

It's all about helping people.

Drew Fisher '11, Daniel Heidtbrink '13, Denise Price '10 and Jacob Wharton '12 work in four different areas of the counseling field, but they say the opportunity to help people is the main reason they do what they do.

## Drew Fisher '11

For Drew Fisher, the shingle is up and the counselor is in. The Weston, Missouri native opened a full-time counseling practice in St. Joseph this past spring.

Fisher, who was director of counseling at Northwest Missouri State University's former Missouri Academy, always knew he wanted to have a private practice. So in February

2016, in addition to his full-time job, he began working in the evenings for a local counseling center in Frederick Towers. That experience helped him learn the business side of running a private practice, he said, and in the spring



Drew Fisher '11

of 2017, he moved to a new space on Beck Road and began working full time on his own.

His broad range of clients include adolescents, terminally ill patients and married couples. As a former Marine, he said he is also pleased to have some veterans among his clients.

"It's rewarding to meet people, get to know them and help them," Fisher said.

When he was a child, his mother was a nontraditional student at Missouri Western, so enrolling after his service to the Marines seemed like a natural choice. The psychology major believes Missouri Western did a good job of preparing him for graduate school, and he appreciated his research experience in the department.

After earning a master's in counseling and guidance degree from University of Missouri-Kansas City right after Missouri Western, he was hired at Northwest in 2014, working with high-achieving high school students.

**"I like this quotation**

**from Friedrich**

**Nietzsche: 'To live is**

**to suffer, to survive is**

**to find some meaning**

**in the suffering.'"**

Drew Fisher '11

"My goal has always been to make the world a better place. I want to help people cope with hard times, to alleviate their pain and help them make a more productive life for themselves."

## Daniel Heidtbrink '13

As a freshman at Missouri Western, Daniel Heidtbrink said he was "about as undecided as you could be," but he did know that he wanted to work with people and help them. He decided to double major in sociology and psychology, and a counseling class in one of his last semesters helped him determine his career.



Daniel Heidtbrink '13

"Midway through the class, I started asking professors and Dave Brown '75 (director of Missouri Western's counseling center) about the counseling field," Heidtbrink said.



## | Alumni Profile |

**“If your passion is working with people and you’re looking at the field of counseling, go for it.”**

Daniel Heidtbrink '13

After earning a master’s in counseling with a mental health emphasis from MidAmerica Nazarene University in 2015, Heidtbrink, a native of Ridgely, Missouri, started working for Comprehensive Counseling Solutions, Inc. in St. Joseph.

Most of his clients are juveniles from the

Buchanan County Juvenile Office. He enjoys that age group, but says it can be challenging because the counseling is mandated for most of them. He has worked with some of the juveniles for more than a year.

“What I enjoy the most are the moments when you are working with someone and they ‘get it.’ They have an insight and you can see that switch flipped. That makes it all worthwhile.”

### Denise Price '10

Denise Price returned to Missouri Western as a nontraditional student with a long-term goal of becoming a school counselor. After earning her Bachelor of English Secondary Education and teaching for four years, she earned her counseling degree and today is a counselor at Edison



Denise Price '10

**“In the end, only kindness matters. People need to be shown that they matter and that there is someone out there who cares.”**

Denise Price '10

Coming back to school as an older adult was daunting at first, Price said, but her professors encouraged and supported her, and helped her believe in herself. “They empowered me.”

And now, she says, her job is everything she hoped it would be.

“I love coming here every single day. I love being their Mother Goose.”

Elementary School in St. Joseph.

“It really is my calling,” she says. “I want to be there for someone who needs someone who cares.”

Nicknamed Mother Goose at Edison because of her nurturing spirit, Price graduated from MidAmerica Nazarene University with general counselor and school counselor options. She is currently working on certification for trauma counseling.

### Jacob Wharton '12

Jacob Wharton moved to St. Joseph from Gulfport, Mississippi in time to complete his senior year at Central High School. He said he wasn’t really thinking about college until a cousin, who was attending Missouri Western, told him he should think about a psychology degree.

“He said I was really good with people,” Wharton said. “So I took a couple of classes and really enjoyed it. I thought, ‘I can do this.’”

Today, Wharton is a behavioral health clinician in the Mental Health Unit at Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph. He was hired in 2015 after earning a master’s in

**“No matter what you’re faced with, never give up. Always remember that eventually things will get better.”**

Jacob Wharton '12

*continued on next page*

continued from pg. 27

counseling and guidance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

When patients are admitted to his unit, he says it is probably the lowest point of their lives, and he is glad he can be there for them.

"I ask them where they want to be in their lives and how

can we get there. How can we make this better? I want to help them find a reason to live."

Since his unit offers short-term care, part of his job is helping his patients find the resources they need for more long-term help and getting them into treatment programs.

"I've always been the type of person that

people come to for advice. It's easy for me to relate to people, I've always liked to help." ■



Jacob Wharton '12

## Dave Brown '75: Guidance

When counselors graduate with a master's degree, they obtain a provisional license and must work 3,000 hours under supervision to earn the license. Dave Brown '75, director of Missouri Western's counseling center, has supervised or is currently supervising four alumni counselors (see "Alumni listen and help") as they worked/work toward licensure.

The four counselors, Drew Fisher '11, Daniel Heidtbrink '13, Denise Price '10 and Jacob Wharton '12, have high praise for Brown and appreciate his supervising them. Fisher has completed his hours and is a licensed professional counselor, and the other three continue to meet with Brown.

"Dave is so flexible and easygoing, he makes it easy, and I look forward to our weekly meetings," Wharton said.

"He provides emotional support and advice," Price said. "He's phenomenal and a great supervisor."

"I think I hit the jackpot with Dave," Heidtbrink added.

"I'm a counselor today because of Dave," Fisher said. "He was very instrumental in developing me professionally. I had great guidance from him." ■



## Kelly Cochran '16: Extraordinary researcher

Throughout his teaching career at Missouri Western, Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology and department chair, conducted research with too many students to count, and has helped many of them publish the results of their research. But Dr. Eckdahl says a recent alumna's accomplishments stand out.

Kelly Cochran '16, a native of Buckner, Missouri, spent two summers conducting research at a biomedical research institution in Maine and co-authored an article that was published in *Science*.

"Kelly achieved an undergraduate research publication record that is not only among the best in the history of Missouri Western, but among undergraduates throughout the country," Dr. Eckdahl said.

He calls *Science* "the most prestigious science research journal in the country."

Cochran, who graduated in spring 2016 with a B.S. in Biology with a health science concentration, says her accomplishments all started with her synthetic biology research as an undergraduate with Dr. Eckdahl in 2014.

"I started out very timid in the lab, checking all of my work with Dr. Eckdahl and asking his permission before every move I made. By the end of the summer, I was walking in and telling him what my plans for the day were and briefing him later," she said. "I grew so much as a researcher and found an independence and creativity that I had never encountered before. I felt so much joy in the lab and in the process that I craved another experience the next summer."

That experience came about when Cochran was accepted into the Jackson Laboratory's Summer Student Program in Bar Harbor, Maine, where she worked with Dr. Pete Williams on

eye research. The program was her top choice and the most competitive program among her applications.

Although she no longer qualified for the laboratory's research program the following summer, Dr. Williams and his wife invited her to stay with them and continue the research.

The article in *Science*, "Vitamin B3 modulates mitochondrial vulnerability and prevents glaucoma in aged mice," described their findings.

"Those were some of the best summers of my life, and I made lifelong friends of my boss and his wife," Cochran says.

Before her initial summer of research, Cochran said the John Lab at Jackson Laboratory had used RNA sequencing to find the pathways that were injured in a mouse model of glaucoma. Their findings, she said, pointed to mitochondrial dysfunction as a major cause of retinal cell and optic nerve death, hallmarks of glaucoma.

When the John Lab analyzed the RNA sequencing data, researchers found a drug known to intercept the pathways harmed by glaucoma, a vitamin B3-derivative, nicotinamide. After a series of preliminary experiments, they decided there was enough evidence to put their mice affected by glaucoma on nicotinamide. The drug worked; it protected retinal cells and the optic nerve from glaucoma and restored retinal cell mitochondrial health.

"One of the most exciting findings is that mice given the drug after they started showing signs of glaucoma ended up being just as protected as mice who were given early treatments before showing damage," Cochran said. "This means that if clinically translatable to humans, nicotinamide should protect glaucoma patients after they've just found out their diagnosis. We won't know this until the drug is tested in humans, but it worked for mice."

Cochran said she conducted many of the experiments and took many of the pictures for the figures in the article.

Because of her *Science* publication, she was overwhelmed with research offers this past summer.

"My research experience at Missouri

Western changed the way I approach my education," Cochran said. "I've learned to be critical and question everything. I'm not satisfied with rote memorization, but in figuring out why something works and how we can make it better."

She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Optometry at the University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry and is assisting Dr. Edward Jarka in dry eye research.

"I pour myself into my studies so that I can eventually become the best doctor and vision researcher I can be."

"I'd love to find myself encouraging my future glaucoma patients to try vitamin B3 (nicotinamide) as a treatment option, knowing I was an integral part of finding the evidence for that discovery." ■



Kelly Cochran '16

# Will Stuck '00: The next chapter

After a career of almost a quarter century at the St. Joseph Public Library, Will Stuck '00 enthralled children at his last story time this past spring and embarked on expanding his public speaking/professional storytelling business.

Stuck says he will continue to perform for children and make them laugh, but he will also speak at conferences and workshops across the country about how to be a better communicator.

"As human beings, our oldest art form is storytelling, and all other art forms spring from that," said Stuck, who graduated from Missouri Western with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. "That's how we connect."

The decision to leave his longtime career as manager of the children's department at the East Hills branch and go out on his own was several years in the making, but about two years ago, he set up a website and a Facebook page, and sent out eight emails "to test the waters." The first year, Stuck generated enough business that he made about half his salary. The second year, he didn't send out any emails, gave fewer performances and made even more money.

But he still wasn't quite ready to leave the library.

"Every time I had an argument with myself about leaving and decided to stay, something would happen that made me think I should leave." When he'd introduce

performers for library programs, they would tell him that he should be



Will Stuck '00 reads to families at the Alumni Association's Future Griffons at the Chocolate Factory in February 2017.

doing what they were doing. Audience members at conferences where he spoke were telling him how much his talks changed their lives and careers.

Finally, he says, his excitement outweighed his fear, and his last day at the library was June 2, his 24-year work anniversary.

But it still wasn't easy. His wife, Crystal, works for the library. He said he'll also miss all his co-workers and the families that he has met over the years. After such a long job tenure, some of Stuck's earlier story time attendees grew up and had children of

their own that were listening to him bring books to life.

By the time Stuck worked his last day at the library, he had already lined up speaking engagements at several conferences and more than 30 performances at libraries in three states. He will also serve as emcee at the Alumni Association's awards banquet on campus in October.

His goal has always been, and will continue to be, to make kids happy and to instill a love of reading in them. "I like that kids got library cards because I came to their school and acted silly," he says.

**What, you may ask, are the favorites of someone who has read thousands of books? Stuck didn't have to think about it for very long:**

## **Favorite adult book**

"I own the complete works of Edgar Allen Poe, and have read all of them more than 30 times."

## **Favorite juvenile book**

"Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.' J.K. Rowling wrote in a character that you really, really hate (Dolores Umbridge). Most authors can't do that."

## **Favorite kids book**

"It's a tie. 'Where the Wild Things Are,' and growing up I loved 'Lambert the Sheepish Lion.'"





Stuck, a St. Joseph native, started at the library a week after he graduated from high school. A few years later, he started reading to children.

"The first few times, I was terrible. But by the third or fourth week, I started thinking about people who read to me that I enjoyed."

He thought about his family ("loaded with storytellers") and his fourth-grade teacher. "I was the class clown and always got in trouble for telling stories, so we rarely saw eye to eye. But when she read to the class, she was my favorite teacher."

So he changed his technique, and story time attendance soared. Over the years, he says he developed too many programs to mention. At first, they were just for children, but then he added teenagers to his audience because he didn't want them to feel left out. ("I like to think I was ahead of the duct tape movement.")

"I wanted to make the library a part of the community, not just a place in the community. I did everything I could to serve every age and help them understand the importance of the library."

Oftentimes, he challenged older kids who weren't so sure they liked to read. "If you come to the library, I guarantee you that I will find a book you love," I told them. Some took me up on it and I did it." And, most rewarding, he says, is that some of those he challenged became longtime library cardholders.

Speaking at a conference recently, Stuck ended his talk by telling the story of "The Tale of Despereaux," by Kate DiCamillo, and used the following quotation from the book: "Stories are light. Light is precious in a world so dark. Begin at the beginning. Tell Gregory a story. Make some light."

"That says it all," said Will Stuck, the storyteller. ■

## 1960s

**Julia Schneider '67**, retired library director, received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the YWCA Women of Excellence Lunch in June. She was recognized for her 44 years of service to Missouri Western and as a leader in the library science field at the state and national levels.

## 1970s

**Bill Brown '74** retired from the Family Guidance Center in St. Joseph, Missouri.

**Mary (Sprake) Vaughan '78** received the 2017 Retirement Service Award from the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association. She recently retired as the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Maryland Heights, Missouri.

## 1980s



**Kimberlie McCue '85** is the director, Research, Conservation and Collections at the Desert Botanical Center in Phoenix. Her previous position at the Center was program director, Conservation of Threatened Species and Habitats.

**Debbie Schaaf '87** received the Literacy Citation award at Pass the Power's 2017 Literacy Luncheon. Pass the Power is an adult literacy program provided by the St. Joseph School District.



Debbie Schaaf '87 with U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt.

## 1990s

**Jeffrey Lee Shanks '91** is celebrating his 25th anniversary with the Platte County, Missouri Sheriff's Office. He is a commissioned deputy sheriff holding the rank of sergeant.

**Col. Grace Link '92** was the keynote speaker at the 16th annual YWCA Women of Excellence Lunch in June. She is currently the director of staff for the Missouri Air National Guard at the Joint Force Headquarters-Missouri.

## 2000s

**Asa Barnes '03** released his first solo music project in May titled, "It's Complicated." He also has a current single, "Thinking of You," that is playing on Kansas City, Missouri and Lawrence, Kansas radio stations. His website is [asaentertains.com](http://asaentertains.com).

**Dr. Jasmine Briedwell '03** is director of elementary education in the Park Hill School District in Kansas City, Missouri. She served as principal at Lake Contrary Elementary School in St. Joseph for eight years. During her time with the St. Joseph School District, she also spent time as a classroom teacher, an instructional coach and an assistant principal.



**LaShaundra Randolph '03** was selected to serve on the National Board of Directors for the National Association for Campus Activities, the recognized

leader in higher education for providing knowledge, ideas and resources for campus life. Members of the board are responsible for the overall strategic direction, effectiveness and financial stability of the association.

**Mindi Richardson '03** is the assistant principal at Oak Grove Elementary School in St. Joseph.



## | *Alumnotes* |



**Lucas Gorham '06** is the Career Services Coordinator for the University of Missouri School of Health Professions, serving health science students with their career exploration and preparation.



**Jill (Johnson) '08 and Jeff '10 Brock** announce the birth of twins, Bowen Mark and Anna Beth, born May 1, 2017. Bowen and Anna join big sister Hadley.

**Kim Evans Carson '08**, head choral director at Truman High School in Independence, Missouri, accepted an invitation for her students to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City in

May 2017. They performed for 20 minutes as the featured choir, and then performed with four other choirs accompanied by the New England Symphony.

### 2010s

**Terra (May) James '12** earned a master of arts from Auburn University in 2014 and is a professor in the communication department for the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. She and her husband have a son, Emmett, born September 2016.

**Lauren Prywitch '14** moved to New York City and is working in casting for the television show "Chopped" on the Food Network.

**Darlisa (Chirieleison) Finney '15**, medical coder for Mosaic Life Care and president of the Pony Express Health Information Management, received the Rising Star Award at the Missouri Health Information Management Association during its annual meeting this past spring. The award recognizes a gifted new professional. Recipients must have fewer than five years in the field, professional association involvement and be a proven role model to peers.

**Alex Atkinson '16** presented a webinar as part of the LeaderShape 2017 Webinar Series, Nonverbal Public Speaking: Radiating Executive Presence. ■

## 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](mailto:holtz@missouriwestern.edu).

**Nikole Rene Caudle '07**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 9, 2017.

**Rebecca Crockett '17**, Cameron, Missouri, May 25, 2017.

**Jason Hiram Hart '04**, St. Joseph, Missouri, May 1, 2017.

**Darrel Huber '66**, St. Joseph, Missouri, March 27, 2017.

**Weldon (Don) Judah '72**, St. Joseph, Missouri, July 13, 2017. Judah received a Distinguished Alumni Award in 2002. He is survived by his wife, Linda '82/'94 and two daughters.

**Dr. Adam Khan**, Scottsdale, Arizona, May 17, 2017. Dr. Khan taught in Missouri Western's Agriculture program from 1979-1995.

**Max Meneely '92**, Kansas City, Missouri, March 26, 2017.

**Robert Lee Meyer '74**, Alpine, California, April 28, 2017.

**Duane Morgan, JC**, St. Joseph, Missouri, March 18, 2017.

**Dr. Donald J. Robbins**, Gower, Missouri, May 19, 2017. Dr. Robbins taught biology and chemistry at the Junior College and biology at Missouri Western. His obituary stated that he and a colleague were instrumental in designing the layout of the Department of Biology in Agenstein Hall on the present-day campus. He also established the Beta Beta Beta Biology Honors Society in 1987. He retired from Missouri Western in 1998.

**Norma G. Salsberry '71**, St. Joseph, Missouri, May 21, 2017.

**Iva Pearl Wake '72**, Overland Park, Kansas, April 5, 2017.

**Kenneth M. Wollnick '76**, Wathena, Kansas, April 28, 2017.

**Christopher G. Kelley '86**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 5, 2017. Kelley, who was teaching at Central High School at the time of his death, is the son of James B. and Jean P. Kelley. His family is the namesake of the student gathering space, Kelley Commons. The family's gifts established the University Plaza in 2007 and the Kelley Commons in 2013. He is survived by his wife, Kelly, daughter, Kealey Mathieson, who is a student at Missouri Western, and sisters, Jeanie Grahl '72 and Molly Pierce '77.



# A look back:

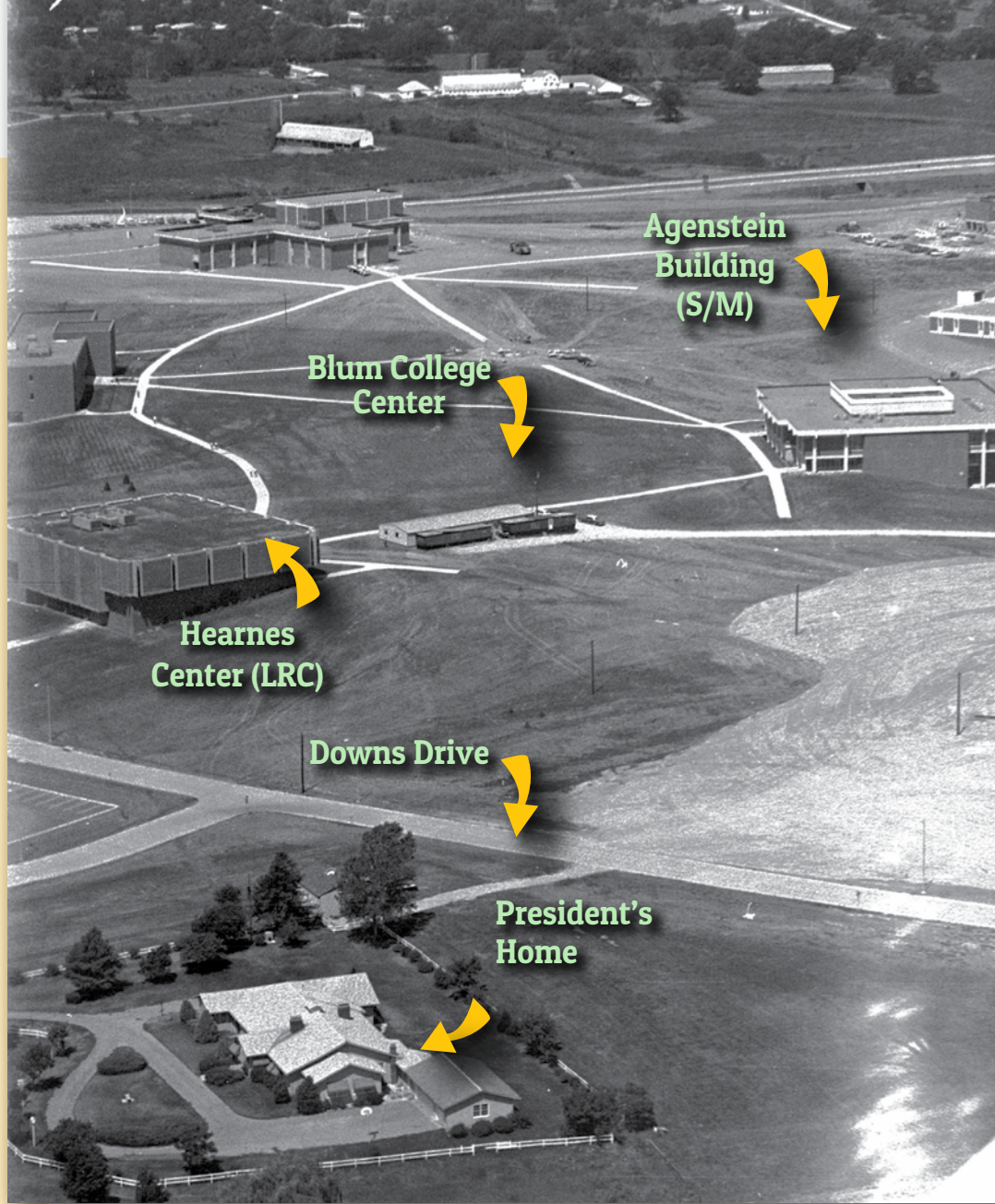
## The president's home on campus

When Missouri Western bought 390 acres east of Interstate 29 in 1967 to build the current campus, a beautiful home that was owned by Louis and Margaret Pinkston stood near the site of the main campus. It became the college president's home.

Dr. M.O. Looney, who was hired as president in 1967, lived in the home with his wife, Dorsey, and their three sons. Many events were held at the home throughout Dr. Looney's tenure.

Unfortunately, the home was destroyed by a fire during the night on New Year's Eve 1981. Dr. and Mrs. Looney, who had relatives visiting for the holidays, were awakened by their son who had just returned home and discovered the fire. Fortunately, everyone made it out of the home safely.

In the fall of 1982, the Board of Regents voted to not rebuild a president's home, but instead to offer a housing allowance to the College president. ■







**Missouri Western State University**

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## Spring 2017 Commencement

Missouri Western graduates are prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education, and we celebrate that at every Commencement ceremony.

