

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

MWSU



SPRING 2020

12 COVID-19: The Silent Spring



Consider joining the Clock Tower Society!

The Clock Tower Society is an honorary society of donors who have made the Missouri Western State University Foundation a beneficiary of their estate and financial planning. Membership in the Society is extended to all who have made an estate or deferred gift commitment, regardless of the amount, to the Foundation.

We appreciate our Clock Tower Society members!

† Denotes deceased.

Algalee Adams '39†
Dr. Jimmy and Janice Albright
Tom† and Mary Alice†
Bingaman
Charlene Riemen Bunten '52
Harold "Pete" and Betty I.†
Burchett
Tom A. Carmichael, Jr.†
Wayne '90 and Nanette Chatham
Jean Conner '38†
Cheryl Ann Cornett '76
Lorraine Crews '42
Jacob Cuning '16
LeRoy† and Jeanne† Eaton
Earl E.† and Elmyra J.† Euler
Bob and Susan Fay
Dale and Valerie Finney
Dr. Frances M. Flanagan '35†
Rod '48† and Anne† Fletcher
Lyman L. and M. Jane Frick
Dr. Joe Friedman '39†
Helen Gettys '51†
Andrew '34† and Betty† Glaze
David A. Grahl '74
Barry Greenwald
Edward '62† and Janet Haffey
Stan and Doris '51† Hall
Jim Hausman
George Hayward '75
Rose W. Herman†

David C. Horn '66
Herb '35† and Peggy† Iffert
Kenneth Jameson†
Carole Kleeman Tuttle '52
Mike and Peggy Lane
Michael and Millie '78 Maloney
Bill '70 and Judy McMurray
Nell T. Morris†
Tom Payn
Greg and Susan Pettigrew
Alice K. Phelan '45†
Charles and Carol '56 Reynolds
George S. Richmond†
Louis R. '28† and Roberta S.†
Riemer
V. Joyce Rochambeau '47†
Robert Donald Sharp '74†
Dr. Melody A. Smith and
Larry Smith
Larry R. Stobbs '74
Roy L. and Lana Tewell
Drs. Bob and Laurel Vartabedian
Greg '89 and Joleen VerMulm
Edward Vincent '39†
LTC (Ret) Kevin West
Steven Whitlock and Synthia
Black-Whitlock
Bob and Susie Willenbrink
William G. Wright†

For more information, contact
Kim Weddle '00, Executive Director
of Alumni Relations and
Annual Giving
(816) 271-5648
weddle@missouriwestern.edu
Thank you!



SPRING 2020

■ SECTIONS

- 3 Campus News
- 16 Griffon Sports
- 18 Alumni News
- 24 Alumnotes

■ FEATURES

10 Celebrating 50 years – Bushman Planetarium

When the present-day campus opened in 1969, one of the few planetariums in the state opened, too.

12 COVID-19: A Silent Spring

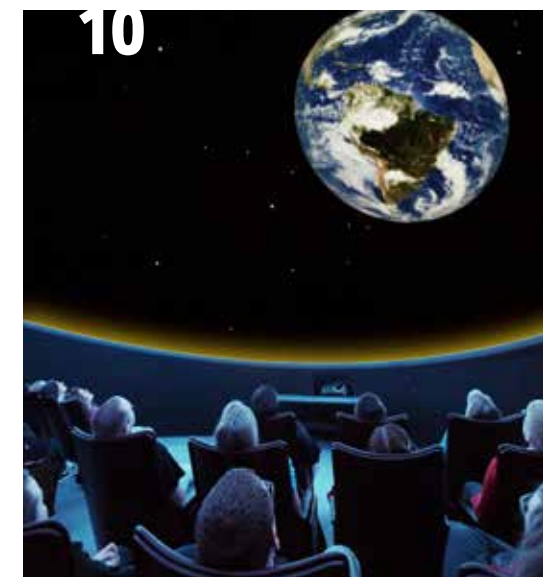
Everyone was somehow affected by the COVID-19 crisis this year, and Missouri Western was no exception. Read how University officials dealt with the unprecedented situation and how it affected our students and employees.

20 Forging Ahead

The Global Center, a one-stop shop for all things international, opened on campus this past spring, academic departments are preparing for Gold Fridays that begins in Fall 2020 and the esports arena is in the works.

■ ON THE COVER

It's just not Missouri Western without our students. We sure missed them when they didn't return to campus after spring break due to COVID-19. Photo by Patrick Evenson



president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

Our heart goes out to Griffon Nation and everyone impacted by the COVID-19 situation. The rapid spread of this virus combined with our commitment to be a responsible global citizen led us to shift our spring semester away from on-campus instruction to alternate modes of delivery so we can continue our important mission of education. As we have operated in unexpected and extraordinary circumstances, we are most appreciative of the understanding of our campus community as well as the efforts of our faculty, staff and administrators in continuing our critical operations.

As you might imagine, the COVID-19 crisis has added massive disruptions to students, institutional operations and finances for all universities around the country. This comes at a time when higher education was already facing unprecedented forces. For quite some time, institutions have been struggling with the impact of downward student enrollment trends, strained state funding, rising costs, facilities maintenance needs, tuition limits, long-term debt and online competition. Such forces have led universities (including Mizzou, UMKC, KU, NWMSU, MSU and others) to make significant reductions in personnel and programs in recent years.

Without question, Missouri Western is not immune to these forces. Our financial challenges are real and immediate. Our net position has decreased by over 70% within the last five years. Cash and investment levels have decreased to critical levels while costs and deferred maintenance increased considerably. To preserve the institution and our accreditation, immediate and corrective actions are needed.

Even before the pandemic, Missouri Western had devised a strategic plan to extricate itself from this delicate financial position. We implemented a process to evaluate

and bring our program offerings and staffing into balance with our enrollment numbers. Commenced in February, this process involved a 14-person Finance Advisory Council evaluating our financial situation and then a nine-person Academic Review Board considering necessary program adjustments. Faculty, staff, administrators and students participated in this important process.

At the end of April, the Board of Governors considered final recommendations. To help Missouri Western survive and strategically put it in a position to thrive, the Board approved a phase-out of certain degrees and minors. Over the years, too many under-enrolled programs have persisted. Nearly 35 majors currently enroll fewer than 10 students total and another 10 majors enroll only between 11-15 students. This approach is unsustainable in the current economic environment.

As difficult as it is to make these changes, we simply cannot be everything to everyone, but must focus on our core strengths. The plan to focus on our strengths impacts the majors of fewer than 15% of our current student population, and these students will have three years to finish out their program or opt into a related one. Sadly, this involves the elimination of quality programs and a heart-breaking reduction in personnel.

As an open-access institution with a statewide applied learning mission, Missouri Western serves as an invaluable resource for students, families and local communities. We are critical to attracting and retaining talent in our area. We are vital to the success of local industry and



Area businesses donated a "presidential limo" to President Wilson so he can offer students rides across campus and have the opportunity to visit with them. He is pictured with representatives of the donor companies: Sunshine Electronic Display Corporation, E.L. Crawford Construction, Inc., ProServ Business Systems, Inc. and Gray Manufacturing.

our society. To survive and thrive, we must be forward thinking and strategic.

Going forward, we will continue to have exceptional programs that serve our students and the community. We will invest in programs that are in demand while continuing to offer courses in liberal arts subjects, just on a different scale.

We are aware that the changes are very difficult. Please know that our goal is to strengthen the University and put us on a pathway to financial stability.

Now more than ever, we need the understanding and support of our alums and supporters. We need you to help us as we gain momentum and attract new students while adapting to the realities facing higher education. Together, we can continue to build our network of Griffons supporting and celebrating each other. We appreciate your support and understanding as we move forward, to emerge stronger than ever to continue the legacy of Griffon Pride.

Matthew J. Wilson
President
Missouri Western State University

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.

SPRING 2020
VOLUME 18/NUMBER 2

Editor

Diane Holtz

Design Editor

Kendy Scudder '94

Chief Communications Officer

Jomel Nichols

Executive Director of Alumni Relations
and Annual Giving

Kim Weddle '00

Photographers

John Ellis

Patrick Evenson

Reid Williams

Board of Governors

Deborah Smith '79, Chair

Lee Tieman, Vice Chair

Rick Ebersold, Al Landes, David Liechti,
Greg Mason '89 and Kayla Schoonover '77

Alumni Board

Tona Williams '00, President

Mary Workman '76, Vice President

Jim Jeffers '73, Immediate Past President

Emily Baumann '10, Marilyn Beck '77,
Linda Crabtree '60, Jodi Deering '01,
Brian Gray '90, Jaime Habersat '99, Diane Hook '90,
Lai-Monté Hunter '99, Claudia James '89,
David Karleskint '90, Linda Kerner '73,
Paige Klocke '16, Stacey Lawrence '10,
Leayn Losh '88, Dennis Merritt '01,
Kendell Misemer '82, Phyllis Myers '56,
Molly Pierce '77, James Sanders '84,
Ralph Schank '82, Angie Springs '02,
Janice Wallace '98, and Alexis Williams '18

Foundation Board

Dennis Rosonke, Chair

Diane Hook '90, Vice Chair

Bill Grimwood, Treasurer

Susan Pettigrew '83, Secretary

Ashley Albers, Mike Basch, Kit Bradley Bowlin,
Eric Bruder '93, Susan Campbell '01, Ali Carolus,
Wayne Chatham '90, Jason Grayson '98, Darrell
Jones '88, Rodger Karn '98, Grace Link '92,
Pat Modlin '88, Brent Porlier '82, Tom Richmond,
David Shinneman, Tom Tewell, Matt Thrasher '95,
Lee Tieman, Greg VerMulm '89, John Wilson,
Matt Wilson, Missouri Western president; Bob
Wollenman '72; and Zack Workman '74.

Missouri Western Magazine

4525 Downs Drive, Spratt Hall 105

St. Joseph, MO 64507

(816) 271-5651

magazine@missouriwestern.edu
missouriwestern.edu/magazine

Missouri Western State University
is an equal opportunity institution.

Center for Teaching and Learning opens

A new Center for Teaching and Learning opened in the spring 2020 semester with Dr. Shauna Hiley, professor of chemistry, serving as its director. The center offers professional development opportunities for all employees, and it kicked off with several options for them.

Dr. Hiley said the center planned to host a lunch topics series two or three times a month, informal events where attendees could bring their own lunch and hear a guest speaker. Those were put on hold when campus closed in March due to COVID-19 and will be held in the fall. Instead, the center's website featured resources for faculty members regarding remote teaching.

"The plan was for the guest speaker to start the conversation and let it go wherever those attending wanted it to go," she said. Dr. Hiley

hopes the lunch sessions will give attendees a forum for interacting and networking with colleagues across campus.

She said the center did hold a couple of presentations by employees in the spring, including Generation Guide: Today's College Students.

Dr. Hiley said she also plans to take advantage of Missouri Western's Gold Fridays, which begin in the fall of 2020. With Gold Fridays, very few classes will be scheduled on Fridays, so she plans to use the days to offer workshop-style presentations.

"The center helps employees explore new ideas, improve pedagogy and improve service to students," she said. "We all want to improve our performance on the job."

It is located in Spratt Hall. ■

Class works with human rights commission

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) in St. Joseph, Missouri was formed in the fall of 2018, but as time passed, members realized that a lot of people in the community were not aware of their existence or their mission. A class at Missouri Western is hoping to change that.

In the spring of 2019, Dr. Jennifer Jackson, assistant professor of communication and journalism, was looking for a nonprofit organization in the community that students in her Strategic Communication Campaigns course could help with marketing and communications. The HRC quickly came on board, and a partnership was born.

In the fall, students worked with HRC members to create goals and objectives, they designed a logo, surveyed the community and created several plans, such as social media

strategies, for the HRC. Then, in Dr. Jackson's spring 2020 Strategic Communication Practices course, students implemented those plans.

"I was very excited they wanted to work with the class, and the students are glad, too," she said of the HRC. "I can get behind the fight to treat each person fairly and equally."

Dr. Jackson likes that her students have the opportunity for hands-on experience with a real client, and they gain the added benefit of learning how to work with different people. When the students presented their plans to HRC members last fall, members told Dr. Jackson that they were so impressed that they believed the students weren't earning enough credit hours for their work.

HRC members were also impressed with Dr. Jackson, because they asked her to join the group as a member. ■

Professor and students create “Old St. Jo”

Toby Lawrence, assistant professor of cinema, and his cinema students are creating an ongoing episodic documentary series about the history of St. Joseph called “Old St. Jo.” They aired the first episode last fall: “The Fur Years - 1799-1843.” It can be viewed on YouTube.

Phase II of the project consists of live-streaming multi-camera



broadcasts to Facebook, which will then be archived on YouTube. Students are filming stories from the community and broadcasting from a studio downtown.

“We are so excited to have the opportunity to engage the students with the community, and to share these stories,” Lawrence said.

The website is oldstjo.com and contains links to its Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube pages. ■

Graduate programs offer accelerated degree

Missouri Western offers an accelerated option for all of its master’s programs, where seniors may apply to earn up to 12 graduate credit hours as an undergraduate and the hours will count toward both their graduate and undergraduate degrees.

Students may apply if they have earned 90 undergraduate credits, are degree-seeking, have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and receive

approval from the director of their graduate program and the Graduate School dean.

Dr. Susan Bashinski, Graduate School dean, noted that this is a great advantage for students. If an undergraduate senior was accepted into the accelerated program and earned 12 hours (six per semester), they would graduate with their bachelor’s degree and have 12 hours toward a Missouri Western master’s degree. ■

Chiefs will return to campus this summer

The Kansas City Chiefs inked a three-year deal to make Missouri Western the home of Chiefs summer training camp through the 2022 season. The agreement includes an option to extend the partnership an additional two years after 2022.

As part of the new agreement, Missouri Western is developing a new seating area on the north end of the existing practice fields to better accommodate Chiefs fans who are viewing practices.

(Depending on the COVID-19 guidelines, there is the possibility that public practices may not be held.)

The Chiefs have held training camp on campus every year since 2010, when the Chiefs returned its training camp to the state of Missouri for the first time in 20 years. Dates and additional details for 2020 Chiefs training camp will be announced on chiefs.com in mid-June. ■

Two construction projects approved

The Missouri Western Board of Governors approved two bids for facility improvements this past spring.

The board approved a bid of \$233,500 from Lawhon Construction Company of St. Joseph to renovate space on the first floor of the Hearn Center to house Missouri Western’s Barnes & Noble Bookstore. The work includes new light fixtures, flooring and ceiling tile replacement, electrical additions, mechanical revisions, removing walls and painting.

The current bookstore space in Blum Union is being converted into a student-use space for interactive gaming and viewing as part of Missouri Western’s new esports program. A portion of the renovation costs is being paid by a private source.

The board also approved a bid of \$372,899 from Seaman & Schuske Metal Works of St. Joseph to replace the roof on Wilson Hall. The current aging roof is leaking and unable to be adequately repaired. Replacing the roof will prevent damage to the interior of the building and save Missouri Western additional costs later.

The project includes the removal of existing roof systems and replacement that includes insulation, cover board and new TPO membrane and flashings. The new roof will include a 20-year warranty. ■

New to the U

Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy was named vice provost last fall. She had been the dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology and interim dean of the College of Health Professions at the University of Akron.

In her role at Missouri Western, Dr. Kennedy will focus on a number of elements of Missouri Western’s strategic plan, Pathways to Excellence, including strengthening student success, creating new partnerships and expanding applied learning.

Dr. Kennedy earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Master of Arts in Psychology, Graduate Certificate in Gerontology and PhD in Psychology, Applied Cognitive Aging, all from the University of Akron. Dr. Kennedy replaces Dr. Doug Davenport, who was named provost and vice president of academic affairs.

Dr. Hannah Piechowski was named associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students in the fall of 2019. She had been director of Student Transitions and Parent and Family Programs at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

Dr. Piechowski earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Piano Performance, and Music Technology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky; a Master of Education and College Student Personnel from the University of Louisville in Kentucky; and a PhD in Education and Social Change: Higher Education from Bellarmine. Dr. Piechowski replaces Dr. Judy Grimes, who retired last summer. ■

National leadership society thrives on campus

Senior Jakob Durham believes that everyone has the potential to be a good leader, and he wants to create as many as possible before he graduates this month. Durham, a history major, joined the National Society of Leadership and Success in the spring semester of his freshman year, and has been helping develop leaders through that group ever since.

He now serves as president of the group, which holds leadership training workshops to learn different communication and leadership styles and how to adjust to each person’s style. They also hold networking events and engage in community service for Habitat for Humanity and the Noyes Home each semester. In November 2019, 25 students were inducted into the group to recognize their leadership training during the fall semester.

“I like seeing people of different backgrounds working together for something bigger than themselves,” Durham said. “There’s always a need for a group like this.”

The group’s advisor is Derek Evans. ■

Girl Scouts

Pam Klaus '03, center, director of the Franchise Development Center, helped Girl Scouts earn their entrepreneurship badge when they gathered on campus recently. Annette Weeks '87 and Miu Sutton '17 of the Center for Entrepreneurship also worked with the young girls.



Campus Kudos

Missouri Western's **Master of Applied Science in Assessment** programs were named No. 5 in the top 10 online master's in assessment and measurement programs by intelligent.com. The ranking was based on cost, course offerings, outcomes, flexibility, faculty and reputation.

According to its website, intelligent.com provides unbiased research to help students make informed decisions about higher education programs.

Dr. Kaye Adkins, professor of English, received the 2019 Distinguished Service Award from the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, the major national organization in technical communication for program administrators and directors. Dr. Adkins is the long-time treasurer for the organization and received recommendations from distinguished faculty across the country.

The design work of student **Lindsey Davis** was selected for the cover of *The Goose*, an international journal of art, environment and culture. Davis submitted two posters for the international competition and both were selected for publication, with one being selected for the cover. Her posters are titled, "Save the Trees, Save Humanity," and convey the results of deforestation. Her work can be viewed at scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose.

Dr. James Carviou, assistant professor of journalism, was named a Distinguished 4-year Yearbook Advisor by the College Media Association, the nation's largest organization dedicated to serving collegiate media advisers. He was recognized at its national convention in November. Additionally, **Dr. Ann Thorne**, long-time yearbook advisor and professor emerita of English, was inducted into the CMA Advisor Hall of Fame.

Dr. Karen Koy, associate professor of biology, co-authored a paper, "The Anthropocene Fossil Record of Terrestrial Mammals" in the peer-reviewed journal *Anthropocene*. The authors were subsequently interviewed by *Science Magazine*, the official publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, for an article titled, "What Fossils Will Modern-day Civilization Leave Behind?" *Science Magazine* is the most important science journal in the United States. There was also an article about their work in *Discover Magazine*.

Student **Cameron Edmonson** received the NACA® Central Markley Scholarship, named for original NACA® Central Region founder Larry Markley. Edmonson is a transition mentor for Admissions and career advisor for the Career Development Center.

Claudia Baer, student employment coordinator, was honored by the National Student Employment Association as the recipient of the 2019 Margene Orzalli Memorial Award, presented annually to a member of NSEA who demonstrates extraordinary effort, energy and commitment to both student employees and the profession. The recipient must provide leadership and vision through various activities, including committee work, conferences and programs, and leadership positions as an officer of the organization.

Baer has provided over three years of service to NSEA through her work as a Student Employment Essentials trainer and board appointee. She is also vice president of professional development for NSEA.

Dr. Hannah Piechowski, recently named associate vice president and dean of students, was selected by the College Personnel Association of Kentucky for the Dr. Fred Rhodes Outstanding Service Award. The award acknowledges an outstanding professional who has made significant professional contributions or achievements on a campus, or at the state or regional level. In order to win the award, Dr. Piechowski demonstrated professional ethics, dedication, and commitment to the principles of the college personnel profession.

Jean Foster, administrative assistant in the Career Development Center, earned her Certified Professional Resume Writer Credential from the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches.

Peter Britton, assistant professor of art, was selected for the 2019 Irene Rosenzweig Biennial Juried Exhibition at The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas in Pine Bluff. His digital metal print "Takate" is part of the juried exhibition showcasing mid-South artists.

Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science Honor Society, received the National Best Chapter Award for the 2018-19 academic year. Only six chapters in the nation receive this award. ■

Missouri Western bowlers have a great season

Five years ago, students asked Monty Smith, associate professor of criminal justice, why Missouri Western didn't have a bowling team. Smith, a United States Bowling Congress Certified Silver Level Coach, decided to help get one started, and the University is now home to a sanctioned intercollegiate bowling team, the Griffon Bowling Club. Rhonda Brown, a USBC



Carson Field and Jacob Dec had a great season with the MWSU Bowling Club.

Certified Bronze Level Coach and developmental math instructor, also coaches.

This past year, its fourth season, two of the bowlers on the team, Carson Field and Jacob Dec, had great seasons. At the Midstates Championship hosted by Wichita State and Newman University in October 2019, Field placed 56th out of more than 300 in the singles event, averaging 188 for six games. In November, at the Jayhawk Collegiate Challenge in Lawrence, Kansas, Dec finished 13th out of 184 bowlers. He averaged 202 for the six games. Carson finished 37th, averaging 192.

At the Bronco Open hosted by Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, Field finished eighth out of 132 bowlers. His average of 198 was just eight pins shy of making the top five finishers All Tournament Team. Dec finished 37th, averaging 175.

"They both worked incredibly hard to become competitive at the collegiate level," Smith said.

Both Field and Dec said the bowling club was definitely a factor in their decision to come to Missouri Western. Dec has been bowling since he was three years old. Field said he bowled on his high school team at Savannah, Missouri. "I didn't want high school bowling to end," he said. "It was too much fun." ■

Three receive Drum Major for Justice Awards

At the 2020 Martin Luther King, Jr. reception on campus in January, three people – one community member, one Missouri Western employee and one student – were honored with the Drum Major for Justice Awards.

The community member recipient was Rich Nolf, who served as director of the St. Joseph Museums for over 30 years; the employee recipient was Dr. Jennifer Jackson, who is a faculty member in the Department of Communication and Journalism, and the student recipient was Leo Grantham, who is an advocate for many social justice issues. Spoken word artist Kyla Lacey was the special guest speaker. ■



Drum Major for Justice Award recipients Rich Nolf and Dr. Jennifer Jackson. Student Leo Grantham was unavailable for a photo.

Training to train

If you are learning how to be a personal trainer, it might work better if you have a personal trainee, right? And if you're an employee, wouldn't you like free guidance from a student learning personal training?

That's exactly what happened last fall when Dr. Stephanie Gerlach, assistant professor of health, physical education and recreation (HPER), matched seven students with seven employees for her Principles of Strength Training and Conditioning class.

The students met in the Baker Family Fitness Center two days a week and spent the time one-on-one with their trainees. And one day a week, they all met in HPER's Personal and Commercial Fitness Lab in the Looney Complex for group workouts. Students were responsible for planning the group workouts, Dr. Gerlach said, and activities included step aerobics, working with resistance bands, stretching and more.

She said the goals of the class included helping the students understand what a long-term exercise program was, how to set appropriate goals for a client and how to have a successful exercise session. Dr. Gerlach said all seven employees stayed through the semester.

Aubry Carpenter '14, marketing coordinator in the Marketing and Communications Office, was one of the employee trainees.

"I loved being a part of the class," Carpenter said. "It definitely got me out of my comfort zone, and was a great learning opportunity for the student. I was also happy to learn how to use many pieces of gym equipment that I had never touched before. I had a lot of fun."

Shaina Spooner '17/'19, also a marketing coordinator in the Marketing and Communications Office, said she had used most of the equipment in the fitness center but had never gone into the free weight area because "it was



Above, employee Aubry Carpenter '14 works out with Taylor Houx in the Baker Family Fitness Center. Below, employee Shaina Spooner '17/'19 works with student Tarell Strader.

intimidating. But Tarell (Strader) encouraged me to try new machines and exercises. I feel more confident when I walk into the gym now."

The class, new in fall 2019, is a required course in the personal and commercial fitness concentration in the physical education major that began in fall 2017.

Senior Giana Butler enjoyed the hands-on experience and was especially glad to learn how to create workout prescriptions for clients.

"It was super fun to get to know the clients," she said. "It was cool to see the differences in backgrounds and skill levels."

Senior Justin Rhodes has a goal of opening a cross fit gym and is already a cross fit coach, but he believes the class gave him a more rounded experience. He liked working with a client one-on-one and helping them figure out their goals and needs.

Dr. Gerlach noted that personal trainers have to work to obtain clients, so the class helped the students gain a lot of self-confidence. She said by the end of the semester, she could just step back and observe rather than giving her input and guidance.

Carpenter and Spooner said they definitely want to participate next time the class is offered.

"My end results were fairly unexpected," Carpenter said. "We did a pre-test and a post-test, and I was amazed to see the weight I lost and strength I gained."

"My favorite part was working with the students," Spooner said. "You could tell they wanted to succeed." ■



Math Pathways to a degree

In 2014, Dr. Jennifer Hegeman, professor of mathematics and chair of the Department of Computer Science, Math and Physics; was selected for a state task force to create college-level mathematics courses that could serve as alternatives to College Algebra and be more aligned with student majors.

The result of the task force was a statewide Math Pathways program that gives students more options as they navigate general studies math requirements for their degrees. Students now have four options instead of just College Algebra, including Mathematical Reasoning & Modeling (contemporary problem solving), Statistical Reasoning, Precalculus Algebra and Precalculus.

"College Algebra became a barrier to success because it kept a lot of students from getting their degree," Dr. Hegeman said. "Math Pathways now opens a lot of doors for students."

Math Pathways is also part of the state's Core 42 program, which makes transferring between Missouri's

public colleges and universities easier by requiring the same general studies course offerings across the state.

With the four options, faculty in Missouri Western's academic departments evaluated all their majors and identified the preferred general studies math course and the accepted courses. That makes it easier for students who are transferring in to Missouri Western. If they didn't take the preferred course, they don't have to retake a class if the one they took is in the accepted category.

Dr. Hegeman said an added and valuable benefit of her work on the statewide task force for three years was the relationships that she created with personnel from other Missouri higher education institutions.

To continue the work of the Math Pathways task force, Missouri Bridges for Equity and Alignment in Mathematics (MoBEAM) was formed, and Dr. Hegeman is part of that leadership group, as well. ■

Griffon Production House

In the spring of 2019, Thomas Brecheisen, assistant professor of cinema, created the Griffon Production House, a group of budding cinematographers who just want to make films.

Brecheisen started the group when he realized that the theatre productions in the Department of Theatre, Cinema and Dance were not being recorded, and he thought that would be great experience for his cinema students. Students had to interview for their positions in the group, and students are in charge of selecting, staffing, setting up, recording, tearing down and completing (editing, motion graphics and rendering) the entire production.

"I'm training students to be producers in charge of other student camera operators, editors, and motion graphic artists doing their own professional productions," Brecheisen said. "I'm okay with them not only achieving a highly produced professional package but also failing and learning from their mistakes. I want them to make those mistakes here."

Sophomore Jozua Bennie joined the group soon after it was founded. He said for the first production, Brecheisen was the producer, but students have filled that role ever since. Bennie started as a camera operator and is now a producer.

"We are learning how to deliver a finalized product," Bennie said. "We are there from start to finish. I learn something new every day."

Along with filming the theatre productions, they are also filming the Department of Music's concerts. This past fall, they also filmed the St. Joseph Youth Chorale's semester concert and created a video of it, and they planned to continue with that project, as well.

Brecheisen said the majority of the group is comprised of younger students who want to gain a lot of experience early in their college careers, he noted.

"This is definitely something I will be putting on my resume," Bennie said. ■



Celebrating 50 years – Bushman Planetarium

Editor's note: In the fall of 2019, Missouri Western's present-day campus and the four-year college celebrated its 50th anniversary. As part of the celebration, we look back at the Bushman Planetarium that was part of the campus right from the start.

When Missouri Western was planning its new campus west of I-29 in 1967, Jerry Wilkerson, professor emeritus of mathematics, still recalls the day he walked into President M.O. Looney's office and suggested Dr. Looney consider building a planetarium in the

would not only be a good addition to the building, but a great resource for the community.

Dr. Looney told Wilkerson he would think about it, and told him later that he planned to include it in the new building on the southeast corner of the first floor. Wilkerson researched and purchased the equipment for the planetarium, and he has been involved in its operation ever since. Wilkerson began running shows as soon as it opened, and even though he retired from teaching in 2002, he continues to schedule and run the shows. He says he loves it when a parent comes in with their children and tells him they attended shows when they were in elementary school.

Wilkerson said the first show, one that "did a beautiful job" of showing the night sky and constellations, was held in October 1969. At the time, there were only a handful of planetariums in the state.

"It was a shining star for Missouri Western," said Wilkerson. (Yes, pun intended). "People were just amazed."

Over the years, more and more shows have been added to the planetarium lineup. "Stars of the Pharaohs," "Extreme Planets," "Mystery of the Christmas Star," and "Nine Planets and Counting," are four of the 16 current shows. (Wilkerson's favorite? "Sea Monsters.")

Before the total eclipse in August 2017, Wilkerson offered the show "Totality" several times in the weeks leading up to the eclipse, and every show but one was sold out.

In 1996, the Joseph R. Bushman estate donated more than 400 acres of farmland, which included three houses, to Missouri Western. When the property was sold, \$250,000 from the proceeds of the sale was used to renovate and update the planetarium, and it was named the Bushman Planetarium at that time.

That renovation included new equipment and technology, and new seats and lighting. It reopened in September 1997.

At the time of the renovation, it was estimated more than 50,000 people, including many elementary school groups and Missouri Western astronomy students, had visited the 28-year-old planetarium.

When Agenstein Hall underwent a complete renovation in 2010, Wilkerson said there was never any talk about removing the planetarium; everyone wanted to renovate it, as well. The new planetarium, now an immersive theatre, opened in February 2011 and continues to be a popular draw on campus and in the community.

And Wilkerson is proud to have been a part of it for the entire 50 years. ■



Top, Jerry Wilkerson in the planetarium. He has been involved with the planetarium since it opened in 1969. Above, the planetarium in its early days.

science and math building, one of the first buildings planned for the new campus. Wilkerson, who started teaching at the St. Joseph Junior College in 1964, thought it

Global Griffon: Dr. Adrienne Johnson

For the second time in as many years, Dr. Adrienne Johnson was selected for an assignment through the U.S. Department of State's English Language Specialist program.

Dr. Johnson, chair of the Department of Education and coordinator of the graduate-level TESOL program, travelled to Egypt in 2018 and to Taiwan in fall 2019. In Taiwan, she spent 15 days conducting 17 workshops with six different topics in three cities, training 221 teachers to teach their STEM content areas in English. Her workshop participants included current teachers, pre-service teachers and university faculty.

The State Department's partners in Taiwan requested the workshops

because the Taiwanese government has new national education initiatives focused on promoting the teaching of STEM content areas in English.

"The teachers were very eager to learn new strategies," she said. "It challenged me to be the best teacher I can be."

Dr. Johnson said preparing the workshops and teaching them made her rethink how she teaches here and strengthened her skills. Also, she said she loved learning about the Taiwanese school system and talking about the American school system.

Not knowing the English-speaking proficiency levels of her workshop participants before she arrived in Taiwan, she said she prepared a lot of hands-on activities for the teachers who were not strong English speakers.

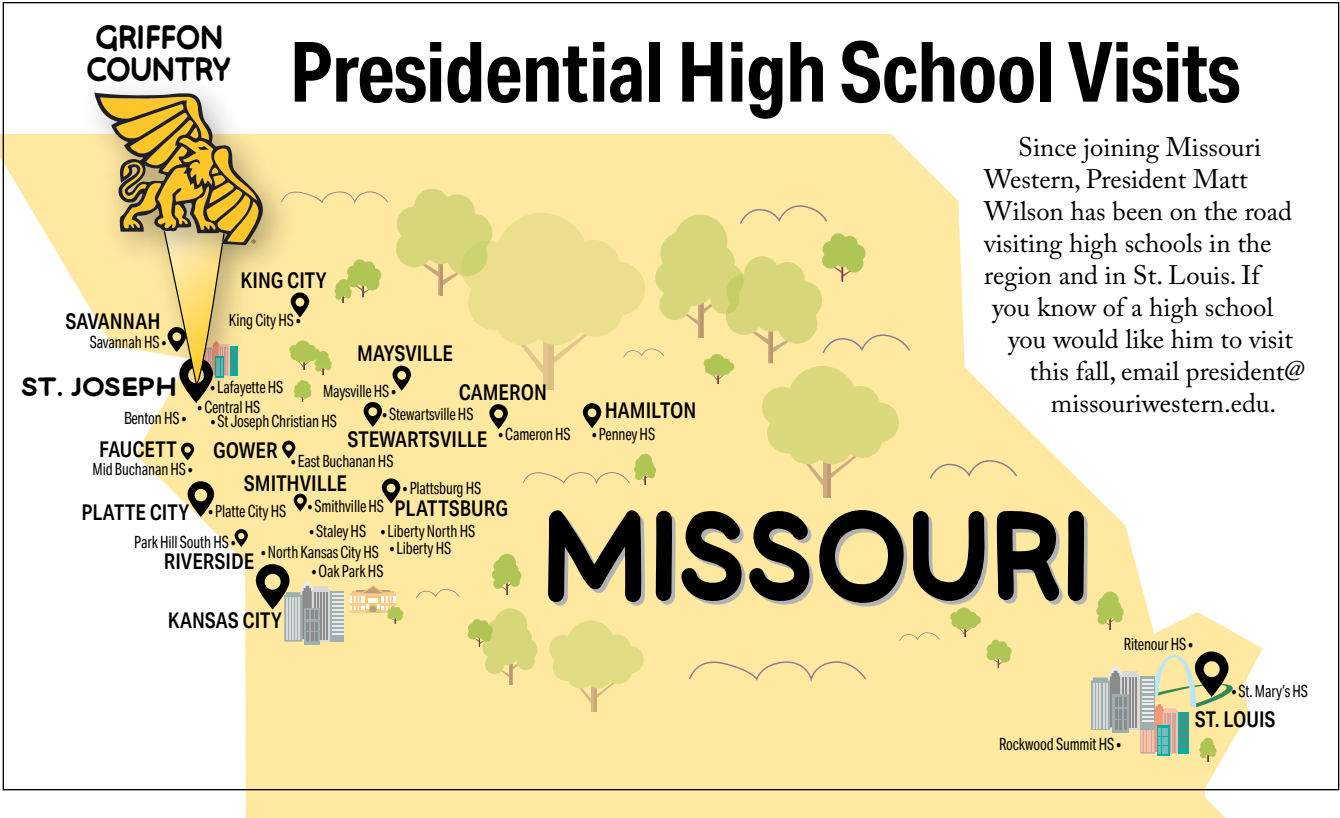
Dr. Johnson, who earned a doctorate and master's in linguistics, noted that a person may be fluent in a language, but not know a lot of academic terms

in that language, so that was the challenge of the workshops she taught.

"I feel very fortunate that I get to help other teachers and live my dream job," she said. "I love to come back and share what I have learned with my students." ■

"I feel very fortunate that I get to help other teachers and live my dream job."

- Dr. Adrienne Johnson



Since joining Missouri Western, President Matt Wilson has been on the road visiting high schools in the region and in St. Louis. If you know of a high school you would like him to visit this fall, email president@missouriwestern.edu.



COVID-19

A silent spring

Because of COVID-19, it was a spring semester like no other. This is the story of how it unfolded at Missouri Western.

Although a case was first reported in China in December 2019, it wasn't until early January when the first cases were being confirmed in the United States and most people started hearing about the "coronavirus."

Even before students left for spring break on March 7, University officials had been closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation. They were already working with a local task force, and by March 10, Missouri Western had formed its own COVID-19 response team. All international travel was suspended, including the study abroad trip to Japan for students that President Matt Wilson was planning for May. Missouri Western also initiated enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures on campus.

On the Thursday of spring break, March 12, it was announced that spring break would be extended for one week, and University officials took the extra time to figure out the balance of the spring semester. By this time, several universities in the United States had gone to all-online classes for the rest of their spring semesters.

At the same time, the NCAA suspended all

basketball championships in all divisions, and a cancellation of the rest of the spring sports seasons subsequently followed. On Wednesday, March 18, the University announced its plan for the 2020 spring semester.

"There is nothing we wanted more than to welcome our students back to campus and have everything back to normal," President Wilson said. "Unfortunately, that was not the situation we faced. But I was confident that we would rise to the occasion and emerge stronger as a Griffon family."

Instead of students completing the semester totally online, faculty were asked to offer two methods of alternative course delivery for most courses: supplemental materials to cover course content for the remainder of the semester, and a spring semester culminating experience. Those experiences could include an exam, a



research paper, a PowerPoint presentation, a business plan or another option. If they had a passing grade at midterm, students had the option of earning the credit hours for their courses with no grade. Or, they could take the grade they had earned or complete the work to improve their grade. Exceptions included those degrees with certifications or licenses that required grades for all courses.

Sarah Weber, assistant professor of art, developed two capstone projects for her students in their fibers course. Since they had learned hand-sewing techniques in class earlier in the semester, they sewed protective face masks for hospitals. For the second project, *Stitching Stories*, students called a resident at Living Community of St. Joseph and asked them a series of questions about their past. They then created a visual interpretation of the conversation.

"Due to COVID-19, senior citizens in nursing homes and assisted living centers are isolated and cannot see their families," Weber said at the time. "And this project promotes healthy morale and genuine interaction between students and the elderly."

Nathan Scott was elected president of the Student Government Association right before spring break, so he conducted SGA business virtually and worked with those student organizations that did not have a chance to elect new officers before spring break. "We did whatever we could to pick up the pieces so we can start strong in the fall," he said.

In a phone interview in late March, Scott said he was still considering his options on how to finish his courses for the balance of the spring semester. He noted that he was really glad students had some options rather than the University just going 100% online. "This was a situation that called for flexibility, and I was very glad Missouri Western was flexible."

The residence halls stayed open throughout the semester for those students who had no other place to stay and the cafeteria provided to-go meals. Students who didn't return to campus will receive prorated room and board credit on their account that can be used for summer tuition, fall tuition or fall housing. Graduating seniors will be issued a refund for the prorated amount.

By the time Missouri Western had announced its alternative semester on March 18, St. Joseph's K-12 schools were closed, along with East Hills Mall. Bars



Library Director Sally Gibson and Beauform wanted students to know that, even though campus was closed, the library was ready to help students.

and restaurants were only allowed take-out or delivery, and gatherings of more than 10 were prohibited by the City of St. Joseph.

On March 20, President Wilson announced a remote work policy for employees, emphasizing that students could still receive services virtually. A few days later, campus access was restricted to the public in response to St. Joseph's emergency declaration that strongly encouraged people to remain in their homes and avoid public places. A few days later, the city extended the shelter-in-place to April 24 and the University's work-from-home policy was extended to that date, as well.

As the silent spring semester continued, many got creative and started offering virtual events to students and the community. International Student Services held its Tea and Talk series via Zoom, and four music students gave their senior recitals on Facebook Live. Graduate student Elizabeth Alkier defended her capstone portfolio for her Master's degree via Zoom, and Admissions created a virtual campus tour for prospective students.

Admissions staff also created a website and held a virtual spring Griffon Showcase for prospective students and their parents on April 4. The website even gave them an opportunity to chat live with Missouri Western personnel.

Continued on pg 15

COVID-19:

A silent spring

Abby Wolff: A last semester to remember



Editor's note: It's probably safe to say that every senior will long remember the spring semester of 2020. At the end of March, I spoke with Abby Wolff, a theatre/cinema major with an animation minor from Kansas City,

Missouri, who had been looking forward to graduating this May.

Q. How did you feel when you found out you couldn't finish your last semester on campus?

A. To be quite honest, I was devastated. There was so much coming in March and April. I wasn't ready to say goodbye to a place I love so much. Cleaning out my dorm room was surreal and heartbreaking.

I was working on two shows at the time when things were starting to shut down. When our season closer "She Kills Monster" was finally canceled, I sat with my fiancé, Ben, and we cried over the loss of a project that was so loved by many people.

I think letting myself grieve was hard because my future in-laws were stuck in Italy and they have it so much worse. However, when I finally let myself process all the emotions I was feeling, I was reminded how our feelings

are valid, even when we think we're being silly. The biggest lesson that this whole thing has taught is that it's okay to be sad!

Q. How have your classes and professors been since there were no more campus classes?

A. I don't know about the other departments on campus, but the TCD department has been absolutely incredible. We're a little family, and the professors have been checking in with students consistently.

They were transparent with us in asking for our patience as they figure out how to do this crazy form of schooling, but overall, I am so proud to have faculty leaders like them. If I'm struggling, I know I can reach out to any of them.

I decided to take the credit for two of my classes. My two acting classes are doing some revised theatre projects that I'm very excited for in the coming weeks. I am working on the final draft for my short play that I've been working on for Playwrighting and have weekly coaching with Dr. Paul Hindemith for voice. While I really miss the classroom, it's nice to still have a way to connect with peers via Zoom.

Q. Did you lose your job because of the pandemic?

A. Yes, I was one of five technicians in the Potter theater (on campus). Since coming home, I got a job at Walmart doing online grocery orders for folks in my community. I had a long conversation with one of

my co-workers about rigging and carpentry (he thinks I'm very cool).

It's a steady job and I feel like I'm helping people, though my heart wants to be back in the theater.

I'm also working to try and use Zoom to have weekly art workshops for students who are stuck at home. Since I was 15, I've been teaching music and art lessons to kiddos from my church and community theater.

I believe that art heals and that it is the perfect distraction for times

like this. Plus, it's a nice little side hustle and gives me time to practice my communication skills. Teaching over video is a whole different beast than being face-to-face. It's a good challenge and keeps me on my toes.

Q. Any other comments?

A. This came at the worst and best possible times. It's the worst because my senior year was cut short and there was so much I wanted to do before saying goodbye to Missouri Western. But also, it's the best because having this time to reset and refocus before entering the professional world is very helpful.

I'm balancing finishing school, planning my wedding and working to start my life outside of my parents' home. While I'd rather be in St. Joseph, there are blessings in this insane time. I'm grateful for the connections I have from college and am looking forward to when I can come back to campus to finally step on that darn seal.

"I'm grateful for the connections I have from college and am looking forward to when I can come back to campus to finally step on that darn seal."

Abby Wolff, Senior Theatre/Cinema Major Animation Minor

Continued from pg 13

"It was definitely a different experience, but the folks who attended asked great questions and seemed to enjoy interacting with the current students, faculty, and staff," said Marissa Steimel, director of new student initiatives. "They appreciated our efforts to still get them information about Missouri Western, even though we couldn't hold the on-campus event. We had students from all across the state participating, which was cool to see!"

Steimel said they are looking into offering more online events in the future.

"Griffon Showcase provides a unique opportunity for prospective students to get a feel for campus, our University, and the Griffon family, and we didn't want our future Griffons to miss out on that experience due to the unforeseen circumstances of COVID-19," she said. "So we completely recreated the event into a virtual showcase. Our campus community quickly came together to still provide a successful 'visit day' despite the unexpected change in plans."

Dr. Teddi Deka, professor of psychology, and the Missouri Western chapter of Alpha Chi Honor Society decided to hold an MWSU No Conference Conference for students who were preparing to travel and present at conferences this spring. She asked students to upload their presentations or powerpoints on Google Drive, and she shared them with the campus community.

Since the spring commencement ceremony could not be held, it was rescheduled for the Sunday of Family Weekend, Sept. 20.

"Commencement means so much to the graduates who have worked so hard to earn their degree," President Wilson said. "We wanted to make sure they had the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments, even though we couldn't hold the ceremony in May."

Graduates also have the option of walking in the December 2020 ceremony.

In April, it was announced that all summer courses would be online only.

Dr. Elise Hepworth, professor of music and president of the Faculty Senate, said the importance of her research in community and relationship building increased exponentially after on-campus classes were cancelled for the semester.

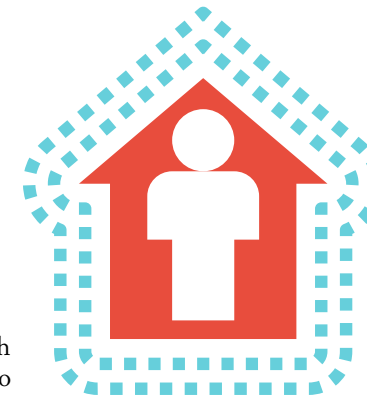


Student Affairs personnel meet via Zoom, the new normal for employees when campus closed due to COVID-19.

Her choir class met virtually during what would have been their weekly rehearsals, and she worked very hard to maintain the culture that they had developed throughout the academic year. Dr. Hepworth lined up guest speakers for each of those classes, including internationally renowned composers and professional musicians. One of the classes featured Yoga for Musicians.

The hard part for the seniors, she said, is that they did not get any closure because they did not get to experience "the last" of each event. She's planning a "family reunion" for her students when the pandemic is over.

In her role as Faculty Senate president, Dr. Hepworth spent a lot of time in virtual meetings with President Wilson and faculty members working together to find the best solutions during an unprecedented time. She said faculty were impressed with the administration, and they were pleased with the decision of how to finish off the semester. ■



Sports wrap

Men's Basketball

The men's basketball team had their most successful campaign in a decade or more. The team went 18-14 overall, 13-6 against MIAA competition and had an impressive 12-1 record in the fieldhouse.

The Griffons finished fourth in the MIAA standings and advanced to the MIAA Championship semifinals (first semifinal in a decade) before falling to MIAA regular season and postseason champion Northwest Missouri State.

After a rocky start to the season, the Griffons rebounded



with a seven-game win streak, the program's longest in 18 years, to elevate the team toward the top of the MIAA standings. The season's accomplishments included the program's most wins in 10 years; most conference wins in 18 years; highest MIAA finish in 10 years; longest home win streak (11) in 17 years; most home wins in 14 years; highest postseason seed in 10 years and a program-record 305 made 3-point field goals in a season.

Sophomore Tyrell Carroll earned first-team All-MIAA honors and second team NABC All-District honors, firsts for a Griffon in 14 years. Will Eames became the first student athlete in program history to be named MIAA Freshman of the Year in addition to receiving All-MIAA honorable mention. Tyus Millhollin broke the program record for 3-point field goals in a season (99) and in a game (10).

Women's Basketball

First-year head coach Candi Whitaker wasted no time restoring the women's basketball program to its traditional winning ways. Whitaker became just the second first-year head coach in program history to win 20 games by leading Missouri Western to a 21-8 overall record. The team went 13-6 in MIAA play and 14-2 in the fieldhouse.

Reaching more than 20 wins for the third time in the past five seasons, the Griffons improved by seven wins over the previous season. The team averaged a 19.3-point margin in wins and never lost a game by more than nine points. The Griffons went 4-2 against teams that qualified for the NCAA DII Championships, including two wins over top-25 competition in three attempts.

Despite finishing in a three-way tie for fourth place in the MIAA standings, the Griffons entered the MIAA Championships as the No. 6 seed by way of three-way tiebreaker rules. Missouri Western fell in



Above, Head Coach Candi Whitaker; left, Tyus Millhollin made the Missouri Western record books this season.

the quarterfinals of the MIAA's postseason tournament to No. 3 seed Nebraska-Kearney.

Newcomer Corbyn Cunningham was named first-team All-MIAA as the only student athlete in the conference ranked in the top-five in scoring, rebounding and field goal percentage.

Indoor Track & Field

Hanna Williams continued her promising young career, becoming the program's highest-ever finisher in the MIAA Indoor Track & Field Championships when she took third in the 600-yard. The women's squad turned in three NCAA DII provisional marks, including Bailey Gilbert's 5.75-meter long jump at the Mel Tjeerdsma Classic; Lynzi Miller's 3,279-point pentathlon at the Mel Tjeerdsma Classic; and the 4x400 relay team of Aniyah Mance-Edwards, Williams, Aniya Kollore and Symonne Holland's 3:50.89 at the Nebraska Tune-Up.

The men's and women's teams combined to break 10 program records with more than 50 personal records in Cody Ingold's first season as head coach. ■

Winter championships and spring season sports curtailed

As national and global concerns over the spread of COVID-19 grew, the NCAA announced the cancellation of all winter and spring sports championships. Consequently, the MIAA Conference canceled all spring competition with about one third of the softball and baseball seasons completed.

The final spring competition by any Griffon team came on March 11 as softball completed a come-from-behind victory over Illinois Springfield in eight innings. Softball finished the shortened season with a 13-9 record with just two MIAA games completed, both wins for the Griffons.

Baseball was 8-15 after a three-game sweep of MIAA newcomer Rogers State to finish 3-3 in Conference play. Tennis was 6-5 in Olaya Garrido-Rivas' first season as head coach before any MIAA matches had been played.

Both the men's and women's golf teams had just competed in one event each when the season was cut short while the track & field teams had yet to begin outdoor competition. ■



A change at the helm of men's basketball

In late March, men's basketball head coach for two seasons, Sundance Wicks, announced his



Will Martin

resignation when he was offered a position as assistant coach at the University of Wyoming. Wicks said he was not looking to leave Missouri Western, but took the opportunity to return to his home state.

Days later, it was announced that Missouri Western's current assistant coach Will Martin will serve as the new head coach. He

was hired by Wicks and has been at the University for two seasons.

Before coming to Missouri Western, Martin served as assistant men's basketball coach and director of athletic admissions at Martin Methodist College in Pulaski, Tennessee. Prior to that, Martin was the director of basketball operations at the University of San Francisco under head coach Rex Walters.

Martin received his bachelor's from the University of Kentucky in 2012 and obtained his master's in education from the University of Tulsa in 2015. ■

Lacrosse coach named

Rachel Benzing was named the first-ever head women's lacrosse coach in Missouri Western history. She joined Missouri Western after helping usher in women's lacrosse programs at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida and Maryville University in St. Louis. After two seasons as a lacrosse student athlete at University of Maryland Baltimore County, Benzing finished her playing career at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, where she was a two-time All-American.

Benzing holds the Lindenwood career record for assists per game after helping the Lions to two NCAA Division II national semi-final appearances. In 2017, Benzing was named the RMAC Offensive Player of the Year, first-team All-Region and first-team All-American. Benzing was a two-time first-team All-RMAC selection and also earned second-team All-Region and third-team All-American honors in 2016.

She served as head coach of the St. Louis Samurai and St. Louis Lacrosse Club from 2017-19. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a minor in nutrition from Lindenwood in 2017. ■

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

As I sit down to write to you all, I feel at a loss for words. We started this spring semester off with great momentum. The fall had us growing our community with so many successful and exciting events. Basketball season took off and we looked great! We also were able to welcome a new Executive Director of Alumni Relations, Kim Weddle. And then as life happens, we entered into the COVID-19 pandemic.

But before I address the pandemic, I do want to give a big heartfelt Griffon welcome to Kim Weddle '00. As a graduate, she is passionate about Missouri Western and is looking forward to meeting with alumni and continuing to take this momentum to the next level.

I also want to give a shoutout to our stellar Griffon basketball teams. We finished the season with some fabulous stats. Our men's team ended 18-14 and the women with a 21-8 record. Oh, and were they ever fun to watch – impressive Griffis!

This year March Madness took on a whole new meaning as the pandemic took hold. For the first time ever, as you probably know, on-site classes were cancelled for the rest of the spring semester. As I was struck with bits of melancholy as events were getting cancelled, I had another thought: We Griffons do not get discouraged. We rally and we fight. We've seen it all year in our growing events, in our sports teams performances and in our alumni support. This is a chance for us to grow closer.

I look back on my college days with great fondness, as those days helped to really shape a lot of the person I have grown into. This is an opportunity for us to find new ways to connect with each other and with our alma mater. This is a great opportunity for us to start thinking of how we can recruit, promote retention, and give back. It is our opportunity to push that momentum to the next level, as we come together as a world, a nation, a community, as a Griffon family. I challenge each of to reach out to an old college friend, share a story with Kim or share your love of MWSU on social media. I implore you to flood Kim's email with all of us sending support to the students as they face a new way of learning and connecting.



Tona Williams '00

My heart goes out to everyone who is directly affected by the virus. I applaud MWSU leaders for taking proactive steps to keep us safe. Let's hear that MWSU alumni pride so loud virtually that we forget we aren't together in person.

Go Griffis!

Tona Williams

Tona Williams '00

President

MWSU Alumni Association

Future Griffis

Several future Griffis joined Max at the annual Future Griffis at the Chocolate Factory on Presidents Day 2020. Alumni and their children and grandchildren gathered at the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in St. Joseph for the event.



From the Executive Director of Alumni Relations

Dear Friends,

As I am writing this letter to you, our world has become surreal. We are asked to stay in our homes and only venture out for necessities in an effort to decrease the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. I miss my colleagues and the vibrancy of having students on campus. So much has changed over the past few weeks. It is my prayer that by the time you read this in May, things will have returned to a new normal.

Although things may seem bleak as I write this, there really are so many new and exciting changes taking place at Missouri Western, that I can't help but have hope. First of all, I am so happy to assume the new role of Executive Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving for my alma mater!

My love for my alma mater began when I first enrolled as a nontraditional student and continues long after my graduation in 2000. I remember Dr. Murphy gave the commencement speech but don't remember what she said. I was too excited to have my family there and was ready to get to my graduation party to celebrate with them.

I worked in the University Advancement Division as a student employee and then as a full-time staff member in various roles over the years, even spending nearly two years as Executive Administrative Associate to the President and most recently as Director of Development.

My years in Development have afforded me the opportunity to hear from alumni about their experiences at Missouri Western. Most who were on campus in the early years comment on the number of trees there are currently and how cold it was to trek across campus to class during those days.



Kim Weddle '00

Alumni relay countless stories about how professors took them under their wing and how they attribute their success to those caring professors.

Many changes are on the horizon for the Alumni Association, including the establishment of a new Alumni Center that is now located in Spratt Hall, room 105. Please stop by and visit us. I would love to hear your stories about your experiences as a Griffon and share mine with you as well.

The Griffon yearbooks have found a home in the Alumni Center, also, and you are welcome to come in and browse through them.

You will notice that our alumni events will now focus on student recruitment, retention, advocacy and giving back. Our future depends on our investment in our current and future student population. We want to see the University not only grow but thrive and increase in reputation. When this happens, our degree becomes even more meaningful.

If you would like to be a part of our efforts, please email me at weddle@missouriwestern.edu or mwalumni@missouriwestern.edu. We are always looking for volunteers to help us carry out the important mission of supporting our students and making connections with other Griffons.

Thank you – Together we succeed!

Kim Weddle

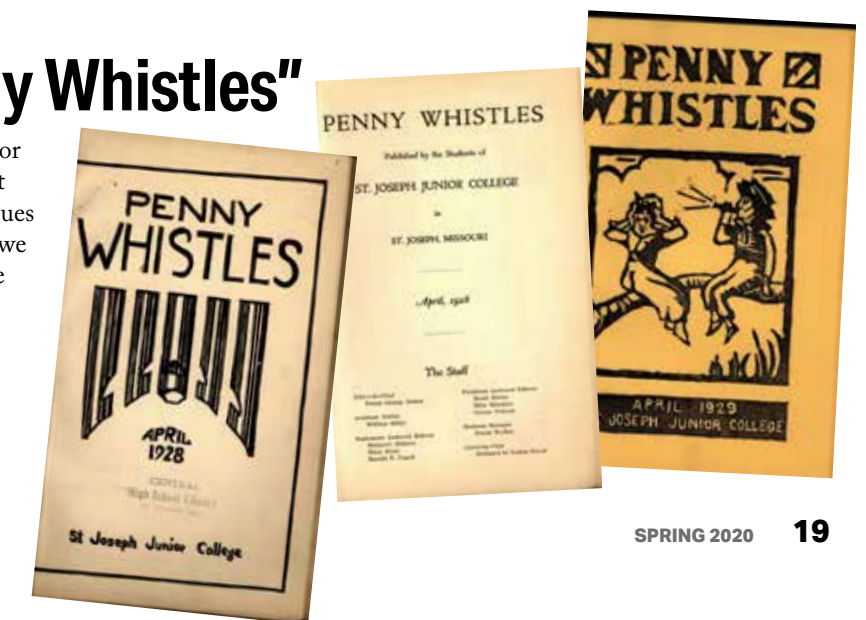
Kim Weddle '00

Executive Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving

Call out for "Penny Whistles"

In the earliest days of the St. Joseph Junior College, students published a literary booklet called "Penny Whistles." We have several issues in our collection in the library, but we know we are missing some, too. If you happen to come across any copies of "Penny Whistles," we'd love to have them!

Please call Rachel Lundy at (816) 271-4139 or email rlundy3@missouriwestern.edu.



Forging ahead at Missouri Western

New Global Center Opens

A one-stop shop for all things international opened on campus in February. The new Global Center, located in Eder Hall 101, is for international students thinking of attending school in the United States, admitted international students who want to become more connected to the campus and community, and current students looking for opportunities to study abroad. All the information is now in one place.

Students interested in studying abroad can learn about faculty-led courses offered through the Global Center. Two study abroad trips were planned in May – Austria/Czech Republic and Japan – but were cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. John Hewitt, director of global engagement, works with both faculty members and students on study abroad experiences.

He is also responsible for developing and maintaining the University's exchange programs. Currently, Missouri Western has exchange agreements with seven universities, which students can attend for one semester or an academic year. Additionally, students from the foreign universities attend Missouri Western. Current universities in the exchange program are located in China (2), France (2), Germany, Spain and Sweden.

International students who are interested in attending Missouri Western also work with the Global

Center to learn about degrees, tuition and financial aid opportunities, and how to apply for admission. Tina Washburn, admissions coordinator for international and graduate, and Rashad Howze, director of international recruitment, work with prospective international students.

International Student Services, which had been in the Blum Union, moved to the Global Center this past spring. Under Director of International Student Services Fumi Cheever, the ISS continues its mission of supporting Missouri Western's international students to help them become a part of the campus community. ISS offers information about visas, employment and other immigration questions, academic advising, and an orientation program for new students each semester.

ISS also offers a variety of activities for the campus community, including international cooking classes, an international fair and a celebration of international festivals throughout the year.

More information about the Global Center and its services can be found at missouriwestern.edu/global.

Gold Fridays

With the announcement of a Monday through Thursday class schedule for fall 2020, departments across campus are planning applied learning opportunities for students on Gold Fridays.

When Gold Fridays was announced last fall, Missouri Western President Matt Wilson noted that Fridays could be used for internships, research, community service, meeting with professors, tutoring, study time or whatever the student chooses. It could mean one less day on the road for commuter students, as well as a benefit for athletes who often travel for competitions over the weekends.

One of the first initiatives launched was the Department of Biology's Gold Fridays PORTAL.

The pilot program for the 2020-21 academic year is designed to promote research opportunities for students, according to Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology and chair of the department. All full-time faculty members will engage in collaborative research with students, and students will have the option of earning credit hours for the research.



Student Merle Phillips works with chemistry faculty member Dr. Natalie Mikita in her lab space. Students will have more opportunities for research with faculty members when Gold Fridays launch this fall.

"This will increase the number and quality of applied learning opportunities for undergraduate students," Dr. Eckdahl said.

The department also plans to provide a number of other applied learning opportunities for students on Gold Fridays, such as internships through AHEC (Area Health Education Center), with Missouri Department of Conservation and other conservation agencies, area life science companies, and community service projects through the Center for Service.

The research projects that will be available to students through Gold Fridays PORTAL can be found at missouriwestern.edu/gold-fridays-portal.

Gold Fridays opportunities and more details about the program are available at missouriwestern.edu/goldfridays.

Esports update

Ever since the esports program was launched and Director Christian Konczal was introduced in December 2019, interest about it from current and prospective students just keeps growing. A web page was launched that month that included a survey gauging

student interest about the program and particular games. By March, there were more than 300 responses from both students and prospective students.

Matt Wilson, Missouri Western's president, said he has seen a large amount of interest in the esports program from the high schools he has visited across Missouri. He said the program was started to help with recruiting new students and retaining the current students, and Konczal believes that will be the case.

He noted that he spends at least the first hour of every day responding to emails from students, prospective students and parents asking questions about the new program. Konczal also has several students who want to volunteer for a variety of duties once esports gets underway.

"I have been blown away by the student interest," he said. "We have a super engaged, passionate cohort."

Konczal said they recently launched a Discord Server, which brings Missouri Western students together who are interested in esports.



Director of esports Christian Konczal speaks at the press conference where he was introduced in December.

Plans are also moving forward for an esports arena to open in Blum Union this fall. The arena will be housed where the Barnes & Noble Bookstore currently resides, and the bookstore will move to the first floor of the Hearnes Center. The arena will contain both personal computers and consoles for games, a broadcast area and Konczal's office.

The arena will be open to all students, according to Konczal. He believes it will be a great place for students to hang out for recreation, engagement with each other, competing in intramurals

or practice for esports team members. Konczal says he hopes to host tournaments there in the near future.

"It's going to be an awesome space. I'm super excited," Konczal said. "Through all this, inclusivity is our goal. "If students come in, it doesn't matter what they play, they are going to have a home on campus." ■



Candy Whirley '97: How many *does* it take to tango?

When Candy Whirley '97 was 30 years old, married and a mother of two, she was managing a restaurant in Kansas City, Missouri when a local corporation asked her to teach a customer service class to their employees.

"After I gave them the 'how-to speech,' I realized that that was what I was supposed to be doing with my career," she said.

So she went to college, earning an associate degree from Maple Woods Community College and a speech communication degree from Missouri Western.

She began her public speaking career right after graduation and started her own business in 2001.

Her career brought her back to Missouri Western last fall when Claudia Baer, student employment coordinator, invited her to campus to give a series of three workshops on leadership and workplace culture.

Her first session, "It Takes 4 to Tango," helped participants identify which "animal" personality they were and how to work together and communicate with the different personalities. Her second workshop included lessons on generational differences and time management, and in the third, participants learned about Whirley's W.O.W. Philosophy (Way of Working), which was about learning the importance of coaching your employees.



Candy Whirley '97 poses for a photo before one of her three workshops at Missouri Western.

"I've always loved helping people," she said. "I like to teach them how to work better and understand themselves and each other."

Whirley said she's held a lot of workshops and talked on a lot of topics over the years, but her people and relationship skills workshops seem to be the most popular. "I've been teaching about personality differences for 19 years, and people are still hiring me for it."

Her talks have taken her all over the country and the world, including speaking to a group of 4,000 in South Korea, where her talk was translated in eight different languages.

"I just love it and cannot imagine doing anything else," Whirley said. "It brings me so much joy."

It takes 4 to tango!

Are you a chameleon, lion, lamb or owl? And how do you work and communicate with the other animal personalities? Candy Whirley '97 helps people figure that out in her book, "It Takes 4 to Tango." She calls the book a "guidebook to help people live and work better together and stop driving each other crazy."

In her book and in her workshop, "It Takes 4 to Tango," Whirley describes the characteristics of each animal and explains how each animal likes to communicate and work.

Chameleons? They love change and are very flexible.

Are you a lion? Then you are results-driven, goal-driven and always searching for the bottom line.

Lambs? Team-oriented and gentle.

And owls? Analytical, research-and data-driven.

Additionally, Lions and Lambs are polar opposites, as are Owls and Chameleons.

The book offers a number of exercises and insights, and also contains a 30-day program journal to help the reader better understand the four animals and practice working better together.

"In the dance world, it takes two humans to tango," she says in her book. "But in the real world, you will meet lots of people with different personalities and their own ways of dancing. With them, it takes four to tango!" ■

LaTonya Williams '03: Determination

When LaTonya Williams '03 was a student, her email signature was LaTonya "I'll sleep when I graduate" Williams. But even though several years have passed since she graduated, she still doesn't seem to have gotten the "you can sleep now" memo.

Williams, who graduated with a journalism and public relations degree, is a professional photographer, the executive director of youth and community outreach at St. Joseph's Bartlett Center, and a mom of three.

As a photographer, she has her own studio and takes maternity, family, sports team, senior photos and more. She also photographs for Josephine, St. Joseph News-Press's women's magazine.

At the Bartlett Center, she works in the daycare and preschool as well as hosting parenting classes and computer classes. She had previously served as interim executive director there, and when they hired an executive director, the staff told her that they wanted her to keep working.

On a typical day, Williams starts at the Bartlett Center and heads to her studio by 11 a.m. Then it's back to the Bartlett Center for late afternoon, then home to edit photos late into the night. Sometimes in the summer, she can be found at the Bartlett Center working 11-hour days.

Williams, a native of St. Joseph, was a teen mom with an infant when she started at Missouri Western. "My mom encouraged me to attend college, but once I had my daughter I didn't want to," she said. "I told her it was hard, and all she said was 'So?' And I didn't have an answer. So I went to class with



LaTonya Williams '03 reads to children at the Bartlett Center.

my daughter in her car seat, and then on my hip when she was older."

Even as a student with a child, she still found time to get involved in the Griffon News student newspaper, serving as editor-in-chief.

"Missouri Western is family. If I have any questions, I can call up anyone at Missouri Western and ask for a few minutes of their time, even years after graduation."

Williams recently received international attention for her photography project, Black Girl Magic, a themed photo shoot to counter the low self-esteem she was seeing among some of the young girls at the Bartlett Center.

Every year, she chooses young black girls, works with a makeup artist and hair stylist and launches a themed photo shoot. Parents tell her what a difference the shoot has made in their daughters' lives.

This past February, she was chosen to attend Project Obscura,

a photography conference in Las Vegas. She was able to train with five of the best photographers in the industry while shooting models at El Dorado Dry Lake Bed.

"My favorite part of the conference was meeting these amazing photographers that I've only read about," she said. "It was great to meet other like-minded professionals who truly understand what you're going through. Plus, who doesn't need more friends?"

So for now, it seems Williams will continue to forgo sleep so she can keep helping people, raise her family and keep taking photos.

At the Bartlett Center, she is currently working with a class for parents where they can ultimately earn an associate degree. "People like to come up with excuses. They say they can't get childcare, but I have staff who will watch their kids," she said. "Then they say it's hard, and I say, 'So? Everything worth achieving is hard.'" ■

1970s

Ken Rosenauer '74 and **Brent Rosenauer '17** purchased the Savannah Reporter newspaper in January 2020. Ken taught journalism at Missouri Western for 34 years and retired in 2013. He was named professor emeritus of English.

Clifford Hawk '77 was awarded faculty emeritus status at Highland Community College in Highland, Kansas. Hawk retired in 2018 after nearly 40 years of teaching agriculture.

1980s

Paul Rhoads '89 is the defensive coordinator at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Rhoads joined the Arizona staff from UCLA where he was defensive backs coach.

1990s

Dirk Allsbury '93 is the general manager at KQTV in St. Joseph, Missouri. Allsbury joined KQTV in 2007 as sales director and has served as digital sales manager and general sales manager.

Dr. Jill Watkins '95 was named principal of the Chillicothe Elementary School and will begin her duties for the 2020-21 school year.

Dlo DuVall '96 is the assistant director of special programs for the St. Joseph School District. She will serve as principal of Edison Elementary School in St. Joseph until the end of the 2019-20 school year.

2000s

Dr. Nate Moore '00 is the assistant superintendent of business services for the Branson, Missouri School District. He has 20 years experience in public education with eight of these years as superintendent in the Mansfield R-IV School District. Dr. Moore holds advanced degrees from William Woods University and Southwest Baptist University. He earned a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Lindenwood University.

Wade Harms '04 was named vice president of E.L. Crawford Construction Inc. of St. Joseph, Missouri. Harms, of Weatherby, Missouri, began his construction career working for a custom home builder while attending Missouri Western where he obtained his degree in construction engineering technology.



Barbara (Meyer) '08 Spencer and her husband, Clint, announce the birth of a daughter, Charlotte Ray, born April 19, 2019. She

has three siblings, C.J., Frankie, and Audrey Sue.

2010s

Tori Lee McNutt '18 and **Bradley Dale Thomas '18** were married at Emerson Fields in Macon, Missouri. The couple resides in St. Joseph. ■

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 MWSU Magazine, Missouri Western State University, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507, or email magazine@missouriwestern.edu.

Lawrence D. Dawson '74, Platte City, Missouri, Jan. 5, 2020.

Stephanie A. Gabbert '97, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 6, 2020.

Ruth Galloway, Gladstone, Missouri, Jan. 5, 2020. Galloway taught English at Missouri Western and was named professor emerita of English.

Larry Jones '75, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 29, 2020.

Michael J. Kiscoan '89, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 10, 2019.

Doug Minnis, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 26, 2019. Minnis was Missouri Western's first baseball coach and served in that role for 30 seasons.

Janice K. Pray, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 16, 2020. She was a longtime devoted member of the MWSU Ambassadors and served on the board and its scholarship committee for many, many years.

James "Pat" Shea '83, Trimble, Missouri, Dec. 16, 2019.

Sharon M. (Koehnlein) Thorpe '84, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 27, 2019.

Martin A. Zimmerman '01, Stewartville, Missouri, Sept. 22, 2019. ■



Super Science Saturday

St. Joseph Museums' Super Science Saturday is always a big hit! Held each year in Remington and Agenstein halls on campus, several Missouri Western academic departments participate with displays, shows and interactive activities. The event drew several hundred participants this year.



Looking back – Men's Basketball

Men's basketball has the distinction of being Missouri Western's first organized intercollegiate sport. It began in 1916, when the St. Joseph Junior College was just one year old. It has been held every year since then.

In the 1920-21 yearbook, it notes that “Every available man in Junior College tried out for the squad.”

In 1969, the team played its first game as a four-year college. The team played Sacred Heart in Wichita.

The Griffons lost 89-77, and finished the season 11-14. Gary Filbert was the coach.

In 1970, Missouri Western joined the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). In 1988, it became a member of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) and the following year, joined the MIAA Conference. ■

