alumni today
Fall 2017

In memory of UW-Platteville alumni
KIRK U’REN AND JENNIFER STEINER
HOMECOMING HUSTLE
2017

A UW-Platteville tradition, this year’s Homecoming Hustle holds SPECIAL MEANING
UW-Platteville's Mission

We promote excellence by using a personal, hands-on approach to empower each student to become broader in perspective, intellectually more astute, ethically more responsible, and to contribute wisely as an accomplished professional and knowledgeable citizen in a diverse global community.

Table of contents

8 The drive to succeed: Herrick influences change at GM and in his community

12 The best of both worlds: Crandall embraces modern dairy technology, old-school tradition

14 ‘How Farms Work’: Kuster attracts large YouTube following

20 Special meaning: Homecoming Hustle dedicated to accident victims

24 Beinborn updates career profile with LinkedIn

30 Of border tape and pica poles: Thirty years later, Exponent editors still working together

32 From genetics class to world class: Brokopp helps cure immune deficiency disease
Fall in Wisconsin—the most colorful time of our year. And while autumn leaves will soon be gone, this time of year is a new beginning for our students. Whether it’s the anxiety of a freshman or the confidence of a senior, all have made the choice to continue to learn. And there is no better place, as we all know, than UW-Platteville; a university steeped in a 151-year tradition of excellence.

Autumn leaves also mean Homecoming. Homecoming means tradition—a tradition that unites the past and present. Even though we are no longer students here, part of our being still remains. As alumni we are an integral part of our university as we work to preserve the legacy that helped prepare us for life. Alumni, your university extends an open invitation to visit anytime.

Homecoming week starts Oct. 9 with the alumni events beginning the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 13, featuring university and respective college award ceremonies followed by the Gala. Homecoming day begins early as the Homecoming Hustle returns. Lace up and join us for a very special hustle. The alumni tent “opens” at 9 a.m. and the parade follows at 10 a.m. The Alumni Association will once again sponsor a luncheon in Velzy Commons (in Ullsvik Hall) starting at 11 a.m. At 2 p.m., our Pioneer football team takes on UW Oshkosh. The day is capped off with the lighting of the “M” at 9 p.m. Please check the entire schedule of daily events posted in the Alumni Today and online at www.uwplatt.edu/alumni.


Forever. Pioneers.

Phil Molldrem
UW-Platteville Alumni Board President
Committed to student success

From the moment our students step foot on campus to when they walk across the commencement stage, our goal as administrators, faculty, and teaching staff is to help them become successful, not only while they are students, but in the next stage of life.

For 2017–18, we have pinpointed a few areas that, with improvement, will go a long way to boosting the achievements of our student body. We call it the Student Success Platform. Our goals are to:

- Improve the time to graduation
- Improve our retention rates
- Maintain our enrollment

To assist our efforts this year and beyond, we are focusing on these areas:

- Campus climate
- Improving student learning
- Retention
- Recruitment
- Budgeting and planning

In late June, we received a $420,000 grant from the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation and Affiliates. The grant will operate and maintain a student emergency aid program. These emergency grants align with the Student Success Platform and the goal of improving retention and completion rates. We will begin disbursing these student emergency grants this fall. These funds, up to $1,000 per grant, will fill in some ancillary needs for students and allow them to stay in school. I’ve heard stories where students will drop out because of a $500 car repair. They choose to repair the car rather than continue their education. This grant program will certainly aid those students and our university retention.

UW-Platteville is a point of access institution and many of our students are first-generation students. We need to move them along from year to year at an increased rate and have them graduate at an increased rate.

Like so many alumni I have met along my travels, I want our students out in the world making their way and being successful. This Student Success Platform will give us the tools to keep us on task.

Nothing gives me greater pride than speaking with alumni and hearing stories of their time on campus and how that foundation propelled them to their current success.

“School is a building which has four walls with tomorrow inside.” That quote is attributed to the late Lon Watters. I think it’s fitting in that everything our students learn, both inside these walls and out in the field, enhances their “tomorrow.”

We want every day on campus and every day in their career to be a great day to be a Pioneer!

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Shields, Chancellor
Letters to the editor

A few days ago I received the spring/summer 2017 issue of Alumni Today. As I made my way through the magazine, I was thrilled to see the article titled “Computer dating not a new trend.”

I was an attendee of that very first “computer dance” held on Friday, Dec. 1, 1967. My roommate and I decided to attend as a way to meet some women. At that time there was only one female in the entire engineering program and with our heavy class loads this dance gave us engineers a way to meet some young ladies. As noted in the magazine article, the huge, room-sized IBM computer matched up punch cards created after a questionnaire was filled out by each attendee. Everyone who applied was guaranteed a “date” for the evening. In my case, when my date and I compared punch cards, only one set of holes matched. We figured it was for our same religion. The one rule I do remember for the evening was that each participant had to promise to spend two hours socializing with their match before parting ways.

In my case, my date wasn’t even a student. She was the best friend of a student, now alumna Mary (Mitchel) Grosz. The friend was coming to visit Mary for the weekend, and they decided on a whim to sign up for the dance as something to do. For some crazy and unknown reason my date actually liked me. When I asked her to attend a Pioneer basketball game the following evening she accepted. She said it gave her something to do before she went back to Madison for her job on Sunday. After that weekend we started having “real” dates and our relationship grew. We were married in August 1969 and Bonnie supported me for the final one and a half years of classes. After my graduation in January 1971, I accepted a position with the Iowa Department of Transportation and we moved to Ames, Iowa, and started a family. We had 45 wonderful years together until she passed in fall 2014. I still cannot believe how lucky I was that the big IBM computer allowed us to meet. We had a great life together.

Thanks again for the great article and the fond memories.

Tom Walther ’71

Write to us
Do you have any reflections or memories to add to the Alumni Today stories? Write to us at alumni@uwplatt.edu or send a letter to Development and Alumni Engagement, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, 1 University Plaza, Platteville WI 53818-3099. Letters are edited for clarity, style, and length. Please include your full name and graduation year.
UW-Platteville is top spot for return on investment

Once again, UW-Platteville is at the head of the class when it comes to return on investment. For the third consecutive year, UW-Platteville is ranked first in Wisconsin among all higher education institutions for return on investment for in-state graduates.

The survey was conducted by PayScale.com. There are 2,474 public and private four-year higher education institutions in the United States. Overall, UW-Platteville ranks 167th nationally for annual ROI.

“When students enroll at UW-Platteville we want them to be confident they are making a sound investment,” said Chancellor Dennis J. Shields. “This report is another strong indication that our students are prepared for their careers and are succeeding once they leave our halls.”

Platteville native named new athletic director

Shannon James Ealy, a Platteville native, is UW-Platteville’s new Athletic Director. Ealy most recently was the interim director of athletics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Previously, he served as a senior associate athletic director at the school from 2007–15.

Ealy is a 1991 graduate of UW-Platteville, where he majored in business administration. He also lettered four years on the Pioneer football team, playing wide receiver and quarterback under Coach George Chryst and earning honorable mention all-Wisconsin State University Conference honors in 1990.

Ealy served as an assistant athletic director at UW-Platteville in 1992–94 and, after earning his master’s of sports administration and facility management at Ohio University in 1995, served as a marketing assistant at the University of Florida in 1995–96. Ealy joined the Southeastern Conference in 1996, first as an assistant director of championships marketing and administration and then as director in 1997. In 2000, he joined Bruno Event Team as the vice president of the Alabama Sports Foundation and then also became president of the Birmingham Sports Venues for Bruno Event Team in 2004.

“UW-Platteville has been a large part of my life, and there are a lot of great people who helped me along the way,” Ealy said. “It’s certainly very special to have the opportunity to return to a place you have a passion for. It’s an honor and a privilege.”

Students research African-American mining history

Five history students spent the spring semester conducting hands-on, archival research in the university’s Southwest Wisconsin Room and investigation in the field to discover the many important contributions of African-American lead miners in the Driftless Region between 1827–90. The student researchers were enrolled in a course taught by Dr. Eugene Tesdahl, Assistant Professor of history at UW-Platteville.

The students examined hundreds of archival manuscript documents, as well as studied and analyzed manumission papers—documents that freed slaves. Their study also included major 19th-century lead mining and smelting operations between Potosi, Platteville, Shullsburg, Mineral Point, and Dodgeville, in Wisconsin.

As part of the course, students worked with Platteville’s Mining & Rollo Jamison Museum staff members to create an exhibit design and permanent exhibit that illustrates the significant contributions of African-American lead miners in Southwest Wisconsin at the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums.
Students find novel way to fight zebra mussel invasion

A team of eight senior design students in mechanical engineering found a novel way to defeat invasive zebra and quagga mussels—a dispersion system that releases a toxicant which dissolves the mussel’s digestive linings from the inside out. The students coined the dispersion system as “Zequanox Subsurface Injection Mechanism.”

The team designed the plumbing, nozzle array, and method for inserting and removing the system in the water, all of which they attached to a barge provided by the United States Geological Survey. They also designed on-shore mixing and transport stages. The toxicant they used, Zequanox, is an EPA-approved product composed of dead cells of a naturally occurring microbe.

The team spent roughly 200 hours last semester developing a prototype that can eliminate the invasive mussels. They sent the prototype to the USGS Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, which will send the system to test ponds in northern Michigan.

UW-Platteville brings goats to campus

In an attempt to combat weeds and unwanted undergrowth on campus, a herd of 40 goats was brought to UW-Platteville’s Memorial Park in July. In this 20-day pilot program, the goats removed invasive honeysuckle and garlic mustard from a two-acre plot of land in an environmentally and financially-friendly way.

“It’s a perfect solution to a complicated problem,” said Amy Seeboth-Wilson, UW-Platteville’s Sustainability Coordinator. “Instead of reinventing the wheel with a manmade solution, let nature do what it does best.”

Although the program was originally conceived in 2013 as part of UW-Platteville’s sustainability plan, it took four years of careful planning to implement. Since controlled fires can be difficult to implement in a city and chemicals can kill wildlife, an innovative and cost-effective strategy had to be approached. Four students helped maintain the herd, refilling the water supply two to three times per day. Seeboth-Wilson is interested in bringing a permanent goat herd to UW-Platteville’s campus, potentially exploring opportunities with the animal science and reclamation and conservation programs.
The drive to succeed
Herrick influences change at GM and in his community

In the Detroit, Michigan, office of Tim Herrick, Executive Chief Engineer at General Motors, hangs a large, 3-by-4-foot world map, purchased when he started launching international programs. However, only one label is pinned on the map—a small, UW-Platteville seal tacked right over Wisconsin. It’s always a conversation-starter, but more so a physical symbol of the impact UW-Platteville had on him, instilling values he has embodied throughout his 34-year career at GM.

Originally from Madison, Wisconsin, Herrick graduated from UW-Platteville in 1983 with a degree in industrial technology. He never dreamed of becoming an executive at one of the largest American automotive makers. “I came out of college wanting to go into design and work, not particularly in the automotive industry, but in any industry where I could be challenged and work on mission-critical, leading-edge projects,” said Herrick. “I sent a résumé to GM and received the canned rejection letter in response.”

With no job lined up, Herrick packed his car and was only a couple of weeks away from driving to Arizona State University to pursue a Master of Business Administration when he received a call from the Janesville General Motors Assembly Division, asking him to interview. “I borrowed my mom’s GM car to drive down—because mine was a Ford—and interviewed and got the job,” he said.

Over the years, Herrick has held various engineering and management positions at GM including in the Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Arlington, Texas, plants. Now, as executive chief engineer for GM’s next generation of full-size pickup trucks and sports utility vehicles, he is responsible for global product development from vehicle inception through production. “From where the wheels hit the ground, to the roof, to the front and to the side, I have responsibility for everything on the truck,” Herrick said. He oversees an engineering team of 25–30 people who inspect the day-to-day work of about 7,500 people.

One of the highlights of Herrick’s career came in 1995 when GM set forth to build a smaller version of the Suburban, and quickly introduce it to the market. Herrick was the lead development engineer on what became GM’s Tahoe. “I actually built a Tahoe from a Suburban with the guys in the shop, which kind of brings everything full-circle because it was the type of hands-on experience that I got at UW-Platteville,” said Herrick. “We did the manufacturing and engineering to fabricate this vehicle from a Suburban to a Tahoe. I worked with the technicians on size, where to put the seats and the doors—we built the whole thing. And then the people in the highest levels of our company got the chance to drive it. That really changed how we did business and put something on the road; at the time, it was the fastest program we ever did.”

Herrick’s career has been marked by many milestones and accolades, from receiving GM’s highest honor for his leadership and development in the launch of the Avalanche to overseeing the largest multi-billion-dollar truck development in GM history. However, when reflecting on his career, he said his most notable success is more personal. “Every program I ever worked on as a chief engineer, my dad would buy one,” said Herrick. “He didn’t need an Avalanche, but when they came out, he went out and bought one. I think he went around and told his buddies too. And when I worked in crossovers, he sold the Avalanche and bought a Terrain. Then he liked to call me and tell me what I missed—in this case the garage door opener.”

There are several characteristics Herrick attributes his career success to, many of which he traces back to developing at UW-Platteville. “I loved the culture at UW-Platteville,” said Herrick. “I call it the hard-working farmer mentality. I was there with a lot of kids who were right off the farm and they took great

Founded by Tim Herrick and his colleagues, the Leader Foundry supports the next generation of leaders in the Metro Detroit Schools through mentorship and scholarships.
pride in their hard work and had that cultural ethic of putting in the time and being patient. My dad was an entrepreneur and owned his own business and worked really hard, so it really resonated with how I was raised.”

Herrick recalled several professors who made a lasting impression on him, including Dr. Mohan Kim, Dr. Howard Brooks, Dr. Roger Hoover, and Dr. Charles Sundin, whose lesson Herrick still repeats to his children today. “I remember Dr. Sundin gave a lecture the first week of class. For the whole hour, he talked about how the professors are not here to flunk you; they are challenging you. He was really forceful in the way he said it. He said, ‘come to my office, or find a professor you like and team up with them and ask their advice. We’re in the education business, not in the flunking business.’ And I give that advice to my kids all the time now.”

Herrick adopts a similar attitude in his professional life as well. About 15-20 years ago, he was charged with actively seeking out the next group of chief engineers and mentoring them. He worked with a select group on leadership skills, meeting regularly to read books on the topic and have discussions. Herrick still leads the mentoring group today.

Eventually, Herrick had an idea to extend this culture of mentorship to the community and help develop the next generation of leaders. Wanting to make a difference in the lives of students in the Metro Detroit schools, Herrick, with the help of others in his GM mentoring group, created the Herrick Leadership Scholarship. Students compete to earn a $2,500 scholarship by delivering a TED-style talk to answer the question “What does a leader look like in your neighborhood?” Alumni of the mentoring program have the option to return the following year and answer the question, “What can you tell yourself a year ago that you now know,” to earn a $1,000 scholarship.

Herrick and his colleagues eventually found a way to increase their impact even more by developing the nonprofit organization, Leader Foundry. Its mission is to identify the next generation of leaders and support them through mentorship and scholarships. Herrick said he enjoys working with the students, many of who are the first from their family to graduate high school. “All I want is for us to be invited to one graduation and be told by the mother, father, or grandmother, ‘you made a difference in our kid’s life,’ and we’re good.” –Alison Parkins

UW-Platteville criminal justice and forensic investigation students now will be able to conduct fingerprint identification through digital means, thanks to the help of an alumna and the Green Bay (Wisconsin) Police Department, who recently donated a LiveScan machine to the university’s Forensic Investigation Laboratory.

The LiveScan machine, manufactured by Identix and worth several thousand dollars, will allow students to identify fingerprints without ink and transmit the fingerprints directly to the Automated Fingerprint Identification System. This system allows for fingerprints to be re-printed if a mistake was made and help prevent errors while fingerprinting.

The donation was made possible through the work of Timothy Juedes, Forensic Investigation Instructor and Associate Student Services Coordinator in the Department of Criminal Justice at UW-Platteville, who was contacted by UW-Platteville alumna Baeleigh Larson ’15, Forensic Specialist for Green Bay Police Department. Larson informed Juedes that they were looking to donate the LiveScan machine to the Department of Criminal Justice to further its forensic investigation program.
“As an alumna of the forensic program at UW-Platteville, I always wanted to give back in some way,” said Larson. “When my department told me that we were getting a new LiveScan machine and we had no use for the old one but it was still in great working condition, I thought, ‘this is my opportunity to give back.’ Through a lot of phone calls, getting the approval by multiple supervisors within my department, and getting the okay from the Identix Company to donate the machine to UW-Platteville, I was able to make this happen.”

“This type of technology is extremely important, not just on the forensic side but for the criminal justice system in general,” said Juedes. “LiveScan provides easy instantaneous access to digital fingerprint databases, which with the old traditional style of fingerprinting could take days to weeks for results. Being able to access a digital fingerprint database makes identifying a fingerprint from a crime scene more efficient. In addition, LiveScan fingerprinting is a lot less messy than fingerprinting with printer’s ink. This machine will give me the ability to not only talk about LiveScan but also demonstrate to the students how to properly capture fingerprints using a LiveScan. Being able to educate my students on properly capturing fingerprints while using the LiveScan will prepare them for when they will need to take fingerprints in their future careers.”

A LiveScan machine works by scanning a person’s fingerprints, like someone would a document. Previously, students had to manually fingerprint each other using printer’s ink and a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card.

The system also captures a mugshot of the individual being printed for criminal records. Once complete, scans of fingerprints and mugshots can be transmitted directly to the proper databases to be searched.

The new equipment is standard in the types of agencies where UW-Platteville criminal justice and forensic investigation students may work in the future. “Having this machine allows our students to work with the latest forensic technology and better prepare them for future careers in the field,” said Dr. Staci Strobl, Associate Professor of criminal justice, and Interim Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at UW-Platteville. –Laurie Hamer
Jana (Duvall) Crandall ’13 has a unique perspective when it comes to the history of dairy technology. Her family farm, the Hefty-Blum Homestead Farms in the New Glarus/Monticello, Wisconsin, area, dates back to 1848 and is a historical site in Green County.

Crandall participated in 4-H from grade school through middle school and became involved with FFA during high school. She and her siblings were active on the farm, always interested in seeing how things operated.

To finalize her college requirements, Crandall had an internship with Quest Industrial, a robotic automation integrator in Monroe, Wisconsin, which specializes in designing and creating equipment for the dairy industry. According to Crandall, Quest is the largest integrator of cheese handling robotics in North America.

Following her graduation from UW-Platteville with a degree in business administration and a double emphasis in marketing and management, she immediately accepted the offered position of Marketing Manager and Business Administration Coordinator with Quest Industrial.

She managed Quest’s marketing presence within the dairy industry through trade shows, social media, email campaigns, advertising, web design, and branding.

Crandall’s uncle and other relatives are and were cheesemakers. The technology she witnessed growing up as a youth in Green County is the same technology she works to improve with her position at Quest. “We help cheese plants stay productive and compete in their industry,” she said. “Sometimes they are stuck in their traditional ways. It’s a process of getting people to think

The best of both worlds
Crandall embraces modern dairy technology, old-school tradition on historical site
ahead and move forward. It’s baby steps and making sure they are comfortable. It comes down to change and how people deal with change. It usually ends up well. We like to support people wherever we can and whatever that looks like.”

Five generations down the family tree, Crandall’s family was the original settlers of New Glarus, migrating from Switzerland. She, along with four siblings, moved to the family farm when she was 9 years old. “We feel quite special to have grown up there,” said Crandall, noting her family rented the land. “We got to help feed calves in the morning and ride the tractors. It was nice to see those things and to see how hard those people work. I marvel at everyone who goes into the industry.”

The farm is known for its beautifully preserved Swiss stone barn. Crandall’s grandparents restored the barn less than 20 years ago and it looks majestic nestled in the rolling green fields of Green County. The barn is currently empty, but serves as a backdrop for photographs and is part of the historical registry in Green County.

Given Crandall’s experiences with significant farm history as well as technological advances, she has a keen view. She understands why people want to hold on to their lifelong traditions and can also see the benefits that advanced technology can make for business solutions. “Sometimes it gets down to where a plant can’t stay open because they don’t have enough labor,” she said. “We saved a couple plants by installing automation.”

“People always think robots take away jobs but in all reality, they create jobs,” she added. “For each robot Quest installs, there are about five to eight jobs created because of the growth that the company would see a couple of years later. There are people who need to maintain the robots and instead of having those people doing those repetitive jobs that are sometimes unsafe for humans and can result in injuries, they are moved into a value added position where they are more fulfilled and challenged and so the retention rate increases. Then we get what we like to call organic labor savings. You’re saving money by retaining your employees.”

For Crandall, she has the best of both worlds. While she has spent much of her career immersed in technology, when she yearns for nostalgia, the stone barn awaits her.

Recently, she made the career transition to Real Estate Agent and now enjoys working with clients and helping those people find their dream homes in south central Wisconsin.

—Dan Wackershauser ’97
‘How Farms Work’
Kuster attracts large YouTube following

Ryan Kuster ’15 didn’t set out to make his living as a YouTuber. Back in 2012, when he was still an ag business student at UW-Platteville, Kuster was just looking for something fun to do when he started a YouTube channel and Facebook page dedicated to showing non-rural people about farming. It was a great way to combine his farming background and his love of photography—he’d shoot videos at the family farm near Potosi, Wisconsin, and then assemble the footage into short videos that explained various aspects of farming, posting them on his newly created “How Farms Work” channel.

“It was just for fun at first, and then it became a hobby and then it turned into kind of a full-time job, and now it is a full-time job, plus some,” Kuster said.

The easy-to-follow, personable videos began attracting a following that grew with each new posting. Kuster recalled the day he sat in a campus building checking his sites and discovered he had reached the impressive milestone of 1,500 subscribers. “I thought, ‘Wow, 1,500 is a lot,’ ” he said.

Indeed it is, but just a few years later, that number has grown to more than 100,000. Kuster has about 600 videos posted on his “How Farms Work” channel. The Facebook page has more than 32,000 likes, and the YouTube channel has attracted major advertisers such as Chevrolet.

The project grew into a commercial success, but Kuster has stayed true to his original mission of teaching non-farmers about farming.

“Even now I don’t really see it as a for-profit business,” he said. “I see it as an education. People are obviously interested in it, so I want to educate them more on what I learned on the farm and in college, because I’ve taken a lot of what I learned in my ag classes and applied it here.”

Kuster’s viewers come from all over the globe, although most are from the Midwestern farming states. Among his many followers are teachers who often use “How Farms Work” videos in their classrooms.
Entrepreneur

Owning and operating a YouTube channel may seem like an unconventional way to make a living, but it’s not a surprising career path for Kuster. He’s worked all his life, but only once for a boss in a traditional setting, when he had a college internship at Premiere Cooperative in Lancaster, Wisconsin.

Kuster grew up working on his grandparents’ dairy farm in Potosi. His parents took over the farm in 2014, and the family converted it into a beef and crop farm. Kuster still works on the farm and does much of his “How Farms Work” filming there.

In high school, he discovered another passion, which he managed to turn into a business as well.

“I took a photography class in high school, got to handle a camera a little bit, and learned how much I loved it,” Kuster explained. “I started my own photography business in 2011. I shot everything, but my biggest thing came to be wedding photography. I was doing that while I was still a student and it got me through college.”

During that time, Kuster was still creating and uploading “How Farms Work” videos. After graduating from college in 2015, still undecided about a specific career, he began uploading with more frequency, about three times a week. That’s when “How Farms Work” emerged as a full-time vocation.

“I actually started making a decent living off it the month I graduated,” he said.

Last year, Kuster said he realized his YouTube project had gone from a “decent living” to something much bigger. The site had grown 30,000 subscribers in three months, surpassing another popular farm channel to which “How Farms Work” has been compared.

“That’s when I realized that this is really big—that we’re the number-one farm vlog [video blog] in the world, at least that I know of,” Kuster said.

Keeping it fresh

Kuster constantly uploads new material. He films daily and typically uploads four new videos a week during the farm’s busy season and three a week during the slower months.

“I always want to make sure something’s uploaded because there are people who routinely log on to YouTube to watch, so I want to make sure there’s always fresh content there so they don’t stop watching,” he said.

Kuster comes up with the topics himself and does almost all of the filming. Coming up with ideas, he said, is easy.

“There’s always something going on,” he said. “Even if I’ve already done something, the following year I can always do it again because farming’s repetitive.”

Content covers a wide variety of farm-related topics, including loading and selling round bales, cleaning the barnyard, and even obtaining a loan from the FSA. Kuster often gets a hand from his girlfriend, Jamie Procarione ’16, who is a familiar face to regular “How Farms Work” viewers. In fact, “Teaching her to drive a tractor,” featuring Procarione and a John Deere, is one of his most popular videos, with more than 400,000 views.

Procarione, a fellow UW-Platteville graduate, had her own “Wow, this thing is really big” moment in Florida last year. She was in Epcot Center when she heard someone behind her mention “How Farms Work.” She turned around and was surprised to be immediately recognized as the Jamie from the videos.

They told me that they always watch the videos and they were so excited to see me,” she said. “It was awesome!”

Still growing

Kuster has helped expand the reach of “How Farms Work” by forming new partnerships with sponsors. He also recently added an online merchandise store, more to create awareness and help grow the brand than to make a profit.

His future plans include upgrading the videos, with an eye toward eventually producing movie-like content.

One thing is certain: Kuster won’t stop producing content until people stop watching. “How Farms Work” is a dream job for him, albeit an unexpected one.

“I had imagined it becoming what it is,” he said. “I never dreamed that it would.” –Mary Erickson
CARTER & McCARN, Platteville.

From the Archives:

A mystery solved

One of the rewards of archival work is running across long-lost treasures. Recently, while compiling pictures for UW-Platteville’s sesquicentennial book, two photographic gems were rediscovered. Each photograph contained the same nine women. One of the photographs was taken in front of the Normal School Building (Rountree Hall Apartments today), but the other photograph was taken in front of an unidentifiable brick building with a multi-paned bay window.

Fortunately, the two photographs were documented. Called cabinet cards (because they were often displayed in cabinets), the stamp on the back of the photographs identified the photographic firm as “Carter & McCarn, Platteville.” The date of “87-Fall” was written on one of the pictures. In addition, the women in each photograph were identified. Still, the photographs begged questions: Who were Carter & McCarn? What was the connection among the women? And where was the multi-paned bay window photograph taken?

Genealogical research determined that Carter & McCarn were Benjamin Carter, age 23, and Harry McCarn, age 26. Neighborhood friends for years, sometime in the mid-1880s, they opened a photographic studio.

Determining the connection between the women fell into place quickly. Guessing they might be Normal School students, the school’s records were consulted. Except for Laura McCarn (back row, second from left), Harry McCarn’s sister, the Normal School records listed the other eight women attending the school in fall 1887. What is more, all of them majored in “Assistant High School” and all graduated between 1888 and 1896.

As for the multi-paned bay window, two clues indicated a possible location. First, the women were wearing the same clothing in both photographs, indicating the photographs were taken on the same day and probably near the Normal School building. Second, the multi-paned bay window building was constructed of brick. However, the neighborhood around the Normal School building did not contain a matching brick building with a bay window.

Turning to the 1896 bird’s eye view of Platteville, an answer was found. Bird’s eye views of villages were common in the last half of the 19th century. They were an artist’s rendition of how a village would appear from the vantage of a bird, hence the
This bird’s eye view shows the Normal School building and multi-paned bay window house across the street.

name. Platteville’s bird’s eye showed a multi-paned bay window building directly across Elm Street from the Normal School. Property records, moreover, proved the owners of this building were William E. and Ellen Carter, parents of Benjamin Carter, the photographer! Therefore, the photographers took the picture at the Carter house. Today, the multi-paned bay window has been eliminated by an addition to the house.

In final analysis, the two photographs were taken on the same day, 100 feet apart, on the opposite sides of Elm Street.

The Carter & McCarn studio went out of business by 1889, when the McCarn family left Platteville. Photography was changing, too. In 1888, George Eastman ushered in snapshot photography when he introduced the Kodak box camera, a camera any amateur photographer could use. –James Hibbard, Archivist
Special meaning
Homecoming Hustle dedicated to accident victims
It was a text that never came.

Dr. Charles Steiner, a UW-Platteville Agribusiness Professor and Director of Pioneer Farm, was at the University of Wisconsin Badger basketball game Feb. 12, waiting to hear from his sister, Jennifer Steiner ‘04, and her husband, Kirk U’Ren ‘02, who were also planning to be at the Kohl Center.

“My wife Carmen and I were attending the game with friends from college and high school. We talked to Jenni and Kirk about whether they were attending earlier in the week. Jenni had mentioned they didn’t know because of babysitting. Apparently, they got Kirk’s mom and dad to watch the boys so they could both go to the game,” Steiner said. “I remember being at the game and sending a text message to my sister saying, ‘We’re here, if you want to meet up after the game.’ I never got a text message or anything back from her, which I remember at the time was surprising to me.”

Instead of a text, Steiner received a phone call that no one wants to answer. His sister and her husband were involved in a horrific car crash.

“We drove back to my in-laws in Prairie du Sac, as they were watching our son, Bryce,” he said. “We planned to stay the night there, but around midnight I got a call from my dad asking if we were with Jenni and Kirk at the game. That’s when I immediately knew something was wrong. We made some calls but then we heard from the police that Jenni was in the hospital at UW Health. That’s when we also found out that they had notified Kirk’s mom and dad that he had passed away immediately in the car accident. Jenni was in critical condition with a brain injury. We got back to Madison around 2 or 2:30 a.m. and first saw her. She was never responsive after the accident.”

Jenni passed away 13 days later as a result of the brain injuries.

UW-Platteville plans to honor their memory during the Homecoming Hustle on Oct. 14, with proceeds and donations going to scholarships in U’Ren and Steiner’s names.

“They both liked to run, so we thought this was an appropriate way to honor them,” Steiner said. “They both went to UW-Platteville, and they met at UW-Platteville. This will be a good way to remember their lives.”

U’Ren earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration and managed Wal-Mart stores before recently accepting a job as a district manager at PepsiCo, while Jenni Steiner was an accounting major who was a senior manager for Virchow Krause now Baker Tilly, an accounting and advisory firm. They married in August 2011 and had twin sons, Kaden and Grayson, who were born in November 2015.

Since the accident, their Cottage Grove community, their work places (past and present), and their hometowns of Mineral Point (U’Ren) and Prairie du Chien (Steiner) have rallied around the families. More than $185,000 has been raised in various fundraisers for the boys.

Steiner said the Homecoming Hustle and other events held in their memory are testaments to just how impactful the young couple’s lives were.

“It shows how much Kirk and Jenni touched people’s lives,” he said. “Even though they passed away from us way too young, they made the most of their lives. The good thing I can take away from this is they really helped a lot of people. They had a lot of close friends. They lived life to the fullest and had a lot of fun.”

The couple were passionate Badger fans, attending Rose Bowl games and kickoff classic contests at AT&T Stadium in Dallas and Lambeau Field. They also were involved in their communities and enjoyed many activities together.

“Right now, I’m working to save all the text messages between us,” Steiner said. “Jenni and I were both big Cubs fans, so I have a lot during their World Series championship. We texted a lot, as my son Bryce is about the same age as the boys. We shared a lot of pictures.”

The last time they saw each other was at a January UW-Platteville Alumni Association event at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

“We had some other UW-Platteville friends with us as well, so we had four adjoining rooms. We spent a lot of time with them, which turned out to be the last time we were together,” Steiner said. “We had a lot of fun with the kids at the water park. Looking back at it now, it was a real blessing that we got to spend that long weekend with them.”

The Alumni Association is proud to sponsor the Homecoming Hustle in their memory, said Steve Ramig, Executive Director of Development and Alumni Engagement.

“This speaks to the value of a Pioneer,” he said. “Being a UW-Platteville Pioneer means supporting fellow alumni, through thick and thin. This is another example of the Pioneer family coming together to support Kirk and Jenni.”

For more information about the Homecoming Hustle, including how to register, sponsor, or donate, visit www.uwplatt.edu/alumni-events/homecoming-hustle-and-half-pint-hustle.

—Paul Erickson
Homecoming – ‘Going Global’

University Awards Ceremony
Friday, Oct. 13 | 4:30 p.m. | Center for the Arts

Homecoming Hustle – In memory of UW-Platteville Alumni Kirk U’Ren ’02 and Jennifer Steiner ’04
Runners’ 5K | Walkers’ 3K
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 7:15 a.m.
Outdoor Track, Williams Fieldhouse

Register at www.uwplatt.edu/alumni-events/homecoming-hustle-and-half-pint-hustle

Alumni Association Homecoming parade tent
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 9 a.m. | 385 W. Main St.
Join us for complimentary hot chocolate, cider, coffee, and donuts.

Counseling education alumni: Attention counselor education graduates and friends, help us celebrate 50 years of counselor education at Homecoming. Come join the fun and reacquaint yourself with classmates. To RSVP contact Development and Alumni Engagement at alumni@uwplatt.edu or 608.342.1181.

Homecoming parade
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 10 a.m. | Main St.

Alumni Association luncheon
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 11 a.m. | Velzy Commons, Ullsvik Hall
Stay on campus and feed the whole family while catching up with former professors and friends. Enjoy the Wundo Band from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Culvers’ custard.

Homecoming football game
UW-Platteville vs. UW Oshkosh
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 2 p.m. | Ralph E. Davis Pioneer Stadium

Marching Pioneers alumni: If you plan to participate in the 2017 Homecoming halftime show, you will need to contact Matthew Gregg at greggm@uwplatt.edu by 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 9. There will be a mandatory rehearsal at the track facility across from the stadium at 11 a.m. on Homecoming day. Alumni will need to provide their own instrument and lyre. We hope to see you there!

“M” Lighting
Saturday, Oct. 14 | 9 p.m. | Platte Mound
After graduation, Distance education alumni continue to make impressions on UW-Platteville by donating their time and resources to serve on boards, connect with current students and other alumni, and encourage others to give back to the university. But alumni also make significant impacts in their professions and communities. Here are just a few examples of the ways in which distance education alumni have left their mark.

**Jill Bisco**
Jill Bisco is a 2005 graduate of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program. She is an Assistant Professor of finance at the University of Akron (Ohio). Bisco began her tenure as president of the Distance Education Alumni Board in 2015. The board is made up of distance education alumni who volunteer their time to represent the Distance Education Alumni Chapter of the university’s Alumni Association. Under Bisco’s leadership, the board entered a new era of increased engagement and communication with distance education alumni and students. In the past year, the board introduced a new scholarship and helped with fundraising and Alumni Association membership initiatives. The board has also been instrumental in implementing virtual events for distance alumni and students.

**Vendarryl Jenkins**
Master of Science in Criminal Justice graduate Vendarryl Jenkins ’11 has been with the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for over 25 years and is now the Resident Agent in charge of the Merrillville, Indiana, office. Along with the 15 agents he supervises, he is responsible for all of northwest Indiana—a region where crimes range from gun violence to methamphetamine use. “I’m a big proponent of education and as an African-American law enforcement officer, I feel a big desire to try to explain to the black community and show them that law enforcement is there to help, and also to be able to guide law enforcement officers in a way to understand that this community needs help, but they need respect as well,” Jenkins said.

**Mitch Farrey**
Mitch Farrey is a two-time UW-Platteville graduate. He earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration on campus in 2009 and a Master of Science in Project Management online in 2011. While working on his master’s degree, Farrey was a graduate assistant coach for the university’s men’s basketball program, and coordinated summer basketball camps. He is now a Program Specialist in the UW-Madison Athletics Department and is in charge of assisting the track, cross country, and tennis programs with travel, recruiting, budgeting, and processing expenses. Farrey continues to give back to the university, helping with basketball tournaments and serving on the Distance Education Alumni Board.

**Cleveland Daniels**
Cleveland Daniels graduated from the Master of Science in Engineering program in 2016. He is a Navy civilian working as an Integrated Test Engineer for the Department of Defense at the Southeast Regional Maintenance Center in Mayport, Florida. Daniels is the senior member of his team and oversees the complex processes that prepare a ship for service. He is recognized as an experienced leader in his profession, and throughout his 20-year career with the Navy, he has worked on everything from gas turbines to advanced electrical work. –Cheryl Lange
Kim Beinborn ’99 is a natural-born leader. Spend five minutes in conversation with the Cuba City, Wisconsin, native and you’ll be infused with her enthusiasm.

Beinborn graduated from Cuba City High School in 1991. She then enrolled at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, where she earned an undergraduate degree. She later earned her master’s degree in counseling from UW-Platteville and worked as a guidance counselor at Verona High School. She enjoyed that job, however, she decided to pursue other interests.

Beinborn moved on to a recruiting position at Robert Half International in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She later was hired at GE Healthcare in the Milwaukee area where LinkedIn was a client. After being approached by someone at LinkedIn and having discussions with LinkedIn employees, she applied and was hired by LinkedIn nearly five years ago.

LinkedIn, a social networking site designed specifically for the business community, initially hired Beinborn as a global products consultant, where she worked for a couple years. “I knew eventually I wanted to get back into leadership,” she said. “The position I am currently in presented itself and here I am.” She currently serves as Manager of Customer Success.

Customer success is part of the talent solutions business at LinkedIn. “When companies purchase any LinkedIn products such as recruiter licenses, job slots, or career pages, my team is responsible for helping them get the most out of the products,” said Beinborn. “We do training and education, and optimization, all sorts of things.”

Beinborn is also responsible for hiring and recruiting talent. “I thought it was an amazing company, and I loved their mission,” she said.

Beinborn is based in Chicago, Illinois, and manages a team of 16 employees in San Francisco, California; New York, New York; and Chicago. “The pace is a little crazy, but I enjoy it a lot.”

“Look for a company that is tied to your values and a mission that inspires you. That’s what makes coming to work every day fulfilling.”

Kim Beinborn
Manager of Customer Success

Beinborn updates career profile with LinkedIn
The educational opportunities Beinborn had at UW-Platteville have proved helpful throughout her career. “Obviously, the counseling is a skill set you can use in the business setting, any time, anywhere,” she said. “It certainly has helped me manage people. I always say I went from counseling kids to adults, and it’s not that different.”

“I always wanted to work with people and I always wanted to help them grow and develop and transform,” added Beinborn. “I always thought one day I’d be a manager, so to speak, or a leader, but, I never thought I’d end up here.”

With today’s social media and technology-laden landscape and shifting corporate culture, Beinborn is enjoying her career. “It’s an innovative culture,” she said. “LinkedIn began as a start-up and it’s grown. We’re up over 500 million members as a network. They are really good to their employees. They encourage what we call ‘next play.’ They encourage you to continue growing and changing. They don’t anticipate people working at LinkedIn for the rest of their lives. They embrace the whole person.”

As part of her responsibilities, Beinborn travels internationally occasionally. She spoke at L’Oréal’s global human resources conference in Paris, France; attended LinkedIn’s global leadership summit in Dublin, Ireland; and has seen other parts of the globe. “No matter what office I am in, we have the similar values that are tied to our mission,” she said.

As for advice for those entering new careers, Beinborn says to get the most out of every opportunity. “Throw yourself into the culture and the experience,” she said. “Look for a company that is tied to your values and a mission that inspires you. That’s what makes coming to work every day fulfilling.” –Dan Wackershauser ’97

Check out the UW-Platteville LinkedIn page at LinkedIn.com/school/43417 and see whom you might know.
Jennifer (Piorkowski) Brooks ’00 was a high school junior when her teacher suggested a career in engineering—an idea she might never have considered on her own. Now, after a successful 17-year career with Caterpillar Inc. that includes global travel, various awards and honors, and four patents—with three more pending—Brooks is placing a priority on making sure other young women are also introduced to these possibilities at a young age.

“As a child, I always liked drawing and I gravitated towards geometric things like buildings and structures, so my dream in high school was to be an architect,” said Brooks, a West Allis, Wisconsin, native. After taking a drafting class in high school, her teacher asked her if she considered engineering. “Honestly, I hadn’t,” said Brooks. “I didn’t know any engineers, and I didn’t know what it meant. His suggestion made me start to explore what a career in engineering might mean, especially mechanical engineering. I realized a lot of the things I liked to do fit well with it. That’s what gave me that exposure to STEM and mechanical engineering, and once I decided that, I never looked back.”

After Brooks earned her bachelor’s in mechanical engineering, she immediately embarked on her career with Caterpillar, eventually also earning her master’s degree in mechanical engineering from Bradley University.

As an Undercarriage Systems Engineer, Brooks is responsible for nearly every stage of the development of new undercarriage systems for Caterpillar, from designing, evaluating, and promoting new products to working with manufacturing teams, suppliers, and customers around the globe. Her team was honored with two critical quality awards in the past three years—most recently a Product Quality Excellence Award for the undercarriage of the D6K tractor. After 12 months in service, this product has 0.007 percent warranty to sales; for the customer that means high reliability and a very low maintenance cost.

Brooks said the opportunities she is afforded outside of work are also rewarding. “I’ve been given the opportunity to grow not just as a Caterpillar employee, but as a member of our community,” she said, adding that Caterpillar sponsors opportunities for volunteerism in the community, such as partnering with a homeless shelter and working with the Junior Achievement program.

Brooks also spends her time helping to build the next generation of women engineers. She is heavily involved in Society of Women Engineers Region H, serving as a professional senator for the past three years. Last year, she became a member of UW-Platteville’s Women in Engineering Advisory Board.

“My focus has been on early outreach and making sure that girls in the middle school range hear about STEM and engineering and understand that it’s a career they can do,” said Brooks. “I know that not every girl whom we talk to is going to be interested in engineering, that’s a given. But, I hope we can reach even just one and change her life, like that teacher did for me.”

–Alison Parkins

Inspiring engineers
Brooks draws on early experiences to help others
This fall, Dr. Mittie Nimocks Den Herder, former provost and vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, formally retired after 31 years with UW-Platteville. Despite her departure, Nimocks Den Herder made sure to leave something behind—the Nimocks Family Faculty Appreciation Award. Designed to honor and recognize outstanding faculty at UW-Platteville, Nimocks Den Herder created the award in 2007 and has been quietly contributing to its fund throughout the years.

“There are so many faculty members who are doing really great things, and so I wanted to do something to reward and recognize their work,” Nimocks Den Herder said. “And not only do I hope this award does that, but I also hope it aids the university in faculty retention.”

With donations from Nimocks Den Herder, UW-Platteville alumni, faculty members, and administrators, the accolade will be awarded to one faculty member each year. Accompanying the honor is a gift of $1,000 and a personalized plaque for each award recipient.

Dr. Jennifer Collins, Assistant Professor of Education, received the inaugural award this fall. “I am incredibly humbled to receive this award,” Collins said. “It’s amazing to have people who you respect on campus acknowledge that your hard work is noticed.”

In addition to serving as provost and vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, Nimocks Den Herder also served as a professor of speech communication and as the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Education while at UW-Platteville. During this time, her passion for students and faculty rarely went unnoticed.

“Dr. Den Herder’s exceptional dedication as an administrative leader served as a building block in the foundation of the university’s future, and her contributions are greatly appreciated,” Chancellor Dennis J. Shields said. “She has been a great colleague and most significantly, a great friend.”

For Nimocks Den Herder, advocating for faculty and students wasn’t an unfamiliar concept. Growing up in a family of public educators, she understood the value of effective professors. “My grandmothers were teachers, two paternal aunts and one maternal aunt were teachers, both of my parents were teachers, and my sister was an elementary school counselor,” Nimocks Den Herder said. “Not only did I want to honor outstanding professors at UW-Platteville with the award, but I wanted to honor my family as well.”

The Nimocks Family Faculty Appreciation Award is university-wide, and any faculty member can be nominated if they meet one or more of the award criteria. This includes teaching effectiveness, teaching the value of diversity, teaching the ability to argue even a sensitive issue with competence and civility, creating opportunities for students to engage in high-impact practices, and communicating the importance of a liberal arts education.

To support the award, visit www.uwplatt.edu/foundation/give, stop by the Development and Alumni Engagement office, or call 608.342.1181. –Amanda Bertolozzi
"As you leave here and begin the next chapters of your lives, please reflect on the people and the institutions that contributed to your personal achievement and success. Plan to be a Pioneer who provides that kind of support in your community … remember, you never know how the smallest gesture might have a profound impact."

Chancellor Dennis J. Shields

“Graduates, today is your commencement. I encourage you to think about what you want to begin—what will you commence and what legacy will you create? What will you do tomorrow to be intentional about this? I’m confident that you will not throw away your shot.”

Robert Cramer, Principal Speaker, BILSA
Vice President for Administration, University of Wisconsin System

“As we move forward into the next stages of our lives, we have the UW-Platteville experience to guide us on the path of success and integrity.”

Kassidy Kohout
Senior Speaker, BILSA
Fennimore, Wisconsin

“You and only you are responsible for your own happiness; to have a successful life and to be happy you need to figure out what it is that is important to you and then live your life consistent with that vision.”

Ann Moyer, Principal Speaker, BILSA
Molecular Genetic Pathologist, Mayo Clinic

“This world needs people with more than one interest and ability. We need people who listen as well as speak; we need people who think as well as act. I believe each and every one of us has a purpose for our life.”

Emily Hefty, Senior Speaker, BILSA
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin
“A true leader is measured by their actions, not by how many awards they have or what positions of power they hold. It is this responsibility—to elevate those around you and express gratitude to those who have helped along the way—that separates a leader from the rest.”

Michelle Merkovich, Principal Speaker, LAE
Staff Operations Specialist, Federal Bureau of Investigation

“If you think about it, UW-Platteville has given us so much over our time here; we’ve become better critical thinkers, better learners, and better, more compassionate human beings.”

Emma Cleveland, Senior Speaker, LAE
Platteville, Wisconsin

“I challenge you to draw upon your coursework and make every experience applicable … If luck is at the intersection of preparation and opportunity, just like we did, you too can make your luck by being as prepared as possible.”

Sakara Wages, Senior Speaker, LAE
Chicago, Illinois

“We may not know what is in store for us, but using everything we have experienced and learned here at school and before, we can make choices that will make our lives better, so let’s go out into the world and show them what we can do.”

Paige Hagen, Senior Speaker, EMS
St. Paul, Minnesota

“It’s important to keep a good balance in life; remember to have fun and enjoy the little things. I think that doing this will bring more joy into your life and make you a better engineer, mathematician, or scientist because your positive attitude will feed into your work.”

Josiah Stuart, Senior Speaker, EMS
Dousman, Wisconsin

“My charge to all of you is to make optimism a way of life and seek possibilities wherever life takes you. It will take practice; it won’t be easy some days, but optimism is free, it’s contagious, and it’s your choice.”

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Vice President of Fixtures Engineering, Kitchen & Bath Americas, Kohler Company

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Vice President of Fixtures Engineering, Kitchen & Bath Americas, Kohler Company
Of border tape and pica poles
Thirty years later, Exponent editors still working together

In the mid-1980s—in the days of alternative rock music (and the accompanying hairstyles and attire), two budding journalists descended the steps of the Student Center … into the Exponent offices. Thirty years later, lifelong wordsmiths and former co-editors Heidi Reiche Hodges ’88 and Sharon Korbeck Verbeten ’87 are working together again.

The two, also roommates for a while, never fell out of touch, but have now come full circle, back to the shared love of print that brought them together.

Originally from Kenosha, Wisconsin, Hodges now lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and is owner of Heidi Hodges Photography. A longtime Gannett columnist/reporter/photographer with the Door County Advocate, she now edits their Door County Magazine. The mother of two won a National Newspaper Association award for sharing her story of cancer survival. Earlier in her career, she even trekked to Germany to cover the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Verbeten, a Sussex, Wisconsin, native, later received her master’s in library science from UW-Madison. She now lives in De Pere, Wisconsin, where she owns her own writing/editing firm, All Write Creative Services; serves as editor of Children and Libraries; and is also a children's librarian for Brown County Library. The married mother of one is the author of two Barbie books with Krause Publications.

Here the two banter about their fond UW-Platteville memories, especially their long nights pasting up pages in the Exponent office.

**Heidi:** It doesn’t even seem possible that it’s been 30 years; it’s hard for me to even say that. I remember I had a different major when I started school. I was looking at education, but I ended up meeting the photo editor of the Exponent and thought he was cute. He said they needed photographers at the Exponent, so I checked it out. I mean, he was really cute, right?

**Sharon:** I don’t remember that, but I also came to UW-Platteville intending to go into radio/TV broadcasting. I was going to be the next great Jane Pauley! Very quickly, I realized I didn’t have the face for TV, but when I realized UW-Platteville had a newspaper on campus, I was there. At the time, UW-Platteville didn’t even have a journalism major, but I loved the college so much, I stayed and changed my major to English.

**Heidi:** I remember there was a sign on the door to the Exponent offices that said, “If you can write your name, you can write for the Exponent.” That didn’t sound great, but I knew the cute guy was inside.

**Sharon:** I remember our advisor Jamie Byrne-McCollum (nee Doerge) was so great … and so young. She was very relatable; she made the long layout nights fun, not a task.

**Heidi:** I thought she was a student! Anyway, the Exponent office quickly became home. Next thing you know, I changed my major.

**Heidi:** The cool thing was, you had students from all majors coming down to work on the Exponent.

**Sharon:** Yeah, even my engineering buddy worked as a photographer for a while.

**Heidi:** And we were all very dedicated to putting that paper out. Such a team effort. And I think Jamie had a lot to do with it.

**Sharon:** The group we were with … the camaraderie was so infectious. Especially on those “layout nights” when we literally pasted up pages with wax and border tape. Counting headlines, using pica poles to measure type … you didn’t mind staying up until 2 a.m.

**Heidi:** I wonder if they pull all-nighters now? And how much they’re doing it all together; I wonder if that still happens, with all the changes in technology.

**Sharon:** We were waxing the paper … and we’d come home and find border tape stuck on our clothes. I still remember the smell of the wax machine.
Heidi: The darkroom was a big thing then too; we had to make do with what we had—typewriters, border tape, physically laying out the paper.

Sharon: I remember writing “Point-Counter-Point” editorials with you when we were co-editors, taking on the “pressing” issues of the day, from major college construction projects to the food at Glenview Commons.

Sharon: I think we all had our own idea of what we wanted to be “when we grew up,” but right there, in the moment, I never felt there were egos; we all just wanted to get better at what we wanted to do.

Sharon: We learned the nuts and bolts—using pica poles and counting headlines, skills that are no longer necessary by any stretch of the imagination today! My first job out of college was editor of my hometown weekly newspaper, the Sussex Sun, where I did exactly those tasks.

Heidi: I went to the Door County Advocate as an intern. It was so much fun; I couldn’t wait to wake up and go to work. I stayed there 13 years, and I guess I never entirely left.

Sharon: I know that having worked at the Exponent definitely prepared me for all my ensuing career moves, especially when I started my own freelance writing company in 2005—kind of the culmination of everything I had learned before.

Heidi: No matter what we did or where we lived, we never really fell out of contact. It’s kinda flukey, right? Yeah, and talk about full circle … our teacher wrote for me (Byrne-McCollum wrote a piece for Door County Magazine).

Sharon: I know I’m glad I’m back doing writing and editing full time. I took a detour to librarianship and have always had that tug of war.

Heidi: Journalism is about doing it for love and not money. That’s the way it’s always been.

Sharon: That’s what journalism is all about.

Sharon: It really works out well that not only am I looking for freelance work, but you are offering freelance work … and you are willing to work with me again (ha ha) … and pay me!

Sharon: The comfort level here is that if you don’t like something I’ve written, you’ll tell me, but in a way that I respect. We know each other so well, we can get the best work out of each other.

Heidi: Same with me, with you editing my stuff.

Sharon: It needs to be said, however, that I am NOT a fan of the Oxford comma.

Heidi: Me neither!

Sharon: Well, then we have a shared affinity—our dislike of the Oxford comma, and our mutual love and respect for the AP Stylebook.

Heidi: Well, I don’t love it.

Sharon: I do.

“I knew both Heidi and Sharon would be successful in some aspect of journalism or writing when I worked with them at the Exponent all of those years ago. They were part of an extremely talented group of young people with drive, intellectual curiosity, attention to detail, creativity, and the ability to write well. It’s been my joy to watch them and their contemporaries mature and find their way in the field.”

Jamie Byrne-McCollum
former teacher/Exponent advisor
It all started in 1970 with an assignment for class. “I was in Dr. Jerry Strohm’s human genetics course and wrote a short paper on a rare metabolic condition known as phenylketonuria or PKU,” Dr. Charles Brokopp ’71, retired director of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, said. “Newborn screening for PKU and treatment of infants with a special diet were both very new. This paper is what got me interested in clinical laboratory science and human genetics.”

During a return visit to UW-Platteville roughly 25 years later, Brokopp ran into Strohm at a Pioneer basketball game. Not only did Strohm remember having Brokopp in class, but he also remembered the paper that Brokopp had written. “Dr. Strohm told me he had something to show me and that he would be back,” Brokopp recalled. “When the game ended, Dr. Strohm walked up to me holding my paper. He had kept it for many years and thought I would like it back.”

Brokopp’s interest in laboratory science and genetics flourished since that assignment more than 45 years ago. He obtained federal research grants and foundation funding to develop and evaluate routine newborn screening for severe combined immunodeficiency, commonly known as SCID or bubble boy disease. This inherited immune deficiency usually results in multiple serious infections and death after the first few months of life. The DNA-based assay developed at the WSLH for SCID represents the first time a molecular marker was successfully used for population wide screening. More than 35 states have now expanded newborn screening to include testing all newborns for SCID, and at least 15 countries have also begun screening infants for SCID using molecular assays based on the one developed at the WSLH.

While the WSLH team was refining the new screening assay, researchers at the Children’s Hospital in Milwaukee were working to improve the treatment of SCID and other immunodeficiencies. This collaborative research led to cures for immunodeficiency including the use of hematopoietic stem cell transplants. While it was originally believed that it would be difficult to find suitable donors, it was discovered that blood from a parent, sibling, or other close relative could be used.

“It’s hard to say just how many lives have been saved by the collaboration of the research teams at the WSLH and the Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin; however, we know that we are saving babies’ lives every year,” Brokopp said.

Brokopp gives a lot of credit to the research teams that have contributed to expansion of newborn screening in Wisconsin to include nearly 50 inherited conditions in newborns. Many of the improvements since the early screening for PKU have required individuals with advanced training in molecular technologies, clinical chemistry, and informatics.

The Lancaster, Wisconsin, native received his bachelor’s degree in biology-zoology from UW-Platteville and an additional bachelor’s degree in medical technology following an internship at Freeport (Illinois) Memorial Hospital School of Medical Technology. He received his master’s and doctorate from the University of North Carolina.

Brokopp began his public health career in 1972 as a public health microbiologist and laboratory consultant with the Wisconsin Division of Health. He later directed state public health and environmental laboratories in Idaho, Oregon, and Utah before returning to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. He returned to Wisconsin in 2006 to become the director of the WSLH and professor of population health sciences at UW-Madison until his retirement in 2016.

Although Brokopp has retired, he continues to contribute to public health. He currently serves on the National Certification Committee for the Global Elimination of Polio. This World Health Organization initiative has an aggressive plan to eliminate polio caused by wild strain viruses through global surveillance systems, a polio laboratory network, and the use of inactivated polio vaccines.

While this is another assignment that Brokopp can check off his list, he often thinks about that first assignment he completed at UW-Platteville years ago. “Choosing UW-Platteville was one of the best decisions I could have made when pursing my undergraduate degree,” he said. “I obtained a well-rounded education, had direct contact with fantastic professors, and obtained hands-on experience both in and out of the classroom.”

–Amanda Bertolozzi
Reddy appointed as Director of School of Agriculture

Dr. Rami Reddy, Coordinator and Professor of agribusiness, was recently appointed as the Director of the School of Agriculture. Reddy joined the UW-Platteville faculty in August 1999. “We are excited to have Dr. Reddy as the Director of the School of Agriculture and as part of the college leadership team,” said Dr. Wayne Weber, Dean of the College of Business, Industry, Life Science and Agriculture. “Dr. Reddy brings with him extensive experience as a faculty member in the School of Agriculture, experience as program coordinator in agribusiness, a palpable passion for the school, and a wealth of ideas. With transition comes opportunity and we look forward to Dr. Reddy’s leadership.”

Isbister presents research on transnational feminism at international conference

Dr. Dong Isbister, Assistant Professor of women’s and gender studies, recently presented her research on environmental humanities and transnational feminism at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment’s 12th biennial conference, “Rust/Resistance: Works of Recovery,” held at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

The conference drew scholars, writers, activists, humanists, publishers, artists and graduate students representing countries from all continents, offering approximately 177 panels on a range of topics in environmental humanities as well as seminars, workshops, keynotes, and opportunities to participate in service learning field trips at businesses and organizations in the Detroit area.

Isbister organized and co-chaired one of the panels, “Creative Resistance: Ethnic Minority Women and Ecomemory in China’s Environmental Literature,” at which she presented her paper, “Re/membeing the Fallen Sacred Birch Tree: Ecological Destruction and Resistance in Dawur Environmental Literature.”

NASA requests development of Hamilton’s telescope-cleaning polymer

Last winter, a representative from NASA reached out to Dr. James Hamilton, Professor of chemistry, requesting that he submit a proposal to the Small Business Innovation Research program. Two NASA scientists had attended a presentation of Hamilton’s at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, California, in October and were impressed with his product. Hamilton has created First Contact Polymer, a peelable coating that cleans and protects optical surfaces like those on giant telescopes and satellites. The purpose of the grant, which was awarded last spring, is to develop a similar polymer system specifically for the special needs of the Starshade Telescope Project that will be launched in the middle 2020s.

The starshade is a large, flower-shaped deployable structure that flies 50,000 kilometers in front of a telescope in deep space, blocking light from a distant star but allowing light from exo-planets out beyond the edge. Hamilton’s new polymer technology will clean the particulates off the edges preventing glare and scatter that interferes with visibility and contrast. NASA and Hamilton also hope to create a system that could peel once in orbit or disperse when in contact with solar radiation.

In the future, the new FCP would be usable NASA-wide in applications from optical instruments to general aerospace surface cleaning. Eventually, the FCP could be commercialized and used in medical, scientific, and pharmaceutical fields where surface sterility is necessary.

The SBIR program consists of three phases. Phase I is a six-month study with a prototype and has a contract value of $125,000. Next fall, Phase II must be applied for and lasts multiple years and can be as much as $750,000. Finally, Phase III brings the product into commercialization.
Dr. Eugene R.H. Tesdahl, Assistant Professor in the Department of History, co-authored the article, “La Salle on Seneca Creation 1678.” The article appears in Volume 40, No. 4 of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, published by the American Indian Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles. Tesdahl and his co-authors analyzed the French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle’s 1678 transcription of a Seneca version of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) creation story that dates to at least 1350. Tesdahl also provided translation of the original French and historical context. Tesdahl is a specialist in early American, Native American, and women’s history.

Gormley earns Patriotic Employer award

The Office of the Secretary of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve presented Dr. Melissa Gormley, Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Education, and the university with a Patriotic Employer award for “contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America’s National Guard and Reserve Force.”

“I was so surprised and deeply honored to receive this special award,” said Gormley, who was nominated by Adam Larson, a social science comprehensive major with an emphasis in history from Tomah, Wisconsin.

“Melissa is always open to talk and assist me in any way she can,” said Larson. “She has often jumped over many barriers to make my civilian life easier and less stressful. She has openly offered to help me with any questions or any problems that I have in my educational needs no matter the size of the problem.”

Safari-Shad honored with senior member ranking

Dr. Nader Safari-Shad, Professor of electrical engineering, was recently elevated to the grade of senior member of the IEEE—an honor bestowed on only 10 percent of its members. IEEE is an international technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. The organization has more than 420,000 members across 160 countries.

Safari-Shad has been teaching at UW-Platteville since 2001. He earned his bachelor and master’s degrees at Oregon State University, and his Ph.D. at UW-Madison.

Support UW-Platteville Foundation Inc.
When you shop at smile.amazon, Amazon donates 0.5 percent of the purchase price.
Future Pioneers

Corey ’11 and Tricia (Pawelski) Conohan ’11 welcomed their first child, Evan Francis, on Dec. 10, 2016. He weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and was 19.5 inches long. The Conohans currently reside in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, where Corey is a Purchasing Coordinator at Placon and Tricia is an Administrative Coordinator at Robert Half International.

Alisha (Slowey) ’08 and Andy Richard welcomed Finley Mac Richard on April 17, 2017. She was 8 pounds, 9 ounces and 20.5 inches.

Becky (Kaiser) Digman ’08 and her husband, Chris, had their second child on April 23, 2017. Logan Jon was 7 pounds, 8 ounces and 21 inches long. He joins his big brother Jackson.

Class notes

Bill Wubben ’76, President and Chairman of the Apple River State Bank board of directors, joined more than 100 community bankers and the Independent Community Bankers of America in May for a meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House. The meeting was part of the ICBA Capital Summit.

Chris Polzer ’88 recently became the Criminal Justice Programs Manager for Sauk County (Wisconsin). Polzer previously spent more than 25 years as a drug treatment specialist for a federal correctional institution, and he has also worked as a lecturer in UW-Platteville’s criminal justice program. Polzer received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and master's degree in adult counseling from UW-Platteville.

John Klossner ’99 has been appointed to a district-court judgeship in Minnesota’s 10th Judicial District. After earning a bachelor’s degree from UW-Platteville, Klossner earned his law degree from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

In memorium

1942
George M. Deutman,
Lakewood, Colorado

1947
Michael E. Linley,
Marinette, Wisconsin

1955
John A. Taylor,
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

1960
Philip H. Johnson,
Belleville, Wisconsin

1965
George H. Swanson,
Williamston, Michigan

1964
Keith C. Englesby,
Madison, Wisconsin

1966
Robert L. Johnston,
Glendale, Arizona

1967
Gary V. Bell,
Platteville, Wisconsin

1968
Jon L. Caylor,
Schofield, Wisconsin

1972
Dorothy (Hensolt) Haman,
Galena, Illinois

1975
George W. Koerner,
Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

1976
Bonnie L. (Wilson) Simmons,
Platteville, Wisconsin

1977
Stephen B. Wilson,
Neenah, Wisconsin

1978
William “Bill” R. Reisner,
La Crosse, Wisconsin

1979
Robert “Bob” J. Stroo,
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

1987
Paul F. Lofy
Sayner, Wisconsin

1970
Lawrence W. Alt,
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

Herman Orr,
Thiensville, Wisconsin

1998
Charlotte A. (Thorncroft) Schenkel,
Platteville, Wisconsin

2004
Darin J. Jarding
Farley, Iowa

Employees
Professor Emeritus
Noman R. Powers,
Platteville, Wisconsin

Ronald A. Yeske,
Anderson, South Carolina

Walt F. Wisnewski,
Platteville, Wisconsin

Correction: In our spring/summer 2017 issue, Jeff J. Trumpy, class of 1969, was incorrectly marked as deceased. We apologize for this error.

Submit a class note or future Pioneer by going to www.uwplatt.edu/alumni, clicking on contact, and sending us comments or updating your information.
SAVE THE DATE
Homecoming Oct. 13–14, 2017