Canta y no llores
upfront

¡Que viva el mariachi!

Is every class missed a lesson lost?

IN OUR COLLECTIONS: A Northwest aviator’s daring actions and flight firsts

Tackling increasing temperatures on Washington’s feedlots

Zooming kids into the kitchen and cooking for themselves

125 years of veterinary medicine at WSU

COVER: A TRANQUIL PATH IN FALL COLORS LEADING TO THE ARBORETUM POND ON THE PULLMAN CAMPUS

RIGHT: EARLY MORNING LIGHT ON THE WAY TO THE SPARK—AN ACADEMIC INNOVATION HUB—PART OF WSU’S CREATIVE CORRIDOR

PHOTOS ROBERT HUBNER

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Small-screen economics

WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE FALL 2024

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Finding the path  As a younger man on hikes, I would scramble straight up hills on my way to the top. Now, I'm not quite as sprightly, and I tend to look more carefully for a better path that will get to the destination. We all face the inevitable march of time, and it requires us to seek out different ways to adjust to age.

In this issue, you can read about Washington State University researchers in human development, nursing, and other areas who are working on “optimal aging,” living the best quality life possible given individual circumstances. This might include chronic illnesses, physical limitations, or cognitive decline. Other aspects of getting older also receive attention from WSU scientists: improving brain health to stave off dementia, leveraging the knowledge of pharmacists to manage medication, and developing comfortable, fabric-like material that can easily monitor health.

All this work is designed to help people choose their own path as they age, whether that’s continuing to live at home or moving into senior living communities, or with assisted care. It also can ease the work of caregivers, who are often family members.

We have to find our way when we’re young, too, especially with education. The rise in school absenteeism and truancy has reached critical levels nationwide. A WSU research team has expanded a tool to help guidance counselors and other school personnel to assess chronically absent students and identify causes. This could help tailor support and stem the tide of truancy.

There are always forks in the road and decisions to be made. Not all of us can fly across the Pacific, like aviation pioneer Clyde Pangborn who’s profiled in these pages, or drive a long-haul truck in retirement, like David Longanecker who’s also spotlighted in this issue. But finding the right path can often give us the life we want.

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Adriana Javorsch
ART DIRECTOR: John Paxson
SCIENCE WRITER: Becky Kramer
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Josh Babcock ’15, Trevor Bond ’17 PhD, Alysen Boston ’17, Addy Hatch, Steve Nakata ’86, Wenda Reed ’76
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Angela Gervasi, Shelly Hanks ’88, Dean Hare ’06, Robert Hubner, Zach Mazur ’06 MFA, ’21 PhD, Ted S. Warren
ILLUSTRATORS: Max Che, Simon Izquierdo
WSU PRESIDENT: Kirk H. Schulz
VICE PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS: Phil Weiler
ADVERTISING: Contact Lowell Ganin, 206-717-5808 or lowell@evenify.com
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WASHING TON STATE MAGAZINE FALL 2024

FIRSTWORDS

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Gleaming memories
I want to throw in my two cents regarding Professor David Stratton of the history department [Winter 2023]. I was a Cougar undergrad in the early '90s, minoring in history. It was an absolute treat to listen to Stratton teach on the characters of the frontier American West such as Jedediah Smith. He did so in his cardigan sweater with a grandfatherly, joyful gleam in his eye. He would also play part of the lesson on a little record player to help embellish the topic.

He was a gem of a professor. It was teachers like him that made my WSU experience both memorable and worthwhile. I've always remembered him.

STEVE GOODMAN '94 ENGLISH
MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

Watershed history
I enjoyed the [Summer 2024] article about the Waterworld exhibit at Expo ’74. That exhibit was one of my favorite parts of the expo, especially the watershed model. And speaking of that, I can provide an update about the model.

The watershed model was made of four-inch layers of Styrofoam that were glued together; carved into the shape of mountains, valleys, and such; and then joined in sections. In the spring of ’76, a number of the mechanical engineering students agreed to hold a hovercraft design competition for our senior design project. After the expo, the model was stored in pieces in the hydraulics lab, and we got wind of that. We were given permission to repurpose the Styrofoam pieces to construct our hovercrafts.

On our team, we used a large sheet of the Styrofoam suspended beneath the deck to meet the flotation requirement, and we carved layers of it to form the duct around the lifting fan. The layers can be seen in the above photo (with me driving, by the way…too fun). As can be seen, other components included plywood, chicken wire, plastic tarp, rope, and duct tape.

To verify hovercraft performance, we held the competition in the pond behind the Chief Joseph Village Apartments, where the photo was taken. Another team used layers of the Styrofoam to make the entire hull of their hovercraft, with ducts and flaps inside the hull to steer it. Alas, it proved too heavy to lift.

GARY E. SPANNER ’76 MECH. ENG.
PASCO

Lane Ficke (’82 Comm.) and daughter Michelle Ficke (’09 Int’l. Bus) joined family members on a February 2024 trip to Portugal. They proudly displayed the cougar flag at the Pena Palace in Sintra, Portugal. Says Lane: “We felt honored to show off this amazing logo for our beloved school in Europe. Go Cougs!”

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**FROM THE president**

My last year at Washington State University has begun. There will be lots of time for reflection before my retirement in June and much still to be done before I step down. But this seems like the right time and place to say thank you.

The best part of any job is the people you get to work with, and as president, I’ve been surrounded by a fantastic group of leaders across the WSU system. The same is true of the faculty, students, and staff I had the privilege of collaborating with over the years. There are countless dedicated, smart people across the university system.

I also want to thank our WSU alumni and community partners. Your support is critical to WSU’s success.

The strength of our Coug community buoyed us during challenging times: COVID-19, a shifting athletics landscape, divisions in society, even the pace of change.

In talking with colleagues at other universities, I know everyone’s feeling unsettled right now. But change has always been part of the job of a university president. I think of my predecessors at WSU like Sam Smith, who opened campuses statewide, and Elson S. Floyd, who created a medical school.

I believe this dynamic environment is our new normal as public higher education evolves. My expectation is that we’re moving toward a future with somewhat fewer broad-scope public research universities and more specialization at the regional level. But I also believe WSU is strategically well positioned for this future. We have campuses and faculty in all the major metropolitan areas of Washington and a state economy that will need hundreds of thousands of new college graduates in the coming years.

My goal for my last year at WSU is to wrap up major projects and pave a smooth runway for my successor. We’re close to launching a joint doctoral program with the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and I’d like to see that happen; WSU’s work on infectious diseases in East Africa could be life-changing. I want a stable enrollment environment for the next president, and I’m pleased to say we’re making great progress there. I also plan to spend a lot of time on the road to build WSU’s fund-raising capacity.

Once I step down, though, I won’t hang around. Noel will still be on faculty and director of the Institute for Northwest Energy Futures, of course, and we plan to retire in Spokane. But it’s important to me that the new president has the space to define their presidency on their terms.

That’s nearly a year off, and I’ve still got a lot of work to do. I hope you’ll join me in whatever way you can to make this a breakout year at Washington State University. You’ll have my gratitude.

**KIRK SCHULZ**

President, Washington State University

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**ILLUSTRATION DEREK MUELLER**

**WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE FALL 2024**
The mariachi music pouring out of Kimbrough Hall rehearsal rooms isn’t a recording. It’s one of Washington State University’s newest musical groups, Mariachi Leones del Monte—loosely translated by its members as Cougar Mariachi—practicing on Wednesday evenings.

Many people are familiar with the distinct sound of mariachi: a unique blend of trumpets, violins, and various guitars. Historians believe mariachi originated in Mexico in the eighteenth century. When migrants traveled from Mexico to the United States in the early 1900s to work in the fields, they brought mariachi music.

Today, mariachi music is a staple in agricultural towns throughout central Washington, including Wenatchee, where WSU seniors Natalie Valdez and Daniela Alpire went to high school together. Valdez and Alpire played guitar together in their high school. Alpire says the songs speak to the traditions and struggles Mexican people have experienced. Yet the band makes sure to leave their audiences feeling good and empowered.

"What I love about the music is how it describes the love of the land, the people, and national pride in Mexico," Singleton says. "To me, that’s what sets mariachi apart from other genres."

Alpire says the songs speak to the traditions and struggles Mexican people have experienced. Yet the band makes sure to leave their audiences feeling good and empowered.

"Being able to project a feeling of joy is one of the biggest aspects of mariachi," Alpire says. "We try to bring a positive energy to our audiences and encourage them to clap, dance, and sing along if they want to."

While WSU’s mariachi band provides quality entertainment and gives its members an important connection to their culture, Valdez and Alpire say it also serves as a valuable student recruitment tool, boosting the university’s pursuit of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Many school districts throughout central Washington have mariachi programs that provide opportunities for students to learn and play mariachi as early as middle school. After devoting so many years to playing mariachi, some students look for opportunities to continue playing after high school.

In April 2024, WSU’s mariachi band invited high school mariachi bands from Othello, East Wenatchee, Pasco, and Grandview to the Pullman campus. The visiting bands spent a day sharing music, touring campus, and learning about WSU’s academic and student support programs.

"We want students to know that WSU is a good option for them," Valdez says. "They can see their culture is present here and that there are so many things they can get involved in, including our mariachi band."
Where, oh where, have they gone?

BY LARRY CLARK

A girl was chronically late for first period at her high school. The school counselor met with her, and they took a quick assessment that launched a conversation.

They found out that the girl was responsible for getting her younger sisters ready every morning, and the school adjusted her start time so she could make it to school last year.

“She wasn’t doing anything negative or bad. She had more responsibility at home than most kids have,” says Brian French, Berry Family Distinguished Regents Professor at Washington State University’s College of Education. “It’s important to understand the environment to get students back to school, he says.

French and a team of WSU researchers manage and refine the tool used by the student and school counselor: the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNs). The 40-question, web-based assessment for middle and high school students offers a way to identify individual reasons for missing school.

WARNs is crucial as a wave of truancy and chronic absenteeism sweeps across schools throughout the country. About 26 percent of public school students in most states were considered chronically absent—typically missing about 18 school days for any reason—in the 2022–23 school year. That’s up from 15 percent before the pandemic, according to an American Enterprise Institute study.

Chronic absenteeism hinders educational recovery from the pandemic, too. If students aren’t in school, they can’t learn and their absence disrupts classrooms.

Washington state has another motivation for the WARNs assessment. The ‘Becca Bill’ law requires all children between the ages of 8 and 18 to attend school regularly, and schools to work with families to ensure attendance.

Paul Strand, a psychology professor at WSU Tri-Cities, says WARNs measures six areas critical to healthy social, emotional, and educational development: aggression-defiance, depression-anxiety, substance use, peer deviance, school engagement, and family environment.

A trained child psychologist, Strand says those dimensions can “try to identify reasons why kids haven’t come back to school.”

Almost half of Washington school districts use WARNs. The assessment can help provide a framework for school counselors and others to start conversations with youth and create personalized action plans for improving attendance.

Conversations and rapport with school personnel are key to translating WARNs into meaningful action, French says. Counselors can ask students, “What’s going on in your environment? What can we change that helps you get back on track?” That’s the power of that type of information,” he says.

Thao Vo (’15 Psy.Ch., ’20 MA, ’24 PhD Ed. Psych.), who works on WARNs, did a deep-dive for her doctoral dissertation with three school districts—a rural, suburban, and urban district—to find how they used WARNs.

“I wanted to know how specialists navigate this idea of chronic absenteeism, truancy, and overall risks for disengagement,” Vo says.

She found each district had distinct responses based on resources and school procedures. For example, Vo says the rural school district leans into family and community to meet student needs, since many services are farther away.

The WARNs team trains school personnel, and they work closely with school districts on ways to use and improve the assessment.

“We want to be responsive to schools, so we provide them with different ways to think about scores and how to interact with kids with respect to their scores,” Strand says.

For example, Chad Goetch (’12 PhD Ed. Psych.), an associate professor in educational psychology, works with the team to develop fictional vignettes for each test dimension as conversation starters with students. Goetch notes that the tool offers another important benefit. “WARNs is an opportunity to connect a student with an adult who cares,” he says. “And we know that can be powerful.”

French says the future for WARNs could be a modified instrument for elementary school students, a shorter version, and possible expansion to more states. WARNs is already used in a few Wisconsin, Virginia, and Minnesota school districts and youth service providers.

“WARNs can be powerful for students as well as schools. “We want to see changes that actually increase student empowerment, engagement, and strengthening relationships with school staff and family,” Vo says.

French and the WARNs team feel those outcomes are a rewarding way to help the state’s communities.

“IT is meaningful work. What’s more essential than helping kids stay connected to school? It’s just a very fundamental thing that we should be engaged in,” Goetch says.

Each year, the WSU Foundation salutes its most exceptional volunteers for their generous contributions of time, talent, and leadership, as well as the profound impact they have had on WSU at Washington State University.

Congratulations to all the 2024 honorees, who were recognized at the Volunteer Awards Celebration and Reception at WSU Spokane this past spring.

WELDON B. GIBSON DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Gibson Award represents the highest distinction bestowed upon a WSU Foundation volunteer.

2024 Gibson honoree Betsy Cowles has served WSU for nearly three decades, from working to build the WSU Spokane campus to providing exceptional leadership and advocacy that have furthered the dreams of students, faculty, and programs across WSU and the state.

WILLIAM F. “BIFF” BROTHERTON COUGAR SPIRIT AWARD

The Brotherton Award recognizes passionate supporters of both Cougar Athletics and WSU.

2024 Brotherton recipients Greg and Jayne Beckel are tireless supporters of Cougar Athletics and WSU who have advanced state-of-the-art athletics facility projects with their passion and leadership.

Our warm congratulations also to our 2024 OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mike Cappetto • Paul W. and Betsy A. Sunich
Erik Carlson drove a truck filled with colored tubes and other sculpture components from Cranston, Rhode Island, to Pullman at the end of spring 2024. Over three days, he helped install a major new piece of public art on the Washington State University campus. Entwine now cascades down three floors in the Plant Sciences Building opposite the football field.

With funding from ArtsWA and as part of the Art in Public Places program, WSU’s campus art committee selected Area C Projects, consisting of Carlson and Erica Carpenter, to formulate their challenge: create a work of art that acts like a plant, or approaches the surrounding structure of the Plant Sciences Building as a type of growing medium.

“We were inspired by the art committee’s comments and the nature of the research being done in the Plant Sciences Building to push ourselves and develop a decentralized artwork that literally entwined itself with the building. We also wanted to create an artwork that offered multiple scales and points of engagement, reflecting our multifaceted relationship with the plant kingdom,” Carlson says.

The artists created a work that mirrors the growth of plants. Rootlike forms of colored tubes emerge from the exposed pipes, ducts, and electrical conduits of the Plant Sciences Building. The colored tubes feature custom-made glass caps. Some of these caps include lights. Others reveal internal fluorescent colors. The glass, at times, magnifies. It also catches the light in compelling ways. The pipes, in places, cluster in bunches, where boxes with bubbled glass windows invite visitors to further explore the structure.

According to Area C’s proposal, “The artwork mimics the relationship between epiphytes, plants that grow harmlessly on the surfaces of other plants, and phorophytes, the sturdier plants that provide epiphytes the base from which to grow ... the artwork and the building commingle to the point that it can be unclear just which portions of these climbing, probing tubes are part of the building, and which are part of the artwork.”

The color palette is inspired by Nez Perce (Nimíipuu) woven bags whose natural dyes reflect the landscape of the region. The artists color-matched these plant-based dyes to modern paints used on the tubes.

These colorful tubular bundles build off the building’s water, air, and electrical systems to create something new, strange, plantlike, and wild in the public areas of the Plant Sciences Building.

The next time you’re watching football in Pullman or taking a photo in front of the Cougar Pride statue, consider crossing the street to also see Entwine. 

**PHOTOS COURTESY AREA C PROJECTS**

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**WSU CAMPUSSES** have many other remarkable and inspiring works of art viewable to the public. The next time you visit a campus, find the works with our maps and guides to sculptures, paintings, and other art installations in Vancouver, Pullman, Tri-Cities, Spokane, and Everett:
magazine.wsu.edu/campus-art-guides
**A Life Impossible**

**LIVING WITH ALS: FINDING PEACE AND WISDOM WITHIN A FRAGILE EXISTENCE**

BY STEVE GLEASON (’00 BUSI.)

WITH JEFF DUNCAN

ALFRED A. KNOPF: 2024

**HE CAN NO LONGER MOVE OR BREATHE.** And that makes getting ready each morning quite a “workout.” Steve Gleason starts his autobiography by describing what he endures to prepare to face the day. A ventilator breathes for him while a crew of caregivers performs strings of mundane tasks: showering, getting dressed, having breakfast. Those are actions that most take for granted, chores people complete each morning without much thought, things that make the former football standout feel powerless.

Imprisoned in his own body, once the athletic star to others, now a “prisoner” to himself, Gleason was 33 in early 2011 when he received the devastating diagnosis. Weeks later, after going through a battery of tests, withdrew from his MBA program, took a leave of absence from his job, and started searching for a miracle.

It seems, however, that though he can no longer move, his voice is now more powerful than ever.

—Adriana Janovich

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**Excerpt From A Life Impossible**

by Steve Gleason

On January 5, 2011, I was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a rare neurodegenerative disease that damages the nerves that control voluntary muscle movement. ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, is relentless and humiliating. It progressively robs people of their motor skills and, in turn, destroys their quality of life. Although your senses and brain remain sharp, you gradually lose the ability to walk, talk, swallow, and breathe.

Today, I’m well past the point of being able to move, talk, or breathe on my own. The powerful legs I once used to race down-field on National Football League kickoffs now are withered. My arms, once muscular and ripped, are frail and motionless. My 5-foot-11 frame, once a strapping 210 pounds, is now an emaciated meat sack of flesh and bones. I’ve lived in a wheelchair for more than a decade. I’ve lived on a ventilator since 2014.

Lou Gehrig, the famous Major League Baseball (MLB) player for whom the disease is named, died two years after he was diagnosed. Most people diagnosed with ALS follow in Gehrig’s steps—death comes a few years after diagnosis. I’m clearly biased, but I’d say I don’t look too shabby for being more than ten years past my expiration date.

Life with ALS prevents me from enjoying some of the things that ordinary people might take for granted. One of the realities of my life is that I’ve never hugged our kids, or more importantly, Rivers and Gray have never been hugged by their dad. Ever. If you saw your daughter weeping in the middle of your bathroom floor, wouldn’t you pick her up?

I expressed this tension between wanting to do more as a father and loving unconditionally to one of my mentors and teachers, Peter Crane, known as the Mind Architect. Peter insightfully responded, “Steve, your presence is enough.” Hearing those words, a massive emotional burden was lifted. I decided that being present is my purpose. I know it’s not true that I am not worthy or that I don’t matter. My presence IS enough. I live from this place.

My body is a prison. I face insurmountable adversity each day, yet my family and I are able to survive and live within this miraculous, wonderful life. I have learned to accept things that are out of my control, to transform suffering into strength. I move through fear to discover the extraordinary on the other side. We all face the impossible at some point in our lives. By exploring acceptance, love, and the power of the human spirit, I recognize the innate peace in the midst of chaos. There is light in the darkness. The light within all of us. Every day. Every precious moment. I know it. I live it.

Our “Pacific Lindbergh”

BY ADDY HATCH

Though not a household name now, Clyde Pangborn led a remarkable life of derring-do.

He made the first nonstop flight across the Pacific Ocean, at one point crawling out of the cockpit to replace a tire. Pangborn was also a barnstormer, a flight instructor, a test pilot, and a war hero.

Pangborn’s mother wrote to US senator William Borah of Idaho, imploring him to use his influence on “behalf of the boys.” Borah responded, “I would not worry. Everything is being done that can be done and I think it will work out all right.”

It did work out. The aviators were fined and told to leave Japan and not return. They loaded up the Miss Veedol with more fuel than was recommended for the 1931 Blainea Skyrocket CH-400 plane and took off on the 4,500-mile flight—longer than Charles Lindbergh’s crossing of the Atlantic. To make the fuel stretch even farther, Pangborn designed a system to drift the landing gear over the ocean; the initial drawings are among his papers at WSU.

But two struts didn’t release, requiring Pangborn to climb outside the airplane in freezing wind, miles above the ocean, to loosen them. Such a terrifying feat might have been easy for a former barnstormer like Pangborn, though.

After returning to the United States, Pangborn attended to his duties as president of the company that sponsored the flight. He made the first nonstop, trans-Pacific flight in 1931. That wasn’t Pangborn’s greatest achievement, for he had achieved the first nonstop, trans-Pacific flight, USPS commemorated the flight by issuing a First trans-Pacific Flight 1931 postal stamp and he helped rescue her. “No movie the like—has ever approached the remarkable achievement of three acrobatic airmen,” a newspaper clipping breathlessly reports.

In 1939, Pangborn published a young boy living in Orondo when Pangborn and Herndon landed in Wenatchee. “We’d been hearing about the (trans-Pacific) flight on the radio for quite some time,” says Ross, “so we headed to Japan. Dad hustled us up into the car and we got to Wenatchee. Pangborn and Herndon were still standing and talking to people. It was just such a thrill to be there. I may have shaken their hands, I can’t remember, but at least I got to go all the way around their airplane. Right from there on, I always wanted to be a flier.”

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What’s cookin’ with 4-H these days

**Valerie Terry** is teaching a dozen 4-H students how to make pita bread. As they follow along over Zoom, she throws in a quick food science lesson.

“See the carbon dioxide bubbles? They’re produced by the yeast feeding on the sugars,” says the Kitsap County 4-H leader, who is filming from her kitchen counter. As she punches down the dough, Terry explains that yeast also conditions the gluten so it traps the carbon dioxide, allowing the bread to rise. Over two hours, students working in their own kitchens prepare a Greek dinner with lamb meatballs, homemade pita bread, and tzatziki sauce. The session includes a review of safe knife skills, accurate measurements, and how to avoid cross-contamination of raw meat juices and fresh veggies.

(Although Zoom classes use a panorama feature, teaching kids how to cook has been a staple of Washington State University Extension’s 4-H programs for more than a century. Last year, more than 1,500 Washington 4-H students took part in cooking, baking, food preservation, or related food science and nutrition classes. More than 300 adult volunteers led the classes.

“Cooking is a foundational part of our curriculum,” says Mark Reistrom (’77 Ag), interim state 4-H director. “4-H is about positive youth development, and being able to make meals for yourself and others is an important life skill.”

Besides food preparation, 4-H students learn about meal planning and budgeting, too.

“Reistrom says they can put together a nutritious dinner for four people for about $20.

For Terry and other 4-H leaders, getting kids excited about scratch cooking in the DoorDash era comes with its own rewards.

“If you know how to put together a meal, there’s a confidence that comes with that,” she says. “As the students’ skills grow, they realize, ‘I don’t have to ask Mom or Dad to take me to the store to buy a cake. I can be capable of making these things for myself and others.’”

A former line cook and professional baker, Terry answered the call for 4-H cooking instructors in Kitsap County three years ago.

“My three girls are 11, 13, and 15, and I thought they might be interested in learning about cooking,” she says. “Cooking is a foundational project our kids are interested in. I thought I’d start with something simple.”

“Terry says the Zoom sessions are “almost like a cooking show,” says Danielle Foss, the parent of one of the 4-H students. “The kids get a really good look at her step-by-step instructions, but they’re able to cook in the comfort of their own kitchen with their own tools.”

During the Zoom sessions, Terry’s husband, John, runs the camera and acts as a moderator. When students have questions, they hold their mixing bowls, cutting boards, and sauce pans up to the camera for her inspection.

“For me, it’s a time to connect with each family, even if it’s just on Zoom,” she says. “I want to engage kids and their families in the kitchen.”

“Zoom allows me to open up the class to more kids and younger kids,” Terry says. “I do ask parents to cook with their children. Tell them, ‘This is your child’s project, but you’re there to make sure everything is safe. You’re acting as my hands because I can’t reach through the screen to adjust someone’s knife grip.’”

Ten-year-old Cassie Barlow started cooking with Terry three years ago. “I wanted to learn how to cook and make stuff by myself,” she says. “As her kitchen skills increased, she has developed a go-to list of favorite recipes, including guacamole for parties and shepherd’s pie for family dinners.

“Cassie can go into the kitchen and break out a recipe,” says her mom, Michelle Barlow. “She’s a lot more confident and independent.”

“Valerie Terry is teaching a Greek dinner for four people for about $30.”

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**Stone fruit**

**BY ADRIANA JANOVICH**

**THINK OF THEM as sunshine encapsulated in plump, perfumed orbs. Sun-ripened, they exist the sweet scents of summer, embodying long lazy days and evoking images of sticky juices running from fingers to elbows at backyard cookouts and picnics in the park.**

Drippily and deliciously, sumptuous stone fruits are quintessential summertime delights. Even their appearance—globes of gold, orange, crimson, and hues in between—epitomizes the warmth of the sun. So-called because of their center pit, or stone, which houses their seed, stone fruits are nature’s desserts.

**Lucky for us, they ripple in waves all summer long.**

Sweet cherries arrive early, in mid to late May, and are available through June and July. Sour, or pie, cherries overlap with apricots in July and August. Peaches and nectarines are readily mid-July through September. Plums cap the season in August and September. To pick a favorite. “There’s such a diversity of flavors and textures across stone fruits that it’s very difficult,” says Washington State University horticulture professor Matt Whiting ('01 PhD Hort.). He focuses on whole-tree physiology, high-efficiency orchard architecture, mechanization, pollination, and environmental control of fruit quality—mostly for sweet cherries. “I do find myself drawn to the more acidic cherry cultivars,” Whiting says, such as the firm, strongly flavored, mahogany Cowiche, developed at WSU’s Integrated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser and released in 2007. “It’s a huge piece of fruit, high in sugar, very juicy, and very acidic. It’s just fantastic,” Whiting says. “Another one of my favorites is Kiona,” also a large, dark sweet cherry developed at WSU. The problem is finding them at the grocery store. Unlike apples, which are marketed by their distinctive varieties, “there are some 20 to 30 cherry varieties that get marketed as dark sweet cherries,” Whiting says. “Depending on the time of the season, you’re going to see totalement different cultivars with completely different flavors and textures. I think it’s a problem for the cherry industry. It leads to customer confusion. It’s like selling Grammy Smith one week and Fuji another week under the same name.” Nevertheless, sweet cherries dominate Washington state’s stone fruit crop, covering about 40,000 acres. In fact, Washington state is the country’s top sweet cherry producer, followed by California and Oregon. But sweet cherries, which rank among Washington state’s top 10 crops, are the exception. The rest of the state’s stone fruit crop, Whiting says, “is really small, even shrinking, because there’s so much volume coming from California.”

California leads the country’s peach, plum, nectarine, and apricot production, which overall are all experiencing dips. At WSU, “our work reflects the industry,” Whiting says. “So our stone fruit research focuses on sweet cherries.”

Still, he did some work on peach root-stallers earlier in the 2000s to help growers transition to higher-density orchards and more efficient production systems. “When you don’t have size-controlling rootstocks, you deal with larger trees. You have to plant them farther apart, and the canopies are harder to control. They require ladders for harvesting, which, in general, is much more challenging with larger, low-density trees.”

All stone fruit is relatively thin-skinned, bruising easily. That’s another challenge. “The harvesting process is delicate. So is sorting and packing. You have to pay more attention than apples, pears, even cherries,” Whiting says.

Some Washington growers are finding a profitable niche by going organic. “Our climate is well suited for organic stone fruits,” Whiting says. “Climate-wise, Washington has an advantage over California. We do have challenges with spring frost and winter cold damage. Stone fruits tend to be more susceptible. That’s why apricots are not easily grown in Washington any longer. But if you can get through the spring frost, our milder summers produce better, high-quality, beautiful stone fruits.”

Apricots are problematic because they bloom as early as February or March, when cold weather can prevent effective pollination and frost damages flowers or young fruit. Per McCord, who leads WSU’s stone fruit breeding and genetics program, is making some apricot crosses, but the work is still in its early stages. He’s also running a small variety trial for peaches and nectarines in western Washington to see how they adapt to the cooler marine climate. But his focus is developing new varieties of sweet cherries.

There are two kinds of stone fruits: free-stone and clingstone. The flesh of free-stone fruit separates easily from the pit. The flesh of clingstone fruit clings stubbornly to the pit. They’re ready to eat when they are soft, succulent, and juicy—not squishy—and small, crunchy, and floral. Their aromatics are intoxicating, particularly peaches and nectarines.

Low in calories and high in dietary fiber, stone fruits are rich in antioxidants, potassium, and vitamins, especially C. Botanically known as drupes, they are perfect for fresh eating, perhaps paired with vanilla whipped cream or homemade ice cream. Chop them up and mix them into salads. Use them to top summer salads, morning cereal, pancakes, waffles, or crepes. Cook them into compotes, jams, or preserves. Blend them into smoothies. Bake them into upside-down cakes. Drizzle grilled peaches or nectarines with balsamic glaze and serve them with pork chops. Make cherry clafoutis or a stone fruit trifle or a rustic galette. The options are almost endless.

All of Washington’s stone fruit is priced with its sweetness and flavor balance, which the Washington State Fruit Commission credits to the region’s unique microclimates and ancient volcanic soils. Fruit that ripens on the tree builds sugar content, making the fruit that much sweeter and flavorful. “People expect high-quality stone fruit from Washington growers,” says McCord, who recommends shopping for stone fruits at farmers markets. His favorite? “It’s a toss-up between cherries and peaches. My favorite way to eat them would be fresh. For apricots, I like them dried and also canned. I’m also a fan of pie.”

**Common kinds of stone fruit**

**Apricots**—These sweet, firm, yellow-orange golf-ball-sized stone fruits have a tart finish and a layer of a floral flavor than peaches.

**Cherries**—From yellow-pink flammers to deep-red Flings, these small, heart-shaped stone fruits come in two kinds: sweet or tart. Sweet cherries are best for fresh eating. The most well-known tart cherry, the mouth-puckering Montmorency, is perfect for pies and preserves. Sweet cherries are best for fresh eating. The most well-known tart cherry, the mouth-puckering Montmorency, is perfect for pies and preserves.

**Peaches**—Yellow-fleshed peaches generally have higher acidity and are better for cooking than mild, white-fleshed peaches. Dorset or Santa Rosas—bit, small, mild—are best for fresh eating. All sport a soft, velvety-fuzzy skin.

**Nectarines**—Think of them as fuzzy peaches. Smooth-skinned nectarines have golden or white flesh and a bright, almost lemony flavor. Just like peaches, the yellow ones are a touch more tart.

**Plums**—From golden-yellow and orange to reddish pink and deep purple, plums come in many varieties.

**Hybrids**—These include pluots, plumcot, and apriums, which, Whiting says, “have a role in Washington state’s stone fruit industry, but it’s a very minor one.”
Aging is not one-size-fits-all. How you age is determined by your genetics, your resources, your lifestyle, and, let’s face it, your luck. With all those variables, most of us can’t expect to age perfectly. But we can age optimally.

Optimal aging means living the best quality life possible given your circumstances, which might include chronic illness, physical limitation, or cognitive decline. Researchers at Washington State University are working on multiple fronts to ease the effect of such limitations on the lives of older adults.

"Most of us are going to need more support as we age, so we’re looking at how we build in those support structures. We don’t want to make people feel they’re a burden for growing older," says Cory Bolkan, a professor in the Department of Human Development at WSU Vancouver and codirector of the GATHER Lab (Generating Aging & Translational Health Equity Research).

People often assume technology is the golden ticket to optimal aging, and that might be a solution for some. In-home sensors and smartwatch-type wearables, for example, have been studied extensively by WSU research teams. But technology might not work for someone who wants to grow older in their rural home, or who bristles at the privacy implications of continuous monitoring.

Housing for older people, where it’s located and how that affects health status, is critical. WSU researchers have studied the built environment to see how signage, materials, and systems like thermostats contribute to optimal aging. WSU’s Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living prepares students to manage a spectrum of senior housing options.

WSU teams are also studying ways to enhance brain health [see page 27]. And across programs and colleges, WSU is working to build the workforce of the future that will serve older people.

POPULATION IS AGING FAST

Optimal aging isn’t a theoretical exercise; the population of the United States is older than it has ever been in the past. In 2022, 17.3 percent of Americans were 65 or older. By 2050, that share is expected to reach 23 percent, or another 24 million people.

About two-thirds of those people want to grow older at home, called aging in place. Doing that will almost assuredly require support, though, and most people haven’t thought through what they’ll need or how they’ll get it, Bolkan says.

A 2022 study led by Bolkan and published in the Journal of Elder Policy found most people don’t think they’ll have future medical or other needs. But that’s not what the data shows, she says. About 95 percent of older adults have at least one chronic condition, and 80 percent have at least two. They may need help with yard work, house cleaning and repair, assistive devices, or accessibility changes.

"Many have very loose plans," Bolkan says about the people interviewed as part of the study. "They say, ‘Oh, my daughter will do it for me,’ but they’ve probably never had a conversation with their daughter and the daughter has no idea.”

Bolkan and coauthor Raven Weaver, an associate professor in the Department of Human Development, both say a little-known resource in optimal aging is the network of Area Agencies on Aging. These are private or public nonprofits located across the nation that connect people with services to help them age in the place of their choosing. Their services are usually free, and programs are federally funded under the Older Americans Act.

"They’re one of the most underutilized, hidden gems of the aging services network," says Weaver.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH IS AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH

One established fact in optimal aging is that human connection has a powerful effect on health. Studies at WSU and elsewhere have demonstrated links between social isolation and depression and disease.
The human connection even showed up in a study about smart-home sensors, and how they can help people maintain independence. Roschelle Fritz, a longtime associate professor in the WSU College of Nursing, says the study was successful: the sensors detected changes in patterns that were relevant to a person’s overall health, such as using the bathroom more often or not leaving the house for days.

But participants were most grateful for another aspect of the study: access to a nurse. Study participants talked to a nurse once a week or more, and nearly all of them wanted the study to continue for that reason.

It was clear that ability to talk to a nurse was very meaningful to them,” says Fritz, who recently joined the University of California, Davis, to work on a project targeting healthy aging in a digital world.

Rural areas offer another kind of human connection. The networks of informal caregivers or community relationships are an underappreciated part of rural life for older adults, Weaver says. Those relationships are balanced against perceived rural deficits like a lack of health care services or access to technology.

When it comes to optimal health, people need support for their physical and functional health plus their emotional and spiritual health, Fritz says. “Loneliness is a big deal,” she says, “and there is a lot of it.”

**LIVING SPACE MATTERS**

Housing makes a big difference in optimal aging. A house with stairs? A retirement community? An urban area with few trees? All can have profound effects on mental and physical health.

Solmaz Amir, a research assistant professor at WSU, led a study published earlier this year that shows a connection between living near nature and better physical and mental health among older adults. Even a 30 percent increase in nearby forest space, trees, water, or trails was associated with better health. Amir says other studies have shown the reverse, that not having access to green spaces might bring a higher risk of health problems.

Researchers at WSU’s Integrated Design & Construction Laboratory have interviewed older people about how easy or difficult it is to function inside a home. Someone whose vision is impaired because of macular degeneration or glaucoma, for example, might have a difficult time seeing things on a speckled countertop. And digital controls were challenging to study participants, no matter how sophisticated or basic those controls were, says Shelby Ruiz, research project manager for the lab. Participants talked about signage, lighting, and storage height, and the frustrations that come with all of those.

“Can we build better buildings for and with the people who are going to be in them?” Ruiz says. “I think the answer is yes, but it takes some careful consideration and actually listening to these folks.”

**START BY THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE**

Changes like how a building is built, or planting trees in a neighborhood, or whether a patient gets to interact with a nurse, are based on policies. But policies don’t always take the needs of older people into account, says Bolkan.

“As a society we tend to devalue aging and older people, and ageism is a huge problem,” she says. “That also shows up in shortage of health care providers and other workers who serve older populations. Those shortages are expected to get worse, not better.”

There are no quick fixes as a society.

But as an individual, there is a place to start, and that’s by acknowledging and embracing aging, and planning for it.

Says Bolkan, “If you’re going to age in place, you need to prepare for that. When you buy your home, is that a home you can live in for the next 30 to 40 years? Are there too many stairs? Are there too many windows? Is there a bathroom on the first floor? Are you thinking about how accessible it is?”

“If you can get people to imagine their future selves, they make better choices.”

**Pills and more pills: Taking medications doesn’t need to be so stressful**

BY LARRY CLARK

Whether they use a box, a smartphone app, or simple notes, people who take several medications have to keep them all straight.

Multiple medications are often necessary for older patients. More than half of adults 65 and older report taking four or more prescription drugs, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

But the more medications a person requires, the more chances of problems—even hospitalization because of adverse drug events or not adhering to a prescription.

“As people get older, they tend to have more medical conditions, which may require more medications,” says Brian Gates (’99 PharmD), a professor of pharmacotherapy at Washington State University College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CPPS) and a board-certified geriatric pharmacist.

One of the riskiest times is the transition from hospital to home care. In a 2009 WSU study, almost 90 percent of patients receiving home health care services from a Medicare-certified home health agency experienced at least one medication discrepancy in that transition.

Pharmacists are ideally suited to identify, prevent, and resolve medication-related problems during transitions of care. They leverage in-depth knowledge of medications and the effects on the body to work closely with older people.

“Pills are going to get worse, not better,” says Gates, who is also director of the Center for Patient Safety and Quality Improvement at the WSU Cougars Health Network.

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“If you can get people to imagine their future selves, they make better choices.”

“One problem is that some patients go back to whatever meds they were taking before they went to the hospital. The pharmacist in home health helps identify those situations and alert patients and other clinicians to prevent adverse effects,” says Jeffrey Clark (’99 PharmD), an associate professor in CPPS. He is also board-certified in geriatrics.

Whether you are aging in place, transitioning back home, or receiving care at a facility, your pharmacist—and especially a senior care pharmacist—can help with medication evaluation for older patients or family members who help them. You can find a senior care pharmacist through the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists’ website.

For example, Providence Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) Home Health in Spokane Valley has utilized consultant pharmacists as part of the home health care team for almost 30 years. WSU faculty, resident pharmacists, and students from CPPS perform medication reviews, assess patients in the home, and collaborate with other providers to improve patient outcomes.

Gates and Clark both work as consultant pharmacists with Providence VNA and have measured the effectiveness of pharmacists on the health care team. That includes significant reductions in hospitalization from adverse medication events.

A recent quality improvement project identified that patients at high risk for hospitalization, who also had two or more medication discrepancies when starting home health care, were about two times as likely to be hospitalized within 30 days. As part of an interdisciplinary team, Gates and Clark took steps to improve medication reconciliation and evaluation that resulted in reduced hospitalizations.

Technology like medication management apps, smart pill dispensers, and telehealth can improve monitoring and support. However, communication between the patient and pharmacist
is still crucial, and sometimes lost with new technology or mail delivery, Clark says.

Education is key, since pharmacists help patients understand the purpose of their medications, which medications are most effective, how to take them safely, and potential side effects, Gates says. If a person has many medications, there can be real difficulty in understanding health information. Cognitive impairment can also affect a patient’s ability to effectively manage and take all their medications.

“Pharmacists can help you, as a patient, understand what the medications are doing for you, and the individual risks and benefits of each one,” Clark says. “By working with providers, we can also help determine which ones are no longer necessary.”

Wear and share: Wearable tech steps up the health-monitoring game

BY ALYSEN BOSTON

Smartwatches and rings, activity trackers, and other wearable technology are convenient tools for tracking our daily habits, like how well we slept, how far we jogged, and even our heart rates and stress levels.

Wearables help us maintain and monitor our health without having to rely on memory to recall how many days we exercised last week. This makes it easier to keep track of our habits, which is even more crucial as we age.

But Ganapathi Bhat, assistant professor in Washington State University’s School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, wants to see wearable technology track more than just steps. Bhat and his team are researching ways to make lightweight and flexible devices that can accurately monitor diseases like Parkinson’s.

“Watches and rings give good metrics, but may not be optimal for some diseases,” Bhat says. “In Parkinson’s, we want to closely monitor how the person is walking. Are they bending their knees enough? Is their gait getting slower? To do that, we need something small, lightweight, and without a large battery.”

Hang Liu, an associate professor in the Department of Apparel, Merchandising, Design and Textiles at WSU, and her team might be able to deliver just that. In December, they announced the development of a fiber that blends cotton and electricity-conducting polymer.

“The material is woven into the fabric, so you can wash it like other clothes and you won’t feel the difference,” Liu says.

The fiber could be used to collect data on vital signs and movement for the user or their doctor to review later, making it a useful tool for health monitoring, exercise, or even in uniforms for workers handling hazardous materials. It’s comfortable, too.

“A lot of care depends on the recall of the patient, and there is researcher bias, too,” Bhat says. “If we have sensors that are monitoring their symptoms on a real-time basis, then they have more frequent and detailed data to show to a doctor at their visit.”

And if Bhat and his team can develop a lightweight device with a long-lasting battery, it could make it easier for patients to use the device longer.

“Glucose monitors, for example, are patches that monitor glucose levels every few hours. They last a few weeks, but they can only do so much with such a small battery,” Bhat says. “After a while, some people stop using them because they have to be charged or replaced, and that can be annoying.”

So Bhat and his team are researching ways to harvest energy through light and motion to keep these devices working longer. The more comfortable and convenient they are, the better, Liu says. That’s a real boon for older patients.

“People wear clothes every day,” Liu says. “If we can build everything into the apparel, then you don’t have to remember to wear accessories or to take your phone with you.”

Healthy lifestyles protect brains and lower dementia risk

BY BECKY KRAMER

Almost 10 percent of US adults 65 and older have dementia, and its pervasiveness is a growing public health crisis.

Beyond the challenge of finding enough caregivers, dementia’s costs include the loss of dignity and independence for people living with cognitive decline and the financial and emotional toll on their families.

But current research also offers hopeful news. Although our brains change as we get older, dementia isn’t an inevitable part of aging.

“Alzheimer’s disease and dementia are not a normal part of aging, but current research also offers hopeful news. Although our brains change as we get older, dementia isn’t an inevitable part of aging. By adopting healthy lifestyle habits, people can significantly reduce their risk of developing dementia, says Maureen Schmitter-Edgecombe, Regents and H. L. Eastlick Distinguished Professor at Washington State University’s Department of Psychology.

Healthy habits foster something researchers call “cognitive reserve,” Schmitter-Edgecombe says.

“If you’ve been doing good things for your brain such as exercising, staying connected socially, or increasing your level of education, your brain is able to work more efficiently and that strengthens its resistance to cognitive decline,” she says.

People with higher cognitive reserves can experience some decline before they start to notice reductions in cognitive functioning—such as thinking, remembering, and reasoning.

Several years ago, Schmitter-Edgecombe created the Healthy Aging Activity Engagement Questionnaire to measure people’s participation in healthy brain activities. She recently talked to Washington State Magazine about her work.
Why should everyone be concerned about brain health? Evidence suggests that about 40 percent of all dementia cases worldwide are related to modifiable risk factors. These are things like not getting enough exercise; uncontrolled diabetes or high blood pressure; poor nutrition; smoking; and excessive alcohol consumption. [see sidebar for full list]

If we can address these modifiable risk factors, we can significantly reduce the risk of people developing dementia. Drug therapies have not been particularly successful in treating Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias. Some may only slow it down for a limited amount of time, and drug therapies are all very expensive.

If we can get people to understand the importance of healthy living for a healthy brain and their future cognition, we will help people live independently for longer periods of time.

What’s the best age to start developing healthy brain habits? I tell people it’s never too early to start engaging in activities for brain health, nor is it ever too late. The research now shows the importance of thinking of brain health as a lifelong process. Education is one of the modifiable risk factors, and that’s important beginning at a young age. And for issues like uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension, the recommendation is 150 minutes per week of moderate to high-intensity exercise.

Exercise also improves your mood and decreases cognitive decline. For healthy brain aging, the recommendation is 150 minutes per week of moderate to high-intensity exercise.

Zavala Magaña left Washington state’s largest newspaper for the much smaller Nyguen International, an English and Spanish newspaper based in the border town of Nogales, Arizona, where she covers border issues and local news. The weekly community publication allows her more time to focus on the kinds of stories she wants to tell.

“What interests me the most are these underrepresented stories about immigration and labor rights and those intersections,” says Zavala Magaña, who spoke on two panels at Washington State University’s 2024 Murrow Symposium organized by the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication. “The theme: ‘Illuminate! The Power of Untold Stories.’

Zavala Magaña, the oldest of four and a first-generation college student, found Murrow College during her sophomore year, switching majors from anthropology to journalism and political science. She grew up in Wenatchee, where her parents—originally from neighboring ranches in rural Michoacan, Mexico, without access to education beyond elementary school—were farmworkers. They followed tree fruit crops from California to Washington, where they eventually settled.

“Growing up speaking Spanish in the home, it’s my first language,” Zavala Magaña says. “All of the traditions of the culture they kept—the food, the holidays, other traditions. I grew up in a community where you very much help your neighbor no matter what. That was the dynamic I was used to.”

Leaving that close-knit environment for college felt scary. “I had no idea how to navigate it,” says Zavala Magaña, who first visited WSU through a trip organized by Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, or MEChA. But “because I knew there was support through that student group, I felt like WSU was somewhere I could see myself and thrive away from home.”

She chose anthropology because “I enjoyed public service, and I liked meeting people.” A media and society class piqued her interest in the power of the press.
especially in helping readers understand under- 
represented communities, completing community- 
routing and ways to improve rural news 
coverage.

“Our focus is on community-centric stories and hyperlocal news that goes beyond the usual narratives you see for a region that has become highly politicized nationally and elsewhere in Arizona,” Zavala Magaña says. “Being bilingual and having the ability to do research and write in a way that feels comfortable makes such a difference.

“What’s really great about the Murrow program is there’s an emphasis on multimedia journalism and building skills beyond writing,” Zavala Magaña says. “That was very helpful because we work in a very fast- paced landscape. I was working odd hours. It messed up your system of the day, I feel good about my choice.”

“No, I’m asking a mother to tell me about her dead child and hoping that humanizes the other daily,$\text{850} \times \text{160 mm}$
for the Office of Tribal Relations and Native American Programs, and tribal liaison to the WSU president.

"Putty not only mentored me on many matters of Native education, but she also taught me the heart and humility behind the work," Higheagle Strong says.

"(Patricia Whitelinton) has helped to protect Indigenous women from violence, and has ensured previously unheard voices have been heard to great effect," Austin said to the regents. "She has helped to shape and inspire curriculum, policy, opportunities for cultural engagement, and the arts. Ms. Whitelinton's work has saved lives; it has also enriched lives and communities."

In addition to serving on the university's Native American Advisory Board and the Native American Health Sciences Tribal Advisory Board, Whitelinton was appointed by the Obama administration to the US Department of Education's National Advisory Council on Indian Education in 2009.

Her work on behalf of Native American education has taken her across the region and beyond, including serving as the state supervisor of Indian education for Washington. She is also an elder member of the Skokomish Nation.

"I feel very lucky I found what I wanted to do," Wardrop says. "It saves lives. We could not do the sophisticated surgeries we do here without transfusions. Once you're without transfusions, you purpose, and that's where happiness comes from, right?"

"We were the first group really to identify the time span that you could use for canine red blood cells," Wardrop says.

In recent years, the blood bank has grown to include four time-study students and two part-time staff for blood collection and processing, as well as Jillian Haines (99 DVM), a former student who will direct the bank as Wardrop retires this fall.

But for much of the blood bank's existence, Wardrop alone recruited blood donors, processed blood, and tracked blood inventory for patients she would help save but often never meet.

Wardrop attributes her love for animals to her father, a lifelong commercial fisherman, and her passion for medicine to her mother, a nurse. Her unswerving work ethic was fueled by her hardworking parents and the loss of her mother and grandmother two months apart when she was just 14, the same age she was when she took her first job at Elkhart Animal Hospital in her hometown of Bellingham.

Throughout her schooling and her 40-year career at WSU, Wardrop has taken that same initiative in everything she does, and she's found joy doing it.

"I feel very lucky I found what I wanted early in life and discovered an aspect of veterinary medicine I adore," she says. "I think that's all people want out of what they do. If they feel they can make a difference, it gives you purpose, and that's where happiness comes from, right?"

"It's a life of saving animals," Wardrop says.

Five decades later, many women have followed in Wardrop's footsteps to change the gender dynamics of the veterinary profession. Two-thirds of licensed veterinarians in the United States are now female, and Wardrop played an integral role in many of their careers.

A professor in her fortieth year at her alma mater, Wardrop has educated thousands of veterinarians and, for 27 years, directed the Clinical Pathology laboratory at WSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. She is also credited with starting WSU's Veterinary Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine program in 1988.

Blood from the program's volunteer canine and feline donors saves an estimated 100 animals each year.

Looking back, Wardrop considers the bank, which has served as a successful model for other blood banks at veterinary clinics across the nation, the nation's greatest career accomplishment.

"Patients that were going to die didn't," Wardrop says. "It saves lives. We could not do the sophisticated surgeries we do here without blood transfusions. We couldn't keep half of those animals in the ICU alive without transfusions. Once you're without blood, you discover how badly you need it.”

Wardrop leaves a mark on the veterinary profession when she applied to veterinary medicine as a male-dominated field. Two-thirds of licensed veterinarians in the United States are now female, and Wardrop played an integral role in many of their careers.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

The Lives of Butterflies: A Natural History of Our Planet’s Butterfly Life DAVID G. JAMES AND DAVID J. LOHMANN PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2024 This comprehensive, authoritative, and beautifully illustrated book by Washington State University entomologist David James describes the biology, ecology, and lives of butterflies around the world.

Indigenizing Archaeology: Putting Theory into Practice EDITED BY EMILY VAN ALST AND CARLTON SHIELD CHIEF GOVER UNIVERSITY PRESS OF FLORIDA: 2024 Early-career Indigenous scholars conducting research in North America are advancing archaeological study done with, by, and for members of Native descendant communities. Van Alst, assistant professor of anthropology at WSU, and other contributors highlight examples of Indigenous methodologies and approaches to research.

The Good Little Mermaid’s Guide to Bedtime EJIA SUMMER (’90 GEN. STU.) AND NICI GREGORY TUNDRA: 2024 Don’t even think about telling this fierce and ferocious, spirited, and perhaps a bit stubborn mermaid to go to bed. Sleep, as this whimsical under-the-sea children’s book declares, “is for guppies.” Sweet dreams—they’re “for garden eels.” Will the “scary” Nilda, a nine-banded armadillo, be on a quest to cure herself of anxiety in this children’s book that ventures through the wilds of Argentina. Along the way, Nilda and three armadillo friends face a jaguar, an anaconda, and more while practicing coping skills and just maybe teaching you some Spanish.

Living, Loving, and Laughing with Animals, The Adventures of a Country Veterinarian RAYMOND “RAY” EDGER ’65 DVM 2023 Raymond “Ray” Ediger, who runs Green Spring Farm in Maryland, spent more than six decades as a veterinarian. His charming memoir is full of life lessons and humorous, heartwarming stories about animals, the protagonist’s author’s own family, and his Oregon childhood.

In the Spaces between Us YVONNE HIGGINS LEACH ’83 ENGLISH KELASY BOOKS: 2023 Yvonne Higgins Leach, who splits her time between Spokane and Vashon Island, writes lyrically about nature, neighbors, home, family, shelter dogs, wild animals, and the love and understanding found in in between spaces. This exquisite collection of poems, her second full-length poetry book, is a finalist for the Sally Balbo Poetry Book Award and the Wandering Aegis Book Award.

The Bowels of Madness: A Journalist’s Manic, Delusional Journey in California’s Mental Health System STEVE DIDDY ’94 COMM. PAGE PUBLISHING: 2023 KMPH-Fresno reporter and anchor Steve Diddy explores his own tumultuous battle with mental health professionals, antipsychotic medications, jail confinement, and psychiatric facilities in this invervent memoir.

A Muckleshoot Poetry Anthology: At the Confluence of the Green and White Rivers CURATED BY SUSAN LANGGRAF WSU PRESS: 2024 This slim but compelling volume features the work of two artists and more than 50 poets of Indigenous heritage living on the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation near Auburn and writing about identity, loss, home, and family.

I, Albert Peabody: Confessions of a Serial Killer JERRY P. SCHELLHAMMER ’87 ENGLISH WSU PRESS: 2024 Albert Peabody was a lanky, mild-mannered, 85-year-old serial killer as he chronicles the calculated killings he’s committed over the course of decades.

Journey in California’s Mental Health System with this lively and approachable guide to dining out in Spokane.

Here are this year’s Top Ten Seniors:

ACADEMICS
Felicia Adesope (’24 Accounting, Mgmt, Info, Sys.) plans to go to grad school to continue studying management information systems. Stevie Fawcett (’24 Spanish, Microbiol.) aims to become a physician scientist and plans to work toward his MD/PhD while studying cancer therapy strategies.

ATHLETICS
Preston Bebich (’24 Econ.), a four-year letter winner in men’s golf, dreams of competing in the PGA Tour Americas. Former captain of the women’s basketball team Charlise Leger-Walker (’24 Busi.) plans to play professional basketball.

The WSU Alumni Association and Student Alumni Ambassadors oversee the program. A committee of faculty, staff, and students chooses two winners in each category based on criteria such as leadership activities and academic achievements.

They represent the highest standards of the college experience. In academics. In athletics. In the arts. In campus involvement and community service.

For more than 80 years, Washington State University has recognized 10 seniors from each graduating class. These students come from across all WSU campuses and embody the best of five areas of college life.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT
Reem Osman (’24 Comp. Sci.) is a software engineer whose favorite memories at WSU Tri-Cities were made at hackathons. Sidney Serna (’24 Dig. Tech. & Cult.) served as the president of the digital media club.

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Alexis Dunn (’24 Biol.) hopes to attend the WSU Eben S. Fordyce College of Medicine. Zack Marian (’24 Const. Mgmt.) is a field engineer for a general contractor, working his way toward becoming a construction superintendent.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
Logan Terry (’24 Music Ed.) loves Cougar Marching Band and hopes to become a college marching band director. Thomas Wieland (’24 Music, Int. Busi. & Finance) is pursuing a master’s degree in jazz studies.

Read longer profiles and watch videos of the 2024 Top Ten Seniors at wsu.edu/top10seniors.
The New England Patriots have a renovated football stadium, complete with a new light tower, thanks to architect ERIC WILLIAMS (’84 Arch. Studios and Const. Mgmt., ’89 Arch.).

Williams, an associate principal with the Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects firm in Boston, led the $350 million renovation of Gillette Stadium, home of the NFL team. The renovation, which was completed in 2023, includes a new four-and-a-half acre plaza at the entrance to the stadium and to the welcoming 22-story light tower. Its 360-degree observation deck, the Lookout, offers year-round, panoramic views of the stadium and surrounding areas, including Boston and Providence skylines.

The renovation also includes the country’s largest curved radius video board, measuring 60 feet by 375 feet. Permanent bars and concession locations with check-out free Zippin technology, an expanded Row of Honor viewing area for veterans, and a glass-enclosed field-level club space with views of the team tunnel were also added to the stadium.

Before the Patriots stadium work, Williams received his Master of Architecture II at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He was one of 12 students engaged in multi-year research of the Elements of Architecture exhibition for the 2014 Architecture Biennale, and he later worked on editing the research material for inclusion in architect Rem Koolhaas’s book The Elements of Architecture.

BY LARRY CLARK
EDWARD NIEHL, a former Cougar football player and longtime high school coach and athletic director, turned 100 on March 5. Niehl (’31 Phys. Ed., ’34 Ed.) spent his entire career in the Bethel School District in Puyallup—from a woodshop and mechanical drawing teacher to physical education teacher and head football coach. He also served as head baseball coach, assistant basketball coach, and recreation director, ending his career at the district as the athletic director.

On December 4, 1981, the Bethel High School gymnasium was dedicated in his honor. Highlights from his football coaching career include a team that went undefeated and unscored upon for the 1955 season and another that finished the season as number one in the state.

"I enjoy watching kids play, but many times I think parents push kids too hard," Niehl told Bethel’s Brave Talk in March 2001. "I hear so much talk about kids not learning enough, but they know so many more things than we knew that age. Elementary students should be playing instead of being bogged down with homework. That is where the real lessons are learned."

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

NIEHL ‘79, ’80

COURTESY TRISH (NAGEL) NIEHL

WSU College of Medicine’s Nutrition and Exercise Physiology department.

DEVIN LEWIS (’99 Soc.) captains the Redmond Police Department. Lewis had served the Bend (Oregon) Police Department since 2004, most recently as a lieutenant. He served as an apprentice for the Washington County Sheriff’s Office in 1994, later becoming deputy with Deschutes County in 1999 before moving to Bend. As captain, Lewis works closely with the police chief to provide general oversight and management of department operations.

KEVIN VAN DE WIESE (’72 Soc. Sci.) is leaving the Washington state legislature after 14 years of service when his term as a state senator ends in January. He is chair of the Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee and is one of the legislature’s foremost authorities on rural issues.

HIDIE I. COX BAINE (’74 Vet. Med., ’77 DVM) will lead the first and only veterinary school in Arkansas. Banse was named dean of the forthcoming College of Veterinary Medicine at Arkansas State University. Previously, she was associate dean for education strategy at Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine. She is a member of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges Council on Outcomes-based Veterinary Education and Spectrum of Care Initiative. Her clinical research has focused on mechanisms of canine glomerular disease and endocrine disorders in humans.


LESLIE BOOREN (’97 Animal) was awarded $100,000 by University of Virginia for her proposal to support the retention and professional development of the university’s restricted research staff. Booren is the associate director of operations and communications for the Youth-Nex Center at UVa’s School of Education and Human Development.

NICOLAS SARYP (’17 Finance) is the chief financial officer for the city of Little Rock, Arkansas. Previously, he was the director of finance for Waco, Texas, and deputy finance director for Kansas City, Missouri.

JULIAN REYES (’10, ’18 M.D., Eng.) is a climate adaptation program lead for the Bureau of Land Management. Previously, he was the assistant director for climate services for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and deputy director for services in the US Global Change Research Program.

PADDICK CANNEL CORCKLATE, a company cofounded by BLAKE (LOO) PRESTON (’14 Wine Bus. Mgmt.), won a Double Gold medal at the San Francisco International Spirits Competition, outscoring Absolut, Bacardi, Smirnoff, and other renowned producers. Preston and her husband, Cary, partnered with NICK LEE (’92 Dig. Tech. & Com.) and Nick Robertson to form Paddock after the couple started canning cocktails while their Pimm’s bar, El Brujo, was shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHRISTOPHER CLARK (’20 PhD Econ.) was awarded the 2024 Dole Academic Technology Award, sponsored by WSU Global Campus, for his innovative use of instructional videos he shares with students via YouTube and TikTok. He has produced more than 50 instructional videos and hundreds of short educational videos that have earned him more than 60,000 followers and millions of views on TikTok. Clarke is an assistant professor in the School of Economic Sciences.

You’ve counted on us to educate the next generation of veterinarians since 1899—and you always can.

THE FUTURE VETERINARIANS

Stephanie Scoville (’24 DVM) from Hawaii is one of nearly 3,000 doctors of veterinary medicine to earn her degree from WSU in the last 125 years. She now works at a mixed-animal general practice in eastern Washington.

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TRAINING FUTURE VETERINARIANS

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Pharmacists provide direct patient care, including in intensive care units, to hospital patients, to home care recipients, in community pharmacies, and more.

Pharmacists do more than dispense therapies—they save lives.

DASH, the Washington State University Alumni Association’s “ambassadog” and the only canine member of the Mag Club at the legendary Pullman bar The Couch, has died. He was 13.

And Edlund, a 15-year-old golden retriever, was the WSU Alumni Association’s “ambassadog” and the only canine member of the Mag Club at the legendary Pullman bar The Couch.

And Edlund got Dash as a pup in 2011 and created the dash.dog Instagram account in 2015. When a 2018 post of Dash holding a hot dog in his mouth during Bark in the Park Night at a Seattle Mariners game went viral and was featured on Good Morning America, Edlund saw an opportunity to use his pet’s celebrity status for public good.

The beloved golden retriever did social media account takeovers for the WSUAA and The Couch. Dash also directed attention and fund raising toward many worthy causes and organizations. For seven years, Dash produced his own wall calendar benefiting the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

While he had other social media accounts, Dash’s largest community—more than 65,800 followers when he crossed the Rainbow Bridge—was on Instagram. Posts were largely written in the dog’s voice.

Dash’s accounts are still active, but these days fans see more of his protege, Edlund’s younger golden retriever, Chase. Dash’s accounts are still active, but these days fans see more of his protege, Edlund’s younger golden retriever, Chase.

Tri, after his passing, Edlund wrote on Instagram, “You had the sweetest smile, the happiest trot, the softest ears, and the floofiest belly. You made me a better human. You were perfect.”

By Adriana Janovich


TODD ALAN DIERKOP (‘80 Agro.), 65, October 31, 2023, Pullman. DENNIS ALAN FALE(‘82 Ag Ed), 64, March 19, 2024, Grandview. AMANDA RENEE RENSLOW(‘87 Audio/Vis), 55, February 21, 2024, Tacoma.


FACULTY AND STAFF


GARY JAY HALDORSON, 60, Veterinary Pathology, 1998-2024, March 19, 2024, Pullman.
Each year, thousands of Cougs have their photos taken with the iconic bronze statue of Butch that greets fans and visitors near the entrance of Gesa Field on the WSU Pullman campus.

Known as Cougar Pride, the statue was generously commissioned by Gary Schneidmiller in 2008 and commemorates Butch’s Den, the site where live cougar mascots lived from 1927 until 1978. Two renowned Spokane artists, Mike Fields and his father, Chester, created the regal cougar that looks ready to pounce at a moment’s notice.

The plaque below the statue pays tribute to the history of the live cougar mascot era and honors Schneidmiller’s parents, Manuel and Gladys Schneidmiller.

Now, more than a decade after he gifted the statue, Schneidmiller has brought Cougar Pride sculptures to WSU Tri-Cities (spring 2023), WSU Spokane (spring 2024), WSU Vancouver (spring 2024), and WSU Everett (summer 2024).

“Gary’s gift is an incredible gesture exemplifying his passion for WSU,” said Mike Connell, vice president for Advancement and CEO of the WSU Foundation.

If you would like to support the statues, please consider a gift to a campus excellence fund.

PHOTOS: SHELLY HANKS & ROBERT HUBNER (INSET)
DEAR READER:

Thank you for enjoying Washington State Magazine. We love to bring you stories of Washington State University and its connections to the world. However, due to increased print production costs and budget reductions, we need to change the distribution of the magazine.

The Fall issue each year—like the one you’re reading—will continue to mail to most alumni.

The Winter and Spring issues will be automatically sent to alumni who have donated $10 or more in the last two years, as well as WSU Alumni Association members, paid subscribers, and some non-alumni donors.

The Summer issue will continue to be sent exclusively to WSU Alumni Association members and paid subscribers.

How to receive the magazine

If you wish to receive all issues, you can join the WSU Alumni Association: alumni.wsu.edu

To receive the Fall, Winter, and Spring issues, please consider giving $10 or more to WSU. For Winter 2024, please donate by October 1. Donations can be to any program or department. magazine.wsu.edu/give-WSU

All magazine issues and stories are available online in several formats. To keep up with new stories, videos, podcast episodes, and more, follow the magazine on social media or sign up for our monthly email newsletter. magazine.wsu.edu/email

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