We came, we saw, we reunited.

A WSU original: 50 years of Master Gardeners
Feature
How WSU’s Master Gardeners program became a national, and global, model

Upfront
The WSUAA knows how to party—biggest reunion ever!

Feed the world and do it right

Being at the center of improving lives with adaptive technology

Protecting our Palouse prairie home companions

A slow burn for a NW icon?

COVER: THE FISH HATCHERY POLLINATOR GARDEN IN LEAVENWORTH IS A CHELAN-DOUGLAS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (COURTESY MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF CHELAN COUNTY)

LEFT: WSU EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS PROMOTE FOOD GARDENING ACROSS ALL WASHINGTON COUNTIES. (PHOTO JULIA SUDNITSKAYA)
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Rowpar Shares Benefit College of Education

Jim Ratcliff (above), a proud long-time Coug supporter, holds a PhD from the WSU College of Education. Jim and his wife were one of the top four shareholders in Rowpar Pharmaceuticals, a privately held C-Corporation. Jim led the company as CEO. Jim converted stock options he received as compensation and made two gifts of stock over a three-year span to the WSU Foundation, totaling 50,000 shares in the company. When Rowpar sold in 2022, WSU gained the benefit of that sale of stock totaling $223,000 and the gifts were designated to support the College of Education’s Dean’s Excellence Fund as well as create an endowment supporting international collaborations within the College.

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5
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Thank you for writing and publishing this piece. So glad the President’s Residence is now the Ida Lou Anderson House and WSU recognizes the brilliant, extraordinary work done by everyday people. I’ll bet Murrow was not the only student enriched by Ida Lou Anderson’s skillful teaching and talent.

Let’s hear it for Ida Lou Anderson and for all the dedicated staff at WSU.

BARRERA PETITE
Seattle

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WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE FALL 2023
Many happy returns

Platinum, Diamond, Golden, and Crimson grads, as well as WSU alumni who missed in-person reunions due to the pandemic, go back to their old school.

It wasn’t quite the same as going to classes, drinking coffee at the CUB with friends, and attending dances and football games as a student, but it was pretty close. In June, Washington State University graduates from 16 classes converged on the Pullman and Spokane campuses to relive some of their student days and reconnect with old friends.

“This was the largest gathering of alumni classes yet for the WSU Alumni Association—spanning from 1950 to 1983—and the first chance since COVID restrictions prevented alumni from returning and connecting safely with each other.

“It was a very special weekend for us,” says Jim Lemery ('63 Busi., '65 MBA). “The best thing is, it’s 60 years later and we can still come back.”

The visiting Cougs, around 250 of them, packed a lot into their time on campus. It started for some with a round at the Palouse Ridge Golf Club, a new feature of Pullman for many of them.

Alumni from 16 classes reconnected at WSU in June.
The reunion was more than just tours of buildings; attendees heard the latest news from WSU leaders, including WSU President Kirk Schulz, Pullman Chancellor Elizabeth Chilton, and WSUAA President Lester Barbero.

The visitors also learned about WSU’s work with industry partners on revolutionizing the senior living industry. The presenters, founding director of the Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living Nancy Swanger and some of those senior living industry leaders, were instrumental in establishing the institute, propelling research, and creating a new WSU major in senior living.

And the grads went back to class—although perhaps not the history course they expected. Instead, Mark O’English, the university’s archivist, told the backstory of WSU mascot Butch T. Cougar and some little-known history of both the live animal and costumed human Butches. Of course, Butch himself made an appearance at the reunion.

“Welcoming our alumni back to our WSU campuses is always the highlight of the year for our staff,” says WSUAA Executive Director Mariah Maki. “We see this as the perfect opportunity to showcase the university’s growth and strength in both research and education, as well as the chance to celebrate and reminisce with our amazing graduates about their time at Washington State.”

For the first time this year, WSU Health Sciences engaged alumni on Reunion Weekend on both the Spokane and Pullman campuses. The reunion attendees talked with students and professors, explored the labs, and learned more about the Spokane campus’s collaboration between nursing, medicine, pharmacy, speech and hearing sciences, nutrition, exercise, and physiology.

Over the course of three days, the visitors toured the libraries, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, the Bookie, Ferdinand’s Ice Cream Shoppe, the WSU Bear Center, and more. Some hit their old stomping grounds at Rico’s Public House and The Coug. No matter where they went, graduates reminisced with classmates. From bottom: College of Veterinary Medicine graduate on tour of the teaching hospital. Education students trading experiences with alums. The reunion dance! Touring modern Martin Stadium and Gesa field.
Back to college with an old friend
Refining what goes in the process

BY ALYSEN BOSTON

Potato chips. Cookies. Candy. A burger, fries, and soda from your favorite fast-food restaurant. Most people know these are processed foods. But even apples, the classic healthy snack that keeps doctors away, are processed.

“Fresh” apples are actually picked several months to a year before they show up in the supermarket,” says Soo-Yeon Lee, director of the School of Food Science at Washington State University. “They’re washed, coated with an edible wax, and stored in a very specific condition before they’re distributed. That’s all processing. Without it, apples would shrivel up or rot within a few weeks.

Under the NOVA food classification system, the more a product is processed, the less healthy it becomes. Since the classification’s development in 2009, many consumers have used it as a guideline to choose more nutritious foods at the grocery store. But the classification isn’t foolproof.

“The frontier of health and sustainability of food is getting into ultra-processing, ironically,” Pablo Monsivais, associate professor in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology, says. “Most alternatives, for example, are highly ultra-processed.”

Girish Ganjyal, an associate professor and food processing specialist at the School of Food Science, and his team have been developing a product that uses apple juice by-products, called pomace, to create a light, crispy puff loaded with fiber, which many Americans lack. “The by-product was being wasted before, and at the same time, we see that the consumer lacks the fiber that’s present in such products,” Ganjyal says. “Strengthening the by-product is a potential solution, but the consumer is not going to eat pomace. That’s where food processing comes in.”

Using extrusion, a high-pressure and heating process that changes the shape of raw ingredients, Ganjyal and his team created a tasty, nutritious, and affordable product while also preventing food waste. But NOVA considers any product made with an extrusion process ultra-processed, which could turn off health-conscious consumers.

“It’s not the processing. It’s the fact that we’re relying on a lot of refined ingredients to make these foods,” Monsivais says. “More than half of the calories that Americans eat are ultra-processed foods. If you improve those, you’re improving more than half the diet.”

Consumers need to choose food products based on familiarity and taste, as well as cost and convenience, and finally, nutrition. So, it’s critical to make a healthy and sustainable food product that people will actually buy, Lee says.

“If nutritious food doesn’t sell, that means consumers aren’t benefitting from them,” Lee says. “Our job as food scientists is to develop products that will feed the world, so we need to make products that consumers like and are produced in a sustainable way. But if we can’t process food, how are we going to feed 10 billion people?”
Spr​ed​d​ing t​he cr​im​son g​ospel o​nli​ne

BY PAUL SORENSEN

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Insider news & analysis you can’t get anywhere else

Along the way, Cougfan.com helped launch the professional careers of dozens of Maroon College products like Bralio Perez (‘11 Comm.), now a senior editor in New York for FanSided, and Michael-Shawn Dugar ('14 Comm.), who covers the Seahawks for The Athletic.

“The steady array of talent on our staff over the years, both young and veteran, is so impressive,” says Greg Witter. “That’s the secret to our longevity.”

Cougfan.com has been a powerful plat- form for former WSU athletes. Tony Thompson ('99 Soc. Sci.), now an assistant professor in the Marrow College, worked as a CF.C sideline reporter for a season, while Ministo Bruce (’06 Soc. Sci.) and Jim & Morrow ('17 Sport Mgmt.) served as analysts for a time. Current Cougs Cameron Theobald and Ron Stone ('17 Soc. Sci.) have contributed their perspectives to CF., as have four powerful influences creating a pair of true believers who saw the Internet as the answer to spread the crimson gospel.

“We cover everything going on in foot- ball and basketball, to the tune of more than 1,000 stories a year. And you can count on one hand the number of football practices we’ve missed over all these years.”

“FOR ME, THE BEAUTY OF Cougfan.com is that we serve the WSU faithful on so many levels,” says managing editor Barry Bolton (‘22 English), who has run day-to-day operations since 2003.

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A better deal

WSU athletes develop their personal brands through name, image, and likeness

Dean Janikowski’s powerful kick sends football soaring over goal posts. His social media posts highlight his field goals for the Cougars, including a 59-yard career best at last year’s Apple Cup. But there’s also a whimsical Instagram video showing him getting hit with a McDonald’s bag. Ask if he connects, Chicken McNuggets explode across the screen.

The posts reveal Janikowski’s dual personality as a student-athlete and a social media influencer who gets paid for promoting brands.

Since July 2021, college athletes have been able to benefit financially from the use of their name, image, and likeness (NIL) in national and local advertising. What does this mean for student-athletes?

WSU was among the first universities to offer a one-credit NIL class for student-athletes, introducing them to topics like personal branding, intellectual property, contracts, budgeting, and taxes. Janikowski took the class as a redshirt freshman. “It’s a big head start because I was already interested in business.”

Janikowski started small, promoting brands in videos he produced in exchange for free products. As his reputation grew, he became more selective. “Now I’m working with brands that have positive social or value areas.”

The vast majority of college athletes—male and female—happen to be students of color, especially in basketball and football. It is offensive to say that students who are generating these revenues shouldn’t benefit from their own name, image, and likeness.

What has NIL accomplished for college athletes?

To elite athletes, there’s less pressure to go pro after graduation. They might re-sign with their school and Cougar football forces him to get closer to a degree.”

Some students aren’t superstar material but are still star players for their universities. Every institution is going to have a star, and those stars are going to be compensated at different levels.

WSU is still looking for clarity on many aspects of NIL, says Athletic Director Pat Chun, who testified before a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee in late March. In the emerging NIL landscape, academics remain the university’s priority, he says.

“While college athletics has evolved into a multibillion-dollar industry, our mission remains to educate young people and prepare them for their respective futures,” Chun testified. “The greatest factor today in social media is still a college education.”

The collective wants to create an equal playing field for college athletes, especially in high-revenue sports.

The NCAA adopted its interim NIL rules. WSU’s NIL class is a cooperative effort between the Athletics department and the Center for Entrepreneurship in the Carson School of Business. About 200 student-athletes have taken it. Roughly half went onto participate in some type of NIL opportunity, says Nick Garner, WSU’s director of student-athlete innovation.

Most college athletes won’t land the kind of deals that make ESPN headlines. The ability to profit from NIL creates a perfect window to teach student-athletes about business, says Marie Mayes (’87 Poli. Sci. MBB), the Center for Entrepreneurship’s director.

“They can sign autographs at a car dealership, run sports camps in their hometowns, or provide individualized coaching.” Mayes says. “Maybe they sign a contract and make some money. Suddenly, they see how important business and personal finance is relevant to their lives.”

Lifting NIL restrictions also helped athletes with existing business ventures. Cani March, the former captain of the WSU women’s golf team, developed an app that allows friends to connect for social activities. Before NIL took effect, March couldn’t advertise the app on her social media accounts. “I would have had to reference to WSU golf from my social media,” says March, who now competes professionally. “Talked to my team about doing that, but it felt disloyal to them.”

The collective helps prevent ethics violations by clarifying the rules for both businessmen and athletes. Companies can’t simply funnel money to student-athletes. The athletes must provide a return value to the business through appearances, endorsements, or other work.

For many college sports fans, NIL deals remain controversial—diminishing the ideal of amateur student-athletes. But NIL is the future of recruiting talent in college sports.

“Used to be about building new facilities and special weight rooms and locker rooms,” he says. “Recruiters don’t ask about facilities anymore. They want to know about NIL opportunities, and so do their parents.”

Janikowski, now a redshirt junior, is working on a new NIL deal with Greenger Powersports. In exchange for social media promotion, the company shipped him two electric dirt bikes.

The diet bikes join the growing list of products he’s promoted to his TikTok and Instagram followers: Onewheel skateboards, energy drinks, fast food, and trackers that allow people to locate stolen bikes.

“Our business is still looking for clarity on NIL,” says Thabiti Lewis (’22 Finance), the collective’s development director. Says he gets two to three times per week from student athletes asking about opportunities. “What if someone comes to us and is willing to put the work in, we’ve been able to help them find deals.”

Companies approaching the Cougar Collective generally want to work with both male and female athletes, Thornton says. Their team’s goal is to make ESPN headlines.

“When someone comes to us with a plan and is willing to put the work in, we’ve been able to help them find deals.”

“The collective’s donors can also specify whether they want to support men’s or women’s sports. The collective does a donor agreement to ensure the right deals. The collective’s donors can also specify whether they want to support men’s or women’s sports. The collective does the donor agreement to ensure the right deals.

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Centered on adaption

AT THE STEVE GLEASON INSTITUTE, ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES ALS PATIENTS' LIVES

Theresa Whitlock-Wild's husband, Matt, was diagnosed with ALS in his early 40s. Shortly afterward, the couple had their home remodeled, and they would have benefited from some expert advice.

Standard ALS design didn’t fully accommodate the 600-pound wheelchair Matt Wild—a six-foot, three-inch former US Marine—would eventually use. “Not was the couple familiar with how adaptive technology could improve his quality of life as the disease progressed. “We wish someone would have held a joint appointment with Providence. Gleeon Institute's director, is a neurologist who出会e research at WSU and community partners such as the Providence Neuroscience Institute and St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center. Ken Isaacs, the Neuroscience Institute and St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center. Ken Isaacs, the Neuroscience Institute and St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center. Ken Isaacs, the

At the center, ALS patients can turn on kitchen faucets and open microwaves with voice-activated smart home features. They can use computers or play video games with chin or breath control. And they can learn how eye-gaze machines and voice-banking will help them communicate after they lose the ability to talk. Many of the devices aren’t covered by insurance. A bed on display allows patients to reposition themselves with eye-gaze or voice commands. The cost: $45,000.

Trying out adaptive technology helps people prioritize where to put their resources. Whitlock-Wild says, “We help inform, so patients and families can make the best decisions for themselves.”

The center is the public face of the Gleason Institute. Established in 2019, the institute is named for Spokane native Steve Gleason, who received the Congressional Gold Medal for his work on drug discovery in the College of Pharmacy to bring together research at WSU and other institutions.

The initial $500,000 in funding came from the Health Sciences and Services Authority of Spokane County and an Arista subsidiary. Gleason's nonprofit, Team Gleason, and other companies donated adaptive equipment.

“Steve Gleason has embraced adaptive technology in his daily life,” says Andrea Lazarus, associate vice president for WSU Health Sciences and the institute’s executive director. “But the value of these technologies is not limited to ALS—they’re for anyone with mobility limitations.”

With an initial focus on ALS, the institute will eventually expand to other neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, and Alzheimer’s. Besides adaptive technology, the institute researches new therapies, disease risk factors, and stress reduction for caregivers.

“There are pockets of neuroscience research throughout the university—from drug discovery in the College of Pharmacy to research throughout the university.”

More than 150 years after ALS was identified by a French neurologist, many aspects of the disease remain a mystery. Scientists aren’t clear what causes the motor neurons to degenerate and stop sending messages to muscles. In a small number of patients, heredity is a factor, and chemical exposure also appears to heighten the risk. Military veterans are about twice as likely as the general public to develop ALS.

Each year, about 5,000 US residents are diagnosed with ALS. Most patients die within two to five years, although some live much longer.

Besides patients and families, Whitlock-Wild gives tours of the Adaptive Technology Center to students ranging from junior high to medical school. Her husband was diagnosed with ALS about eight years ago. She wants to expose students to some of the challenges of living with a debilitating disease and the toll it takes on families.

Using an eye-gaze device requires hours of practice. “Some of these students are in occupational therapy and haven’t had a chance to try out this type of equipment,” Whitlock-Wild says. “They should know how difficult it is.”

“The Adaptive Technology Center has done a lot for patients and families,” says Linda Sprenger, whose late husband Mike had ALS.

When the couple visited the center in 2021, Mike couldn’t keep his eyes open long enough to use his eye-gaze device. But he could still twitch an eyebrow. “We smelled things out to ask if he was hot, if he was cold, if he wanted to change the channel,” Springer says.

At the center, Mike tried out another machine that utilized his remaining muscle movement. “Suddenly, there were words on the screen,” Springer says. “We look at the Adaptive Technology Center as welcoming not only for patients and their families but for entrepreneurs and others who can help improve their lives,” Isaacs says.
Oats are almost always a whole-grain ingredient. That’s one of the attributes that makes them so good for you. Processing is minimal. The edible hul l is removed, exposing a sandlike grain encased in a soft bran layer that’s typically retained. Here’s a quick guide to this healthful grain.

**Oat groats**—These are whole, intact kernels minus the edible hulk. Soaking them overnight makes them cook faster.

**Steel-cut or Irish oats**—Groats are sliced into coarse bits with a steel blade.

**Rolled or old-fashioned oats**—Groats are steamed, then flattened with a roller.

**Instant oats**—Usually sweetened and flavored, these oats are made for the microwave.

**Oat flour**—Ground oats make a powdery flour.

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**Oats aren’t the sexiest ingredient. The beige bland, and, some might say, boring, gluten-free grain is most commonly served as oatmeal. Even the American Heart Association refers to the mush as “a total nerd” on its website.**

WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE FALL 2023

Oat recipes and facts: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/oats

KNOW YOUR OATS

Oats are always a whole-grain ingredient. That’s one of the attributes that makes them so good for you. Processing is minimal. The edible hulk is removed, exposing a sandlike grain encased in a soft bran layer that’s typically retained. Here’s a quick guide to this healthful grain.

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For many, prairie brings to mind the sweeping grasslands of the Great Plains. Few are aware that the Palouse—traditionally thought of as a sea of wheat—was once swathed in its own prairie.

Palouse prairie is the most endangered ecosystem in the continental United States. Severely fragmented by agriculture and settlement, less than 1 percent remains.

Chris Duke (’21 PhD Biol.) cofounded the Phoenix Conservancy—dedicated to restoring endangered landscapes—in 2020 after he realized the threat to ecosystems such as Palouse prairie.

“What makes true Palouse prairie interesting and unique is it’s one of the very few forb-dominant prairies,” Duke says.

While the Great Plains are largely grass, Palouse prairie is much more diverse; in some pockets, grasses are almost absent, with dozens of herbaceous flowering plants—forges—bloom simultaneously.

The Palouse prairie differs because “the Missoula floods largely missed our region, which is why we have the soils that allow these diverse communities to really thrive,” Duke says.

Some areas have more than 200 feet of fire. Fires were rare, allowing the ecosystem thousands of years to develop complex plant and animal communities with minimal disturbance. The three foundation plants became bluebunch wheatgrass, snowberry, and Idaho fescue. Instead of prairie dogs, Palouse prairie hosts stripped Columbian ground squirrels, prey for short-eared owls, ferruginous hawks, coyotes, and American badgers. The prairie provided nourishment and shelter for wildlife, from pronghorn to sharp-tailed grouse, since the last Ice Age.

Until it was plowed.

Only a century ago, the prairie experienced widespread conversion to agriculture and was nearly lost. Now, a handful of organizations are working to save it.

Together, the Phoenix Conservancy, Palouse Conservation District, Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI), Nature Conservancy, Palouse Land Trust, and Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF) form a network of conservationists and citizen scientists. Tom Besser, professor emeritus of WSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine, is a PPF board member who first noticed prairie during his research on bovine shorthorn pneumonia.

“Towards the first time, instead of going to farms and barns, I was going down to Hell’s Canyon and seeing amazing places with incredible native vegetation,” Besser says.

“Pristine prairie patches exist at Whelan Cemetery near Pullman, Steptoe and Kamiak Buttes, and the Dave Skinner Ecological Preserve, named for a founding member of the PPF.

“After heavy rain caused topsoil to cascade into his yard in 2015, Besser decided to combat the erosion with prairie reconstruction. With the help of a neighboring farmer, Besser saved native seeds on a 1-acre plot. Over the past five growing seasons, he’s watched plants root into the soil and stretch leaves toward the sun. Snowdrops and buttercups, once just patchy, are now residents. Besser also noted that, though he didn’t plant them, native species like scarlet gilia, a twiggy forb with tube-like crimson blooms, have popped up. Their presence signals healthy pollinator activity. Tim Parish (’80 Comm.), who retired from his position as executive director of the WSU Alumni Association last year, moved to Pullman two decades ago. When looking for a home, thanks to PCEI and Parish’s upbringing, he was inspired to restore habitat on the property.

“It was raised down in Walla Walla and my parents had a small farm, so I was exposed to natural places my whole life,” Parish says.

“Since starting the project, Parish noticed a large increase in visits from deer, coyotes, and his personal favorite: great horned owls.”

“All these prairie protectors emphasize the same thing: you can do this, no matter the square footage, planting native species supports pollinators and connects isolated prairie parcels, reattracting species like ground squirrels and owls.

“That’s the most promising thing about the future of Palouse prairie: the building blocks are still here,” Duke says. “But they won’t be forever.”

If you go there in June, you just won’t believe how beautiful it is,” Besser says.

For more information about the Palouse prairie, including Native American historic and cultural significance, visit the Palouse Prairie Conservation District.

You can do it in your backyard. You don’t have to have 5,000 acres to do it. You can do it in your backyard.”
High and dry for a NW icon?

BY WENDA REED

If May and June continue to be hotter and drier than average—like this May’s 90-degree weather in Seattle—and the next four or five summers follow the same pattern, more of the Northwest’s iconic western red cedars are likely to die back.

Dieback is characterized by dead tops, brown canopy, and thinning foliage and can be followed by tree mortality.

Robbie Andrus, a postdoctoral researcher with the Washington State University School of the Environment, is the lead author on the first peer-reviewed study of western red cedar (WRC) dieback, released early this year. The study is titled “Canary in the Forest?” because WRCs are more sensitive to drought than other conifers and may be an indicator of more forest damage to come.

Andrus and his colleagues took 30,000 core samples (tree rings) from 280 WRCs in 11 sites from coastal and interior Washington and Oregon. They measured radial growth—increase in the girth of the trunk. “We found that May and June climate is the most important for increasing tree growth,” Andrus says. WRCs are resilient, living up to 1,000 years and sometimes growing more than 200 feet high. “The tree is well-conditioned to weather our hot and dry summers and early fall if May and June are wetter and cooler.”

WRC trees that died experienced a period of declining tree growth for four to five years before death. Most of the mortality in the coastal areas occurred in 2017–2018, which coincided with exceedingly hot temperatures and the longest regionally dry period for May to September in 1970–2020. The early summers of 2019 and 2020 were cooler and wetter, which may give trees a chance to recover.

WRC’s older than 150 years with more extensive root systems fared better than younger trees. Trees in eastern Washington and Idaho, where conditions are drier, dealt with extremes better than those west of the Cascades—perhaps because they have longer taproots to reach the water table.

Andrus contributed to the international study on the death of local trees such as the WRC. “So far we can’t find any insect, fungus, or other disease attacking this tree,” he says. “But we’re watching tree growth, looking at the study’s coauthors and has studied trees around the United States for 22 years. Trees pull water from the soil, he explains, and they dry in moisture from the air. Sunlight turns the nutrients in water to sugar and sap, which nourishes new growth.

If both soil and air are dry because of drought, trees must “pull harder” to get enough water.

“One water molecule pulls on the next like a chain. If it pulls too hard under tension, air bubbles get in there and release pressure like a rubber band being stretched so far that it breaks,” he says. “This sudden hydraulic failure prevents the flow of water to leaves or needles. They dry out and turn brown.”

This isn’t just ugly-looking. Trees start to lose water loss by closing their stomata or pores, according to a 2022 study published in Nature Communications. They reduce or stop photosynthesis, draw less carbon dioxide out of the air, and release less oxygen.

“Adams contributed to the international study on the death of local trees such as the WRC. ‘So far we can’t find any insect, fungus, or other disease attacking this tree, so our research is showing it appears to be the effect of drought and heat alone,’ he wrote.

Some of his earlier research indicates that long-time drought is more stressful than extreme heat, like the 2021 “heat dome” over western Washington and Oregon, but the two probably interact. “If the amount of rain and snow stay the same, the water won’t last as long if it’s too hot.”

Wildfires are dramatic, but drought and heat affect landscapes even more, Adams says. “They are like a massively spread-out, slow-burning wildfire.”

Ron Bliesner

Ron Bliesner (’11, 13 MS Mech. Eng.), fluids and propulsion lead at space exploration company Blue Origin, knows liquid hydrogen—a go-to fuel to launch rockets.

He studied it at the Hydrogen Properties for Energy Research (HYPER) laboratory at Washington State University, led by mechanical engineering associate professor Jacob Leachman. It’s the only cryogenic hydrogen lab at a US university.

Bliesner and fellow HYPER Lab alum Chelsea Crabb (’20 Mech. Eng.), fluid systems engineer at the Kent-based Blue Origin, bring their liquid hydrogen expertise to projects such as Blue Origin’s Artemis V moon lander contract with NASA, which was announced in April.

“WSU is working on things that nobody else is working on in academia,” Bliesner says. “If you understand hydrogen, you have a future.”

watch alumni stories from the HYPER Lab: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/hyperlab

Ron Bliesner at the WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center started Forest Health Watch in 2020. In the pilot project, more than 2,000 organizations and individuals recorded photos and observations of healthy and unhealthy western red cedar trees to help determine what combinations of soil and location lead to vulnerability. Hulbert encourages Cougar alumni to become citizen scientists through the Naturalist app.

Visit foresthealth.org/redcedar for more information.

watch alumni stories from the HYPER Lab: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/hyperlab
WSU’s Master Gardeners program became a national—and global—model.
DIANA PIETI LEADS THE WAY DOWN THE GARDEN PATH, pausing to point out particulars. See the serviceberry, already blooming.

A stone’s throw from the white blossoms lies a uric berm, which, at the end of April, has not quite woken for the season. But hopes are already creeping up an arbor nearby. Giant snowdrops—the tips of their arching, ivory, chalice-shaped petals tinged pale green—circle a tall rustor tree in a round raised bed also dotted with daffodils and tulips.

“It’s all just lovely, and it shows what you could grow here in the Yakima Valley with a lot of good color,” Pieti says, noting how the landscaped 1.2 acres often serve as a backdrop for graduation, engagement, wedding, homecoming, and prom pictures. “I’m very proud, very proud, of our garden.”

The Yakima County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, founded in Union Gap’s Ahtanum Youth Park in 2005, is just one of the projects established or maintained, or both, by Master Gardener volunteers, like Pieti. The Master Gardener program took root in 1973 through Washington State University Extension and has since grown into one of its longest-running and most successful public, educational outreach efforts.

Almost every county in Washington state is covered. There are 31 Master Gardener programs representing 35 of Washington state’s 39 counties.

But, says Jennifer Marquis, the Wenatchee-based leader of Master Gardener programs statewide, “it’s just not WSU anymore, and it hasn’t been for a long time. Other states saw the value in doing this and jumped on board and adopted the program early on. Now, we’re in all 50 states and most recently in Puerto Rico as well as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Korea.”

NO MATTER WHERE THEY WEED AND WATER, rake and hoe, teach and learn and grow, Master Gardeners are the grassroots gardening authority in any region in which they work. Whether it’s the arid steppe of Yakima or the mild maritime climate surrounding Puget Sound—or varied landscapes around the country and overseas—they are incredibly knowledgeable. About soils. About pests. About what grows well at a particular elevation or in a specific hardness zone, with its specific range of rainfall and average annual and seasonal temperatures.

“Volunteers in the desert of the Southwest have a much different skillset than volunteers in the Northeast or the Northwest,” says Tim Kohlhauff, a certified arborist and the urban horticulture coordinator for the Spokane County Master Gardeners, one of the longest-running Master Gardener programs in the state. “The idea is to give everybody research-based information about plants and add local knowledge unique to specific growing areas. There are so many different environments across the US and in the other countries where Master Gardeners are established that they have different styles of working and decision-making. On a local level, they know what works best in their communities.”

They are not only committed to cutting-edge, unbiased, science-based education but also dedicated to service.

In Colorado, where Master Gardeners sprouted in 1975, volunteers support a Grow and Give initiative, cultivating food for food banks, shelters, senior centers, and more. They donated nearly 135,000 pounds of home-grown food during the first three years of the program, which started in spring 2020.

“Grow and Give was our response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Katie Dunker, director for Extension programs at Colorado State University. “We saw a need in the community, and in keeping with our land-grant mission, encouraged people to start food gardens and donate what they could to neighbors in need.”

Master Gardeners launched in 1977 in Rhode Island, where volunteers also grow fruits and vegetables to fight food insecurity. They additionally work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to install native plants at parks and refuges, supporting habitat restoration. And, in 2020, they formed a task force to ensure that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles and practices flourish in their gardens and programing.

In Florida, where the program started in 1979, Master Gardeners emphasize water protection and conservation. Following Hurricane Ian, they distributed 100,000 donated traps to nearly 30,000 residents throughout the state, helping to curb a proliferation of Bloodwater mosquitoes.

HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET

WSU Extension Master Gardeners promote and practice: Gardening techniques to adapt to climate change, mitigate its effects, and create climate-resistant communities

¬ Integrated pest management strategies to minimize polluted runoff for clean water in lakes, streams, rivers, and oceans

¬ Sustainable gardening and landscaping for water conservation

¬ Building soil health to prevent depletion and ensure the long-term viability of local food security and natural resources

¬ Providing food, water, and habitat to help native bees and other pollinators thrive in home and community landscapes

¬ Securing a biodiverse ecosystem

¬ Increasing access to fresh, nutrient-dense ingredients and improving individual and community health and wellness

¬ Managing invasive and protecting native species to protect against ecosystem declines and ensure plant biodiversity

¬ Sustainable horticulture skills to improve individual and community health and wellness

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There was a lot of flooding. The water didn’t retreat. It just stayed there, and that’s where mosquitoes want to go in and breed,” says Wendy Wilber, Master Gardener volunteer program coordinator at the University of Florida.

Master Gardeners began in 1982 in Pennsylvania, and volunteers there staff a garden hotline, putting in more than 10,000 hours and answering more than 21,000 questions last year. They also partner with the National Park Service to beautify the Flight 93 National Memorial and Tower of Voices, pruning trees and shrubs and weeding garden beds.

“Master Gardeners give so much of their time and talents to make a real difference,” Marquis says. “I feel privileged that so many volunteers across Washington state, the country, and beyond choose to spend their seconds and minutes and hours delivering the message of Master Gardeners.”

The fact that the program started at WSU Extension “is super humbling,” she says. “We take care of the earth and the water and the soil and the trees that give us space to live, air to breath, food to eat, and water to drink.”

PLANTING THE SEED

WSU EXTENSION’S FLAGSHIP PROGRAM, fittingly, grew organically.

Dave Gibby and Bill Scheer were new hires in King and Pierce Counties in the early 1970s, splitting time between Seattle and Tacoma. Scheer focused on commercial agriculture. Gibby specialized in urban horticulture. And the two new Extension agents shared a problem.

"Each time I got to the other office, I would have hundreds of callback slips,” Gibby told Washington State Magazine in 2008. “We tried to be of service to people,” Scheer added. “But we were overwhelmed with the demand.”

Media outreach worsened the situation. Instead of preemptively addressing gardening questions—on the radio and television, in newspapers and tip sheets left at local nurseries—it multiplied calls. “I thought, ‘What’s the problem with having volunteers help out?’” said Gibby, who discussed the idea with Scheer, along with the German system of recognizing master craftspeople, or meisters.

“Master Gardeners. We knew people would be proud to have the title,” Scheer said.

They held a trial clinic at Tacoma Mall in fall 1972 and pitched a story to Samar magazine to plug the event and forthcoming program. The piece ran in the September issue. Training started in 1973. There were so many applicants that would-be volunteers were turned away.

Gibby soon left WSU for private industry. Sharon Collman, one of Master Gardeners’ first trainers, took over training and helped grow the program. Soon, Spokane County started a program, which tried to be of its own half-century mark next year.

“I think what both milestones show me is the folks who started the program 50 years ago had a really good idea,” Kolibauff says. “Nowadays, it’s easy to Google information. But we’re still growing and engaging people. People still want to learn from people, people they know, people in their local communities. People still want to come to us with their gardening questions because they know they will get good science-based information and advice, person to person, community member to community member.”

TAKEING ROOT

FROM 1976 UNTIL HIS 1994 RETIREMENT, George Pinyuh served in Gibby’s former role, helping launch Master Gardener foundations, organizations that provide financial support for Master Gardener programs, as well as the WSU Extension Master Gardener Resource Center at the University of Washington’s Center for Urban Horticulture. Collman focused on training and outreach. And Extension specialist and ornamental horticulturist Bernie Wenzenberg helped promote the program across the country.

“When I travel around the US and talk about the success of the program and provided tools and resources to other schools to get their programs off the ground,” Marquis says. “If it wasn’t for his contacts, the program probably would not have spread like it did.”

By 1996, Master Gardener volunteers were operating in all 50 states. Ten years later, a national committee formed to foster communication and collaboration among programs across the country.

“We try to coordinate efforts and share best practices, but it’s pretty organic,” Dunker says. “Master Gardeners is a very local program. That’s its strength. We’re not big administrators; we’re big doers. We’re a very large volunteer network.”

Plant clinics, among Master Gardeners’ earliest offerings, remain a mainstay. So are plant sales and demonstration gardens, like the one in Union Gap’s Ahtanum Youth Park. “It’s a teaching garden,” says Debra Kroon, immediate past president of the Master Gardener Foundation of Yakima County. Master Gardeners rooted here in 1980.

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“The most popular designs was the apple,” says Judie Stanton, who became a certified Master Gardener in 2021 and joined the foundation board early this year. She chairs the development committee. “Other years we’ve done a sunrise or a quilt with nice patches of various plantings.”

This year, only about 550 sun图案 were planted as volunteers are battling pesky yellow rabbits, a nosy weed. “It’s invaded the area that we normally plant inside the boxwood hedge,” says Stanton, noting part of their abatement strategy is to plant the flowers in 475 pots above soil level. “Next year, we’ll hopefully go back to planting in the ground as always.”

Master Gardener and foundation volunteers have been beautifying the iconic “Welcome to Washington” sign since 2010, minus a couple of years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The otherwise gross median is maintained by the state Department of Transportation.

“It raises awareness for our programs,” says Stanton, noting the best time to view the display is “probably mid-June. But it lasts from the end of May—Memorial Day—through the end of summer because we go back and weed as necessary.”
Native plants adorn a shallow depression—a stone’s throw from the beach at Port Hudson. Purple iris, Oregon grape, ornamental grasses, dwarf pine, coastal strawberry, creeping raspberry, and more grow in the rectangular plot, anchored by a sign that explains this is no ordinary landscaping. It’s a way to clean rainwater and reduce flooding and runoff.

Below the surface, a special mix of sand and compost helps filter pollutants such as oil, grease, heavy metals, and harmful bacteria. “Stormwater runoff is one of the top priorities in this region. It’s one of the highest causes of contamination in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca,” says Bob Simmons, the Olympic region water resources specialist with WSU Jefferson County Extension since 2014. He spearheaded the project, which—along with another in Port Townsend’s picturesque Chetemokahki Park—is among east Jefferson County’s more visible and approachable rain gardens.

Throughout the Olympic Peninsula, small cities “don’t really have the funding or the expertise to put in rain gardens,” Simmons says. “Rain gardens are really beneficial. They enhance our landscapes. They provide habitat for insects, birds, and small mammals. They have their filtration properties. And they reduce flooding and recharge groundwater. That’s one of the reasons we put one in at Port Hudson. There was a big puddle at the end of the street that wasn’t infiltrating well.”

The Port of Port Townsend covered much of the cost. WSU Beach Naturalists and WSU Extension Master Gardeners of Jefferson County helped plant the rain garden’s 1,350 native plants. Sixth graders from Port Townsend’s Swan School and 4-H students also participated in the 2015 project, now one of 18 rain gardens located throughout east Jefferson County. There are twelve in Port Townsend, three in Port Hadlock, and three in Quilcene. All but two—including Point Hudson—were supported by the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) through grant funding. Simmons has worked on all 18, along with myriad community partners.

Simmons completed a stormwater assessment and priority list of high-pollution drainages for the MRC about 10 years ago. Not only does he design the rain gardens, but he recruits volunteers, hosts workshops, and oversees installations. Master Gardeners decide what to grow, help plant the plants, and, in some cases, provide ongoing maintenance.

Their time and expertise are “very crucial,” Simmons says. “They help figure out which plants work well in our unique environment and are deer-proof, and they try to maintain color in the rain gardens throughout the year—not just spring and summer, but in the fall and winter when many plants die back.

Plus, he says, “they’re fun to work with. They’re passionate about the gardens—and not only the rain gardens but gardens for pollinators and aesthetics and air quality. Their scientific eyes are useful. They look at things differently from a homeowner who hasn’t been trained.”

RAIN GARDENS, such as this one at Point Hudson in Jefferson County, are effective ways to treat polluted stormwater runoff. They are specially designed to collect, absorb, and filter runoff from roof tops, driveways, patios, and other areas that don’t allow water to soak in. Courtesy WSU Extension

Just inside the garden’s main gate, a kiosk welcomes visitors. In back, a group of volunteers gathers at lime- and lavender-painted picnic tables after long mornings of pulling weeds and raking leaves. “Our dirty dozen,” Skip Brockman calls them. He’s one of the bunch.

So is Pieti. Brockman built the half dozen birdhouses that climb a weathered ladder in one corner of the garden. In another nook, an antique sink from Pieti’s old farmhouse hurls up to a garden hose—handy for cleaning tools and watering plant starts.

Stone pavers lead to an arbor fashioned from vintage doors. Concrete squares painted with brightly colored numbers present a path for hopscotch in the children’s section. The garden is divided into several other distinct areas, including raised beds, a woods walk, shade bench, and composting.

Mulching and composting are taught in workshops held in the garden, where volunteers cultivate more than 300 plant varieties. “I’ll tell you what, it’s a lot of work,” says Brockman, who completed his Master Gardener training in 2006 and helped build the garden paths. It’s also fun “working with people of different backgrounds for the benefit of others.” He enjoys “talking to the many people that frequent our classes and other functions.”

Classes also cover container planting, seeds, sunflowers, roses, orchids, herbs, cover crops, soil testing, tomato pruning, and more. Pieti, who completed her training in 1998, leads several sessions. So does Kroon, who finished hers five years later.

“My passion in life is promoting pollinator health and habitat,” Kroon says, “Serving as a Master Gardener... helps me follow that passion by teaching classes on gardening for pollinators while educating our public. It’s a win-win.”

WEBSITE: garden.wsu.edu/countyMGstories
He worked in several on-campus labs, collecting air-quality data and helping develop an efficient process to convert carbon dioxide into formic acid. Later, during the pandemic, he conducted experiments using carbon dioxide as a tracer gas for COVID-19 to assess the safety of in-person classes.

These experiences “gave me an exciting sense of agency to explore the bounds of existing technology,” says Kristian Gubsch ('20 Chem. Eng.), cofounder and vice president of feedstock development at Mars Materials. It also underscored something he already knew. “I want to be part of the solution,” he says. “I want to scale up technologies that can remove waste carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. I want to reimagine and revolutionize what our relationship is with industry.”

Mars Materials, an Oakland, California-based startup that rechartered as a public benefit corporation in 2021, is on a mission to reverse the world’s industrial waste carbon footprint—and it’s garnered the attention of Bill Gates.

Gubsch and cofounder and CEO Aaron Fitzgerald were recently named Innovator Fellows in the second cohort of Gates’s Breakthrough Energy Fellows program, which supports top early-stage clean-tech innovations with huge impact potential. The two-year fellowship provides technology development funds, mentorship, expert advice, and more.

“The Breakthrough fellowship is enabling us to expand our engineering team and complete improvements to our process,” Gubsch says. “We’re also setting a lab to house our pilot unit.”

The pilot nitrilation unit to produce acrylonitrile is scheduled to be operational this fall. A primary building block in carbon fiber composites, acrylonitrile offers myriad, diverse commercial uses—from cars to clothing and carpets. Nitrilation units use bio-based feedstocks, such as corn-based ethanol, as well as captured carbon dioxide as inputs. They are cheaper to build and produce fewer toxic by-products than traditional approaches.

“We see a future where steel is replaced by carbon fiber and atmospheric carbon dioxide is repurposed for good,” Gubsch says. “The long-term goal is to develop many different products where we are able to produce valuable materials from waste carbon dioxide.”

An Honors College graduate who grew up near Tacoma, Gubsch has been passionate about climate change since high school. By the time he arrived in Pullman, “I was laser-focused on finding opportunities to work in climate and carbon dioxide mitigation. I ended up getting involved with anything and everything related to climate that I could: the WSU Solar Decathlon, the Environmental Sustainability Alliance, undergraduate research. I was just trying to learn as much as possible.”

He was also a top scholar, named 2018’s Most Outstanding Sophomore in Chemical Engineering and, in 2020, Most Outstanding Senior in Chemical Engineering, Most Outstanding Senior in the Vолодар College of Engineering and Architecture, and a WSU Top Scholar.

Being part of the solution

BY A D R I A N A J A N O V I C H

A HAPPY REUNION WITH FERDINAND’S ICE CREAM SHOPPE (PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER)
Top Ten Senior. He won the President’s Award for Leadership and Virginia E. Thomas Scholarship at WSU.

He also won three prestigious national scholarships: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship in 2018 and, in 2019, the Marshall Scholarship and Barry Goldwater Scholarship.

WSU’s first Hollings recipient, Gubsch worked in the Hollings Marine Laboratory in Charleston, South Carolina, to investigate how metabo-tiles in coral change in response to ocean acidification. The Goldwater recognized the carbon dioxide utilization research he completed on campus and helped pay for his undergraduate studies.

The Marshall—Gubsch was WSU’s first recipient of this scholarship too—funded two years’ worth of research in the Life Sciences building. Mensah-Bonsu landed a job on the Goldwater team and used the stipend to pursue her graduate degree in biochemistry.

Gubsch says, “We’re on the wrong side of a ticking clock. We need everyone on board to have a shot at a career in this space,” Gubsch says. “It’s hard to make 5-year plans or 10-year plans. Opportunities present themselves if you work hard.”
Motivated to do more

B Y B R I A N H U D G I N S

These hurricanes and two tropical storms struck Louisiana during the record-breaking 2020 season, rapidly changing priorities for Shavana Howard and her colleagues.

Thousands of homes and businesses were left beyond repair. Roofs that could be fixed waited for months for work crews.

“The biggest challenge was sheltering Louisianians,” says Howard (’05 Psych.), who was the assistant secretary of the Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services during those five back-to-back disasters. They also led to an unprecedented need for food. Her staff had to stop performing their regular jobs and start processing five times the normal volume of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications.

“So many had homes, but they continued to show up—and I saw the resilience,” she says. “People had to overcome so many disasters. It was monumental.”

Howard carried the memories of that resolve with her to Washington, DC, where she has served as a senior advisor for food, nutrition, and consumer services in the US Department of Agriculture since early 2023. Now she tackles food insecurity and other emergency needs on a national scale.

“I am looking at the entire country and how we all operate, working things from a federal perspective,” Howard says. Up until this year, “my entire career has been all about the state perspective. I had to respond to challenges considering area policies and politics. Now, I am helping to support states to see what options they have.”

Howard works with SNAP leadership and officials to support and hold states accountable for SNAP operations. She addresses reviews, regulations, and state waiver requests daily, among many other duties.

She blends those daily duties and their results into the big picture that involves local and federal efforts. Howard has worked with the Senate Agriculture committee, Alaska to work out. “It worked out the way it was supposed to for me.”

Becoming a mom propelled her toward developmental and behavioral pediatrics. During her third year of pediatric residency at the University of Chicago, she gave birth to premature twins, born at 23 weeks. Stiles weighed one pound, two ounces at birth and spent five months in an intensive care unit. He is now a six-foot-tall freshman in high school and plays sousaphone in the marching band. Her twin Noah passed away six at days old.

“I wasn’t ready for my own pregnancy and I was trying to figure out how to parent him better and reach him better so he could meet his own developmental milestones—that’s when I came back to training in development and behavior,” Menlas-Bonus says.

Two of her three children have ADHD, which makes it difficult for them to sit and stare at a screen. “It makes remote education very difficult,” she says. Her oldest, a young adult with the shadow of COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging both personally and professionally.

As a family, they have had to navigate the constant changes, school closings, and social and emotional challenges. That’s why she chose WSU for her graduate studies.

“I knew WSU would be a good environment for me because of the wonderful support system at WSU for my family,” Howard says.

Shavana Howard. Courtesy Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services

Senator Lisa Murkowski and staff, delegates from Delaware, and others, Howard had witnessed emergencies before working in Louisiana. From early 2003 to spring 2020, she was an administrator in Washington state’s Department of Social and Health Services, where she watched wildfires take their toll. “I spent the majority of my career in Washington (state),” Howard says. “It helped set me up for the position I’m in now.”

She experienced her own difficulties as a youth in Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey. “We grew up in poverty,” says Howard, who has been married for 20 years and is the mother of two adult sons. “My mother was a single mom, and it was me and my two brothers. We were on these programs. It built up that fine to help and do something better.”

When she moved as a young adult with her family across the country, Howard continued her education at Pierce College in Puypadill before transferring to Washington State University. Psychology classes “made me want to stay in the field of helping people. I wanted to impact society.”

Howard is making that impact in an invigorating environment that provides new challenges. Nearly a year into her new role, she calls upon her personal and professional experience. Working through the aftermath of wildfires and hurricanes is one piece of that role. Her upbringin motivates her to do more. “It reminds me of why I continue to go fight every day.”

The long journeys of artist Keiko Hara take form in swaths of color and shape that speak to land, ocean, and dreamscapes, all beautifully showcased in this book-length retrospective of her 40-year career.

Hara moved to Walla Walla, in the shadow of the Blue Mountains, in 1985. She was born in North Korea to Japanese parents, raised in Japan, and came to the United States in 1977 to pursue greater artistic freedom. She studied printmaking in Michigan and, after 21 years of teaching, retired from Whitman College in 2006.

A number of Hara’s works use the word “toposphilica” in their titles. More than just a sense of place, it’s a form of love and an emotional connection to history, memory, natural settings, and the very essence of locations. Hara uses color and motion to bring these feelings to life.

Her commitment to that vision is expressed through paintings and her own form of Japanese woodblock printmaking, often in abstract compositions. Some are displayed in permanent collections at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, Milwaukee Art Museum, Racine Art Museum, and the Detroit Institute of Arts, among others.

For an artist moving between lands and cultures, Hara’s work shows an artistic together as many memories and narrating/radial life transitions brought on by partings, loss, and making new homes,” writes coauthor Ryan Hardesty, executive director and curator at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU. He has known Hara for almost 20 years. The book, the first full-scale museum publication about Hara, is an exhibition at the WSU museum that ran from May 2022 through June 2023.

Next year she is planning to return to Japan for a solo show at the Art Museum of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is working on a monograph about her work and a book of her printmaking travels around the world.

Shavana Howard. Courtesy Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services

New media

Keiko Hara: Four Decades of Paintings & Prints

LINDA TAYLOR AND RYAN HARDESTY

WSU PRESS: 2022

The long journeys of artist Keiko Hara take form in swaths of color and shape that speak to land, ocean, and dreamscapes, all beautifully showcased in this book-length retrospective of her 40-year career.

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Not only does he explore the emotional, physical, and spiritual abuse of federal Indian boarding schools, he delves into the perspectives of Latino and other immigrants, and examines issues and events that bring them together. Dam building. Tree-fruit growing. Horse riding. Homelessness. Teen pregnancy. Poverty. Alcoholism. Depression.

While the narrative is a work of fiction, it’s set against a real landscape in the early twentieth century. Roskelley deftly weaves fact with fiction, shifting locations and chronologies. The main narrative occurs in the mid-1950s, but backstories pull readers into the first five decades of the twentieth century across Washington: Wapato, Yakima, Omak, Spokane, Seattle, and Everett.

Fancy Dancer deals with difficult subjects. The detailed drama presents a well-researched look into the inability of eastern and central Washington’s past, the regions’ Native peoples, and shared history that—unlike a novel’s resolution—people are still reconciling.

New five-minute interviews with four Keiko Hara exhibition on the Humanities podcast. magazinsi.wsu.edu/extra/Hara

— Adriana Jenwick

Nine-year-old Beth Louis is walking home with her little brother when a pickup comes barreling down the remote reservation road. It’s the drunk driver they don’t see. Beth pushes six-year-old Danny down a runway and out of the truck’s path. She struck and killed—her small body tossed into the gorge, dirt kicked over her blood in the road. Investigators quickly see the scene has been tampered with. Will the bodies—evidence points to a White rancher—be brought to justice? This historical thriller, John Roskelley’s first novel, centers around a 1914 hit-and-run that claims the life of a young Nez Percé Fancy Shawl powwow dancer. While the book begins with the kids’ walk from the school bus stop on the Colville Reservation, this is no children’s book.

Fancy Dancer and the Seven Drums

JOHN ROSKELLEY ’71 GEOL.

DI ANGELO PUBLICATIONS: 2023

Whether you saw the exhibition, have a connection to history, or are an artist deeply connected to the Northwest and beyond, this volume will draw you into Hara’s world through compelling visual stories.

— Larry Clark

Flashpoint: A Firefighter’s Journey Through PTSD

CHRISTY WARREN ’17 BUS.

SHE WRITES PRESS: 2023

Nineteen-year-old Christy Warren is working for a private ambulance company when she responds to a crash. Two boys are trapped inside a car, along with the body of their mother.
For the next 25 years, the smell of sun-warmed asphalt reminded her of that particular scene, described in the prologue of her new memoir in just enough detail—the dead mother’s hair brushing against her arm, the sounds of her young sons’ screams.

This intensely honest, heart-wrenching, and hopeful read is dedicated to “all the rescuers who have worn blood and endured the screams of those they serve.”

Warren’s approachable, highly personal, and compelling account of working as a paramedic and firefighter portrays a tough, stubborn, and skilled first responder who thrives on adrenaline, physical challenges, and proving herself in a mostly male environment—until the nightmares start.

“I was so excited to take care of themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. She makes it, but she summons the courage to be vulnerable and share her excruciating and inspiring story.” — Adriana Janovich

BRIEFLY NOTED

Wine Hiking Oregon: Explore the Landscapes of Oregon Wines
JACK COSTA ’22 WINE & BEV. BUS. MGMT.
HELVETIQ: 2023
The 30 hikes highlighted in this guidebook end near wineries, where trekkers can stop for a well-earned glass of pinot noir or another favorite varietal after hiking through Oregon’s breathtaking wine country. Each entry includes a description of difficulty, points of interest, wine recommendations with tasting notes, and info about the varietals, winery, and winemakers.

Stuff TV
NICK HUZAR ’99 MGMT. INFO. SYS.
2023
Stuff TV, founded in 2023, is a weekly video podcast featuring experts in climate change, discussing ways to make a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Huzar, who co-founded mobile marketplace OfferUp, talks with guests about topics such as sustainable housing, concrete, and recycling clothing. Stuff TV is at stufftv.org and on most podcast channels.

Oorah! The Adventures of a Brave Girl
ALLEN JOHNSON ’85 PHD
ARCHWAY PUBLISHING: 2023
This young adult novel follows a 10-year-old to England during the summer of 1969. Samantha, who prefers to be called Sam like her dad, a US Marine who died in Vietnam, visits her grandparents, the duke and duchess of Surrey. She charms everyone she meets, including Oliver, the groundskeeper’s son, who becomes her confidant and co-conspirator in numerous incredible escapades.

Coyote’s Swing: A Memoir and Critique of Mental Hygiene in Native America
DAVID EDWARD WALKER
WYO PRESS: 2022
This psychologist’s look at how Western mental health ideology threatens Native lives and cultures is divided into four parts. The first is the author’s own story. The second offers analysis of the US mental health system in Native America. Next is a look at its philosophical and religious foundations, then ideas for improving the system.

Shadow’s Flight: A Fighter Pilot’s Story
GREGORY DEAN TAYLOR ’68
ENGLISH
A PLACE IN TIME PRESS: 2022
Taylor follows his dream to become a fighter pilot in a Marine Corps F-4 Phantom, sharing stories of hair-raising combat missions in Vietnam, earning US Air Force and Navy wings (including engagements with the elite Top Gun squadron), and commanding a fighter squadron.

Wild Rose
JENNIFER MERSCHDOORF ’96 BUSS.
NEW DEGREE PRESS: 2023
After unexpected loss, Julia moves out of the city and buys an abandoned hotel in Connecticut. As she undertakes the renovation, she strikes up a friendship with the spirits of three women who died in the once-luxurious lodging. The spirits are trapped within the walls of the historic Wild Rose hotel, which—Julia learns as the novel unravels—heaps many secrets.

Poems of the Point
LAURI CRUVER CHERIAN ’86 ED.
POETRY BOX: 2022
This ode to growing up in Gig Harbor provides a window to a beachfront childhood on Puget Sound. Poems describe digging for clams and geoducks, looking for shells, fishing for cod, finding an eagle’s nest, and spying sea life—and on a clear day—Mount Rainier.

NEWmedia

In true Cougar Spirit, the latest release of the Cougar Collectors’ Series is a little extra special. We are pleased to present Cougar X, the tenth release in the Cougar Collectors’ Series. Cougar X is a limited-edition red blend wine from the creative Cougs at Five Star Cellars in Walla Walla, WA. You won’t want to miss it. Guarantee your bottle by joining Wine-By-Cougars, the official wine club for Cougs, before August 7.

Get your first taste of Cougar X at the Release Party this summer, happening over two days:

**Friday, August 25, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Pacific**
Saturday, August 26, 1:00–4:00 p.m. Pacific

Five Star Cellars, 840 C St., Walla Walla, WA 99362
alumni.wsu.edu/CXFiveStar

Cougar X is Here

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alumni.wsu.edu/CXFiveStar
The Coug Plate is #1 in Washington.

If you live in Washington and don't have one, get one at alumni.wsu.edu/WSUplate

Can't attend the game but want to watch it with fellow Cougs? Join WSU alumni at a nearby Cougar Watch Party powered by BECU! Each week, WSUAA volunteers find the best Coug-friendly locations near you to gather with local fans nationwide. The official Watch Parties often offer drink and food specials, raffles, giveaways, and more. To find one near you, visit alumni.wsu.edu/watchparty.

Later this fall, the WSUAA is partnering with ASWSU, IFC/Panhellenic, and the Student Entertainment Board to bring you a reimagined Homecoming on October 13 and 14. The signature event for festivities surrounding the football game is a Pep Rally at the Lewis Alumni Centre, complete with live bands, and so much more. Visit alumni.wsu.edu/homecoming to stay up-to-date with this year’s Homecoming festivities.

No matter where you are, you’re never far from fellow Cougs who want to meet up and cheer WSU to victory. To learn about all the ways you can stay connected with Cougs and WSU, visit alumni.wsu.edu.

Alumni Association News

FALL FOOTBALL FESTIVITIES

As the leaves begin to fall and autumn approaches, the WSU Alumni Association can’t wait for another existing Coug football season! Whether you’re on the Palouse or across the country, the WSUAA has plenty of fun opportunities to stay connected and cheer on the Cougs.

If you are traveling to an away football game, make sure to check out the PreGame, the official tailgate event before the team takes the field. This year’s PreGames will be at Arizona State on October 28 and at Cal on November 11. To learn more and reserve your spot, visit alumni.wsu.edu/pregame.

JUDITH RAY won the 2022 College of Education and Human Development Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Minnesota for a lifetime of overcoming gender and racial barriers.

Ray, born in a segregated community in St. Louis, was part of the first cohort of Black students to integrate Harris Teachers College, now Harris-Stowe State University.

After earning her teaching degree and two master’s degrees, Ray ’79 MS Phys., Ed.D. followed her passion for educational equity and diversity at West Chester University, where she was the first and, at that time, only Black person in her department.

She pursued her doctoral degree at the University of Minnesota, where she was part of the first cohort of the Common Ground Consortium, a program that recruits and supports Black graduate education students.

She retired in 2013 from the School of Business and Professional Studies at Cheshier University of Pennsylvania, the nation’s first historically Black college and university, after more than three decades of teaching, research, managing grant acquisitions, and more.
Agriculture looks pretty fun in KAITLYN THORNTON’s hands. Big trucks, small trucks, pears and apples, belt buckles and boots, and lots of music.

Thornton, who’ll gradu- ate from the Carson College of Business in December 2023, is an ag influencer on TikTok and Instagram with hundreds of thousands of followers. Through videos and photos she educates her followers on what it takes to operate a more than 400-acre orchard in north-central Washington. For example, that “dust” on apples in an ag influencer on TikTok and Instagram with hundreds of thousands of followers.

Through videos and photos she educates her followers on what it takes to operate a more than 400-acre orchard in north-central Washington. For example, that “dust” on apples in an ag influencer on TikTok and Instagram with hundreds of thousands of followers.

She adds about her packed schedule, which includes frequent trips back and forth from Pullman to the family farm, “I’m busy, but it doesn’t always keep me out of trouble, I’ll be honest.”

BY ADEY HATCH

The Black Cypress, Pullman’s downtown fine dining establish- ment, was a finalist for the 2023 James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Hospitality.

Twenty semifinalists were an- nounced in January. The final five nominees were named at WSU.

The Greek and Italian-inspired Black Cypress, opened in downtown in 2005, serves much of its workforce from Washington State University. Many of its front-of-house staff are students.

Owner NIKIFOROS “NICK” PITSIONIS (’17) is a former WSU employee and graduate student. Before opening his restaurant, he worked from 2004 to 2007 at the Writing Center, where he served as assistant director of tutorial services. He has also worked at the famed Fresh Laundry in California and Nectar restaurant and lounge in Moscow, Idaho.

Pitsionis, born in Greece, says his approach to hospitality is influenced by his heritage; the Greek word for hospitality, philoxenia, means “love of strangers.” He says he wants customers to feel welcome, comfortable, connected, and restored by their experiences at the Black Cypress.

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Honor College alumna ERIC MCELROY’S (“13 Music) debut album of Fire, released by Somm Recordings in March 2023, includes songs that he says draw connections to his student days at Washington State University. Financial support from the Horsens College allowed him to study abroad in Vienna before he graduated in 2013.

“That incredible experience was only meant to be a six-month adventure, but I’m still in Europe 10 years later,” McElroy said.

The album features McElroy on piano for four connected song cycles and a single song. Each of the song cycles explores distinct introspective themes inspired by modern poets, including former US Post Laureate W.S. Merwin, transforming their ideas and meanings from the written word to music. Performing with McElroy is celebrated English tenor James Gilmore.

The album takes its title from the third song cycle, which is based on the works of poet Grevel Lindop. McElroy credits his Honors English professor Robert Eddy with introducing him to Lindop’s work. That introduction and the education and encouragement he received from WSU music professor Gerald Berthanneau continue to influence his work as a performer, teacher, and researcher today.

“Simply put, none of my subsequent achievements would have been possible without the support of WSU,” McElroy said.

In 2014, McElroy completed a master’s degree at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. He earned an advanced diploma in professional performance with distinction at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2017 and is currently a doctoral candidate at Oxford University. He has written for solo piano, voice, choral orchestra, and various chamber ensembles, and his works have been performed across Europe and the United States.

BY PHYLIS SIEH

Graduation, Family Week- ends, and Conga softball game days are among the restaurant’s busiest nights. Governor Jay Inslee dined there this year, WSU stu- dents and their parents, alumni, professors, and administrators and frequent customers.

The late Mike Leach, who coached WSU football from 2011 to 2019, was a regular. In fact, he offered this advice for dating in Pullman: “I would go to Black Cypress, if you really want to make a good impression … I’d talk to Nick beforehand because he has the menu and it’s all really good. He’s got some great appetizers and he’ll come by and keep hitting you up—here’s this, try that—and I think it should work out really well.”

Appetizers include the signature pork souvlakia and Cypriot cheese sandwiches. The three top-selling mains are carbonara, a roasted half chicken atop bread salad with kale and herb vinaigrette, and rib eye with bernaise butter and mashed potatoes.
February 19, 2023, Valley.


BEVERLY IRENE (MINNICH) SMITH (Gen. Stu.), 94, April 13, 2022, Portland.

Omega), 95, January 20, 2023, Portland, Oregon.

COSBY-MONROE JENNINGS 2021, Gladstone, Oregon.

ANNE BAKER 23, 2023, Bakersfield, Oregon.

ELLENE L. ESTERGREEN ('49 MS Home Econ.), 97, December 7, 2022, Rainier.

('48 MS Home Econ.), 97, February 14, 2023, Pottstown, California.

('56 Elec. Eng.), 85, March 9, 2022, Cupertino, California.

JAMES LESTER GOOD JR. 95, March 25, 2023, Rincón de Guayabitos, Mexico.

CHARLES S. UHLING 96, February 27, 2023, Vancouver.

K. SLAGLE 8, 2023, Redmond.

SLAVIN JOAN MARGARET SNOW ('51 Pharm.), 101, December 18, 2022, Spokane.

('63 Zool.), 86, March 10, 2023, Raritan Township, New Jersey.

('64 Gen. Stu.), 80, March 12, 2023, Spokane.


LINDA JUNE (LEWIS) DUNN ('60 Civ. Eng.), 85, March 20, 2023, Eagle River, Alaska.

('58 DVM), 86, April 21, 2023, Spokane Valley.

JAMES EVAN JOHNSON 76, April 7, 2023, Alexandria, Virginia.

('69 Busi.), 76, April 30, 2023, Edmonds.

('59, '60 MA Econ., Delta Sigma Phi), 86, January 30, 2023, St. Charles, Missouri.

('65 Home Econ.), 80, April 7, 2023, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

('58 DVM), 86, September 19, 2022, Independence, Oregon.

('57 Civ., '72 Arch.), 80, April 30, 2023, Pullman.


('63 Archaeology, Delta Sigma Phi), 86, January 1, 2023, Kirkland.

('58 DVM), 86, September 30, 2022, Lake Tapps.

('69 Business Administration), 79, September 30, 2022, Pullman.

('63 Ag. Econ.), 89, November 22, 2022, Walla Walla.

('58 DVM), 86, September 6, 2022, Maple Valley.


('85 Mechanical Eng.), 62, February 26, 2023, West Seattle.

('78 PhD Botany), 85, October 27, 2022, Vancouver.

('78 PhD Env.), 71, September 6, 2022, Maple Valley.

('79 PhD Econ.), 83, May 9, 2023, Waska Weela.


'93, December 25, 2022, Batavia, Illinois.

'98 Bachelor of Science), 92, February 7, 2023, Kirkland.

('57 Bachelor of Science), 92, March 25, 2023, Navarre, Florida.

'50 Pharm.), 93, February 27, 2023, Vancouver.

('59, '60 MA Econ., Delta Sigma Phi), 86, January 13, 2023, Alexandria, Virginia.

('59 MS Accounting), 94, November 24, 2022, Walla Walla.

('68 Bachelor of Science), 92, March 25, 2023, Vancouver.

('59 Bachelor of Science), 92, January 21, 2023, Vancouver.

('56 Speech), 85, August 20, 2022, Snohomish.

('56 MA Econ., Delta Sigma Phi), 86, January 13, 2023, Richmond, Virginia.


'88, December 25, 2022, Batavia, Illinois.

('70 Bachelor of Science), 92, February 7, 2023, Kirkland.

('57 Bachelor of Science), 92, March 25, 2023, Navarre, Florida.

('56 B.S.), 85, January 30, 2023, St. Charles, Missouri.

'53 Bachelor of Science), 85, August 20, 2022, Seattle.

'59 Master of Science), 85, October 27, 2022, Ellensburg, Washington.

'59 Bachelor of Science), 94, April 1, 2023, Carol Stream, Illinois.

'59 Bachelor of Science), 85, August 30, 2023, Pullman.

'70 Bachelor of Science), 79, September 30, 2022, Lake Tapps, Curtis Sand (76 Hotel & Rest. Admin.), 78, January 2, 2023, Portland, Oregon.

'72 Bachelor of Science), 86, October 25, 2022, South Jordan, Utah.

'68 Bachelor of Education), 77, April 21, 2023, Edmonds.

'79 Bachelor of Science), 78, September 24, 2022, Ellensburg, Washington.

'72 Bachelor of Science), 78, September 24, 2022, Ellensburg, Washington.

'56 Bachelor of Science), 85, September 30, 2022, Pullman.

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IN memoriam


FACULTY AND STAFF


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Did you know that 20 percent of first-year students at WSU have a need gap of $7,000 or more? This means they must somehow come up with $7,000 they don’t have to meet the financial requirements of attendance. As a result, many promising students are struggling to pay for their education.

The Crimson Opportunity Scholarship — available to any WSU student, in any discipline, at any WSU campus — is a difference maker for students in need. This scholarship provided nearly $400,000 in scholarships last year. Gifts from $10 to $1 million have accelerated the impact of this scholarship. In fact, in recent years, gifts of less than $100 have contributed $620,000 toward this fund.

One unique way to contribute to this fund is a pop-up that appears whenever you make a gift online to any WSU program. Perhaps you’ve seen the prompt “I believe in WSU students. I would like to give $10 to support the Crimson Opportunity Scholarship...”

To date, thousands of Cougs have responded to this pop-up, contributing nearly $90,000 to this scholarship fund. And you can make a gift anytime, of any size, to the Crimson Opportunity Fund.

For more information on how you can be a difference maker, contact Risë McGill at the WSU Foundation at 509-335-7456 or rmcguill@wsu.edu.

MERIEL BARBER
PHOTOGRAPHY: SHELL HANKS

The Crimson Opportunity Scholarship allowed me to focus on my education in a way I couldn’t have working 30 hours a week. It’s the kindest gift a student could ask for.

MERRILL BARBER
PHOTOGRAPHY: SHELL HANKS

For years, though, visitors from more moderate climes like Seattle and other places on the west side of the state have looked forward to browsing the plants and taking home their favorites. The plants were started and nourished in greenhouses around the WSU Pullman campus around 13 weeks before the sale. Later sales benefit gardeners from the state’s east side, when the planting season arrives.

Most of the proceeds from plant sales fund scholarships for horticulture students.

“If someone buys a hanging basket of flowers from us, if they water and fertilize, I can guarantee it’s going to perform better than almost anything else they buy,” Horticulture Club advisor James Holden (’73 Sci.) told Washington State Magazine in 2016.