



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

CLASS NOTES

OCTOBER 2020

CLASS NOTES SUBMITTED JULY 15 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

'66

Barbara J. (Brekken) Langfeld is retired and living in Romeoville, Illinois.

Dennis Stannard is retired and living in Onalaska with his wife, Betsy.

'69

Bruce J. McGuire, Elgin, Illinois, is a retired teacher and coach from the Elgin School District U-46.



John D. Medinger

'70

John D. Medinger, '70 & '72, La Crosse has retired. The political science and history major served as a state representative from La Crosse from 1976-92, as well as mayor of

La Crosse from 1997-05. Most recently, he was U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin's La Crosse area representative.

'71

John Lochner, De Pere, is a partner with the Legacy Group of America Foundation in Green Bay.

Jerome D. Stremcha is moving back to Florida, now calling Ormond Beach home.

Barbara (Best), '71 and James, '73, Wittlief are retired and living in Franklin.

'73

Duane "Buck" Denzer, Saint Cloud, Florida, recently retired.

Donald G. Wick, '73 & '75, is a retired biology professor living in Coralville, Iowa.

'77

Jennifer (Erickson) Brooks was widowed in 2014 from Steven Weissgerber while living in Sheboygan.

She retired and remarried in 2016. She and her husband, Thomas Brooks, have moved to San Tan Valley, Arizona.

Dean Martin is retired and living in Spooner with his wife, Vicki.

Leo A. Steiner, River Falls, retired as city planner.

'79

John M. Sykes, Rhinelander, is a physical therapist for the Forest County Potawatomi in Crandon.

'81

Jay Heldt, '81, is retired and living in La Crosse.

'82

Lisa R. Farness, Muscoda, is retired and serving as a substitute teacher for Riverdale Schools.

Dennis Patchak, Cave Creek, Arizona, recently retired from Wells Fargo Equipment Finance after 29 years.



Jean Storlie, Maple Grove, Minnesota, has published a book, “Once Upon an Innovation.” Two stories in the book have UWL angles. Chapter 1 opens with a story about her grad school experience in the La Crosse Exercise Program that shaped her career and approach to innovation. Chapter 2 opens with her dad’s visionary leadership in founding UWL’s Computer Science Program. In the book, Storlie and co-author Mimi Sherlock illustrate how storytelling can be applied to accelerate innovation and lead change.

[See more and order.](#)

Jodi Will is retired and living in Richmond, Virginia.

'83

Bob L. Klein retired in 2015 after a 31-year career with the YMCA. In March 2020, Klein relocated to Durham, North Carolina. He and his girlfriend, Bryanna Wright, are looking forward to “little or no snow in the future.”

Michael, '83, and Colleen, '84, Urban live in Fitchburg. Michael is marketing president for One Community Bank in Sun Prairie; Colleen is employed by NanoString Co.

'84

John B. Young, New Salem, North Dakota, is assistant area director for OSHA in Bismarck.

'85

Linda (Brahm), '85, and James Patrick O'Brien, '84, live in Grafton. Linda is a flight attendant with Southwest Airlines. Jim has retired after 35 years in

education with positions including administration, teaching and coaching. They are proud parents of **Michael “Chip” O'Brien, '20**, who majored in communication studies and leadership. Michael works at WXOW-TV, La Crosse, in master control and digital media. They are just three of the O'Brien family members who are UWL grads, beginning with Jim's father, **John O'Brien, '60**.

Kathy (Marcou) Duerwachter, La Crescent, Minnesota, is director of Alumni Engagement at Viterbo University in La Crosse.

Michael Hirner, Shorewood, Minnesota, is a client relationship manager at Cognizant in Minneapolis.

Brian Whitty, '85, and Carol A. Fisher, '95, live in Madison. Brian is a self-employed musician; Carol works for Fleetworthy Solutions.

'86

Roberta (Schmidtke) Jones, Mukwonago, is an underwriter Cigna.

Sheryl (Fickau) Watkins, Mukwonago, is PACS administrator for Advocate Aurora Medical Center in Grafton. Watkins has canceled travel for herself and wedding plans for her daughter. She's looking forward to a COVID-19 free world. "I can't wait until next year when, hopefully, we can travel again and renew my daughter's wedding vows so we can celebrate the occasion with friends and family here and abroad," she says.



'87

Dean Klinkenberg, St. Louis, Missouri, has a new book out, his third

Frank Dodge mystery. "Letting Go in La Crosse" is set in La Crosse and surrounding area centering around the frac sand mining industry.

[See details.](#)

Crystal (Hoeth) Luehne, Whitefish Bay, is manager of Donor Relations & Special Events for the Alzheimer's Association in Milwaukee.

'88

Brian MacDonald, Crystal Lake, Illinois, is an insurance broker for Connor & Gallagher Insurance in Lisle, Illinois.

'89

Marcia (Olson) Kvigne, Dodgeville, is a senior financial planning and business development analyst with the Dean Health Plan in Madison.



Matthew J. Nowakowski

'90

Matthew J. Nowakowski, Plymouth, Minnesota, received the Distinguished Lasallian Educator Award at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. The annual award recognizes faculty, staff, or administrators whose life of faith and service exemplifies the ideals of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. The award is given by Lasallian institutions like Saint Mary's in the Lasallian Region of North America of the De La Salle Christian Brothers to honor contributions and commitment to the Lasallian mission of education. Nowakowski is program director of the Doctor of Business Administration Program, core associate professor, and former interim vice provost of Academic Affairs. He

has taught and been an administrator at Saint Mary's for 12 years, serving as a mentor, teacher and scholar committed to faculty, staff, and student success.

'91

Tami Carpenter, Milwaukee, has moved back to Wisconsin after 25 years teaching in Arizona. Carpenter is a third-grade teacher at St. Joseph Academy in Milwaukee. "I am very happy to be back," she says.

Deb Morse, Onalaska, is a school psychologist with the Hiawatha Valley Education District based in Winona, Minnesota.

'92

Lance C. Bagstad, Arcadia, is the district administrator for the School District of Arcadia.

'95

Kevin J. Lewis, Kissimmee, Florida, is self-employed.

'96

Aric Dutelle, Vancouver, Washington, is semi-retired in the Pacific Northwest. Dutelle recently published his 12th book, 4th edition of "An Introduction to Crime Scene Investigation." He continues to author and edit in between travel and enjoys bumping into UWL alumni across the globe.

'97

Glenda Butterfield-Boldig, Mountain, started to serve as the Superintendent/Director of Special Education for the White Lake School District July 1. She had been Principal and Director of Special Education in the district for eight years.

Jeremy D. Otte, Hartland, is director of Outreach & Education at the Wisconsin Parkinson Association in Brookfield.

Jodie (Brown) Sorenson, Waunakee, is clerk of court for the Village of Waunakee.

Mandy (Moore) Stanley, Friendship, is director of the Marquette County Department of Human Services in Montello.



David Herold

'98

David Herold is retired and living in Cresco, Iowa.

'00

Michael Cibulka, Combined Locks, has returned to Wisconsin after 19 years in Washington and Oregon. Cibulka is a manager of data engineering at JJ Keller & Associates in Neenah.

Anastasia “Stacie” (Cihlar) Opahle, Manitowoc, recently completed her first year as district summer school coordinator for the Manitowoc Public School District, where she has been an elementary principal for five years.

’01

Erin (Eichstedt) Springstead, Edgerton, is a high school counselor in the Edgerton School District.

’02

Michael Bradford, Altoona, is an archaeologist with Florin Cultural Resource Services.

Shannon Ruegg (Castro) Triggs, Sun Prairie, is a military personnel management officer with the Wisconsin Air National Guard in Madison.

’03

Russ D. Braby, had been living in Perth, Western Australia, for the past decade —

making him, he believes, the “farthest away UWL alumnus” because Perth is 10,571 miles from La Crosse. Early this year he not only changed occupations, now a project manager for a software system, but also relocated his family to southern France in Montpellier. Braby was a communications and German major and now works (in German) with his company's German clients.

’05

Jay Farmer, Onalaska, is a behavioral health adolescent social worker with Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. Farmer is also the assistant women's golf coach at UWL.

’06

Joe Carey, Lake Zurich, Illinois, is the assistant village manager for the Village of Carol Stream.

Katherine (Haake) Hayes, Park City, Utah, served in the U.S. Air Force from 2010-18.

Hayes completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium, Wilford Hall & Brooke Army Medical Center. She was then stationed overseas at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. After completing her service, Hayes returned to a Pediatric & Adolescent Gynecology Fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. In August 2020, she started the new pediatric and adolescent gynecology division at the University of Utah and Primary Children's Hospital. Hayes and her husband, Patrick, have two children, Greta (7) and Karl (5).

Laura (Monson) Tlachac, Appleton, is an accounts receivable specialist for the Evergreen Retirement Community in Oshkosh.

’07

Brett Gullicksrud has been named director of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse in

Holmen. Gullicksrud had been club manager of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee for eight years and worked at the University of Colorado-Boulder Athletic Department as director of Stadium Operations before returning to the La Crosse area.

Markus Movrich, Mukwonago, and his wife, Kayla, have been married for seven years. They have two boys, Sawyer, 5 and Oakley, 2. Movrich is a regional manager at Invitae Genetics, overseeing Wisconsin and Iowa. He works closely with cardiologists, neurologists, pediatric specialists, geneticists, and others to help diagnose disease and steer medical management among patients. "It's incredibly exciting and rewarding at the same time," he notes.

Kate Van Wattingen, Sheboygan, is a business initiatives consultant with Wells Fargo in Menomonee Falls.

'08

Michael B. Hruska, Verona, is a swim coach with the business he owns, Mike Hruska Swim, which serves the Madison area swimming community.

Joshua N. LaVelle, La Crosse, is a customer service representative with La Crosse Mail and Print Solutions Inc.

'09

Jon Vitkus, Kenosha, is a senior print designer with ULIN in Pleasant Prairie.

'11

Ashley Grice, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is associate director of Alumni & Constituent Engagement at Carnegie Mellon University.

Eric, '11, and Peyton (Kerst), '17, Schmidt live in Sparta. Eric is an associate tax consultant at Compeer Financial in Sparta; Peyton works in the Sparta School District.

'12

Russell "Rusty" Brunner, Lakewood, Colorado, is the human resources manager at the Colorado School of Mines Foundation in Golden.

Sara J. Schoonover, Grand Marais, Minnesota, is a health care access coordinator/case aide with Cook County Public Health and Human Services in Grand Marais.

'13

Samuel H. Schmidt, and Linh K. Nguyen, '14, are returning to La Crosse. Schmidt has left his position as a professor in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and has been hired as an assistant professor of sport management at UWL. Nguyen is joining the academic advising staff on campus. The two met at UWL and have spent the past seven years in Louisville, Kentucky, and Wilkes-Barre. "Our goal

Continued on next page

was to make it back to UWL and work together for our alma mater,” says Schmidt.

'14

Daniel, '14, and Morgan (Sefzik), '15, Frederickson live in Sun Prairie. Daniel works with the Johnson Financial Group; Morgan is a teacher in the Waunakee Community School District.

Emily Mitch, Raleigh, North Carolina, accepted a new job with Alpha Phi International Fraternity as a program manager of Health, Wellness & Accountability in March of 2020. Mitch joined the Delta Kappa chapter of Alpha Phi at UWL in 2010 and now will support more than 170 collegiate chapters across the U.S. and Canada.

Bethany (Wedvick) Spooner, and her husband, Cody Spooner, live in Madison. Bethany is a marketing automation specialist with National Guardian Life Insurance Co.

'17

Dustin Metzger, Holmen, is a quality manager for Land O'Lakes in Black River Falls.

Abigail J. Paynter, Chicago, Illinois, is a financial management analyst with the FBI in Chicago, working closely with special agents across the Midwest to ensure proper allocation of FBI budget for various field operations. Paynter recently accepted an offer as an intelligence research specialist with the Drug Enforcement Administration, which she will transition into during the summer of 2021.

Stephanie R. Prasser, Kenosha, graduated from Marquette Law School in May 2020 and has begun a career as an associate attorney with J.B. Enterprises S.C. in Milwaukee.

'19

Elizabeth Rushing, Madison, is a physician assistant with the UW Medical Foundation.

'20

Alyssa R. Glassen moved back to her hometown, Salem, after being hired right after graduation, which was an amazing feeling, she says. Glassen is working on getting ready to start the school year during this crazy time and making it the best she can for her students.

Megan Kirsch, Waconia, Minnesota, is a recruiter for Lifetouch in Eden Prairie.

Morgan Kuske, Green Bay, is public relations and event coordinator for La Force Inc. Kuske returned to her hometown and moved in with her boyfriend, with whom she was in a long-distance relationship during college. They adopted a dog named Murphy — “Yes, like the library — but he was already named that.”

Paula M. Myatt, Cedar Falls, Iowa, is the residence life coordinator at the University of Northern Iowa.

Kaitlyn Robbeloth has moved to a new city — Appleton — and a new job. Robbeloth is

an account executive administrator for McClone Agency in Menasha. Although close to her hometown, she is enjoying exploring a new city and experiencing life as a “full-time adult.” Robbeloth thanks UWL

for all of the amazing experiences over the last four years. “I will always hold on to my time in La Crosse,” she says.



Marius and Idris Rizvi show off their UWL gear at their home in India. The two are the sons of alums **Altaf Rizvi**, and **Pauline Boue**. They received the gear from retired UWL International Education advisor Lisbeth Reynertson during a wedding in Vietnam in December. Reynertson says alums from India, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Norway, Russia and Poland attended the wedding and are planning an even larger reunion next summer in Wisconsin.



Tanmaya Singh, '09, who lives in India, shares a photo of his twin sons Ved and Vansh sporting UWL T-shirts provided by former International Education adviser Lisbeth Reynertson. Reynertson provided the shirts for children of alumni during a wedding in Vietnam in December attended by a number of international students who attended UWL.

In Remembrance

1941 — Lillian P. Jothan, Coon Valley.
1960 — Richard V. Kiedrowski, Greenfield.
1966 — Bonnie Brundage, Olathe, Kansas.
1971 — Lee E. Olson, Sparta.
1971 — Robert Olson, Montrose, Colorado.
1971 — James R. Heefner, Alpharetta, Georgia.
1975 — Marilyn L. Van Wyk, Onalaska.

1977 — Rodney “Rod” Kouba, Hudson.
1977 — Randall “Randy” Pruitt, Lynchburg, Virginia.
1997 — Benjamin Deyo, West Salem.
2006 — Brian J. Liddicoat, Madison.
2007 — Jamie (Korth) Tennant, La Crosse.
2015 — Donleigh “Don” O. Gaunky, Hudson.

Faculty & Staff

Ruthann Benson

Ruthann Benson died July 16, 2020. Benson came to UWL in 1994 to teach theatre and serve as chair of the Theatre Arts Department. In 1997, she was named associate dean and director of the School of Arts & Communication before being dean of the College of Liberal Studies from 2005 until retiring in 2015. Benson, an advocate for international education for students, is survived by a son, Michael. Memorials may be given to the Ruthann E. Benson Study Abroad Scholarship with the UWL Foundation.

[See her complete obituary.](#)

John N. Hoefer

John N. Hoefer died June 25, 2020, in La Crosse. Hoefer taught in the Geography & Earth Science Department from 1966 until retiring in 1990. After retirement, he held a part-time position with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. He is survived by four children. [See his complete obituary.](#)

H. Laury LePage

H. Laury LePage died June 14, 2020, in St. Cloud, Minnesota. LePage worked in the Counseling and Testing Center from 1969 until retiring in 1995. During his tenure, he helped create the Academic Skills Center and taught in the College Student Personnel Program. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, and two children. [See his complete obituary.](#)

Gerald Rausch

Gerald Rausch died Aug. 8, 2020, in Ettrick. Rausch earned a bachelor's from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1959, and a doctorate from the University of Iowa in 1963. He began his career as an industrial chemist, working for Union Carbide in Charleston, West Virginia, before coming to campus in 1965 to teach organic chemistry. He retired in 1999. Rausch is survived by his children. [See his complete obituary.](#)

Gary Willhite

Gary Willhite, Holmen, died Sept. 5, 2020. Willhite was an associate professor in the Department of Educational Studies for the past 12 years. He held various leadership roles on campus and in the School of Education. He served as a Faculty Fellow in the School of Education Dean's Office, fulfilling part of an associate dean's responsibilities. He is survived by his wife, Kathy.

To learn more about the UWL Alumni Association and its activities and events visit:
uwlax.edu/alumni/



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Brad Quarberg | University Communications
608.785.8572 | bquarberg@uwlax.edu

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