

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

MWSU



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GRIFFONS UNDER THE **THE BIG TOP** HOMECOMING 2018





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Student success is the overarching goal of Missouri Western's new strategic plan. Photo by Ed Collier.

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Missouri Western State University
is an equal opportunity institution.

president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

This past fall, I announced my retirement as president of Missouri Western, effective July 1, 2019.

I have been truly honored and proud to serve as Missouri Western's president for more than a decade. These years have been by far the most gratifying of my long career in higher education. For a first-generation college student like myself to have this kind of capstone career opportunity was a dream come true for me.

Missouri Western accomplished many great things during my time here, but the University also accomplished many great things before my time here, and will accomplish many more after I leave. The real work has been done by the dedicated people at Missouri Western – the faculty, staff, students and alumni who take such great pride in being Griffons, and our many community partners who have made our work possible.

The University recently embarked on a five-year strategic plan, which offers a great vision for the future (see p. 16). I am certain that my successor will appreciate the due diligence that went into the strategic planning process and the resulting plan.

I have always been grateful for the support of Missouri Western from our outstanding alumni, and I appreciate the support you have given me personally throughout my time here. Missouri Western is very near and dear to me, and, of course, I will always be a Griffon. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian
President
Missouri Western State University



Dr. Vartabedian cuts the ribbon to celebrate the opening of a Starbucks in the Blum Union. To the right of Dr. Vartabedian is Stephen Kerr, director of Aramark Dining Services on campus, and Shana Meyer, vice president of Student Affairs.

Cutting-edge research leads to work with national laboratory

Dr. Mark Lewis knew his area of research for the past 15 years was uncommon, but the professor of business realized just how rare when he was asked to assist the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico this past summer.

For about two years, Dr. Lewis has been working with D-Wave Systems, the only company in the world with a commercially available quantum computer. The national laboratory in Los Alamos bought one recently, and D-Wave recommended that Dr. Lewis help remotely with programming it. His research, optimization algorithms and their applications, develops programming to find solutions to problems such as inventory, logistics, scheduling and more, and that is what the laboratory needed.

"A regular computer is general purpose, but a quantum computer is very specific," he said. "It solves

certain kinds of problems that I have been working on for some time, very quickly."

Those types of problems have an incomprehensibly large number of possible solutions, Dr. Lewis said, which requires quantum computing to solve.

He noted that few people in the world are conducting the same type of research as he is, and no one really paid much attention until quantum computing gained traction about five years ago.

The explanation of how quantum computing works involves terms such as "superposition" and "electron (or photon) entanglement," which Dr. Lewis says is cutting-edge research.

"There is a lot going on in quantum computing. If you Google these terms, you'll find a whole hidden world out there of people working on applying quantum phenomenon to computing."

He was recently awarded a \$125,000 one-year grant from the Air Force Research Laboratory to try to solve the logistical problems associated with fighting wildfires.

Dr. Lewis, a native of the Kansas City area, earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Kansas, and a Master of Science in Operations Research and a Ph.D in Operations Research from Southern Methodist University. He currently teaches graduate courses in the Craig School of Business & Technology in systems analysis and design, business intelligence and analytics, and enterprise applications; and several undergraduate courses in management and statistics.

Dr. Lewis's work with Los Alamos continued into the fall semester, and he says he will assist the laboratory as long as he is needed. ■

President Vartabedian announces retirement

In August, Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian, Missouri Western's president, announced his plans to retire on July 1, 2019.

Dr. Vartabedian and his wife, Dr. Laurel Vartabedian, plan to spend more time with family, including their children and grandchildren in Texas.

"Bob and Laurel's contributions to Missouri Western and the St. Joseph area will be felt for many years to come," said Dave Liechti, chair of the Board of Governors. "Bob is a great leader and tireless worker with a vision and commitment to advance the University. Both he and Laurel have immersed themselves in the community and been great



Dr. Robert Vartabedian

ambassadors for Missouri Western. The bar is set very high for whoever follows."

On July 1, 2008, Dr. Vartabedian became Missouri Western's fourth president since the institution became a four-year college, and he is the longest-tenured current president among public universities in Missouri.

In October, the Board of Governors selected AGB Search from Washington, D.C. to serve as the search firm for Dr. Vartabedian's replacement.

For the latest information on the search, go to missouriwestern.edu/presidential-search. ■

Supporter passes away

Patricia “Patsy” Lee Remington died July 25, 2018.

She was born on August 19, 1932, to Charles O.A. and Marian Irene (Jones) Smith in Mound City, Missouri. Remington was a graduate of Central High School in St. Joseph, Missouri and attended Southern Methodist University, Dallas. She graduated from Missouri Western in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work. In 1953, Patsy married Wes Remington, who survives.

In 2007, Patsy and Wes provided the lead gift for Missouri Western’s renovation of Agenstein Hall and the construction of Remington Hall, which houses the University’s science and math facilities. At the time of their gift, it was the largest gift in the history of Missouri Western. Remington Hall is named in their honor, and they received an honorary doctorate degree from Missouri Western in 2009.

Patsy and Wes were also instrumental in developing the Remington Nature Center in St. Joseph. Additionally, with Patsy and Wes’s leadership, Heartland Health (now Mosaic Life Care) partnered with the Mayo Clinic of Scottsdale, Arizona to establish the Tele Stroke Network in 2011.

Patsy was a member of Wyatt Park Baptist Church, Panhellenic Council and a sustaining member of the St. Joseph Junior League.

Additional survivors include four children, Stephanie Remington, Scottsdale, Arizona; Lee Ann Swartz, Savannah, Missouri; C. Scott Remington, Omaha, Nebraska; and Gay Lyn Barwald, Mesa, Arizona; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. ■



Wes and Patsy '79 Remington with former president Dr. James Scanlon.

University hires police chief

Jill Voltmer, a St. Joseph native and veteran police officer, was named chief of the University Police Department in September 2018. Voltmer spent 24 years in the patrol and detective divisions of the St. Joseph Police Department, including more than 15 years as a sergeant, and she was hired by Missouri Western as a police officer in June 2017.

While in the SJPd, Voltmer supervised the family crimes unit of detectives, worked on the sexual assault and family violence council, worked with members of the

community, and supervised and evaluated police officers. She has been honored for her police work multiple times, most recently receiving the Officer of the Year Award from the Optimist Club in 2018.

Voltmer graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

As chief, she supervises University Police personnel and manages all law enforcement, security, traffic and parking functions on campus. ■

Students travel abroad

Several students traveled abroad after the spring 2018 semester ended in May.

Dr. Caroline Whiteman, assistant professor of French, led a group of five French students to Quebec, Canada. They took part in an intensive program through the University of Montreal and also toured Old Quebec.

Eighteen nursing and physical therapist assistant students joined Dr. Maureen Raffensperger, director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program; Stephanie Stewart, instructor of nursing; and Latha Varghese, assistant professor of nursing; on a trip to India, where they offered free medical care to residents of a small village outside Chennai. They also toured Agra and Delhi.

Two criminal justice students, Britane Hubbard and Kaylee Sharp, traveled to Myanmar and Singapore with Dave Tushaus, professor of legal studies. They

went to Singapore and then Myanmar to work for a law school to help improve its legal education program. The students developed curriculum to teach clinical legal education English, and Tushaus helped the University of Taunggyi law faculty implement the program. They presented on their work in Myanmar at an International Conference in Australia in December.

Several students also made presentations at international conferences in Athens, Greece and Dubrovnik, Croatia. Devin Guerrero, Rose Cadden and Rachel Bertram gave two presentations at the International Conference on Communication and Mass Media in Athens. At the International Conference on Information Technology and Journalism in Dubrovnik, Lance Lawton, Caleb May and Chloe Rhein presented papers, as well as Dr. Bob Bergland, professor of journalism. ■

Campus collects school supplies after Florence

Madison Romjue '18 graduated in May and accepted a teaching job in special education this past fall in New Bern, North Carolina. When Hurricane Florence hit that area in September 2018, the schools in her district had a lot of damage, and several students lost their homes. So in October, Romjue asked the Missouri Western Department of Education if they would collect school supplies for her school district.

The response was overwhelming. Every type of school supply was donated, along with \$250 in cash

that was used to purchase children's books. The women's volleyball team filled three backpacks as donations came campuswide and from Missouri Western's Northland location. Mindy Miller, owner of an education supply store that recently closed, donated approximately 200 teacher resource books and bulletin board supplies.

Dr. Susan Bashinski, professor of education, and Dr. Elizabeth Potts, assistant professor of education, organized the drive and shipped everything to Romjue. ■

Director of External Relations hired

Steve Johnston, director of the Community Alliance of St. Joseph, was named director of external relations at Missouri Western and began his duties Jan. 3. He

replaces Brandt Shields, who left in August 2018.

As director of external relations, Johnston will serve on the president's

cabinet and is responsible for building and sustaining strong and positive relationships with government officials, policy makers and University advocates.

Johnston has served as director of the Community Alliance since 2009. He is chair of the Heartland Foundation Board and a member of the United Way of Greater St. Joseph and Missouri Western Foundation Boards. He has served as Buchanan County chair of Great Northwest Day at the Capitol.

Prior to joining the Community Alliance, Johnston worked at Wire Rope Corporation of America, Inc., for more than 20 years.

Johnston received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Kansas State University. ■



Steve Johnston



25th Annual R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues

Veteran broadcast journalist Chris Wallace was the guest speaker at the 25th annual R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues in November. His presentation, *A View from Washington*, drew applause and laughs amidst his unique perspective on politics and the media. While on campus, Wallace also attended a private reception, a breakfast with students and a lunch that featured a question-and-answer session.

Enrollment increases in fall 2018

Missouri Western had 5,707 students enrolled as of the official fall 2018 census date Sept. 24, an increase of 2.6 percent over fall 2017. The number includes a 5.5 percent growth in the number of new freshmen. Over the past two years, the University has seen a

22.6 percent jump in freshman enrollment.

Additionally, there was a 42 percent jump in the number of students taking 16 credit hours or more, which is due in part to the Finish in Four initiative launched in 2018, as well as intentional

University-wide efforts encouraging students to plan ahead and complete their degree in a timely manner.

Dual credit courses, which are taken by high school students to earn college credit, were up 21.7 percent over 2017, for a total of 1,224 students. ■

Survey is positive for University

The Community Alliance of St. Joseph released its 2018 Community Survey last summer with positive results for Missouri Western.

One of the notable positive increases was in response to the following question: "Missouri Western is moving in the right direction." In the 2016 survey, 62 percent of the responses

were "strongly agree" or "agree" (excluding those who responded "don't know"). In the 2018 survey, 72 percent of the responses were "strongly agree" or "agree," a 10 percent increase.

Residents were also asked about 19 different quality of life issues in St. Joseph and Buchanan County, and whether their needs were being met in those areas. Of those issues,

"access to higher education" had the highest favorable rating, with about 87 percent (excluding those who answered "don't know") saying that their needs for access to higher education are being met.

The survey is administered by the ETC Institute in Olathe, Kansas. The response rate generated a 95 percent level of confidence, statistically speaking. ■

Student brings Oxfam to campus

Student Andrea Gordon is all about helping others, and because of her passion to serve, she was one of only 30 students selected nationwide as an Oxfam America CHANGE leader. This past summer, she spent a week training in Boston to learn about Oxfam and its initiatives and attending workshops on leadership and advocacy.

"It was a great opportunity for me to meet so many amazing people," she said. "And it was an honor to represent Missouri Western."

Throughout the week, Gordon learned that Oxfam is a global organization working to end the injustice of poverty. She said she especially enjoyed the small group discussions that were part of the week.

"The best part was the bonds we built," she said. "We all skipped the awkwardness stage and everyone opened up right away."

The sophomore cinema and marketing double major applied for the program because of the encouragement of Shana Meyer, vice president of Student Affairs. "Shana knows I'm very involved and very vocal," Gordon said with a laugh. The application process included a written application and a video interview.

By the end of the CHANGE week, Gordon had created a plan for this school year that she brought back to Missouri Western. Since then, she coordinated an "Oxfam Jam" at Homecoming, held a hunger banquet in November and spearheaded petition drives for issues regarding poverty and more. Oxfam has been supporting Gordon throughout the year with advice, materials and information.

Oxfam suggests that the CHANGE leaders start an Oxfam club on their campuses, but Gordon has bigger plans. She serves as the director of GriffsGiveBack, the central office for volunteerism on campus and in the community, so that gives her the perfect opportunity to promote Oxfam. Gordon says she doesn't want to stop with just a club; she wants the entire campus community to become involved and informed about Oxfam.

"I have always seen a need to help people, and that's what makes me happy," she said. "People need to get active and get involved. Just do it because it's the right thing to do." ■



Biology student selected as a

Last summer, junior Rachael Prawitz was just one of 14 undergraduates selected from an international pool of applicants by the American Society of Plant Biologists to be a 2018 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow. There were hundreds of applicants, and she and two others were the only ones selected from primarily undergraduate institutions.

As a SURF, she and her mentor Dr. Csengele Barta, associate professor of biology, spent the summer working on her research project, studying the role of isoprene in plant development.

“We were very excited when she was selected,” Dr. Barta said. “She is an exceptional student, and receiving this award is an honor and a great success.”

“I was pleasantly surprised when I was selected,” said Prawitz, a biology health sciences major from Kansas City, Missouri. “Science research is very exciting, and I love learning about the diverse aspects of biology. Research reinforces and enhances what I learn in the classroom.”

Prawitz’s project focused on studying how the capacity to emit isoprene, a volatile molecule, affects the aging process in plants. She worked with velvet bean, a semi-invasive species. Plants for the project were grown under three different temperature and light environments in the three climate-controlled sections of the department’s greenhouse (adjacent to Agenstein Hall) to regulate the production and emission of isoprene in the plants. Interestingly, Prawitz’s results showed a substantial extension of

the plants’ lifecycle, which extended her project beyond the expected 10 weeks.

Dr. Barta has studied the role of isoprene in plants for several years. Her research on oak trees indicated that strong isoprene emissions may delay the aging of leaves in some species, and Prawitz’s project was built on those findings. However, unlike the earlier field project, Prawitz’s approach offered better environmental control over the plants.

Dr. Barta said Prawitz, who plans to be a pediatrician, also learned a lot about the scientific process this past summer as she designed her experiments and used critical thinking to analyze and interpret her results.

Dr. Barta worked with a large team of students on three research projects during the summer, and along with her SURF project, Prawitz also collaborated with other students on Dr. Barta’s other ongoing projects.

One involved isolating the gene encoding for isoprene synthase – the enzyme catalyzing the production of isoprene in plants – from Missouri pin oaks, for the first time. Dr. Barta and her students, including Prawitz, initiated this project during the summer of 2017 and isolated a portion of the gene at that time, but the big breakthrough came this past summer, when they sequenced the full gene. They submitted the sequence to the Gen Bank with the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

“I like to engage students in projects using new techniques, even beyond what they learn in the classroom,” Dr. Barta said.



“Summer research reinforces what they learn in the class and laboratories, but also allows them to go beyond those limits and delve into more details. They learn new, cutting-edge techniques used in science research.”

Dr. Barta and 15 undergraduate students, including Prawitz, published a paper last year in *Plants*, an international science research journal, and Prawitz is working on a paper from her SURF

research fellow



Rachael Prawitz and Dr. Csengele Barta work on one of their research projects.

project to submit for publication. She and three other students presented the results of this past summer's research at a convention in Montreal, and will present again at Plant Biology 2019 in San Jose, California this summer.

Dr. Barta said she has conducted research with over 35 students since she began teaching at Missouri Western six years ago, and all

have presented their research at conferences.

"Research broadens students' perspective, is a valuable experience in their preparation for future careers in science and contributes to their better understanding and appreciation of the natural world surrounding them," Dr. Barta said. "I am very proud of all my students and their successes." ■

Entrepreneur resource launches

A new resource for entrepreneurs or those who are thinking about becoming an entrepreneur debuted this past summer. Annette Weeks '87, director of Missouri Western's Center for Entrepreneurship, said the Northwest Missouri Roundtable of Economic Developers created a website, Sourcelink Northwest Missouri (nwmosourcelink.com) that offers a host of resources and help.

Weeks, who chairs the Roundtable group, said they received a \$25,000 grant from the Missouri Small Business and Technology Development Center to collaborate with UMKC SourceLink to create the website, manage a social media campaign and provide the analytics for all inquiries.

The site is a helpful tool for small business owners because it connects them to resources for business development, Weeks said. The site is for startups or already-established small businesses, and contains information on business plans, marketing, hiring, managing growth and more. Additionally, Roundtable members are committed to being available to site users to offer advice and information. There are 137 partners listed in the site's Resource Navigator.

By October, there had been 3,749 website page views and 645 searches in the Resource Navigator. ■



Students study city's downtown

When Pat Modlin '88 retired in 2017, he and his wife, Terri, renovated a building in downtown St. Joseph, and he began to get involved in downtown initiatives. The more he learned about the area, the more he wanted to know.

So this past summer, Modlin funded an internship for four college students to comprehensively study the downtown area. Two were from Missouri Western – Kristen Hagen, a junior marketing major, and Maddie Dillon, a senior marketing major, both from St. Joseph.

The study involved creating an inventory of all the buildings and businesses, analyzing census data, sales tax information, downtown's digital presence and more. The students focused on the city's Community Improvement District, a 47-block area formed in 2011 as a special taxing district to provide funding for capital improvements, beautification, marketing and business assistance in the downtown area. The first two weeks, Dillon and Hagen said, were spent physically walking all over the 47 blocks.

Modlin, who owns Room 108 and the Felix Street Gourmet, met with the interns weekly, and an advisory group he created met with them each week, as well. Members of the advisory group included Dr. Logan Jones, dean of the Craig School of Business & Technology, and Annette Weeks '87, director of Missouri Western's Center for Entrepreneurship.

"I gave the students direction but generally they solved their own problems," Modlin said.

He said he wanted to make sure the students had a meaningful internship, and he was pleased with the experiences they had. They communicated well with each other and worked as a team, and they interviewed several people in the community, including Patt Lilly, St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce; Bill McMurray '70, St. Joseph's mayor; and City Manager Bruce Woody.

The internship also included a trip to Weston, Missouri, to speak with its Chamber representatives

and downtown business owners. They also researched downtown districts in Omaha, Nebraska; St. Charles, Missouri; and Lawrence, Kansas.

As part of their study, the interns divided St. Joseph's downtown into different districts, such as "the heart" (around Felix Street Square), "riverfront," "industrial" and "uptown." They also mapped every building, identifying all vacant spaces. If a building was occupied, it was classified according to its occupancy, such as food/beverage, retail, government, etc.

"We wanted to identify the full market potential of downtown St. Joseph," Dillon said.

At the end of the internship, the students wrote a 37-page report with their recommendations and made a presentation to a group of more than 50 community members. Dillon and Hagen also made a presentation to the St. Joseph Host Lions Club in the fall.

"Everyone was impressed with their presentations," Modlin said. "They were prepared and very professional."

Modlin also formed a downtown strategic planning committee, and that group is using the report as a guide.

One important finding was the number of disparate groups that were working to improve St. Joseph's downtown. Students found there were four different groups, each working on their own set of goals. Modlin said the goal of the strategic planning committee is to bring all the groups together so they can develop a comprehensive master plan for the area, and he is optimistic that that will happen.

"Unfortunately, before I did the internship, I never came downtown," said Dillon, a St. Joseph native. "But we feel there is so much potential. There are a lot of people that are behind the downtown."

Another recommendation encourages the downtown businesses and Missouri Western to collaborate more. Some work has already begun toward that goal (see "Student Government Association creates two community

"The interns were able to provide some insights that people weren't aware of ... I was very pleased. They exceeded my expectations."

- Pat Modlin '88

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initiatives”). Additionally, a marketing class taught by Dr. Phillip Frank is partnering with the downtown to help establish one main downtown website, and more efforts are in the works.

And, one of the focuses of the University’s strategic plan is to create more partnerships between campus and community and strengthen the current ones.

“This was such an amazing experience being able to utilize what I learned in class,” Hagen said.

“The interns were able to provide some insights that people weren’t aware of or didn’t realize the extent of,” Modlin said. “I was very pleased. They exceeded my expectations.” ■

Recommendations for downtown St. Joseph

The following are the priorities for the downtown strategic planning committee, based on the recommendations from the interns’ summer 2018 study:

1. Create a unified downtown voice/common goals.
2. Create a unified brand and marketing plan.
3. Attract/develop/retain businesses.
4. Increase the visual appeal and safety.
5. Have a downtown anchor.
6. Increase Missouri Western presence downtown.
7. Develop the riverfront.
8. Increase residential downtown.



Left: Missouri Western students Kristen Hagen and Maddie Dillon.

Below: The four interns who worked on the St. Joseph downtown study this past summer include Maddie Dillon, Marnie Castle, Kristen Hagen and Jacob Modlin.

Student Government Association creates two community initiatives

Missouri Western's Student Government Association recently became involved in two initiatives in collaborative efforts with the St. Joseph community – participating in the bike-share program and Third Thursdays.

In the spring of 2018, the Student Government Association voted to purchase 18 bikes and three bike racks in a partnership with St. Joseph's Pony Express Bike Share program that began in August 2017.

The program makes bikes available free for anyone's use across the campus and community. Riders can return them to the racks where they picked them up or to any program rack in St. Joseph. The bike racks on campus are located near the Blum Union, the Hearn Center and the Baker Fitness Center.

Student Evan Banks, assistant director for external relations for SGA, coordinated the University's involvement in the bike-sharing program.

Banks was also responsible for creating Third Thursdays (#griffsgodowntown) that began this past fall. He and the Student Government Association worked with several downtown businesses that are providing special deals and promotions to those with a Missouri Western student ID the third Thursday of each month.

"The goal of Third Thursdays is to support a vibrant culture of community between two critical parts of St. Joseph – downtown and Missouri Western," Banks said. He started the initiative because he wants to see University students head downtown at least once a month.

The first event had 15 businesses participating, and Banks said they were continuing to add more each week. Find out more information at St. Joe Third Thursday on Facebook. ■





Football returns to postseason

The 2018 Griffon football team saw a return to Missouri Western's winning ways. The Griffons finished the regular season 6-5 and accepted an invitation to the Agent Barry Live United Bowl in Texarkana, Arkansas. It was the first postseason trip for the program since advancing to the NCAA Division II quarterfinals in 2012, and they came home with a 30-25 victory over Southern Arkansas.

In a season filled with many memorable moments, the Griffons

survived an extremely challenging start to the season with three-straight ranked opponents through the first three weeks. Missouri Western upset then No. 5-ranked Fort Hays State in week two. Fort Hays State, the defending MIAA champions, went on to share the 2018 conference title with Northwest Missouri State. The season also featured program-snapping skids against Washburn and Emporia State and getting two crucial come-

from-behind wins on the road in the team's final two road games.

Matt Williamson's second year as head coach saw 16 different players collect a total of 17 All-MIAA awards. Junior offensive lineman Hayden Eatinger was named first team All-MIAA, as was senior returner Brandin Dandridge. Junior offensive lineman Shawn Rouse was named first team CoSIDA Academic All-District®. ■

Soccer produces double-digit win total

Despite returning just six upperclassmen from a record-breaking 2017 season, the soccer team kept pace with its new standards. Missouri Western finished the season 12-7 overall for the second most wins in program history.

The Griffons qualified for postseason play for a fifth consecutive season, the only five extended seasons in the program's history. New milestones continued to be a trademark for the team as the

Griffons defeated then No. 1-ranked and defending national champion Central Missouri on Sept. 21. In Missouri Western's home opener, the Griffons handed Central Missouri its first loss since 2016 and snapped the Jennies' 58-game streak of scoring at least one goal.

Eight Griffons were named All-MIAA, including three-time first-team selection Cassidy Menke, who left the program as its all-time leading goal scorer. ■



Litvinski completes first year as head cross country coach

First-year head coach Yuriy Litvinski kept his eyes toward the future in building the 2018 cross country squads. Flooded with underclassmen, Litvinski shuffled rotations and pushed the young Griffons to new heights.

After opening the season by winning both the men's and women's portions of the inaugural Griffon Open on the Missouri Western cross country course, both teams showed improvements at event after event. Nearly every member of the women's team churned out personal bests or team-best averages at each event. The men's squad was often hampered by injuries. The women's team finished the season with an eighth place finish at the MIAA Championships while the men's team finished 11th. ■

Hall of Fame



Congratulations to the Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2018: Phillip Nelson '01 (football), Dana Wertz '07 (softball), Dave Slifer (women's basketball coach), Steve Craig (meritorious service) and Jenny Marr '98 (women's basketball).



Volleyball season features standout performers

Griffon volleyball was not able to defend its 2017 MIAA Championship, finishing the season 15-17, but there were some outstanding individual performances.

Six Griffons were named All-MIAA, and Missouri Western had players at each position ranked among the best in the MIAA. Junior Stephanie Doak was named second-team All-MIAA despite finishing second in the conference in kills and kills per set. Senior Rachel Losch led the MIAA with a .348 hitting

percentage and was among the league leaders in blocks, earning second-team honors as a middle hitter. Junior setter Lauren Murphy was also named second-team and was one of just a few setters in the conference to average more than 10 assists per set. Senior libero Audrey Keim finished fourth in the MIAA in digs per set and was named honorable mention All-MIAA along with senior outside hitter Shellby Taylor and sophomore middle hitter Ali Tauchen. ■

gogriffons.com



PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE: MWSU'S STRATEGIC PLAN

For the past two years, Dr. Doug Davenport has been encouraging the campus and community to dream about the future of Missouri Western, as the University created a new strategic plan.

Dr. Davenport, interim provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, formed a steering committee that started its efforts with a University environmental scan – “it was an honest assessment of who we are, and what were our opportunities and challenges.” Then, the steering committee and work committee, numbering almost 60, listened to groups across the campus and community, studied the results of an online survey for all constituents, set priorities and shaped a plan. Pathways to Excellence 2018-2022 was the result.

“It was important to hear from a lot of people,” Dr. Davenport said. “You may miss some really good insights if you don’t listen. We needed to ensure that we had the broadest perspective possible.”

The most valuable elements of the plan, Dr. Davenport says, are the new mission and vision statements. He likened the statements to an elevator speech, with those two being the key points that tell people who Missouri Western is.

“The mission and vision statements are our anchor points,” he said.

The plan’s overarching goal is Student Success, and measurable indicators are part of the document. Five



Dr. Doug Davenport

themes to advance student success include student experience, people, partnerships, programs and stewardship.

Once Pathways to Excellence was approved by the Board of Governors, Dr. Davenport said work began on two immediate priorities: one, develop a Center for Teaching and Learning, and two, make sure Missouri Western is engaging in best practices to recruit and maintain a diverse, qualified work force.

Dr. Davenport also said he wants to make sure another aspect of the strategic plan, E3, becomes ingrained in the University’s culture. “Every Employee is an Educator” is an important component of achieving student success, he said.

“It is my hope that every employee identifies how their role supports the mission and vision of Missouri Western. I am passionate about E3. Student success is the responsibility of every employee, and each of us plays a vital role in the student experience.”

In light of several years of tight budgets and diminishing state allocations, he said another objective of the strategic plan is to be an excellent steward of resources, achieve long-term financial stability and increase affordability. The plan also contains a focus on investing in infrastructure.

“There is a lot of positive energy out there and the plan has a lot of support,” Dr. Davenport said. “People are excited about the future of Missouri Western.” ■



MISSION STATEMENT

Missouri Western State University is a student-centered learning community preparing individuals for lives of excellence through applied learning.

VISION STATEMENT

Missouri Western will be the premier open access regional university, known for transforming the lives of our students and the communities we serve.

OUR CULTURE

To achieve our vision for student success, we embody a culture that demonstrates our values of service, quality, enthusiasm, freedom, respect and courage.

We achieve this culture by fostering:

Creativity and collaboration

Evidence-based decision-making

Agile innovation

Accountability

Diversity and Inclusion

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE THEMES

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Eliminate barriers to student access and student success.

PEOPLE

Every employee plays a vital part in the student experience.

PARTNERSHIPS

Community, regional and state partnerships are vital for success.

PROGRAMS

Quality programs are the hallmark of great institutions.

STEWARDSHIP

We cannot achieve our goals without a sound foundation of support and excellent stewardship of our resources.

Pathways to Excellence 2018–2022: missouriwestern.edu/strategicplan

BIENVENIDO

**OET LA SE
ESTACION BIOLOGICA**

Organización para





WELCOME

LA SELVA
BIOLOGICAL STATION

Estudios Tropicales

Rainforest Research

When students tell you they spent their summer conducting research amidst strawberry poison arrow frogs, sloths, Capuchin monkeys, great curassows (a bird), terciopelo (a venomous viper) and caimans, and you guessed they weren't in Missouri, you would be correct.

In fact, they were more than 3,000 miles from home in a tropical rainforest in northeastern Costa Rica.

Chris Watson, Rebecca Prest and Dr. Carissa Ganong, assistant professor of biology, spent nine weeks at the La Selva Biological Station conducting research related to stream ecology.

continued on next page



continued from pg.19

Dr. Ganong has been conducting research at the station, which she calls “a premier tropical research station,” off and on for more than 13 years, including researching there when she was an undergraduate and doctoral student. For the past five years, she has coordinated National Science Foundation Research Experiences there for undergraduate students.

Watson, a biochemistry and molecular biology major from Platte City, Missouri, studied the effect of high levels of pH on the growth rates and survival of aquatic midge larvae.

Prest, a biochemistry and molecular biology major with an American Chemical Society certification, conducted research on the effects of a pesticide on two insect and one fish species in the rainforest streams. She was funded by an Emerging Challenge in Tropical Science pilot grant through the Organization for Tropical Studies that was awarded to Dr. Ganong,

“I spent a lot of time in the streams and running lab trials,” Prest said.

Their team consisted of 18 undergraduate students from across the globe, and Prest said she

enjoyed talking to everyone about their research projects.

Watson’s field work took him several miles from the station, “hiking, biking and sliding” through lots of brush and streams, and getting “stuck in the mud more times than I can count.” Prest’s field work was held up for two weeks because of rains.

“It was a bit intense, but I loved every minute of it,” Watson said. “The entire experience was truly remarkable.”

“One of the most deeply satisfying parts of mentoring tropical research is seeing and helping students transform from ‘jungle newbies’ into experienced, confident field researchers.”

- Dr. Carissa Ganong,
assistant professor of biology

The students plan to present on their research projects at the National Society for Freshwater Science conference this coming May in Utah.

“One of the most deeply satisfying parts of mentoring tropical research is seeing and helping students transform from ‘jungle newbies’ into experienced, confident field researchers,” Dr.

Ganong said. “And along the way, they made new friends, discovered the wonders of the rainforest ecosystem, learned about different cultures and ways of life, and had unforgettable adventures. Hopefully, the lessons and memories of this summer will stand out in the students’ minds for years to come.” ■



Blogging from a tropical rainforest

Check out the blog posts of Dr. Carissa Ganong, Chris Watson and Rebecca Prest at mwsulaselva2018.wordpress.com. Below are some excerpts from it:

Typing from a very rainy La Selva. This was our second day of prep work for research, which involved a 3 km hike. – Chris

Quick update from an unusually warm and mosquito-y La Selva. After last week's pilot fieldwork, all 18 students gave formal proposal presentations. Chris and Rebecca's presentations were excellent! – Dr. Ganong

I need to do an official tally at some point, but I am certain that I've exceeded 100 unique species that I've observed, and that's only counting the animals. Everywhere you look, every rock, every leaf, every branch; life abounds in every way, shape and form. – Chris

Research is progressing nicely, but time is flying! I've seen all of the large ground bird species. The curassows are still my favorite because they both look and act like mentally disturbed dinosaurs. While collecting caddisflies at one of my field sites, Dr. Ganong and I were harassed by a pair of very noisy and nosy toucans. – Rebecca

Jill Leonard from Northern Michigan University enjoyed working with Rebecca in the field and lab, and dubbed Rebecca the "Guppy Queen" for her skill at hand-netting small fish. – Dr. Ganong

This turnip-tailed gecko caught and ate a katydid right outside my window. It's extremely easy to get distracted from your work here for exactly that reason; there's too many cool things to watch. – Rebecca

Rebecca and I completed the perimeter hike of La Selva yesterday, a distance of roughly 10 miles. The hike took a little over nine hours, because of mud, numerous stream/river crossings and steep hillsides. There was a plethora of beautiful scenes and I added eight vertebrate species to my list, bringing my total for vertebrate species observed to 168. – Chris

I really need to learn that in order to take good quality pictures in the rainforest you must check your camera lens for condensation every. single. time. you want to take a picture. Or else you end up with foggy pictures. – Rebecca

So far, the rainforest has taken my umbrella, my watch, one of my flashlights, several space pens, and most of the functionality of my mud boots. My field pack smells like a peccary (pig-like mammal). But it's all worth it. I can honestly say that this has been the best summer of my life. I have learned so much about the world around me, being a researcher, and about myself. – Rebecca ■

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Hello again! As president of the Alumni Association, I am proud to report that the Griffon spirit at this year's Homecoming was alive and well!

Before I talk about Homecoming, I want to thank David Karleskint, Reyhan Wilkinson, Tona Williams and Mary Workman for their work on a successful event held at the beginning of the year, "Rally Round the Griffins." This event helped us kick off the year and showcased the MWSU band and athletics.

We kicked off Homecoming week with the Forever Griffons Luncheon. We had a nice lunch, entertainment by our music students, heard from Dr. Vartabedian and had a fun tour of campus. Thank you to Linda Crabtree, Phyllis Myers and Jodi Deering for helping.

We held our Legacy Day again this year to give alumni a chance to donate to the MWSU Foundation and continue our Griffon legacy. We thank Chris '78 and Dan '78 Danford and the Danford Family Excellence Fund for their matching gift support and thank all who contributed.

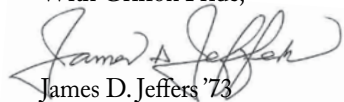
Additional events included an alumni employee breakfast and Support a Griffon Business Day. The Alumni Awards Banquet went very well this year. Congratulations to the Alumni Award winners (see pgs. 24-26).

Saturday, we enjoyed the parade, where we tossed out a lot of candy. After the parade was Arts, Beats and Treats for families. Before the football game, I walked through the Greek tailgates and noticed their numbers were up and everyone was enjoying the day. The tailgate food was great and the weather was nice for the game.

Thanks to the board, volunteers, staff, students and alumni who made the 2018 Homecoming one to remember. I personally enjoyed seeing many old friends this year.

Keep connecting! We would love to get your involvement or feedback in the Alumni Association. Please reach out to me at (816) 390-1605 or jimjeffers25@gmail.com.

With Griffon Pride,



James D. Jeffers '73
President, Alumni Association



James Jeffers '73



Alumni trip to Greece!

Travel to Greece with the Missouri Western Alumni Association and Dr. Jimmy Albright! We will spend 11 days, May 22-June 1, 2019, visiting ancient sites such as the Parthenon, the Temple of Delphi, and the Temple of Apollo. The trip includes a three-day cruise to Mykonos, Kusadasi and Patmos, and Heraklion and Santorini. Alumni, parents, and community members are welcome.

Cost is \$3,999 per person double occupancy. If you want a single room, add \$799. A deposit is due Feb. 2, and invoices for the final payment will be sent prior to departure.

If you would like information sent to you, please contact Colleen Kowich at ckowich@missouriwestern.edu or (816) 271-5650. ■

Alumni Awards Banquet



Brooke Rogers '00, Jennifer Stanek '99, Reyhan Wilkinson '17, Kristi Bailey '00, Natalie Redmond '00 and Shelby Coxon '99 enjoy the Alumni Awards Banquet.

Faithful, proud and true: Diane '90 and Neal '90 Hook

If you're involved at Missouri Western or on campus a lot, it's a pretty safe bet that you may run into Diane '90 or Neal '90 Hook, who have been active at Missouri Western since they were students.

Neal, a graduate of Benton High School in St. Joseph, played basketball for Coach Tom Smith, who had just arrived on campus. Neal graduated with a mathematics degree and has spent his entire career at Central High School in St. Joseph. Along with teaching math, he served 12 years as head boys basketball coach.

He earned a Master of Science in Educational Leadership: Secondary Education from Northwest Missouri State University and is currently serving in his third year as assistant principal at Central.

Diane, from central Kansas, transferred to Missouri Western after one year at Wichita State and played basketball under Coach Terry Ellis for two years. Diane graduated with a Criminal Justice – Legal Studies degree and worked as a paralegal before returning to law school. She graduated with her Juris Doctorate in 2003 from University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

She currently is an attorney with Hook McKinley LLC in St. Joseph, practicing general law.

"There's a certain satisfaction in really solving problems for people," she said.

"Missouri Western gave me a shot with academic scholarships, so I am giving back."

- Diane Hook '90



Diane '90 and Neal '90 Hook at a football game this past fall.

Diane is currently a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and is vice chair of the the MWSU Foundation Board of Directors. Additionally, she and Neal can be found at many athletic events throughout the year.

"Missouri Western gave me a shot with academic scholarships, so

I am giving back," Diane said.

Diane has also served on a number of community boards. Neal, she says, "volunteers quietly" and does a lot for people behind the scenes.

"I enjoy being involved at Missouri Western," Diane said. "The University is very important to the community, and I hope it continues to grow." ■

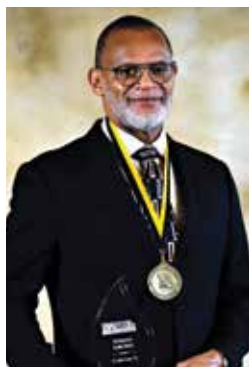
Eleven honored at awards banquet

Eleven alumni and friends were honored at the Alumni Association's 36th annual banquet Homecoming weekend. *Congratulations!*

Keith Evans '78 MD, PT, DPT Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Keith Evans, a former Griffon linebacker, is CEO/Director and owner of the Atlanta Human Performance Center, a facility offering physical therapy, massage therapy, sports therapy, dry needling, and a fitness and wellness center.

"I enjoy helping people," the Farmington, Missouri native said.



Keith Evans '78 MD, PT, DPT

"My patients won't get out without knowing how to become more active and exercise."

Dr. Evans, who played football four years and served as team captain, says the courses he took at Missouri

Western in exercise physiology and human performance led him to pursue a career in physical therapy. He earned a Bachelor of Health Science-Physical Therapy from University of Missouri-Columbia, a Master in Exercise Physiology from Georgia State University, a Doctor of Physical Therapy from Alabama State University, and a doctorate in medicine from Xavier University School of Medicine.

He was also vice president of the Student Government Association and served on the College Center Board. Dr. Evans believes his experiences as a student taught him discipline and great leadership and

decision-making skills.

Dr. Evans was inducted in Missouri Western's Athletics Hall of Fame as an individual in 2003 and as part of the 1975 football team in 2005.

"I really appreciate the strong base I received from Missouri Western."

Dr. Brian A. Dow '11 GOLD Award

Dr. Dow is a Dossier Development Scientist for Janssen Pharmaceuticals, a Johnson & Johnson Company, in Pennsylvania, where he makes regulatory decisions for antibody-based and gene therapy drugs.

To date, his work has led to clinical trial approval in 16-plus countries with thousands of patients.

Dr. Dow, a native of Kansas City, Kansas, graduated from Missouri Western with a biotechnology degree, which combines biology, chemistry and business. He said as a student, his classes and two internships helped him get accepted into the University of Central Florida's Biomedical Sciences Ph.D. program. He was hired at Janssen before he graduated.

"The professors and their classes shaped my interests in graduate school and provided me with a



Dr. Brian A. Dow '11

strong scientific foundation. Every day I use the scientific knowledge that I learned at MWSU."

Drew Brown, U.S. Army Lt. Col., Retired Herb '35 and Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University

Drew Brown has been very involved in Missouri Western, including serving 12 years on the MWSU Foundation Board of Directors and helping with events in the Center for Multicultural Education. He is currently serving as the chair of the Arts Society Council.

His involvement in the community includes a list too long to name. "The community won't improve if people don't put their shoulder to the wheel and get involved. I'm trying to be the best community member I can be."

Brown, a native of Philadelphia, earned bachelor's degrees in biology and German at North Carolina Central University in Durham. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1966 and served until 1992, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

While in the service, he graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College with the equivalent of a master's degree. He is the owner of Brown Investments.



Drew Brown, U.S. Army Lt. Col., Retired

Dr. Bill Church '89 Distinguished Faculty Award

Dr. Bill Church joined the Missouri Western faculty in 1990, when he was hired to work full time in the Center for Academic Support and teach two English classes. In 1996, he began teaching full time.



Dr. Bill Church '89

He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Missouri Western, and a master's in English: Professional Writing, Fiction Emphasis from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He earned his doctorate from the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

"I love being around the energy of young people," he says. "It's meaningful when students really begin to see the power of language; when they find out the written word has power."

Dr. Church is currently writing an autoethnography, "This is What it Means to Say Missouri Western," that reflects his views as an alumnus and a professor with student anecdotes interwoven in the University history.

"Missouri Western transforms lives, and in my case, it is absolutely true."

Kristi Bailey '00 Great Griffon Award College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Kristi Bailey is the Director of Communications and Marketing for the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, a position she has held since 2008. Recently, she guided St. Joseph's branding campaign, "Made with Uncommon Character."

Bailey, from Ewing, Missouri, graduated with an English degree and a business minor. Prior to joining the Chamber staff, she worked eight years at the St. Joseph News-Press.



Kristi Bailey '00

Bailey earned an MBA from Northwest Missouri State University. "My time at Missouri Western wouldn't have been the same without my sorority," she said.

"Not only was it responsible for forming the strongest friendships of my life, but it made me the leader I am today."

Rachel A. Pepper '03 DNP, RN, NEA-BC Great Griffon Award College of Professional Studies/ School of Nursing and Health Professions

Dr. Rachel Pepper was promoted to Chief Nursing Officer of Kansas City Operations for the University of Kansas Health System this past July. She had previously been serving as the Senior Director of Nursing for the University of Kansas Hospital.

Dr. Pepper, a native of DeKalb, Missouri, earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Missouri Western, and a Master of Science in Nursing-



Rachel A. Pepper '03 DNP, RN, NEA-BC

Organizational Leadership and a Doctor of Nursing Practice-Organizational Leadership from the University of Kansas. She is also an adjunct professor at Missouri Western.

"My time at MWSU was amazing," Dr. Pepper said. "I enjoyed the nursing program. The rigor and dedication the faculty provided set up all the new nurses very well for our careers."

Jaime Lynn Habersat '99 Great Griffon Award Craig School of Business & Technology

Jaime Habersat is a Transportation Operation Specialist, Loss Prevention Team for the General Services Administration in Kansas City, Missouri. She has worked for GSA since 2009.

Habersat is also a volunteer Membership/Mobilization Manager for Team Rubicon, a veteran- and first responder-based disaster response organization. She has been volunteering for them since 2014 and has been on 10 deployments with them. She also teaches training classes for team members.

As a student, Habersat was involved in several organizations, including being one of the founding members of the Alpha Gamma Delta Fraternity. "I jumped in with both feet at Missouri Western," she says. "There are so many memories, it's hard to pick the most memorable."



Jaime Lynn Habersat '99

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Habersat graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and earned an MBA from Webster University in 2004.

Patrick Larsen '15 Great Griffon Award School of Fine Arts

Patrick Larsen, from Weston, Missouri, graduated with a



Patrick Larsen '15

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art. As a student, he and David Harris, associate professor of art, built a wood-fired kiln and Larsen rebuilt the department's salt kiln.

He had been a sculptor for 20 years when he decided to "put a degree behind it." After he graduated, he opened a working studio, the Mad Potter Studio, in Weston.

As a student, Larsen set up a pottery wheel at the MWSU Foundation's Donor Appreciation Reception for three years, visiting with those in attendance and displaying his craft.

Alexis Williams '18 Student Leadership Award Clifford Hughes '55 Award

Alexis Williams graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in May 2018.

Williams was involved in several organizations on campus, including the Student Government Association, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (president), Alpha Kappa Psi, Alpha Kappa Alpha and

Residential Life. She also worked in the Center for Multicultural Education. In 2017,



Alexis Williams '18

Williams received the University's Drum Major for Justice Award.

"My jobs I held and the organizations I was involved in helped me grow into a professional,"

she said. "The experiences gave me life lessons and helped mold me into the person I have become."

Sanhith Chinta '18 Student Leadership Award International Student of the Year

Sanhith "Sunny" Chinta graduated with a master's degree in Information Technology Assurance Administration this past spring. He grew up in Nizamabad, India and earned a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's College of Engineering and Technology at Hyderabad, Telangana, India before enrolling at Missouri Western.

Chinta was involved on campus as part of the International Student Council and the Indian Nepali Student Association, where he says he gained leadership skills.

"My experience at Missouri Western was amazing," Chinta said. "I felt like it was a second home."



Sanhith Chinta '18

Mariatul Dianah Hidzir '18 Student Leadership Award Graduating Student of the Year

Dianah Hidzir graduated with a diploma in English from a local university in Malaysia and in May 2018 graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations from Missouri Western. She completed an internship at Open Client Services in Chicago this past summer.

As a student, Hidzir was the program assistant in the



Dianah Hidzir '18

Center for Multicultural Education, president of the International Student Council, a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society and an editor for the Griffon Yearbook. She was selected as the student to give the commencement address at the May ceremony.

"I got to meet people from all around the world, organize events, utilize my skills and creativity in my classes and make so many memories," she said.

Nominate for Alumni Association awards today!

Nominations for all Alumni Association awards may be submitted year round online at missouriwestern.edu/alumni. Along with the nomination form, a letter stating why you believe the person deserves this award must accompany the application. The deadline is March 1 each year. Current members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors are not eligible for nomination. ■

Shawn Malone '87: Global chemist

When Shawn Malone '87 was in high school trying to figure out how he would pay for college, his sister, who was a Missouri Western student at the time, told her chemistry professor, Dr. Len Archer, about him, and Dr. Archer helped Malone receive a chemistry scholarship that paid for his freshman year.

He earned a three-year ROTC scholarship to pay for his last three years of college, graduating with a chemistry degree and a 2nd Lieutenant commissioning in the Chemical Corps of the U. S. Army.

Malone said he appreciated Dr. Archer's role in getting him to Missouri Western, and also Dr. Larry Lambing, whom he collaborated with on research projects.

"I think the most important part of Missouri Western was its smaller size so it allowed us closer interaction with the professors, especially in the chemistry department," Malone said. "We were able to use lab equipment much earlier than most and work on research to support the professors, which I believe helped me develop strong problem solving skills."

His senior year, he served as ROTC battalion commander, which, he says, helped him develop even more skills.

"In ROTC, we spent hours studying and practicing leadership, as well as challenging ourselves mentally and physically on orienteering courses, rappelling and exercising."



Shawn Malone '87

Although a great memory that stands out was jump (Airborne) school after his junior year, a chemistry memory hasn't faded much, either (for him or the professors, I'd bet).

"I was a little mischievous," Malone said. "During my senior year, my best friend and I made a particular chemical in the lab that exploded upon contact, more along the lines of pop caps, just a little stronger. We would put large amounts in filter paper and drop it down the stairwell from the third floor and run as the explosion echoed. We got in trouble when we put some under an eraser during one of Dr. (Jerry) Zweerink's classes. When he grabbed the eraser it gave him quite a jolt."

It must have all worked out, though. After graduating, he spent 11 years as active military, earning a Master's in Chemical Engineering from Cornell University. He finished his military career as a Major teaching chemistry and organic chemistry at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.

Then he began working for GE Appliances and today is Vice President, Sourcing, responsible for a Global Sourcing Organization that purchases over \$5 billion of goods and services that go into GE appliances that are made in the U.S., Mexico and Asia. The position requires world travel, which Malone enjoys.

He says his experiences in the Department of Chemistry and ROTC played a large role in shaping who he is today, so when he wanted to make a larger commitment to Missouri Western, he established the Shawn P. Malone Chemistry Scholarship, an endowed scholarship for chemistry majors, with a preference to ROTC cadets, National Guard and Reserve members and honorably discharged veterans.

"I have always been a regular supporter of Missouri Western because I recall the efforts they made to help me out financially," he said. "I had reached a point in my career that it was time to start giving back more to those who helped me through life."

He lives in Louisville, Kentucky with his wife of 31 years, Cathy, and has two sons who are both married, and one granddaughter. ■



Sterling Fichter '13 and Garrett Holtz '09: Following Lewis and Clark

For two alumni who earned history degrees from Missouri Western, an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's Corps of Discovery expedition was too good to pass up. This past fall, Sterling Fichter '13 and Garrett Holtz '09 gathered with several other Lewis and Clark buffs to reenact 125 miles of the expedition's 1806 return on the Missouri River.

In character and period costume – Holtz as Sgt. John Ordway and Fichter as John Colter – the group started their six-day journey on the river below Fort Randall Dam near Pickstown, South Dakota and ended at Ponca State Park near Ponca, Nebraska. Along the way, they presented 11 programs to school groups and the public, speaking to approximately 800-1,000 people.

Holtz, who teaches middle school social studies at St. Francis Xavier School in St. Joseph, Missouri, said he enjoyed talking to the school groups about Lewis and Clark and seeing the children get excited about history. His presentation was about the expedition's provisions.

Prior to the trip, Holtz had made portable soup, pemmican (a Native American food) and elk jerky for his presentations. The portable soup, he said, was "survival food and the most

important provision Lewis and Clark brought along."

The reenactors ate 21st century food on their trip, but one evening they cooked some portable soup over the campfire and added some rice and jerky to it. Holtz told the students that the 2018 crew disliked it as much as the 1806 crew did. The first time Lewis and Clark's crew tried it, he said, they killed a horse and ate it instead. "The idea was to mix the portable soup with something else, but they didn't have anything."

Fichter, who farms and works construction in southwest Iowa, said he was nervous about having to give a presentation, but he was surprised by how much he enjoyed talking about his character to the students.

To prepare for the trip, he made knives and powder horns, and tried to make his "factory-production gun not so factory-like." He also made three pairs of pants – one out of deer hide, one out of elk hide and one cowhide in preparation for the trip ("elk is the best"). He told the students about Colter, who is considered the first mountain man. In 1807-08, Colter became the first known person of European descent to enter the region that is now Yellowstone National Park. Fichter also spoke about fur trappers of the time, beaver hats and the flintlock muzzleloader he carried.

The programs also featured the boat builder who talked about the replica pirogue, the 15th boat of that type he had built. He is considered one of the nation's leading authorities on boats of the Lewis and Clark era, Fichter said.



Another one of the crew talked about how the explorers navigated by the stars, and a third talked about the mission of the Corps of Discovery – to explore the lands that were part of the Louisiana Purchase, find the headwaters of the Missouri River, establish contact with the Indian tribes and study the flora and fauna of the new United States territory.

The presenters also passed out coins with a likeness of Thomas Jefferson that were replicas of those that Lewis and Clark gave to Indian chiefs along the way. Those in attendance also had the opportunity to board and explore the 42' x 9' boat, complete with a cannon.

Both Fichter and Holtz said they were glad they got to experience a bit of history. They enjoyed the camaraderie of the crew, navigating the boat, wearing period clothing and camping in 1800s-style tents (think buffalo robe and wool blankets). Fichter said the undeveloped stretches of the river made him feel like he was seeing the same scenery as Lewis and Clark saw. The only downside of the reenactment was the heavy rains prior to the trip. Park rangers would not allow the crew to return to the high and rapid river after day two.

Also as part of their journey, the 2018 crew read excerpts from the 1806 journals that matched their location and stopped to visit the Lewis and Clark historic sites along the way. They stopped at Spirit Mound Historic Prairie in South

Dakota and Old Baldy in Nebraska, where the expedition had trapped a “barking squirrel” (a prairie dog) and sent it back to President Thomas Jefferson.

Holtz said he was happy to share his experiences with his students when he returned home.

“As a student of history, it was great to be able to put ourselves in the Corps of Discovery’s shoes, seeing it and experiencing it somewhat like they did,” Fichter said.

Corps of Discovery Glossary

Flintlock Muzzleloader – A firearm into which the projectile is loaded from the muzzle of the gun (the open end of the gun’s barrel). It uses flint as its firing mechanism.

Pemmican – a paste of dried and pounded meat mixed with melted fat and other ingredients (Holtz used homemade jerky and blueberries).

Pirogue – A flat-bottom river craft. The Corps of Discovery used the term for two of their boats.

Portable Soup – a type of dehydrated food used in the 18th and 19th centuries; a precursor to bouillon cubes.

Spirit Mound – a prominent hill on the Great Plains in South Dakota. The Indians considered the mound the home of dangerous spirits or little people. Members of the Corps of Discovery climbed it on Aug. 25, 1804. ■



Jaime Bartley '17: Coordinating a beautiful gift

Last year, Jaime Bartley '17 was part of a University of Kansas Health System team that made history. Bartley, organ transplant manager for the kidney, pancreas transplant and living donation programs, led a team of transplant coordinators who coordinated a five-pair kidney transplant chain, which had never been done before in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Surgeons operated on five donors and five recipients over two days.

The chain, she said, started with an "altruistic" donor, who was not a match for his friend, but was ready to give his kidney to a stranger. The team looked to its program's transplant registry of patients awaiting transplant and eligible living donors for possible kidney transplant matches. The chain ultimately included three donors who were incompatible to their intended recipients and one pair who was compatible and chose to join the chain, enabling more exchanges of the gift of life.

"While the logistics of coordinating this transplant chain can present unique challenges, our nurses, doctors and multidisciplinary team members were truly honored to care for these patients throughout their evaluation and recovery, and for years to come," Bartley, a native of Omaha, Nebraska, said in a press conference.

The roots of the historic accomplishment, she said, actually started in her last semester in Missouri Western's Master of Science in Nursing: Healthcare Leadership program. For her final capstone project, Optimizing a Living Donor Program, she and one of her colleagues, Melissa Fowler, a Missouri Western alumna who earned a Bachelor of Science in



Jaime Bartley '17

Nursing in 2013 and her master's in healthcare leadership in 2016, examined all aspects of the transplant programs Bartley was responsible for. They studied ways to remove barriers, improve quality and outcomes for patients, and increase living donations. Changing the processes and asking the right questions led to the five-pair transplant chain. Bartley confirmed that the University of Kansas Health System has since performed two additional kidney transplant chains, one in August 2018 and one this past October.

She said they wanted to help patients better understand that they didn't need to find a donor that was a match for them. If they found someone willing to donate, the team would work to pair living donors and recipients to maximize the number of transplants and the best

match for each patient.

"A living donation is the best outcome for a recipient when compared to a deceased donor transplant or dialysis."

Bartley, who earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Kearney in 2003, said she had thought about getting a master's for a long time and

researched several programs before choosing Missouri Western in 2013.

"I wanted it to be worth it, a good value and affordable," she said.

Missouri Western's program also offered the flexibility she

needed by offering courses on campus, in Liberty, Missouri or the option to join the class via webcam. Many courses were also a hybrid of classroom and online.

"It exceeded my expectations," she said. "The professors were supportive and truly treated me as a professional."

Bartley began working with transplants ("the most

rewarding work in nursing I have ever done") when she became a clinical nurse transplant coordinator at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha in 2007.

"A living donation is the most beautiful decision a donor can make," she says. "If you have it in your heart to donate, call us and we can get you the information." ■

"While the logistics of coordinating this transplant chain can present unique challenges, our nurses, doctors and multidisciplinary team members were truly honored to care for these patients throughout their evaluation and recovery, and for years to come."

- Jaime Bartley '17

1970s

Dr. David Belt '73, retired biology instructor at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley, had a tropical plant named after him – *Anthurium davidbeltianum* Croat. Dr. Belt was volunteering for the Missouri Botanical Garden under Dr. Tom Croat when the new species was discovered in Peru in 2006. He taught at MCC for 16 years.

Sue Owen '73 is the head women's golf coach at Peru State College in Peru, Nebraska. She had been teaching and coaching at Rock Port (Missouri) High School.

Gayle Myers '74 received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. Less than one half percent of all certificated pilots have received the award from the FAA. A thorough search of FAA records revealed no accidents or violations in 50 years of corporate and airline flying totaling over 16,000 hours. He currently is flying a Jetstream for Alpha Air out of Joplin, Missouri.



Dr. Joella Hendricks Mehrhof '75 retired after 32 years as a professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education

at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Besides teaching, Dr. Mehrhof served as president of the faculty, graduate advisor, and department chair, as well as in many other administrative roles. She was honored with the highest award given to an ESU faculty member when she was named a Roe R. Cross Distinguished Professor. Professionally, she has authored more than 40 books and journal articles and has received national awards for mentoring, teaching, and service. Dr. Mehrhof was named a Missouri Western Distinguished Alumni in 1998.

Chris Danford '78 advanced to Investment Advisor Representative with Family Investment Center in St. Joseph, Missouri, passing the Series 65 Exam.

Gary Schermerhorn '79 and Cecilia Irenosen Iboaya-Woods were married June 23, 2018 in St. Joseph, Missouri. Gary is the owner and operator of Benders Prescription Shop in St. Joseph.



Dr. Melissa Stuart '79 was appointed chairman of the Microbiology/Immunology Department at A.T.

Still University, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, in May 2018.

1980s

Dr. Debra Parker Oliver '81 received the 51st Faculty-Alumni Award from the Mizzou Alumni Association. Dr. Parker Oliver earned her master's degree in social work and a doctorate's degree in rural sociology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She started Hands of Hope Hospice in St. Joseph in 1990. She is currently a professor at MU and has published 170 papers.

Jeffrey Stubblefield '83 was hired as Parks and Recreation Director for Maryville, Missouri.

Susan M. Ball '85 was appointed to the Board of Directors of U.S. Concrete, Inc. of Euless, Texas.

Richard Todd '86 has been working as an Insurance Financial Examiner at the Kansas Insurance Department since March 2016. He says he has been back to campus more frequently of late because his nephew, Bryce Steffens, is a Griffon football player.

Angela Hickman Podany '88 earned a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia University in Nebraska in 2018. She has been teaching special education in a middle school in Omaha, Nebraska for the past five years.

1990s

Stacia A. (Hellerich) Studer '92 is serving as assistant principal at Bode Middle School for the 2018-19 school year. For the past 16 years, she has taught English at Bode.

Eric Montegna '93 was accepted for membership into MENSA in 2017.

Catina (Green) Dreyer '99 is the assistant principal/athletic director for Savannah (Missouri) Middle School. She taught Spanish for 19 years, the last 13 in the Savannah School District. Dreyer earned her master's in administration from William Woods University in 2011.

Terri Sallee '99 participated in Miami University's Earth Expeditions global field course in Baja (Mexico) this past summer, where she studied at Bahia de los Angeles, a UNESCO World Heritage site and biosphere reserve located on the Sea of Cortez.

2000s



Stephanie Paasch '01 published book one and two of a children's picture book series, "The Adventures of

Sparklepants." Book one, "Sparklepants: Moving Day," is available on Amazon or at Main Street Books in St. Charles, Missouri. Book two is "Sparklepants: Terrific Tea Party." The series will feature 29 stories about Ellie Marie and her dog, Sparklepants.

Bradley Kurz '02 was named one of 20 Under 40 by the Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig. The financial advisor for Edward Jones is very involved in his Hannibal, Missouri community.

Danielle (Jones) Robinson '03 and her husband, William, welcomed their fourth child, a daughter, in April 2018. Emery joins siblings Samiya, Kira and William III (Joey).

Justin Collins '06 is the principal at Gallatin R-5 middle school.

2010s

Sarah (Hatten) Weaver '12 is a mortgage banker at Commerce Bank in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Elizabeth Bertram '15 is participating in a one-year clerkship with the North Dakota Supreme Court. She earned her Juris Doctorate from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University, in May 2018.



Maggie Lee '16 and **David Anderson '16** were married May 19, 2018 in Jonesboro, Indiana.

Cierra Edwards '17 and **Brad Stanton '17** were married June 2, 2018 in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Brooke Chestnut '17 is the superintendent of park operations for Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation.



Marilyn Huskamp '17 mended a vintage quilt that will be featured in the Quilting Arts Magazine February/March 2019 publication. She also had her Kansas City cityscape quilt/painting above published in the July/August 2018 Cloth Paper Scissors Magazine.



JD Soil '17 was commissioned to paint a mural at East Hills Mall in St. Joseph, Missouri called "Dream Machine."



Robert Ernst '18 was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps on Parris Island, South Carolina.

His father, CDR Benjamin Ernst, U.S. Navy (Retired) swore him in, and Robert wore his father's dress blues from when he was a new Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He reported to the Basic School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia in October.

In Memoriam

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

Sharon Sue Bally '58, St. Joseph, Missouri, Aug. 20, 2018.

Phillip B. Bivin '75, Mountain Home, Arkansas, May 6, 2018.

Edward A. Cordonier '79, St. Peters, Missouri, Aug. 14, 2018.

Michael B. Dye '07, Wentzville, Missouri, Sept. 17, 2018.

Anne (Miles) Fletcher, Omaha, Nebraska, June 22, 2018. Fletcher was a past member of the MWSU Foundation Board of Directors.

Samuel P. Fuller '82, St. Joseph, Missouri, June 19, 2018.

Gregg T. Hyder '73, St. Joseph, Missouri, Sept. 14, 2018.

Barbara D. James JC, St. Joseph, Missouri, Aug. 18, 2018.

Joyce A. Laffey '92, St. Joseph, Missouri, formerly of Chillicothe, June 22, 2018.

Sherrill E. Logan '74, Savannah, Missouri, Sept. 26, 2018.

Marillyn R. Manuel '47, St. Joseph, Missouri, July 23, 2018.

Thomas E. McCallan II '94, St. Joseph, Missouri, July 13, 2018.

Marilyn Meinert Ph.D. '72, St. Joseph, Missouri, Sept. 12, 2018.

Dennis P. O'Connell '81, Kansas City, Missouri, Aug. 23, 2018.

Michael Parks '04, St. Joseph, Missouri, June 22, 2018.

James Schuckebrook '76, Kansas City, Missouri, Oct. 6, 2018.

Stephen K. Showalter '86, St. Joseph, Missouri, formerly of South Carolina, May 25, 2018.

John Scott Smith '87, Glendale, Arizona, Aug. 3, 2018.

Melvin C. Tyler, St. Joseph, Missouri, Sept. 15, 2018. Tyler served as assistant director of Admissions, residential house director and assistant basketball coach at Missouri Western for 11 years before he began working for UMKC. He is survived by his wife, Deatra, who retired in 2018 after a long career at Missouri Western. ■

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Submit your creative entry to holtz@missouriwestern.edu or mail to Diane Holtz, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507 by January 31. Our panel of judges will select a winner, and we will notify you! We will announce the winner in the Spring 2019 issue. Good luck!