

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

# MWSU



**FALL 2019**

**16** Welcome, President Wilson!

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our Founders began a legacy.*  
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FALL 2019

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Photo by Patrick Evenson

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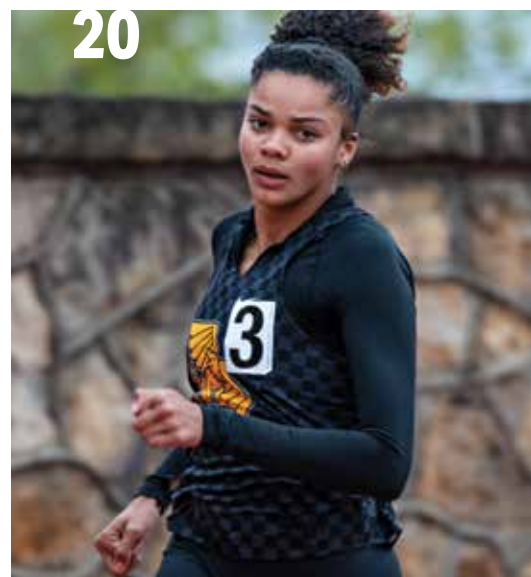
A \$1 million pledge boosts the Centennial Capital Campaign that has reached more than \$10 million over its initial celebration goal.

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Missouri Western welcomed its sixth president in July 2019. Read about what he brings to the University and his vision for the future.

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Fall 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of Missouri Western's present-day campus and becoming a four-year institution. Walk down Memory Lane with us as we reminisce about the past 50 years.



The MWSU Magazine is a publication of the University Advancement Office for alumni and friends of Missouri Western State University and its predecessor institutions.

## FALL 2019 VOLUME 17/NUMBER 3

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Missouri Western State University  
is an equal opportunity institution.

## president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

I am truly humbled to serve as the next President of Missouri Western. The trust expressed by the Board of Governors in appointing me is sincerely appreciated. Missouri Western is an outstanding university that plays a critical role in the lives of our students, our faculty, our staff, our graduates and our community.

As I interacted with the Missouri Western family during the interview process and since my appointment in March, I discovered a community committed to the ideals of an affordable public higher education, dedicated student service, quality teaching, applied learning, innovation, creativity and excellence. We have exceptional students, faculty, staff, programs and opportunities here at the University.

Since I began my presidency in July, I have been exploring a number of initiatives in an effort to grow our enrollment and improve student retention. We are looking

at changing our current scholarship program, researching new degree programs, and finding ways to better serve our students to help them succeed. We are also working

to increase efficiencies on campus. In the coming months, we will share more information with you about our innovative efforts.

This University is a special place where students can plan, dream, interact and excel, and acquire the tools necessary to succeed. At the

same time, a university cannot excel without the collective support of many. Working together with you, I am excited about the possibilities and look forward to building upon our solid foundation to reach new heights together.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Wilson  
President





Andrea Hall '19, Pam Klaus '03 and Michelle Scott '19

## Alumna awarded Auntie Anne's franchise

After the most recent competition by the Center for Franchise Development in the Craig School of Business and Technology, there ended up being one winner but two new business owners. Andrea Hall '19 won the competition and was awarded an Auntie Anne's pretzel franchise in Joplin, Missouri. In a first in the 10 years of the competition, Hall asked the other finalist in the program, Michelle Scott '19, to partner with her.

Hall, of St. Joseph, Missouri, and Scott, of Maysville, Missouri, were two of a record 16 students to take the senior-level Applied Business Ownership class this past spring. Students in the class prepared business plans for the franchise, and Hall and Scott were selected as finalists. They presented their plans to a panel of judges that included

Steven L. Craig, Missouri Western benefactor; other business leaders; representatives from Auntie Anne's; and alumni who had won franchises in previous years.

"It's a great feeling," Hall said.

"I've always dreamed of owning my own business and today this dream has come true. I'm super excited Michelle and I will be able to pursue this dream together."

Hall graduated with a major in accounting and a minor in entrepreneurship and Scott graduated

with majors in management and marketing.

"We had two outstanding candidates, and it was a tough decision for the judges," said Pam Klaus '03, director of the Center for Franchise Development. "Andrea was selected as the winner, but she and Michelle had planned for a long time to go into business together, so we not only have a winner, we actually formed a partnership today.

It's a unique and exciting day for our program."

Hall and Scott join 19 alumni owners operating 38 stores and businesses in nine states since the franchise program began in 2009. Last year, the alumni-owned businesses employed 319 people and generated \$11.8 million in sales.

The entrepreneurs receive ongoing support from Craig, faculty members, the Craig School of Business Advisory Council and each other. Additionally, the owners are expected to donate a portion of their store's proceeds back to the University. So far, those donations have totaled more than \$230,000.

At the franchise dinner the evening before the competition, Jim Reinert '73 received the inaugural Patron of Entrepreneurs Award in recognition of his support of the program, and owners of three stores were recognized for paying off the loans for their stores. Dr. Robert Vartabedian received the Champion of Entrepreneurs Award. ■

**"I've always dreamed of owning my own business and today this dream has come true. I'm super excited Michelle and I will be able to pursue this dream together."**

- Andrea Hall '19



## Department receives accreditation

The Department of Theatre, Cinema and Dance was notified this past spring by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) that it received five-year full accreditation for its theatre and cinema programs. At the time of the department's accreditation, only 190 institutions in the United States had received NAST accreditation, and Missouri Western is just one of five Missouri universities with that distinction.

"It tells the world that our faculty, curriculum and student work meet a national standard of excellence," said Dr. Robert Willenbrink, dean of the School of Fine Arts at the time.

He said rather than just review the classes offered, the accrediting body looks at the competency outcomes of students, and the accreditation process includes a self-study and on-site review.

"Students can now say they graduated from an accredited program, and they are excited about that," said Jeff Stover, associate professor of theatre and department chair. ■

## Join the MWSU Ambassadors!

You are invited to join the MWSU Ambassadors, a group of campus and community members who raise funds for scholarships for nontraditional students. Learn more by attending their luncheon meeting at noon on Sept. 19 (social begins at 11:30 a.m.). For more information, go to [foundation.missouriwestern.edu/ambassadors](http://foundation.missouriwestern.edu/ambassadors) or call (816) 271-5920. ■

## MSN/MBA new this fall

A master's program that combines nursing and business for nurses who want advance their healthcare careers will begin this fall. A joint Master of Science in Nursing in Health Care Leadership/Master of Business Administration degree can be earned with 47 credit hours – 26 nursing credits and 21 business credits.

The MSN courses will be offered in face-to-face, blended and online learning formats, while the MBA courses will be offered face-to-face and online. Students will also have the option to go full- or part-time.

The program is designed to develop leadership abilities in promoting professional practice, creating effective work environments, fostering evidence-based practices, application of informatics in decision making, leading and developing teams, effective resource management, and more.

For more information, email [nursing@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:nursing@missouriwestern.edu) or go to [missouriwestern.edu/nursing/msn](http://missouriwestern.edu/nursing/msn). Dr. Jacklyn Gentry, assistant professor of nursing, is the program director. ■

## New vice president hired

Darrell R. Morrison, who had been serving as associate vice chancellor for finance at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, was named vice president for financial planning and administration and began in June.

Prior to his position at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, Morrison served as the vice president for business affairs at Texas A&M University-San Antonio and as the vice chancellor for finance and administration at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.



Darrell R. Morrison

Morrison holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Accounting from Henderson State University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock.

As vice president for financial planning, Morrison is Missouri Western's chief financial officer reporting directly to the president. He oversees accounting services, the business office, human resources, information technology, physical plant, police department, purchasing, risk management and contracts for the bookstore and food services.

Morrison succeeds Dr. Cale Fessler. ■

# Residence hall renamed for former president

Griffon Hall has been renamed Vartabedian Hall in honor of Drs. Robert and Laurel Vartabedian. Dr. Robert Vartabedian retired in June 2019 after 11 years as Missouri Western's president.

"Getting to know Dr. Vartabedian in the five years I've been on the board has been a real blessing for me," said David Liechti, chair of the Board of Governors. "He and Laurel have been very engaged in the community, and I think they've made a great team. I know all of the board members join me in thanking them both, and I'm pleased we could honor them in this way."

Vartabedian Hall was one of the construction projects on campus during Dr. Vartabedian's tenure as president, opening to students in 2011. It is Missouri Western's only apartment-style residence hall, housing 240 students. Each suite houses four students in four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a shared living area.

The board also honored Dr. Vartabedian with the title of "President Emeritus" and presented him with an office chair engraved with his name, years of service and the University Seal. ■

## Hyer named Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean

Dr. Joel Hyer, formerly academic dean at Chadron State College in Nebraska, was hired as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and began his duties July 1.

Dr. Hyer had been at Chadron State since 2001, starting as an assistant professor of history. He served as director of the history and American Indian studies programs, head of the Social Sciences program and department chair. He began his duties as academic dean in 2011, overseeing the School of Business, Mathematics and Science

as well as Graduate Studies. As dean, Dr. Hyer developed and worked with others to implement Chadron State's plan for reaffirmation of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, resulting in full reaffirmation in 2017.

Dr. Hyer received his Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Riverside and his master's and bachelor's degrees, also in history, from Brigham Young University. He succeeds Dr. Murray Nabors, who is teaching biology full-time this fall. ■

## Early College Academy formed

A move to combine the programs and courses available to high school students under one umbrella was completed this past spring when the Early College Academy was formed, under the Western Institute.

The Early College Academy includes Dual Credit programs, the Visiting High School Student program and the Dual Enrollment program.

Last fall, enrollment from all these programs was 1,224. ■

## University offers accelerated cybersecurity degree

Students have an opportunity to earn a master's degree in cybersecurity in five years, thanks to an accelerated program in the Department of Computer Science, Math and Physics.

Those working on a bachelor's degree in computer science or applied computer technology may take up to 12 graduate credit hours in cybersecurity courses during their senior year that would count toward the master's degree. The master's program was formerly known as Information Technology Assurance Administration.

"Our goal is to equip students to become IT professionals that safeguard IT infrastructures from attacks on hardware, software, networks and data repositories," said Dr. Yipkei Kwok, assistant professor of computer science. "Doing so requires our students to gain a thorough understanding of these attacks and the ability to deploy countermeasures against them."

He noted that the company Cybersecurity Ventures predicts there will be 3.5 million cybersecurity job openings by 2021. For more information go to [missouriwestern.edu/csmp/cybersecurity](http://missouriwestern.edu/csmp/cybersecurity) or email [ykwok@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:ykwok@missouriwestern.edu). ■

# University establishes diversity statement

Last fall, a University diversity statement was approved after a task force spent two years studying Missouri Western's success in recruiting and retaining a diverse campus workforce.

Task force co-chair Latoya Muhammad said they formed several committees, conducted surveys and focus groups, studied past surveys, and examined policies and procedures in Human Resources.

Several new policies are now in place, including ongoing employee training, diversity programming and a new reporting system.

## Diversity Statement

**As a student-centered learning community, Missouri Western is dedicated to inclusion and the promotion of diversity as essential to our mission as a public university. This commitment contributes to transforming lives and demonstrates our values of freedom, respect and courage.**

Muhammad said there are and will be several campus opportunities to learn about diversity. In the 2018-19 academic year, the Center for Multicultural Education presented about 40 programs on diversity and inclusion, and the International Center presented 40 more.

"Ultimately, the task force started with our students," Muhammad said. "If our students speak up, it's important for us to actively listen and follow up with them to let them know what steps we are taking." ■

# Convocation to feature Jon Meacham

Presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham will be the guest speaker for the 26th annual R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues at Missouri Western this month. His presentation, "The Soul of America: Moving Beyond Division and Hostility," will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 26, in the Looney Complex Arena. Meacham will also be the featured guest at the annual Convocation Luncheon at noon Sept. 26 in the Fulkerson Center. For more information, go to [missouriwestern.edu/convocation](http://missouriwestern.edu/convocation).

A contributor to TIME and The New York Times Book Review, Meacham is a highly sought-after commentator, regularly appearing on CNN and MSNBC. Known as a skilled orator with a depth of knowledge about politics, religion, and current affairs, Meacham

brings historical context to the issues and events impacting our daily lives.



His latest No. 1 New York Times bestseller, "The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels," examines the present moment in American politics and life by looking back at critical times in U.S. history when hope overcame division and

fear. Meacham is also a co-author of the recently released book, "Impeachment: An American History," which reveals the complicated motives behind the three presidential impeachments in U.S. history.

Meacham's presidential biography, "Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush," debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times bestsellers list. Meacham delivered eulogies for both President George H.W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush.

Other bestsellers include "Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power," "Franklin and Winston," "American Gospel" and "American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House," which won the Pulitzer Prize in 2009. ■



# Professor lives her adventurous dream

Just 320 days after surgery for a brain aneurism, Dr. Linda Oakleaf, assistant professor of health, physical education and recreation, participated in a two-day, 52-mile Harbor to Harbor hike in California, trekking from Oceanside to San Diego.

"I'm really glad I did it in spite of the fact that my feet kinda looked like hamburger when I was finished," she said with a laugh.

The journey to her hiking adventure began when Dr. Oakleaf was recovering from brain surgery last summer. Someone told her about Project Athena, an organization that helps survivors of medical or traumatic setbacks "achieve their adventurous dreams."

Along with the Harbor to Harbor trek, the nonprofit organization offers three other adventures each year: Grand Canyon Adventure Trek, San Diego Cove to Harbor Coastal Marathon Trek and a Florida Keys to Recovery Adventure.



Dr. Linda Oakleaf

"It's not about trying to get back to what you were," Project Athena Founder Robyn Benincasa wrote on its website.

"It's about trying to be the best of what you're capable of today, this minute. The most gratifying thing is the moment when you see someone realize they're going to make it, when you see the fear disappear and they realize how awesome they truly are!"

Dr. Oakleaf said she was immediately interested when she heard about Project Athena, and was awarded a grant from them that paid for her flight, transportation, hotel, food and some training gear. Project Athena even provided her with a trainer through an app.

Dr. Oakleaf began training in January 2019, and the winter weather presented its own set of challenges. One day, she was iced in and walked up and down her basement stairs for 45 minutes. But working toward a goal really helped her on her way to recovery, she said. "Training made me feel better about myself and made me feel stronger."

The first day of the Harbor to Harbor trek, Dr. Oakleaf hiked 28 miles in about 11 hours, and the second day 24 miles in about 10 hours. A 40-minute climb up Mount Soledad on the second day was very challenging, she said, but the walkers helped each other and



Dr. Linda Oakleaf with her fellow Project Athena trekkers.

even had Project Athena "trail angels" to help if they needed it.

"All of us had our struggles with our bodies, and we talked about it with each other," she said of her fellow walkers. "They are now like family."

Dr. Oakleaf was scheduled to teach classes in the summer of 2018 before she found out she had to have surgery, and she said she is grateful for her colleagues who not only took over her classes, but helped when she was recovering. "They were so supportive and kind. I couldn't have done it without the help from everyone."

Surgeons warned that she could have problems after the surgery, but she has no ill effects or deficits.

"There is no way to tell your colleagues that you are having brain surgery without sounding traumatic," she said with a laugh. "It's not your best day when you tell your dean that you may return from surgery with some brain deficits."

"But," she paused, "now I can even do crazy things like walk 50 miles." ■

# Griffons Abroad

## Legal terms teaching in Myanmar

Understanding legal jargon is difficult enough for the average layperson to understand, but try teaching those terms to someone who doesn't speak English. That's just what Kaylee Sharp '19 and Britane Hubbard '19 did in Myanmar in the summer of 2018 for law students at Taunggyi University.

Sharp and Hubbard developed the two-week curriculum since they were the first students from the United States to teach the course. They had access to the lesson plans of a group from Australia who had taught there the year before, but unfortunately, those plans didn't work too well for the women. In the Australians' class the year prior, the students had some command of the English language, but Sharp and Hubbard's students knew no English at all.

"We had to do a lot of reworking," Sharp said. "But by the end, everyone was having a blast and it was wonderful." She said that since the class was optional for the students, she and Hubbard wanted to make sure it was worthwhile for them.

"We had never taught before so it was very challenging, but the students were so grateful to learn English," Hubbard said. "It felt like we were making a definite difference. They were sad to see us leave."

"It was a really incredible learning experience," Sharp said. "It was life-changing, and I'll be forever grateful for the experience."

Last December, the two women gave a presentation at an international conference in Australia about their service in Myanmar. And this past January, thanks to webcams

and the internet, they trained the next group of teachers and shared their lesson plans.

Hubbard then returned to Myanmar this past summer for six weeks. Along with teaching English, she helped Dave Tushaus, professor of legal studies, develop law clinic courses (see "Professor selected as Fulbright Specialist").

Sharp and Hubbard, who both graduated this past May, took full advantage of opportunities as college students. They participated in a study away trip to Washington, D.C., Sharp went to Portland, Oregon for another and Hubbard traveled to Memphis, Tennessee.

Hubbard, a native of Linneus, Missouri, graduated with a degree in criminal justice with a legal studies concentration and began Missouri Western's master's program in forensic investigation this fall.

As a freshman at Missouri Western, she enrolled in an honors colloquium on election law that was taught by Tushaus, and she

worked with him on research projects every year since. This past academic year, Hubbard helped plan four pro bono legal clinics for the campus and community. She also gave presentations on her honors research at several national conferences throughout her Missouri Western career.

Sharp, a native of Savannah, Missouri, participated in an independent study course every year with Dr. Edwin Taylor, associate professor of political science, and presented her research at national conferences.

"Dr. Taylor really wants to make sure that political science is more than just watching the news," Sharp said.

She spent the spring 2019 semester in Jefferson City serving as an intern for State Sen. Jill Schupp from the 24th district near St. Louis.

"It was great to do all this with Missouri Western," Sharp said. "I feel like my degree is a lot more valuable." ■

Kaylee Sharp '19, Fulbright Specialist Dave Tushaus and Britane Hubbard '19.



## Professor selected as Fulbright Specialist

When Kaylee Sharp '19 and Britane Hubbard '19 served in Myanmar in the summer of 2018, they were accompanied by Dave Tushaus, professor of legal studies, who served as an international clinician in residence for a month at Taunggyi University. The three worked with an NGO (non-governmental organization) called Babseacle, whose mission is to create greater access to justice worldwide.

This past summer, Tushaus returned to Myanmar to serve as a Fulbright Specialist.

In the summer of 2018, Tushaus worked with more than 100 law students there to develop a community teaching program and create a mini-clinic to conduct a community needs assessment. He continued to work with a law student and faculty member from Myanmar even after he returned to the United States.

This past summer, he built on that foundation, working to help them establish a legal clinic as part of their law school that will become a model for other universities in Myanmar.

This is Tushaus's second stint as a Fulbright Specialist. In 2017, he spent six weeks assisting the University of The Gambia Faculty of Law with its clinical legal program. In 2012, Tushaus was selected as a Fulbright Scholar for the fall semester. He helped law students expand their legal aid clinic at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India and gave lectures and workshops on the subject.

"Legal clinics are a very effective way to give people access to justice," Tushaus said. ■

## Training teachers in Egypt

Dr. Adrienne Johnson spent two weeks in Cairo this past spring when she was selected for an English Language Specialist assignment for the U.S. Department of State. Just 80 people from the United States are selected for the program each year.

Dr. Johnson, associate professor of education and coordinator of the graduate-level TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program, spent six days of her trip

training 20 mentor teachers, who then returned to their elementary schools to train teacher mentors.

"The teachers were funny, kind and eager to learn," Dr. Johnson said. "They were one of the easiest groups I've ever worked with."

She also attended the two-day NileTESOL Conference XXIII at the American University in Cairo, on the New Cairo campus. Dr. Johnson gave a talk to all the conference attendees about leaving your comfort zone and moving into a growth zone, a favorite topic in her Missouri Western classes.

While at the conference, she also served on a panel about teacher needs in the 21st century and gave a presentation on interactive strategies for working with young language learners. More than 500 attended that presentation.

"I feel very fortunate that I got to do something I love to do,"

Dr. Johnson said of her time in Egypt. She said that since she is always asking her students to step outside their comfort zone and learn something new, she was pleased that she was able to do that. It was her first time in Egypt, her first time in a predominantly Muslim country and her first time in an Arabic-speaking country.

"I require my students to attempt to learn a foreign language, so it was good for me to do that, too."

Dr. Johnson joined Missouri Western in the fall of 2013, and she teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses. She earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and Spanish from the University of Denver, a master's in education from National Louis University in Chicago, and a doctorate and master's in linguistics from the University of Kansas.

Her specialties include young learners, English as a second language and bilingual programming, and first and second language acquisition. Her career has included several years of working with elementary-aged language learners.

"I went to Egypt to teach others, but I probably learned the most," she said. "I was grateful to deepen my understanding of another culture and its people. It was an awesome experience." ■

**"I went to Egypt to teach others, but I probably learned the most."**

- Dr. Adrienne Johnson



# Centennial Capital Campaign Report

In January 2019, Missouri Western entered the fifth year of its five-year Centennial Capital Campaign. Kim Weddle '00, director of Development, said that although it has been a successful campaign, there is more work they want to accomplish.

The campaign kicked off with three campaign goals: investment in campus facilities, investment in Missouri Western's endowment and investment in academic and co-curricular programming.

An early deferred gift of \$10 million from an anonymous alumnus kicked off the campaign in 2015. The Foundation also received a \$1.5 million pledge from Mosaic Life Care to endow a professorship in the field of population health. Fiona Sansone was hired for the Mosaic Professorship for Population Health, the first endowed professorship in Missouri Western's history.

Just this past April, a \$1 million gift from University

supporter Drew Brown brought the campaign total to \$31,159,565 in outright and deferred pledges and gifts, exceeding the initial celebration goal of \$20 million.

(See Drew Brown pledges \$1 million gift, p. 12.)

One of the campaign's successes was the renovation of Spratt Memorial Stadium, which

was identified as an urgent need in the University's Comprehensive Master Plan in 2014.

Thanks to a combination of public and private support, the stadium reopened in 2016 and included new turf for the field, moving the visitor side bleachers closer to the field and replacing the seating on the home side. Steven L. Craig donated funds for an extra-large video scoreboard and the field was

named Craig Field in his honor.

A three-story building was also part of the project, and it features a new concourse area with a ticket



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office, team store, two concession stands and larger restrooms. There is also a new Stadium Club, which is two to three times larger than the previous space.

The second floor houses individual suites with both indoor and outdoor seating and a serving area, in addition to restrooms, a full kitchen and a Hall of Fame room. The third level includes a control room for the video board, a coaches' suite and a press box.

A new Victory Plaza was also created between the stadium and the Griffon Indoor Sports Complex as part of the campaign, and 274 engraved bricks have been sold since it was built. Bricks are still available for purchase to support the campaign.

In 2018, the Bill Snyder Pavilion in Spratt Stadium was dedicated, thanks to a gift from Steven L. Craig. The two-level area offers a great gathering and tailgating space for fans.

Last year, an anonymous donor funded an upgrade to the Looney Complex arena, which included

all new seating and bleachers, paint and new graphics.

A renovation and expansion of Potter Hall was one of the original goals of the campaign, and progress has been steady on that project since the campaign began. Potter Hall, which houses the School of Fine Arts, has received several improvements, including an addition of a percussion studio and restrooms. Additionally, thanks to capital improvement funds from the state and a donation of the 2015-16 membership dues of the Missouri Western Arts Society, several common areas were updated, and there were



improvements to the heating and cooling systems.

Brown's gift will help fund a planned addition to Potter Hall which will be named the Drew H. Brown Arts Annex when completed. Work on the annex will progress as funds are raised.

"The Centennial Capital Campaign has already had a transformative impact on our campus, with facility improvements, a new academic program and more," Weddle said. "It's vital that we sustain this momentum through the next several months, so we can continue transforming lives for decades to come." ■

**To support the Centennial Capital Campaign and Missouri Western, please contact:**

**Kim Weddle '00**  
**Director of Development**  
**(816) 271-5648**  
**weddle@missouriwestern.edu**





# Drew Brown pledges \$1 million gift

Missouri Western's Potter Hall project received a \$1 million pledge from Drew Brown, a University supporter from St. Joseph, Missouri. The gift will help fund the addition of a visual arts annex, which is one of the goals of the Centennial Capital Campaign. When the annex is constructed, the addition will be known as the Drew H. Brown Arts Annex.

"Drew has been one of Missouri Western's most active supporters for many years," said Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western's president at the time of the gift. "He has provided leadership to many areas of campus, and I am very grateful that he has added to his legacy with such a generous gift."

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 retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1992. His military service took him all over the world, and he received the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal. While in the service, Brown graduated from the U.S.



Drew Brown with Potter Hall renditions.

Army Command and General Staff College with the equivalent of a master's degree. He is the owner of Brown Investments.

Brown served on the Missouri Western State University Foundation Board of Directors for 12 years and is currently chair of the Missouri Western Arts Society. He has also served as a mentor and volunteer through the Center for Multicultural Education. In 2018,

he received the Herb '35 and Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University from the Alumni Association.

"I love this university," Brown said. "Missouri Western brings so much to the St. Joseph community, and I welcome that,

whether it's arts offerings, the expertise of its faculty or, most importantly, workforce development. We all want a better life, and most students come to Missouri Western because they see it as the key to that better life. And I am committed to do all I can to help make people's lives better."

He said he especially likes that the University is an open-enrollment institution. "It gives people an opportunity to fly when they are not even sure if they have wings."

His involvement in a long list of community organizations includes arts organizations and museum boards.

"I hope my gift will inspire others to do likewise, so we can continue enhancing the campus." ■

**"I hope my gift will inspire others to do likewise, so we can continue enhancing the campus."**

- Drew Brown

## Potter Gift

At the end of June, a few days before Dr. Robert Vartabedian (center) retired, he accepted a \$75,000 check to be directed toward the Potter Hall Annex project. The gift was from a trust that wished to remain anonymous. Dr. Vartabedian is pictured with Steve Briggs, trustee of the trust, Matt Wilson, who became Missouri Western's president July 1, and Shannon Moore and Phil Michaud from U.S. Bank.







Rebecca Prest and Merle Phillips were selected for prestigious research programs this past summer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Harvard University.

## Students selected for top-notch research

So how did seniors Merle Phillips and Rebecca Prest spend their summer vacations? Both were selected to participate in the Research Experience for Undergraduates program, where they conducted research for 10 weeks at top-notch research institutions. Phillips, a chemistry major, worked in a research lab at Harvard University in Boston and Prest researched at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

Prest, a native of Bethany, Missouri, conducted research using Rosetta Commons software for computer-based protein modeling, and completed the program in Washington state where she presented the results of her research.

Phillips, of St. Joseph, Missouri, conducted genetics research at the Buratowski Lab at the Harvard Medical School.

And why were Phillips and Prest selected by top-notch research institutions? Because they are, well, top-notch students.

Knowing how difficult it was to be selected for an REU, the two students did everything right since they arrived on campus – tutoring, mentoring, working as lab assistants, volunteering and serving as officers for student organizations. They also earned good grades and conducted research with faculty members. Additionally, they have both presented their work at several national conferences.

Prest also spent the summer of 2018 conducting research in Costa Rica with Dr. Carissa Ganong, assistant professor of biology, and another student.

“We just utilized everything that is available to all students,” Phillips said.

He attended Missouri Western for one year right after high school, and in his words, “crashed and burned. I was a total failure.” When he returned after working a few years, he was ready to start over. And on his first day of a chemistry class, he knew that would be his major.

“Students that I tutor ask me, ‘Have you ever even gotten a B?’ I just laugh and say, ‘Oh, yes, I’ve done a lot worse than a B.’”

He applied to Northwestern University, Cornell University and Harvard for an REU, and was accepted to all three programs. He chose Harvard for two reasons: one, because of the variety of research opportunities, and two, because he hopes to attend graduate school there. He believes the REU will help him decide his doctoral focus.

Prest, a biochemistry and molecular biology major with an American Chemical Society certification, was accepted in two other REUs, as well. She picked Rensselaer because it seemed like the best fit for her. She plans to study biophysics in graduate school.

Both received a stipend, a residence hall room and paid travel expenses.

“It was awesome,” Prest said. “It was something I wanted to learn about and do, and it is an awesome university. I’m super excited I got to be a part of this.” ■

# Campus Kudos

**Dr. Heather Kendall**, associate professor of nursing, was recognized recently as a recipient of the Missouri Governor's Excellence in Teaching Award for 2019.

**Dr. Vince Bowhay**, director of the Career Development Center, received the 2019 National Association for Campus Activities Gold Scholar Award. He received the award for his research proposal focused on student employment as a model for workforce readiness skill development.

**Bethany Vonnegern '18** received the Society for Collegiate Journalists Medal of Merit. She was instrumental in founding a student chapter of the society at Missouri Western and served as its first president. She was also the editor-in-chief of the Griffon Yearbook and helped with the 2019 edition after she graduated.

OnlineMasters.com selected Missouri Western as one of the top 10 best master's in assessment and measurement programs for 2019 for its **Master's of Applied Science in Assessment**. The program was also named Best in Real-World Training. OnlineMasters.com analyzed every online master's in assessment and measurement program in the United States and selected the top 10. Missouri Western's assessment program offers three concentrations: K-12 cross-categorical special education, TESOL and writing.

**Dr. Regan Dodd**, associate professor of health, physical education and recreation, was named chair of the Faculty Athletics Representatives Council for the MIAA Conference. She has served on the council since 2015. ■

## Faculty and staff honored

Twelve faculty and staff members were honored at Missouri Western's annual awards ceremony this past spring.

Missouri Western State University Foundation Awards:  
Staff Service to Students:  
**Susan Deering**, University Police Department

Staff Service to Colleagues:  
**Sherrilyn Schottel**, Mail Room

Staff Service to University:  
**Robin Kelly**, Department of Education

Teaching Excellence:  
**Dr. Brett Luthans**, Craig School of Business & Technology; **Dana McDaniel**, School of Nursing and Health Professions; and **Dawn Terrick**, Department of English and Modern Languages

Dr. James V. Mehl Award for Outstanding Faculty Scholarship:  
**Dr. Marianne Kunkel**, Department of English and Modern Languages;  
**Dr. Amit Verma**, Craig School of Business & Technology

Outstanding Academic Advisor:  
**Dr. Jason Baker**, Department of Biology

Dr. James J. Scanlon Award for Staff Service to the Community:  
**Chad Edwards**, Athletics

Dr. James J. Scanlon Award for Faculty Service to the Community:  
**Jana Frye**, Department of Criminal Justice, Legal Studies and Social Work

Student Employee Supervisor of the Year: **Dr. Susan Bashinski**, Department of Education ■

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## Retirees 2018-19

*Best wishes to Missouri Western's employees who retired this past academic year!*

**Kim Beckett**, Admissions, 12 years

**Dr. Evelyn Brooks**, School of Nursing and Health Professions, 24 years

**Sabrina Campbell**, Physical Plant, 15 years

**Linda Clark**, Physical Plant, 19 years

**Sharon Driggers**, Information Technology Services, 22 years

**Dr. Judy Grimes**, Student Affairs, 23 years

**Dr. Cosette Hardwick**, School of Nursing and Health Professions, 19 years

**Jeannette Holland**, Department of Economics, Political Science and Sociology, 13 years

**Dr. Debby Bogle Irvine**, Department of Education, 24 years

**Mark Mabe**, Information Technology Services, 23 years

**Dr. Gordon Mapley**, Western Institute, 10 years

**Dr. Patrick McMurtry**, Department of Economics, Political Science and Sociology, 40 years

**David Noah**, Physical Plant, 27 years

**Deatra Tyler**, Human Resources, 29 years

**Dr. Robert Vartabedian**, President, 11 years

**Bruce Whitsell**, Physical Plant, 13 years

**Anna Williams**, Physical Plant, 12 years

**Robin Yarnell**, Physical Plant, 14 years ■

## Student Awards



The Organization of Student Social Workers was honored as the Student Organization of the Year this past spring. The group's officers, **Tori Bond**, **Sarah Raynor**, **Roxanne Bade** and **Alyssa Bonnett**, are pictured with their advisor, **Dr. Pam Clary**.

At a student awards banquet in April, several student organizations were recognized:

2019 Spring Commencement  
Speakers: **Bailey Ketcham**, Omaha, Nebraska; and **Eugenia Wallace**, Kansas City, Missouri

Outstanding Student  
Organization Member:  
**Kim Leach**, Chillicothe, Missouri,  
Geography Club

Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian  
President's Outstanding Leader:  
**Sarah Lee**, Savannah, Missouri,  
National Association for Music  
Educators-Collegiate

Outstanding Student  
Organization Advisor:  
**Dr. Jordan Atkinson**, assistant  
professor of communication,  
Communications Club

Student Employee of  
the Year: **Destiny Redmond**,  
Kansas City, Missouri

Dean Hoff Outstanding  
Achievement Award:  
**Derek Neupauer**, Pittsfield,  
Illinois, freshman; **Mazzie Boyd**,  
Stewartsville, Missouri, sophomore;

**Cecilia Tackett**, Savannah,  
Missouri, junior; and **Teresa  
Flaughter**, Platte City, Missouri,  
senior

New Program of the Year:  
My Sigma Valentine,  
Phi Beta Sigma

Program of the Year:  
Friendsgiving, Residential Life  
Community Service Program  
of the Year: Colors 4 Carson,  
Student Athlete Advisory  
Committee

Glenn Marion Community  
Service Award: Phi Delta Theta  
Spirit of the Griffon:  
Soccer Club

Greek Week Champions:  
Sigma Sigma Sigma

Fraternity of the Year:  
Alpha Sigma Phi

Sorority of the Year:

Alpha Gamma Delta

Best New Student

Organization: Geography Club

Student Organization  
of the Year: Organization of  
Student Social Workers ■

## CFE celebrates five

The Center for Entrepreneurship in the Craig School of Business and Technology celebrated its fifth anniversary this year. Since it opened, the Center has worked with more than 580 entrepreneurs, created 242 new jobs, retained 125 jobs and made an economic impact of more than \$25 million.

"I am so grateful that the Craig School of Business realized the importance and impact that entrepreneurs make on our community," said **Annette Weeks '87**, CFE director.

The CFE trains, mentors and supports business owners and entrepreneurs in the St. Joseph region and beyond. Faculty and students in the Craig School of Business serve as a resource for its clients, including helping to create marketing plans and ad campaigns. All services are free and confidential.

In addition to one-on-one mentoring with business owners, the CFE created Entrepreneurship Week, a weeklong series of workshops. The fourth annual event in March 2019 attracted more than 1,000 participants.

"I'm proud that we have helped people achieve their dreams of starting or growing their own business. We have also kept longtime businesses open and serving our community by connecting new entrepreneurs with established businesses whose owners were ready to transition," Weeks said.

She has served as the Center's director since it opened in 2014.

To contact the Center for Entrepreneurship, call (816) 271-4283 or email Weeks at [aweeks@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:aweeks@missouriwestern.edu). Visit the Center online at [csb-cfe.missouriwestern.edu](http://csb-cfe.missouriwestern.edu). ■



# Welcome, President

Bringing a broad array of educational and business experience from around the world, Matthew J. Wilson took the helm as the University's president on July 1, 2019.

Wilson arrived from the University of Akron, where he had served as president for two years and dean of its law school. Previously, he had taught and served as law program director and senior associate dean at Temple University's Tokyo campus.

An educator, businessman and attorney, he has lived in Japan, South Korea and Saipan, and in several states in the U.S.

Wilson said he applied for the president's position at Missouri Western for a number of reasons, but especially because the University is open access as well as the state's designated applied learning institution.

He also believes his undergraduate experience is a lot like many Missouri Western students'. As the oldest of six children, Wilson, a Utah native, says his parents encouraged him to pursue a college degree, but they told him he would have to pay for it himself. So he earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Utah on his own, often working two jobs to help fund his education. He was also a nontraditional student. By the time he graduated from college, he was 24 years old, married to Noriko ("she is awesome and talented in so many ways") and had a daughter.

Missouri Western's new president has a lot of ideas for innovative academic programs to make the University stand out.

As president, he says he will also continually look for ways to make education affordable and accessible for students. When he was serving as president at the University of Akron, he started a guaranteed scholarship initiative, where student scholarships were renewable with automatic upgrades each year. "It was a win-win for students and it helped with student retention."

# Wilson!







President Wilson visits with students in one of the several classrooms and labs he visited on the first day of his presidency.

Another program that he started at Akron that he would like to explore for Missouri Western is Five Star Fridays, where courses are held Monday-Thursday, and Fridays are open for internships, working, volunteering, researching with faculty, or job searching and interviews.

"It really worked well. It allowed the students time to engage in the community and the workplace. Many students told me how much they liked it."

Wilson also plans to spend a lot of time speaking to high school students in the region and to community groups, and he would love to see Missouri Western become even more involved in the community than it already is. He wants the community involved in mentorships, scholarships and prospective student recruitment.

His experience in international studies means that expanding Missouri Western's international programs and reach is important to him. He plans to use his connections overseas to create new opportunities for students and faculty to engage globally and to have the University become more visible worldwide.

Of all his accomplishments throughout his career, Wilson says he is most proud of his relationship with students when he was president at the University of Akron. He often received invitations to join students in activities such as basketball shooting contests, sand volleyball tournaments and lip sync competitions, and he

could often be seen across campus assisting with residence hall move-in, dining hall special events and more. "They knew I was accessible and I cared," he said.

"As we move forward, we're going to do some wonderful things. It's my mission to help the world discover the magic that we have at Missouri Western."

## Things to know about Matt Wilson

- ◆ Fluent in speaking, reading and writing Japanese
- ◆ Has four children and four grandchildren
- ◆ Met his wife, Noriko, in college. They were engaged a month later and married within five months of meeting.
- ◆ Member of the Florida Bar Association
- ◆ Last two books he read: "Mediation in Asia" and "Who Judges? Designing Jury Systems in Japan, East Asia and Europe"
- ◆ Favorite movie: "It depends on the day. I love all the Marvel movies and sports movies."
- ◆ Was once on a three-hour prime time game show in Japan

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## In the President's own words

### **What did you enjoy the most about your presidency at Akron?**

"The interaction with students. I really enjoyed the opportunity to positively impact students, to inspire them and empower them so they could succeed."

### **What is the most important quality a president must have?**

"The ability to find ways to support others (students, employees, alumni, community members and legislators) so they know they are appreciated, and the ability to find ways to work collaboratively with them."

### **What do you want people to be saying about you on your one-year presidential anniversary?**

"I hope when people look at the University then, they see excitement, hope and engagement, and my tireless commitment to student success. I hope they will be excited, too."

### **What do you like to do in your (rare) spare time?**

"I love anything that involves a ball, whether it is participating or watching, and spending time with my family."

### **What do you want to say to alumni as you begin your presidency?**

"I am a big believer in transparency and accessibility. I welcome your ideas, thoughts and comments. My door is always open."

## Education

Juris Doctor, 1999  
Temple University Beasley School of Law, Philadelphia

B.S in Political Science, 1995  
B.A. in Asian Studies with Japanese minor, 1995  
University of Utah, Salt Lake City

## Accomplishments as president at the University of Akron

### **Major Gifts**

During Wilson's presidency, the University of Akron received the largest single gift in university history – a \$23 million estate gift.



Noriko and Matt Wilson

### **\$70 Million Two-year Budgetary Turnaround**

In 2016-17, the University of Akron faced a projected \$30 million operating deficit and an 8% drop in overall enrollment. Wilson led collective efforts that resulted in the elimination of the deficit and addition of \$12 million to the reserves.

### **Making a Difference Moving Forward Scholarship Campaign**

A new campaign resulted in a 50% increase in overall scholarship giving with over \$20 million raised for endowed and non-endowed scholarships.

### **Akron Internationalization**

Wilson led the establishment of an International Center to focus on recruitment of international students and the formation of cross-border relationships with universities around the world. The university focused global outreach efforts on Asia and entered into new agreements with institutions in Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan and Vietnam.

### **Esports Varsity Team and Club Program**

Wilson spearheaded the conception and development of a new program designed to tap into online competitive video gaming. ■



# Nursing expands with \$550,000+ grant

The School of Nursing and Health Professions received a grant from the Missouri Department of Higher Education to increase its capacity and better meet the health care workforce needs of the region.

The School received \$557,744 through MDHE's MoExcels workforce initiative to establish a Center of Excellence in Applied Health Care Learning (CEAHL). The initiative includes expanding classrooms sizes and simulation laboratory space, enhancing technology in the labs and promoting job exploration opportunities to high school and college students who may be interested in the health care field. The funding will be matched locally with donations from Mosaic Life Care, Mosaic Auxiliary, the Heartland Foundation and the Missouri Western State University Foundation.

"Creating partnerships with community and regional

organizations so we can discover innovative ways to recruit, train and retain nurses and other health-care professionals is vital in this competitive job market," said Dr. Mark Laney, CEO of Mosaic Life Care. "We want to make sure we keep our highly trained and sought-after caregivers here in our community and offer them

opportunities to learn and grow."

The partnership will increase the number of graduates receiving a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree

from Missouri Western by 15%. It will also increase intended majors in all health-related fields by 5% and increase Master of Science in Nursing admissions by 10%.

The CEAHL will allow Missouri Western to expand partnerships with regional health care providers for clinical education, ensuring that the University's education and training programs are responsive to current and future workforce needs.

**"There is a critical shortage of health care workers in the region, and our goal is to address that shortage by developing a pipeline of local talent with the required skills and training to succeed in the workplace."**

- Dr. Crystal Harris



"One of the things that sets Missouri Western apart is our statewide mission of applied learning, and this partnership will build on that foundation by providing more real-world learning opportunities outside of the classroom," said Dr. Crystal Harris, associate dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions. "There is a critical shortage of health care workers in the region, and our goal is to address that shortage by developing a pipeline of local talent with the required skills and training to succeed in the workplace."

When the expansion of the simulation lab is complete, the lab will be available for community use to provide education and job exploration opportunities for visiting high school students and employees of community partners.

During construction, the School's faculty offices relocated to the Bond Science and Technology Center's second floor. Planned completion of the construction on the third floor of Murphy Hall is scheduled for December 2019. ■



# Women's basketball coach hired

Candi Whitaker was hired in April as the ninth head women's basketball coach at Missouri Western. She has been the head coach at Texas Tech from 2013-18, an associate head coach at Oklahoma State 2012-13 and the head coach at University of Missouri-Kansas City 2006-12.

Whitaker has coached 24 student athletes to all-conference honors, 47 to academic all-conference status and nationally ranked recruiting classes. As a head coach, Whitaker's student athletes have posted a 100% graduation rate.

At Texas Tech, Whitaker turned around the program between year one and year two, going from seven wins to 15. In five seasons leading the Lady Raiders, Whitaker had four players named All-Big 12. In her final season at Texas Tech, a player was named to the Big 12 All-Freshman Team after being named conference Freshman of the Week for a record six times. Whitaker led Texas Tech to four consecutive Big 12 Championship appearances and back-to-back quarterfinal appearances. Under her guidance, 11 Lady Raiders were

named Academic All-Big 12 with eight earning spots on the Dean's or President's List.

When she took over the UMKC program at age 26, Whitaker became one of the youngest head coaches in women's basketball. She won 83 games there and left the program as its second-winningest head coach.

Whitaker graduated from Texas Tech in 2002 with a degree in exercise sports science and earned her master's in sports administration at Valparaiso in 2004. She and her husband, Matt, have three sons. ■

# Spring sports wrap

## Shi Qing Ong caps memorable career

One of the most decorated individual careers in Griffon Athletics came to a close this past spring as women's golfer Shi Qing Ong competed for the final time.

Ong, from Malaysia, won all four spring tournaments she entered and won her 14th career and fifth consecutive event by becoming a back-to-back MIAA Champion. Her 14 individual titles were good for a new Missouri

Western record, passing current PGA golfer Brice Garnett for the most ever as a Griffon.

Ong was named MIAA Women's Golfer of the Year for a second consecutive season. She also became Missouri Western's first finalist for the MIAA's Ken B. Jones award, which recognizes the top male and female student athletes in the MIAA. Ong was named second-team All-American by the Women's Golf Coaches Association, first-team All-Central Region by the WGCA and first team All-MIAA. She was also named Google Cloud Academic All-District® and was named Missouri Western's Female Student-Athlete of The Year for a second time.

On the course, Ong helped the women's golf team to its fourth consecutive NCAA Central Region Championship appearance,



Golf took home the gold at the athletic awards banquet this past spring when men's golfer Patrick McCarthy was named Missouri Western's Male Student Athlete of the Year and women's golfer Shi Qing Ong was named Female Student Athlete of the Year.





where she finished tied for second to advance to her third NCAA Division II Championships appearance. Ong carded her best round in her final round as a collegiate golfer to finish tied for 19th at the national championships, her highest-ever finish at the event.

### Baseball

The 20th season of the Buzz Verduzco era and the 50th season of Missouri Western baseball produced a 21-24 record. Senior pitcher Anthony Castaneda was named first team All-MIAA and second team All-Region by three different organizations. Castaneda produced one of the most prolific seasons by a Griffon pitcher in recent memory, with his 111 strikeouts the second most in a season in Missouri Western history.

### Men's Golf

Patrick McCarthy earned a spot in the NCAA Central/Midwest Super Regional for a third consecutive year. The New Mexico native's 72.35 scoring average

through the regular season was the lowest ever recorded by a Griffon. He reached as high as No. 7 in the central region rankings and was named first team All-MIAA for the third time in his career.

### Softball

Bad weather in the spring couldn't rain on the parade of softball head coach Jen Bagley Trotter. Her

18th season leading the Griffons brought two major milestones for the coach and saw her program back toward the top of the MIAA.

Almost two months after earning her 600th career victory, Bagley Trotter became the MIAA's winningest softball coach when her Griffons shut out nationally ranked Winona State 1-0 on March 23 at home. Her 615th career victory – all at Missouri Western – moved the Griffon head coach past one of her predecessors, Rhesa Sumrell, for the most wins ever by a softball coach in MIAA history.

Following the milestone for their head coach, the Griffons won 19 of their next 20 games, including an 18-game win streak that was snapped on the third day of the MIAA Championships by then No. 1-ranked University of Central Oklahoma. Missouri Western finished second in the MIAA standings and returned to the NCAA Central Region Championships for the 11th time in Bagley Trotter's 18 seasons here. The Griffons went 1-2 at the regional, falling to eventual

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# Football to celebrate 50th season

The 2019 season will be the 50th season of Missouri Western football, and a number of special events and recognitions are being planned to celebrate the occasion. Fans selected the 50th anniversary logo that will be featured on five unique



helmets to be worn by the team during its home schedule in 2019. Each home game, the team will wear a different helmet logo that had been worn by previous Griffon teams. The 50th anniversary logo will be worn on the back of the helmets. In recognition of the golden season, the team will unveil special gold uniforms at the season opener Sept. 5.

Fans can also score special collector's edition Griffon Gameday magazines at each home game in 2019. Each edition will feature information from a different decade of Griffon Football, including All-Decade teams. Football alumni will be recognized at games throughout the season, along with many other special events to be announced later. ■

## New sports performance director

Matt Mandich has been hired as the director of sports performance/head strength and conditioning coach.

He had been an assistant strength and conditioning coach at the University of Southern Mississippi where he was the primary director for baseball programming and an assistant for the football team. Mandich was also an assistant strength and conditioning coach at Wofford

College from 2015-17. He served as assistant strength and conditioning coach at Missouri Southern State University, an MIAA conference school, for two years, also.

A four-time All-Sun Belt Conference offensive lineman at Arkansas State University, Mandich received his bachelor's degree in exercise science from there in 2009. He received his master's in health and human performance from

Northwestern State University in 2012. Mandich has certifications from the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association, United States Weightlifting, Reflexive Performance Reset, National Academy of Sports Medicine and the American Red Cross.

Mandich replaces Greg Carbin '07, who left Missouri Western for a position with the Kansas City Chiefs. ■

## Spring sports wrap *continued from page 21*

national champion Augustana and Winona State.

Seven Griffons were named All-MIAA, with Morgan Frost and Brea Blanton named first-team selections.

### Track & Field

Sophomore Hanna Williams became the first female to represent Missouri Western at the NCAA

Division II Outdoor Track & Field Championships. The Trimble, Missouri native qualified for the national championships in the 400 meter, just missing the finals.

In the indoor season, Williams became Missouri Western's first automatic qualifier for the national championships, but was unable to compete after suffering an injury in the MIAA Championships.

The Griffons showed major signs of improvement in the second year of the resurrection of the program. Eight members of the women's team scored points in the MIAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships and three competitors on the men's side tallied points for the Griffons at the event. ■

# Young to a degree

When Eugenia Wallace '19 was at cheer camp in September of her freshman year at Missouri Western, the other cheerleaders found out her birthday was coming up. "How old will you be?" they asked. "20? 21?" Wallace said it was a little awkward when everyone found out she would be just 17. That's right, 17. The Kansas City, Missouri native graduated early from Raytown High School and came to Missouri Western on a cheerleading scholarship at the age of 16.

Although she says it was tough coming to college quite a bit younger than her fellow students ("I made mistakes that 16 year-olds would make in high school, but I made them in college"), you would never know it. Wallace, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice/legal studies in four years, was chosen as one of two students to give the commencement address at the ceremony in Spratt Memorial Stadium this past May. She was also involved in several student organizations, volunteered more than 400 hours in the community, and already had a job lined up at a Kansas City law firm before she graduated.

**"Missouri Western taught me a lot about grit, perseverance and hard work."**

— Eugenia Wallace '19

Starting college that young may have been a challenge for Wallace, but really, it was just one more challenge in a very long line of challenges that marked her childhood.

Growing up in poverty with her dad and three older brothers, she remembers times of no electricity or food, and sometimes not knowing where she was going to sleep. Just seven years before becoming a Griffon, Wallace was separated from her family and placed in the foster care system. She lived in two different foster homes over the next few years before settling with a sister in Raytown, Missouri.

"I had to fend for myself. Some foster parents were great, but some were not. I had to teach myself," Wallace says. One foster parent told her she would never go to college. "I believed it. I thought, 'there goes my dream. I'll just go on to be another statistic.'"

But she realized she was good at reading and writing and school became a great escape. It wasn't long after she transferred to Raytown High School as a freshman that she caught the attention of teachers who pushed her to succeed.

Wallace took a lot of summer classes and was very surprised when the school told her she had enough credits

to graduate at age 16. Wallace earned a full-ride scholarship to a school in Oklahoma, but thought it might be prudent to stick closer to home because of her age.

She cheered for one year at Missouri Western on a scholarship and joined the Mystics the second year. But that all cut into her school work ("academically I felt like I had to work twice as hard"), so she began to focus more on her degree and became active in the students' Legal Studies Association. This past year she served as vice president for the group.

And through all her academic success, Wallace never forgot that she's a foster kid. In high school, she was asked to join the State Youth Advisory Board and she continued to serve on that board as a college student. One of her proudest accomplishments was when the group advocated for legislation that gave foster children health insurance up to age 26.

She also gave the graduation speech at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri for the Alex Smith Foundation Cornerstones of Care, an organization that supports children in foster care, and she served as vice president of the Kansas City advisory board for youth in foster care.

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# From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

It is with great pleasure and it is an honor to be serving as your new Alumni Association president. I want to thank our last year's president Jim Jeffers for his dedication and service.

A little about myself: I'm from St. Joseph, Missouri and I work at American Family Insurance in the Commercial Lines area. I keep busy with organizations around town, including Runcie and Allied Arts. You can also find me chasing my nephew in a number of sports-related activities. I'm a second-generation graduate of Missouri Western (my dad and younger sister are both graduates), and I loved my time as an undergrad.

I would like thank Drs. Bob and Laurel Vartabedian for their service to Missouri Western. Dr. Bob Vartabedian did an amazing job as president and will greatly be missed. We also want to give a Griffon Welcome to Matt and Noriko Wilson and wish them well as they begin their tenure as president and first lady.



Tona Williams '00

We look forward to getting to know them and their family.

I also want to bid Alumni Relations Director Colleen Kowich a fond farewell as she leaves Missouri Western. The Alumni Association truly appreciates her dedicated service to alumni and to the University! I personally have enjoyed working with her on the Alumni Board and will miss her.

The Alumni Board has some amazing events already in the works, and be sure to mark your calendars for Homecoming the week of October 7. Also, we are always looking for new volunteers in our many chapters and network, so please consider

becoming a volunteer!

I would love to have your feedback and ideas; please e-mail me at [tonatee@hotmail.com](mailto:tonatee@hotmail.com) with your thoughts or questions.

With Griffon Pride,

*Tona Williams*

Tona Williams '00

President, Alumni Association

## Griffons Uncorked

Alumni and friends gathered for the annual Griffons Uncorked event at Room 108 in downtown St. Joseph. Pictured are some of them enjoying the rooftop deck: Linda Crabtree '60, Linda Bishop, Keeran King, Jo and Jim '59 Thompson and Garry Crabtree '59.



## Best wishes, Colleen!

Colleen Kowich, director of Alumni Relations since 2006, resigned her Missouri Western post this past summer and began working at University of Kansas in Lawrence. A search for her replacement began immediately, and Dr. Melody Smith '87 is serving as interim alumni director. If you have any questions before a new director is hired, email Alicia Otto at [aotto@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:aotto@missouriwestern.edu) or call (816) 271-5670. ■



# HOMECOMING 2019

# ROARIN' & SOARIN' 90s through the

[missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming](http://missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming)

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 7

### BLACK & GOLD DAY

Wear your Missouri Western gear or your black and gold, take a picture and post on social media. #MWSUAlumni #BlackandGoldDay. Do you work with other Griffons? Take a group photo!

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8

### GRIFFON EMPLOYEE ALUMNI BREAKFAST

7-8 a.m. Blum Union Food Court

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

### SGA REUNION NETWORKING AND TRIVIA WITH CURRENT SGA MEMBERS

7 p.m. Spratt Hall Enright Rooms, 214/216  
Meet the current members of SGA, WAC (formerly CAB), and RHA. All former SGA, CAB, RHA members are invited to attend. See [missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming](http://missouriwestern.edu/alumni/homecoming) for more information.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

### ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT

9:30 a.m. Registration; 10 a.m. Shotgun start  
Fairview Golf Course  
\$50 per person or \$200 per team of four

### SGA REUNION LUNCH AND CAMPUS TOUR

Noon  
The SGA Reunion continues with a lunch in the Hall of Fame Room in Spratt Memorial Stadium followed by a campus tour.

### ALUMNI AWARDS BANQUET

5:30 p.m. Reception, 6:15 p.m. Dinner and Program  
Fulkerson Center  
\$35 per person or \$280 for a table of 8

- Distinguished Alumni Award: Dr. Jamel Santa Cruze Wright '00, president, Eureka College
- GOLD (Graduate of the Last Decade) Award: Chelsey Kusek '09, Lead Elementary Art Teacher, North Kansas City School District

- Herb '35 & Peggy Iffert Award for Outstanding Service to the University: Pat Dillon, Chief Government and Community Relations Officer, Mosaic Life Care
- Distinguished Faculty Award: Dr. Tom Rachow, Department of Biology
- Great Griffon Awards: Craig School of Business & Technology – Jake Cuning '16; Liberal Arts and Sciences – Duane Martin '89; Professional Studies – Mary Vaughan '79; School of Nursing and Health Professions – Jaime Bartley '17
- Student Leadership Awards: Clifford Hughes '55 Award – Ben Allen '19; Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian International Student of the Year – Shi Qing Ong '19; Graduating Student of the Year – Evan Banks '19

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

### PARADE

9 a.m. Downtown

### FUTURE GRIFFS FUN ZONE

1-2:30 p.m. Remington Hall  
Free family fun

### FREE TAILGATE

2 p.m. Parking Lot H

### FOOTBALL GAME

Griffons vs. Missouri Southern State University  
4 p.m. Craig Field at Spratt Memorial Stadium

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

### FOREVER GRIFFONS LUNCHEON

11:30 a.m. social, lunch at noon  
\$15 per person  
Hall of Fame Room in Spratt Memorial Stadium  
(Park in Lot I, watch for signs) ■

# Blake Schreck '78: Economic developer

Blake Schreck '78 can't help but feel proud when he drives around Johnson County and sees all the new development in the area. For the past 20 years, he has served as the president and economic development director for the Lenexa Chamber of Commerce. Lenexa's population has grown from a little over 48,000 in 2010 to almost 54,000 in 2017, and the city can boast of several new projects and developments, including Lenexa City Center.

Prior to joining the Lenexa Chamber, Schreck had served as director of economic development for Overland Park's Chamber of Commerce and president of the Olathe Chamber of Commerce.

"It gives me tremendous satisfaction to see that growth," Schreck said. "I feel like I've been responsible for some of that."

**"I like to give back because of my wonderful experience. Missouri Western was a great place to get an education and I am so proud of what it has become."**

— Blake Schreck '78

And, he noted, he uses the skills he learned at Missouri Western all the time.

When the Wichita, Kansas native was playing baseball in high school, he met several players from other teams. They all had offers from several colleges, but six of them decided to play at Missouri Western together.

"My adversaries became my teammates. I have a lot of great memories."

He played baseball as shortstop all four years at Missouri Western and even played basketball for the Griffons a couple of years. Schreck was inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame in 2005, and the 1975 baseball team he played on was inducted in 2007.

Schreck, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Marketing, said he visits campus quite often for sporting events and appreciates that Head Baseball Coach Buzz Verduzco makes the baseball alumni feel welcome.



Blake Schreck '78

Recently, Schreck joined the Western League for Excellence at the Regents level in order to support the University with an undesignated gift each year.

"I like to give back because of my wonderful experience," he said. "Missouri Western was a great place to get an education and I am so proud of what it has become." ■

## Young to a degree

*continued from page 23*

Last fall, she founded the Wallace Community Association, a 501(C)3 to support youth in Kansas City, Missouri and the surrounding area. Her organization teaches about financial literacy and pairs students with foundations that award scholarships. It also sends care packages to the students when they go to college.

The association was created, she says, "to let youth and young adults know they can overcome any obstacle put in their way." She's working with a lot of Missouri Western students in an effort to give back to the University that helped her "find my voice and learn how to use it."

"Missouri Western taught me a lot about grit, perseverance and

hard work," Wallace said. "I know what it's like to feel down and not wanted. But I also know the benefits of persevering and getting to where you want to be. I refused to let my circumstances define who I was and where I was going. I tell people, if I can do it, you can do it." ■

# Lauren Prywitch '14: Behind the TV scenes

Lauren Prywitch '14 always knew she wanted to work in television on one of the coasts. Her path to get there may have been "kinda crazy," she says, involving several internships, radio station sales and Boston Red Sox Radio, but she made it.

"I knew I wanted to do what I am now doing, but I just wasn't sure how to get into it," she said.

Her brother was working in television in New York, and last year, he introduced her to someone who could help her reach her dream. While she was working in Boston, she was hired to work two days on "Wild 'n Out" for MTV, and the next day, someone from "Chopped" called with a casting and recruiting job offer.

So she moved to New York City and for the next six months, she recruited chefs to serve as judges on the culinary competition show. She worked on the set when they filmed three seasons.

From there she landed an associate field producer role for an MTV pilot, and worked on "What Now?" which covers the lives of the TLC's "90 Day Fiancé" couples after they said "I do." Then, this past March, she moved to Los Angeles and worked as a segment producer for an MTV show that aired in August. (When I interviewed her, the show was yet unnamed.)

"I love when I get to work with cast members and producers," she said. "It's great to work hard and then watch the show. Television is very exciting."

And work hard she does. Most days on the "Chopped" set began at 6 a.m. and ended around 8 p.m. When she was travelling for MTV's pilot show, some work days lasted 17 or 18 hours.

"Sometimes it's hard to maintain a personal life," she said with a laugh.

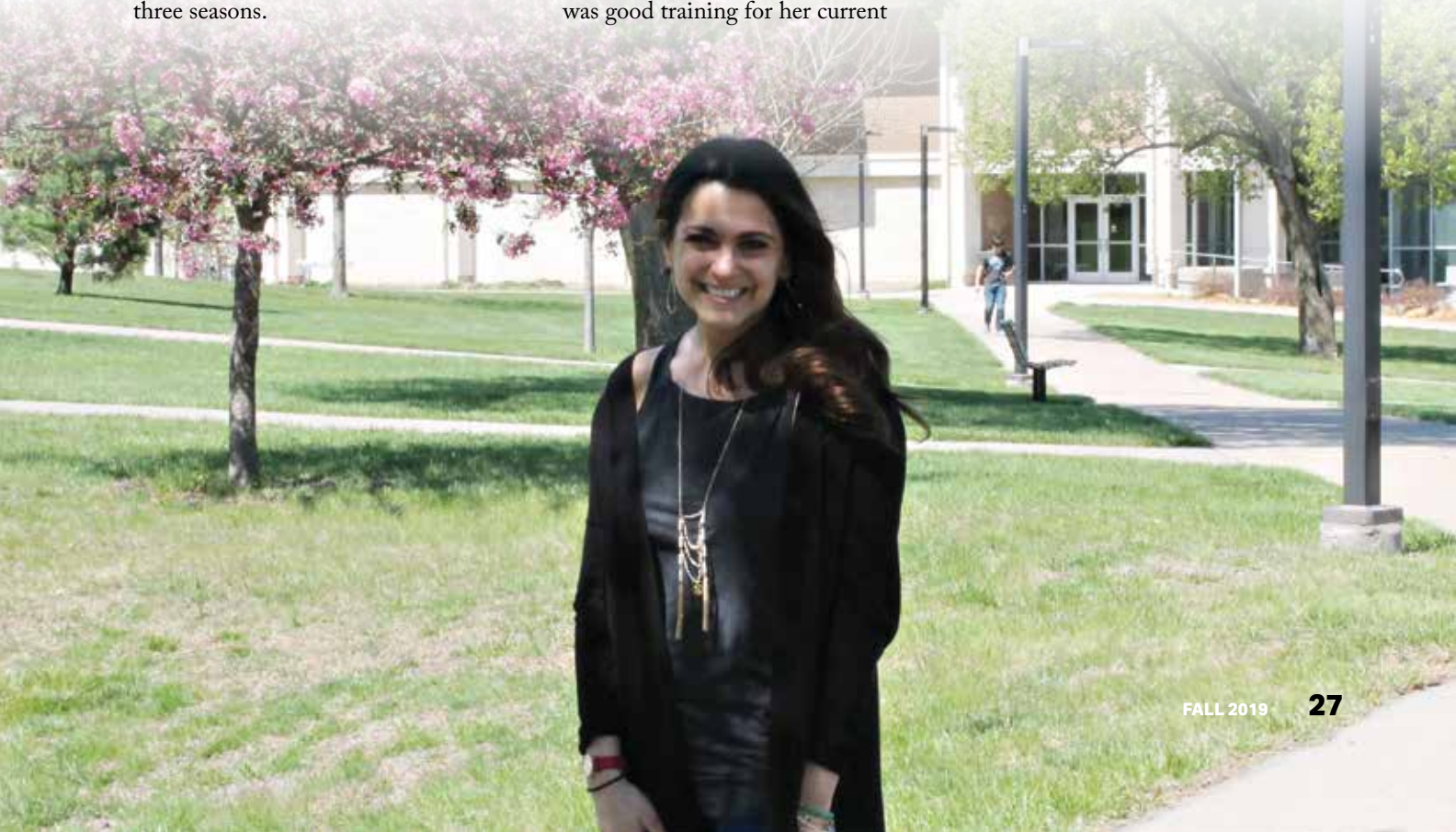
But her college experience was good training for her current

busy schedule. Prywitch says she didn't have the best high school experience, so she came to Missouri Western determined to get the most out of college. Her solution was to get involved.

"I had so many opportunities. I kept applying for things and just kept getting them," said Prywitch, a native of St. Louis. "But it felt right."

She served as an ambassador in Admissions, a member of the Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority, a Griffon Edge leader, a member of the Homecoming steering committee and the Student Government Association, to name a few. She was also vice president of the Panhellenic Association and participated in the Barbara Sprong Leadership Challenge.

And now, she's loving her busy television life hoping to be a producer someday. "My heart is in TV." ■





## 1970s

**Shirley Dodge '73** recently reminisced about an art class she had when she was a student at Missouri Western. The assignment was to copy the work of a famous artist, so she chose Claes Oldenburg, whose work includes the shuttlecocks on the lawn of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. She created a large ball and bat. If the artist was alive, the student had to write a letter to them, so Dodge did. "And guess what?" she said. "I got a letter back and he signed his name in person. I still have the framed letter. It meant so much to me."



## 1980s

**David Slater '82** received a leadership award from the Mid-America Regional Council. Slater, who is serving his eighth term as mayor of Pleasant Valley, Missouri, was recognized for his work in education, regional transportation and promoting cooperation between Missouri and Kansas in economic development issues. He has also chaired the Metro Mayors Caucus, a coalition of mayors from 83 cities and towns, for six years.

**Lori (Ellison) Wilson '84** is co-owner of Ellison-Auxier Architects in St. Joseph, Missouri. She noted that her father designed the first buildings on Missouri Western's present campus.

**Paul Breshears '86** earned his teaching certification through Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri and is teaching at Great Circle-Marshall Tom Butterfield Campus, a residential school for children in the foster care system.

**Daniel Williams '87** retired this year as Director of Sales Operations at Hitachi.

## 1990s

**Neal Hook '90** was named head boys basketball coach at St. Joseph Christian High School in St. Joseph, Missouri.

**Nancy Gray '91** and her husband, Larry, are with Hosanna International Ministries. In the past 33 years, they have traveled to several countries to work in churches, schools and homes. This past summer, they completed a mission trip to India.



**Gary Lewis '92** had both his children graduate from Missouri Western in May 2018. Levi '18 graduated with a degree in criminal justice, and Lauren '18 graduated with a degree in psychology. "It was one of the greatest/proudest days of my life," Gary said.

**Janice Rothganger '97** joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Stein & Summers Real Estate of St. Joseph, Missouri in residential sales.

## 2000s



**Stephanie Lynn (Crandall)**

**Dryer '03** is the Director of Marketing and Human Resources at Omnitech Midwest in Lee's Summit, Missouri. She and her husband, Aaron, have six children – Kadence, Mason, Brecklynn, Ireland, Hudson and Kellan.

**Taira Roth '04** was a recipient of a 2019 Wynn Award from the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. The award, named for the late Dr. Mary Jo Wynn, honors former high school and college standouts who made positive impacts in their sports. Roth played both basketball and golf for Missouri Western.

**Penny (Thornton) Capps '05** is Branch Chief/Contracting Officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Kyle Grove '07** is the strategic operations lead – Post Acute and myEvolv at Netsmart in Overland Park, Kansas. He and his wife, Traci '10, have three children, Rumer, Griffin and Charlee.

**Garrett Holtz '09** and his wife, Maureen, announce the birth of a son, Henry Frederick, born July 16, 2019. Henry joins three siblings, Patrick, Luke and Ellie. Maureen began teaching in the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Missouri Western this fall.

## 2010s

**James Bush '11** is a police officer for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County in Kansas City, Kansas. He has two children, James Bush III and A'mora Bush.

**Rebecca Morgan '11** is the owner of Well Read Books in Fulton, Missouri.



**Paula (Elsner) '12** and **Shelby '12 Hamilton** announce the birth of a daughter, Quinlan Pearl, born Jan. 13, 2019.

**Taylor (Hand) Buhman '13** is a researcher at Kansas State University.

**Lauryn (Roberts) Newhart '13** is a resident obstetrics/gynecology physician at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine.

**Victoria Byerley '15** is an inventory specialist for the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, Florida.

**Ryan Hand '16/'18** is an assistant men's and women's golf coach at Barry University in Florida.

**Staci Rock-Rich '16** is an exercise specialist at Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph, Missouri.

**Amanda Camden '17** is a paraprofessional at the high school for the Ralls County R-II School District in Center, Missouri. She also coaches high school softball and junior high girls basketball and is working on her master's in elementary education.

**Holly (Leslie) Trotter '18** is a registered nurse at the University of Kansas Medical Center. ■

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

**Donald M. Beavers '79**, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 24, 2019.

**Kelsey F. Cartledge '17**, Stafford, Virginia, Feb. 17, 2019.

**Bille S. Draper '89**, Savannah, Missouri, March 5, 2019.

**Robert L. Engnell '90**, Maysville, Missouri, March 5, 2019.

**Jack W. Fennel '71**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 4, 2019.

**Melody A. Filley '91**, St. Joseph, Missouri, May 31, 2019.

**Susan A. Grimes '83**, Overland Park, Kansas, Feb. 7, 2019.

**Susan L. Heath '86**, Platte City, Missouri, Jan. 19, 2019.

**Rose M. Newton '91**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 22, 2019.

**Jill S. Rardon '07**, Polo, Missouri, May 11, 2019.

**Patricia R. Ridpath '97**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 1, 2019.

**Charles Stephen "Steve" Swymeler, Jr. '94**, Hermann, Missouri, May 22, 2019.

**Norma V. Snow '56**, Bridgeton, Missouri, May 28, 2019.

**Don J. Stallard JC**, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 10, 2019.

**James H. Thompson '78**, Kansas City, Missouri, May 16, 2019.

**Glenn S. Turpin '48**, Kansas City, Missouri, Feb. 3, 2019. ■

# Calling Alumni Veterans!

If you are a veteran of any branch of the U.S. military and an MWSU alumnus, please let us know! We are planning a lunch around Veterans Day 2019 and want to include you. Please email [involvement@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:involvement@missouriwestern.edu) today, and we will reply with all the details as we make our plans. Thank you. ■



# Celebrating 50 years!

Happy 50th anniversary to the Missouri Western campus and our four-year institution – it was the fall of 1969 when Missouri Western moved to its present location and began offering bachelor's degrees.

When the campus opened that fall, 2,536 students were enrolled and there were 167 employees. Three buildings were open for classes and three more were under

construction. At the time, the original three were known as the Evan R. Agenstein Science and Math Building, the Warren E. Hearnese Learning Resource Center and the Frank S. Popplewell Administration Building. The three under construction included the Engineering Technology Building (now Wilson Hall), the Thompson E. Potter Fine Arts Center and

the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Building (now the M.O. Looney Complex).

Today, there are 24 buildings on campus, including seven residence halls, a fitness center and a conference center. The campus also contains tennis courts, an indoor pool, walking trails, nine ponds and a spring sports complex. ■

**"I was a 1969-73 student at MWC. I was in work study and got the 'pleasure' of helping move everything from the downtown campus out to the new buildings and campus. I also dragged water hoses all over to water the grass."**

– Steve Allen '73

(In case you were wondering, they set up a roller conveyor belt in the auditorium of the Junior College and slid the boxes above all the seats, on to the stage and out the back door.)

State Rep. Ronald Reed, Dr. M.O. Looney and State Sen. John Downs discuss the campus construction.







Left, early 1970s; above, late 1970s



Early 1990s



2011



Glenn E. Marion Clock Tower  
built in 1997



A campus fountain from the late 1970s  
was where the clock tower is today

**"When I interviewed for my job in 1968, they brought me out to the campus and showed me the foundations of the buildings, because that was all that was there at the time. When I started, there were two other deans and a secretary all in one big room, but I moved several times to make room for faculty members that were hired in the academic departments.**

**Planning the four-year curriculum was one of the attractions of the job."**

– Dr. Bob Scott, first Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences

*continued on page 32*



# Celebrating 50 years!

## The road to a four-year college and a new campus

Two days before the St. Joseph Junior College opened in 1915, the Gazette newspaper noted the following in its article about the new two-year college:

*"Although two years of college work have been added to the curriculum of Central High, this is not the end of the ambition of some of the friends of the school system here. They hope to see the day soon when the full university course has been installed ... which will give children of the city the opportunity to get a finished education at small cost."*

Adding two more years to the St. Joseph college actually took 50 years, and it wasn't the easiest to accomplish. Below is the timeline wfor the fruition of a four-year college and a new campus:

**1961** – Legislation passes that provides for the establishment of junior college districts by a vote of the people in those areas. Such a district was a prerequisite to a four-year college for St. Joseph.

**1965** – A Board of Trustees is established for the Junior College District Jan. 19.

**1965** – The Missouri Western Junior College District is approved by voters, and the college's name is changed to Missouri Western Junior College, effective June 7. The Junior College is now funded by residents of five counties: Andrew, Buchanan, Clay, Clinton and Platte.

**1965** – In July, Gov. Warren Hearnes signs a bill to fund a four-year college in St. Joseph. This bill provides for the establishment of an independent state senior college, to be known as Missouri Western College, when the Junior College acquires a campus, meets the requirements established by the Board of Curators at the University of Missouri and enrollment trends constitute sufficient justification.

**1965** – Dr. Milburn W. Blanton is named Missouri Western's first president. The Board of Trustees wants to recognize a new era for the institution by naming the top position, "president."

**1965** – A bill passes to give the college an option to purchase 130 acres on Frederick Blvd. for the new campus.

**1966** – A bond issue passes to build four new buildings on a new campus on Frederick Blvd.

**1966** – The Board of Trustees votes to look at other properties before purchasing the land on Frederick Blvd. In October, the board announces that it plans to purchase 390 acres east of Interstate 29 for the new campus.

**1967** – Missouri governor passes a bill which authorizes conveyance of 130 acres to the Junior College District. The acreage is part of the state hospital's dairy farm, and the cost is \$27,000. The governor also rescinds the option to buy the land on Frederick Blvd. The balance of the acreage is purchased from area farmers; the total cost for 390 acres is \$357,200.

**1967** – Dr. M.O. Looney becomes president.

**1967** – Missouri Western Junior College is renamed Missouri Western College.

Gov. Warren Hearnes breaks ground for the new campus in 1967.

**1967** – A groundbreaking ceremony for the new campus is held on Aug. 22.

**1968** – The campus is annexed by the City of St. Joseph.

**1968** – Conditions that were set out in the four-year bill that was signed in 1965 are deemed met, and Missouri Western officially becomes a four-year college on Oct. 22.

**1969** – As Missouri Western transitions from a two-year to a four-year college, no degrees are awarded this year.

**1969** – The college opens in the fall as a four-year institution on Sept. 15.

**1969** – A ceremony to dedicate the new campus is held Oct. 12. Although it was a rainy day, approximately 1,500 attended.

**1970** – The first Commencement ceremony for the four-year institution is held outside by the Hearnes Learning Resource Center for 45 graduates.

**1971** – The college adds 354 acres, bringing the total campus size to 744 acres. Later conveyances to the Missouri Army National Guard, University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation bring the acreage size to 723. ■





## Mitchell Avenue entrance signs



The first!



Look at that Griffon!



The sign read "College" until 2005.



## Campus Buildings

	Year Opened	Renovated/Added On
Agenstein Hall	1969	2011
Baker Fitness Center	1994	2012
Beshears Hall (200s)	1973	
Blum Union	1972	2000
Bond Incubator	2008	
Clock Tower	1997	
Commons	2004	
Conservation HQ	1992	
Eder Hall	1976	2000
Fulkerson Center	2005	
Griffon Indoor Sports Complex	2010	
Hearnes Center	1969	1990
Juda Hall (400s)	1973	
Kelley Commons	2013	
Leaverton Hall	1991	
Logan Hall (100s)	1971	
Looney Complex	1971	1980
Murphy Hall	2000	
Popplewell Hall	1969	
Potter Hall	1971	1986
Remington Hall	2010	
Scanlon Hall	2005	
Spratt Hall	1997	
Spratt Memorial Stadium	1979	2016
Spring Sports Complex	2011	
University Plaza	2007	
Vartabedian Hall*	2011	
Vaselakos Hall	1995	
Wilson Hall	1970	

\*Formerly Griffon Hall; name changed in June 2019. Blum Union and the residence halls have been updated and remodeled several times since they were built.

**"In those first semesters on campus, the luxuries of sidewalks and landscaping were postponed until the necessities of buildings and parking lots could be completed. Students traveled to class following dirt paths, avoiding the ever-present bulldozers and trucks."**

– 25th Anniversary publication





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to receive the MWSU Magazine via email  
rather than printed.

*Thank you!*



## Looking Back – Spratt Memorial Stadium

Spratt Memorial Stadium was built in 1979, thanks to funds from the estate of Elliott “Bub” Spratt. The first football game was played on the field Sept. 8, 1979, a 44-0 victory over Dana College. Lights were added six years later, and the first night game was Sept. 4, 1985. Griffon soccer played its first match at Spratt Stadium on Sept. 3, 2006, a 3-2 win over Concordia-St. Paul.

The stadium underwent an extensive renovation in 2015-16, and now features a giant video scoreboard and a beautiful pavilion. The spring 2014 Commencement ceremony was held in the stadium for the first time since 1981. Once the stadium was renovated, the tradition was revived in 2016, and the spring ceremony has been held there ever since. ■