

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

# MW SU



**WINTER 2020**

**7** Indigo Gets Her Wings

**16** Missouri Western: Innovative Initiatives





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up for the SPRING PHONE-A-THON  
and will be calling you soon.**

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# MWSU

WINTER 2020

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Indigo Gaydusek '19 poses by her artwork, see p. 7. Together we fly!

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President Matt Wilson has rolled out a number of initiatives this past fall to increase enrollment and retention; see all the details in this feature.



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

## WINTER 2019 VOLUME 18/NUMBER 1

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## president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

It is amazing that six months have passed since I assumed the reins at Missouri Western. Since my arrival, I have truly enjoyed getting out in the community, visiting local high schools, connecting with civic organizations, interacting with policymakers and literally traveling all of the area, state and country to tell the Missouri Western story. The reception has been very encouraging and I am most grateful for the warm welcome. Most

importantly, however, I have thoroughly enjoyed engaging with students across campus. Without question, supporting students is the best part of my job.

At the same time, one of the biggest difficulties facing Missouri Western and other public universities centers around financial challenges caused by demographic shifts, increasing operating costs, limits on state funding and the mission to provide an affordable college education. This past semester, we spent considerable time analyzing our current financial situation and developing potential strategies and solutions. Our strategic goals in this regard involve taking measures to: (1) develop a sustainable budget; (2) increase enrollment and retention; (3) reduce costs without harming the student experience; and (4) significantly grow our development efforts. Working together, I am confident that we can achieve all of these goals.

This past November, we rolled out a budget that will help us address our pressing challenges. To increase enrollment and enhance retention, we have announced a host of innovative programs involving scholarship, scheduling, service learning, international programming and technology. You can read more about these initiatives in this issue.

Our campus community and graduates have experienced Missouri Western and can personally attest that it is a great university. Although it may not be "great" in

the sense of size or financial means, Missouri Western is great in terms of the education we deliver and quality of graduates that we produce. It is great in the impact that we make in the lives of so many. It is great in the potential that exists. It is great in terms of what it has done for our alumni.

At this stage of our history, it is vital that we share our own stories about what makes Missouri Western great. It is more important than ever to support Missouri Western. Together, I believe that we can do exceptional things for the benefit of our students and success of our university. Please stay tuned as we continue to achieve great things at this great university!

Go Griffs!



Matt Wilson  
President  
Missouri Western State University



President Matt Wilson with former President  
Dr. M.O. Looney

# University receives \$1 million grant

Missouri Western has received a \$1 million grant from the Sunderland Foundation for the construction of the Drew H. Brown Arts Annex for Potter Hall.

“We are extremely grateful to the Sunderland Foundation for their investment in our students and their futures,” said Matt Wilson, Missouri Western’s president. “The facilities made possible by this gift will foster creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking, skills that make our students valuable contributors to society.”

At this stage, it is envisioned that the Drew H. Brown Arts Annex will house the Department of Art’s sculpture and ceramics programs. Space vacated by the three-dimensional

arts would then be used for Missouri Western’s growing graphic design program.

Dr. Doug Davenport, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, noted that Potter Hall is one of the oldest buildings on campus and has served Missouri Western well, but many of the programs have outgrown the space available. “The annex will give us greater flexibility in providing appropriate teaching environments, and we are very grateful.”

The new structure is named for St. Joseph resident Drew Brown, who announced his own \$1 million gift toward the project in April 2019.

The Potter Hall project is part of Missouri Western’s capital campaign, launched in January 2015. The campaign so far has

exceeded the initial celebration goal of \$20 million by more than 50%.

“We’re very thankful to the Sunderland Foundation and to the hundreds of others who have supported the Centennial Capital Campaign,” said Todd Simpson, vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the Missouri Western State University Foundation. “Through the campaign, Missouri Western has been able to address many of its long-range needs. That kind of private support is critical in today’s higher education environment.”

The campaign funded significant improvements to Craig Field at Spratt Memorial Stadium and the Looney Arena, endowed a first-of-its-kind population health management degree program and grew the Foundation’s endowment. The five-year campaign will end in January 2020.

The Sunderland Foundation, based in Overland Park, Kansas, was established in 1945 by Lester T. Sunderland, who served as President of the Ash Grove Cement Company for 33 years as a highly respected leader in the cement industry. Since its inception, the Foundation, which continues to be led by Lester T. Sunderland’s descendants, has focused on supporting construction projects, awarding grants to nonprofits in the Kansas City region and other markets traditionally served by the Ash Grove Cement Company. ■

## Speaker visits campus

Elijah Haahr '05, Speaker of the House in the Missouri House of Representatives, spoke to more than 200 students on campus last fall.



# New master's degree for teachers

Missouri Western began offering a new master's degree for teachers this fall that is 100% online. The Master of Applied Science in Assessment Differentiated Instruction is for teachers or administrators in pre-K through 12th grade.

"Today's Pre-K-12 classrooms are more diverse than ever, and finding effective ways to teach

all students is more important than it's ever been," said Dr. Susan Bashinski, graduate program director and professor of education.

She said the degree program is designed so students can gain a deep understanding of how to effectively differentiate instruction for learners who are English learners, gifted, at-risk for school failure or who experience a mild

to moderate disability. Graduates of the program will gain specific skills associated with differentiating content, processes and environments, and how learners demonstrate learning.

For more information, contact Dr. Bashinski at (816) 271-4394 or [sbashinski@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:sbashinski@missouriwestern.edu). ■

# Professor takes chemistry lab on the road

A mobile teaching laboratory hit the road this fall for high school chemistry students in rural Northwest Missouri. The bus will be used by the Department of Chemistry for its dual enrollment program.

Prior to using the bus, high school students enrolled in the college chemistry class were required to visit campus at least once per semester for an instrument-intensive lab. Dr. Mike Ducey, chair of the Department of Chemistry, said the bus makes it a lot easier for the rural high schools since the labs will now go to them and

they won't have the expense of traveling to campus.

He also noted that they only offered dual enrollment chemistry to high schools within a 70-mile radius of St. Joseph, but the bus makes it possible to increase that distance.

This past fall, chemistry faculty member and dual enrollment director Debbie Jeffries visited high schools so students could conduct an experiment of extracting caffeine from an energy drink and analyzing the caffeine. This spring, they will measure the amount of potassium in energy drinks.

"We are bringing real world, cutting-edge science to the region to share with high school students," Dr. Ducey said. "We want to expose students to chemistry, and expose them to people who are excited about chemistry."

Last year, the Department of Chemistry served approximately 250 students in its dual enrollment chemistry program.

"It's important for us as scientists and for Missouri Western to serve the region," Dr. Ducey said. "STEM education is hugely critical." ■

# Fast Track grants available for students

The Missouri Department of Higher Education is now offering a grant for students aged 25 or older, or students who have not been enrolled in school within the past two years, to help them complete their education in select programs. The Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant is designed to ensure that

tuition and fees are fully covered, and grants will be awarded for any remaining tuition and fees not covered by other state and federal student aid programs.

Many Missouri Western programs qualify for the grant; see [missouriwestern.edu/finaid](http://missouriwestern.edu/finaid) for a complete list of qualifying programs. Grant recipients must

maintain Missouri residency and work in Missouri for three years after graduation to prevent the grant from becoming a loan that must be repaid with interest. Eligibility requirements and how to apply can be found at [MoFastTrack.com](http://MoFastTrack.com). ■

# New vice presidents named

This past summer, President Matt Wilson announced the filling of two open vice president positions and two new vice presidential positions. Dr. Doug Davenport, associate provost of research, planning and institutional effectiveness, had been serving as interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for the past year. He was named provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. R. Todd Simpson was hired as the vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the MWSU Foundation.

Dr. Josh Looney, who had been serving as director of Athletics since 2017, was named vice president of Intercollegiate Athletics. And Sarah M. R. Cravens, J.D., was hired as vice president for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff.

As associate provost, Dr. Davenport has overseen Missouri Western's accreditation efforts, including the reaffirmation of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in 2017. He also led the team that authored Missouri Western's new strategic

plan, "Pathways to Excellence." In the past year, his office has launched several initiatives to advance the strategic plan, including the Center for Teaching & Learning and the Provost's Fellows Program.

Prior to joining Missouri Western, R. Todd Simpson served



Dr. Doug Davenport



R. Todd Simpson

as chief executive officer of the Peru State College Foundation since 2010. Under Simpson's leadership, annual giving doubled and identified estate gifts topped \$20 million.

He holds a Master of Science in Organizational Management from Peru State College and a BSBA from the University of Central Missouri. Simpson has been a Certified Fund Raising Executive since 1998.

Prior to joining Missouri Western, Dr.

Looney was director of athletics at East Stroudsburg University for two years. He also served as associate director of NCAA Division II and worked for the Kansas City

Chiefs and the Orlando Magic. Dr. Looney earned a bachelor's degree in business from Washburn University, an MBA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a doctorate in Interdisciplinary Education from Creighton University.



Dr. Josh Looney



Sarah Cravens, J.D.

Prior to joining Missouri Western, Cravens was the C. Blake McDowell Jr. Professor of Law at the University of Akron School of Law. She previously served as the vice provost for strategic initiatives and interim dean of the Williams Honor College.

She earned a bachelor's degree in classics from Princeton University, a master's in classics from Cambridge University, U.K., and a juris

doctorate from Washington and Lee University School of Law. ■





# Missouri Western paints up the Southside

Thanks to faculty and students from Missouri Western, Southside St. Joseph is shining with beautiful artwork. This past summer, four students and two alumni under the guidance of Kathy Liao, assistant professor of art, designed and painted an 80'x20' mural on a building on the corner of Lake and Illinois avenues. And in the fall, they developed the design and painted window panels and other artwork for the facade of the Livestock Exchange building on Packers Avenue.

The first mural project came about when the South St. Joseph Development Corporation and Allied Arts Council of St Joseph put a call out for a muralist last spring, and Liao thought it would be a great project for her art students. She designed the mural and coordinated the project, enlisting the help of Indigo Gaydusek '19 (see "Indigo gets her wings," p. 7), Acacia Richardson '19, and students

Devin Halbirt, Shelly Lundy, Madison McKinley and Kenneth Young.

She created her proposed design after speaking with many Southside community members, including business owners, historians and librarians.

The mural was also inspired by the feedback from Benton High School students, she said. They fondly recalled riding their bikes to the King Hill lookout that overlooks the MFA building and Livestock Exchange building, so that's in the mural. Also recognizable on the building are iconic places such as the Carnegie Library, Lake Contrary and Hyde Park, including the suspension bridge. The numerals 238 can also be found in the mural, because many community members told Liao they were proud to be a "238-er," a reference to the phone prefix for Southside residences.

"We wanted to incorporate the theme of the history of the Stockyards, industry and

immigration into the mural because the Southside is a place with a deep pride in its own identity and culture," Liao said. "I was very excited to transform a building facade into a giant piece of art."

Because of the success of that first project, they were asked to design public art for the historic four-story Exchange building, and Liao made it a class project in the fall 2019 semester.

Built in 1898-99, the Exchange building was a major cultural and business hub for the livestock industry and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Friends of St Joseph Society, led by Dr. Kim Schutte, hopes to repair and return it to its original glory, and bring arts, entertainment, and business back into that area.

"It has been an incredible learning experience for the students and me," Liao said. "They learned the significance of public art and how it transforms the space and experiences of the people who live and work in the neighborhood." ■



# Indigo gets her wings

Every time Indigo Gaydusek '19 drives down Frederick Avenue, she sees her very large artwork on the side of a brick building at 13th and Frederick. Gaydusek, who graduated with a studio art – painting degree with minors in printmaking and sculpture last May, was commissioned by Missouri Western's Marketing and Communications Office to paint Griffon wings on the side of Kelly's Pub, owned by Shawn and Kathy Kelly. She completed the work this past summer.

"That was such a blessing to be able to jump right in with the mural as soon as I graduated," she said.

The mural, approximately 15' wide x 11' high, features Missouri Western's clock tower and a pair of wings. Jomel Nichols, chief communications officer, said the wings make an outstanding photo opportunity for students and the community.

She said the University's new tagline, "Together we succeed," conveys that Missouri Western faculty and staff are right there with the students as they work toward their degrees and meet their goals. "The wings seem to say, 'we've got your back. Together we fly!'"

Last semester, when Nichols approached Kathy Liao, assistant professor of art, about the wings mural, Liao immediately suggested Gaydusek for the project.

"I loved the wings, but I felt like it needed the clock tower as a unifying concept, since it is in the



Students enjoy the Missouri Western wings artwork at 13th and Frederick Avenue. Gaydusek is pictured with her artwork on the magazine cover.

center of campus," said Gaydusek, who designed the mural.

But the giant wings weren't Gaydusek's last large public art project. She also helped Liao on a mural on a Southside St. Joseph building (see "Missouri Western paints up the Southside," p. 6). Gaydusek's role in that mural was painting the woman on the bike, because "no one else wanted to tackle it." She also worked on the "238" sign.

"Kathy Liao was really influential to me and helped me become more professional," Gaydusek said. "She really wanted us to succeed, and she helped me stretch my abilities."

Gaydusek said she really enjoyed painting the wings on Kelly's and she learned a lot as she worked out the challenges of painting on a large, brick wall. But visiting with people as they came by to check out her work made for a really great experience.

"I really enjoy that my murals bring people together."

The alumna artist currently lives in St. Joseph, ministering to college students with the Navigators and working at Starbucks part-time. Someday, she hopes to create more public art for St. Joseph. Her dad is ready; he already has a hashtag for her – #paintthesaint. ■

# Turtle life at MWSU

*Editor's note: I had heard about Dr. Mark Mills' campus turtle research and decided to tag along one day this past summer and check out his and his students' work with Griffon turtles.*

With nine ponds and a creek running through Missouri Western's 723 acres, it should come as no surprise that students are sharing the campus with a large population of turtles. And it also should come as no surprise that Missouri Western biology students are studying those turtles. Since the summer of 2009 when the first turtle research team was formed by Dr. Mark Mills, associate professor of biology, more than 30 students have cataloged over 200 different Griffon turtles.

This past summer, Dr. Mills worked with two of those students, Faye Thammarat and Mistina Wheeler. They dropped nets in campus ponds three days a week throughout the summer semester in an effort to record turtle life at Missouri Western. Dr. Mills said that most turtle studies are in rural areas, but their study is distinctive because the University is in an urban area.

I caught up with the turtle team at 9 a.m. one morning in mid-June in the Department of Conservation building on campus.

The three turtle researchers donned chest-high waders and boots, and away they went to Wild Pond, the one that is closest to the conservation building and the first of two ponds they were checking that day.

"It's not for everybody," Dr. Mills said of the turtle field research. "After a couple of snapping turtles, some students say, 'I'm done.'"

Before checking if they had caught any turtles, the student researchers recorded the time, the weather, the water temperature and clarity of the water. Then they checked their nets. The day before, they had netted seven, all turtles that had been previously captured. Today, the first pond yielded three, two painted turtles and one slider.



Dr. Mills, Faye Thammarat and Mistina Wheeler.





Dr. Mills talks turtle to a homeschoolers group last semester.

“A big part of this is to give students experience in hands-on field work,” said Dr. Mills, who teaches evolutionary ecology and vertebrate biology. “It’s more important what the students are doing than what they find.”

Thammarat, a senior zoology major from Thailand, said this was her first time working with Dr. Mills and turtles, and she said she was really enjoying it. She hopes to have a career in research, so she has previously conducted research with two other Missouri Western professors.

“I’m trying to find which animal I want to work with and it’s so hard to decide. I just know anything but insects,” she said with a laugh.

The turtles were transported in a bucket back to the lab in the Conservation building where they were measured and recorded. One recapture had eggs the last time she was captured recently, but now there were none. Another had not laid her eggs yet. Students also counted leeches that were on the turtles (forget the snapping turtles, the leeches would make me turn in my waders).

Two of the day’s turtles had never been captured, so their shells got notched (it doesn’t harm them) and they were assigned a letter and a number. Thammarat and Wheeler also tried to estimate the turtles’ ages by counting the ridges on its bottom shell (kind of like counting tree rings). One capture was an eastern slider, and Dr. Mills suspected it had once been someone’s pet since that species is not native to Missouri.

By summer’s end, turtles in all nine campus ponds were checked at least once. The researchers also set nets in a pooled area in Otoe Creek near Eddie’s Bridge. (“Turtles use Otoe Creek like a highway,” Dr. Mills said.)

In the 10 years of study, students have recorded

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# Turtle life at MWSU



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information on over 500 turtles, including recaptures, and the three most common turtles captured on campus have been the snapping, painted and red-eared slider.

One turtle has been captured more than 30 times since 2009 (she's grown a centimeter since then, by the way). Although she has always been found in Wild Pond, Dr. Mills said their study shows that some turtles do move between ponds.

And to validate his point, the second pond they checked on the day I tagged along, Old Pond, netted two traveling turtles. This pond had been dry for the past three years and had just filled back up this past spring,

and the turtles traveled about 600 feet to it from Wild Pond.

The longest distance of a documented turtle movement, Dr. Mills said, was a snapper that moved from South Pond by Vartabedian Hall to the Canoe Pond by the MWSU letters, approximately 2,900 feet if it traveled in a straight line. He estimates that more than 20 have moved between ponds at least once.

"I used to think turtles were slow and lazy, but they do move and some are feisty," said Wheeler, a senior zoology major from Plattsburg, Missouri.

Thammarat and Wheeler presented their research results at a showcase on campus in September. ■

## The wild campus

Missouri Western's 723-acre-campus contains nine manmade ponds. With the help of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation several years ago, the ponds were given names in the Nation's native tongue with English translations.



1. South Pond – Ni-satt-wen mbes
2. Oak Pond – Mish-mesh mbes
3. Canoe Pond – Tti-man mbes w
4. Wild Pond – Mkott mbes
5. Old Pond – Ke-te mbes
6. Everyday Pond – Ek me gish ek mbes  
This pond is open to the public for fishing.
7. Back and Forth Pond – Kwek-tte-wen mbes
8. Clear Pond – Pi-na-bo-ya mbes
9. Duck Pond – Shi-shi-be mbes





Nicholas Darling and Laura Siegel take soil samples at the vineyard.

## Grapes and chemistry: students in the vineyard

Everyone knows how important it is for students to get out in the field and get some experience outside the classroom, but chemistry students this year are getting out in, well, the vineyard.

It all began about nine years ago, when Kevin Carver, who lives near Faucett, Missouri, planted 140 Chambourcin vines one year and 200 Norton vines a year later, and he and his wife enjoyed caring for the vineyard and made wine. About three years ago, they got too busy for the winemaking, so they started selling the grapes to Tipple Hill Winery near Osborn, Missouri. But then, about two years ago, even caring for the vineyard took up too much of their time.

Carver thought about pulling the vines out. But last fall, he began talking to Annette Weeks '87, director of the Center for

Entrepreneurship, and asked her if anyone at Missouri Western would

**"The aspects of business, chemistry and biology all play important roles in the production of grapes. Our students actually had the opportunity to experience these aspects in the field in an applied learning environment.**

**And those experiences are expected to carry over as part of their University learning and experience."**

- Dr. Gary Clapp

be interested in taking care of the vineyard. Weeks introduced him to Dr. Gary Clapp, associate professor of chemistry.

Dr. Clapp said he had worked in a vineyard before and had really enjoyed it, and he thought it would be a great opportunity for chemistry students.

A partnership was born.

"The aspects of business, chemistry and biology all play important roles in the production of grapes," Dr. Clapp said. "Our students actually had the opportunity to experience these aspects in the field in an applied learning environment. And those experiences are expected to carry over as part of their University learning and experience."

Students began by pruning vines, keeping bugs off and pulling weeds. This fall, they visited the vineyard as part of their General Chemistry course to test the sugar content of the grapes, the potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the soil, and the health and calcium content of the leaves. Some of the testing was done in the vineyard, but some samples were taken back to the chemistry lab for testing.

"It's interesting going out in the 'real world' for lab," Megan Baker said. "I didn't know you could test for sugar in the field."

Then, when it was time, students harvested 850 pounds of grapes and sold them to Jowler Creek Winery in Platte City, Missouri.

"I love seeing the students come out," Carver said. "It's pretty exciting to see how they transformed it, and it's great seeing students learning something that they can actually apply." ■

# Griffons in D.C.

## Carr interns at National Portrait Gallery

Student Alexis Carr always loved art and knew that's what she wanted to major in, but she says she "found her calling" when she took her first art history class. And last summer, she found her dream internship when she was selected to work at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

The studio art major and art history minor was selected for a nine-week Katzenberger Foundation Art History Internship through the Smithsonian Institution, which only funds six projects a year. Her project was "Recovering a 19th-Century African American History, Biography, and Portraiture through a Collection of Slave Narratives."

"It was incredible. I was so honored to be there," she said. "You can just feel the history and significance of what you're doing and where you are."



Alexis Carr

Her research was part of a reconfiguring of the current 19th century gallery to make it more diverse. She studied William Still's book, "Underground Railroad Records," which documents the stories of more than 600 slaves who escaped via the Underground Railroad, and she researched to find more information about those in the book, which contains more than 100 photographs.

Carr, a native of St. Louis, also spent time taking inventory in one of the Gallery's storage rooms, which was "really cool," and conducting research in the Library of Congress.

"It was inspiring to see so many people passionate about art, history

and culture. It made me want to be a part of it," she said.

She was also inspired by reading the stories of the slaves and what they had made of their lives once they were free. "The stories were so heartbreaking. These people went through this and went on to do incredible things," Carr said. "I thought, if they could put the pieces of their lives together after that, then there's no excuse for me to not do something great. It really put a fire and drive in me."

Carr, who plans to attend graduate school for art history, praised the Department of Art for its "culture of support," and for giving her the experiences that led to her selection for the internship – conducting research with faculty members, starting an art history club and organizing an art history symposium at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art.

In the fall 2019 semester, she helped catalog the print collection that was donated last year by Dr. William Eickhorst, professor emeritus of art, and his wife, Edith.

"My experience here is proof that there are a lot of opportunities at Missouri Western." ■







Mazzie Boyd

## Boyd interns for U.S. Senator

When Mazzie Boyd was serving as an intern for Sen. Roy Blunt in Washington, D.C. this past summer, a visitor asked her how she ended up in the nation's capital even though she was from a small town in Missouri (Stewartsville).

"I had to think about it a minute, and then I realized it was because Missouri Western gave me the opportunity," she said.

Boyd, a business management major who will graduate in May 2020 after just three years

**"It was great seeing all the senators that you usually only see on television. I also enjoyed serving Missouri; it was the best way I could give back to my state."**

-Mazzie Boyd

of college, attended the Governor's Student Leadership Forum in Jefferson City, Missouri in February 2019, and was recommended for a summer internship in D.C. She spent nine weeks in Sen. Blunt's office, answering calls from constituents, taking around office visitors and attending committee meetings.

"It was great seeing all the senators that you usually only see on television," she said. "I also enjoyed serving Missouri; it was the best way I could give back to my state."

While interning in D.C., she lived at the National Student Leadership Forum's Cornerstone Intern House with 39 other college

students from all over the world, which she said enhanced her already great experience.

Cornerstone residents conducted volunteer work, heard guest speakers and participated in discussions and activities together. Boyd says that experience was almost like a second internship, because she learned a lot about relationships and friendships.

"In some ways, I feel like I have a different perspective on life," she said. "I learned that who you surround yourself with in life is important."

In order to be able to graduate in just three years, Boyd took 12 credit hours of online courses this past summer, even though she was completing the internship for Sen. Blunt.

But full course loads each semester didn't stop her from becoming involved in a number of student organizations, particularly the Student Government Association. She has also worked in the Student Affairs Office since she was a freshman.

And her advice for incoming freshmen as she gets closer to graduation? "Get involved. Getting involved and stepping out of my comfort zone has made my experience so amazing. And if you want good grades, you have to put in the effort and work." ■

# GRIFFON FOOTBALL

## celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> season



On Sept. 12, 1970, the brand new Griffon football team took to the field for the first time, playing Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa under Head Coach Harold Cagle. The Griffons were defeated 72-10, and that score holds the record for the largest margin of defeat to this day.

Although it was a crushing blow, the score couldn't dampen the fact that it was the first of a season of firsts, as a new era had begun at Missouri Western. This past fall, that program celebrated its 50th season on the gridiron, and Athletics celebrated big.

"It's very rare in life that anyone or any group of people have the opportunity to do anything for the first time – the first game, the first bus ride, the first team game meal, the first touchdown or tackle of a game, the first block or interception, the first home game and the first ride in the city bus down to Noyes Field to experience that first home game. Those special times were spent with total strangers who would eventually become your best friends for life," said Zack Workman '74, co-captain of

the first football team and 50th Season committee member. "To share those experiences for four years with so many others has been an honor, not only for me but for everyone who played a part in the program 50 years ago."

In the fall of 2018, former player Scott Graham '78 approached Dr. Josh Looney, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, to talk about the upcoming milestone season. Graham agreed to form a committee to determine how to celebrate the milestone.

"I wanted it to be an all-season celebration instead of just one game," Graham said. "It's a very big deal."

The committee immediately knew they wanted to honor former football Griffons, and five scheduled home games made it easy – one team for each decade was honored at each game. Five different

**"What does it mean to look back and realize this was football's 50th season? It means everything. It's where my real life began. It means the lifelong friendships that others and I still enjoy today. I met my wife of 47 years when I was a football player and student at Missouri Western.**

**The coaching staff and head coaches each are a part of this story because they too are a part of the Griffon Family. It's been a pleasure to see the program build to what it is today and to be a part of something very special. In the end, it's about the friendships that have developed along the way that have changed our lives."**

- Zack Workman '74

committees made up of players, coaches and staff from that decade selected each All-Decade Team, and in all, 151 former players made up the All-Decade rosters. They were invited to attend a game, and a special commemorative program honoring each team was also part of the celebration.

"We have been so blessed over the years to have individuals who have shown their exceptional talents for the growth of the Griffon football program," Workman said.

Nick McCutcheon, director of Athletics Marketing and Communications, coordinated the

production of the commemorative programs for each game, but he





gave credit to Graham, who spent many hours researching 50 years of football records to help compile the All-Decade teams and create the programs. Graham

researched every player on every team by scouring newspaper articles not only in local papers, but in other cities where the Griffons played. He provided the main list of players and their accomplishments to the committees in order to select the All-Decade Teams.

Some of the 50th season celebration events included an All-Decade Team tailgate, an

**"We practiced on a field that was located where we tailgate today. The hill we ran for conditioning is where the stadium seats are today. Our group laid the foundation that others built on, and that foundation continued to be built on to where we are today."**

- Scott Graham '78

opportunity for the former players to walk down the hill with the current players, recognition of the football alumni on the field and a tour of the current athletic facilities. For each home game, players had a Griffon decal from the designated decade on their helmets.

Some of the former players had not been back to visit the campus in several years, and some had not visited since they graduated.

"Seeing the former players come back was like seeing relatives you had not seen for a time," Workman said. "It was like you just

*Continued on page 24*

## 50 seasons of Griffon football

- 50-season record: 291-238-9
- 10 postseason bowl games (8-2)
- 2 Conferences – NAIA CSIC & NCAA MIAA
- Six head coaches: Harold Cagle, Rob Hicklin, Dennis Darnell, Stan McGarvey, Jerry Partridge '86 and Matt Williamson '96 (current)
- 4 NCAA DII Playoffs (Quarterfinals in 2012)



1980s



1990s



2000s



# President Matthew J. Wilson

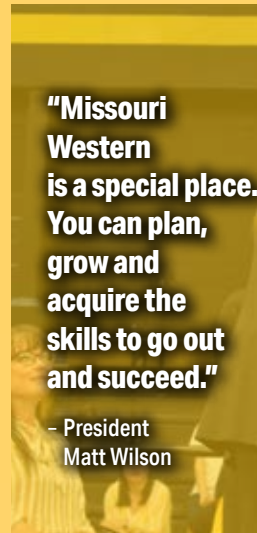
## Installation Ceremony

*September 20, 2019*



**"Today is a reminder of where we have been, where we are and how we will continue the process of transforming lives."**

- Engoma Fataki, president of the Student Government Association



**"Missouri Western is a special place. You can plan, grow and acquire the skills to go out and succeed."**

- President Matt Wilson



**"No matter where students are in their journey, there is a place for them at Missouri Western."**

- Beth McLenaghan, student



**"We want to educate, elevate and inspire. I know there are challenges, but I want you to know that the faculty and staff and I are here for you."**

- President Matt Wilson, to students



**"I am excited to have a president who cares so much about the students."**

- Mazzie Boyd, student





# Missouri Western: Innovative initiatives

**"It's my mission to help the world discover the magic that we have here at Missouri Western.**

**We truly have the opportunity to come together and to innovate, to be creative, and to have approaches that are going to impact and benefit our students."**

Those were the words of Matt Wilson on the day he was introduced to Missouri Western and the community as University president. Since he began his presidential duties on July 1, 2019, he has held to that promise, bringing innovative and creative initiatives that benefit the students and help them succeed.

## **GOLD FRIDAYS**

In October 2019, Missouri Western announced Gold Fridays. Beginning the fall of 2020, the majority of classes will be offered Monday through Thursday, and Fridays will be dedicated to applied learning and other opportunities.

The program leaves Fridays open for students to engage in internships, research, community service, meeting with professors, tutoring, study time or whatever the student chooses. Gold Fridays will also be a benefit to students who commute since it could mean one less day on the road, as well as to athletes who often travel for competitions over the weekends.

**"It's an innovative and unique program that combines applied learning and affordable education, and it helps meet the region's**

**workforce needs," President Wilson said. "Fridays can be devoted to student service and success."**

He noted that Gold Fridays will not change the total minutes for each course, the number of courses offered or the number of students on campus. While a four-day schedule may not be appropriate for every program, he said most academic programs will be adapted.

"No classes on Fridays frees up an entire day for flexible learning opportunities," President Wilson said. "Students will have the opportunity to apply what they are learning in meaningful ways. On Gold Fridays, they'll have an opportunity they won't find at any other Missouri university."

More details are available at [missouriwestern.edu/goldfridays](http://missouriwestern.edu/goldfridays).

*Continued on next page*





## CENTER FOR SERVICE

Beginning in the fall of 2020, following a pilot this spring, students will be able to earn credit toward their degree by volunteering in the community, thanks to the new Center for Service on campus. Dr. Melody Smith has been named executive director of the Center.

Students may earn one elective credit for Community Service Learning toward their degree for every 40 hours of validated community service they engage in, up to a maximum of three credits. Those credits will be free of charge to the students and funded, in full or part, by sponsors of the Center.

**"Service is at the very core of our mission at Missouri Western," said President Wilson. "We don't just want to provide students with opportunities to serve; we want to provide them with an incentive to serve. Hundreds of students serving thousands of hours each school year will be transformative for our University and for our community."**

In addition to administering community service learning opportunities for individual students and student groups, the Center for Service will also include a new Center for Military and Veteran Services. This Center will provide academic and financial aid advisement, along with other dedicated wraparound services, for military-connected students.

The Center will also serve as "front door" for Missouri Western, providing

a first point of contact for visitors and students to guide them where they want to go.

## GRIFFON GUARANTEE SCHOLARSHIP

For students entering in the fall of 2020, the University has launched the Griffon Guarantee Scholarship, a new scholarship program for freshmen and transfer students that automatically renews and increases in value each year so long as students remain in good standing.

The Griffon Guarantee Scholarship differs from previous Missouri Western programs and from scholarships at other institutions in two distinct ways. First, the annual scholarship renewal is guaranteed for students who remain in good academic standing (minimum 2.0 GPA); and second, recipients will receive an additional \$1,000 at the 30-credit mark, an additional \$500 at the 60-credit mark, and an additional \$500 at the 90-credit mark. That means recipients will receive \$2,000 more in their fourth year of school than they did in the first year.

The base first-year award for the Griffon Guarantee Scholarship will range from \$500 to \$6,500 for incoming freshmen and \$500 to \$1,500 for transfer students. With the automatic renewal and upgrades, the scholarship will provide students up to \$4,500 in additional aid over the course of eight semesters.

To qualify, incoming freshmen must have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 and ACT score of at least 19. Students with a lower ACT score may be eligible depending on their GPA. Transfer students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and at least 12 credit hours will qualify for the Griffon Guarantee Scholarship.







**"The program invests in our students in two innovative ways not typically seen at other universities," President Matt Wilson said. "Not only will the Griffon Guarantee Scholarship encourage academic progress toward graduation by rewarding students with automatic scholarship increases, but it will also protect students who may experience an unexpected or temporary drop in grades caused by a tough transition to college or unexpected circumstances."**

Go to [missouriwestern.edu/finaid/griff-guarantee](http://missouriwestern.edu/finaid/griff-guarantee) for more information.

## ESPORTS

In December, Missouri Western took the first step toward launching its new esports programs, announcing that Christian Konczal was hired as the program's first director/head coach.

Konczal had been serving as an adjunct professor at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont and as event staff for the University of Akron Zips Esports in Ohio. He received a Master of Fine Arts in Emergent Media from Champlain and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Vermont.

"The addition of esports provides students the opportunity to come together and collaborate in a team setting, providing not only recreational opportunities but academic opportunities in a variety of fields," President Wilson said.

"Christian is familiar with both the operational and academic sides of esports, and I'm confident he will build an outstanding program that

will attract top students and help them develop the critical skills of leadership, communication, team-building and collaboration."

Esports is organized team-based, multiplayer competitive video gaming. Competitions among collegiate teams and professionals can take place in arenas in front of large audiences and are streamed on the internet or broadcast on television. Collegiate esports is growing, with more than 130 universities nationwide with competitive varsity teams, including 16 in Missouri. Missouri Western will be just the third public university in the state with an esports team.

Konczal will be responsible for building Griffon Esports from the ground up, recruiting varsity and club teams to compete in a variety of video games to be determined by student interest. The program will be structured much like traditional varsity athletics, with team members participating in tryouts, wearing uniforms, maintaining practice schedules and adhering to a code of conduct and academic standards.

It was also announced that an esports arena will be built in the student union where the Barnes & Noble Bookstore currently resides.

For more information, visit [missouriwestern.edu/esports](http://missouriwestern.edu/esports).

**"Together we can reach new heights in academics, arts and athletics," President Wilson said. "We can teach our students how to communicate effectively, how to think critically, how to lead, how to innovate, how to be entrepreneurial and how to celebrate differences. We can open minds, we can open eyes and we can open hearts." ■**

# Fall sports wrap

## Football

The 50th season of Griffon football saw the program return to success known for much of the previous two decades. Missouri Western went 8-3 in the regular season for its most wins since 2013. The season was capped with a second consecutive appearance in the Agent Barry Live United Bowl in Texarkana, Arkansas, where the Griffons beat Henderson State University 35-14. That ninth win was the most since 2012 and the football program's 300th.

The season was highlighted by a dynamic offense that averaged close to 42 points per game. That offense put up at least 43 points in five straight games and six overall. The offense also totaled more than 500 yards four times, including a program-first string of three-straight 500+ yard totals.

Sixteen Griffons were named All-MIAA, highlighted by first-team selections Hayden Eatinger, Sam Webb and Trey Vaval. Vaval became the first freshman in the history of the program to be named All-American by the American Football Coaches Association, receiving second-team honors. The true freshman broke a 27-year-old MIAA record by averaging more than 35 yards per kick return and led the nation with more than 1,100 combined return yards.

## Volleyball

Griffon volleyball finished 17-13 overall with an 11-9 conference record that helped the team earn a fifth-place spot in the MIAA standings.

The Griffons got off to a hot start, winning their first five

matches of the season. After challenging conference play against the best in the MIAA and several nationally ranked opponents, the team clawed its way back over .500 and swept traditional power Central Oklahoma in the regular

season finale to claim the No. 5 seed in the MIAA Championships.

Six Griffons were named All-MIAA including first-team middle hitter Ali Tauchen. Lauren Murphy finished her career ranked second in Griffon rally scoring history with 3,898 assists.





# New tennis coach hired

## Soccer

After five straight years of record-breaking win totals for the soccer program, the Griffons took a step back in 2019 when Coach Chad Edwards lined up a team this season without a single senior.

The youth movement resulted in a 4-11-3 overall record that saw the team miss the postseason for the first time in six years. There still were bright spots. After not scoring in the first three games, the Griffons won three straight to begin MIAA play 3-2-1. While the season didn't end with many victories, the Griffons did show signs of improvement late in the year, scoring at least one goal in each of its final six games.

## Cross Country

Year three of Griffon cross country saw both teams improve as Cody Ingold took over as head coach early in the season.

The women's team opened the season with a second-place finish in the Bearcat Open and won the Griffon Open two weeks later. The squad finished seventh at the MIAA Championships, the highest-ever finish by the Griffons. Megan Gillen finished 11th at the MIAA Championships.

The men's squad finished in the top 10 in every event before the NCAA DII Central Regional. The men won the Griffon Open in late September and finished second at the Bearcat Open. The team's ninth-place finish in the MIAA Championships was its highest in the first three years of the program. ■

Olaya Garrido-Rivas was hired as the head women's tennis coach. She came to Missouri Western after two seasons as an assistant women's tennis coach at NCAA Division I member Middle Tennessee State. A native of Gijon, Asturias, Spain, she was a second-team All-Big 12 selection as a women's tennis player at Texas Christian University in 2017 and was named the Big 12 Women's

Tennis Newcomer of the Year in 2016 after transferring to TCU from the University of South Florida.

She received her bachelor's degree in communications studies from TCU in 2017. Since graduating from Middle Tennessee with a master's in leisure and sport management, Garrido-Rivas had been working as an instructor with the Rafa Nadal Academy. ■

# Missouri Western adds new sport

The Missouri Western Board of Governors unanimously approved the addition of women's lacrosse as the 17th NCAA Division II varsity sport this past fall. The team will become active in the 2020-21 academic year and begin competition in the spring of 2021.

the state of Missouri sponsoring women's lacrosse.

The team will play games on Craig Field in Spratt Memorial Stadium and use current locker room facilities. It is estimated that the new sport will attract between 30 and 40 student athletes. A national search for a coach is underway.

Women's lacrosse is the fastest growing NCAA sport. DII sponsorships increased 129.7% over the past 10 years. In fall 2019, 109 NCAA DII members sponsored women's lacrosse. ■



The University is the fourth NCAA Division II member in the state of Missouri to add the sport and the first from the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association. Missouri Western will be the only public DII member in

# Charity Golf Classic – Save the date

A favorite local event and the top fundraiser for Griffon Athletics, the 18th Annual MWSU/YWCA Charity Golf Classic is set for June 6 and 8. The event begins on the June 6 with the charity

social dinner party and auction and continues at the St. Joseph Country Club for the golf portion on June 8. Look for more details at [gogriffons.com](http://gogriffons.com). ■

# Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2019

**Seven former student athletes and one team was honored at the Rogers Pharmacy Hall of Fame Weekend in October. Congratulations!**

## **Reggie Alexander Men's Basketball 1999-2001**

Reggie Alexander was a dominant inside presence on teams that won 38 combined games. His 50 blocked shots in the 1999-2000 season still rank as the most ever by a Griffon. He also scored 458 points that season, breaking a Missouri Western single-season record at the time, currently ranking 11th. Alexander also broke the University's single-season rebounds record with 200 and currently ranks eighth. His 184 field goals in 1999-2000 rank as the fifth most in a season at Missouri Western; his 6.9 rebounds per game rank ninth and his 138 defensive rebounds also rank ninth. Alexander was named second-team All-MIAA in 2000 and was a first-team selection in 2001. He was also named first-team Daktronics All-South Central Region and second-team NABC All-South Central Region in 2001.

## **Jarrett Brooks '09 Football 2003-06**

An all-purpose threat on Griffon teams that combined to win 32 games, Jarrett Brooks finished his career with 27 touchdowns and 4,408 all-purpose yards. He ranks 10th all-time at Missouri Western in total touchdowns and eighth in receiving touchdowns (21). His 133 receptions are fourth most in Griffon history and his 2,099 receiving yards rank seventh. The all-purpose total is fourth best in program history while his 162 points are ninth most. Brooks' 1,675 kick-return yards are the second most ever by a Griffon and his 541 punt-return yards are third most. He returned two punts and two kicks for touchdowns in his career. Brooks was a first-team All-MIAA selection in 2006 as a wide receiver and as a returner. He also received honorable mention D2Football.com All-American as a returner in 2006.



## **Tracy Jones '01 Women's Tennis 1996-99**

Tracy Jones was a three-time top-three finisher in the MIAA Championships at No. 1 singles and led the team to its only appearance in the NCAA postseason in 1998. Jones was a second-team All-MIAA selection in 1997, finishing second at No. 1 singles and third at No. 1 doubles. The next year, she again finished second at No. 1 singles and second as part of the Griffons' No. 1 doubles team at the MIAA Championships. She helped the team to an appearance in the NCAA regional tournament that season. In 1999, Jones finished third at the top singles spot and second at No. 1 doubles in the MIAA Championships for a third-team All-MIAA honor. Jones went on to serve as both an assistant and head women's tennis coach at Missouri Western and is currently a physical therapist assistant.

## **Jessica (Koch) Williams '12 Women's Basketball 2007-12**

The all-time leading scorer in the program's history, Jessica Williams scored 1,776 career points. She is also the program's all-time leader in made free throws (394); ranks second all-time in made field goals (615); ranks third in assists (387) and ranks fifth in made 3-pt field goals (152). Her 595 points during the 2011-12 season are the most in program history along with her 22-point average that season. Her 16.6 points-per-game average the previous season ranks 10th best in program history.

Also in 2011-12, she made 139 free throws, also a single-season record. Williams made 204 field goals that season, second most ever by a Griffon. A versatile guard, Williams' 7.2 rebound per game averaged in 2009-10 is tied for the ninth best in program history. Her 107 assists in the 2010-11 season ranks 10th most in Griffon history. She also blocked 25 shots and recorded 76 steals (T-4th) in the 2011-12 season.

Williams also holds single-game records for field goals made (17) and free throws made (14). Williams scored 38 points at Southwest Baptist in 2012, tied for third-most ever by a Griffon. Her six made threes against Washburn in 2012 are tied for the second most in program history.





The 2019 Athletic Hall of Fame individual honorees included Reggie Alexander, Tracy Jones '01, Taira Roth '04, Kara (Unger) Rosonke '06, Jarrett Brooks '09, Michael Schulze '13 and Jessica (Koch) Williams '12.

Following her final season, she was an honorable mention WBCA All-American, second-team Daktronics All-South Central Region and first-team All-MIAA. Williams was a second-team All-MIAA selection in 2011; honorable mention in 2010; and was named MIAA Freshman of the Year in 2009.

#### **Taira Roth '04 Women's Golf 2002-04**

A two-sport athlete, Taira Roth also participated as a member of the women's basketball team, but she becomes the women's golf program's first-ever Athletics Hall of Fame inductee. She reached as high as No. 36 in the nation, the third highest ever by a Griffon women's golfer. Her 8.17 versus par score in 2003-04 ranks 11th best in program history. She won seven tournaments total, second most all-time at Missouri Western, and four in the 2003-04 season, which also ranks second-most in University history.



The 1995 basketball team honorees included front row, Lamont Thomas, Assistant Coach Brian Ostermann, Troy Goodnight, Head Coach Tom Smith, Jerran Cobb. Back row: Andre Crittendon, Toby Hoggatt, Dywane Mitchell and Will Kendrick.

#### **Michael Schulze '13 Baseball 2012-13**

In two short years, Michael Schulze left Missouri Western as the most decorated baseball student athlete in program history. He was named the 2013 National Player of the Year by Daktronics and the National Collegiate Baseball Writer's Association. Schulze was also a finalist for the inaugural Josh Willingham Award. In 2013, Schulze's honors also included MIAA Player of the Year, first-team All-MIAA, Daktronics Central Region Player of the Year, first-team Daktronics All-Region, ABCA Central Region Player of the Year, first-team ABCA All-Region, first-team Daktronics All-American, first-team ABCA/Rawlings All-American, NCBWA Central Region Player of the Year, first-team NCBWA All-Region, first-team NCBWA All-American and MIAA Honor Roll. His .400 career batting average ranks first

*Continued on next page*

*Continued from pg. 23*

## Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2019

all-time at Missouri Western and his .439 average in the 2013 season is also the best in Griffon baseball history. Schulze helped lead the Griffons to their first MIAA Championship in 2013. He received honorable mention All-MIAA at shortstop in 2012. Following his two-year Griffon career, Schulze was drafted in the 19th round by the St. Louis Cardinals and played in their minor league system for four years.

### Kara (Unger) Rosonke '06 Softball 2005-06

Kara Rosonke was a two-time first-team All-MIAA selection, helping the Griffons at the plate, in the field and in the circle. She helped lead the program to its first-ever NCAA postseason appearance. She was named first-team All-MIAA and NFCA All-Region as a utility player in 2005. In 2006, Rosonke was a first-team All-MIAA and second-team NFCA All-Region outfielder. She was also named first-team ESPN The Magazine/CoSIDA

Academic All-District in 2006. Her .609 slugging percentage ranks third all-time at Missouri Western and her .406 career on base percentage ranks 10th best. Her 23 home runs are ninth most in program history. She was also a key piece of the Griffon pitching staff, going 14-7 with a 2.64 career ERA. She had seven complete games and four career shutouts. Rosonke struck out 110 batters to just 39 walks.

### 1994-95 Men's Basketball Team

The team became Head Coach Tom Smith's first to sweep the MIAA regular season and postseason championships. The Griffons won their first 12 games before a five-point overtime loss at Missouri Southern. Its final victory, 66-58 over Washburn in the MIAA Championship final, gave the team a Missouri Western record 26th win. Reaching as high as No. 4 in the NCAA DII rankings, the team went 26-5 overall, 13-3 in conference play, and hosted the NCAA South Central Region Championships. ■

*Continued from pg. 15*

## GRIFFON FOOTBALL celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> season

walked off the practice field and said to each other, 'I'll see you after while.' For some the 'after while' has been many, many years but it was like it was yesterday."

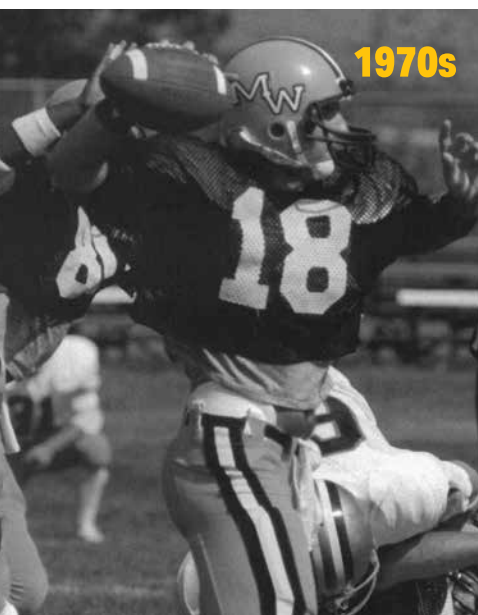
Graham said he also wanted to make sure they honored the coaches of the past, so large photos of

the three Hall of Fame coaches – Harold Cagle, Rob Hicklin and Jerry Partridge '86 – are now hanging in the Stadium Club.

"Every athlete, regardless of their time spent or their success on and off the field, had their hands in the success of the program," Workman said. "For many of us who had the privilege of being on the first team in 1970 and remember the first

game, we understand that our time is limited and we understand that each year is a gift that should be shared with others because there are no guarantees for the next year. So it's very special, and to share those moments with others you played alongside or other Griffon players who came later is certainly an honor for everyone involved."

Besides the lopsided first-game score, that first season's record was 1-8, but that, too, has long been overshadowed by many great moments and records over the next 49 seasons. ■





# From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Wow, what a fall we had! This year's Homecoming was a HUGE success. We kicked off the week's events with our annual breakfast in recognition of alumni employees, and we continued our celebration with the SGA Reunion. It was a big hit, with alumni from at least five different decades! The Golf Tournament was a little chilly, but we still had a fantastic turnout. Friday night at our Alumni Awards Banquet, we honored 11 Griffons who are doing amazing things. You can check out the Alumni Association Facebook page to see our honorees and all the fun we had that evening.

This year's parade was a fun time, and we plan for next year's turnout to be even bigger and better! Before the game kicked off, we had Future Griff's Fun Zone on the Remington Hall lawn, an area for the kids to play some games and have fun on campus. At the Tailgate we had some delicious food and time to reconnect, and let's not forget time to get pumped up for the big game.



Tona Williams '00

And what a game! Our Griff's had a big win that day! Way to go, team! We ended the week with a Forever Griffons Luncheon, where we listened to the sounds of the jazz band and got to hear from our new president Matt Wilson and new vice president of University Advancement Todd Simpson.

Speaking of Vice President Simpson, I'd like to welcome him and his wife, Michelle, to the Griffon Family. We are very excited to have you aboard. I personally had the chance to have lunch with them, and they are wonderful additions to our University. If you see them around, don't

hesitate to introduce yourself to them.

The Alumni Board is working hard on future events. And, we are always looking for new volunteers. We would love to have YOU involved in the Alumni Association. Please feel free to reach out to me at [tonatee@hotmail.com](mailto:tonatee@hotmail.com).

With Griffon Pride,

*Tona Williams*

Tona Williams '00

President, Alumni Association

## Kim Weddle '00 to head Alumni Relations

Kim Weddle '00 was named executive director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving last fall. Weddle, longtime Missouri Western employee, had been serving as director of Development since January 2015.

"I'm excited about my new role and the opportunity to meet even more of my fellow Griffons," Weddle said.

The position is new for Missouri Western, as it expands the role of the Alumni Relations director to include the coordination of the annual fund. Weddle noted that many universities have similar positions in their University Advancement divisions.

"I am looking forward to helping alumni connect with Missouri Western," she said. "I know the impact that this university had on my life, and I know it did the same for many others. I want to work to make that impact continue because our alumni are our greatest supporters." ■



Kim Weddle '00, right, visits with Pat '88 and Terri Modlin at the Donor Appreciation Reception last spring.

# Paul Helmer and Garrett Wilson '15: Preserving and restoring

## Paul Helmer

As a child, Paul Helmer would often make suggestions to his mother about ways to improve the way their home looked. But his mother would tell him no, because no one in the neighborhood was doing it. "And I'd say, 'that's why we should do it!'" he said.

That creative thinking and love of art and architecture continued throughout his childhood, and as Helmer grew up, he came to appreciate St. Joseph's architecture more and more.

The St. Joseph Historical Society was most likely pretty surprised when Helmer, still a student at Central High School, started attending society meetings.

And his love for historical buildings and architecture has never waned.

Helmer attended Missouri Western for three years before transferring to Kansas State University to earn an architecture degree. He started his business, Touch of Distinction, in Kansas City about 40 years ago and has completed

restoration projects all over the United States, including several in St. Joseph.

"I went into architecture because I grew up in St. Joseph, and architecture was everywhere, and I

could see the beauty of the city and the things that made it unique," he said. "It's the idiosyncrasies that make our cities beautiful."

Calling himself both a conservationist and architect, Helmer's business offers color consultations, faux painting, landscapes,

interior design and more for both commercial and residential buildings.

He completed work on St. Patrick's Catholic Church and the Twin Spires church ("the most beautiful church in the city") in St. Joseph, and recently restored the exterior of the 1890 Krug Mansion. He also restored the

original French wallpaper in the Shakespeare Chateau Inn and Gardens in St. Joseph.

"It was a delight," he said of the Shakespeare project. "I try to bring things back as close to the original as possible."

And although he lives in Kansas City, Helmer has always remained involved in St. Joseph's preservation efforts.

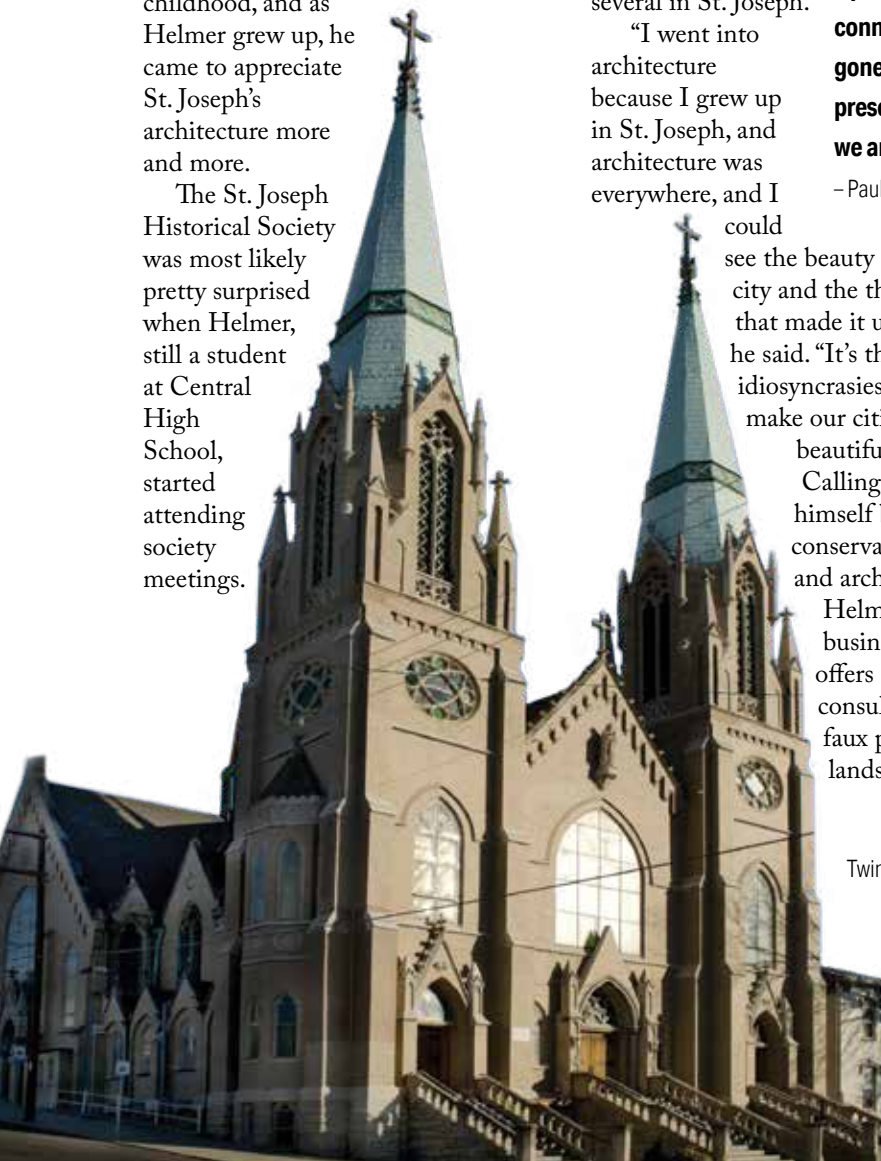
"When someone says no, I say, 'why not?' I always look at alternatives to demolition. The buildings are so beautiful; how can you tear them down?"

His final graduation project at Kansas State was creating a plan to restore Warehouse Row on 4th Street in downtown St. Joseph, which included converting the upper floors to apartments and filling the ground level with commercial properties. That's where the Fourth Street

**"When we tear down a masterpiece of art and architecture, we lose a piece of ourselves; we lose the connection with those who have gone before us. We are not just preserving beautiful old buildings, we are preserving history."**

— Paul Helmer

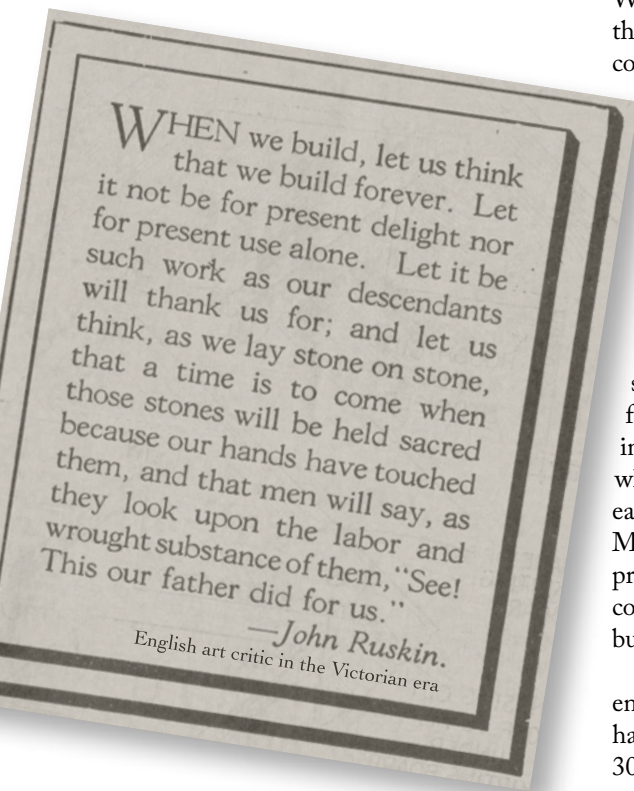
Twin Spires in St. Joseph, Missouri





Lofts and Boudreaux's Louisiana Seafood and Steaks are today. And many elements of his senior project, a renovation plan for the Buchanan County Courthouse, made their way into the work that began on it two years later.

"When we tear down a masterpiece of art and architecture, we lose a piece of ourselves; we lose the connection with those who have gone before us," Helmer said. "We are not just preserving beautiful old buildings, we are preserving history."



**"I enjoy being able to stand back at the end of project and look at the before and after photos. I like to see how far the project came, knowing we did it correctly."**

— Garrett Wilson '15

## Garrett Wilson '15

Garrett Wilson '15 may be young, but he still appreciates the past and wants to do his part to preserve it. In 2017, he started his own business, GKW Restoration, which specializes in historic masonry restoration such as tuckpointing, stone replacement and patching, brick replacement, masonry cleaning, and new masonry projects.

"I enjoy being able to stand back at the end of project and look at the before and after photos," Wilson said. "I like to see how far the project came, knowing we did it correctly."

Wilson, who was born in St. Joseph and grew up in Kansas City, started at Missouri Western right out of high school and played golf his freshman year. He thought he wanted to go into banking, but then decided no.

Wilson got married and switched to part-time college and full-time work. He began working in construction, and then he knew what he wanted to do. Wilson earned an economics degree from Missouri Western and worked as a project manager for a construction company before starting his own business.

When he became an entrepreneur just two years ago, he had one employee. Today, there are 30 employees and the company has grown to do millions of dollars in annual revenue. Wilson has offices in Kansas City and Manhattan, Kansas; and plans to open more in the future.

However, he is quick to credit his wife when it comes to the success of the business.

"I want to mention how big a part that my wife, Maria, has



Garrett Wilson '15

played, and still plays, in the success of the company. She puts up with my 70-hour work weeks and is used to me leaving before the sun comes up and coming home at 8 p.m. She knows that I am not the kind of person that can work a 9-5 job, and she stays at home with the kids so I can do my thing. I couldn't do it without her."

Wilson says when you are restoring historic buildings, you have to not only learn the skills to restore the brick or stone, but you have to keep up with the regulations and historic preservation requirements, and he enjoys that aspect of the business.

He is involved in Young Preservationists KC, an affiliate group of Historic Kansas City, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the area's heritage and neighborhoods. GKW Restoration is also a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which protects and supports significant historic places and structures across the United States. ■

## 1970s

**Dr. Linda Pettijohn '79** was honored by the Missouri State University Board of Governors as a 2019 inductee into the University's Wall of Fame. The wall honors employees who have excelled at MSU and significantly contributed to the success and positive collegiate experience of students. Dr. Pettijohn worked in the College of Business at MSU from 1987 to 2010.

## 1990s



**L.B. Galbearth, Jr. '94** was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in June 2019.

LTC Galbearth made history as the first U.S. Army officer to complete the Certificate of Management Excellence from the Harvard Business School. He is also the first Department of Defense military officer to complete the Advanced Management Leadership Program at Oxford University Said Business School. He earned degrees in history and political science from Missouri Western and holds a graduate certificate in Emergency and Disaster Management and a Master's in Health Sciences from Touro University in 2011.

He is also a graduate of the Army Recruiter and the Recruiter Company Commander courses and holds the Gold Badge in Recruiting. He is a graduate of the Health Services Plans, Operations, Intelligence, Security

and Training Course, Health Services Human Resources Course, Health Services Logistics Course and the Multifunctional Logistics Course. He is a graduate of the Army Command General Staff College and the Naval War College Command and Staff. He has completed the Homeland Security Planner's Course and Joint, Inter Agency, Multinational Planner's Course at the National Defense University. He holds Peace Operations Specialized Training Certificates in Military Studies, Human Rights and Gender Studies from the United Nations Peace Operations Training Institute. He and his wife, **Toni (Foster) Galbearth '91**, have four children. He is currently serving as the Battalion Executive Officer for the 7455th Medical Battalion in Topeka, Kansas.

# Deena Murphy '85

Deena Murphy said she really didn't think about going to college until she was recruited by Missouri Western to play basketball.

When she arrived on campus, coaches suggested she also try out for softball, and she ended up playing both softball and basketball throughout her college career.

Ironically, it was her softball experience that gave her her most memorable moment at Missouri Western – the national softball championship in 1982, when she was a freshman.

Interestingly, six of the nine starters on the championship team that year were freshmen. "We just didn't know any better so we kept winning," she said with a laugh.

Murphy and her spouse, Michele Gehringer, recently established an endowed scholarship, the Murphy-Gehringer Family Scholarship, with criteria that harkens back to her softball days at Missouri Western. It is for a fifth-year female athlete who has exhausted her athletic scholarship, with preference given to a softball player.

"The benefits I received from Missouri Western were directly related to the success I've had," she said.

Murphy was a recreation management major, but she took an accounting class when she was a junior and fell in love with it. Since she was close to graduation, she went ahead and earned her recreation management degree,

returned to her hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, got a job and then went to University of Nebraska-Omaha to earn an accounting degree.

Murphy worked in that field her entire career, retiring last year from Union Pacific Railroad. But before she retired, she leveraged Union Pacific's generous 2:1 charitable match program, turning her \$10,000 gift to Missouri Western into \$30,000.

"I wanted to give back to make sure someone else has the opportunity," Murphy said. "I always felt like it was important to give back so other people could benefit like I did." ■



## 1990s

**Jason Tolen '95** is assistant principal at Central High School in St. Joseph, Missouri.

## 2000s



the birth of a daughter, Lucy Jean, born July 8, 2019.

**Christopher Hamilton '05** and **Heather (Teeter) Hamilton '06**, announce

## 2010s



Stella Marie, born June 14, 2019. She has a brother, Cooper. ■

**Matt '08** and **Allie '11 Canaday** announce the birth of a daughter,

# 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).

**David Carriger Jr. '72**, St. Joseph, Missouri, June 30, 2019.

**David Dinning '73**, New Braunfels, Texas, Aug. 9, 2019.

**Patti Jo (Hackett) Hale '76**, Kansas City, Missouri, March 27, 2018.

**Ivan E. Herpel '74**, Gower, Missouri, March 5, 2019.

**Harold Dean Johnson '64**, Derby, Kansas, June 14, 2019. He served as assistant professor of engineering and technology at Missouri Western 1971-76.

**Kenneth G. Johnson '63**, St. Joseph, Missouri, June 8, 2019. He taught computer science at Missouri Western for 37 ½ years.

**Matthew A. Landess '08**, Bonner Springs, Kansas, Sept. 14, 2019.

**Elizabeth A. Moore '86**, Ruskin, Florida, March 8, 2019.

**Heather A. Riley '95**, Belton, Missouri, July 8, 2019.

**Roger W. Roberts '91**, Kansas City, Missouri, May 24, 2019.

**Mary A. Rasmussen '74**, Lake Placid, Florida, April 25, 2019.

**Lee R. Schuster**, Coronado, California, Aug. 13, 2019. He was an adjunct instructor at Missouri Western for more than 20 years.

**Maisie I. (Brumge) Stevenson '77**, McAllen, Texas, July 7, 2019. ■

# Yearbooks – online and more!

Griffon yearbooks are now available online. Thanks to Rachel Lundy, collection specialist and archivist for the library; and Diane Holtz, senior content manager for Marketing and Communications, every edition of the Griffon Yearbook that was published can be accessed at [omekas.missouriwestern.edu/s/mwsu-yearbooks/page/home](http://omekas.missouriwestern.edu/s/mwsu-yearbooks/page/home).

The 1916-1920 St. Joseph Junior College yearbooks consisted of just a few pages within Central High School's yearbooks, and those pages are also available on the Missouri Western website. Thanks to Central High School Librarian Kristy Johnson, the Missouri Western library now contains a physical copy of the yearbook for every year one was published, including the Central High School yearbooks

from 1916-20. To view the physical copies, contact Lundy at [rlundy3@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:rlundy3@missouriwestern.edu).

Johnson noted that Central High School has almost every yearbook since 1891. She is only missing the following years and would love to acquire a copy of those: 1897, 1898 and 1903. Contact Holtz at [holtz@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:holtz@missouriwestern.edu) if you have any of those editions. ■

# Alumni Association honors 11 at banquet

**Eleven alumni and friends were honored at the Alumni Association's 37th annual banquet Homecoming weekend. Congratulations!**

## **Dr. Jamel Santa Cruze Wright '00 Distinguished Alumni Award**

As president of Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois, Dr. Jamel Wright says she often thinks about her experience as a student at Missouri Western.



"I think I spend some portion of every day celebrating Missouri

Western," she said. "Every day I have a memory of something that happened there that laid the foundation for where I am today."

After she graduated with a communication studies degree with a public relations/strategic communication emphasis in 2000, Dr. Wright earned her master's and doctorate degrees in communication studies from the University of Kansas in just four years.

Dr. Wright taught at Boston University and Saint Louis University before joining the administration at Eureka College in 2014. She served as vice president/special assistant to the president for strategic and diversity initiatives before being named interim president in 2016. She became Eureka College's president in July 2017.

## **Chelsey Kusek '09 GOLD Award**

Chelsey Kusek '09 is an art teacher at Bell Prairie Elementary School and the subject area-lead teacher for the North Kansas City School District.



She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Art Education and a minor in Spanish in May 2009 and began teaching at Bell Prairie that fall. As Bell Prairie's art teacher, she teaches more than

600 students every week.

She was named lead teacher in 2015. In that role, she plans monthly staff meetings and professional development for her colleagues.

"My experience at Missouri Western was so positive," she said. "My classes were just the right combination of challenging and engaging, and my happy place was certainly Potter Hall. Missouri Western truly holds a special place in my heart."

She earned a Master of Education in Technology-Enhanced Teaching from Mid-America Nazarene University in 2012.

## **Dr. Tom Rachow Distinguished Faculty Award**

Dr. Tom Rachow began teaching at Missouri Western in 1968 and retired this past spring after 51 years of service.

Dr. Rachow, who was named Professor Emeritus of Biology, earned a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from the



University of Iowa, and a Master of Science in Education, Biological Sciences, and a doctorate in physiology from Southern Illinois University.

"Dr. Rachow is what Missouri Western's academic staff should be modeled after," said one of his former students. "He is not only a state-of-the-art teacher, but a great man."

"We have matured into a beautiful campus with a great student body," Dr. Rachow said. "I am so proud of the strong academic institution we have become."





**Pat Dillon  
Herb '35 and  
Peggy Iffert  
Award for  
Outstanding  
Service to the  
University**

Pat Dillon  
is the Chief  
Government and

Community Relations Officer for Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph. In addition to serving on a number of community organizations' boards, he completed two terms (12 years) on the MWSU Foundation Board, serving on the directorship, executive and bylaws committees, along with chairing the development committee. He has also worked on two of the University's capital campaigns and helped found the Western League for Excellence giving society.

He owned The Dillon Company for 25 years before going to work for Mosaic as its retail director in 2007. He was promoted to vice president of advocacy and Government Relations in 2015, and named to his current position this year.

**Jaime Bartley '17, MSN, RN,  
NE-BC, CCTC  
Great Griffon Award  
School of Nursing and Health  
Professions**



Jaime Bartley '17 graduated from Missouri Western's Master of Science in Nursing: Health Care Leadership program and is the Organ Transplant Manager for

the University of Kansas Health System.

Under her guidance, the donor transplant program has experienced a number of changes, which resulted in a great increase in the number of living donors and transplants.

Since January 2018, the University of Kansas Health System's transplant team has performed 11 internal kidney transplant exchanges or chains which impacted 50 patients (25 donors and 25 recipients). They also hosted a Big Ask Big Give workshop in February 2019 for patients, and the success of that workshop has led to other health care and National Kidney Foundation representatives from across the country seeking their input.

**Jacob Cunning '16  
Great Griffon Award  
Craig School of Business &  
Technology**

Jacob Cunning '16 graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in



Management and immediately became an active alumni volunteer. Since he graduated, he has served on the St. Joseph Alumni Chapter

Steering Committee and the Legacy Day Committee.

Cunning served as an intern at Boehringer Ingelheim while he was a student and was hired there after he graduated, moving with the company to its Atlanta office.

He is currently a Consultant, Human Capital at Deloitte, a multinational professional services network, and he continues to reside in Atlanta.

Cunning holds the distinction of being the youngest member of Missouri Western's Clock Tower Society, an honorary society that recognizes donors who have made the MWSU Foundation a beneficiary of their estate.

**Duane Martin '89  
Great Griffon Award  
Liberal Arts and Sciences**

Duane Martin '89 earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Missouri Western.



In 2014, he founded EdCounsel, LLC, a firm dedicated to defending and supporting Missouri's public schools.

Throughout his career, Martin has represented more than 40% of Missouri's public school districts. He has also published scholarly articles in national publications.

Martin graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. He was a judicial law clerk at the Missouri Court of Appeals and an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Missouri. Martin has also taught as an adjunct professor in the doctoral program for education at St. Louis University.

*Continued on next page*

*continued from pg. 31*

**Mary Sprake Vaughan '79**  
**Great Griffon Award**  
**College of Professional Studies**



Mary Vaughan '79, a native of St. Joseph, graduated with a bachelor's degree in leisure management and served 32 years in the Parks and Recreation Department for the city of Maryland Heights, Missouri. She became the director in 1998 and guided a great expansion of programs in the department, overseeing the construction of a new Community Center before retiring in 2016.

Vaughan was a past president of the Alumni Association and chair of numerous committees for the group. She is currently serving as district secretary for the Missouri Arkansas District of Kiwanis International. Throughout her career, Vaughan also held many positions with the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association, including president.



**Benjamin Allen '19**  
**Clifford Hughes '55 Award**

Benjamin Allen, who graduated with a biology degree, health sciences concentration, in 2019, excelled in both student organizations and in academic pursuits.

He was president of Alpha Sigma Phi, where he had the opportunity to redesign the fraternity and turn it into one of the leading organizations on campus. He also participated in the Barbara Sprong Leadership Challenge and was on the University's strategic plan committee.

Allen also had the opportunity to conduct research with Dr. Carissa Ganong for nine weeks in a Costa Rican rainforest. He is currently working at Boehringer-Ingelheim as a Quality Control Technician and plans to attend graduate school in the future to become a physician's assistant.

**Evan M. Banks '19**  
**Graduating Student of the Year**



Evan Banks '19 graduated with degrees in history and political science with a minor in peace and conflict studies, but not before he got involved in several organizations across campus.

As a student, he served as vice president of the Student Government Association and director of external relations, as a tutor, and as president of the History Society.

Banks is an admissions counselor for Missouri Western. "Everyone in my departments took an interest in my career, and I would not be the person I am today were it not for them. I am so grateful for the opportunities and experiences that Missouri Western afforded me," said Banks, a native of Las Vegas.

**Shi Qing Ong '19**  
**Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian International Student of the Year**

Shi Qing Ong '19, from Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, graduated with a biology degree with a health science concentration and is currently



studying physical therapy at the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center.

She played golf for the Griffons for four years. In her senior year, she won her record 14th career and fifth consecutive event. Qing Ong was named MIAA Women's Golfer of the Year two years in a row and recognized as Missouri Western's Female Student Athlete of the Year twice.

Qing Ong also conducted genetic research with Dr. Todd Eckdahl and presented her work at a national conference.

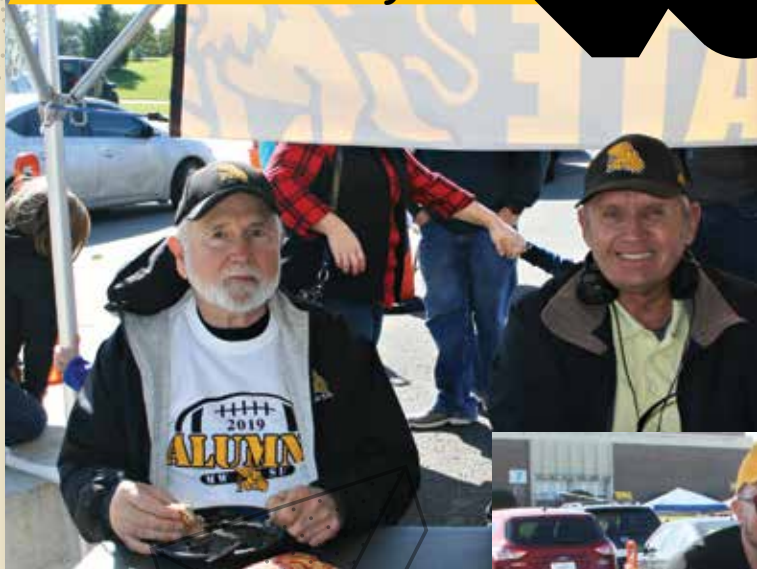
**Nominate for Alumni Association awards today!**

Nominations for all Alumni Association awards may be submitted year round online at [missouriwestern.edu/alumni](http://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. ■



HOMECOMING 2019

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## Looking back – the ceramics house

When the Potter Fine Arts Center opened in 1971, a ceramics studio was located in the building. But by 1975, the studio had moved into an old farmhouse on the east side of campus, off of 50th Street, to alleviate crowding in the building.

The ceramics space, far from ideal, was used until an addition to Potter Hall was built in 1986. Reports of a leaky roof and walls, poor plumbing and inadequate ventilation were common. In the spring, heavy rains often made the dirt road to the house impassable, and at least one snake made its way inside the house.

Dr. M.O. Looney, who was president at the time, began looking for ways to fund an addition to Potter Hall as early as 1976, but funding was not received from the state Legislature until 1985 under Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy.

The successful funding was probably due in part to the fact that Dr. McCarthy invited area legislators to tour the ceramics house in the fall of 1984.

The structure remained on campus until it was destroyed by fire in 1997. ■