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PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER

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Washington State Magazine is published three times a year by Washington State University. **Editorial office:** IT Building 2013, 1670 NE Wilson Road, Pullman, Washington; 509-335-2388. **Mailing address:** PO Box 641227, Pullman, WA 99164-1227. Printed in the USA. © 2025 Washington State University Board of Regents. All rights reserved. Views expressed in *Washington State Magazine* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official policy of Washington State University.

The Spring and Fall issues of Washington State magazine are distributed free to alumni, friends, faculty, and staff. The Summer issue is exclusive to WSUAA members and paid subscribers. Subscribe or gift the magazine for \$25 yearly (magazine.wsu.edu/subscribe). **Change of address:** Biographical and Records Team, PO Box 641927, Pullman, WA 99164-1927; address.updates@wsu.edu; 800-448-2978.

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Local action Most of us seek happiness, friendship, and community in our lives. There's a proven way to find all three: volunteer where you live.

When people join together in their town or neighborhood, they can identify and fulfill their local needs. Everyone involved wins when neighbors build bonds of trust, particularly during a difficult and divided time.

On Whidbey Island, a lack of energy options led to a grassroots effort to convert to heat pumps (with support from the Washington State University Extension Energy Program). In Port Angeles and Clallam County, community members and Extension pulled together and made a commercial kitchen a reality, to reduce both food waste and food insecurity.

It's part of WSU's DNA to encourage a local focus. That often transfers to alumni and others connected to WSU. Cougar Nation, Washington state, and the Pacific Northwest are full of stories of volunteerism, in which communities tackle needed projects.

Recognizing a need, and sometimes even building a new community, goes way back. In the early days of Washington State College, a group of women formed the Fortnightly Club to read and discuss literature for their mutual intellectual enjoyment. It is still around 132 years later, a shining example of the staying power of shared interests.

When you give to your community, it gives back too. Jeremiah Allison ('16 Crim. Just.) starred as a Coug football player and as a dedicated volunteer in Pullman and his home city of Los Angeles. The WSU community in turn supported him through tough times and helped him achieve his dream of becoming an attorney—currently for the Minnesota Vikings.

Whether it's an alumni chapter, a service club, or just a group of neighbors with a purpose, anyone can make meaningful change and boost their happiness with a project just down the street.

P.S. If you visit the Pullman campus this fall, check out this issue's online map of museums and exhibits. It's a great chance to reconnect with the WSU community and see some cool gems ([see page 15](#)).

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Advertising guide is online at magazine.wsu.edu/advertising.

Washington State Magazine is pleased to acknowledge the generous support of alumni and friends of WSU, including a major gift from Phillip M. '40 and June Lighty.

Dear readers: *Washington State Magazine* will be changing its **schedule and frequency** after this issue. We'll still bring you great stories from Washington State University and Coug alumni, but we will have three print issues each year. The next issue will be in January 2026, then May and August.

There are also some exciting new changes coming to the digital side of *WSM*: **more stories, videos, podcasts, and other content** in a central WSU story website.

TALKback

New way of thinking?

It is not entirely correct to say that George Washington founded the town of Centralia alone (“Black history in the Northwest,” Spring 2024). He filed the plat with his wife, Mary Jane Coones Washington, whom he married in the 1860s. Together, they platted the town. It is said that it was she who realized the strategic and central location of the homestead when news of the railroad being built reached them.

As mentioned, George was a mixed-race child with a Black father and a White mother. So was Mary Jane, who was of African American and Jewish descent. As often happens in history, the important role of women in historical achievements is left out—as is a person’s lineage on the mother’s side, almost always. I hope you will work in the future to be more inclusive. It’s a relatively new way of thinking, I know. Just as it is with telling and retelling history by going beyond the white and male historical records.

ANN ANDERSON

Description vs. prescription

When my friend Hannah applied to WSU’s vet school in the early 1970s, she was asked, “Why do you want to become a vet? Why don’t you marry one?”

WSU has come a long way since then. The total student enrollment is 53+ percent female. The faculty is 52 percent female (per College Factual).

Yet, a former Association for Faculty Women president notes that “some departments” have very few women in them (“Celebrating the returns on equity,” Spring 2025). The data suggest that some departments have very few men in them. Is that a concern or should we only care if women are underrepresented?

A definition of “equity” would be useful to include in the article. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has no entry for “equity.” It has no entry for “social justice.”

RICHARD MCGOWAN,
'76 MA PHILOSOPHY



Trummelbach Falls in Switzerland, September 2024. Left to right: Lori (Lee) Williams ('82 Clothing & Textiles, '89 MBA), Glenn Williams ('89 Busi.), Vickie (Cash) Frick ('82 Speech Comm.), Larry Frick ('81 Elec. Eng.). **Go Cougs!**

What’s on your mind, Cougs? Let us know at:

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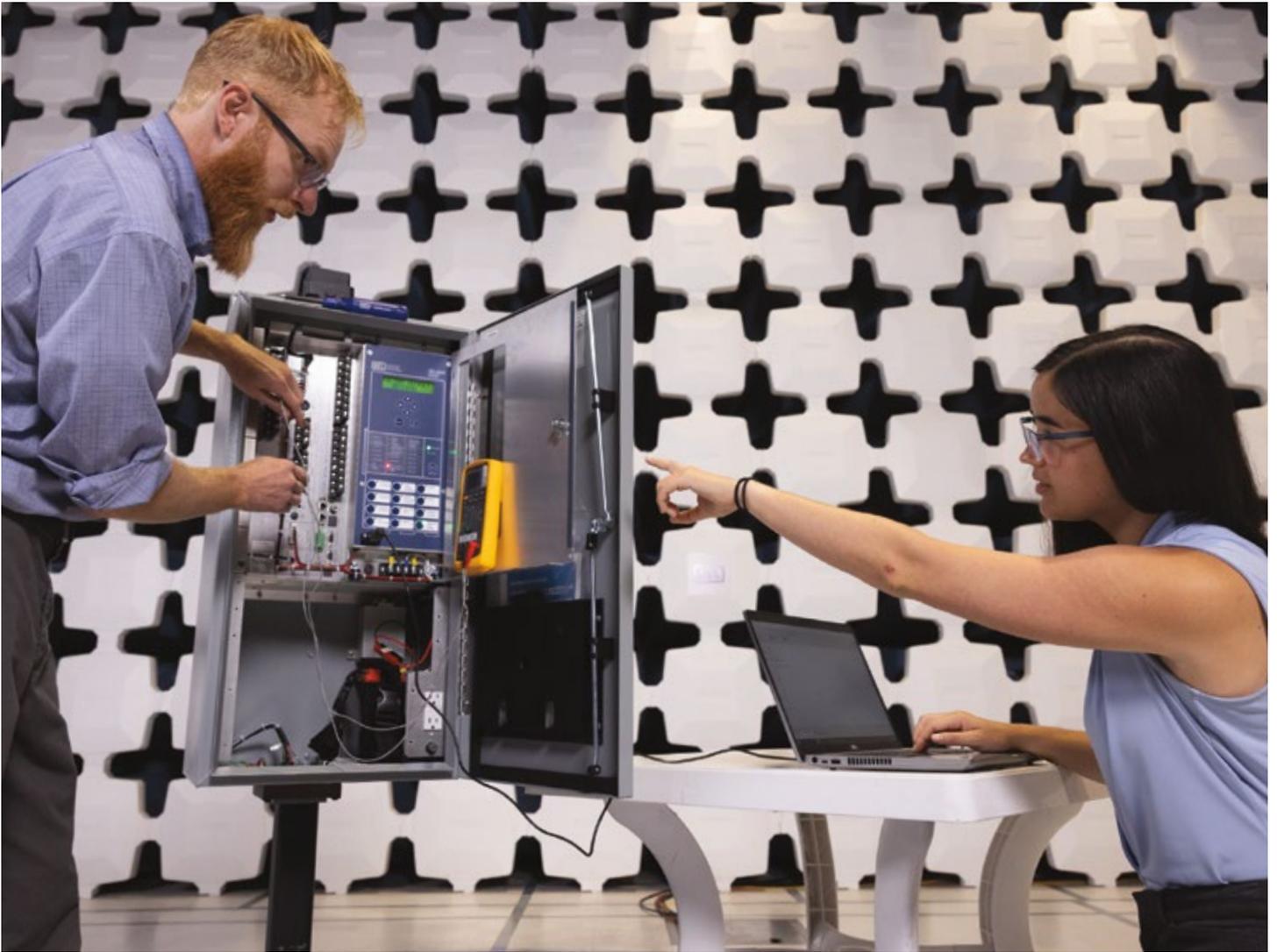
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Friday afternoon, Feb. 3d, the Fortnightly Club held its regular meeting. Mrs. Wallis read the concluding paper on *The Scarlet Letter*; subject: "What defence is there for so much that is repellent in *Scarlet Letter*." The regular program for the day then followed:

MARBLE FAUN.

Historical. Mrs. E. A. Bryan
 Character of Hilda Mrs. E. Fulmer
 Character of Miriam. Miss Annie Howard
 Sprightly discussion followed each paper.

And ladies of the Pullman club

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Shakespeare was an early and repeat visitor.

So was **Robert Browning, William Butler Yeats, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf** popped in too.

Booklets with "PFC" embossed on the covers name every author who has appeared at Pullman Fortnightly Club since its inception, and it's an impressive list.

Sophocles. Dante. Percy Shelley. Charles Dickens. Emily Dickinson. Just to name a few.

Reading selections show the academic fortitude of the generations of women who founded, participated in, and continue to keep alive the longtime Washington State University–related literary tradition. Established in 1893, the **Fortnightly Club** is the oldest continually operating book club in Pullman. It's also one of the oldest in the Pacific Northwest and entire country. "I love the history of it," says former WSU registrar Julia Pomerenk, who joined the club in 2011.

"Any organization that's 132 years old is pretty remarkable."

The early roster reads like a Who's Who of the founding of the university. Its membership rolls feature women who share names with buildings on campus: Nancy Van Doren, Ida Bohler, Helen Fulmer, Belle Waller, Charlotte Kruegel, Peg Eastlick, and, of course, founder Harriet "Hattie" Bryan, wife of the third—but first long-term—president of the small agricultural college that would become WSU.

"The story is that when they arrived, she thought, 'We need some culture for women in this town,'" says Barbara Hammond ('80 MS, '83 PhD Psych.), who joined the club in 2010, a year after she retired from WSU as the director of counseling and testing services. "I'm a newbie," she quips.

Other current members joined in the 1980s and '90s. Karen Kiessling, the first female mayor of Pullman, joined in 1972.

"When I was invited to join, I accepted immediately," Kiessling recalls. "What could be better than being part of a club that stressed literary merit, assigned you a topic, required an hour-long presentation on that topic, and was made up of a remarkable group of women who could handle such assignments?"

BRYAN ARRIVED IN PULLMAN three years after the founding of what was then Washington Agricultural College and one year after the institution welcomed its first students. She traveled from Indiana, where her husband had been president of Vincennes University and she was a member of a women's literary circle founded in 1891, also dubbed Fortnightly and part of a larger trend.

Fortnightly societies, named for how often the clubs met, were springing up across



UPfront

NEWSPAPER CLIPPING INSET FROM THE PULLMAN HERALD, NOVEMBER 9, 1895 (SOURCE: NEWSPAPERS.COM)

the country, which was—when Bryan came to the Palouse—overcome with widespread despair caused by the Panic of 1893, the worst economic depression in history before the Great Depression. Pullman, incorporated five years earlier, had only some 900 residents. “The campus was then a cornfield,” Bryan recalled 15 years later. The “village,” as she referred to Pullman, had just three telephones—“one at the college and one at each railway station.”

It was pouring rain the day she arrived. That night, there was a murder in downtown’s new Artesian Hotel. Pullman, she quickly surmised, needed a women’s study group. So she assembled “a few choice spirits” to organize one over tea. Article II of the club’s constitution, adopted that November 27, clearly states its purpose:

“the mutual improvement of its members and the study and enjoyment of literature.”

Through Fortnightly, Bryan—like many of her contemporaries as well as later members in the next 13 decades—found “a source of strength, and light, and a better intellectual life.”

FORTNIGHTLY HASN'T CHANGED much since its inception. The club still meets twice a month during most of the academic year. Dues are paid annually. Meetings adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order. Members are expected to show up, accept any office they



are asked to fill, and complete assigned book reports, formally presented to the members.

“I think everybody really enjoys the tradition of it,” Hammond says. “It’s like a salon.”



Barbara Hammond

Fortnightly has much in common with private social gatherings, dating at least to sixteenth-century Europe, in which attendees discussed literature, art, and other intellectual topics. Salons were often hosted by well-connected and well-to-do women, patrons of the arts who gave writers, artists, and intellectuals platforms to connect and share ideas.

While Fortnightly includes time for socializing, it also resembles a college-level course—and has since the beginning. The first presentations, held December 8, 1893, at the home of Margaret Morrell, explored *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Bryan discussed Hawthorne’s life. Fulmer gave a synopsis of the novel. Annie Howard led a character study. Ella Jackson led a study of the prologue.

Early on, the club spent several weeks on a particular author, book, or theme, and read works by mostly male authors. Geoffrey Chaucer. William Wordsworth. Honoré de Balzac. George Bernard Shaw. Joseph Conrad.

Members now make an effort to read contemporary books by women and authors of varying ethnicities and nationalities. “We read a graphic novel a year or two ago, and I think that was kind of edgy for us,” Pomerenk says.



Julia Pomerenk

Themes from the recent past include Indigenous writers of the Pacific Northwest, US presidents, favorite American authors, favorite Canadian authors, humor, betrayal, and the presence of absence. This year’s theme: “Surviving the Journey.”

The aim is to read about 11 books each year. By the end of this year, that roughly totals some 1,450 volumes.

PHOTO SOURCES (LEFT TO RIGHT): WSU MASC; WSU FILE PHOTO; UNIV. OF OREGON; OPPOSITE: COURTESY MOSCOW-PULLMAN DAILY NEWS



Hattie Bryan



BYLAWS HAVE LOOSENED throughout the decades. Handwork, such as embroidery or knitting, used to be entirely outlawed; now—and this was a compromise—it’s only barred during meetings with guest speakers. A candidate must be proposed by two members and voted into the invite-only club by a simple majority; a unanimous vote used to be required.

Compared to other book clubs, the format is, well, “rigid. There have been people in the club who have decided it’s not for them because they wanted a freer form,” Hammond says. “For people who liked school, this is fabulous. It works for those of us who stay in it.”

To liven up one of her presentations, Hammond, club archivist and a psychologist, delivered her talk “as if it were a therapy case. I wrote an intake report, then talked about what the author might have brought into therapy as part of the narrative.” The book: 2017’s *You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me: A Memoir* by Sherman Alexie (’94 Amer. Stu.), a former student of her husband, Alex Hammond, an emeritus associate professor of English at WSU.



Karen Kiessling

“All books are supposed to be of literary merit,” Hammond notes. “I love it because it forces, or encourages, me to read things that I never would never have selected on my own, and I end up just being fascinated by them.” ✨

Civil discourse

BY LARRY CLARK

Effective political debate, discussion, and action start with civility, and it can begin at the state level.

That’s what researchers at Washington State University and their colleagues around the country found when they looked into civility, comity, and mutual respect—even with significant political differences—among state legislators.

“It makes a big difference in the quality of public policy in states,” says Nicholas Lovrich, emeritus Regents Professor of political science at WSU.

Government gridlock, toxic partisanship, and lack of trust have been infusing US politics from the federal level on down for years. In light of the worsening situation, including in Washington state, then-Secretary of State Sam Reed (’63 Soc. Stud., ’68 MA Poli. Sci.) in 2009 wanted to know the effect of civility on the state’s legislative process.



His challenge was answered by WSU’s Division of Governmental Studies and Services to collect the data and present it to the legislature, staff, and lobbyists.

Lovrich and Francis Benjamin (’06 Psych., ’14 MA Poli. Sci.), an instructor and data analyst for the Department of Psychology, led the study. They surveyed interns, registered voters, lobbyists, legislative staff, and current and former legislators from a wide range of party affiliations and geography.

“We wanted a 360-degree view of what was really happening,” Benjamin says. “We were asking, ‘How do we help the legislature make the best decisions?’”

Among their findings: nearly 95 percent of legislators felt that bipartisan collaboration improved the effectiveness of the legislative process. But legislators also said they worked in a more bipartisan manner compared to others.

After presentation of the findings in Olympia in 2010, word reached the National Institute for Civil Discourse, and the WSU researchers joined collaborators on a nationwide survey of legislative lobbyists.

Why lobbyists? Benjamin and Lovrich discovered that, among the groups surveyed, lobbyists were the most responsive, most likely to offer informed commentary, and most interested in discussing the results of civility surveys. Lobbyists also know the value of a functional legislative process as they work with legislators in both parties.

“Lobbyists were actually the most open and the most consistent in their answers,” Benjamin says. “They really have their finger on the pulse of the legislative process.”

In *Outside Looking In: Lobbyists’ Views on Civil Discourse in U.S. State Legislatures* (WSU Press, 2021), findings showed differences among state legislatures on the level of civil discourse, but there was almost universal agreement that weakening civility norms and hyper-partisanship reduced the effective operation of state government.

Unfortunately, televised legislative work and social media have fed acrimony and lessened civil discussions, Lovrich says. “It put a strain on important relationships” when



constituents would see and question why legislators were talking to the “enemy.”

There may be ways to overcome the decline in civility.

Benjamin and William D. Schreckhise looked at professional legislatures, where legislators are compensated, as a possible way to improve civility. Another is to pass on civil discourse norms to new legislators, when they have to leave behind the hostility of campaign environments for a more collegial legislative world.

One thing is clear, say Lovrich and Benjamin. The public benefits if legislators discuss ideas in a civil manner, even when Republicans and Democrats disagree on policies and ideas. It’s a matter of building trust and relationships.

“We need the voices of better angels to be heard and not be drowned out,” Lovrich says. ✨

LEFT TO RIGHT: NICHOLAS LOVRICH AND FRANCIS BENJAMIN (COURTESY WSU LABS)

A new president steps forward

CAMPUS PHOTOS BY DEAN HARE & ROBERT HUBNER

When Washington State University President **Elizabeth “Betsy” Cantwell** was interviewed for this story in late April, there was a long shadow over higher education, one cast by state budget woes and federal disruptions. No one could predict what would happen by August, when the story was set to publish.

But certain things were clear, Cantwell observed. “We know our mission is to make sure anyone who wants an education like we offer has access to one. We know our communities need us. And we know our Cougs love us.”

Cantwell was less than a month into her job as WSU’s twelfth president, having come from the same position at Utah State University. Her résumé also includes senior leadership positions in research and innovation at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University, and service to US national security with strategic roles at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and at Oak Ridge and Los Alamos National Laboratories.

She’d recently returned from a whistle-stop tour of WSU campuses around the state.

One of her takeaways is that WSU is in a better position to push past hurdles than many other colleges and universities around the country. With newer buildings and facilities on all five of WSU’s physical campuses, “we’ve been well taken care of by the state of Washington,” she says.

“You don’t see that all that often,” she adds. “As a nation, most of our investments into public higher education were made in the ’50s and ’60s. Having that gives us enormous run room to be innovative.”

She says WSU has a strong brand that is, like its logo, recognized around the world. And the university’s dedication to students is evident, with a smorgasbord of academic, financial, social, and community-based programs available across all campuses.

Nevertheless, changes are coming.

The long-predicted and long-dreaded, among higher education professionals, “enrollment cliff” has arrived. A falling birth rate that began in 2007 means a drop-off in the number of 18-year-olds graduating from high schools, who make up the traditional pool of college students.

But change is also coming through technology and innovation, and through an evolution of the concept of higher education.

“While the experience of coming to campus will endure, because that brings a lot of value, for some the days of taking four or five years of your life to go to school will be

waning,” Cantwell says. “That doesn’t mean what we do, or the excellence we bring to our mission, won’t be available. We just will do it in new and different ways.”

Different might mean offering shorter programs to help working professionals gain skills needed to advance in their careers. Or it could mean instruction that combines faculty discussion with immersive technologies or digital experiences, a hybrid approach that’s already in use in some programs

Cantwell believes artificial intelligence has great potential for higher education—to complement, not replace, faculty and staff. For example, AI could bring personalized learning by assessing a student’s progress and designing educational components that target that student’s gaps. It could alert counselors that a student is in mental distress.

PULLMAN



EVERETT



A letter from President Cantwell

PORTRAIT PHOTO WSU VIDEO SERVICES

Envisioning what *can* be

I may be your newest WSU president, but I’ve had a long career as an academic leader and research scientist, mostly in the western United States. So I arrived with insight into Washington State University.

Here are a few things I knew coming in: Cougar alumni are dedicated and passionate. WSU students are sought-after by employers because of the strength of their education. And WSU faculty are highly respected in their disciplines. Once I started the job, I quickly learned that Cougs are also kind-spirited, generous, and determined.

All of those qualities will be needed to help us navigate the changing landscape we’re traveling.

If the issue were just athletics, or enrollment, or research funding, or instructional methods, it would be a big enough lift. Tackling generational change in all four of those areas at once won’t be easy. But I’m confident it’s possible.

We start from the same place in each case: envisioning what could be.

We have the knowledge and the imagination to explore possibilities. How will our grandchildren learn? Will they attend college in-person, and for how long? How will businesses support our mission to our mutual benefit? And how will student athletes compete in the new athletic financial markets at the same time they’re competing on the field and the court, and in the classroom?

As we work on these questions, we’re lucky to have a committed alumni network who will pitch in with counsel, industry feedback, and support to help us bring our plans to life.

Our history will always be with us, but we must change. This is a critical moment in higher education.

It’s not in my nature to give up; and as Cougs, I know it’s not in yours either. I invite you to join me in this work of refining, revising, remaking, and reawakening Washington State University.

Go Cougs!

“It really expands the world of the possible,” she says.

To get there, Cantwell likes the strategic process of future-casting: imagining various possibilities, then developing plans around those. For instance, WSU Health Sciences might bring in WSU alumni in the health care professions to discuss how they think delivery of care could change in coming decades. That helps structure discussions of how education might need to adapt.

“When you do that, you create a learning organization, and you disaggregate power and authority,” she says. “People have permission to think big and talk about their ideas. And people in universities are very, very good at coming up with interesting new ideas.”

Cantwell doesn’t discount the weight of uncertainty in higher education right now. But she believes institutions like WSU will survive—and thrive. And though she is just starting her time here, she knows what she’d like her legacy to be: “That we feel good about everything Washington State University stands for, and that we fully realize our capacity to serve our communities.” ✨



VANCOUVER



TRI-CITIES



SPOKANE

Walking the talk on tours of WSU campuses, Cantwell visited Vancouver, Tri-Cities, Spokane, and Everett this spring, to meet students and faculty, see research in action, and learn about the communities.



Left: Katy Whalen. Courtesy WSU Student Engagement Services. Below: Jeanine Gordon (right front) with the WSU class at Treaty Rock. Courtesy Katy Whalen

Being there

BY KATY WHALEN

The best place to experience history is often where it happened.

On a bright sunny morning in early March this year, Assistant Professor of History Ryan Booth ('21 PhD History) and I shuttled a group of history majors out of the classroom to Walla Walla, where they learned about public memory, contested histories, and what can be gained from looking at the past through a different lens.

Our first stop was the Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Known to the Cayuse peoples for thousands of years as Waailatpu, it is also the place where Marcus and Narcissa Whitman established their Protestant mission in 1836, one of the first in the Pacific Northwest. Nearly 12 years after their arrival, the Whitmans and 11 other White people were killed after increasing White settlement and disease outbreak. The Whitmans' reluctance to culturally adapt also led to Cayuse frustration.

At the mission site, students learned about interpretation of the events there in the decades that followed the killings, which largely cast the Whitmans as innocent victims of a savage massacre. The pair became martyrs within a heroic and patriotic narrative of westward expansion.

More recently historians have complicated this narrative and placed it within a larger framework of prideful settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession. The National Park Service has installed new signage at the site inviting visitors to consider what happened there through Indigenous

perspectives. For their part, the Cayuse have always understood Waailatpu as part of the land from which they come, and the killings as an act meant to preserve their community.

Students are asked to analyze primary sources and discuss change over time in classrooms, but it is infinitely more powerful when done in the actual place where the history being examined occurred. Rachael Waagen ('25 Ed., Soc. Stu.) remarked that though she and her peers learn about the historically marginalized and ignored, it was not until visiting the Whitman Mission that she saw "those biased and silencing narratives being changed" in a practical way.

Kyleigh Davis ('25 History) agreed, saying she especially appreciated how public historians can drive those changes when they make bold decisions to reframe old narratives in ways that seek not to alienate but invite folks into unfamiliar and uncomfortable conversations.

Park Ranger Kate Kunkel-Patterson told students she hopes visitors feel connected, heard, and inspired. She believes that place-based experiences can help people form emotional connections to what they are seeing and hearing.

We then traveled to Whitman College where Jeanine Gordon, enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and special assistant to the Whitman College president for Native American outreach, hosted a First Foods luncheon for us. Students learned about the cultural and spiritual significance of the foods we were eating as well as of the traditional deer-hide dress and basket hat Gordon wore.

After feasting on roasted root vegetables, bison meatballs, and frybread with huckleberry jam, Gordon told the history of the

Walla Walla Treaty Council of 1855 which drew 5,000 tribal leaders and delegates from across the Columbia Plateau to the current site of Whitman College. Many of Gordon's ancestors signed the treaty, including her fifth great-grandfather, Chief Peo Peo Mox Mox, heralded leader and head chief of the Walla Walla tribe. In those treaties, Indigenous peoples agreed to cede land to the US government but were promised continued access to their traditional hunting and fishing lands—promises that have not always been kept.

A walk across Whitman's central lawn led us to Treaty Rock ("Pewaooyit"), a large boulder the Yakima, Nez Perce, Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla Tribes donated to the college in 1955 to commemorate the approximate place where the treaty was signed.

As we gathered around the memorial, Gordon explained the significance of the treaty for her peoples: "Our treaty that was made in agreement with the United States is part of the supreme law of the land, along with the Constitution and US laws. It has the force of federal law and is a binding agreement between our tribal nation and the nation of the United States. The treaty establishes and reinforces our guaranteed rights and sovereignty as a tribal nation."

At the end of the trip, Ryan and I led students in a conversation about the different but intersecting histories they had encountered throughout the day, how public memorials help tell those histories, and how the landscape itself can shape our understandings of the past. *

Katy Whalen ('11 PhD History) is an associate professor of history and assistant director of the Roots of Contemporary Issues program at WSU.



World views

BY BECKY KRAMER

From his Pullman apartment, John Williams spent his Thursday mornings last spring interacting with people from all over the world.

Brokering a deal in India typically starts with pleasantries exchanged over a cup of tea, the Washington State University junior learned as part of his online International Relations and Global Leadership class.

Saudi Arabia values its strategic partnerships with the United States and the European Union, but also works with Russia and China.

And China—with its large, upwardly mobile population—is a valuable market for American beef, soybeans, and other US agricultural exports.

Williams appreciated the chance to hear people from other countries discuss business, trade, and political systems. “I want to work for a multinational corporation or start-up, so I was looking for that broader global perspective,” he says. “This has been my best class for that objective.”

Not everyone gets to do a study abroad or travel internationally, says Dipra Jha, an associate dean and faculty member at the Carson College of Business, who teaches the class.

“So we’re bringing the world to the classroom, allowing students to hear different perspectives and voices,” he says. “It’s more meaningful to students than me lecturing from a PowerPoint.”

Jha, who joined WSU in 2020, draws on his extensive network to recruit speakers. New this year was Saudi Arabia’s

permanent representative to the United Nations, who discussed the country’s 80-year relationship with the United States, along with energy and tourism initiatives.

Jha had taught the diplomat’s daughter during a semester at César Ritz Colleges in Switzerland. A speaker from the East African island nation of Mauritius is an acquaintance through a mutual friend.

WSU students also interacted with students from universities in Kosovo, Ukraine, and the republic of Georgia, who joined the class with their professors through a collaborative online learning arrangement. The classes started at 7:45 a.m. Pacific

Time to accommodate a variety of time zones.

About 40 percent of the jobs in Washington state are tied to international trade. “This class gives our students the opportunity to understand how the world operates,” Jha says. “If they’re going to have an internationally engaged career, they’ll need to be able to work with people from other countries.”

The way people conduct business in the United States, “where communication is direct and time is sacrosanct,” won’t necessarily work in other countries, he says.

Ashish Dahiya, a professor at Maharshi Dayanand University in India, told students that professional relationships in his country are often built on

personal rapport. Something as simple as having a cup of tea together plays a meaningful role in establishing trust and respect.

Students also need to know that patience is a virtue in Indian culture. Decisions are made by consensus. Respecting hierarchy within organizations is the norm. And while meetings might start late, they’re usually very productive once they get going, Dahiya says.

“People appreciate knowing that you understand a few of their cultural norms,” Jha says. “Most of the world is forgiving if you make some stumbles, but it’s good to learn from your mistakes.”

Other speakers talked about the value of international trade for US agriculture. Soybeans, corn, beef, dairy, and pork are important export commodities for Midwest growers, while Washington state is a top agricultural exporter for apples, wheat, and other fruits and vegetables.

Williams says the class got him interested in a study abroad in Asia. He’s also considering Spain, where he could

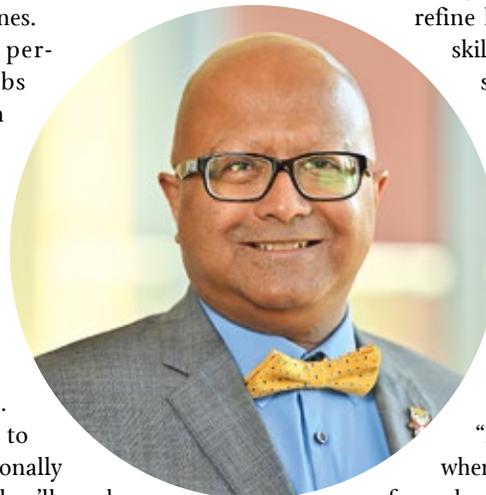
refine his Spanish language skills. Being in class with students from other countries, particularly Ukraine, was also eye-opening, he says.

“The students from Ukraine talked about what’s going on in their lives,” Williams says. “It was nerve-racking when we learned their professor had air-raid sirens go off during a lecture.”

It’s important that students learn to connect the dots between world events and the economy, Jha says.

“How does the war between Ukraine and Russia impact global wheat prices, and ultimately the cost of baked goods at Safeway?” he says. “It’s a big epiphany for many of our students, because they haven’t thought about these things.” *

COURTESY JOHN WILLIAMS



DIPRA JHA (PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER)

Below: Paper assay for measuring smoke biomarkers in urine; 3-D-printed attachment magnifies image on cellphone camera; app quantifies benzene metabolite levels.

A personal smoke detector

BY BECKY KRAMER

Wildland firefighters spend their summers steeped in woodsmoke.

Whether they're working a 16-hour shift or sleeping in a tent at a fire camp, breathing smoky air is an occupational hazard linked to increased risk of lung cancer, leukemia, and other serious health problems.

To measure woodsmoke exposure, a Washington State University-led team has developed a low-cost, self-administered test for firefighters. It could be a game changer not only for the thousands of people who fight wildfires each year but others exposed to chronic smoke conditions or high doses over a short period of time.

The test allows people to monitor their smoke biomarkers in real time, says Annie Du, a research professor in WSU's School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering who is leading the project. The personalized results remove the uncertainty of estimating exposure based on regional air-quality monitoring.

People can inhale dangerous amounts of woodsmoke without showing symptoms, Du says. The amount of harm also varies by individual. Two firefighters working side by side can respond differently to the same smoke conditions. One might be OK, while the other firefighter's DNA is damaged.

"Some people's bodies will protect them from smoke exposure; others will be vulnerable," says Du, who also works in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

For those who are vulnerable, "we want to catch it early," she adds. "If you feel dizzy or nauseous, if your lungs hurt, if you need to go to the hospital, that's too late. You already have clinical symptoms."

Benzene, a pollutant found in woodsmoke, is associated with health risks including blood disorders, leukemia, and other cancers. After high-dose smoke exposures, benzene levels in the body can fluctuate quickly, which is why a rapid field test for firefighters is so important, Du says.

Blood tests can also be used to measure smoke biomarkers, but those samples must be sent to a lab for analysis, which is time-consuming and costly.

A grant from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports efforts to scale up the test for use in occupational settings. Besides the WSU team, researchers at University of Washington and University of Georgia contributed to the work.

Wildland firefighters in Georgia will help validate the test's accuracy this year, providing both blood and urine samples to compare measurements for their smoke biomarkers. WSU's Office of Commercialization is also providing funds to improve the test for future use in high-risk populations, including young children and the elderly.

Climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of wildfires, putting millions of people at risk each year from woodsmoke.

Someday, individual monitoring for smoke exposure may be as familiar to people as taking a COVID-19 test, Du says. And it will help safeguard the health of people working on the fire lines.

Based on their personalized test results, supervisors might need to rearrange some firefighters' shifts.

"Or they might need to take a break and come back next season," Du says. "Otherwise, that smoke exposure will damage their DNA and increase their risk of cancer." *



Similar to pregnancy tests, the test requires a drop of urine on a paper assay. The researchers used tiny particles of platinum and palladium in the assay to improve the test's accuracy and sensitivity.

The test results aren't visible to the naked eye. But firefighters can use their smartphone cameras, a 3-D-printed attachment, and app to magnify the image and quantify the level of benzene metabolites in their urine.

STAFF ILLUSTRATION BASED ON ACS SOURCEWORKS AND PHOTOS FROM ADOBE STOCK/FIREFLY

Get real at the campus museums

It's so easy to look up virtually anything online these days, but a digital experience can't replace encounters with the physical world in museums. Ask anyone who has been face-to-face with a masterpiece painting or a fully articulated dinosaur skeleton.

A number of museums on Washington State University's Pullman campus offer a blend of art, science, and history that visitors, students, and community members can experience in person.

Start, perhaps, at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU, sheathed in reflective crimson glass. In addition to intriguing exhibits, the museum hosts educational opportunities for the region.

Recent exhibits include the art of food, a remix of contemporary WSU faculty artwork with the museum's historical collection, and a retrospective of Pacific Northwest painter and printmaker Keiko Hara.

Learn more about the natural world at the Conner Museum or the James Entomological Collection. Both are renowned for their extensive holdings: the Conner Museum is the largest public collection of taxidermy in the Pacific Northwest, and the James Collection is the largest insect museum in the state.

On the first floor of Webster Hall—just look for the tallest building on campus—three geology collections make up a fascinating museum, filled with fluorescent minerals, rocks of all sorts, one of the most extensive collections of cut and polished petrified wood in the country, and even a dire wolf skull.

There are many other rotating and permanent exhibits around the Pullman campus that can educate and entertain. All are open to the public and entry is free.

Next time you visit Pullman, plan to check out the museums and find some of the hidden gems around WSU.

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART WSU

The stunning Crimson Cube, with its mirrored glass exterior, is the center of visual arts on the Palouse. It contains six galleries that showcase visiting exhibits, featured artists, and works from the museum's permanent collection. Location: Across Terrell Mall from the CUB. Hours: Starting August 19, the museum is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday. museum.wsu.edu

WSU Pullman has many more rotating exhibits and displays, including alumni memorabilia in the **Lewis Alumni Centre**; **WSU Athletics Hall of Fame** in Bohler Addition; **Cougar Football Hall of Fame** in the Football Operations Building; **Marion Ownbey Herbarium** in Owen Science and Engineering Library (various **science exhibits** can also be found throughout the library); **galleries** in the Fine Arts Center; **art exhibits** on the east end of the Compton Union Building; **curated exhibits** at Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (ground floor of Terrell Library); **historical broadcasting equipment** at Murrow Hall; and **agricultural history and research** displays in the Vogel Plant Bioscience Building. *

CHARLES R. CONNER MUSEUM

The largest public collection of taxidermy in the Pacific Northwest dates to 1894. Exhibits are self-guided and feature more than 700 birds and mammals, such as an armadillo, bison, and moose. The research collection encompasses more than 60,000 specimens of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Location: South end of the first floor of Abelson Hall. Hours: Usually open every day 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except major holidays and between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day). sbs.wsu.edu/conner-museum

M.T. JAMES ENTOMOLOGICAL COLLECTION

The largest insect museum in the state of Washington is a growing and important regional resource. Established in 1892, the collection's holdings number in the millions and are of significant historical and scientific importance. Location: First floor, Food Science and Human Nutrition building. Hours: Contact the staff about a tour via museum.entomology.wsu.edu.

GEOLOGY MUSEUM

Three geology collections make up the School of the Environment's museum. The Culver Study Memorial contains rock and mineral specimens and some fossils, including saber-toothed cat and dire wolf skulls. The Jacklin Collection is one of the most extensive collections of cut and polished petrified wood in the United States. The S. Elroy McCaw Fluorescent Mineral Display holds 150 fluorescent specimens in a dark room that displays the glowing minerals. Location: First floor, Kate B. Webster Physical Sciences Building. Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the academic year. environment.wsu.edu/museums-field-guide

MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Curating archaeological and ethnographic materials from more than 1,600 archaeological sites from the Pacific Northwest, the museum is located on the first floor of College Hall. Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the academic year (summer hours vary). archaeology.wsu.edu

WORTHMAN-JOHNSON VETERINARY ANATOMY TEACHING MUSEUM

An intriguing collection of anatomical specimens provides an excellent learning resource for students and a valuable teaching and reference source for faculty. The museum, housed in McCoy Hall and maintained by Integrative Physiology and Neuroscience, is open to the public for both self- and staff-guided tours. vetmed.wsu.edu/about/facilities/worthman-johnson-veterinary-anatomy-teaching-museum

When on the Pullman campus ...

try our **online locator map** to easily find and check out what's happening at the **many ever-changing exhibits**.

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/museums-map



A ride of a lifetime

BY ADDY HATCH

It was the late 1930s when teenager Luana (Boner) Sever decided she wanted to study forestry at Washington State College. The problem: She lived on the south side of Chicago and didn't have much money. But she had plenty of gumption.

Sever got on her bicycle and rode 2,000 miles from Chicago to Pullman to start school.

"She packed up what she could and started off on the bike from Chicago," says Pat Helland, Sever's daughter. "If she ran out of money, she would stop in a town and do some odd jobs. She asked farmers if she could sleep in their fields or their barns along the way."

Her father wasn't happy. At one point he contacted the police and asked them to find her and send her home.

"The police did talk to her, and she said, 'I'm just riding my bike to college,'" Helland says. "That's the power of a woman who is determined and has a goal and a purpose."

The *Evergreen* student newspaper said Sever arrived in Pullman after the 24-day trip "tired and windburned." By the time she reached Pocatello, Idaho, she had 12 cents to her name and lived on stale bread and milk until a letter arrived from her parents with additional funds.

Sever was interviewed by the *Spokane Chronicle* after she arrived. She told the reporter that she'd commuted long distances by bicycle in Chicago: 24 miles a day round trip to her junior college. She added, "I've never tackled a trip like this, though, and I would never do it again."

Sever's Washington State story doesn't end there, though.

In 1939 she and Virginia Weldert ('41 Hort.) assisted graduate student Thomas Rogers ('41 MS Botany) in collecting plant specimens along the Columbia River before the area was submerged behind the Grand Coulee Dam.



“Their collections and photographs are all that remain to document the vegetation below the 1,290-foot level of the river,” says Walter Fertig, collections manager at the Marion Ownbey Herbarium on WSU’s Pullman campus. One of the species they collected was Columbia locoweed, a rare plant found only along the Columbia and Methow Rivers in Washington and the Flathead Lake area of Montana. To this day, the herbarium has more than 100 specimens attributed to “L. Boner” from the late 1930s.

Sever graduated with a bachelor’s of science in botany in 1940, then worked in a seed factory and oil refinery while her husband Buel (’40 Gen. Stu.), whom she met at WSC, attended medical school in Illinois.

The couple lived for most of their married life in University Place, near Tacoma. Luana Sever went on to become an expert weaver. Then in her 60s she took up hot-air ballooning, becoming an FAA-certified balloon pilot and instructor, and opening a balloon-repair business in her basement.

The Severs frequently visited Pullman and maintained their ties to their alma mater. Buel’s brother Elmer “Shorty” Sever served as custodian of the university’s athletic grounds for 42 years.

Luana Sever died in 2012 at age 93. Her husband Buel died two years after that.

Says Helland, “She just loved learning. She was really ahead of her time.” ✨

Luana Sever’s epic bike ride from Chicago to Pullman was just the start of her adventures. **At right:** Luana and Buel Sever



PHOTOS COURTESY SEVER FAMILY



JEREMIAH ALLISON HAD TWO DREAMS WHILE GROWING UP IN LOS ANGELES: PLAY FOOTBALL AND BECOME A LAWYER. HE ACHIEVED BOTH, AND NOW THE DREAMS HAVE CONVERGED.

Tackling his dreams

BY LARRY CLARK

Allison ('16 Crim. Just.) joined the legal team for the National Football League's Minnesota Vikings last summer, with both an outstanding football career—in high school, with Washington State University, and in Italy—and experience in law.

Allison was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and moved with his mother, Lucille, and siblings to Los Angeles when he was six. A promising athlete from a young age,

sports, eventually raising the family out of homelessness.

"She just made sure that we were always in a house of love," Allison says. "She made it to all the sporting events for me, my sister, and my brother."

Allison had a number of college offers, but WSU Coach Mike Leach, with a law degree and a mind for the game, proffered the one that most appealed to him. Allison says the coach told him, "We'll definitely make sure law is a focal point on your journey even after your football days."

Allison met with Assistant Coach Dennis Simmons on December 11, 2011, and WSU made him an offer. However, tragedy struck



Courtesy Washington State Athletics



Courtesy Jeremiah Allison/LinkedIn

he eventually went to Dorsey High School, where he earned football all-league and all-city honors for three straight seasons and maintained a 4.0 GPA.

Since Dorsey High is a magnet school, students had to choose math and science or law as an academic path. Allison gravitated to law, in part because "I have been playing chess since I was three years old, and law reminded me of chess."

It wasn't easy for the family, he says. Lucille was a single mother who worked hard and supported her children's school and

Allison's family that same day, when his mother suffered a massive heart attack and fell into a coma.

Lucille died one week before Allison's first game as a linebacker with WSU. There was an outpouring of support for the freshman and, as Allison wrote in 2016, "everyone associated with WSU wrapped me in a giant crimson and gray blanket."

As part of Leach's first Cougar team, Allison appeared in 49 games between 2012 and 2015, including 25 starts and 175 tackles throughout his last two seasons.



Off the field, Allison set records for public service, which he dedicated to his mother's memory. He received national recognition with selection to the 2014 Allstate Good Works Team and the 2015 Wuerffel Trophy Watch List for his work with Habitat for Humanity, WSU Reading Buddies, Special Olympics, Butch's Holiday Bash, and other activities.

In 2016, Allison didn't join the professional league during the draft and later appeared on the NFL Network documentary series *Undrafted*. Leach, though, kept his promise to Allison to support his quest for a law degree, with recommendation letters and an introduction to then-Washington State Senator Michael Baumgartner ('99 Econ.).

Baumgartner, now a US representative for eastern Washington, hired Allison as a legislative session aide in 2017 to learn more about government and law.

Around that time, former Nevada coach Chris Ault recruited him to play professional football for the Milano Rhinos in Milan, Italy. Allison was hesitant at first, but Baumgartner encouraged him to see the world. "He told me, 'Go play football in Italy. Just promise me you'll go to law school this year.'"

Allison played for the Rhinos for four and a half months and traveled around Europe. He then moved to Minnesota in May 2020 and matriculated at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in Saint Paul. Allison passed the bar in February 2021 and joined the legal team at medical device giant Medtronic, where he worked for several years.

His football days weren't over yet. Although he wasn't playing on the field, Allison applied to the Vikings legal office in 2024. "I felt like it was just a perfect opportunity for me to learn so much in the industry because I still love the game of football."

He was hired in July 2024 and became one of just three attorneys for the team.

"It's been an amazing journey back to football," Allison says. "A friend told me, 'You didn't make a 53-man NFL roster, but you made roster of three, which is tougher.'"

Allison says "I want to make sure I'm a pro in all the work," with his north-star goal to someday become a general counsel on an NFL team. ✨



PHOTOS COURTESY KEN STRUCKMEYER

HE STARTS WITH AN OUTLINE, APPLYING BLACK PENCIL TO PAPER. After tracing the bare bones of the image—silhouettes rowing on the Snake River—he begins to apply color, eyeing his artwork from close and afar to help him see what might be missing.

"No 'happy little trees' here," he says, referring to Bob Ross, host of *The Joy of Painting* on PBS from 1983 to 1994. "Happy oars."

Ken Struckmeyer works in stages over several days to produce one of his sketches, among the most popular items up for auction during the annual Cougar Crew Days gala, the Washington State University club's biggest fundraiser. Since 2008, Struckmeyer's sketches have earned more than \$25,000 for the team he used to coach. In 2024, one went for \$2,000, the most a single Struckmeyer sketch has fetched so far.

Struckmeyer, who coached Cougar Crew for 20 years from 1973 to 1992 and remains the longest-serving coach in the team's history, donates one to four drawings per year. The first year, he donated two, fetching \$100 and \$175, respectively.

The retired WSU landscape architecture professor has no formal art training. "One day I just started," he says. "Cougar Crew was asking for auction items, and I thought I'd do a couple of these and see what happens."

Today, "even guys who didn't row for me are buying my sketches," Struckmeyer observes. He creates his drawings in his daylight basement, working from photographs and taking "artistic liberty." All his sketches show rowers on the Snake, encased in the walls of the canyon.

Struckmeyer sees the space as a "cathedral. This is a special place to row. All the kids who rowed on the Snake River revere the setting. I try to capture the feeling of the canyon walls and the water. You can't show the sounds, but you can show the space. You can capture a memory." ✨

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

INseason

Melons

It's a classic combination, one that evokes that long-dreamed-of Italian vacation and sun-drenched summery days that stretch lazily into early autumn. Ribbons of salty, paper-thin prosciutto wrapped around wedges of honey-sweet cantaloupe make for a simple and elegant starter or light, warm-weather lunch or dinner.

The best part? Savory dry-cured ham coupled with cantaloupe requires no actual cooking. And that's the best way to enjoy melons, says Carol Miles, Washington State University Extension vegetable specialist at the WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center. "They're meant for fresh eating," she says.

While *prosciutto e melone* hails from Italy, cantaloupe (*Cucumis melo* var. *cantalupensis*) and all sorts of other melons are easy to grow in Washington. On the west side of the state, opt for early varieties, bred to mature faster and therefore suitable for cooler climates like the Puget Sound region. In eastern Washington, where the climate is warmer and the growing season lasts longer, there are more options. Whether early- or longer-season varieties, Miles says, "melons are a great-tasting crop to grow."

They're nature's dessert, aromatic and sweet, but not cloying, and—unlike other treats—low in calories. A cup of cantaloupe has just 53 calories. The same serving size of honeydew melon (*Cucumis melo* ssp. *melo* var. *inodorus* H. Jacq.) has 60. Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), just 46. All three are great sources of vitamins A and C.

Until about 20 years ago, there were "basically two kinds of melons on the mainstream American market, besides watermelon: cantaloupe and honeydew," Miles says. "Now we're seeing a lot more diversity. The advantage is there are so many more varieties that are early maturing, which means we can grow



them in western Washington and throughout the state.”

Cantaloupes and honeydews—warm-season, cold-sensitive crops—account for a third of the total US melon market and “provide great opportunity for Washington,” says Miles, who studies high-value fruit production for local and overseas markets.

“We work with a lot of Asian companies that put a lot of effort into breeding and developing varieties with excellent eating quality,” such as the Japanese white-fleshed, early-maturing Picasso melon with firm flesh and high sugar content. It hit the market in 2022. “It’s the best melon that I have ever grown and that I have ever eaten,” Miles says.

She found that grafting melons, specifically watermelon and cantaloupe, onto heartier squash rootstalks produced not only more but also slightly bigger fruit. That recent study was part of an effort to combat the soil-borne fungal disease verticillium wilt, which affects melons and other crops in the Pacific Northwest and California as well as northern states and temperate zones.

Watermelons are grown commercially in the Columbia Basin, with harvest typically taking place from July through late September. Throughout the country, the fruit has gotten smaller. “If you go back 20 years, you basically only found picnic-sized watermelons in grocery stores,” Miles says. “It was a seasonal crop, and it was this really large fruit. Today, we have icebox-sized watermelon, including basketball size and minis,” available all year.

In 2004, Miles led variety trials for the smaller-sized fruit and saw the market opportunity. Others saw the potential too. Within a couple of years, smaller watermelons were available in grocery stores nationwide. “I have never seen a crop move to market so fast,” says Miles, who tested 115 varieties and found 77 early-maturing that did well in western Washington.

Watermelons date to ancient times. Archeological evidence suggests Egyptians were growing them more than 5,000 years ago. Cultivation is believed to have originated in Africa, spreading to the Near and Middle East.

The Roman cookbook *De Re Coquinaria* (*The Art of Cooking*), attributed to Marcus Gavius Apicius in the first century AD, includes a recipe for unspecified melons dressed with pepper, pennyroyal, honey or condensed must, broth, vinegar, and, sometimes, silphium, an unidentified plant used in antiquity.

The first known reference in the English colonies to watermelons, brought to the Americas by Africans and Europeans, dates to 1629 Massachusetts. Thomas Jefferson later grew watermelons, Zatta di Massa cantaloupes, and other varieties.

The 1796 cookbook *American Cookery* by Amelia Simmons includes a recipe for “American citrons.” It reads: “Take the rine [sic] of a large watermelon not too ripe, cut it into small pieces, take two pound(s) of loaf sugar, one pint of water, put it all into a kettle, let it boil gently for four hours, then put it into pots for use.”

Today, Tonnemaker Hill Farm, run by brothers Kole and Kurt Tonnemaker (‘84 Hotel & Rest. Admin.), organically grows about 35 varieties of watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, and canary melons near Royal City. The farm was established by their grandparents, WSU Extension agent Orland Tonnemaker (1922 Ag., ‘56 Ed.) and his wife, Pearl, in 1962.

Melons grow best when temperatures hit 86 to 95 degrees. For western Washington gardeners, Miles recommends getting a jump on the season by starting seeds indoors four to six weeks before transplanting on or around June 1. “Start them in a nice warm place like your kitchen or a greenhouse, and make sure they get enough light,” she says. “In eastern Washington, you’re going to be able to start maybe a month earlier.”

Before transplanting, be sure to “harden off” vines for three days to a week. “Keep them in pots, and put them outside in a protected space, not exposed to wind,” advises Miles, who also recommends black plastic mulch, or sheeting, to help soil retain moisture and warmth in western Washington. “In eastern Washington, you don’t need it,” she notes.

When it’s time for plants to go into the ground, “make sure they have enough water.” At WSU Mount Vernon, fields are irrigated so vines are transplanted into wet soil.

Planting melons among or near flowers is also a good idea, Miles says. The practice invites pollinators.

Most varieties mature within 70 to 100 days. But, Miles warns, “in western Washington for a crop that takes 80 days, you’re realistically going to add 10 or 20 days. That’s why transplanting is critical; you gain four to six weeks.”

When it’s time to harvest, Miles says, “don’t let them stay on the vine too long. Some melons will do what’s called slipping. They’re going to slip away from the vine and self-detach. You have to do your homework and find out if the varieties you are growing are slipping or non-slipping.

“For watermelon, harvest the fruit when the tendril and leaflet where the fruit are connected to the vine are both brown and dry. If fruit is left on the vine too long, it starts fermenting and doesn’t taste any good.”

Miles recommends trying many kinds—from pinkish red and yellow watermelons to sherbet-orange cantaloupes, green honeydews, and ivory-fleshed snow leopard and canary melons, encased in a cheerful yellow rind.

“That’s why I think melons are exciting,” Miles says. “There are so many really good-tasting melons, and they’re very fun and easy to grow. If I can grow them in Mount Vernon, you can grow them anywhere.” ✨

Giving back close to home

BY BECKY KRAMER

There's a simple way to improve your overall well-being. It's as easy as *becoming a volunteer*.

People who regularly give back to their communities report a greater sense of purpose, stronger social ties, and better mental and physical health. Volunteer work also builds more cohesive communities as people come together, sharing their skills to address local needs and solve problems.

While national or international problems often seem insurmountable, people can make progress locally. Reducing food insecurity in your community is a small step toward addressing hunger. Planting native shrubs along a creek is a step toward a healthy planet. And working with non-native English speakers is a step toward global understanding.

Pullman Mayor Francis Benjamin is an advocate for volunteering at the local level.

"I encourage everyone to think about what legacy they want to leave in their community," says Benjamin ('06 Psych., '14 MA Poli. Sci.), who also works at Washington State University as an adjunct faculty and staff member.

Wherever you live, Benjamin suggests reflecting on several questions to help guide your focus as a volunteer: What do you like about your community? What do you miss from places you previously lived? What do you wish you could change?

The important thing is to get started, Benjamin says. He tells working adults not to wait until they're retired to volunteer and students that they're not too young to make a difference.

In Washington, nearly one-third of people 16 and older volunteer, the US Census Bureau reports. In the following stories, we highlight some of the ways volunteers make an impact in their communities—including a monarch butterfly conservation project that supports rural youth employment and a nonprofit nursery for babies born with addiction from their mothers' substance abuse. Each of these projects connects to WSU's mission of sharing its expertise to benefit communities, the state, and the region.

Besides providing support to community projects, WSU plants the seeds for a lifetime of volunteering in students through the Center for Civic Engagement.

For more than 30 years, the Pullman-based center has connected WSU students, faculty, and staff with nonprofits and other organizations that need volunteers. Opportunities range from walking dogs at a local shelter to class projects that tap students' expertise in areas like landscape architecture, digital marketing, or mechanical engineering.

"We look for ways to engage students in the community, whether that means Pullman or another community," says Jessica Perone, assistant director at the Center for Civic Engagement.

More than 4,800 students took part in service learning projects during the fall 2024 semester, putting in more than 28,000 hours of volunteer time. Students volunteer with local organizations as part of service learning requirements for their classes, so they get real-world experience, Perone says.



WSU CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/HUMANE SOCIETY ▼



Volunteers gather soup mixes and other food for distribution at a food bank / WSU Alumni Association



Comforting arms

BY ADDY HATCH

MOST BABIES BORN with prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol show signs of withdrawal that can last weeks, even months. Crying, tremors, and trouble eating and sleeping are all common behaviors among these infants.

Tricia Hughes knew this as a nurse who worked in labor and delivery. She also knew it as a longtime foster parent who had held and comforted drug-dependent babies in her care.

“There are so many medically fragile and drug-exposed babies coming into foster care,” Hughes says. “I thought I might be able to do something.”

Hughes brainstormed with doctors, social workers, and foster parents and the result was Maddie’s Place, one of two recovery nurseries in the state that provides withdrawal care to babies. It opened in Spokane in late 2022 and has served more than 125 babies since then.

Maddie’s Place takes in babies who are referred through hospitals, child welfare workers, and community nonprofits. The nursery provides medical care when necessary and emphasizes the evidence-based “Eat, Sleep, Console” method that prioritizes swaddling and contact, a low-stimulus environment, and family involvement when possible. About 30 volunteer “cuddlers” help with this care, people who “literally just sit and hold babies,” Hughes says. New volunteer positions are being added in the kitchen, doing yard work, and in administration.

Prenatal substance abuse is a national issue, but it hits some regions harder than others. Spokane County’s rate of neonatal abstinence syndrome, as the symptoms of withdrawal are called, is nearly twice as high as the rate for Washington state, and Washington’s is higher than the national rate.

Hughes’s philosophy is to tackle societal issues by “serving the people right in front of you.” While Maddie’s Place focuses on one life at a time, the nursery has the potential to change more lives through the services and support it provides.

MADDIE’S PLACE FOUNDER TRICIA HUGHES (KATHY PLOMKATHE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW) ▼

WSU CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ▲

The nonprofits benefit from WSU students’ time and energy, but students might gain even more. Volunteering helps them grow their professional networks, learn about career opportunities, and have projects they can talk about at job interviews.

The sense of connectedness is valuable too. First-year students who volunteer as part of class assignments are more likely to return for their sophomore year, according to studies by the Center for Civic Engagement and faculty researchers.

“We believe it fosters that sense of connection—to the community, to their peers, and to an off-campus experience that resonates with their interests and passions,” Perone says.

“And when our students graduate and land in communities all over the world, they are prepared and ready—not just professionally and academically, but to be socially responsible community members and leaders,” she says.

In terms of volunteer impact, the place where you live is often where you can see the most results, Benjamin says. Through community involvement, you’re also taking steps toward a more cooperative, less polarized society.

Most issues are nonpartisan at the local level, he notes. By volunteering, you’ll work alongside people who voted differently than you did. But focusing on a common goal encourages respectful interactions despite differing backgrounds and viewpoints, says Benjamin, who coauthored a book on how civility in government contributes to more productive debate and greater likelihood of reaching consensus.

“If you think locally, your hometown is small enough that eventually, you will probably need to work with that person on something else,” Benjamin says. “You can’t just burn a bridge. You might be able to do that on a state or national level, but locally you can’t.”

So next time you’re frustrated or despairing over the state of the world, consider where you could make a difference locally. Think of it as an investment in the issues you care most deeply about, and the chance to create a legacy.

And remember, by volunteering, you just might benefit the most.



Without Maddie's Place, "My baby would probably have been in foster care," says one mother. "And, honestly, I probably wouldn't be in a treatment facility right now and working on myself. I probably would have relapsed."

Says another, "There's a bunch of different stuff that they helped me get squared away, you know, so I could have a better life."

The comments were part of a report to the Washington Health Care Authority on the prevalence of neonatal abstinence syndrome and the effectiveness of Maddie's Place. The study was led by faculty from Washington State University Health Sciences and released earlier this year.

"Health care and support systems are fragmented, at best," says Ekaterina Burduli ('08, '11 MS, '16 PhD Psych.), associate professor at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine and one of the report's authors. "Even when they're available, they're hard to navigate. Maddie's Place serves as a safety net where these families are cared for in a comprehensive way." That might include help finding a place to live or childcare, or referrals to mental health and substance use treatment.

Hughes has stepped back from her day-to-day role at Maddie's Place, but is advising others on opening recovery nurseries in their communities.

"I get contacted all the time by people who see the need, because drugs are everywhere," she says. "Maddie's Place would love to support people around the country."

Really pumped

BY BECKY KRAMER

Tom and Mary Fisher replaced their propane furnace with a heat pump last year. For the Whidbey Island couple, it was smart investment with environmental benefits.

They wanted a reliable heating-and-cooling system in their home of four decades. Doing their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was a priority too.

"We like the clean energy aspect of heat pumps," says Tom Fisher, a retired cabinetmaker. "About 60 percent of Washington's electricity comes from hydropower—just think of all that water flowing through Grand Coulee Dam."

More than 100 Whidbey Island households recently **SWITCHED TO HEAT PUMPS** through the Kicking Gas campaign, including the Fishers. The grassroots effort is using \$1 million in state grant funds awarded through Washington State University Extension's Energy Program to subsidize the cost of the heat pumps for income-qualifying households.

"We support communities across Washington as they make decisions about energy use," says Georgine Yorgey, the WSU Energy Program's director. "It's one of the big societal issues we're facing with climate change."

After students staged climate walkouts in the South Whidbey School District, the city of Langley declared a climate emergency in

2021 and created a climate action committee. The walkouts rallied residents to think about how they could reduce fossil fuel use in their own community.

"One of the most achievable ways we saw that happening was through electric homes," says Derek Hoshiko, who heads up the Kicking Gas campaign.

In southern Whidbey Island, many families heat their homes with propane, heating oil, or wood. Besides reducing emissions, heat pumps can lower utility bills and improve indoor air quality. The local Salish Sea Cooperative Finance offers low-interest, short-term loans to households that need financing.

Heat pump installers help spread the word about Kicking Gas, particularly among clients who get estimates but can't immediately afford one. The state-allocated funds are aimed at "those middle-income folks for whom buying a new furnace is a massive undertaking," says Erika Coveny, a WSU Energy Program manager.



Now in its third year, Kicking Gas has received additional funds from the state Department of Commerce. The campaign is working with Bainbridge Island on their heat pump subsidy program and has expanded into Snohomish County.

Kicking Gas is nearing 300 conversions, which includes electric hot water heaters and induction stoves as well as heat pumps. Most of the conversions are residential, with a few nonprofits and small businesses.

Across Washington, local communities have many opportunities to act on the climate crisis, Hoshiko says.

"Communities need to respond to this challenge with solutions that are entrepreneurial and that help people," he says. "When people step up, we can get things done."



FEATURETTES

What's cookin'

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

WSU CLALLAM COUNTY EXTENSION

Volunteers with Washington State University Clallam County Extension's **FARM GLEANING PROGRAM** harvest excess produce from fields or orchards, with crops going directly to the Port Angeles Food Bank.

But, says Clea Rome, director of Clallam County Extension, "There are only so many raw apples that can be distributed. Applesauce," she notes, "might be easier to consume, especially for elderly clients who might have difficulty digesting raw fruit." Plus, she says, "Clients don't always have access to kitchen equipment for chopping and cooking, not to mention the time it takes to cook a meal."

A new processing kitchen is boosting the food bank's ability to transform large amounts of produce into easy-to-use ingredients or dishes such as soups, salads, and sides.



The Port Angeles Food Bank, in partnership with WSU Clallam County Extension, operates the kitchen to improve access to locally grown and raised food, reduce food waste, and provide nutrition education. It opened in spring 2023 after more than eight years in the works.

Clallam County used COVID recovery funds, community donations, and state contributions to relocate the food bank, add the kitchen, and complete other renovations.

WSU Clallam County Extension lent expertise to help design the kitchen and funded supplies and equipment. Extension staff members provide ongoing technical assistance, training, and project management.

"Food insecurity continues to rise in our state," Rome says. "Post-COVID, food banks have seen their numbers of clients rise upwards of three times as much as pre-pandemic levels."

In 2024, the Port Angeles Food Bank experienced an increase in demand of approximately 40 percent over the previous year. In Washington state, some 10 percent of the population faces food insecurity, according to Feeding Washington. That includes one in seven children.

"The availability of the food-processing kitchen really enhances access for clients," says Rome, noting the food bank often receives ingredients "near the end of their life cycle that need to get out to clients in a timely way."

The food bank now has the capacity to turn apples into applesauce and prepare minimally processed foods, such as fajita kits with washed and sliced peppers and onions.

Recently, "we had an incredible amount of gleaned cauliflower, and we were able to blanch and freeze it for later use in prepared meals. We did the same thing with broccoli and kale and collards that were later used in stews," says Danielle Carson, the community health and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinator at WSU Clallam County Extension. She also serves as the regional food safety advisor and food protection manager for the processing kitchen.

"The kitchen has been a really wonderful jumping-off point for a lot of community health and food-waste-prevention programs," Carson says.

Last year, the Farm Gleaning Program rescued 13,146 pounds of food from three local farms, according to WSU Clallam County Extension. The kitchen helped divert approximately 350 tons of food from the waste stream in 2024.

"I'm very proud of the work our team is doing here," Rome says. "This kitchen is an example of how WSU Extension can do community-level work with trusted partners to bring a community development project to fruition, and that's been really gratifying."

Launching butterflies

BY BECKY KRAMER

Butterflies outnumber people in tiny Elkton, Oregon, which hosts one of the **REGION'S LARGEST CONSERVATION EFFORTS** for western monarch populations.

Each year, volunteers in Elkton—population 200—raise, tag, and release hundreds of monarchs. About 5,000 people visit the city southwest of Eugene annually to see the charismatic orange butterflies and learn more about their life cycle, migration, and habitat needs.

"Elkton is a major contributor to our monarch research through tagging," says David James, associate professor of entomology at Washington State University. "They do a really good job at rearing healthy butterflies, and they get higher than average rates of return."



Western monarch populations have plummeted since the 1990s as a result of new pesticides, climate change, and loss of native milkweed, the host plant for monarch caterpillars. But citizen science projects such as Elkton's are a hopeful sign for the species, says James, who studies monarch migration in the West and provided early advice to volunteers on growing milkweed and butterfly rearing.



▼ ELKTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER (SOURCE: MONARCH PHOTO DEB GRITTON) ▼

Besides the valuable data gained from tagging, Elkton's work is raising awareness and creating advocates for monarchs, he says.

The city's monarch project got its start in 1999, when retired teacher Carol Beckley asked local residents about ideas for some pastureland she owned. The result was the Elkton Community Education Center, which supports pollinator and vegetable gardens, a butterfly pavilion, small café, and the local library.

Jobs for teens are part of the project. Each summer, the center employs about 15 to 20 youth. "It doesn't sound like a lot, but we're a small town, so that's a pretty good percentage of the high school," says Barbara Slott, Elkton's volunteer butterfly steward.

After monarchs lay eggs on Elkton's milkweed plants, Slott and her team collect the leaves and rear the caterpillars in a research room so they're safe from predators. The chrysalises are moved into the pavilion where the butterflies emerge and tourists can see them, along with painted lady butterflies also raised in Elkton.

"We have students give tours all summer, talking to people about the status of monarchs, their life cycle, and why milkweed is important," Slott says. Tourists can pay \$20 for the opportunity to name, tag, and release a monarch. It's a popular fundraiser, and the idea came from a student worker.

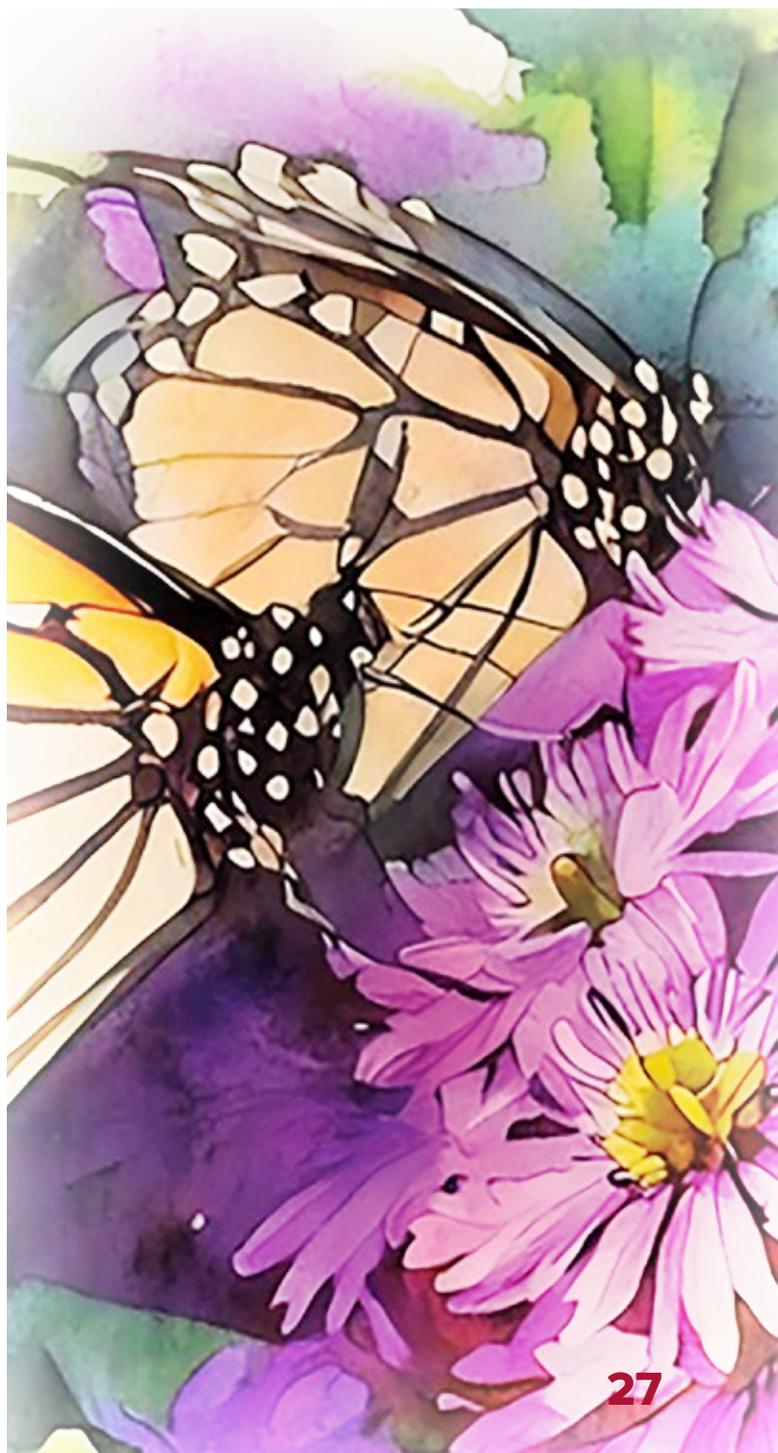
WSU provides the adhesive tags that attach to the butterflies' wings. People who find the tagged monarchs report the serial numbers, helping researchers map migration patterns.

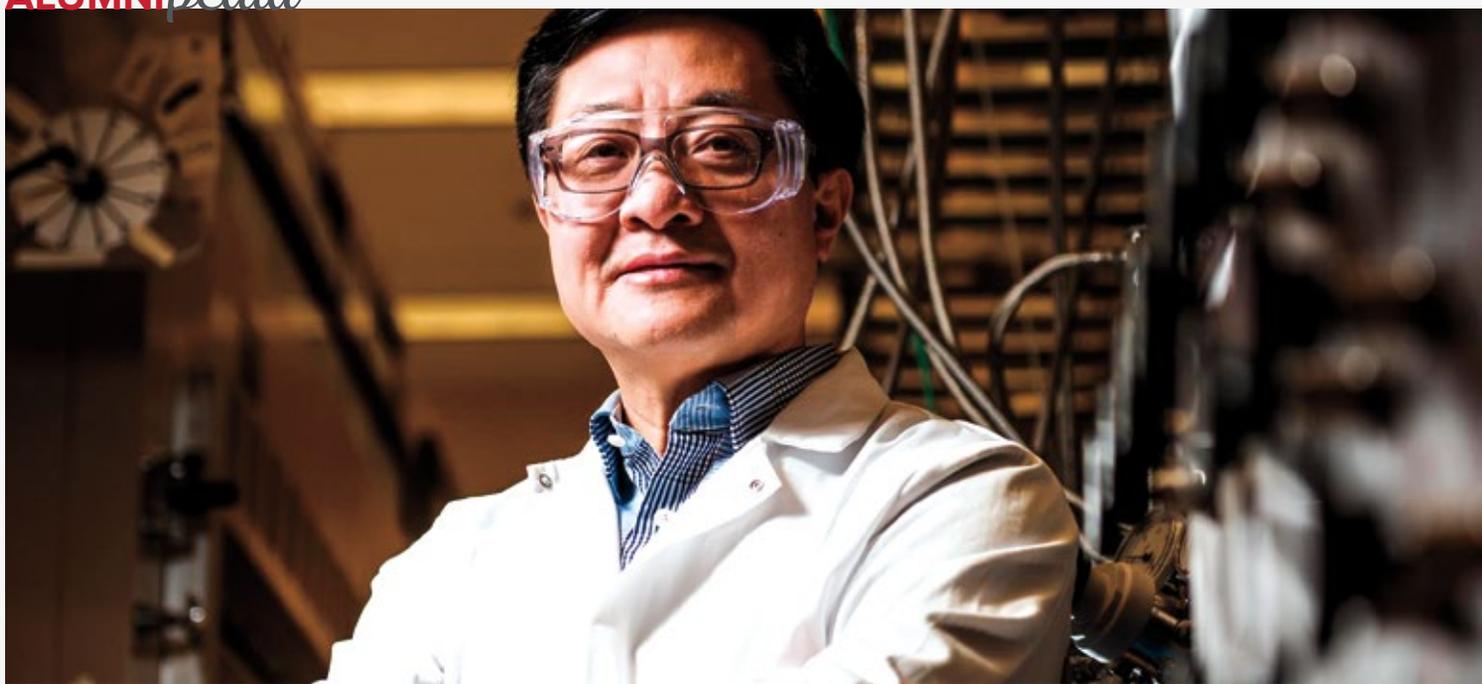
Elkton's monarchs overwinter in about 250 sites along the California coast. The eggs they lay in spring become the butterflies that return to the Northwest in May and June.

Several generations of caterpillars hatch on Elkton's milkweed plants and turn into butterflies during the summer. When daylight hours start to wane, a "super generation" of monarchs emerges from their chrysalises and migrates south to wintering areas.

Beckley, the founder of Elkton's butterfly conservation efforts, recently turned 90 and still volunteers in the pollinator garden.

"She's my role model," Slott says. "When I think I'm too old to do something, I think, 'What would Carol Beckley do?'" ✨





Catalyst for success

BY TINA HILDING

YONG WANG likes to create a good reaction.

Wang ('92 MS, '93 PhD Chem. Eng.), a Regents Professor in the Gene and Linda Voiland School of Chemical Engineering and Bioengineering at Washington State University, researches catalysis, a chemical substance that enables reactants to come together and quickly form a product without being consumed itself.

"If you don't control catalysts properly, reactions can get out of control if you don't know what you're doing," Wang says. "I like to see and control the radical change. It's quite exciting and very dynamic."

In the world of chemical engineering, Wang might be a catalyst himself, transforming those around him and helping to raise the reputation worldwide for WSU's chemi-

cal engineering program. This year, he was elected as a member of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the most prestigious honor in engineering. Only about 2,500 of approximately 2 million US engineers are elected by their peers to the academy.

Wang was recognized with the honor for his work in advancing catalyst discovery, design, and reaction engineering for energy and environmental applications. He holds a joint appointment with the US Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), where he is acting director of the Institute for Integrated Catalysis.

"I never anticipated to be where I am," Wang says. "It's really because of the great education I received at WSU and the wonderful opportunities for me to work with a fantastic group of people and colleagues. I think they got me here—not myself."

Originally from Kunming, a city of about five million people in Southwest China known for its year-round mild temperatures, Wang arrived in Pullman in January 1990 to snow and subzero temperatures on campus.

"After I got back to my apartment, it took me at least two hours to have feeling in my face," he says.

While Wang struggled with speaking and understanding English, cultural differences,

and adapting to a new environment, he also enjoyed the challenges. He got needed support and encouragement from many around him, starting with his doctoral advisor, Bill Thomson. Wang didn't know how rigorous the WSU program was, and he's thankful to Thomson for inspiring him to work hard.

"There were many nights that first semester that I woke at midnight or 2 or 3 a.m. and thought, 'Holy cow, I need to study!' so I would jump out of bed and study," he says. "I had no idea how much it would take, but I studied very hard and that was very beneficial, including later on in my career."

After graduating, Wang worked as a postdoctoral researcher for chemical engineering professor Jim Petersen, and then PNNL. Meanwhile, Petersen and colleagues were developing a focus on catalysis.

"Chemical catalysis is foundational to the development of technologies that reduce energy use and enable a clean environment," Petersen says. "It is an area that is foundational to chemical transformation, yet most chemical engineering departments have only one or two faculty members working in it."

Support from Gene ('69 Chem. Eng.) and Linda Voiland allowed Petersen to hire Wang in 2009 as the first Voiland Distinguished

COURTESY PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY

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Professor and first joint appointee with a university in PNNL history.

"In any endeavor, you have to have top talent—not just in knowing how to do things but also in having the drive and energy to make them successful," Gene Voiland says.

Wang is a world leader in his field of research, Voiland says, "but he's also a real person with a really positive set of values and humility."

Initially, the program focused on catalysis for biofuels, but the research has grown to include work on automotive catalytic converters, electrochemical catalysis, computational catalysis, and material processing for better catalysis. Several faculty members have joint appointments with PNNL and can leverage that connection.

Wang has also supervised more than 20 doctoral students as they completed their degrees. While research is important, the program trains students and creates engineers who are practical and oriented toward problem-solving.

When he learned of his election to the NAE in February, Wang reflected on who and what had helped him get to this point in his career.

"It didn't happen overnight—it was an entire journey," he says. "I actually have a list of people, so I called these people individually to thank them all—from the Voilands to Jim Petersen and Bill Thomson to friends and family members. I feel so grateful." ✱

Coffee, community, calm

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

When he graduated from college, **PHILIP MEECH** asked his parents not for a car or computer, class ring, trip, or even luggage to take on a trip. He wanted to know if he could install a roasting machine in their garage to start a coffee business.

Within two years, the mom-and-pop-and-son start-up outgrew the space.

Twenty-five years later, Caffè Lusso Roastery—"luxury coffee" in Italian—is still

growing and going strong. The Redmond-based business is preparing for yet another expansion and counts Microsoft, Meta, and premier catering companies, such as Lisa Dupar and Gourmondo, among its commercial clients.

"Our company mandate, since the beginning, has been 'stop drinking, and start tasting,'" Meech ('00 Finance, Busi.) says. "It's an invitation to pause. A great cup of coffee is a chance to slow down. It's an excuse to have a conversation. It's an excuse to get together and chat and dream new dreams and talk about hopes."

Do those things over a cup—preferably ceramic—of Caffè Lusso's signature Gran Miscela Carmo Espresso Blend. The nutty, medium-bodied roast, with notes of caramel and milk chocolate, features beans from three different family farmers in Brazil's Carmo de Minas region. "I love that blend. I drink it every day," says Meech, who also sources beans directly from small growers in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, and more.

"Our goal is coffees that are elegant and a program that is simple," says Meech, who got into coffee culture in high school, working at Starbucks in Bellevue.

But he started drinking coffee as a kid—"bad coffee," he specifies—while spending summers on his grandfather's farm in Colorado. "Every morning, I had breakfast with Grandpa at a small-town-USA diner. If

it was 7 a.m. and you turned over your coffee mug, they would fill it for you, even if you're an 8- or 9-year-old boy. My grandfather would turn over his cup. And I wanted to be like my grandfather."

Freshman year at Washington State University, Meech helped open Pullman's first Starbucks. He was studying sports medicine and biology with the goal of going to medical school. But, he says, "coffee wouldn't let go."

In 1997, while working at an independent coffee shop in Moscow, Idaho, the owner asked him to check out a new Lewiston, Idaho-based micro-roaster. "I still remember the aroma and the instant curiosity," says Meech, who began driving to Lewiston at 4 a.m. Thursdays to learn more. Soon, he was switching his major from pre-med to business with the goal of starting his own roastery.

Meech began roasting coffee in his parents' Bellevue garage in August 2000, a few months after his WSU graduation. He was 23. His parents were his business partners. They started small, roasting just seven pounds at a time.

"Immediately, we had good results," Meech recalls. "Then we started getting busy, and we didn't have a lot of smoke mitigation." A neighbor complained and, in late 2001, the city stepped in, giving the fledgling roastery 30 days to quit operating out of the garage.

In 2002, Meech and his parents found a 1,200-square-foot space in a Redmond

COURTESY CAFFÈ LUSSO



business park—and upped their batches to 25 pounds. After about a decade of doing business, they began adding staff members, one by one.

“We had a tough first 10 years,” Meech admits. “If I had known how hard it was going to be, I don’t know if I would have started it. But it would have sat on my shoulder for the rest of my life: What if?”

Caffè Lusso annexed 3,200 square feet seven years ago and another 2,400 square feet three years ago. The facility now stretches just under 7,000 square feet and roasts 60- to 75-pound batches—for a total of about 150,000 pounds per year. In addition to wholesale coffee, equipment, maintenance, and training for commercial clients, Caffè Lusso retails beans directly to consumers through walk-up and online sales, including a nationwide subscription service.

Plans call for expanding within approximately three years to 20,000 or 30,000 square feet and increasing batch size to 527 pounds—for a total of some 2 million pounds per year. A new roaster is being designed and built in Italy.

The new facility would also serve as an event space, offer tours, and showcase storytelling. “From the first year, we’ve been about farm to cup,” says Meech, now sole owner. He heads a team of five. “We want to let people see the full cycle, which ties to my farming roots visiting my grandfather’s farm. It’s really about everybody getting to trace the ingredients and the people globally to locally.”

Plans include a destination café. “It would be very European, with no to-go cups,” Meech says. “We wouldn’t be trying to do 3,000 cups a day. Maybe we’d be trying to do 300 cups a day.”

Meantime, find Meech at work five days a week. “It’s something of a marriage,” he says. “I love what I do. There’s no place I’d rather be”—except maybe Italy. He’s only been once, with plans “to start going back once a year forever.”

In Italy, Meech fell in love with *il dolce far niente*, or “the sweetness of doing nothing.” Italians, he says, “are very good at slowing down, and they’re very good at community. They’re happy and less stressed, and it’s not genetic. We can learn from their culture about

family, about community, about enjoying good food and good wine and good coffee, and”—perhaps most of all—“not being in a rush.” ✨

Upholding the promise

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Growing up, she “never thought of higher education as a career in and of itself.”

The daughter of a Navy submariner and a nurse for the Department of Veterans Affairs—immigrants from the Philippines who met in America—**ROSIE RIMANDO-CHAREUNSA** (’99 English, ’11 EdD) was born in South Carolina and raised on Bainbridge Island.

“I was this Filipina girl with a Southern accent in the Pacific Northwest,” she says.

Washington State University, particularly its professors and student support services, helped shape her studies, career, and approach to leadership. As chancellor for Seattle Colleges, Rimando-Chareunsap uses the lessons she learned at WSU and through federal TRIO programs to create equitable success and make college accessible for all.

“I wanted to change the experience for kids like me,” she says.

Rimando-Chareunsap arrived in Washington state in fifth grade, when her dad was stationed at Naval Submarine Base Bangor. Her mom landed a job with the VA in Seattle. Bainbridge was halfway. A couple of campus visits helped her and her parents become comfortable with the idea of coming to Pullman for college.

At WSU, she had mentors—and became a mentor herself—through the Office of Multicultural Student Services. She was a member of the Asian Pacific American Student Coalition and the Association of Pacific and Asian Women, and an officer in the Filipino American Student Association. She also participated in a newly established recruitment program aimed at diversifying the ranks of Washington’s teachers. Milton Lang (’98 MA Elem. & Sec. Ed., ’08 EdD Higher Ed. Admin.), former director of student recruitment and retention at the College



of Education, founded and coordinated the Future Teachers of Color Program.

“When I look back, it was really effective retention programming,” she says. But that first year, “I struggled. When I faced hardships, it was the people that kept me there. I had a mentor in the College of Education. I had a mentor in Multicultural Student Services. (Professor) Michael Delahoyde in the English department encouraged me as a writer and introduced me to an identity I never otherwise would have embraced.”

Her most impactful undergrad professor, Rory Ong, an emeritus professor of comparative ethnic studies and American studies and culture, sat on her doctoral committee. “He introduced me to histories and literature that actually reflected me,” Rimando-Chareunsap says. “He was able to see me come full circle, from this young and naive underclassman figuring out life and developing critical thinking skills to a doctoral candidate trying to apply the things I learned from him in a professional career.”

A 2025 recipient of an Alumni Achievement Award, the highest honor awarded by the WSU Alumni Association, Rimando-Chareunsap started her career at South Seattle College as a student success specialist in the TRIO Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound programs, working with first-generation college-bound youths. Federal TRIO programs support students from low-income and other disadvantaged backgrounds.

“I was in pre-college TRIO programs, and I really identify as a TRIO alum today,” says Rimando-Chareunsap, who described her core values—service, and racial equality and justice—and TRIO’s importance in her keynote address for WSU’s 2025 National TRIO Day.

“My TRIO experience defined what I’ve sought to create across higher ed wherever

COURTESY SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE/INSTAGRAM

I can,” she says. “TRIO works. Focusing on creating more equitable systems and outcomes works. Those concepts are evergreen, regardless of how they may be threatened or politicized. What this environment is telling me is that not enough people understand this on a fundamental level.”

She became director of student outreach, admissions, and recruitment, then vice president of student services before serving as president of South Seattle College from 2018 to 2022. In 2023, Rimando-Chareunsap took the helm of Seattle Colleges, where she oversees three colleges, five specialty sites, 2,000 employees, 30,000 students, and an operating budget of nearly \$200 million.

Rimando-Chareunsap believes strongly in the W. Edwards Deming quote: “Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results that it gets.” This sentiment was on her mind when she helped plan Seattle Promise, an initiative from Seattle Colleges, Seattle Public Schools, and the City of Seattle that guarantees two years of free community college tuition. “It’s really something that I’m proud of,” says Rimando-Chareunsap, noting she helped design the program based on TRIO.

Funding is always a concern. Community colleges, like public universities, depend on state revenue. “All of higher ed is facing a revenue shortfall on the order of billions,” says Rimando-Chareunsap, who holds a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Washington and has two children, ages 10 and 13. “The more ground we lose in state funding, the less accessible college becomes for students to access our own public higher education.”

On top of that, colleges and universities are facing a devaluation of higher education, Rimando-Chareunsap says. “There’s this faulty rhetoric taking hold that college is not for everyone,” she says. “The cliché of underwater basketweaving—that’s not what we’re doing here. I think we need to remind people of all the ways they interact with higher education degrees on any given day. College includes everything from pre-med and business school to veterinary science and welding and nursing. Even traditional blue-collar jobs require training, usually through community colleges.

“The open-access mission of community colleges has democratized higher education.

Our work is in our communities and ensuring every individual can transform their own life through education. That’s why I am in this work, to ensure we uphold the promise of that mission.” ✨

Cakewalk of fame

BY WENDA REED

She started helping her parents in the kitchen when she was just three years old. In high school, she won the Washington state 4-H baking championship. Now, with 30 years of food industry experience, she’s part of a team that provides personalized petits fours to celebrities and major corporations.

MEGAN (PECK) LEIFSON (’90 Food Sci.) is the food safety director and research-and-development expert at Dragonfly Cakes in Tacoma. The company makes petit fours for celebrities who perform at the Tacoma Dome, including Taylor Swift, Oprah, Maroon 5, and Lady Gaga. Corporate clients, including Tiffany and Chanel, use them for customer appreciation and other events.

Dragonfly Cakes and its sister company, Celebrity Cake Studios, are owned by two sisters from Guam. Dragonfly’s dainty and delicate petits fours are handmade with all-natural, plant-based colors and flavors without preservatives, explains Milana D’Aniello, marketing director and niece of one of the owners.

“We’re a small family business, and we wanted to start nationwide distribution,” she says. “To do that we had to pass an AIB (American Institute of Baking) audit for cleanliness and safety. Everything has to be written down and documented. We failed our first audit.”

The owners hired Leifson in 2022. “Megan was the smartest in the room,” D’Aniello says. “She was fine with all the documentation, and she pushed us into the modern era.”

They passed the last three audits.

Leifson says she especially enjoys the research, such as helping develop flavors: matcha-passionfruit, mango-yuzu, and piña colada. “Asian-inspired flavors were a new

thing for me,” she says. “The most challenging was ube (a purple yam from the Philippines). When you bake it, it naturally turns blue. I had to figure out how to change the acidity of the dough to keep the purple color they wanted.”

Her knowledge and approach continue to impress. “Megan’s attitude is ‘We can make that,’ when presented with an idea from Filipino cuisine,” D’Aniello says. “She researches ‘clean label’ ingredients, like beet-root powder that we use for pink coloring. Once I was freaking out because some of the cakes looked purple. She explained that beets are red when harvested in summer and purple when harvested in winter.”

Leifson’s love for cooking began as a preschooler, helping her dad make bread and candies. 4-H, offered through Washington State University Extension in Clark County, “helped me build a foundation in cooking,” she says. “I entered every competition—baking, food preservation, canning.” Bread making became a specialty, and her cinnamon swirl bread was a winner for 4-H statewide.

A high school teacher sparked her love for the science side of cooking. “One of my 4-H projects was to use a camera mounted to a microscope to explore the gluten composition of different kinds of bread,” Leifson recalls. “I read an article about food science as a college major and realized I could combine my love of food with my love of science.”

She chose WSU for its food science program and because it was the alma mater of her father, Robert Peck (’53, MA ’61 Int. Des.), and her grandfather, Gilbert Peck (1923 Hort.).



COURTESY DRAGONFLY CAKES

Beyond her specialty in baking, Leifson studied sensory panels, blind taste testing, preserving and preparing meat and dairy products, and more. “I learned how to commercialize food preparation—making products that don’t fade under fluorescent lights and ones that can stay fresh longer under refrigeration.”

Her first job was running the production side of Le Panier, a French bakery in Seattle’s Pike Place Market. “The biggest challenge was cooking enough bread for the holidays. We had to figure out how to half-bake the loaves, freeze them, and finish baking them so that they tasted exactly the same as the fresh-baked loaves.”

She also worked at a company that makes imitation crab meat and another that makes pasta and potato salads. “We made our own mayonnaise and needed to keep it shelf-stable, especially if it contained blue cheese, which tends to mold.”

At Lucks Food Decorating, a century-old Tacoma company, Leifson worked on edible food colorings and edible paper. “It’s challenging to make it work with different kinds of icing so that it doesn’t bubble up and the colors don’t fade,” says Leifson, who patented an edible food paper that works on high moisture frosting, as well as laser-cutting technology for the paper.

Leifson also uses her expertise as chair of the board of Nourish Pierce County. The 50-year-old nonprofit runs six food banks and 15 mobile sites, serving more than 66,000 people in 2024. Her husband, Michael Leifson (’90 Accounting), volunteers with her.

“There’s good job security in food science,” she says. “This is my way of giving back.” ✨

Cast-iron chef

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

It’s not the first thing she says to celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, but it’s close. “Shut up!” she exclaims, when he mentions he has a copy of her 2017 cookbook, *Cast Iron Gourmet*.

MEGAN KENO (’08 Poli. Sci.), a home cook and food blogger, is making cast-iron steak with whiskey garlic cream sauce during the home-cook audition round for the fourth

season of Fox’s *Next Level Chef* when Ramsay drops that tidbit.

“Are you kidding me?” she says, reflecting on the moment months later. “I couldn’t possibly conceive of that. I joke it was my *Princess Diaries* moment.”

From that fun start to the final episode, Keno sets herself apart from the other 23 contestants. Ramsay, an executive producer on the show, which also stars mentor chefs Nyesha Arrington and Richard Blais, “is funny and jokes around a lot. And I’m someone who will give it right back to him.”

Keno finishes as one of two runners-up and the only remaining home cook in the competitive cooking show, with \$250,000 and a year-long mentorship on the line. The series, which filmed in Ireland and aired mid-February to mid-May, often cuts to Keno, showing her emotional responses to twists and turns in the intense competition.

The three-tiered set features an oversized dumbwaiter that passes each floor—from the tony top-level commercial kitchen to the bare-bones, ill-equipped basement. Contestants have 30 seconds to grab ingredients. And they usually have 30 minutes to complete a cooking challenge, such as barbecue, ramen, a five-course tasting menu, or a twist on Ramsay’s signature Wellington, sans beef.

“The show is really based around thinking on your feet,” Keno says. “I don’t think there’s any mom who’s trying to get dinner on the table in 45 minutes with whatever’s in the kitchen who doesn’t regularly think on her feet. That was my saving grace, and it shows on-screen. Being able to harness that quick thinking and pivot were really helpful.”

Keno, of Auburn, is a married mom of two boys, ages five and seven, who have “been on a ramen kick lately. I doctor it up with shredded pork, veggies, and jammy seven-minute eggs.”

Her oldest already wants to be on *MasterChef Junior*. “He says, ‘Do you think Chef Ramsay would like my scrambled eggs?’”

Keno notes, “He might have to learn to make more than scrambled eggs. But he’s on his way.”

On *Next Level Chef*, the celebrity chefs select teams composed of home, social media, and professionally trained cooks to mentor. Blais chooses Keno, a project manager for Jacobs Engineering Group who’s consulting



COURTESY MEGAN KENO

with the Port of Seattle on the renovation of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport’s north terminal.

Nights and weekends, she blogs about food. Keno started her *Country Cleaver* food blog in 2010, rebranding it in 2022 as *Homemade Home*. There are now more than 1,000 recipes on the site. “I do all the cooking, photography, and writing,” says Keno, who aims to post about once a week.

Page Street Publishing approached Keno with the idea for the cookbook, which took nine months to complete. “Cast iron was the perfect avenue for me to learn to flex my muscles,” says Keno, a self-taught baker and cook who recently rereleased an updated, self-published version with new recipes.

Her blog and book caught the attention of casting directors, who invited Keno to apply for *Next Level Chef*. She was familiar with Ramsay’s notoriously loud, intimidating, and explosively angry on-air persona à la *Hell’s Kitchen*. And, she says, “that environment wasn’t really appealing to me.”

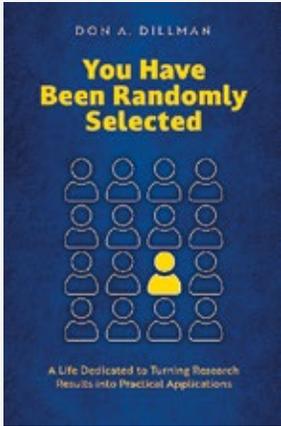
But *Next Level Chef* shows Ramsay’s softer, more encouraging side. “The thing about *Next Level Chef* is that it’s a mentorship-focused show,” says Keno, who watched a few episodes before deciding to go for it. “Chef Ramsay is still very firm. He’s a teacher and a mentor, and he wants you to succeed. But he’s also kind of a jokester. We had a lot of great banter on the show. I truly enjoyed working with him.”

Keno calls Washington State University “a jumping-off point for the rest of my life. I want people to understand what a special part of my life WSU was.”

For four years, she was a member of WSU’s intramural logging sports team, and that fact is referenced on the show. She notes that she was a “lumberjack.” And, at one point, Blais calls Keno “an ax-throwing firecracker.”

All banter aside, Keno says the set of *Next Level Chef* “was a supportive environment. I wouldn’t trade the experience for the world.”

In fact, she says, “I would love to work with Chef Ramsay again.” ✨



You Have Been Randomly Selected: A Life Dedicated to Turning Research Results into Practical Applications

DON DILLMAN
WSU PRESS: 2024

Don Dillman, raised on a farm in Iowa, wanted to be an agronomy specialist when he grew up. According to his 1959 Chariton High School yearbook, his aim was to help farmers renovate their fields to provide more nutritious feed for animals—like the cows he milked morning and night.

To that end, he earned a bachelor’s degree in agronomy from Iowa State University and went to Poland for six months in 1963 as part of an immersive 4-H International Farm Youth Exchange. Instead of cementing his dedication to farming, it opened Dillman’s mind to other possibilities.

“Poland had taken me in new directions while making it obvious to me that I needed to learn more about people and the institutions that guided their lives and less about plants,” writes the late Washington State University Regents Professor of sociology and renowned survey methodologist in his memoir, published six months after his death at 82 in June 2024.

In the book, he describes how seemingly random circumstances led him from a “limited life” on his family’s 160-acre farm

2025 top ten seniors



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

Each year, Washington State University recognizes 10 outstanding seniors. The WSU Alumni Association and Student Alumni Ambassadors oversee the effort. A committee of faculty, staff, and students chooses two winners in each category based on criteria such as leadership activities and academic achievements.

Meet this year’s Top Ten Seniors:

ACADEMICS

John Bussey, of Olympia, studied materials science and engineering. As a Barry Goldwater scholar, he intends to study glass science in a dual-degree doctoral program between WSU and the University of Paris. **Amabel Zucker**, of Morgantown, West Virginia, studied theoretical mathematics and philosophy at WSU Pullman, where she was a Math Learning Center tutor and teaching assistant. She plans to go to graduate school for math.

ATHLETICS

Samantha “Sam” Krew, of Scottsdale, Arizona, studied neuroscience at WSU Pullman, where she was the swim team captain, and founder and president of the Athletes in STEM Club. She plans to attend medical school. **Katy Ryan**, of Rathdrum, Idaho, studied elementary education at WSU Pullman, where she was a four-year starter on the volleyball team and co-captain in 2024. She plans to play professional volleyball in Europe, then teach elementary school.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Yasamin Alazawi, of Richland, studied biology and psychology at WSU Tri-Cities, where she was president of the Pre-Health Club. She plans to attend medical school. **Hannah McCready**, of Mead, studied psychology and human development at WSU Pullman, where she was president of the Human Development Club and treasurer for the Psych Squared psychology club. She plans to pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Shay Boyd, of Pullman, studied marketing, volunteered with WSU’s Veteran Student Support Services program, and trained in the Air Force ROTC. She plans to pursue an online MBA, then commission into the US Air Force as an officer. **Eva Sheffler**, of Spokane Valley, studied psychology at WSU Pullman, where she was a senior resident advisor. She plans to study international education administration through a master’s program at the American College of the Mediterranean.

VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

Madeline Goolie, of Anchorage, Alaska, studied fine arts at WSU Pullman, where she served as secretary and treasurer for the Art Club and president of the Print and Zine Club. She plans to pursue a master’s degree in fine arts. **Skylar McDavid**, of Bothell, studied music education at WSU Pullman, where he was a drum major and trombone player for Cougar Marching Band. He plans to teach and pursue master’s and doctoral degrees.

Read more about the top 10 seniors:
www.wsu.edu/toptenseniors

to becoming one of the world's most recognized survey methodologists.

As part of the second generation of survey researchers, Dillman did work at WSU and with the US Census Bureau—designing data collection protocols and measurement devices—that changed how surveys are conducted. A pioneer in modern survey methods, he sought to improve participation rates as well as the quality of collected information.

“My career was not influenced by the convergence of influences on fulfilling a particular life goal. Rather it was making decisions that were contingent on unexpected influences that kept happening,” Dillman writes. “Chance encounters and connections resulted in going from one set of research and applications to another in unexpected ways throughout my career.”

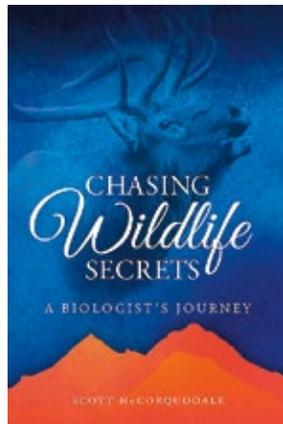
Among his earliest memories: spending his fifth birthday in the polio ward. He also describes his early schooling and the daily routine of rural Iowa farm life in the 1940s and 1950s.

In 1964, he married his college sweetheart. In 1969, the couple moved to Pullman, where they raised a son and a daughter. Dillman worked at WSU for the next 55 years—minus a stint on the East Coast, redesigning and improving participation in the 2000 Decennial Census.

Other survey researchers will particularly enjoy the second half of the book, which shifts from a personal narrative of his formative years to a career description in a more academic tone. Dillman gets into the details of data collection—something he also addresses in another book he coauthored: *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*.

“The satisfaction he got from his work was not in the discovery itself, but in seeing ideas put into practice by colleagues and professionals around the world,” his obituary notes. “Don strongly believed that the mission of a land-grant university like WSU is to share new knowledge through outreach to the community, a mission he lived his whole career.”

—Adriana Janovich



Chasing Wildlife Secrets: A Biologist's Journey

SCOTT MCCORQUODALE

WSU PRESS: 2025

Tracking black bears, tagging elk, learning about Columbian black-tailed deer—the life of a wildlife biologist is an adventure.

Scott McCorquodale's four decades of this pursuit inspired his detailed and fascinating memoir of the natural world and the wildlife that shares it with us.

“What drove me was an innate curiosity about wild animals,” writes McCorquodale. “They captivate me—always have, still do, and probably always will.”

His respect for wild animals and reverence for wild places started as a kid in California reading *National Geographic* and tracking iguanas in the Mojave Desert. His interest increased when his family moved to Montana. McCorquodale eventually graduated with undergraduate and graduate wildlife biology degrees.

Stories from his ensuing career in Washington state fill the book with colorful and gripping anecdotes of learning how and where bears, elk, moose, deer, and other animals live.

The animals themselves take on major roles in this memoir. Bears like Greasy and Midnight, elk named Granny and Brutus, and many others bring the research of the wildlife biologist to life. McCorquodale even worked diligently to find celebrity elk Buttons, far too habituated to people and unhealthy, a forever home at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo.

The research itself also sheds light on the behavior and range of state's fauna. For example, McCorquodale studied how 27 elk could survive in the arid central Washington landscape around Hanford.

The work is demanding but has relevant and consequential conservation implications, he notes. “Wild animals don't give up their secrets easily. Discovering the answer to any one question can take years.”

His tools to answer such questions in fieldwork were radio collars, tranquilizer darts, tags, and eventually GPS and DNA analysis.

McCorquodale traveled extensively around the state to learn about the secret lives of animals, by snowshoe, truck, four-wheeler, small plane, helicopter, and any method that worked. There was always an element of danger, particularly with small aircraft. The author shares the tragedy of losing colleagues in such an accident, and its effect on him.

Throughout his career, McCorquodale collaborated with scientists, farmers, Native American tribes, and others on the research and conservation of wild animals. He concludes the book with a call for everyone to take part: “Alliances can be a powerful way to do wildlife science.”

—Larry Clark

What the River Keeps

CHERYL GREY BOSTROM '80 MA ENGLISH
TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS: 2025

A successful biologist with passion for wild fish of the Pacific Northwest, Hildy Nybo keeps it together professionally. Her private life is another matter.

She fears she's losing her mind, or at least her memory. As a child, she constantly misplaces things, even her most treasured possessions, unable to recall where she might have left them. As an adult, she obsessively collects keepsakes and writes down the details of her daily doings in diaries, both in hopes of preserving—and, if necessary, jarring—her memory.

As her mother's own memory fails and overall health declines, Hildy returns

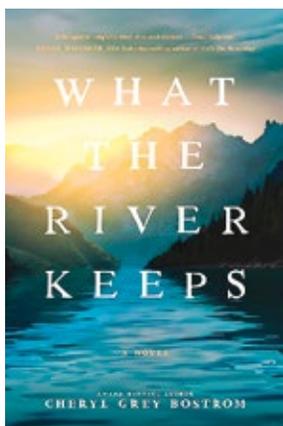


to her childhood home on the Olympic Peninsula, accepting a job to help restore the Elwha River after the demolition of two century-old dams. Living in a cabin at her family's rustic riverside resort, the haunting holes in her history seem to resurface.

When a local artist rents a nearby cabin to use as a pottery study, her carpenter brother Luke, a few years removed from his own personal trauma, starts hanging around and slowly tearing down the walls Hildy has built around her heart. Luke recognizes it will take time for the young recluse—fragile and a little naive, yet also stubborn and stronger than she knows—to let him in. But will she ever be able to piece together her perplexing past and free herself from its confines?

What the River Keeps follows Cheryl Grey (Hobson) Bostrom's 2021 debut novel *Sugar Birds* and 2024 sequel *Leaning on Air*, carrying similar themes: family, forgiveness, science, Christian spirituality, redemption, and the beauty and mystery of Washington state's natural world. It's both a love story and a story of learning to let go. Bostrom masterfully weaves together two different perspectives, alternating chapters from the points of view of both Hildy and Luke. Her prose—delicately nuanced, wholly seductive—unfolds cinematically and sings.

—Adriana Janovich



BRIEFLY NOTED

Gittel

LAURIE SCHNEIDER '98 MA AMER. STU. FITZROY BOOKS, AN IMPRINT OF REGAL HOUSE PUBLISHING: 2025

Eighth grader Gittel Borenstein—her first name means “good” in Yiddish—dreams of becoming an actress or writer during what’s surely to be her last year of formal education. It’s winter 1911 in rural Wisconsin, and the smart, spirited, outspoken 13-year-old is grappling with cultural and personal identity after fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe with her family. As winter melts into spring and summer 1912, Gittel navigates matters relevant to contemporary middle-grade-readers: friendship, family dynamics, bullying, bigotry, and loss. The young heroine of this coming-of-age novel, a sort of Jewish version of *Anne of Green Gables*—meets—*Little House on the Prairie*, is a delight.

The Diamond King

MARQ EVANS ('03 BUSI.) THE MCCAW: 2025

Artist Dick Perez has been called the “Picasso of Baseball” for his beautifully painted baseball cards. This captivating documentary by director Marq Evans tells the story of how Perez, official artist of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and the Philadelphia Phillies, transformed the commemoration of America’s most iconic pastime.

Read more and listen to a podcast with Evans about *The Diamond King*: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/diamond-king

Down the Rabbit Hole: Slowing the Spread of Misinformation and Propaganda on Social Media

LACEY J. FAUGHT '10 COMM. AND ADRIENNE HARVEY

DIGITAL LITERACY PUBLISHERS: 2024

“Where is my mind when I’m scrolling?” asks Lacey Faught, owner and founder of Vancouver-based social media agency Spry. She coauthored an easy-to-follow, *Alice-in-Wonderland*-themed guide to recognizing, challenging, and mitigating the impact of misinformation and propaganda online. The book’s simple Three-Click Method describes

what people should check before resharing content. Part workbook, part handbook, *Down the Rabbit Hole* equips social media users with powerful tools to help them navigate their favorite platforms—and not get completely sucked in.

Let’s Live A.L.O.H.A.

GERRY EBALAROZA-TUNNELL '11 SOC. SCI.

PLOWLINE PUBLISHING: 2024

This award-winning children’s book emphasizes qualities such as empathy, adaptability, and the wisdom found in Hawaiian culture. Using the acronym A.L.O.H.A., the story encourages kids to ask thoughtful questions, listen attentively, observe their surroundings, make decisions with heart, and adapt to life’s ever-changing situations.

The Big Bays of Lincoln County

ED VANDE VOORDE '83 FOREST & RANGE MGMT. 2024

This rural coming-of-age novel, inspired by real events, centers around Cap and Snap, a pair of draft horses, and Ira and Eva, country kids from different communities, as they all grow up together. The story delves into Amish culture and agriculture, echoing the simple life of bygone times. Ed Vande Voorde, of Parma, Idaho, operated a dairy farm with his dad for more than two decades before writing this story, honoring the animals and way of life he loves so much.

Becoming Walla Walla: The Transformation of Cayuse Country, 1805–1879

DENNIS CROCKETT WSU PRESS: 2024

From Indigenous peoples’ interactions with explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to the allotment plan for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, this well-researched history of the Walla Walla Valley documents the region’s dramatic cultural transformations of the 1800s. Dennis Crockett spent three decades as a professor of art history and visual culture at Walla Walla’s Whitman College.

60 LOREN KOLLER ('65 DVM) received the 2025 WSU Alumni Achievement Award. Pathologist Koller pioneered immunotoxicology in the 1970s. Previously, he served as dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University and associate dean at the University of Idaho. He has also served on editorial boards, grant review panels, and National Academy of Sciences committees, and held leadership roles in the Society of Toxicology and other professional organizations. ✨ **AVON MURPHY** ('67 MA English) created TCBib, a searchable database hosting thousands of technical communication articles. It was programmed by two computer science capstone teams at WSU Vancouver. The project is part of open-access publishing collaborative WAC Clearinghouse and hosted at Colorado State University. Murphy owns Murphy Editing and Writing Services and has been annotating technical communication literature since 1975.

70 Governor Bob Ferguson reappointed **JIM ANDERSON** ('74 Env. Sci., '78 MA Env. Sci.) to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission. He was appointed to the commission in 2019 and has four decades of experience in natural resources. Previously, he worked with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. ✨ **DUANE WOLVERTON** ('74 Vet. Sci., '77 DVM) received the 2025 Outstanding Service Alumni Award from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine for four decades of veterinary care in his hometown of Orofino, Idaho. Wolverson has performed discounted spays and neuters and provided a sanctuary for pets in need.

80 **PETER ANDERSON** ('81 DVM) received the 2025 Excellence in Teaching and Research Award from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. Anderson is a professor of pathology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine. His research on cardiac hypertrophy, atherosclerosis, and stents has resulted in more than 100 publications and six patents. He also cocreated the

Pathology Education Informational Resource, an image database used for medical education. ✨ **RENA CARLSON-LAMMERS** ('86 Vet. Sci., '89 DVM) received the Professional Achievement Award for 2025 from the Idaho State University Alumni Association. Carlson-Lammers served as ISU's attending veterinarian for 28 years and co-owned Alpine Animal Hospital in Pocatello, Idaho. She has held leadership roles in the Idaho Veterinary Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association and was named Idaho Veterinarian of the Year. ✨ **TERRY MCELWAIN** ('86 PhD Infect. Diseases & Immun.) received the 2025 Graduate Alumni Award from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. McElwain retired as a Regents Professor in 2016 after 32 years at WSU. He cofounded the Paul G. Allen School for Global Health, helped establish the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Previously, he served as executive director of the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at WSU. ✨ **PAUL MORLEY** ('86 Ani. Sci., '87 Vet. Sci., '89 DVM) received the 2025 Excellence in Teaching and Research Award from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. Morley is a professor and director of research for the Veterinary Education, Research, and Outreach program at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. He is an internationally renowned epidemiologist, animal scientist, and veterinary internal medicine specialist known for his expertise in infectious diseases. Previously, he was a faculty member at Ohio State University, Colorado State University, and University of Colorado. ✨ **GARY BALLEW** ('88 Hotel & Rest. Admin., '94 Civ. & Env. Eng., '97 MS Env. Eng.) is assistant city manager for Yakima. Previously, Ballew was vice president of economic development for Greater Spokane, Inc., and director of economic development and marketing at the Port of Pasco. He has more than 20 years of experience in economic development. ✨ **STEVE JOHNSON**

('89 Biol., '97 Pharm., '98 PharmD) is chief development officer for Zealand Pharma, a Danish biotechnology company. Previously, he was senior vice president and head of regulatory stakeholders at UCB Biopharma and held leadership roles at Medpace, Inc. and Novo Nordisk. He also served as a master reviewer in the Division of Metabolic and Endocrine Drug Products at the Food and Drug Administration.

90 **RICH FLANIGAN** ('91 Accounting, Finance) is chief commercial officer of the Grant County Public Utility District in Ephrata. Flanigan joined the agency in 2006 as a senior financial analyst, and later served as senior manager of wholesale marketing and supply. ✨ **MIKE BEDNAR** ('92 Geol., '04 Crop Sci.) is first runner-up for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's 2025 Healthy Land Stewardship Award. Bednar, superintendent of Palouse Ridge Golf Club, was recognized for his dedication to maintaining healthy ecosystems and sustainability practices. ✨ **DANIEL DUNCAN** ('94 Poli. Sci.) is commander of the Joint Munitions Command based at the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois. Previously, Duncan, a brigadier general, was deputy commander for the Combined Arms Support Command and executive officer to the commander of the Transportation Command. ✨ **SAMANTHA SWINDELL** ('95 MS, '98 PhD Psych.) received the inaugural Assessment Champion Award from the WSU Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness, in recognition for advancing the assessment of undergraduate programs. She is a professor in the psychology department and associate dean for undergraduate studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. ✨ **SCOTT TINGEY** ('96 Busi., '00 MBA) is associate laboratory director for operational systems at the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Previously, Tingey was senior director for operations at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, chief operating officer at the Fermi National Accelerator Facility, and director of program and human resource management at the National Biodefense

The energy industry and utilities have gone through major transformations over the last few decades. **DENNIS VERMILLION** ('85 Elec. Eng.) has had a front-row seat for most of it.

Vermillion retired as CEO of Avista Corp at the end of 2024 after nearly 40 years with the company. Avista President and CEO Heather Rosentrater took the helm on January 1.

Energy company Avista is involved with production, transmission and distribution of energy as well as other energy-related businesses. It's best known as the utility providing electricity and natural gas to 1.7 million customers across eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and parts of southern and eastern Oregon.

"Our company's been in business for 135 years. I'm proud of the commitment to the community that we serve and our customers," Vermillion says.

Vermillion, a Spokane native, started with Avista in 1985 with an engineering degree from Washington State University. In addition to his CEO position, he served in senior leadership at the company for nearly 24 years, including president of Avista Corp, senior vice president of Avista Corp and president of Avista Utilities, and vice president of energy resources.



He helped Avista navigate challenging times: COVID-19 with its supply chain disruptions and inflation pressures, complicated regulatory changes, ongoing transition to clean energy sources, and new policies. Vermillion also led investment in modernizing the electrical grid for resiliency, wildfire mitigation, and increased demand from customers.

Customers are the main priority, Vermillion says. They "flip the light switch and the lights come on, and that's what you think about. But it really can be a very complicated industry."

He notes that energy crises, customer service during the recent pandemic, grid resilience, clean energy transitions, and the great recession were some of toughest tests of his leadership. He credits his Avista colleagues for ensuring they made it through rough patches so customers could keep the lights and heat on.

"I've been so fortunate being able to work at Avista and to have a long, fulfilling career in my hometown in a part of the country that I love," Vermillion says. "I thank my lucky stars for that opportunity."

LARRY CLARK

and Countermeasure Center. He started at PNNL as a hot cell technician in 1992, eventually becoming chief operating officer for the Earth and Biological Sciences Directorate. He is an associate professor in the Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution at Texas A&M. ✨ **HEIDI SHULTZ** ('97 Ed.) was inducted to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association's Hall of Fame class of 2024. Shultz is head volleyball coach at Columbia High School in White Salmon. She competed in the heptathlon on the WSU track and field team, earning a place in the NCAA national championships her senior year. ✨ **MICHAEL HAYMON** ('98 Crim. Jus.) is the thirty-fifth commander of Naval Air Station Fallon in Churchill County, Nevada. Captain Haymon has served 27 years in the military.

and wellness company, and hosts *The Green Edition*, a health and wellness show sponsored by his company. ✨ **ANGIE SENTER** ('02 Ag. Ed., '10 MS Ag.) received the Outstanding Staff Award for Student Engagement from the Carson College of Business. Senter, event manager for the college, led or supported more than 200 events in 2024. ✨ **TIM SPERBER** ('04 MEd) is superintendent of the Lewiston School District in Lewiston, Idaho. He has been an administrator for the district since 2006. ✨ **RAUL ALVARADO** ('05 Kinesio.) is boys' basketball coach at Davis High School in Yakima. Alvarado started there as a physical education teacher in 2012, then joined the girls' basketball coaching staff before becoming boys' basketball assistant coach. Previously, Alvarado coached for an Amateur Athletic Union team in Hermiston, Oregon. He was head coach for middle school teams in Echo, Oregon, and Moscow, Idaho, and an assistant coach at Wapato High School. ✨ **MOLLY SCHOTZKO** ('05 Comm., '08 MA Sport Mgmt.) received the Excellence in Teaching a Large Class

Award from the WSU Teaching Academy. Schotzko is an assistant professor of strategic communication in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication. ✨ **JENNIFER ERICKSON** ('06 Neurosci.) received the 2025 Undergraduate Alumni Award from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. Erickson is an assistant professor at the University of Washington, medical director of the Traumatic Brain Injury-Behavioral Health ECHO program, and associate program director for the Adult Psychiatry Residency Training program. She completed her psychiatry residency at the University of New Mexico in 2015 and is board-certified in psychiatry, consultation liaison psychiatry, brain injury medicine, and neuropsychiatry-behavioral neurology. ✨ **ALLIE WITTENBERGER** ('06 Accounting) is vice president of audit programs for Alaska Airlines. Wittenberger joined Alaska in 2010 as a senior internal auditor, then director of ethics and compliance and manager of financial planning and analysis. She most recently served as Alaska Air Group's managing director of corporate affairs and

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CLAYTON THOMAS ('00 Hum.) is the International Association of Top Professionals' 2025 Top Global Entrepreneur of the Year. He is founder and board chair at the ROOT Brands, a health



CLASSnotes

MARK SCHUSTER was growing up in Richland, playing sports, and collecting baseball cards, when he first learned about Gene Conley.

The two-sport professional athlete was long retired from sports by then. A Richland High School Bomber and Coug, **CONLEY** (x'50) had pitched for four Major League Baseball teams and played for two National Basketball Association teams, winning national championships in both sports—something no one else has done.

To Schuster ('95 Busi.) and many boys like him, Conley was a phenom and role model.

"When I found out that a big-time professional athlete came from Richland, I thought, 'Hey, maybe someday I can do that,'" says Schuster, whose father-in-law, Jack Glover ('66 Ed.), went to school with Conley's sister in first grade and remained friends.

A highly recruited high school athlete, Conley anchored Washington State College baseball and basketball in 1949 and 1950. He led the teams to the Pacific Coast Conference baseball and basketball championships and to the school's first appearance in the College World Series title game.

He went pro in 1950, playing baseball for the Boston (and later Milwaukee) Braves, Philadelphia Phillies, and the Boston Red Sox. In the NBA, he played for the Boston Celtics and New York Knicks. He was a pitcher for the Milwaukee Braves when they won the



World Series in 1957, and he helped the Celtics win three NBA titles: 1959, 1960, and 1961.

In 2023, his sister, Billye (Conley) Drew ('65 Busi.) saw a *Washington State Magazine* story about Schuster, then president of the WSU Alumni Association, returning memorabilia to legendary Coug basketball coach George Raveling.

"She knew I was a collector. She said she had this stuff, but she didn't really have any plans for it, and she wanted it to be taken care of. She felt she could trust me to do the right

thing with it. And I was happy to do it."

The right thing, Schuster felt, was to gift the collection to Richland High School and WSU so it could be displayed in perpetuity.

Schuster was "blown away" when he opened the box of mementos. "A letterman's sweater is so personal. Back in the 1940s and '50s, they were really big deals. To have two of them in the box—one from college and one from high school—I was just thrilled."

Schuster added a few of his own Conley collectibles, including a signed baseball glove and a signed Milwaukee Braves baseball card, to the mix.

The WSU exhibit was installed in the Lewis Alumni Centre by the end of 2023. The Richland High School display was finalized in early 2025.

ADRIANA JANOVICH

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compliance. ✨ **LIV BOURNE** ('07 Hosp. Busi. Mgmt., '18 MBA) was featured in *South Sound Business Journal's* 2025 40 Under 40, which recognizes business leaders for their contributions in the region. Bourne is the director of sales and catering at Alderbrook Resort & Spa in Union, and an adjunct professor in the WSU School of Hospitality Business Management. ✨

BRONSON POCOCK ('07 History) is a fire captain at the Maui County Department of Fire and Public Safety in Hawaii. Pockock joined the department in 2012 and worked as a firefighter in Wailea and Makawao and as captain in Pūko'o and Lahaina. ✨ **JANA FISCHBACK** ('08 Comm.) is sustainability coordinator for food safety and compliance at Stemilt, a family-owned tree fruit packing company based in Wenatchee. Fischback cofounded the educational nonprofit Sustainable NCW, where she worked with organizations to implement environmental sustainability programs and helped educate the community on how to live more sustainably. Previously, she

worked as sustainability coordinator for Metro Parks Tacoma.

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BEAU SCHWIESO ('16 Comp. Sci., '24 MBA) is chief operating officer for Caf2Code, a Microsoft Solutions partner that specializes in enterprise resource planning and digital transformation for businesses. Previously, Schwieso worked as an information systems technician manager for the US Navy, a senior Dynamics AX developer for Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, a senior engineering manager for enVista and H-E-B, and vice president for enterprise solutions delivery at HOLT CAT. ✨ **RUIYING CAI** ('18 PhD Hosp. Busi. Mgmt.) received the Outstanding Faculty Research Award from the Carson College of Business. Cai is an assistant professor in the School of Hospitality Business Management and has published 15 journal articles as a WSU faculty member. She has been featured in *Forbes*, the *Telegraph*, and Yahoo News, and has

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ERIN MULLINS ('22, '23 Comm.) is a general assignment reporter for the *Whitman County Gazette* in Colfax. Previously, Mullins worked for the *Leavenworth Echo* and the *Lovell Chronicle* in Wyoming. At WSU, she worked at the *Daily Evergreen* and was a varsity track and field athlete. ✨ **MELODY DAVIS** ('23 Crim. Jus.) is head coach of the dance team at Ephrata High School. Davis, an experienced coach and choreographer, was a member of the Denver Nuggets dance team and served as captain of both her high school and WSU dance teams, earning a Washington Interscholastic Activities Association State Pom Championship. ✨ **GABRIELLE FELICIANO** ('24 Comm.) is a reporter at the *Newport Miner* in Newport. At WSU, Feliciano was a reporter and editor for the *Daily Evergreen* and a copy and nonfiction editor for *LandEscapes*. She also interned at the *Olympian* as a general assignment reporter.

INmemoriam

40 **VIRGINIA STREETS** ('44 DVM), 102, February 11, 2025, Los Angeles, California. **LAUREL ANNE PICKETT** ('48 Home Econ.), 93, December 29, 2020, Chehalis. **JOANNE FISHER JONES** ('49 Music, Ed.), 97, February 14, 2025, North Bend. **DAWN ALICE MARSHALL** ('49 English, Pi Beta Phi), 91, November 27, 2018, Olympia.

50 **ROBERT WILLIAM BRADEN** ('50 Ag. Econ.), 100, February 9, 2025, Yakima. **LESLIE ROY ADAMS** ('51 Ag., Ed., '70 MS Ag. Ed., '79 EdD, Alpha Gamma Rho), 96, May 3, 2025, Kennewick. **CLIFFORD M. PHIBBS JR.** ('52 Zool.), 95, April 1, 2025, Bloomington, Minnesota. **PATRICIA (NAGLE) GALLIGAN** ('53 Soc. Stu.), 94, April 14, 2025, Keizer, Oregon. **EMIL ERICH LEITZ** ('53 Mech. Eng., Alpha Kappa Lambda), 94, March 4, 2025, Richland. **BARBARA ANN MAGNUSON** ('53 Ed.), 93, February 26, 2025, Spokane. **WILLIAM BARTON STRACK** ('54 Wildlife Biol.), 97, March 6, 2025, Idaho City, Idaho. **JAMES EUGENE DALEN** ('55 Psych.), 91, January 16, 2024, Oro Valley, Arizona. **SUSAN N. HOWARD** ('55 Gen. Stu., Pi Beta Phi), 92, January 29, 2025, Wenatchee. **HARRY M. RENDLE JR.** ('55 Pharm.), 94, March 16, 2025, Spokane. **BEVERLY JANE STILSON** ('55 Nursing), 93, March 24, 2025, Lynnwood. **ALEX G. ALEXANDER** ('56 Hort.), 86, March 18, 2020, Everett. **JOHN HUNT "JACK" SLOANE** ('56 Elec. Eng.), 91, January 29, 2025, North Charleston, South Carolina. **GLENN OWEN TRIBE** ('56 Mech. Eng.), 89, November 27, 2023, Ridgefield. **CAROL ANN (HOFFMAN) WHITE** ('56 Fine Arts, Kappa Kappa Gamma), 90, April 15, 2025, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. **DALE THOMAS TINGEY** ('57 PhD Couns. Psych.), 100, February 27, 2025, Provo, Utah. **GLENN CONAN ALDRICH** ('58 Ag., '62 MS Ag. Ed., Farmhouse), 88, March 8, 2025, Mossyrock. **HELEN E. DAVIS** ('58 Home Econ.), 88, April 9, 2025, Walnut Creek, California. **VERGIL L. LINDSEY** ('58 Forest & Range Mgmt.), 95, April 17, 2025, Meridian, Idaho.

60 **GERALD E. JOHNSON** ('60 Arch.), 88, March 16, 2025, Spokane. **FRANK**

CLIFFORD MICHEL ('60 Psych., '75 EdD), 89, September 20, 2023, Corvallis, Oregon. **DAVID P. ANDERSON** ('61 DVM), 90, May 24, 2025, Winterville, Georgia. **GLEN DALE FRANKLIN** ('61 Psych.), 88, November 10, 2024, Delta Junction, Alaska. **PATRICK J. CARAHER** ('62 Soc. Stu., Comm.), 86, March 11, 2025, Pullman. **MARK R. WELCH** ('62 Mining Eng.), 85, March 10, 2025, Albuquerque, New Mexico. **WILLIAM M. BATES** ('63 Pharm.), 84, April 11, 2024, Spokane. **MAX SUMMERS JENSEN** ('63 Phys. Ed.), 85, March 25, 2025, Spokane Valley. **GERALD T. "TIM" SLOBOJAN** ('64 DVM), 83, April 1, 2024, Kalispell, Montana. **STANLEY WEGNER EMIG** ('65 Bacterio.), 77, January 5, 2020, Kennewick. **HELEN MANING ALMY** ('66 Elem. Ed.), 79, November 24, 2023, Meridian, Idaho. **NEWT JACKSON** ('66 Civ. Eng.), 82, April 5, 2025, Olympia. **JOHN R. S. MCCORMICK** ('66 Poli. Sci.), 81, January 19, 2025, Fallon, Nevada. **LOYCE DAWN EMIG** ('67 Pharm.), 78, January 13, 2022, Kennewick. **DEAN HUTCHINSON** ('67 Psych.), 82, February 17, 2025, Plummer, Idaho. **JERRY WAYNE NIELSEN** ('67 Ag.), 83, January 6, 2025, Richland. **NORMAN W. RANTANEN** ('67 DVM), 82, March 22, 2025, Fallbrook, California. **KAREN LEE RISTVET VIALLE** ('67 MA Poli. Sci.), 76, July 21, 2019, Tacoma. **EDWIN ANTHONY KARLOW** ('68 MS, '71 PhD Physics), 82, March 28, 2025, Tillamook, Oregon. **JAMES IRVIN SCHELLER** ('68 Const. Mgmt.), 79, May 17, 2025, Powell Butte, Oregon. **JOE LLOYD SNYDER** ('68 Accounting), 78, May 11, 2025, Seattle. **GEORGE M. MALCOLM** ('69 Busi., '74 MBA), 79, April 17, 2025, Pullman. **THOMAS RANDALL SIMMONS** ('69 Math., Tau Kappa Epsilon), 75, March 5, 2022, Atlanta, Georgia. **RICARDO JON TOBIA** ('69 Gen. Stu.), 71, July 5, 2018, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

70 **MICHAEL G. AGAT** ('70 Socio.), 79, March 20, 2025, Orlando, Florida. **JAMES EDWIN COOLIDGE** ('70 Biol.), 79, May 18, 2025, Kalispell, Montana. **GARY**

L. LEWIS ('70 Forestry & Range Mgmt., Sigma Nu), 77, December 1, 2023, Yakima. **GARY A. REMY** ('70 History, '72 MBA), 74, November 3, 2022, Yakima. **JOHN WILLIAM RICHES II** ('70 Poli. Sci.), 76, March 7, 2025, Liberty Lake. **MELVIN JAMES RICKETTS** ('70 Elec. Eng.), 77, April 4, 2025, University Place. **STEVEN MARK KLINSKI** ('71 Psych., Lambda Chi Alpha), 75, April 21, 2025, Vancouver. **PHILIP G. LEVENDUSKY** ('71 Psych.), 78, April 17, 2025, Manchester, Massachusetts. **ROOSEVELT D. BUTLER** ('72 MA Poli. Sci.), 87, May 28, 2022, Lakewood. **GUY H. GRABER** ('72 Fine Arts), 75, January 3, 2025, Othello. **JOAN DIANE GUPTILL** ('72 Busi.), 71, October 16, 2020, Electric City. **ROBIN HICKOK** ('72, '73 MS Police Sci.), 78, April 8, 2025, Moses Lake. **JOANNE NEBEN** ('72 Phys. Ed.), 74, January 22, 2025, Antioch, California. **ALBERT ANGELO JR.** ('73 Const. Mgmt.), 76, April 19, 2025, Vancouver. **ELIZABETH A. "BETSY" GUTHU** ('73 English), 73, January 5, 2025, West Hartford, Connecticut. **RICHARD J. PETERSON** ('73 Zool.), 71, August 15, 2022, Seattle. **MERLIN DAVID "BUCK" BUCHANAN** ('74 Police Sci.), 77, January 12, 2025, Colbert. **JAMES IRVING NEWHOUSE** ('74 Agriculture), 75, July 26, 2024, Yakima. **THOMAS EDWARD PARSONS** ('74 Ed.), 76, March 31, 2025, Blaine. **SUSAN GAYLE (BOAZ) PENCE** ('74 Ed.), 71, April 25, 2023, Snohomish. **THOMAS P. REYNOLDS** ('74 Soc. Sci.), 70, December 27, 2020, Portland, Oregon. **LANCE BYRON WILLIS** ('74 Accounting), 72, April 11, 2025, Seattle. **DONALD S. PATTERSON** ('75 MS Hort.), 74, February 12, 2025, Clarkston. **MERRY ANN GORDON** ('76 Home Econ., '77 Elem. Ed.), 71, May 19, 2025, Tumwater. **WILLIAM R. GREEN** ('76 PhD Geol.), 86, March 17, 2025, Spokane. **JOHN A. HARRISON** ('76 Comm.), 70, February 7, 2025, Vancouver. **SUSAN L. HUNTER** ('76 Ed.), 73, February 27, 2025, Bozeman, Montana.

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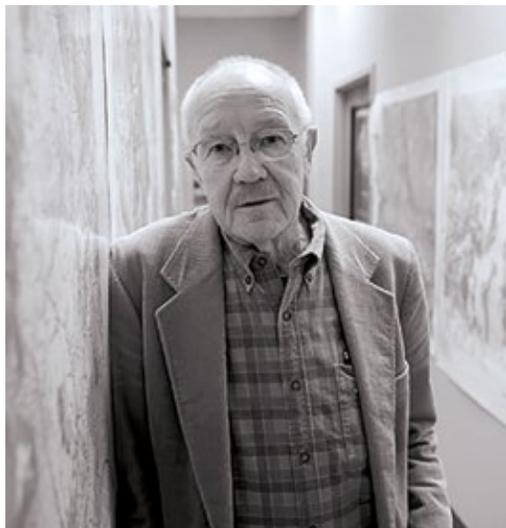


PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER

Through seven decades as a distinguished archaeologist, professor, visionary and advocate, **WILLIAM "BILL" LIPE** contributed to the understanding and preservation of ancestral Puebloan culture in the American Southwest while mentoring generations of scholars at Washington State University and beyond.

A preeminent scholar of ancient Southwest cultures, he pioneered approaches in conservation archaeology and cultural resource management. Lipe advanced a stewardship model for archaeology, balancing research with long-term preservation of archaeological sites, and profoundly shaped the ethics and practice of American archaeology.

Lipe died April 9, 2025, in Moscow, Idaho.

He was born May 5, 1935, in Struggleville, Oklahoma, and later attended the University of Oklahoma to pursue his interest in Native American history.

Lipe married June Finley in 1962, with daughter Carrie born in 1963 and twins Jessica and David in 1965. In 1976, the family moved to the Palouse when Lipe joined the WSU faculty. He spent nearly 50 years at WSU and, even after his retirement, continued to conduct research, serve professional organizations, and consult with policymakers on issues related to cultural heritage preservation.

From 1978 to 1985 he led WSU's collaboration with the University of Colorado on the vast Dolores Archaeological Program. One of the largest such projects in the nation's history, it became a model for structuring large-scale archaeological investigations.

Lipe collaborated on developing the nonprofit Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in Cortez, Colorado, a 170-acre "living classroom" with research opportunities and preservation of ancestral Pueblo Indian cultures.

Late in his life, Lipe helped preserve other ancestral landscapes, including the 174,000-acre Canyons of the Ancients National

Monument in Colorado and the Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah.

Lipe was president of the Society for American Archaeology in the 1990s, which he helped to transform into an authoritative resource for archaeological practice and professional ethics. The society recognized him with the Distinguished Service Award, its highest honor.

He also sat on the boards of a number of professional societies and was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Lipe received WSU's highest honor, an honorary doctoral degree, in 2021.

WSM STAFF



Bill Lipe's illustrious career:

magazine.wsu.edu/web-extra/Lipe-honors



BOB ORR, the first coach of Cougar Crew, died February 21, 2025. The retired Vancouver, Washington, teacher, principal, and girls fast-pitch coach was 87.

A former oarsman for the University of Washington, Robert Stewart Orr Jr. ('73 PhD Elem. Ed.) moved to Pullman in 1971 to pursue a doctoral degree. The WSU Rowing Club, which became Cougar Crew, was formed during the 1970–1971 school year.

"They'd gotten a bunch of young men together who wanted to sit on their behinds and go backwards," Orr told *Washington State Magazine* in 2019. "They'd never rowed a stroke in their lives."

Orr was 34 when he told rowing club advisor Ken Abbey that he wanted to be involved with the fledgling crew. "What I said

ABOVE: COUGAR CREW MEMBER WALT COWART (LEFT IN PHOTO) STANDS WITH **BOB ORR** OUTSIDE THE RUINED SHELLHOUSE IN JANUARY 1972. A WINDSTORM DESTROYED THE NEWLY BUILT SHELLHOUSE IN EARLY JANUARY. IT HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN FALL 1971. (COURTESY *THE DAILY EVERGREEN*)

was 'I'd be happy to help,'" Orr recalled. "He said, 'OK, you're the coach.'"

He was the coach on Black Thursday, when a storm came up fast and swamped three Cougar Crew boats: *Loyal Shoudy*, *Titanic*, and *Tyee*. *Loyal Shoudy* and *Tyee* sank that day, April 5, 1973.

He was also the coach a year earlier, on April 15, 1972, when one shell, *Red Baron*, hit bridge pilings, broke up, and sent crew members over the starboard side. Orr recalled yelling to his crew, "'Is there anybody that can't swim?' That was my first concern."

The disastrous day yielded one of Alan "Mike" Klier's favorite memories of Orr. "Having determined that everyone could swim, he told those clinging to wreckage in the frigid Snake to 'Save the oars!'"

Says Klier ('75 Physics), "Bob was the source of many memorable quotes. He would frequently gaze out upon deplorable conditions at Almota, as if carefully pondering circumstances, then turn to those of us foolish enough to be present and exclaim, 'It's row-able water!' It was never not row-able."

Orr served two years as the volunteer crew coach, made the program a varsity boat club, started the *Pull Hard* newsletter, launched two-a-day practices during spring break, and instigated the crew's commodore-based governance system. He held the first Class Day Races too.

Klier says, "His finest moment, and a comment I think that was original to his own creativity, spoke to a contemplative aspect of his character that was not frequently revealed: 'You can learn a lot about life at the end of an oar.'"

ADRIANA JANOVICH



More on Bob Orr and other Cougar Crew coaches and members: magazine.wsu.edu/web-extra/cougar-crew-profiles

PAT CARAHER devoted himself to telling the stories of Washington State University alumni, researchers, students, sports, and the Cougar nation for over three decades.

Patrick "Pat" James Caraher died March 11, 2025, at 86, after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

He was born October 14, 1938, in Seattle, grew up in the Ravenna district, and attended Seattle Prep.

In fall 1957, Caraher began his lifelong connection to WSU. He joined Phi Kappa Theta fraternity and later earned a degree in social sciences in 1962. After serving two years in the US Army, he returned to WSU and earned a communications degree in 1966.

Caraher started his professional journey at the *Register-Guard* newspaper in Eugene, Oregon, before he was offered the position of editor of the WSU alumni publication in 1969. He was the founding editor of *Hilltopics* and later co-editor of *Washington State Magazine* from 2001 until his retirement in 2004. His 35-year WSU career

was marked by his dedication to storytelling and his deep love for the Cougar community.

In recognition of his contributions, Caraher received the WSU Alumni Achievement Award in 1995.

He married Laurie Busch ('76 Music) in 1976, and together they raised three daughters, Maureen Wilson ('99 Ed.) of Bothell, Kelly Caraher ('02 Human Dev.) of Pullman, and Theresa Brabner ('05 Fine Arts) of Columbus, Georgia.

Caraher was also dedicated to community service. As a volunteer chaplain at Pullman Regional Hospital for 17 years, he provided comfort and support to countless patients and was named Outstanding Volunteer in 2019. A proud Rotarian for 42 years, he served as Pullman president in 1977–78 and was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow. His faith was a guiding force in his life. He was an active member of Sacred Heart Parish, serving as president of the Parish Council, a member of the St. Francis Guild, and outreach ministries.

Caraher was a lifelong and loyal Cougar fan. WSU baseball was his "love and vice." He rarely missed a home game.

He was known for his kindness and ability to make friends everywhere he went. Caraher often said, "You can never have enough friends," and lived that belief every day.

WSM STAFF



Pat Caraher's memories of his best WSU journalism professors: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Caraher



Caraher's obituary: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Caraher-obit



COURTESY WSU MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES, AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

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VICKY RHODES ('76 Pharm.), 71, April 1, 2025, Vancouver. **DAVID L. PEARSON** ('77 Pharm., Beta Theta Pi), 70, November 2, 2024, Kennewick. **SUSAN (HURLBUT) HEYDON** ('78 History, Gamma Phi Beta), 68, March 10, 2025, Federal Way.

80 DAVID SANDER BURGESS ('80 Socio.), 77, February 16, 2024, Olympia. **ALLEN ARTHUR HALL** ('80 MBA Finance), 65, November 30, 2020, Sacramento, California. **LARRY EDWARD PEDERSON** ('81 MA Ag. Econ.), 72, February 23, 2025, Dayton, Oregon. **GREGORY JAMES FORSYTH** ('82 Math., Ed.), 64, April 8, 2025, Spokane. **RICHARD ALLEN WATT** ('85 Fine Arts, Ed.), 66, August 2, 2024, Omak. **TODD JOSEPH BRYAN** ('86 Music), 62, April 10, 2025, Vancouver. **MAUREEN STEBNER** ('86 Soc. Sci.), 60, December 3, 2019, Tacoma. **LAWRENCE ALVIN HOST** ('88 MS Forest & Range Mgmt.), 66, August 17, 2019, Sacramento.

90 KATHRYN LYNN (DUNBAR) FAZIO ('90 Ed., Alpha Gamma Delta), 56, October 26, 2023, Ridgefield. **MARTY DALEWARD** ('90 Fine Arts), 56, December 31, 2019, Winchester, California. **PETER J. JAMES** ('91 Gen. Stu.), 58, March 26, 2025, Gig Harbor. **MARTIN BRUCE WALL** ('92 Gen. Stu.), 63, December 31, 2024, Seattle. **ROBERT MERRILL "ROB" BURR** ('97 Busi., '20 MBA, Finance), 50, May 13, 2025, Gig Harbor.

00 JEREMY SEAN SATOMI SANTO ('03 Biol.), 45, March 12, 2025, Pasco. **JENNIFER CAROL NEHER** ('04 Apparel Merch., Des. & Textiles), 42, April 16, 2023, Rougemont, North Carolina. **ROLANDO HERNANDEZ** ('06 Crim. Jus., Socio.), 42, April 16, 2025, Othello.

10 DEAN ALAN UMATHUM ('12 Accounting), 40, March 26, 2025, Vancouver.

20 OLIVER WAYNE SMITH ('20 Chem. Eng.), 28, March 2, 2025, Cheney. **SARAH NICOLE CARLSON** ('24 MS Speech & Hearing Sci.), 25, April 8, 2025, Port Orchard. **LUKE SIMON ROSS** ('24 Mat. Sci.), 22, April 6, 2025, Seattle.

FACULTY AND STAFF

DALE BRANTNER, 72, Facilities Services, 1982-2012, February 16, 2025, Palouse. ✨ **PAULA BECK**, 64, Facilities Services, 1994-2016, December 29, 2024, Palouse. ✨ **MARY E. BOLES**, 76, Registrar, 1984-2013, February 21, 2025, Troy, Idaho. ✨ **PATRICK CARAHER**, 86, News Service, 1969-2004, March 11, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **LYNN CHURCHILL**, 77, Veterinary Medicine, 1987-2009, February 28, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **FREDERICK FORD**, 80, School of the Environment, 1992-2014, December

29, 2024, Grand Junction, Colorado. ✨ **JO ANN GETZ**, 88, Housing, 1975-1998, December 27, 2024, Palouse. ✨ **CATHERINE HARPER**, 77, Information Systems, 1984-2009, April 21, 2025, Potlatch, Idaho. ✨ **GEORGE "MIKE" MALCOLM**, 79, Veterinary Medicine, 1973-2018, April 17, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **PHILLIP MALTE**, 82, Mechanical Engineering, 1972-1979, March 23, 2024, Bellevue. ✨ **SHARON MELDRUM**, 88, Economics, 1976-1984, 1995-2007, April 22, 2025, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. ✨ **BETTY MUSICK**, 77, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, 1967-2014, February 11, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **GUY SENTER**, 82, Facilities Services, 1978-1993, March 17, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **JAY WEIDNER**, 70, Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, 1990-2011, March 4, 2025, Pullman. ✨ **MARY WOOD**, 76, Libraries, 1990-2014, January 17, 2025, Portland, Oregon.

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Scientific exposures

BY BECKY KRAMER

A wildlife biologist crouches in a forest wetland. In her hands are tiny frogs, ready to leap back into their watery home.

RYAN WAGNER, a doctoral student at Washington State University, photographed young Cascades froglets being released into the wild at a Northern California research site. His picture was recently featured in *Nature's* "Scientist at Work" contest.

"For me, the photo represents a lot of hope for amphibians," says Wagner, who studies wildlife disease ecology at WSU Vancouver. "The frogs' release is the culmination of hard work and a lot of science."

Cascades frog populations are plunging in Northern California, and the chytrid fungus is a primary culprit. To increase their chances of survival, the young frogs are captured and held for a week, receiving daily antifungal baths.

It's a labor-intensive effort. Researchers scout for remnant Cascades frog populations in high-elevation meadows and lakes. They catch the froglets in fall, shortly after they change out of their tadpole stage. Antifungal treatments increase the frogs' survival rates from less than 5 percent to more than 50 percent during their first winter.

"We're starting to have tools that make a difference against chytrid," Wagner says of the highly infectious fungus responsible for worldwide declines in amphibian numbers.

Wagner frequently pairs photography with his research. This is the second year his work has been featured in the *Nature* contest. Last year's winning photo showed a researcher feeding an endangered Hawaiian songbird.

"I try to capture images that connect with a broader audience, and show just how cool scientists can be," Wagner says. "We're very down-to-earth people, and our work can be a lot of fun." *

PHOTO: RYAN WAGNER



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