

# Washington State Magazine

SUMMER 2026

PREPARING  
THE NEXT  
GENERATION  
OF NUCLEAR  
OPERATORS

KEEPING  
COMMUNITY  
INVESTMENTS  
LOCAL

FAST TIMES  
AT WSU:  
COUG  
RUNNING  
LEGENDS

SOLAR POWER  
AND MORE  
MONEY FOR  
SCHOOLS

HYDROGEN  
FUEL ON  
THE FARM

A dawning  
of the **Age of  
New Energy**



A photograph of a campus scene during autumn. In the foreground, a tree branch with green and yellowing leaves is on the left. A white, torn-edge graphic overlay is positioned over this branch, containing the text 'WSU' in a bold, gold, sans-serif font. The background features a large, multi-story building with a light-colored facade and several windows. A well-maintained green lawn is in the middle ground, with a few fallen leaves scattered on it. Another tree with vibrant yellow autumn foliage stands to the right of the building. The sky is bright, and there are lens flare effects on the right side of the image.

**WSU**

**Energy innovation** lies at the heart of Washington State University's Tri-Cities campus. Read more at its Academic Research website.



## WASHINGTON *spotlight*

### Tri-Cities campus

**WSU Tri-Cities is home to creative energy researchers and cutting-edge ideas. The Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory is part of WSU's efforts to improve sustainable aviation fuel, used by airlines to reduce their carbon footprint. The Institute for Northwest Energy Futures, established in 2021, looks to accelerate the adoption of reliable and affordable electricity and transportation fuels. The institute also connects WSU energy research and programs across the state. Joint programs between WSU Tri-Cities and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory boost nuclear science and technology, advanced power grid, and bio-based products.**

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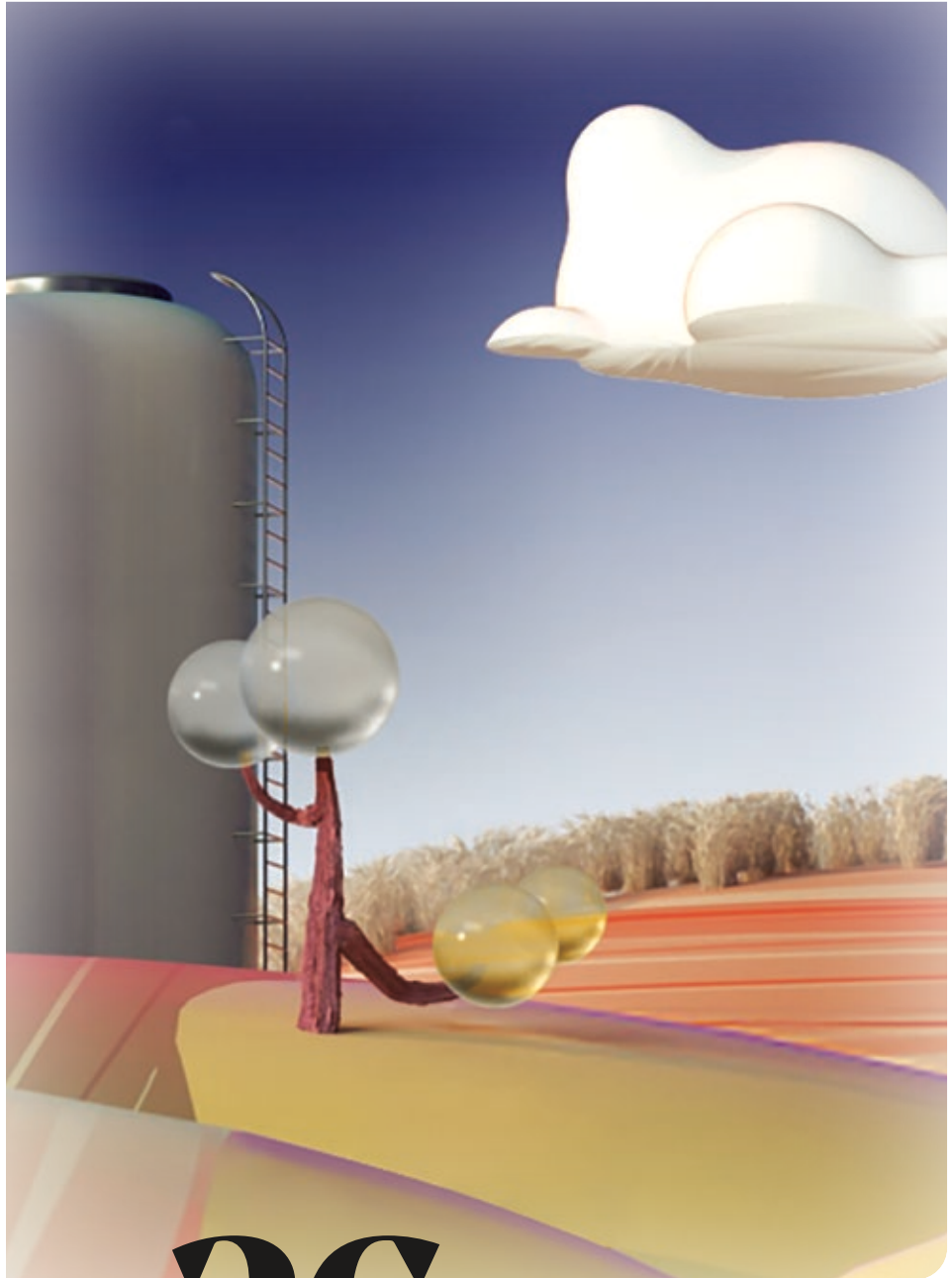
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Staff photo illustration/Adobe Firefly



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## NEW ENERGY

The thirst for energy keeps growing across the state and everywhere. Data centers, new businesses, electrification, and population growth increase the strain on our power grids.

Washington State University has stepped up to the energy challenge for many decades. As dams were built around the Pacific Northwest, WSU engineers and experts in hydrology took part in their design and construction. We've benefited from lower-cost hydropower ever since.

That tradition continued into nuclear energy. WSU's nuclear reactor on the Pullman campus has trained new reactor operators for 65 years, while providing research opportunities and medical isotopes.

As small modular reactors come online to provide electricity, WSU Tri-Cities and partners will teach future operators and technicians with an on-campus simulator.

Another potential energy source could grow on farms next to wheat, onions, and other crops. Two young alumni have a startup company to bring small-scale hydrogen fuel to agriculture, which can be generated on the farm and used to power equipment.

Cougs are involved in the accelerating effort to produce power with nuclear fusion, too, at companies like Helion and Zap Energy in Everett. It's a thrilling time to take on what is sometimes called the 21st century's grand engineering challenge: clean, abundant energy from fusion.

A different kind of energy can emerge from bringing together people in industries—beyond power generation. The Murrow Symposium hit its 50th year, and it consistently infuses alumni young and old with new ideas and enthusiasm for communications.

Small businesses bring their own energy to communities. Thanks to support from WSU Extension, local investment networks—powered by neighbor-to-neighbor lending—help those businesses grow and their communities benefit in return.

Larry Clark  
Editor

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## Still playing



I had a long career as a conductor, cellist, pianist, and founder of several orchestras in the Seattle area. **I just turned 98 and I'm still playing some music with friends.** Here's a picture of me playing the cello.

— *Frances Walton '50 Music Issaquah*

(Editor's note: Among her many other accomplishments, Walton founded Philharmonia Northwest, Olympic Youth Symphony, and Issaquah School District's string program. She is also the namesake and founder of the Ladies Musical Club of Seattle's Frances Walton Competition that awards top classical musicians ages 20 to 35.)

COURTESY FRANCES WALTON

## Still reuniting

Washington State University's first and only Chicano Latino brotherhood, **La Hermandad de Oquichtli Macuilli Tonatiuh** (O eMe Te), hosted a 30th anniversary reunion on the Pullman campus on January 24. Rafael Pruneda ('21 Comp. Ethnic Stu.), director of development and alumni relations at WSU Tri-Cities, has advised the group since 2013 and meets with every new member. "They tell me one of the biggest reasons they joined is the opportunity to be mentored by other students and be part of an on-campus family that can assist them on their WSU journey," Pruneda says. "The strong network they build with the other members and alumni will be with them for the rest of their lives."



PHOTO CHRISTIAN BROWN

## Do you work with Cougs?

*Send us photos of WSU alumni at your workplace!*

We know Cougs can be found all over, and we want to hear about it. Please send us a photo of WSU alums at your work, along with any information. Go to [magazine.wsu.edu/contact](https://magazine.wsu.edu/contact) or email to [wsm@wsu.edu](mailto:wsm@wsu.edu).

(We'll send a prize to our favorite and include some Cougar workplace photos in the next issues of the magazine.)



# Congratulations, Class of 2026!

Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories is proud to support Washington State University and the Cougars. Headquartered in Pullman, WA, SEL has a long history of hiring current students and graduates from WSU from a diverse range of academic programs, including Engineering, Business, and Communications.

To learn how you can support a mission that truly matters and create a career that maximizes your full potential, visit [www.selinc.com/careers](http://www.selinc.com/careers).



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### New sources of energy

by Betsy Cantwell

Producing enough energy for a rapidly changing world is what's called a wicked problem in design thinking. It's a description used for complex issues that involve multiple stakeholders and defy quick solutions.

It's also a description of what we do at Washington State University.

As a land-grant university, we have decades of experience working with private and public partners to translate our research into real-world solutions.

This is especially true in energy. WSU has experience and expertise in nuclear energy, hydropower, sustainable aviation fuel, hydrogen, solar, wind, and energy transmission. It's part of our heritage.

It's also one of the things that drew me to the university, since most of my career has been spent working at the intersection of energy security and national security.

Take nuclear energy. While there's new interest and enthusiasm about nuclear as a power source, WSU has operated a nuclear research reactor for 65 years. We're embarking on a major expansion of the research operation and educating professionals to work in the industry now and in the future. We have the capacity to make a big difference in this field.

We're also a national and international leader in the effort to transition the airline industry to clean energy. WSU researchers in multiple colleges are exploring energy sources, testing, supply chain logistics, and policy in the effort to reduce aviation emissions. Earlier this year we announced a collaboration with Boeing, Alaska Airlines, Amazon and other partners to create the Cascadia Sustainable Aviation Accelerator in Everett.

The electric power program at WSU is considered among the best in the world in power systems research and power engineering education. Researchers are focused on making sure power gets where it needs to go safely and efficiently. WSU's important and longstanding connection with Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories has been instrumental in this work.

We partner with local, state and federal agencies, and with national research laboratories, notably Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

We make these connections because these projects are too big for any one entity to tackle alone. This has been our approach since the early 1900s, when our scientists and graduates were essential to the development of the state's hydropower system and the ability to deliver electricity across the state.

New sources of energy, clean energy, safe energy—these are long-term challenges. But Washington State University brings a long-term perspective, along with excellence in research, education, and outreach. So bring the wicked problems. They're no match for Cougs.





WSU Extension helps rural communities, like Twisp in the Methow Valley, set up local investment networks to finance small businesses.

PHOTO CASCADE LOOP FOUNDATION

**Patrick Law, TwispWorks economic program director** COURTESY TWISPWORKS



## Invest locally — it works.

by Becky Kramer

**BLUE STAR COFFEE ROASTERS** in Twisp is hopping on a weekday morning. Cars and trucks line the parking lot, while customers gather for mid-morning coffee klatches. The aroma of roasting coffee beans wafts in from the back of the shop, where a specialty dark roast is underway for a New York client.

“Our motto is coffee for coffee lovers,” says co-owner Meg Donohue as she surveys the crowd. “We have a wide and deep customer base.”

Donohue and her husband, Dan, built a thriving roasting business in this former timber town in the Methow Valley. While they sell coffee in Twisp, the bulk of their sales are to retail and wholesale clients in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The couple credits the Methow Investment Network—a “neighbor-to-neighbor” style lending program that Washington State University Extension supports in rural communities—for helping fuel the company’s growth.

When Blue Star Coffee outgrew its leased quarters, the Donohues bought

a former automotive shop in 2019 to expand their roasting capacity and local coffee shop. They purchased the building with conventional bank financing, but they turned to the Methow Investment Network to raise about \$500,000 for renovations.

“Getting a loan for capital improvements is tough,” Meg Donohue says. “It’s one of the biggest hurdles small businesses face, and one of the reasons they don’t flourish.”

After the Donohues made a *Shark Tank* style pitch about their company at a Methow Investment Network forum, a dozen local investors stepped up to negotiate a business loan at advantageous terms for the couple. The loan jumpstarted the renovations on Blue Star Coffee’s current location—now a bright, modern facility that employs 14 people in the coffee shop and production side.

The Methow Investment Network is run by TwispWorks, a local nonprofit, with WSU Extension officials providing technical assistance to the program. Since 2017,

the network has generated \$3.5 million in investments for more than 35 Methow Valley companies. Instead of flowing out of the area, that money gets invested at home.

The Methow Investment Network acts like a matchmaker, says Patrick Law, TwispWorks’ economic program director. “We bring together local entrepreneurs and local investors.”

People interested in starting or expanding a company can get help with their pitch and business plans. At the network’s “pitch nights,” business owners present their ideas to an audience of prospective investors. Then it’s up to individual businesses and investors to decide whether they can make a deal and agree on loan terms, Law says.

**WSU EXTENSION ALSO WORKS** with other local investment networks in Washington, but the Methow network is among the most active. Statewide, more than 150 community investors have made nearly 300 loans totaling over \$8 million during



**Left, from top:** Meg and Dan Donohue STAFF PHOTO Community investors helped Blue Star Coffee Roasters weather the pandemic, the couple says. PHOTOS COURTESY BLUE STAR COFFEE/INSTAGRAM TwispWorks runs the Methow Investment Network COURTESY SCENIC WASHINGTON

Seattleites started Blue Star Coffee in Twisp in 2007, drawing on Dan’s background in the coffee industry and Meg’s experience in the arts community and startups.

“People thought we were nuts to start our company in this little town of 900,” Meg Donohue says. “But we chose it intentionally. We knew that we needed to ship our product to succeed. And we had Seattle in our backyard.”

Twisp’s civic identity carries over into its support for local businesses, Donohue says. The couple worked with a TwispWorks’ volunteer to prepare their pitch and financial statements. His background in tech industry mergers and acquisitions helped them understand what investors were looking for.

The Donohues also credit the local investors for working with them during the pandemic.

“When COVID hit, it was terrible,” she says. “We’re part of the food industry, and no one knew what would happen. We immediately went to our investor group and asked for a six-month pause in loan payments.”

The investors not only agreed, they suspended the interest accruing on the loan. Blue Star Coffee weathered the pandemic disruption through a shift to retail sales and lots of hard work, Donohue says. As the company’s wholesale business declined during COVID, the cost of building renovations rose.

But by the fall of 2022, Blue Star Coffee moved into its new space. The Donohues paid back the local investors after they consolidated the company’s debt through a Small Business Administration loan.

“The support of our community and the Methow Investment Network were key to our ability to survive that time. We’ll forever be grateful,” Donohue says. “These are our neighbors, our customers, the people who volunteer with us. What a difference that makes.” 🐾



**Local Investment Networks project lead Anthony Gromko** COURTESY WSU EXTENSION—GOVERNMENT STUDIES AND SERVICES

community and economic development. By investing capital locally, residents help build community wealth.

Supporting local entrepreneurs also helps small towns retain essential services like mechanics, hairdressers, and arborists..

“Often, it starts with a group of community members who say, ‘We love where we live. There’s something special here. We want to support our local businesses because this is home for us,’” Gromko says.

A “how-to” guidebook written by Gromko and Lane helps communities set up and run local investment networks. Among other things, the guide covers compliance with federal securities law—a section reviewed by the state Attorney General’s Office. Legal requirements are met when the investment network hosts public gatherings that allow businesses and prospective investors to meet.

“You bring people together in good



the past decade, creating or retaining at least 178 jobs.

WSU Extension got involved with local investment networks after seeing a successful example on the Olympic Peninsula. Port Townsend’s historic Aldrich’s grocery store was at risk of closing in 2008 when community investors stepped up to support the new owners. They launched a Jefferson County investment network that continues today. Extension officials studied it and developed a program that could be replicated in other communities.

“Jefferson County really helped us lay the framework for an Extension-based approach to local investment networks,” says Trevor Lane, a former WSU associate professor and Extension specialist. “We bring a lot of trust to these small business ecosystems, because the WSU brand is very familiar to them.”

Local investment networks have a lot to offer communities, says Anthony Gromko, an assistant professor of com-



faith,” Lane says. “Once they know each other and that relationship is established, it’s their own business how they structure their deals.”

The guide also notes that private financial transactions carry risks, and due diligence is up to the investors. The investments tend to be longer term, without an easy way for lenders to cash out.

**THE DONOHUES CAN’T SAY ENOUGH** about their experience with the Methow Investment Network. The former

Headwaters Tree Service launched its business via the Methow Investment Network. Read that story at [magazine.wsu.edu/extra/headwaters](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/headwaters)



# The Legacy stays aLIVE

by Adriana Janovich

**Almost every spring, the WSU Edward R. Murrow College of Communication hosts its Murrow Symposium, bringing prominent media figures to the Pullman campus to discuss current issues facing communication professions.**

**B**ruce Pinkleton compares Murrow Symposium to the Super Bowl—and beyond.

“It’s our Academy Awards, our Emmys Awards, our Super Bowl, all rolled into one big event,” says Pinkleton, dean of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University. “If you go, you can’t help but be inspired.”

This year marked an important milestone in the ever-growing legacy of legendary broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow. Murrow College celebrated its 50th Murrow Symposium in April. The theme: “The Murrow Standard. Built on Legacy. Defining the Future.”

Says Pinkleton, “It’s a tremendous, active, living legacy that Edward R. Murrow has and that we have by extension. We at Murrow College view Murrow Symposium as a means by which to further teach students about that legacy.”

A pioneering radio and TV journalist, Murrow (’30 Speech) defined ethical standards of broadcast reporting. He gained fame for his vivid radio reports from London during the Blitz and for challenging Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin who spearheaded an intensive anti-communist crusade during the Cold War.

“We talk about Murrow in all our classes. Our students understand from day one that Murrow College is different, and it’s the Murrow legacy and standards we uphold that make it that way,” Pinkleton says.

Since 1973, the almost-annual Murrow Symposium has given students the opportunity to gain insights and inspiration from top national and regional communication professionals—including many Murrow alumni—through keynote speeches, panel discussions, career-coaching, résumé critiques, networking, and more.

“It’s a chance to showcase who Murrow was and what we can do as a college,” says Olivia Soliz, vice president of the Murrow Ambassadors and a junior from San Jose, California, studying broadcast journalism. “The title of Murrow graduate reflects back on the college and that reflects back on his name.”

The first Murrow Symposium, themed “Threats to the Public’s Right to Know,” included the dedication of the Edward R. Murrow Communications Center, now Jackson Hall. In attendance was Murrow’s widow, Janet, who would attend several symposiums before her death in 1998. “We are calling it the first annual Murrow Symposium because we hope to make it an annual event,” Denny Morrison, assistant to President Glenn Terrell, said in the March 29, 1973, edition of the *Daily Evergreen*, the student newspaper. The story also noted invitations were sent to all WSU alumni in the field of communication.

Alumni remain an integral component. “A sub-theme of Murrow Symposium is homecoming,” Pinkleton says. “It’s an opportunity for alumni to get involved, reconnect, and give back. I think they see their former selves in the students—full of energy and great ideas but maybe needing some direction.”

Alumni help provide that guidance through breakout-session talks and one-on-one coaching. “It’s really awesome that alumni want to come back and do service for younger generations who are trying to grow in the field,” Soliz says. “I know when I graduate I want to come back and help out, too.”

Attendees, including faculty and staff, make connections that they might never otherwise make, Pinkleton says. “They end up coming to guest lecture or speak at a future symposium. It spins out a lot of goodwill and follow-through that we benefit from year ’round.”

But, Pinkleton says, “First and foremost, Murrow Symposium is for students. That’s how we think of it. That’s how we plan for it. We’re constantly changing formats, topics, and themes to stay as current and as relevant as we can for students. To get this level of talent in front of students is remarkable. I don’t know of another university that gets this level of talent in front of students on a regular basis.”

Assistant professor Nicole O’Donnell (’18 PhD Comm.) has experienced the symposium as both a graduate student and a faculty member.

“As an alum, one of my favorite parts of this year’s symposium was the reunion the night before. I think it’s meaningful to reconnect with people I was a student alongside and that I worked alongside. It just shows how big our network truly is,” she says.

**The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication presents its Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award, established in 1997, as part of the Murrow Symposium to a journalist who has demonstrated a commitment to excellence that exemplifies the legendary broadcast journalist’s career. Walter Cronkite. Christiane Amanpour. Daniel Pearl. Peter Jennings. Tom Brokaw. Dan Rather. Helen Thomas. Judy Woodruff. Ann Curry.**

**Joining their ranks this year was broadcast journalist and Washington State University alumna Ana Cabrera (’04 Comm.). A CNN anchor for nearly a decade, she now works as a national news anchor for MS NOW.**


**“When I read the list of recipients, I’m blown away,” says Bruce Pinkleton, dean of the Murrow College. “They are the best of the best, and they reflect the tremendous respect people in the industry have for Edward R. Murrow and his ethics as a journalist. Ana embodies those ethics. She is known for her courage, and she has an outstanding reputation for dispassionate reporting of the truth.”**

“As a professor, one of my favorite parts is that students have the ability to see versions of their future selves. I hope that they see themselves in speakers, especially if they are in their early careers talking about their successes.”

Apparently, no symposium occurred in 1975. And there seems to be no records for 1982. No. 39 was used for both 2014 and 2013, when the event was referred to as a “communicators’ summit.” 2020’s

symposium was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead, Pinkleton says he hopes to grow Murrow Symposium. “Our field is constantly changing. It’s critical for us to look down the road and plan for the future,” he says.

“We start planning for the next one literally the day after it’s over. It’s something we’re proud of and work so hard on.” 

*Recollections, timeline, and more stories from the Murrow Symposium*

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Murrow-Symposium](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Murrow-Symposium)



**Ana Cabrera**—formerly with KHQ and an anchor at KMGH, CNN, and MSNBC—at the National Association of Hispanic Journalists conference, 2025.

PHOTO SARAH K. JOYCE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Edward R. Murrow (‘30 Speech) studied at WSC under the tutelage of mentor Ida Lou Anderson, which led to a storied broadcasting career. His legacy of principled journalism continues at WSU’s Murrow College.

COURTESY WSU MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES, AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

# Action... at Cable 8

Check out Cable 8 on YouTube:

[youtube.com/cable8productions](https://youtube.com/cable8productions)



**Cable 8 has been the first step** into broadcasting for hundreds of students since 1986, and it's still booming.

The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University's many clubs and organizations help students achieve their goals but there really is only one Cable 8. The student club broadcasts shows from a variety of genres: sports, comedy, drama, podcasts, non-fiction, mystery, film, live shows, and much more.

Over the past 40 years, WSU students created endless hours of content dispensing comedy or advice, fiction movies or daily news, and ESPN-style sports.

The first show to get Cable 8 off the ground was *Live at 8*. Viewers attended live tapings of the weekly news show. Current club president and senior Gus Marceau took part in a Cable 8 movie last year based on the very first show from the 1980s.

"The most important thing was *Live at 8*. The club would not be who it is without it," Marceau says.

Nick Krupke ('04 Comm.) saw a new future from Cable 8. After graduation, he reported for nearly two decades in Oregon sports and is currently the sports anchor for KPTV Fox 12 in Portland, Oregon. He credits his success to his professors, Marvin Marcelo and Glenn Johnson, who encouraged him to dive into the TV side of sports.

"I was on the radio path and heavily invested into KUGR before Marvin Marcelo and Glenn Johnson encouraged me to give TV a try, and the rest is history. Cable 8 gave me the confidence to pursue my true passion and 21 years later, I love what I do more than ever," Krupke says.

Sam Taylor ('24 Comm.), a sports reporter for the *Lewiston Tribune*, also credits success to Cable 8 involvement.

"Cable 8 showed me what was possible in a shifting media landscape. I had a rigid idea of what I wanted to do: 'I'm a writer, there's no place for me in the TV club.' I quickly and gladly learned how wrong I was. In my first job out of college, I use the skills I learned through Cable 8 every day," Taylor says.

Since Professor W. Neal Robison founded the club, Cable 8 has been a jumping point for careers as well as a safe haven for community, building skills, and networking.

Cameron Limes ('21 Comm.), a reporter for ABC News 4 in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, agrees that there is no club like this one.

"Cable 8 fundamentally changed the way I look at broadcast. I originally thought TV production was so strict, but I learned with enough determination you can make it anything you want it to be. It's the best club on campus by a mile and I hope it never changes," Limes says.

Alex Huddleston ('23 Comm.), now a sports reporter for KCAU Channel 9 in Sioux City, Iowa, says Cable 8 was home and he will cherish that part of his life.

"That team we built was exactly what I needed. I spent every hour I could in the studio, the editing bay, the scene storage, reorganizing the equipment room, editing, working on the social media presence, and brainstorming ideas," Huddleston says. "I lived in that studio. I pushed for creativity and energy. That was just *Coug on the Clock*." He put out 92 episodes in his two years with Cable 8.

In the club's 40th year, students are still engaged and gain beneficial experience they will carry through their careers. Every year fresh ideas spring from new generations of creators who bring new shows to join Cable 8 legacy shows, such as *Coug Zone*.

"Cable 8 has been so important to me because it provides hands-on skills and extra experience independent from a classroom, while also building my portfolio," says junior Avery Anderson.

"I'm forever grateful to Cable 8 and my peers for being a defining pillar of my Murrow and WSU experience. Cable 8 is Cable Great!" Taylor says.

*Sydney Reid is a senior media production student at the Murrow College of Communication.*

by Larry Clark

**C**hristian faith has always played a significant part in American public life. Today nearly two-thirds of Americans identify as Christian, even if many don't regularly attend church. The story of the United States is intertwined with the religion despite being a nation with a secular Constitution.

Matthew Avery Sutton, Claudius O. and Mary Johnson Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of History at Washington State University, explores that story in his book *Chosen Land: How Christianity Made America and Americans Remade Christianity* (Basic Books, 2026). His expansive history of Christianity in America shows the prominent role of Christian faith and practice in politics, education, popular culture, and law through many examples from all eras of US history.

A sweeping history of the effort to transform North America into a new holy land, *Chosen Land* chronicles the rise of American Christianity and its continuing influence. A crucial part of that growth came from evolving strains of Christianity battling for potential adherents, because the nation's lack of a state religion "was not a barrier to religious influence, but stimulated religious innovation, expansion, and integration in every part of American life," Sutton writes.

Sutton talked about the book and its ideas with *Washington State Magazine*.

#### HOW IS CHRISTIANITY INGRAINED IN AMERICA AND AMERICA'S CONSCIOUSNESS?

As a historian who specializes in religion, I've always been struck by how much more religious we are than our competitor nations, like Canada and much of western Europe. To understand this story, we have to go back to the First Amendment and what the founders were trying to do in intentionally creating a godless, secular Constitution. They looked at European models with their established, official churches, and they realized there's no consensus in the colonies around a single denomination, but you need to organize together to fight the revolution. So, you can't choose Presbyterians over Anglicans over Baptists.

An unintended consequence is that not choosing a single winner opened the doors for those who already had power: mainstream Protestant leaders. But they had a problem—there's not a state mechanism providing financial support to underwrite their work, so they have to be relevant.

## CHOSEN LAND

### *A conversation with historian Matthew Avery Sutton about Christianity in America*

They became more effective than Christians in many other parts of the world because they tapped into Americans' needs, desires, interests, and entertainments. That set the stage for Christian leaders to influence culture, laws, foreign policy, education—because all those things were going to help ensure their longevity.

#### WHAT ARE SOME EVENTS AND FIGURES THAT HELPED KEEP CHRISTIANITY INFUSED IN SOCIETY?

I open the book with this revivalist, Peter Cartwright, because he's campaigning for a seat in Congress against Abraham Lincoln. The challenge for Lincoln was that he was pretty unorthodox and Cartwright knew it. Lincoln didn't attend church regularly and was kind of skeptical about the Bible. So, Cartwright made religion central to the Congressional campaign and essentially forced Lincoln to affirm that he was pro-church, pro-Christian, pro-God, and that he would never do anything as a political leader to undermine the power of establishment Christianity.

But Cartwright wasn't just working through politics. He was also very entertaining. He would tell these fabulous stories to get attention from journalists to make sure he got good newspaper coverage. So, we see all these themes coming together, of media and innovation and entrepreneurship and politics and religion, then we fast forward and see Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr. doing the same thing.

#### WHAT ARE SOME KEY POINTS FOR SOMEONE WHO READS CHOSEN LAND?

I hope to convince those who are more secular to take American Christianity more seriously. For those who are more Christian, I want to help them see that their history is complicated, and that there have been many competing versions of Christianity, vying to shape the trajectory of the nation.

Christianity remains central to all of the things that both unite and divide us. And if we don't recognize or understand that, then I think we won't be as effective at building the kind of future we want, regardless of what that future might look like. 🐉

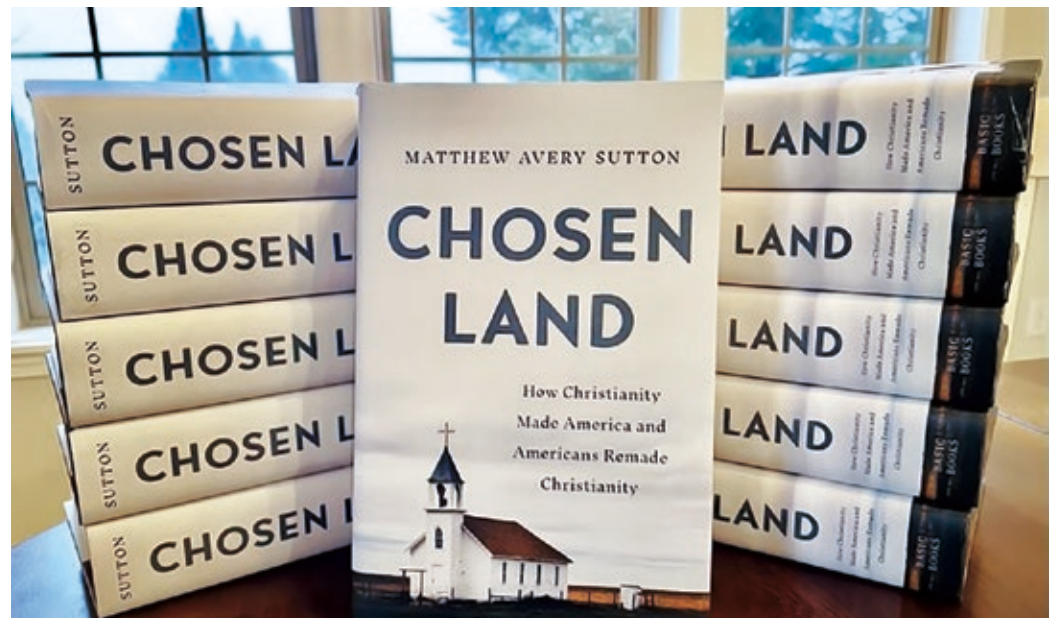


Matthew Avery Sutton  
COURTESY HACHETTE  
BOOK GROUP

Read the full Q&A  
with Sutton at  
[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/  
ChosenLand](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/ChosenLand)



*Chosen Land* was recently recognized by Basic Books and named a top pick in *Publisher's Weekly*.



COURTESY MATTHEW SUTTON / X

FROM THE WSU 1983 CHINOOK YEARBOOK



**SHORTLY AFTER ROBERT REDFORD'S DEATH IN 2025**, the pictures began surfacing.

The actor/director helping extinguish a bus engine fire during a field trip to Palouse Falls. With paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey near the prehistoric Marmes Rockshelter site on the Snake River. Sporting faded jeans and a sweater at a black-tie reception.

In the early 1980s, Redford was working to establish the Institute for Resource Management at Washington State University and University of Idaho. The Hollywood celebrity's visits to the Palouse, while brief, left a lasting imprint on environmental education.

Redford envisioned an interdisciplinary master's program whose graduates would help Western communities chart their way through thorny environmental issues. He picked WSU and UI because of their

like the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill that fouled California's coastline and repeated fires on Ohio's Cuyahoga River from industrial pollution.

"The public was upset that all this was going on," says Allyson Beall King, director of WSU's School of the Environment. "People just got tired of it, and our politicians listened."

But the environmental movement also spurred backlash. Redford was burned in effigy and labeled a radical environmentalist for opposing a large coal-fired electrical plant near Utah's national parks. Rather than "fighting individual brushfires," Redford wrote in an op-ed for *Coal Industry News*, he established the

resource managers to work with communities to anticipate that change."

The fellowship paid for Lustgarden's master's degree and provided a modest living stipend. During his time at WSU, Lustgarden focused on strategies for farmland preservation. After a long career with nonprofits, he retired as the assistant director of California Certified Organic Farmers.

The fellowship kickstarted Stephanie Burchfield's career in water resources. After studying hydrology and engineering at WSU, she worked on fish passage at Columbia and Snake River dams for Northwest tribes. Burchfield ('85 MA Env. Sci.) later worked for the Oregon

# Redford's Palouse Legacy

by Becky Kramer

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view more photos  
[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/IRM](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/IRM)



existing programs and proximity to agriculture, forestry, and other resource industries.

Despite Redford's involvement, the Institute for Resource Management was a short-lived experiment. He and the nonprofit institute failed to raise the promised endowment. The institute operated just two years, graduating 19 master's students before closing.

Redford's legacy on the Palouse, however, lives on in several ways. The graduates went on to shape environmental policy through jobs at federal and state agencies, nonprofits, and corporations. And the institute's cross-disciplinary training—new at the time—remains embedded in WSU's School of Environment.

The 1960s and 1970s marked the passage of major US laws protecting the environment and increasing public involvement in decision-making. The legislation followed highly publicized disasters—

institute to train well-grounded professionals to work on the country's natural resource issues.

"There's a need for a balanced, orderly approach to our environment that recognizes both the need for development and our responsibility to protect our resources," he later said during a WSU visit.

Redford was "ahead of his time in realizing that change was inevitable in the West and that resource extraction had a limited lifespan," says Steve Lustgarden ('84 MS Env. Sci.), an institute fellow. "And he realized it was incumbent upon

Department of Fish and Wildlife as a water resource manager and eventually retired from NOAA Fisheries.

"I hadn't taken any engineering classes as an undergraduate, and the beauty of this program was that you could design your own curriculum," she says. The program's interdisciplinary approach, including sessions on rural resource economies, proved valuable throughout Burchfield's career.

At WSU's School of the Environment, that interdisciplinary work continues. "Students are earning a science degree,

## Recent highlights

but there's a lot of the human element involved," Beall King says.

She and her colleague designed a class on conflict resolution and shared governance that requires students to role-play various side of environmental issues.

"For one week, you might be the rancher. If you don't know how to think like a rancher, you'll learn," Beall King says. "Environmental problems are so big and messy and there's so many perspectives involved. Unless you plan to litigate everything, you have to learn how to find common ground."

Other classes teach students about different value systems related to land management, including Indigenous ecological values.

Redford's involvement with the institute, meanwhile, remained a conversation starter for the fellows. People were curious about the actor known for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men*, and other classic films.

Neither Lustgarden nor Burchfield had significant interactions with him. On the field trip to Palouse Falls, Redford was



### Environmental problems

are so big and messy

and there's so many

perspectives involved. ...

You have to learn how to

find common ground."



— Allyson Beall King

briefly conversing with each fellow. Just as he reached Burchfield, the bus engine caught fire, and he ushered her out the emergency exit.

Lustgarden also missed his chance to talk to Redford but didn't mind.

"My recollection is that he didn't want the institute to be about him. It wasn't the Robert Redford Institute for Resource Management; that wasn't his style," Lustgarden says. "He had a deep and genuine care for the land, wildlife, and communities. I remain grateful for his vision and generosity." 🐾

### Wildfires and Climate

The Northwest can expect a widespread *increase of days with cloud-to-ground lightning* in the years to come—along with heightened wildfire risk—according to projections made with a machine-learning approach developed at Washington State University. The study, co-authored by Deepti Singh, associate professor in the School of the Environment at WSU Vancouver, determined that the largest change in lightning in the mid-21st century is expected in parts of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, with four to 12 more days of lightning per year in some parts of the Rocky Mountains. It increases risk of lightning-caused wildfires across 98 percent of Western lands susceptible to fire. The study adds urgency to the need to manage forests for wildfire risk and prepare at-risk communities for fires, the researchers say. Lightning already accounts for more than two-thirds of the acreage burned in wildfires across the West, but current global climate models are unable to directly simulate future lightning because they rely on geographic resolutions too coarse to capture the conditions that create it. The study's AI models zoom in to create the most detailed picture yet of future lightning patterns and lightning-caused fire risk across the West.

by Shawn Vestal



Singh founded the Climate Extremes Lab at WSU

### Veterinary Medicine

It had only been a year and a half since Dayla Culp and her family lost her sister to breast cancer when they heard another devastating diagnosis—this time for their dog, Clarice. The 6-year-old silver Labrador retriever had a malignant tumor growing near her left wrist, in a spot where surgery would be risky and amputation was the usual recommendation. At Washington State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Clarice became part of *a novel treatment plan* that combined surgery, radiation, and a clinical trial in partnership with Seattle Children's Hospital. The approach not only appears to have left Clarice cancer free, but could also help advance new immunotherapy options for difficult-to-treat tumors in both dogs and children. The treatment involved injecting an immune-stimulating agent directly into Clarice's tumor to activate the body's T cells. One week later, Clarice underwent surgery to remove the tumor. Soft-tissue sarcomas are among the most common canine cancers. As many as 95,000 dogs in the United States are diagnosed each year, and an estimated 20-30 percent of cases are fatal.

by Devin Rokyta



Clarice, a 6-year-old silver Labrador retriever

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Lawrence Hatter is a historian of empire in British America and the early United States.

PHOTO WSU DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION** is often remembered as a triumph of liberty, a clean break from empire that gave rise to a new republic built on universal ideals. But that familiar story leaves out a harder truth: independence also carried with it imperial ambitions and consequences that are often left unexamined, notes historian Lawrence Hatter.

It's a legacy worth revisiting as the nation approaches the 250th anniversary

Find the schedule of Hatter's presentations and other sesquicentennial events through Humanities Washington:

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/US250](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/US250)



# A longer look

by Will Ferguson

of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

As people across the state prepare to mark that milestone, Hatter, an associate professor of history at Washington State University, is taking his scholarship on the

road and inviting audiences to reflect on the uneasy aftermath of independence and the expansionist ambitions that followed.

Through the Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau, Hatter will spend the next two years traveling across Washington to deliver public lectures in communities large and small. He is one of three WSU faculty members selected for 2026-27 as Humanities Washington Foley Fellows, a program presented in partnership with WSU's Thomas S. Foley Institute for Public Policy and Public Service and Humanities Washington. The fellowships are designed to connect university scholars with communities across the state through public talks. The other fellows from WSU are Jacob Lewis, an associate professor of political science, and Charles Weller, an associate professor of history (career).

Hatter's first two engagements, scheduled for May 2026, will take place at the Clark County Historical Society in Vancouver and the Moses Lake Museum & Art Center.

For Hatter, the program reflects a growing commitment to public-facing scholarship and to the mission of a land-grant university. "There are a lot of communities in Washington that don't have the cultural resources of bigger cities," he says. "Bringing the humanities into those spaces is part of our responsibility."

Rather than retelling the Revolution as a simple clash between freedom and tyranny, Hatter's talk focuses on what happened after the fighting stopped. He argues that while American leaders rejected British colonial rule, many simultaneously pursued their own ambitions for land, power, and influence across the continent.


"We tend to think of the Revolution as a rejection of empire," Hatter says. "But in many ways, it was also about reinventing empire under a new banner."

To illustrate that shift, Hatter draws on episodes that rarely appear in textbook summaries. One is the failed American invasion of Canada in 1775, an early attempt to extend the Revolution beyond the 13 colonies.

Another is the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, a decisive conflict between US forces and a Native confederacy near present-day Ohio that helped clear the way for US westward expansion. "If you're trying to understand how the United States became a continental power so quickly," Hatter says, "this is one of those moments that really matters."

Although these events unfolded centuries ago and far from the Pacific Northwest, Hatter emphasizes their relevance to Washington state. The political frameworks established in the late 18th century shaped how regions like Washington were eventually incorporated into the United States, influencing borders, treaty rights, and long-running conflicts between Indigenous nations and the federal government.

The goal of Hatter's talks is not to assign blame or offer easy answers, but to encourage reflection. Citizenship, he says, carries a responsibility to reckon honestly with history and to recognize the gap between America's ideals and its lived realities.

"The ideals we celebrate are real," Hatter says, "but they're also aspirations. The challenge is holding ourselves, and our country, accountable to them." 



# Good medicine for Little Birds

by Addy Hatch



CORI KOGAN



SHELLY HANKS



SHELLY HANKS

**I**NDIAN COUNTRY urgently needs more doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health care professionals.

It's not a new problem, and Washington State University has long offered programs for Native American middle and high school students to open doors to careers in health professions. Now, WSU is taking that message of possibility to younger kids.

The Little Birds program came about at the suggestion of the Tribal Advisory Board, says Jerry Crowshoe, director of Native American Health Sciences at WSU.

"They told us, you're starting way too late, high school kids have already made up their minds," Crowshoe recalls. "From 0-12 a child's mind gets hardwired how they're going to see the world."

Little Birds is offered at five elementary schools in Spokane Public Schools and at the Columbia School District elementary in Hunters. It's held after school once a month, with WSU students from a different health sciences program visiting each time.

"One of the things Elders said, too, is that you can't be doing this one time a year, you need to be consistent with whatever you deliver," Crowshoe says.

The WSU students come up with games, puzzles, and experiments that reflect their specialty. So, for example, pharmacy students had the Little Birds compounding medications with whipped cream and food coloring, and counting M&Ms and Skittles pills to treat a condition. Nutrition & Exercise Physiology students had the kids doing frog-hop relays to learn about food groups and throwing foam dice to see how many pushups or burpees to do.

Hannah Tomeo Maguire (Colville, Yakama, Nimiipuu, Sioux), the K-12 coordinator at WSU's Center for Native American Health, developed Little Birds. She'd seen teddy-bear clinics used to help quell kids' fear of doctors and medical procedures, and used that as a loose inspiration. But Tomeo Maguire and Crowshoe say they believe Little Birds is unique.


The name comes from Crowshoe's heritage as an enrolled member of the Piikani Nation (Blackfoot Confederacy), where Tribal members are grouped in

age-based societies. One of the youngest societies he remembers learning about was called the Little Birds Society.

Two tribes that are financial sponsors of the pilot program—the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Squaxin Island Tribe—have expressed interest in bringing a similar program to western Washington and incorporating Native language and plant medicine, Tomeo Maguire says.

At the end of the Little Birds event for Nutrition & Exercise Physiology, the kids nominated each other as amazing teammates and each got a sports ball or water bottle to take home, along with their Little Bird t-shirt. They also have white medical coats that they'll wear when students from the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine take their turn. At the end of the program there will be a graduation ceremony from Little Birds Medical School, Crowshoe says, along with a traditional blanket ceremony.

Little Birds is more than just a career pathway program, he and Tomeo Maguire say. It's a free resource for struggling schools, and it could help kids be more comfortable around health professionals as they go through their lives.

But Crowshoe adds, "if the kids' mind and experiences up to age 12 says, 'you know what, I had a lot of fun with health sciences,' and they go into adolescence carrying that with them, and our WSU students get the experience of working with Indian Country and working with Tribes and young people, that's the exchange." 



Jerry Crowshoe COURTESY NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH SCIENCES



Hannah Tomeo Maguire COURTESY LINKEDIN



COURTESY WSU NEWS

# SOLAR SCHOOLS SHINE

by Addy Hatch

**AS WITH MANY RURAL TOWNS**, the heart of Harrington in eastern Washington, population 429, is its school. Now that heart has new energy.

Thanks to a solar program administered by Washington State University Extension's energy office, Harrington School District and other rural areas will have the sun powering schools and bringing much-needed funds to their communities at the same time.

Schools usually pay nothing for the solar installation, which is funded by state tax credits. In return, they agree to use money saved on their power bills to benefit low-income students and their families for 10 years.

Partners in the project say it's a win for all involved: the small, rural schools that likely couldn't afford to convert to solar; the community members who'll benefit; and the state, which has an interest in clean energy and in making it available equitably.

How the schools spend their extra revenue is largely up to them, as long as it directly benefits low-income community members, says Jody Opheim, executive director of Partners for Rural Washington, a nonprofit leading the project.

The Harrington School District was the first installation completed. Some options being considered to benefit its 105 students are weekend food programs, technology upgrades, and field trips and experiences, says Courtney Strozyk ('03 Ed.), superintendent and principal.

About 20 schools are signed up for the project called The Giving Grid, with more expressing interest. These schools are expected to achieve nearly \$20 million in energy bill savings over the expected 30-year life of the systems, says David Funk, president of Zero Emissions Northwest, the company that's leading the project with Partners for Rural Washington.

Just as importantly, it's making renewable energy more widely available.

"It's part of the magic," says Georgine Yorgey, director of the WSU Energy Program. "Schools can benefit that would never be able to install infrastructure like this on their own. And many rural schools have high populations of low-income students who really could benefit."

Under the program, solar systems are installed on or near participating schools. Utilities receive a state tax credit and reimburse the partners for the school solar installations. The WSU Energy Program handles the administration, tapped by the Washington legislature because of its decades of experience in energy initiatives. The program is part of WSU Extension and supports partners throughout the state in developing resilient and reliable energy sources.

"A land-grant university has resources that are not otherwise available to communities," says Michael Gaffney, associate director of WSU Extension. "We can bring these resources to bear to help local communities improve their quality of life."

Once installed, the solar systems could lead to other upgrades, like battery storage, so that the schools can be used as emergency shelters during extended power outages.

Says Funk, these rural schools are "a beating heart of the community. They're a huge nexus of community, children, education, and they do so much more than teach." 🐾

# Uncorking women winemakers

by Becky Kramer

**W**OMEN ACCOUNT FOR almost 60 percent of US wine purchases, but they often encounter marketing strategies with a distinctly masculine flair.

Dark colors on wine labels. Masculine-themed artwork like pirates, wolves, or horses. Male winemakers' names. It was enough to make researchers at Washington State University's Carson College of Business scratch their heads—and start studying which marketing strategies appeal to women wine consumers.

Two years ago, Carson researchers found that women were more likely to buy wines when the labels' artwork had feminine cues, such as flowers.

Messages like “proudly made by a woman winemaker” also increased women's intentions of purchasing wines, and women were willing to pay about \$3 more per bottle for those wines, the researchers recently found. The “woman winemaker” messaging was most effective when paired with feminine artwork on labels, but it also worked for brands with masculine-themed art.

Wine is a cultural product, where the winemaker's identity plays a role in shaping the brand's image, says Christina Chi, coauthor of the research published in *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and a Carson College professor of hospitality business management.

Women winemakers, however, are less likely than their male counterparts to include their names on bottle labels or draw attention to their gender. Their reluctance may stem from concerns about prejudice toward their products in the male-dominated wine industry, Chi says.



WSU professor & researcher Christina Chi



COURTESY WSU NEWS

“Our findings suggest that women winemakers and winery owners can benefit by being more visible,” she says. “The research shows that they can disclose their ownership with confidence and leverage it as a marketing strategy.”


Since the first study on wine labels was released, Chi and the other researchers have heard from women winemakers in the United States and other countries. They were excited about the research results and adopting the findings in their own marketing efforts.

Demi Deng ('23 PhD Busi.), an assistant professor at Auburn University, is the first author on the most recent research. Ruiying Cai ('18 PhD Busi.), an assistant professor of hospitality business management at WSU, also contributed to the research.

Besides helping women winemakers market their products, Deng says she hopes the research will draw attention to women's contributions to the industry.

Deng worked as a sommelier in New Zealand before she earned her doctorate. “I actually encountered a lot of women winemakers, but their names aren't visible in the wine market,” she says.

Chi has started pondering future research related to marketing and women consumers.

“I can see the potential for feminine messaging in packaging for organic foods and non-alcoholic or low-alcohol beverages,” she says. “That's because women consumers are generally more health conscious and environmentally conscious than men.” 



Ruiying Cai '18 PhD Business

COURTESY LEWISTON TRIBUNE



Demi Deng '23 PhD Business

COURTESY DEMI DENG

**WORLD-CLASS CLIMBERS** John Roskelley and Chris Kopeczynski went to remote areas to ascend some of earth’s highest peaks. During these expeditions and other travels, they sought out new heights—and signatures.

At the request of their mentor, Joe Collins, who encouraged the pair to climb when they were teens growing up in Spokane in the 1960s, the friends and longtime climbing partners asked some of mountaineering’s most celebrated adventurers to autograph books they authored or appeared in.

“Every time we would travel, Joe would give us books to put in our packs to get signatures from all these pioneers,” says Kopeczynski (’71 Const. Mgmt.). “Now, (most of) these pioneers are gone but their signatures are still here.”

Their signatures are part of an exceptional collection of mountaineering books that Kopeczynski and Roskelley (’71 Geol.) recently donated to Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) at Washington State University Libraries. The books total about 350 in all, date from the 1890s to 2020s, and include titles from Roskelley’s and Kopeczynski’s own personal libraries. But the bulk of the collection originally belonged to their mentor, who died at 98 in 2023.

“Joe was an extraordinary person,” Kopeczynski recalls. “He completed more than 600 climbs himself. It’s what he lived for.”

Three years after their WSU graduation, the pair participated in the 1974 International Pamirs Expedition, in which Kopeczynski and teammates made the first American ascent of Pik Lenin. Roskelley, along with three other Americans, made the first ascent of the north face of Peak of the Nineteenth Party Congress. Both peaks are in what was then the Soviet Union. On their way home, the pair became the first all-American team to climb the north face of the Eiger in Switzerland.

In 1980, they became the first Americans to climb the world’s fifth-highest mountain: Nepal’s Makalu. They summited without bottled oxygen and without help from Sherpas above base camp. The feat has since been recognized by the American Alpine Club as one of the world’s most significant climbs of the twentieth century.

The following year, Kopeczynski became the ninth American to climb Mount Everest—as well as the first American to summit both Everest and the north face of Eiger, the world’s “highest and hardest” peaks. He then set a goal of climbing the highest peak on every continent—known

as the Seven Summits—and, in 1991, became the eleventh person to achieve this remarkable feat.

Roskelley completed Everest via Tibet’s north ridge in 2003 with his son, Jess, who—at 20—became the youngest American to summit the world’s highest peak.

Roskelley claimed other firsts throughout his long career: ascending the northwest face of India’s Nanda Devi in 1976, summing Pakistan’s Great Trango Tower in 1977, topping the west face of Nepal’s Gauri Sankar in 1979, ascending the east face of Pakistan’s Uli Biaho in 1979, summing Nepal’s Cholatse in 1982, and climbing the northeast face of Nepal’s Taboche in 1989.

And, in 2014, Roskelley was the sixth winner of the Piolet d’Or Lifetime Achievement Award, mountaineering’s highest honor.

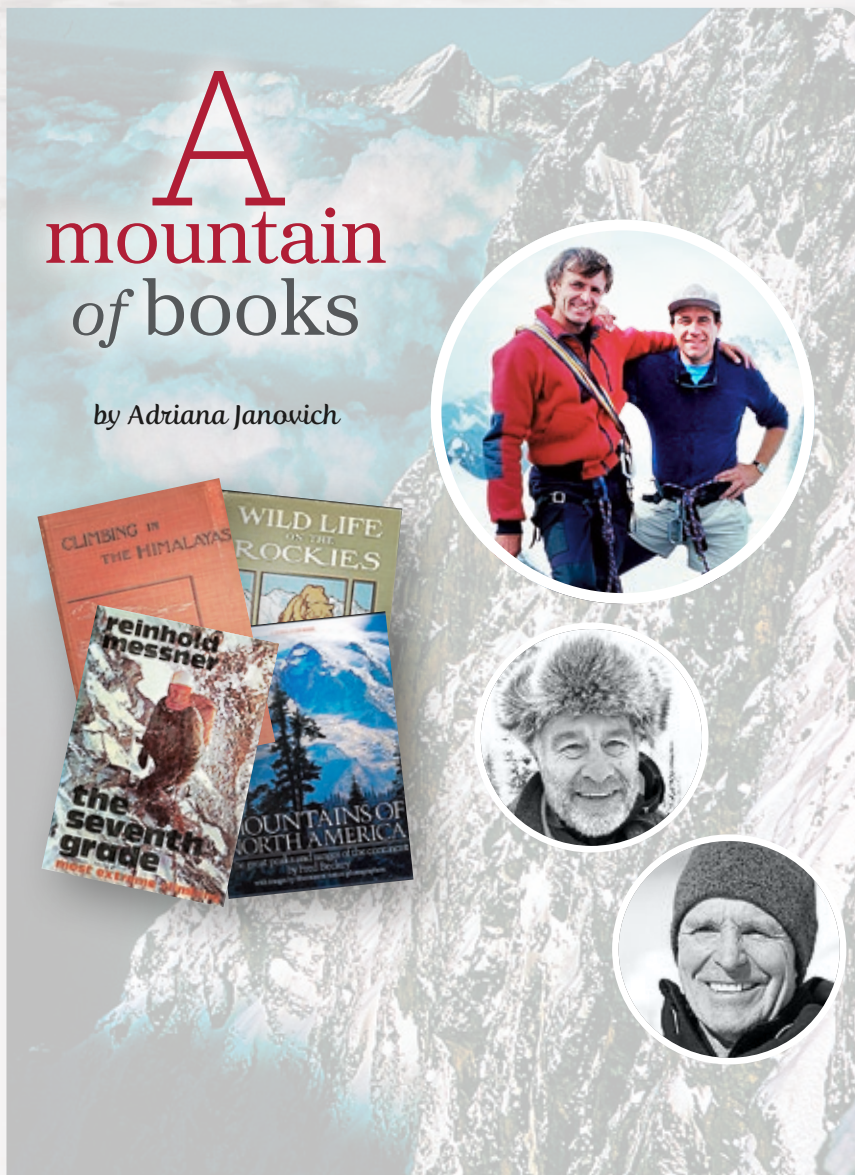
**IN SPRING 2024**, Roskelley’s name showed up in MASC’s voicemail. Manuscripts librarian Will Gregg, himself a climbing enthusiast who was preparing to climb North America’s highest peak, admittedly “fan-boyed” a bit when he saw the name.

“He’s a huge deal in the mountaineering world. They both are,” says Gregg, who hadn’t realized Roskelley and Kopeczynski were alumni nor that they still lived in Spokane. Soon, he learned they were interested in donating an extraordinary collection of mountaineering books to their alma mater.

“Some titles aren’t that rare right now but over time will become harder and harder to get. Some are already pretty rare. And the signed editions are really, really valuable,” Gregg says. “Together, they form this big body of mountaineering literature. The collection gives the whole history of mountaineering and how it’s changed over the last 150 years. It’s a serious collection, and it’s going to have a long-term impact.”

Collins began collecting signed editions of mountaineering books more than 60 years ago. When Roskelley and Kopeczynski weren’t traveling or otherwise able to ask for autographs, he “would mail the books to whoever it was, then get them back with the signatures,” recalls Roskelley, the author of five books, including three of which are included in the donation: 1991’s *Last Days*, 1993’s *Stories Off the Wall*, and 2000’s *Nanda Devi*.

Kopeczynski, author of 2022’s *Highest and Hardest*—also included in the donation—says, “In my mind, WSU now has the most unique mountain-climbing book collection in the world. Hopefully, it’ll be read and used for research for a long time.” 🐾



**FROM TOP:** ROSKELLEY (LEFT) AND KOPCZYNSKI ON BUGABOO SPIRE, PURCELL MOUNTAINS, IN 1986; JOHN ROSKELLEY; CHRIS KOPCZYNSKI (COURTESY CHRIS KOPCZYNSKI EXCEPT JOHN ROSKELLEY COURTESY LOWA BOOTS)

**OPPOSITE:** KOPCZYNSKI AND ROSKELLEY LED AN ALL-SPOKANE CLIMBING EXPEDITION TO THE WORLD’S FIFTH-HIGHEST PEAK, MAKALU, IN 1980. (COURTESY CHRIS KOPCZYNSKI)

# Shedding light

by Trevor Bond

If you've ever wondered how old a book really is—or where its paper was made—the answer might be hiding in plain sight.

In Washington State University's Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC), home to more than 5,000 books printed before 1800, a newly purchased light sheet, or flexible light panel, now helps researchers see through pages to the structures and watermarks embedded within.

Unlike reflective lighting that shows surface features, transmitted light shines up through the page, revealing the paper's internal architecture: watermarks and countermarks, chain and laid lines, fiber distribution, and even faint or erased annotations. For scholars, those details can corroborate dates, identify where the paper was made, and trace a book's path through time.

"The light sheet is an essential aid for research in literary history," says WSU English professor Will Hamlin. "It aids the study of provenance, it helps with deciphering handwritten annotations in old books, and it enables more accurate dating."

Hamlin continues, "Many books and manuscripts from the European Renaissance are either undated or bear a false imprint to make them seem older—or newer—than they are. But watermarks in the paper, which become highly visible using a light sheet, allow us to date these books and manuscripts accurately, since book-history experts have determined which marks were used by which papermakers at which times and places."

This is all possible because of how early European paper was made. By the mid-13th century, Fabriano, Italy, was a renowned papermaking center. European mills collected used cotton and linen rags from worn clothing, sorted them by color and quality, washed and cut them, and prepared fibers through fermentation before beating them to pulp.

Fabriano papermakers perfected the two-part mold, which shaped the sheet as it was lifted from a vat of roughly 10 percent pulp and 90 percent water. The wet sheet was then layered onto felt, pressed, dried in a loft, sized with gelatin made from boiled pieces of animal hide, ears, feet, tripe, and other bits for better writing and printing, and made smooth.

They also introduced wire-formed watermarks sewn onto the mold's screen—marks that, centuries later, become strikingly visible with the light sheet and serve as fingerprints for dating and locating paper. These techniques spread throughout Europe and America.

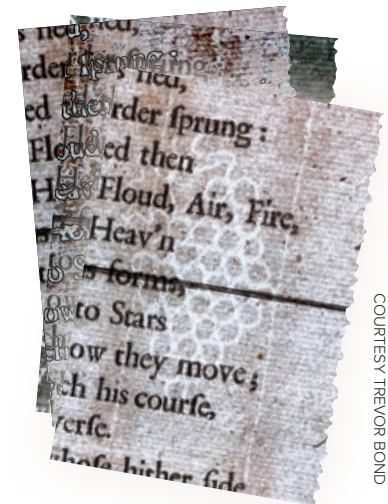
In Hamlin's own work on the first English translation of Michel de

Montaigne's *Essays*, the light sheet has enabled him to determine that the paper used by the London printers was imported from northern France. This is because French paper was far superior to English paper in the early 17th century.

"The London printers must have believed that the Montaigne translation deserved high-quality paper so that it would be attractive and durable, and this in turn meant that the book would be more expensive," Hamlin says. "But the translation sold well and a great many copies have survived, so the publishers' gambit was successful."

MASC acquired the light sheet with donated funds. Its collections offer rich opportunities for analysis, including three 17th-century English translations of Montaigne from 1603, 1613, and 1632. The oldest printed book in MASC is *De Sollicitudine Ecclesiasticorum* by Jean Gerson, published in 1470. While not remarkable for its text, it is rubricated—showcasing hand-applied color over printed type, a perfect pairing of light sheet and study of paper and production.

One of my favorite books in MASC is the 1688 edition of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which includes 12 stunning full-page engravings and the bold signature of book owner "Michael Dunn, his Book, 1799." The paper's watermarks vary between the makers' logo and a bunch of grapes.



COURTESY TREVOR BOND

In the reading room, MASC staff collaborate with faculty, students, and visiting researchers to document material evidence that can be folded into catalog records, digital projects, and teaching. The light sheet is already helping us see the past more clearly, illuminating centuries of craft, publishing, and readership—one page at a time. 🐾

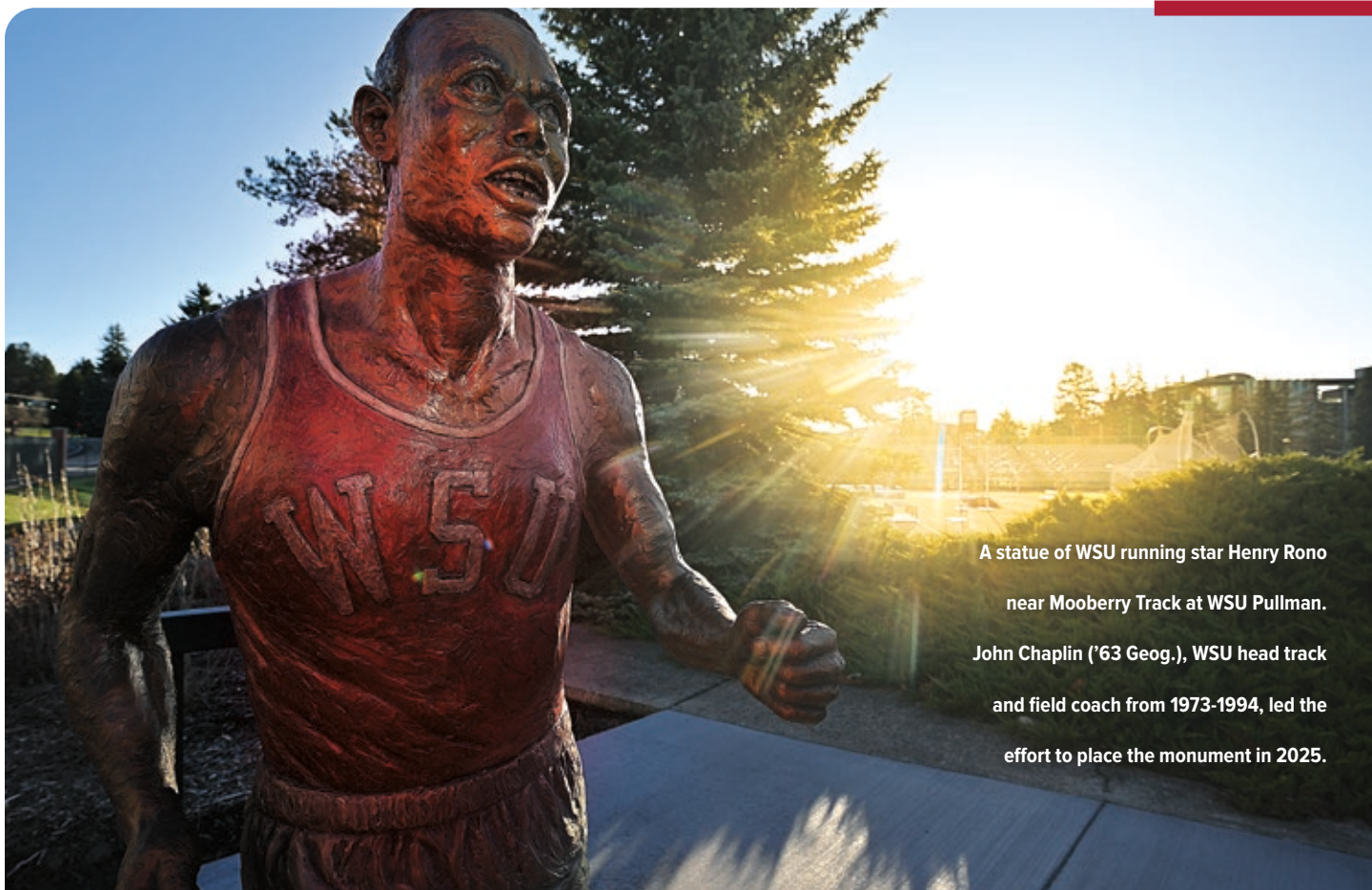
Trevor Bond is dean of WSU Libraries.



## SAVE THE DATE:

Meet the mountaineers  
at a free program and  
reception in Pullman,  
September 25, 2026.

[magazine.wsu.edu/mountaineers](https://magazine.wsu.edu/mountaineers)



A statue of WSU running star Henry Rono near Mooberry Track at WSU Pullman. John Chaplin ('63 Geog.), WSU head track and field coach from 1973-1994, led the effort to place the monument in 2025.

PHOTO DEAN HARE

## Fast Times at WSU:

by Larry Clark



**SINCE THE EARLY DAYS** of the school, amazing runners have worn the crimson and gray for Washington State.

Distance runners, sprinters, and other extremely fast athletes broke records and thrilled track fans. In February this year, two more WSU runners broke school records: Zenah Cheptoo in the 5,000-meter race and Rosemary Longisa in the 800-meter race.

Here are some of the many Washington State speedsters from over the decades.

**1. JOHN DIVINE** ('27 Ag.) was Washington State College's first collegiate distance champion, winning the NCAA title in the two-mile run as a sophomore in 1925. That same year, he won all four dual meets he entered and placed fourth in the Pacific Coast Conference.

**2. WESLEY L. FOSTER** ('31 Econ.) won six Pacific Coast Conference sprinting titles at Washington State. In 1928, he set a world record for 175 yards during a meet with the University of Oregon; Foster's record was set during the 220-yard dash when four timers—all stationed at the 175-yard mark—clocked him at 16.6 seconds. Foster also set four state marks and set or equaled two national records in 1925 as a Wenatchee high school student.

**3. PAUL SWIFT** ('33 Busi.) came to WSC as a state-record holder and left a world-record setter. As a freshman in 1931, the Spokane native equaled a world record in the 100-yard dash at 9.5 seconds. The aptly named Swift later matched the world record twice in one day during his

sophomore season, becoming the first sprinter with that distinction.

**4. THE WSC RELAY TEAM OF 1937** set mile relay collegiate, national, and world records of 3 minutes, 12.3 seconds, which lasted as a school record for 31 years. The team, composed of brothers Jack and Lee Orr, Harry Nettleton, and Loren "Bill" Benke, was coached by Karl Schlademan. A year earlier, Lee Orr had competed in the 1936 Olympics for Canada, where he raced against US champion Jesse Owens.

**5. ROBERT R. "BOB" GARY** ('56 Phys. Ed.), one of the top sprinters in the world for several years, dominated against Northwest opponents. Gary never lost a sprint race to Oregon, Washington, Oregon State, or Idaho, while claiming

four Pacific Coast Conference championships as a junior and senior.

**6. GERRY LINDGREN** ('68 Poli. Sci.), one of the greatest distance runners in American collegiate history, won 11 straight NCAA titles while at WSU. He set 57 American records and shared a world record for the six-mile, along with numerous high school world records. Lindgren competed on the 1964 US Olympic team, and he was the first American to beat the Russians in a distance race, in the 10,000-meters at a dual meet in 1964.

**7. JOHN NGENO** ('76 Gen. Stu.) held WSU, conference, and collegiate records for races covering 5,000 meters, six miles, 10,000 meters, and 21 kilometers. In 1975, he was NCAA champion in three- and six-mile races. Only two other collegians had won more titles than Ngeno.

**8. SAMSON KIMOBWA** ('80 Ag.), one of many outstanding Kenyan runners at WSU, set a 10,000-meter world record in 1977. Kimobwa was a three-time Pac-10 champion and NCAA title holder.

**9. HENRY RONO** ('81 Gen. Stu., '83 Psych.) shocked the running world in 1978 when he broke four world records in just 81

days as a WSU student. Kenyan runner Rono dominated college distance running, winning six NCAA titles and setting six collegiate outdoor records and four indoor marks. Rono's 10,000-meter cross-country time in 1976 still stands as an NCAA record. WSU's lone track national championship came from Rono's two-mile run in 1977. Rono was Pac-12 Athlete of the Century and a six-time All-American, with seven collegiate records and seven WSU records.

**10. PETER KOECH** ('86 Soc. Sci.) earned 11 All-American certificates, captured five Pac-10 Conference crowns and two NCAA Championships. He later grabbed the world record in steeplechase.

**11. CELESTINE N'DRIN** ('91 Hotel & Rest. Admin.) broke two school records in 400-meter and 500-yard races as a freshman in 1986. N'Drin competed as a member of the Ivory Coast 1984 Olympic team, held WSU's record in the women's 800-meter, and was the first three-time conference champion in women's program history.

**12. JENNIFER (ROBERTSON) BRAVARD** ('93 Human Dev.) brought home

multiple Pac-10 titles and NCAA honors in cross country. Robertson held school records in the 1,500-meter, mile, 3,000-meter, and 5,000-meter.

**13. BERNARD LAGAT** ('00 Mgmt. Info. Sys.) was a dominant Pac-10 Conference distance runner who won 11 conference championship races, multiple NCAA honors including four titles, and a world record as part of a relay team at WSU. Lagat has silver and bronze Olympic Games medals, six world titles, and many American records.

**14. ELLANNEE RICHARDSON** ('02 Socio., '07 MA Crim. Just.) was a five-time All-American heptathlete and sprinter at WSU with a slew of honors. Richardson later joined the WSU coaching staff, leading the next generation of sprinters for a decade, where her relay teams consistently ran WSU top ten times every season.

**15. JESHUA ANDERSON** (x'11) dominated hurdles as a four-time NCAA champion and a 2015 Pan-American Games representative. He also leveraged his speed as a receiver for the WSU football team. 🐾

## And even more WSU runners...

Curt Ledford ('39 Phys. Ed.)

Art Sandison ('70, '73 MS Phys. Ed.)

Rick Riley ('71 English)

Joshua Kimeto (x'77)

Gabriel Tiacoh ('85 Econ., '91 MBA)

Julius Korir ('86 Gen. Stu.)

Pam Qualls (x'88)

Josephat Kapkory ('95 Chem. Eng.)

Samuel Kibiri ('96 Comp. Sci., '99 MA Higher Ed. Admin.)

# Coug legends on the track



1-5

6-10

11-15

# Rhubarb

PHOTO DAVID VAN KLAVEREN



## RHUBARB SIMPLY SINGS OF SPRING.

Its pretty pink stalks emerge earlier than most crops in the Northern Hemisphere, signifying the end of the dark, barren winter and start of earth's annual reawakening. Stalks blush beautifully—from light rose to deep crimson, although there are green and green-red varieties. Whatever the coloring, rhubarb symbolizes renewal, resilience, and hope.

Still, it's a strange and difficult fruit: mouth-puckeringly tart, and topped with toxic leaves. In fact, it's not even really fruit at all, rather a vegetable treated as one. As early as April, find it baked into cobblers and upside-down cakes, cooked into compote to top vanilla ice cream or swirl into Greek yogurt, and, of course, tucked into tarts and pies—perhaps coupled with strawberries, a classic combination.

Sugar is a must.

“No spice is required, but sugar may be put in as long as your conscience will let you, and a handful afterwards,” Jane Cunningham Croly writes under the simple title of “Rhubarb, or Pie Plant” in the 1878 edition of *Jennie June's American Cookery Book*.

Lydia Maria Child also emphasizes the fact that rhubarb pies “take an enormous quantity of sugar,” so much so that she doesn't provide an exact measurement in 1844's *The American Frugal Housewife*. “There is no way to judge (the right amount) but by your own taste,” she surmises.

In fact, the “pie plant” didn't become popular with the masses until the mid-1800s, when sugar became more affordable in Europe and America. Mostly used for medicinal purposes until then, rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) was reborn as a filling for desserts.

Fortunately for us, the Evergreen State is a national leader in rhubarb production. Only Oregon harvests more acres of rhubarb. According to 2022 data from the United States Department of Agriculture, 145 farms harvested 464 acres of rhubarb in Washington state, with the crop from all but four acres bound for the fresh market. That compares to 1,727 rhubarb acres nationwide and 571 rhubarb acres in Oregon.

Rhubarb's roots stretch back generations near Sumner, the “Rhubarb Pie Capital of the World.” The Pierce County town celebrates its annual Rhubarb Days Festival in June with plenty of rhubarb pie, rhubarb crisp,

freshly cut rhubarb, and rhubarb-infused beer. Pierce County is the state's largest rhubarb producer with 398 acres. In second place is Skagit County with 35 acres.

Pullman also has a special connection to the “pie plant.” Since 2012, the USDA's rhubarb collection has been maintained at its Western Regional Plant Introduction Station on the Washington State University campus. The outpost is part of the larger National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS), which maintains one of the world's largest germplasm collections.

“This is a living seedbank,” explains Carol Miles, WSU horticulture professor and Extension vegetable specialist at the WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center. She served for 12 years as the WSU liaison to the NPGS, through which research scientists from all over the world can request plant materials.

The NPGS contains nearly 624,000 entries. One-sixth of the total collection, or some 101,000 entries, is maintained at WSU. This includes 55 rhubarb specimens, with another 10 waiting in the wings—er, fields—thanks to Ann Kowenstrot ('23 MS Ag.), Alex Cornwall ('10, '25 PhD Hort.), and Miles, who served as their graduate committee adviser.

A few years ago, the trio traveled to Alaska to collect wild and landrace rhubarb samples, which were then sent

to a commercial lab to be analyzed. As a result, the WSU researchers identified 10 varieties that were not yet part of the USDA collection. Soon, they will be available to researchers around the world, says Cornwall, who joined Pullman's USDA unit in 2011 as the field technician for horticultural crops and now works as one of four collection curators on the Pullman campus. He oversees nearly 14,000 entries, including garlic, beets, and First Foods such as biscuitroot, wild onion, and wapato, or duck potato.

“Our main mission is to preserve the diversity of plant life, especially with agricultural crops and their wild relatives,” Cornwall says. “We never know when a new pest might threaten our food security. Researchers can mine these materials for genetics to determine if any are resistant to the new pathogen or insect.”

But, he says, “Not many researchers are interested in rhubarb. It hasn't had the marketing like other crops have. I feel like once people realize how versatile it is, it could become more popular.”

Most of the demand for the collection's rhubarb comes from growers and nurseries, including a mail-order seed company that had donated one of its proprietary varieties to the collection decades ago. When it was recently in need of the material, “we were able to supply it back to them,” says Cornwall, who partnered with



Timperley Early  
variety beginning  
to emerge

by Adriana Janowich

too, but favors locations with afternoon shade to alleviate extreme summer heat. Researchers in Alaska have been especially interested in rhubarb, a good source of vitamin C, because of its “amazing cold hardiness,” Miles says. “It’s one of the only food crops that survives in those winter conditions year after year.”

In her 2021 publication, “Growing Rhubarb in Home Gardens,” Washington State University Extension specialist and professor emerita Linda Chalker-Scott recommends growing rhubarb “as a landscape plant rather than in an annual bed” because of its size. “The diameter of a single rhubarb plant can reach eight feet or more, so give each plant plenty of space in full sun for best production,” she writes.

Chalker-Scott also notes rhubarb does “best when planted in the fall when the plant is dormant” and “performs best in a well-drained, aerated soil.” But, once established, rhubarb “requires little care other than maintaining a mulch layer and irrigation.”

Cornwall’s favorite varieties are the bright red Crimson Cherry and dark red German Wine, known for its thick stalks. He recommends keeping the earth around them weed-free and, when they get too big, breaking up the crown and replanting the pieces to rejuvenate them. In fields he maintains, he ensures rows are “well-irrigated” using a drip-system “so we’re not having to expend a lot of water to keep these plants happy.”

Just don’t eat the leaves, loaded with oxalic acid. According to the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, “Only the leafstalk of rhubarb is suitable for human consumption. The leaf blade...can be quite poisonous.”

Ancient Greeks called the plant *rha barbaron*, or foreign rhubarb, likely because of its origins in ancient Asia, where—especially in China—its root was highly sought after for use as a laxative. The Silk Road brought rhubarb west. It arrived in Europe by the thirteenth century, reaching Great Britain by the 1500s. Fun fact: William Shakespeare references rhubarb in *Macbeth*, written in the early 1600s.

In 1742, English cookery writer Hannah Glasse published a simple tart recipe in *The Compleat Confectioner*, recommending stalks be cut “the size of goosberries (sic)” and the tarts made “as you do goosberry (sic) tarts ... These tarts may be thought very odd, but they are very fine ones and have a pretty flavour ...”

A hundred years later, rhubarb went from “very odd” to very popular. The oldest variety still commonly cultivated is Victoria, introduced in 1837 in England in honor of Queen Victoria’s

coronation—and largely credited with England’s rhubarb craze. Victorians were obsessed with rhubarb, considered a symbol of passion and desire. They often included the “pie plant” in recipes, such as stewed pork with rhubarb, meant to impress a potential sweetheart.

Colonial botanist John Bartram is credited with being first to cultivate the crop in what’s now the United States, using seeds sent to his Philadelphia-area farm by British merchant and fellow plant enthusiast Peter Collinson in the 1730s.

American writer Sarah Josepha Hale noted the English called rhubarb “spring fruit,” which, in her opinion, was “a much more relishing name than rhubarb.” Her pie recipe, published in 1839’s *Early American Cookery: The Good Housekeeper*, likens the dessert to apple pie and recommends “plenty of brown sugar, you can hardly put in too much.”

Croly, who refers to rhubarb as “one of the greatest spring luxuries,” calls for an entire pound of brown sugar to four pounds of rhubarb in the 1866 edition of her cookbook.

One cup of rhubarb has about 26 calories. One pound, about 97. But one cup of granulated sugar has 774 calories. One pound, about 1,800. So, it’s probably best not to add that extra handful, even if you have a sweet tooth or, like Miles, make your own jams.

“I love rhubarb,” Miles says. “I think it’s a great crop for its resiliency and flavor. The jam I’m working on now is cherry rhubarb. My feeling—and I personally take this very seriously—is embrace the bitterness. Embrace the lack of sweetness. If you add too much sugar, you lose the rhubarb flavor.” 🐾



A Rhubarb Rumble entry  
PHOTO (DETAIL) HAL FRANCIS REX



Washington state  
produces more  
fresh rhubarb than  
any other state.



RHUBARB RECIPES  
AND OTHER LINKS

[magazine.wsu.edu/  
extra/rhubarb](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/rhubarb)



WSU’s Department of Horticulture to start a Rhubarb Rumble last year on the Pullman campus. The cook-off included rhubarb panna cotta, rhubarb lemonade, and rhubarb salsa that “would go well with mango” and “could definitely be used in a restaurant setting,” according to Cornwall, who prepared it.

For this year’s competition at the end of May, Cornwall is considering rhubarb-infused French macarons. He’s also interested in trying a traditional springtime Persian rhubarb-and-lamb stew, typically served over rice. “We’re trying to showcase what this crop can do,” he says. “It’s more than people think. I find it fascinating that we can use it in sweet compotes and pie fillings as well as savory stews.”

The springtime staple is ready for harvest in April or May in Washington state and then, gloriously, throughout the summer—though stalks are most tender in spring. Good news for home gardeners: Rhubarb freezes well and is exceptionally easy to grow. “It doesn’t require a lot of attention,” Miles underscores. “It’s not a demanding crop and can withstand the worse winter weather, emerging early in the spring.”

The hardy perennial thrives in mild climates with damp springs and moderate summers, such as western Washington. It grows well in eastern Washington,

Field technician David Van Klaveren holds a leaf of Oregon Giant.



COURTESY DAVID VAN KLAVEREN



DERIVATIVE FROM ILLUSTRATION BY BORIS SV / GETTY IMAGES

# Energizing FUTURE Farms





by Becky Kramer

**CRYOCOWBOYS' ULTIMATE GOAL** is building an entire hydrogen system that could be used on farms. ... Farmers could generate their own hydrogen, liquify and store it, and run their equipment on the fuel.

**A**T HIS FAMILY'S WHEAT FARM near Dusty, Washington, Kyle Appel grew up helping his dad repair diesel tractors and combines. But he can picture a day when the farm's equipment is powered by clean hydrogen fuel.

The idea took hold in Appel's combustion engine class at Washington State University, when the professor brought in a paper about converting diesel engines to run on mostly hydrogen. With his hands-on mechanical experience, "I could see the possibilities for heavy equipment," says Appel ('22, '24 MS Mech. Eng.).

Last year, he cofounded CryoCowboys LLC with colleague **Matthew Shenton**.

"Kyle and I have a vision," Shenton ('25 PhD Mech. Eng.) says. "We want to drive hydrogen-powered tractors. We want to

push sustainability forward by making liquid hydrogen a viable fuel for the agricultural industry."

Hydrogen fuel has plenty of upsides. It's energy intensive, but unlike fossil fuels, it doesn't produce greenhouse gasses when it burns. It can be made from water by using electrolysis to break the hydrogen-oxygen bond. And if the electrolysis is fueled by renewable energy—like solar panels on a farm—the resulting hydrogen is considered climate neutral.

Hydrogen-powered forklifts are already used in US warehouses, moving about 30 percent of the nation's groceries. But as a fuel for widespread use, hydrogen still has challenges to overcome.

For industrial uses, hydrogen is most practical as a liquid fuel. However, keeping hydrogen in a liquid state requires extremely low temperatures of -420 degrees Fahrenheit, which falls in the cryogenic temperature range. And that's where Appel and Shenton's work comes in.

The business partners met at WSU's HYdrogen Properties for Energy Research (HYPER) Laboratory run by Jacob Leachman, a professor in the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering. The lab is working on a variety of liquid hydrogen fuel applications, including aviation and other types of transportation. Appel and Shenton zeroed in on agriculture.

"He's from an ag background and so am I," says Shenton, who grew up on an Idaho cattle ranch. "One day, one of our friends said, 'Here come the CryoCowboys. They

work in cryogenics, but their hearts are in agriculture.” The name stuck.

They formed CryoCowboys LLC to apply for small business innovation grants through the US Department of Energy. During his master’s degree, Appel worked on mathematical modeling to improve liquid hydrogen storage tank operations and prevent fuel loss.

But the company’s immediate focus is Shenton’s thermoacoustic research at the

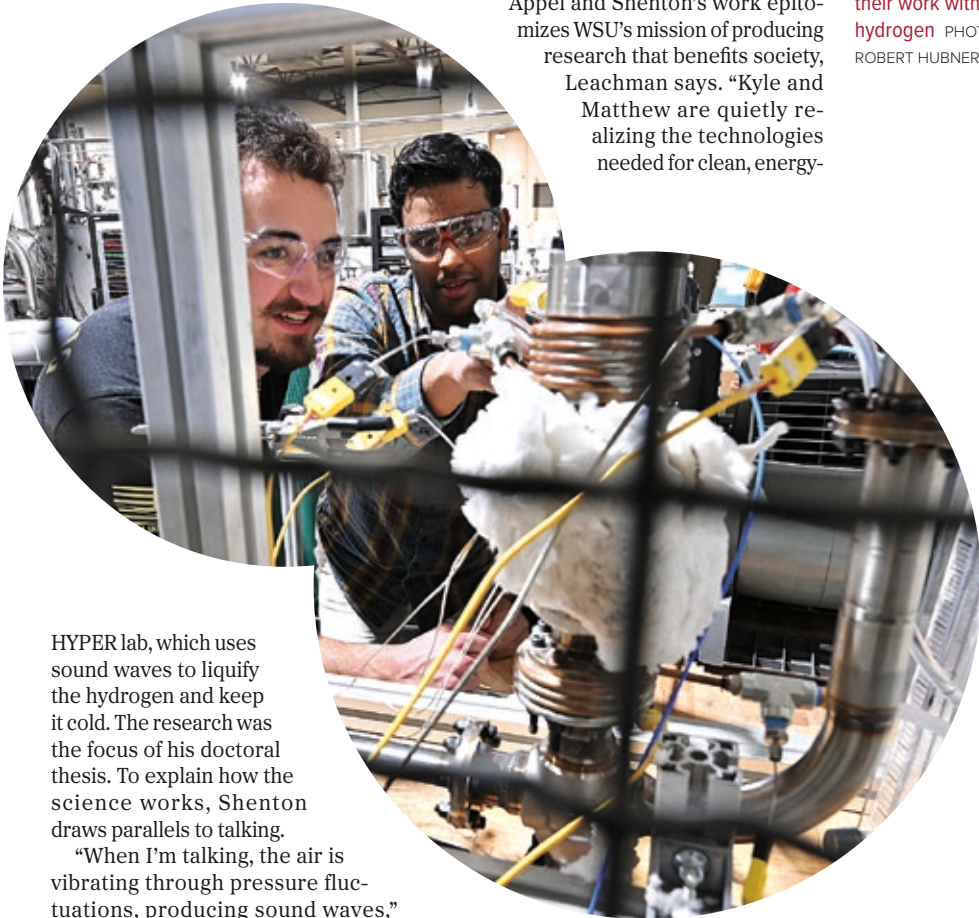
“It’s less likely to break down, and it requires less maintenance,” Shenton says. “We’ve eliminated the compression system’s mechanical parts, and we’re using the hydrogen molecule to cool itself.”

CryoCowboys’ ultimate goal is building an entire hydrogen system that could be used on farms. The partners envision a future when farmers could generate their own hydrogen, liquify and store it, and run their equipment on the fuel.

Appel and Shenton’s work epitomizes WSU’s mission of producing research that benefits society, Leachman says. “Kyle and Matthew are quietly realizing the technologies needed for clean, energy-

Kyle Appel (at left) and Matthew Shenton discuss their work with liquid hydrogen PHOTO

ROBERT HUBNER



HYPER lab, which uses sound waves to liquify the hydrogen and keep it cold. The research was the focus of his doctoral thesis. To explain how the science works, Shenton draws parallels to talking.

“When I’m talking, the air is vibrating through pressure fluctuations, producing sound waves,” Shenton says. In a pure hydrogen environment, the hydrogen molecules would be vibrating instead.

“We can generate and amplify the pressure waves in hydrogen by using the vast difference between room temperature (70 degrees) and cryogenic conditions of -420 degrees,” he adds. By harnessing those pressure fluctuations, energy is transferred from the cold space to the warm space, creating refrigeration.

Shenton is working to refine the thermoacoustic wave technology with hydrogen for eventual commercialization. He says it has advantages over refrigeration compression systems for keeping liquid hydrogen cold.

independent agriculture right here on the Palouse.”

Appel turned down a lucrative job offer after earning his bachelor’s degree to work in the HYPER lab while getting his master’s.

“I looked at what I wanted to do with my life,” he says. “What I saw was a great opportunity to make hydrogen a viable fuel for industries that currently rely on heavy equipment with big block diesel engines.”

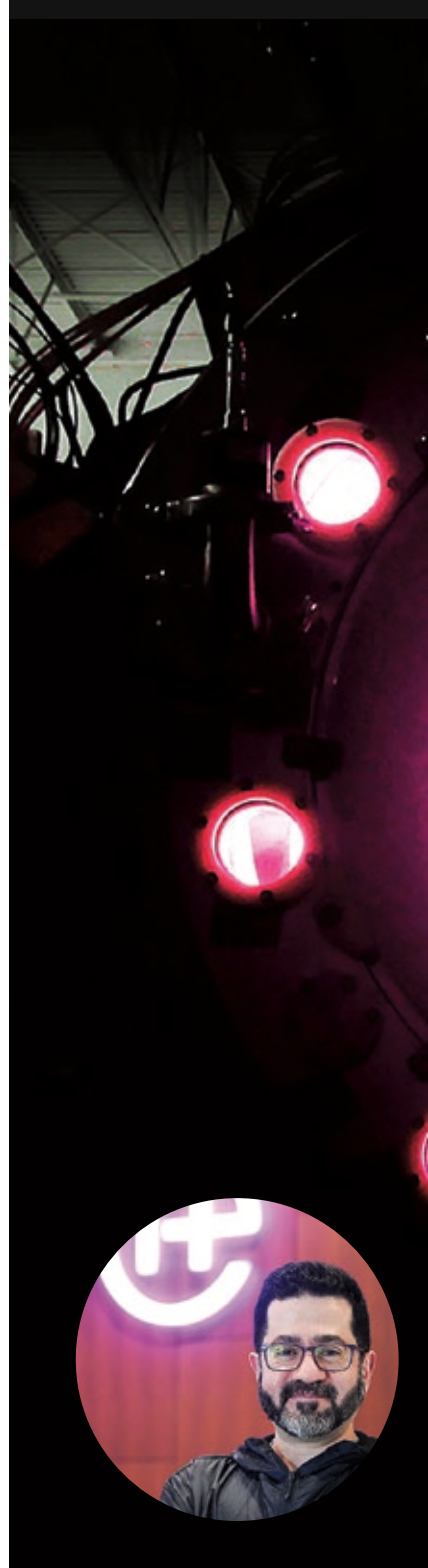
“Hydrogen has great potential for agriculture,” Shenton adds, “and the industry is interested in seeing it reach the point where it’s economically feasible.” 

Read more about WSU’s liquid hydrogen research at the HYPER Lab.



[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/harnessing-hydrogen](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/harnessing-hydrogen)

PHOTO COURTESY HELION ENERGY





## Cougs in Fusion

by Becky Kramer

**Helion's Polaris reactor** was designed to be the first fusion machine to actually generate electricity. WSU alumni in the fusion industry are working toward a future of clean, abundant energy.

**F**OR NEARLY A CENTURY, scientists have chased the idea of nuclear fusion for domestic power. The cataclysmic fusion of atoms that powers our sun and other stars holds the promise of clean, abundant energy without long-lived radioactive waste.

While that reality isn't here yet, the Seattle area is becoming a hub for fusion startups. Helion Energy and Zap Energy in Everett, and Avalanche in Seattle are each developing technologies for fusion power plants, with the goal of generating electricity for the grid. Cougs are helping build the industry as part of the workforce.

Nuclear fusion is sometimes called the 21st century's grand engineering challenge. Scientists and engineers are working to recreate the sun's processes in a controlled environment with magnetic fields and plasma temperatures of 100 million degrees Celsius.

Vince Giacalone ('11 Mech. Eng.) is a production manager at Helion Energy. He oversees a team that works with engineers to develop and build hardware for fusion generators and small-scale plasma testbeds. It's an exciting, fast-paced work environment.

"There's an incredible vibe and energy on the team," Giacalone says. "It's like a design project from back in school where everybody's having fun, but the stakes are real. There's a huge net win for the world to have clean, low-cost, and abundant energy."

Helion, founded in 2013, has a growing presence in Washington, with 600 employees, a fusion plant under construction near Wenatchee, and Microsoft lined up as a customer. Giacalone joined the company in 2024 after working as a general manager for a manufacturing firm.

"Helion is a five-minute drive from my previous workplace, but I hadn't known there was a fusion startup down the road," he says.

Other Cougar alumni at Helion include Zahra Armanfard ('23 PhD Phys.) and Shahriar Safaee ('21 PhD Mech. Eng.). Armanfard is an experimental scientist who studies plasma. Safaee designs electromechanical pulsed power systems used in Helion's capacitor bank.

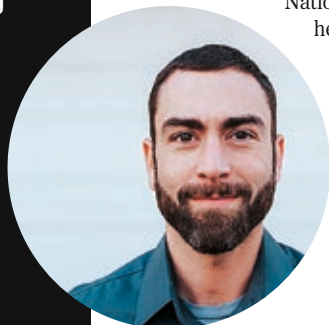
"The capacitor bank delivers the energy to the electromagnets that drive the fusion process, then recovers the energy produced during fusion," he explains.

Fusion is different than the atom-splitting nuclear fission, which currently powers the world's nuclear plants. In simplistic terms, fusion occurs when two light nuclei (usually hydrogen isotopes deuterium and tritium) fuse together, releasing energy. In the sun, fusion requires superheated plasma and immense pressure.

More than 40 fusion startup companies exist worldwide, all aiming for breakthroughs that will make fusion a viable power source. Billions of investment dollars are pouring into the industry. A 2022 accomplishment at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's

National Ignition Facility in California helped fuel the excitement. For the first time, the facility created a net gain of energy through nuclear fusion, with the output exceeding the energy used to create the reaction.

Helion has announced plans to provide Microsoft data centers with fusion energy by late 2028, and to its



**Left: Zahra Armanfard, Bottom: Vince Giacalone, Opposite: Shahriar Safaee, Right: Jay Nawash**

ARMANFARD AND SAFAEE PHOTOS COURTESY HELION ENERGY; GIACALONE AND NAWASH COURTESY RESPECTIVELY

second customer, steel manufacturer Nucor Corp., in 2030. But projections vary on when energy from fusion will become widely available. The World Economic Forum recently reported estimates ranging from the mid-2030s to the 2050s.

Society urgently needs clean, abundant energy, says Jay Nawash ('07 PhD Mat. Sci. & Eng.), Zap Energy's research laboratory manager. Global demand for electricity is projected to triple by 2050, driven in part by the high energy needs of data centers and artificial intelligence. Climate change, meanwhile, has raised the stakes for generating electricity without burning fossil fuels.

"Fusion checks all the boxes as the most desirable energy source," Nawash says. "There are no carbon emissions, the fuels are abundant and inexpensive, and public acceptance is high."

Representatives from Helion, Zap Energy, and Avalanche gave presentations at Washington State University this year. The invitations came from John McCloy, professor and director of the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering, who sees opportunities to expose students to nuclear fusion careers, and for WSU to partner with companies on research.

"Our students are excited about this. There's a lot of promise for fusion in terms of its potential for clean energy," McCloy says. The influx of private investment helps validate the industry's progress, he adds.


"It indicates that nuclear fusion is not just a push from government and academia," McCloy says. "There's a commercial need, and investors believe it could be financially viable."

Neither Armanfard nor Safaee expected to work in the fusion industry. For Armanfard, the hook was her doctoral work in spectroscopy, which she now uses at Helion to study temperature and impurities in plasma as part of the company's experimental science team.

When Armanfard was evaluating job offers, she was drawn to the fusion energy mission. "I wanted to be part of something very good and very big that will change the world."

Before Safaee joined Helion, he worked at a large tech company developing virtual reality products. "They were cool products, but I realized that not many people would be able to afford them, and the impact wouldn't be as widespread as I hoped," he says.

Working toward a clean energy future gives him a greater sense of purpose, says Safaee, who encourages students to keep an open mind on where their degrees might take them.

"The WSU doctoral program taught me how to find solutions to hard engineering problems," he says. "Every day, I go to work knowing that I'm designing and building hardware that can contribute to a better society." 



# KEEPING IT GOING NUCLEAR

The Nuclear Science Center at WSU has trained reactor operators for 65 years. An expansion of the facility is underway.



Layla Lumzer ('25 Mech. Eng.)

by Addy Hatch  
& Shawn Vestal



**I**T'S A NEW ERA FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY, and Washington State University will help shape that future by building on its past.

WSU has more than a half-century of experience educating nuclear scientists and reactor operators. The university is home to the state's only research reactor.

A major expansion at WSU's Nuclear Science Center in Pullman will enable new lines of research and potentially new certificate and degree options, says Corey Hines, director of the center.

Interest and investment in nuclear power is increasing globally, driven by soaring demand for energy, advances in technology, and climate goals. New reactors are being built worldwide, while companies are also developing next-generation small modular reactors that could lower costs and speed construction.

All of these facilities will need people to run and monitor them.

WSU helps fill that pipeline through its longtime reactor operator training program, where undergraduate students can get the education and training needed to become a licensed reactor operator or senior reactor operator.

Since the center's establishment in 1961, 113 nuclear reactor operators trained there have been licensed by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, as of fall 2025. Students with nuclear training also work in many other capacities where that experience is valuable. Those students come from a wide variety of majors.

"We've had music majors take the course; they've passed and become senior reactor operators. We've had history majors. We take all backgrounds," says Layla Lumzer ('25 Mech. Eng.), who has worked at the Nuclear Science Center for two years and is a licensed reactor operator. She graduated in December and will sit for the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission's senior reactor operator license exam this summer.

Students need one chemistry prerequisite to start the program. Then they must pass three additional courses and work at WSU's research reactor to be eligible to sit for the exam. Average pay for a reactor operator in the United States is \$121,000 per year, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The reactor core represents an incredibly versatile resource. It is one of just four research nuclear reactors in the Pacific Northwest; it is a TRIGA facility—Training, Research, Isotopes, General Atomics—that uses fuel especially suited for research.

The core is operated from a control room, where student operators in training adjust the power of the reactor by raising and lowering materials that act as sponges to control the nuclear chain reaction.

WSU offers five nuclear science courses and is working on creating a nuclear science certificate within the chemistry department. After that, the university may launch a nuclear science minor, which would be a rarity in the United States.

"Our recent motivation has been in development of undergraduate course work to introduce students to sought-after nuclear science skill sets earlier in their academic lives," says Hines.

In addition to more training, the expansion includes a new 5,000-square-foot facility being built at the Nuclear Science Center. It will house three "hot cells" for nuclear research, a chemistry wet lab, and other facilities. The building is expected to take a year, and then about five years to bring the hot cells into operation.

"With the expansion, we're now going to be able to use the full nuclear capacity of the core," says Hines.

Kim Christen, WSU vice president for research, says, "These hot cells will supercharge the ability of WSU scientists and our regional and national partners to discover new kinds of fuels, produce specialized isotopes, and develop materials suited to extreme environments, like next-generation nuclear reactors."

The research taking place in WSU's Nuclear Science Center is conducted by university faculty and government and private partners. The center also produces radioactive isotopes for use at US national laboratories, for advanced nuclear and energy industry partners, and medical research.

## Institute for Northwest Energy Futures

WSU's Institute for Northwest Energy Futures, started in 2021 at WSU Tri-Cities, works to meet the global need for sustainable clean energy production. INEF is partnering with Energy Northwest and Columbia Basin College on a small modular reactor operations simulation center inside the INEF building, which will be a critical training resource for the next generation of nuclear operators. Energy Northwest recently signed an agreement with Amazon to build and deploy small modular reactors in the Tri-Cities.



Watch a video of the Nuclear Science Center to learn more.

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/  
WSU-nuclear](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/wsu-nuclear)



COREY HINES PHOTO SHELLY HANKS

A particular priority is national security work contributing to nuclear science, nuclear non-proliferation, and emergency readiness exercises and training programs, Hines says. "This is an exciting moment for nuclear energy," Christen says. "WSU is uniquely positioned to drive next-generation nuclear innovations while preparing the highly qualified operators and scientists needed to power the industry's future."

Lumzer says she encourages all students to look into the nuclear field.

"Don't be afraid to try it out if you're not a STEM major. We'll teach you the basics," she says. "You get hands-on training. And, while you'll be supervised, you get to operate a nuclear reactor yourself."

Through it all, Hines says, the center will retain its focus on safety. The facility operates with several layers of safety checks and precautions, and encourages a culture with several channels for anyone to report safety concerns, for any reason at any time.


"We strive every day to be the safest building on campus," he says. 

PHOTO ERIC LOZAGA / DAILY NEWS



# The Can-Do **Coug** Commodore

by Adriana Janovich

**N**O DOCKS. NO CLUBHOUSE. NOT EVEN A CABANA.

No matter.

What the Cougar Yacht Club lacks in physical assets, it makes up for in spirit. Cougar spirit. Especially when cruising on Lake Washington past Husky Stadium. Or when the Apple Cup gets canceled, like it did during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 marked the first time the iconic match-up wasn't played since World War II. But the University of Utah accepted a late invitation from the University of Washington just days after the 113th Apple Cup was slated to take place. And a few Cougar fans took to the water to wave Ol' Crimson flags during the game.

"We're Apple Cupping no matter what," **Nicole Marie Sobottke** ('11 Nat. Res. Sci.) recalls telling friend, fellow boating enthusiast, and former Washington State University student Paul Twibell, then-commodore of the Cougar Yacht Club. "I said, 'You can't cancel Cougar spirit.'"

That can-do, don't-let-the-devil-get-you-down attitude is a key reason Sobottke—aka Nicole "The Rock" Rockfish—is now serving as the first woman and youngest commodore in the history of the Cougar Yacht Club, a group of sailors with a simple mission: "To promote Cougar spirit by connecting alumni and friends to Washington State University through their interest in boating and to raise the image and awareness of WSU in waterfront communities."

Anyone can join. Anyone, that is, who loves the Cougs.

"You don't have to be an alum. All you need is crimson in your heart and

a boat in your moorage," Sobottke quips.

Her favorite part of Cougar Yacht Club is the camaraderie. "We're not stuffy. We're very welcoming. We get out there on the water, and we just share our love for the Cougs. We just enjoy being Cougars and being boaters," says Sobottke, who was 38 when she took the helm of CYC during the 2025 Opening Day festivities.

Held the first Saturday in May, Opening Day celebrates the start of Seattle's busy spring and summer boating season with a boat parade through Montlake Cut, just south of Husky Stadium. The procession motors past the UW shellhouse from Portage Bay, ending near Lake Washington's Webster Point. Of course, CYC's fleet is decked out in crimson and Cougar-head logos. "We love trolling the Huskies," Sobottke says.

Opening Day, along with "sailgating" during Apple Cup the years it's held in Seattle, are the club's two biggest events of the year. In all, CYC, founded in 1992, has about 650 supporters and a fleet of approximately 500 vessels—from 19-foot runabouts to 70-foot yachts. The average vessel size is about 35 feet. Most are

//

*All you need  
is crimson in  
your heart and  
a boat in your  
moorage.*

//

motorboats, moored in Seattle, Tri-Cities, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Some are sailboats. Others, kayaks.

"It's come one, come all," says Sobottke, of Moscow, Idaho. She didn't become interested in sailing until arriving in Cougar country after earning her associate's degree at Skagit Valley College. A WSU pal's dad gifted him a Catalina 28, moored on Lake Union, and their friend group drove from Pullman to Seattle to sail as much as possible. They raced in Lake Union's Tuesday night Duck Dodge,



Nicole Sobottke takes the helm. COURTESY NICOLE SOBOTTKE



Commodore Nicole "The Rock" Sobottke  
COURTESY PAUL TWIBELL



Vice Commodore Paul Twibell  
COURTESY PAUL TWIBELL / FACEBOOK



Sailing through the Montlake Cut COURTESY BILL O'BRIEN (FORMER VICE COMMODORE)

participated in Whidbey Island Race Week, and sailed the San Juan Islands during summer vacation.

Soon, Sobottke—nicknamed “Outta Control Nicole”—became known for sailing close to the wind, a nautical term for navigating a vessel at the tightest possible angle toward the wind without the sails losing power. Figuratively, it means taking risks. Along with her moniker came a tagline: “She’ll sink a boat to win.”

She’s still vivacious. But, Sobottke, a Palouse-area sales manager for Ziplly Fiber, takes her CYC leadership role seriously. “I run a tight ship,” she says. “I hope to leave a lasting impact and make the school proud and give back to the school that gave so much to me. My goals are to gain more members and lead our club in a positive way into the future.”

She loves “all kinds of boating. I’m a big sucker for wooden boats. My favorite boat is a Chris-Craft. I do prefer powerboats over sailboats. And I do make a mean charcuterie board, so,” she says with a wink, “I might be a yachter.”

After serving as vice commodore for two years under Twibell, she replaced him in the top slot. Twibell—creator of the Cougar-themed repurposed ambulance known as the Cougulance—is now vice commodore.

Sobottke met him at a tailgate in Pullman. He introduced her to CYC, although she didn’t join right away. “I was their stray cat for several years before I became a full-fledged member,” she says. “I’ve been one of the youngest members of the yacht club this whole time. But I am going to change that.”

Sobottke recently helped add a student ambassador to the board of directors. “One of my goals as the youngest commodore in CYC history is to get more students involved. We are an older club. I think getting more young boaters involved is going to be our way forward.”

The club emphasizes friendship, fun, and “Cougs versus everyone.” The vibe is low-key and approachable; the dues are just a one-time donation of \$125. Each supporter receives a CYC burgee, a pennant used by recreational boaters to identify their home yacht club or sailing organization.

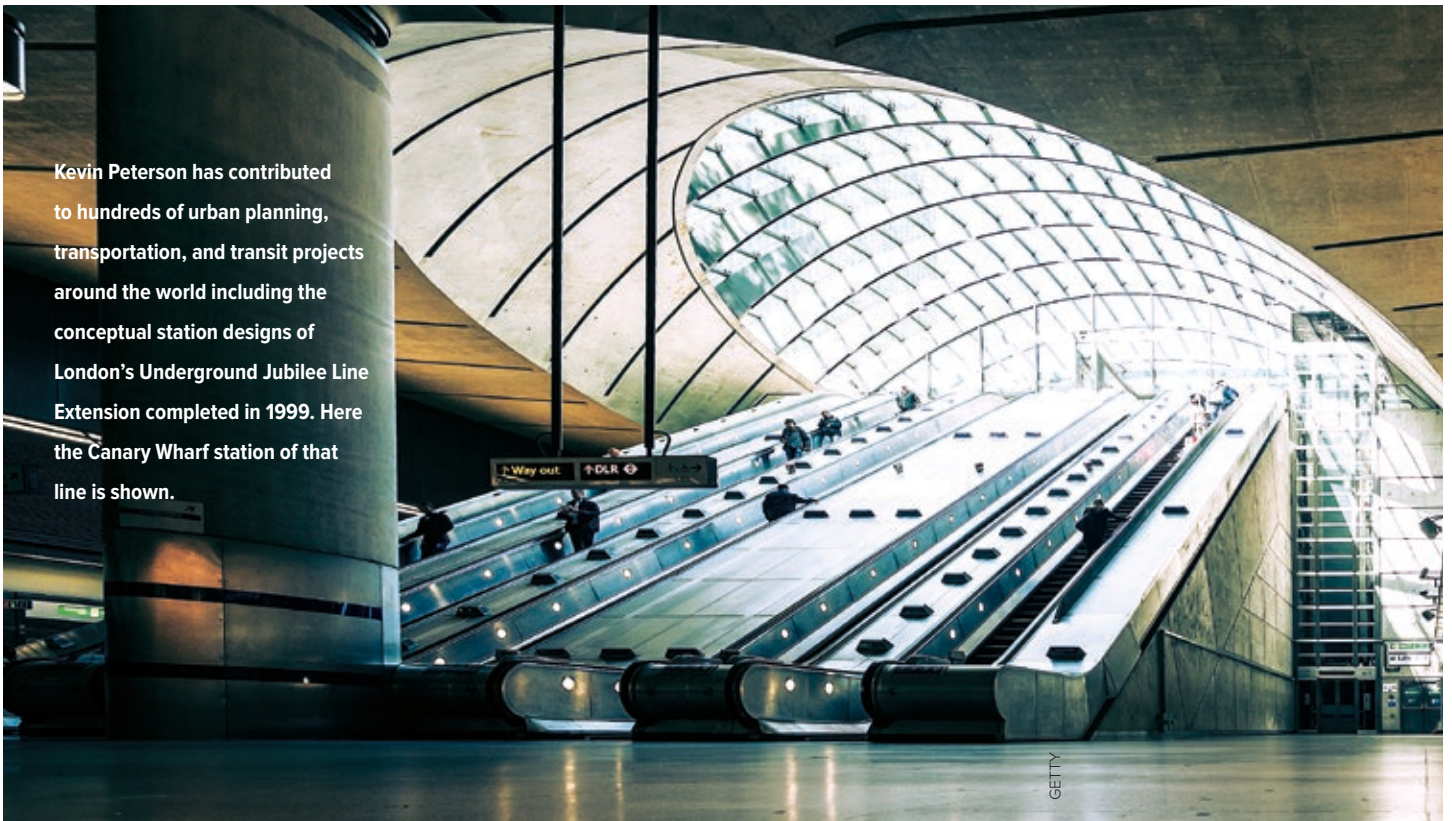
In addition to her recruitment goal, Sobottke wants to connect with the non-profit Ol’ Crimson Booster Club—which has been waving the WSU flag on ESPN *College GameDay* since 2003—don her commodore uniform, and represent CYC and Cougar Nation on TV.

“My biggest dream in life,” she says, “is to wave the Cougar flag in my uniform as the youngest commodore in CYC history.” 

More about the Cougar Yacht Club

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/CYC](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/CYC)





Kevin Peterson has contributed to hundreds of urban planning, transportation, and transit projects around the world including the conceptual station designs of London's Underground Jubilee Line Extension completed in 1999. Here the Canary Wharf station of that line is shown.

ADOBE STOCK

GETTY

# Designs that move millions

by Wenda Reed

**KEVIN PETERSON STUDIED THE LONDON UNDERGROUND**, the world's oldest metro, as part of a Washington State University architecture study abroad program in England in 1974.

Sixteen years later, **Peterson** ('76 Arch.) returned to London in a lead architectural role establishing station layouts for the Jubilee Line Extension, the first major improvement to the London Underground since World War II.

Connecting Westminster with the new subcenter at Canary Wharf, the effort involved a deep tunnel under the River Thames, intermediate stations, and the celebrated Canary Wharf station, designed to serve up to 20,000 passengers an hour. Peterson prepared concepts for Parliament to approve before local architects and engineers took over.

Peterson is a big-picture transportation architect. His international reputation encompasses transit systems and urban design in every continent but Antarctica. And he credits two WSU professors—Jack Johnson and Bob Patton—with launching his career.

"My career would not have been possible if not for professors Jack and Bob at WSU," Peterson says. "Jack taught me the importance of sketching. Bob taught me the importance of responsive design serving the needs of people."

After a few years as an apprentice, Peterson joined the Seattle office of the international planning and design firm Parsons Brinckerhoff, now part of WSP Global. This allowed him to fulfill his interest in "the spaces between buildings, transportation, infrastructure and urban fabric."

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importance of  
responsive design  
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Read more about Kevin Peterson's design projects around the world.

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/  
Peterson-design](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Peterson-design)



He began his 21-year career with Parsons Brinckerhoff with a project in Tacoma, where he was born. "Pierce Transit was creating a bus system where passengers could easily transfer between one line and another at transit centers," remembers Peterson, who also assisted senior architects and engineers with the design of downtown Seattle's underground metro system. "Then I began getting calls from across the nation... I soon got a reputation as someone who could quickly and responsively solve problems. Often, I did the basic, conceptual design helping projects get started."

He met his wife, Ann (English Bevens) Peterson ('75 Int. Des.), when she was designing a space for the old Sheraton Hotel in Billings, Montana. Peterson helped with architectural aspects. Their Coug connections span three generations,

including his mother-in-law, Shirley (English) Bevens ('41 Music) and their daughter Mari (Peterson) Schillios ('14 Hum.).

Newlywed, he embarked on his first international project: the design of eight elevated stations and about 20 kilometers of elevated guideway in Singapore.

Next stop was Taipei, Taiwan, where Peterson was instrumental in establishing the design philosophy for the largest mass transit system then being developed in the world.

Later, he created conceptual designs for the Marmaray metro rail line connecting the European and Asian sides of Istanbul, Turkey, across the Bosphorus Strait. At its deepest, the tunnel sits 60 meters down, the deepest submerged rail line in the world. The project included designing an 11-city block multi-modal transportation facility, meant to move more than 100,000 people each hour, within the Roman walls of the World Heritage City.

Some of his most interesting urban design projects, such as Jubail, were in Saudi Arabia. Started in the 1960s, Jubail turned a fishing village on the Persian Gulf into one of the Middle East's largest industrial cities, planned for 600,000 residents. But, by the early 1990s, only some 30,000 lived there.

"The original plan imposed a 1950s social utopia onto a Bedouin culture," Peterson says. "No one wanted to live there. They wanted a city with multi-generational neighborhoods and traditional urban activities." Many changes resulted, but—as of 2022—Jubail housed 474,000 residents.

Peterson also designed transportation and infrastructure for a major high-density development above the Kaaba in Mecca, Islam's most sacred site. "As a Christian, I couldn't go there, so they sent people to walk the streets and videotape the cityscape and send me the CDs."

In all, Peterson, who left Parsons Brinckerhoff in 2001 to join his wife in Peterson Design, logged some 5 million miles of international travel. The Petersons have lived in London, Singapore, Taipei, Istanbul, and Sydney.

Projects in Washington state include rail stations, transit centers, and infrastructure planning in Friday Harbor, Bellingham, Olympia, Everett, and Kirkland. In Seattle, Peterson helped select King Street Station as the site for the Amtrak and commuter rail terminal in south Seattle.

"For the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement, I was asked to work with the state legislature to explore non-tunnel options," says Peterson, who is still called upon to advise government officials, including lawmakers, on transportation issues. For example, he's consulting on modifications to the long-delayed Columbia River Bridge replacement between Vancouver and Portland, Oregon.

Looking back, he reflects, "Growing up an average kid in Washington state and attending WSU resulted in an international career helping shape how millions of people live." 🐾



experience than sitting courtside with your feet on the floor."

The Storm's 27th season—Silverman's twelfth with the team—starts this spring. Since 2014, he's led the four-time WNBA champions' corporate partnership, community, and social impact efforts. One of his proudest achievements includes securing naming rights for the state-of-the-art BECU Storm Center for Basketball Performance, built in 2024. The deal marked the first time an independently owned WNBA team secured a sponsor for the naming of its practice facility.

"That was definitely a landmark moment," says Silverman, noting another top accomplishment with the Storm is negotiating a TV partnership to air home games with KOMO and The CW Network.

In all, Silverman has worked more than two decades in the sports and entertainment businesses. He's been a member of the board of directors of the Seattle Sports Commission since 2018 and a member of the board of trustees of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce since 2023.

He joined the Storm in 2014 as vice president of corporate partnerships, was named senior vice president in 2017, and was promoted again in 2022. During his tenure, corporate partnership revenue growth jumped nearly 500 percent.

The team also expanded its social justice and community platforms, which Silverman ran until 2025 when the Storm hired its first social impact officer. Since 2020, the community and social impact department has raised and donated more than \$2 million and led the development of youth programs reaching more than 55,000 children and teens in the greater Seattle area.

"Growing up, I was always passionate about sports, especially basketball," Silverman says.

He didn't realize he could study sport management until he transferred to Washington State University. "I remember seeing the major listed, and I was shocked. It opened my eyes that there are careers in sports" beyond being an athlete. "It sparked something in me."

Silverman took tickets at volleyball games, served as an away-team liaison for basketball, and gave away rally towels and T-shirts during football games. Going to the 2003 Rose Bowl was a highlight.

Senior year, he was a finalist for an internship with the Seattle SuperSonics. "I remember sitting in the nose-bleed section as a kid and waiting post-game to try to get autographs from players," he recalls.

When he didn't get the job, he petitioned the New York Knicks, landed a



## Behind the rising Storm

by Adriana Janovich

**THE STORM'S BEEN BREWING** since 2000. And while Nate Silverman hasn't been part of the excitement since its first season, he attends every home game of the women's professional basketball team, often sitting courtside with clients.

"It's full circle for me," says **Silverman** ('04 Sport Mgmt.), who started his career in promotions and ticket sales, and now serves as chief commercial officer of the Seattle Storm. "I'm fortunate that, in my role, I have the opportunity to share incredible experiences with clients, colleagues, friends, and family. I don't think there's a better



**Nate Silverman connects the Storm with corporate partners.** COURTESY NATE SILVERMAN

position in game-day promotions, and moved to Manhattan. The role involved throwing T-shirts into the crowd and escorting the anthem singer onto the court—and he loved it. He was interested in all aspects of sport management—everything, that is, except sales.

But, back in Seattle, that's what the longtime Sonics and fledgling Storm needed. So, Silverman says, "I figured it was the best way to get my foot in the door."

Today, "I work on finding brands that align with our values, brands that want to lift and elevate our players, women's sports, and the Seattle region in general," Silverman says.

At the end of 2025, "we finished out the year up in every way: ticket revenue,

sponsorship revenue, merch revenue, attendance, TV viewership," Silverman says. "I think we're in a pivotal moment in women's professional sports, especially in the WNBA, particularly the Storm. The numbers are just off the charts."

He doesn't travel to away games as much anymore. Silverman and his wife, Alona, a nurse practitioner, have two children: six-year-old daughter Tayla and son Weston, who turns four in May.

He still does attend home games. "It's always exciting on game day," Silverman says. "Even after more than 20 years in the business, the energy inside of a packed arena still gives me goosebumps." 🦊

**Silverman's children with Storm mascot Doppler.** COURTESY NATE SILVERMAN



**ELLA SPILLANE PAIRS BACKPACKING TRIPS WITH YOGA** and mindfulness exercises in the wilderness through her new business, founded with a passion for global connections, a sense of adventure, collaboration, and an appreciation for cultural and natural wonders.

Spillane ('21 Intl. Busi., Mktg.) began this journey as a portfolio development principal at Boeing Ventures, which gave her exposure to talented entrepreneurs and leaders. During this time, she developed a vision for her own business, Trailbound Yoga.

With an upcoming trip planned in the Italian Dolomites, her work reflects how global business training can shape both professional pathways and entrepreneurial goals.

"I was drawn to international business because I knew that whatever I ended up doing for my career, I wanted it to be globally focused," Spillane says.

Spillane grew up traveling internationally with her family, so she arrived at Washington State University and the Carson College of Business with a strong interest in building a globally focused career. Majoring in international business and marketing, she began developing the tools she now uses to work across cultures and global markets.

She says some of the most valuable courses of her academic career focused on intercultural management and global business strategy and helped her understand how communication styles, expectations, and decision-making vary across demographics and regions.

Her experience studying abroad in Barcelona cemented these lessons. She describes her time in Spain as one of the most impactful parts of her WSU education because it exposed her to diverse viewpoints in and out of the classroom.

"It opens up your perspective to how peoples' culture, their history, and the place they live in can shape their worldview and how exposure to other perspectives can shape our own," she says. "It really taught me humility."

Today, Spillane works with Boeing Ventures, where she collaborates with founders and teams across the aerospace industry. She supports venture initiatives around the world and helps coordinate the team's presence at major international events, including aerospace exhibitions in Dubai and Paris. Working with companies from different countries has reinforced the value of the intercultural skills she developed in business school.

"Having a business education with a global focus has set me up for success and taught me to be as respectful and thoughtful as I can when engaging



**Ella Spillane** COURTESY ELLA SPILLANE/JESSICA CHRISTIE PHOTOGRAPHY

# Yoga in the wilds

by Scott Jackson

across global communities,” Spillane says.

Her work at Boeing also informed another path. Connecting her professional and educational experience with personal interests, Spillane founded Trailbound Yoga. It grew out of Spillane’s connection to the outdoors and her long-standing interest in yoga. Raised in a family that spent significant time in wilderness environments, she saw an opportunity to combine those influences into a community-driven experience.

“I really wanted to bridge the two most healing aspects of my life—the wilderness and yoga—but I couldn’t find a community that was doing that,” she says. “I thought, what could be better than just creating the community I want to be part of and sharing it with others?”

Spillane says her time at Carson College, particularly an entrepreneurship course and participation in the Business Plan Competition, where her team earned second place, helped her build the skills she would later apply as a business owner. She still relies on those skills when developing new trips and managing operations.

“I think my training at Carson is a big part of why I felt I had at least the tools to give entrepreneurship a shot,” she says. “Those processes and tools created a really great framework I used to start Trailbound Yoga.”

As a founder, Spillane manages multiple aspects of the venture herself, from logistics and marketing to early legal documentation.

This year marks a milestone for Trailbound Yoga as Spillane prepares to lead her first international group to the Italian Dolomites. She says the trip was built with her commitment to responsible global partnerships in mind—she will collaborate with local mountaineering guides to ensure safety while supporting existing businesses within the region.

She hopes to expand the program, including a future goal of guiding a group along routes in Nepal and introducing other new destinations. 🐾

“

*I think my training at Carson is a big part of why I felt I had the tools to give entrepreneurship a shot.*

”

**Spillane leveraged her love of yoga and the outdoors into a new business. Here she leads a group on Catalina Island in California.** PHOTOS

JESSICA CHRISTIE



# At the helm of the *Times*

by Addy Hatch



**RYAN BLETHEN'S FAVORITE CLASSES** at Washington State University covered twentieth-century American history. Now, Blethen produces the “first rough draft of history” as the recently named publisher of the *Seattle Times*.

**Blethen** ('96 Gen. Stu.) is the fifth generation of his family to lead the newspaper since the family bought it in 1896. He's doing things a little differently, though.

For one, he came from the news side of the operation. His father Frank Blethen, who published the *Seattle Times* for 40 years, had come up through the business side as many publishers do. Blethen is also the first *Seattle Times* publisher who's a Cougar.

He chose WSU for the same reasons lots of other students do: the draw of a

quintessential college town that's “far enough away that I wasn't going to get the parental drop-in,” he says, laughing. He adds, “I thought it would be a good place for me to get away and grow as a person.”

After college, he interned at the family-owned *Yakima Herald-Republic*. Then, wanting to get experience outside of the Blethen organization, he worked at the *Spokesman-Review* as weekend night cops reporter covering crime and mayhem. “I wanted a different experience, and I loved it,” he says.

Back in Seattle, he landed in a new role, early-morning editor, putting together a morning email newsletter with a small team starting at 5:30 a.m. It was an experiment in new ways to deliver the news and it was a success.

The *Seattle Times* has long been recognized for its willingness to experiment, a mindset that Blethen credits to his father. More than a decade ago, for example, the newspaper launched the “Education Lab,” a grant-sponsored project to spotlight new approaches to challenges in education. Both the financial underwriting and structured outreach to communities and educators were innovative at the time.

“Coming off the heels of the 2008 financial crash, it was a real tough time for newspapers and a lot of other industries too,” Blethen says. His father got the idea to pursue sponsorship for public-service journalism, and Blethen says his reaction was, “You're crazy. Who's going to give us money beyond a subscription?”


But it worked, and the *Seattle Times* has now replicated that model with five other labs for coverage of transportation, climate, mental health, homelessness, and investigative journalism.

Ryan Blethen says there was some anxiety in the newsroom about this new financial model, but the newspaper made it clear to funders that there was no connection between sponsorship and coverage. “We've had to return people's money before because they've disagreed,” he says. “We're not afraid to do that if it's the right thing to do.”

The *Seattle Times* has more than 105,000 digital subscribers and about 100,000 print subscribers, a level of success in this news age that Blethen attributes to the company's targeted approach.

“It's not rocket science. You need to have a decent sized newsroom that's going to produce news people want to buy,” he says. At the *Seattle Times*, that means 170 newsroom employees who focus on popular topics like politics, investigative reporting, sports, and food. “We can't write enough about restaurants and food, as evidenced by our three food writers,” Blethen said. The *Times* also reopened its Washington, D.C., bureau to bolster political coverage.

The *Seattle Times* tries to cover news that drives subscriptions, not just page views. To do that, there has to be internal cohesion between the newsroom and product and marketing departments, an alignment that used to be frowned on.

“News has been really open to the feedback and learning from the product marketing folks about what works and what hasn't,” Blethen says. He and Executive Editor Michele Matassa Flores “are really aligned on our vision for the newsroom and the paper. I think a huge part of our success is everybody pointing in the same direction.” 

More on the “labs” approach to journalism used by the *Seattle Times* via the Solutions Journalism Network

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/SJN](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/SJN)



# Affinity for bears

by Becky Kramer



COURTESY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**GRANT V. HILDERBRAND** saw his first bear in the wild during graduate research at Washington State University. He was part of a team that helicopter-darted a female brown bear in Denali National Park. The adrenaline rush of the experience put the Midwest native on a career path to working as a wildlife research biologist in Alaska.

Hilderbrand ('95 MS, '98 PhD) is the lead editor of *Brown Bears in Alaska's National Parks: Conservation of a Wilderness Icon*, published in 2025 by University of Alaska Press.

He's also the superintendent of the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in southwest Alaska—home to a sizable brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) population.

#### WHAT DREW YOU TO BEARS?

I always had a certain affinity for bears, but I grew up in places where they just didn't occur. Every summer, my family would drive west from South Dakota to visit national parks. I was always hoping to see one. I never did.

When I applied to grad school, I was looking for a great mentor, and it just happened that Charlie Robbins studied bears. He was also doing a fair bit of work on elk, moose, caribou, and deer. Getting the offer from Charlie, a research professor and director of the WSU Bear Center, changed my life.

As a graduate student, I traveled to Alaska for field work. I was only there a short time before I was like, "I'm going to figure out a way to move here and work here." It took a little while, but I got it done. I spent 12 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as a research biologist before joining the Park Service in 2010.

#### WHAT LED TO THE PUBLICATION OF *BROWN BEARS IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS*?

About 10 years ago, my team had four research projects going in different parts of Alaska. It was quite a unique opportunity to study bears in various ecosystems. We published several dozen articles in scientific journals, but we also wanted to share what we learned with the broader public.

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Drew Bledsoe,  
2026 Honorary Chair  
WSU Cougar & NFL Legend

## PROFILES

Jeff Rasic ('00 MA, '08 PhD Anthro.), science coordinator for the National Park Service for the Alaska region, was working with me on summary documents. He said, "I think you've got the skeleton of a book."

#### HOW MANY BEARS HAVE YOU WORKED WITH?

I don't have it down to the bear, but I've been part of teams that have handled about 1,400 brown bears, and I've probably seen 10,000 black bears and brown bears—some of them repeats. I get the biggest kick and the biggest rush every single time. Even living here in Anchorage, every now and then I'll see one crossing the road. It's just precious. Every single time.

#### WHAT TYPE OF GRADUATE RESEARCH DID YOU DO AT WSU?

We were interested in salmon's importance to bears' diets. We used something called stable isotopes—new technology at the time—to trace and quantify the contribution of salmon for bears' physiology. We did this through hair and blood samples. Quantifying bears' reliance on salmon helps with overall fisheries management.

#### THE BOOK DISCUSSES TWO WAYS PEOPLE MIGHT ENCOUNTER AGGRESSIVE BEARS—THROUGH A FOOD SOURCE OR PROTECTING CUBS.

The currency that bears live by is calories. That's part of why they're so food-motivated and why they can be defensive with food resources. They live and die by the fat they're able to store up for the winter. When you've got a mom with little cubs, it's even more of a challenge. Her food options are more limited because the threats on the landscape are exacerbated with cubs.

Female bears don't have their first litter until they are seven or eight years old. The cubs will stay with them for three to five years. The mortality of cubs is quite high in the first year or two—there are lots of risks out there. There's a heavy, heavy

investment in those cubs, and that is why we think female bears defend their young so fiercely.

#### HOW IS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT TO MANAGING BEARS AND OTHER WILDLIFE?

About 70 percent of National Park Service lands in Alaska are open to subsistence hunting. We have to understand the effect of human harvest on bear populations,

Read the full Q&A with Hilderbrand about bears and Alaska:

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Alaska-bears](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Alaska-bears)



the challenges of accruing enough fat to survive winter hibernation and raising their young in harsh environments.

Alaska is one of the few places that still has healthy brown bear populations and large, intact natural ecosystems. But the bears aren't immune from the pressures of climate change, development, or even increased tourism.

The long co-existence of bears and people in Alaska is also part of the narrative. Archeological evidence from thousands of years ago documents the use of bears for

### BROWN BEARS IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS: CONSERVATION OF A WILDERNESS ICON

Grant V. Hilderbrand '95 MS, '98 PhD  
University of Alaska Press: 2025

Alaska's 30,000 brown bears are a symbol of the state's wild places, a draw for tourists, and a source of reverence in Alaska Native cultures.

This collection of writings—lavishly illustrated with National Park Service photos—explores the natural history, ecology, and behavior of brown bears in Alaska's national parks. More than

# BROWN BEARS IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS

## CONSERVATION OF A WILDERNESS ICON



Grant Hilderbrand, Kyle Joly,  
David Gustine & Nina Chambers

and also the harvest of species they prey on—whether that's moose, caribou, or especially salmon. Those resources are critical to the food economies of rural Alaska communities, and they are equally important to Alaska Natives' culture and language.

As land managers, we benefit tremendously from knowing about the long history of human-wildlife interactions that folks can share with us. These are people living in rural areas, and they're seeing things we certainly don't see. 🐻

30 scientists contributed to the book with the goal of distilling decades of research into engaging reading for the public.

"By sharing our knowledge, we hope others will join us in becoming stewards of the species," says lead editor Grant V. Hilderbrand, who has worked as a wildlife biologist in Alaska for 30 years.

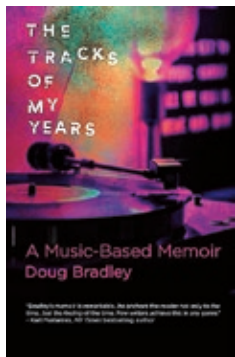
The book highlights how brown bears are adapted to living across a wide variety of landscapes in Alaska's national parks. The hefty specimens featured in Katmai National Park and Preserve's "Fat Bear Week," for instance, far outweigh the 200-pound brown bears in the Gates of the Arctic National Park. Despite the differences in the populations, the bears share

food, fur, and tools. Indigenous oral histories highlight stories of brown bears' strength, cunning, and close relationships with people.

Close interactions between people and bears continue today, the book notes. Compared to other national parks, many of Alaska's national park designations are relatively new. Subsistence hunting remains a permitted activity on the majority of National Park Service lands in the state.

"Alaska is a bit different than other places in that we very much view humans as being part of a natural functioning ecosystem," Hilderbrand says.

—Becky Kramer



**THE TRACKS OF MY YEARS: A MUSIC-BASED MEMOIR**

**Doug Bradley '74 MA English**  
**Legacy Book Press: 2025**

Doug Bradley tells the story of his formative years through a series of nearly 50 songs. The soundtrack of his early life spans post-World War II Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, rural West Virginia in the mid to late 1960s, and Vietnam at the dawn of the 1970s. Divided into four parts, the narrative largely centers around growing up, girlfriends, and the confusing and complicated relationship Bradley develops with his high school English teacher. The sad, conflicted man in his early twenties befriends “Dube” during one the loneliest low points in the teen’s life—and inspires, confounds, and infuriates him.

Throughout high school, college, and war, Bradley seeks refuge in the songs of his generation—Peter, Paul and Mary’s version of “Leaving on a Jet Plane” and Jefferson Airplane’s “Somebody to Love,” both from 1967; “We Gotta Get Outta This Place” by The Animals in 1965; and, of course, “Tracks of My Tears,” from which the book title is taken, by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, also in 1965. Alert readers, particularly those who came of age when he did, will recognize the song lyrics Bradley craftily tucks into his prose.

Raised by a belt-wielding World War II veteran and “diminutive, brown-haired Albanian-Italian,” Bradley grows up against a backdrop of doo-wop, rock ‘n’ roll, racial tension, and growing uneasiness about conflict abroad. He looks up to his popular older brother, a smooth dancer who listens to 45 RPMs with him but doesn’t write to him while he’s serving overseas. In between,

Bradley pursues young women at a small, private, Evangelical Lutheran college, where he hosts a short-lived radio show, writes a weekly music column for the student newspaper, joins a fraternity, and serves as campus social chair.

It’s in this role that he does what the back of the book boasts: “Doug Bradley played basketball with Smokey and the Miracles, shared a joint with Grace Slick, and held Dionne Warwick’s hand when he told her Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated.”

His memoir—part Baby Boomer playlist, part personal history—discusses the music that resonated with him as he bumbled toward adulthood, especially in the difficult times. Vietnam looms large. Bradley served one year in Long Binh as an information specialist in an air-conditioned office. He later spent three decades in communications and media and public relations in higher education.

Now retired and a grandfather who splits his time between Wisconsin and Arizona, Bradley offers an intimate look at the inner life of a teen and twentysomething in Middle America in the middle of the last century. His music memoir provides a poignant and compelling look back at his life through the songs that shaped his coming-of-age and continue to connect him to this youth and remind him of particular places and moments. It’s sure to make others of his era wax nostalgic for years gone by.

— Adriana Janovich

*A chat with Bradley about his music memoir:* [magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Bradley-tracks](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Bradley-tracks)

**THE MIND STRENGTH PLAYBOOK: MASTERING YOUR MIND. MASTERING THE GAME**

**Luke Falk '17 Soc. Sci.**  
**Maison Vero: 2025**

One of the best ways to program failure is to tell a player not to do something. Don’t miss the shot. Don’t strike out. Don’t give up the goal. The thing you say not to do is the very thing the person immediately pictures doing.

The brain turns thoughts into mental pictures. Instead of helping

people imagine poor outcomes—missing the shot, striking out, giving up the goal—spiking anxiety and dropping confidence along the way, former Washington State University quarterback Luke Falk recommends flipping the script. Turn a negative statement into “a clear, confident ‘do,’” he encourages. Focus on the skills, processes, and other things you can control to help athletes—yourself, maybe—with “taking ownership of your response.”

That idea—“State What You Want”—is one of the core mind strength skills that Falk dubs “The Falk Five.” He describes these as tools “that every athlete, coach, and high-performer should have at their disposal.” The same could be said for all seven chapters’ worth of tips and strategies in *The Mind Strength Playbook*. Each chapter of the well-organized, easy-to-follow guide offers practical ways “to build clarity, resilience, and focus.” Also included is “walk-on wisdom,” coaching tips, parent tips, and quick reviews. Online, there’s a “virtual locker room” of additional digital materials and resources.

At the outset, Falk specifies his book is for athletes, coaches, and parents of athletes. But its advice can be applied to regular life. Non-athletes could benefit from this playbook, too. Falk defines mind strength training as “mastering your inner world so that you can handle anything the external world throws at you.” Who doesn’t need that?

He opens up about his own struggles, insecurities, and mistakes as well as what he’s learned from them. “It’s clear to me now—I wasn’t just meant to play football. I was meant to teach it,” he writes. “But more than that, I was meant to coach the mindset behind it—the discipline, the belief, and the habits



that carry over into everything else.”

He writes about dealing with performance anxiety, making comparisons, and silencing your own inner critic. He recommends visualization and affirmation, along with other techniques and anecdotes. *The Mind Strength Playbook* is peppered with personal stories from Falk’s record-breaking Cougar football days, beginning as a walk-on, as well as his short stint in the NFL. He discusses his triumphs as well as shortcomings—times when he played the victim, blamed others, and made excuses.

Plenty of props go to late Cougar football Coach Mike Leach. Falk shares Leachisms that most resonated with him, such as “Respect Everyone, Fear No One” and “You are either coaching it or allowing it to happen.”

Chapters feature quotes from other famous figures, too, including Falk’s idol and NFL star Tom Brady. *Ted Lasso* fans will recognize this advice: “Be a goldfish.”

What matters most on and off the playing field, Falk writes, is your response. “Because once you take ownership, everything else becomes possible.”

— Adriana Janovich

*Read a Q&A and listen to a podcast episode with Falk:* [magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Falk](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Falk)

**LISTENING TO THE BIRDS: A NEZPERCE WOMAN’S JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND HEALING**

**Roberta Tawlikitsanmay’ Paul**  
**WSU Press: 2025**

On Feb. 20, 1993, Roberta Tawlikitsanmay’ (Woman of the Forest) Paul attended a Spokane conference on suicide prevention for Native Americans. At the time, Paul was director of Washington State University’s Native American health sciences.

During a showing of *In the White Man’s Image*, a documentary on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, she learned details of Native American children’s introduction to boarding school life—and the erasure of their identities.

“It made me sick to my stomach,” Paul said in a previous interview. “I had to run out of the conference.”



Paul felt uneasy at various times in her life surrounding specific dates, but didn't know why. Later, as she learned about her family's experiences in Indian boarding schools, she discovered that her grandfather, Jesse Paul, arrived at Carlisle at age 10 on February 20, 1880. He was stripped of his buckskins, and his hair was cut short; he was then given a bath with lye soap and issued a stiff wool uniform to wear. He was also given his Christian name, no longer known as Ka-Khun-Nee, or Black Raven.

Paul recounts the history of the Paul family, the emotional and spiritual scars passed down to each generation, and her road to healing in her memoir.

An enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe, Paul was born and raised on the reservation in north-central Idaho. She endured years of severe emotional pain, but through repeated encounters with birds, she sensed her ancestors and began listening to their messages.

With help from her relatives, she uncovered five generations of her family's people, including a Nez Perce chief who met explorers Lewis and Clark in Idaho and a warrior who died fighting alongside Chief Joseph in the Nez Perce War of 1877.

Three generations of Pauls attended government boarding schools, including Carlisle. Founded in 1879, it was the first off-reservation Indian boarding school in the continental United States and a model for other federal Indian boarding schools to follow.

US Army Captain Richard Henry Pratt—who infamously said of Indigenous assimilation “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” in 1892—started Carlisle, served as its first and longtime superintendent, and put in place the system of cultural

genocide that became the prevailing policy with regard to Native American peoples, in the name of “civilizing” and “Americanizing” them.

For 40 years, until the school shut down in 1918, about 7,800 Native American children were taken far from their families, homes, and communities to Carlisle. An estimated 180-200 of them never returned home, buried in Carlisle's cemetery after dying from disease, abuse, overwork, lack of food, and no family contact.

Paul now gives presentations for survivors of intergenerational trauma, where she teaches that sharing stories is a Native way to heal wounds. But, she says, “If you don't know the story, you can't heal.” Unearthing her family's past became her own first step toward healing wounds of racism, relocation, and assimilation. In addition, she teaches workshops on healing historical trauma using a 10-step model she developed—one she describes in *Listening to the Birds*.

— Nella Letizia

### Briefly Noted

#### TOO GOOD TO BE THROUGH

**Bud Withers '70 Comm. 2025**

Retired *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and *Seattle Times* sportswriter Bud Withers explores 125 years of what he calls the country's most distinctive yet underrated college football rivalry: the Apple Cup. Withers covered 31 Apple Cups, retiring in 2015 after a 45-year newspaper career. Here, he gives a game-by-game history of the match-up he describes as “dominated by Washington yet invariably made interesting by Washington State.”

#### WINDS OF GLORY

**Gary Bye '71 Ag., '74 Voc. Tech. Ed. Granite Point Publishing: 2024**

*Winds of Glory* picks up where award-winning *Glory Grove* leaves off. But the sequel to Gary Bye's debut novel easily stands on its own two feet and, like his first book, will resonate with

readers who love small towns, rural America, and high school sports—in this case, basketball.

#### FORGET THE FAIRY TALE AND FIND YOUR HAPPINESS

**Deb Miller She Writes Press: 2025**

Write your own happily-ever-after with guidance from this book—part self-help, part memoir—from Deb Miller, an adjunct professor of marketing in the MBA program at Carson College of Business. Miller grew up believing in finding a prince and living the dream. Here, she discusses what happens when the fairytale falls apart and offers advice for transforming setbacks such as divorce into stepping stones for rewriting narratives.

#### NASCENT

**Bitty Balducci 2025**

Juniper Griffith is coming of age in 2113 when she embarks on an epic journey to learn the truth about Dream Corp., which monopolizes modern civilization. Inspiration for this young adult dystopian science fiction adventure novel, the first in *The Clockwise Chronicles* trilogy, came to Bitty Balducci, an assistant professor of marketing at Carson College of Business, in—what else?—a dream.

#### SECRET SPOKANE: A GUIDE TO THE WEIRD, WONDERFUL, AND OBSCURE

**Adriana Janovich Reedy Press: 2026**

This lively guide takes readers on a tour of more than 80 offbeat places that make Spokane the cultural capital of the Inland Northwest. From a charming, tucked-away hobbit house and spooky cemetery staircase to a metal goat designed to “eat” garbage, these spots will captivate visitors and new and longtime residents alike. Adriana Janovich worked at Spokane's *Spokesman-Review* newspaper for nearly six years before joining *Washington State Magazine* as associate editor in 2019.

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## '70

**SHERRY NEBEL** ('76 Comm.) received a 2026 Edward R. Murrow College of Communication Hall of Achievement Award. Nebel started her career at KIRO-TV and later joined Boeing, holding leadership roles in public and media relations

**MARK HOWELL** ('78 English, Ed.) retired from Skanska USA after 38 years. He joined the firm in 1988 and served as a senior vice president since 2014.

## '80

**CHALAPATHY NETI** ('83 MS Elec. Eng.) is assistant vice president of enterprise artificial intelligence at Fordham University and will develop a university-wide strategy for AI use.

**SIEG SNAPP** ('83 Agro., Soil Sci.) is associate dean for research for WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences.

**JEFFREY FRANKS** ('84 Poli. Sci., '85 Econ.) received the WSUAA Alumni Achievement Award. He spent three decades at the International Monetary Fund, eventually serving as director of the IMF's European Office and senior resident representative to the European Union.

**GREG WITTER** ('84 Comm.) received a 2026 Edward R. Murrow College of Communication Hall of Achievement Award. He served as a press secretary and legislative aide for US House and Senate members, later joining Alaska Airlines where he managed corporate and strategic communications. He is also co-founder and executive editor of Cougfan.com.

**GERRI MARTIN-FLICKINGER** ('85 Comp. Sci.) is chair of the board of directors for Renaissance, a global leader in pre-K-12 education technology.

**TERRY** ('85 Ani. Sci.) and **SYLVIA WOLTERS** ('85 Ani. Sci.) received the Minnesota Pork Board's Family of the Year award. Terry is vice president of customer and industry relations, and Sylvia is public relations director at Pipestone.

**DANIEL PUCKETT** ('86 Accounting) was appointed by Procept BioRobotics to its board of directors and audit committee. Puckett was most recently the chief financial officer of Shockwave Medical.

**JIM SNYDER** ('87 Comm.) has retired after 38 years in broadcast journalism. Snyder has been a morning show anchor for News 3 Las Vegas since 1991.

**ERIC PATRICK** ('89 Comm.) is president of Northwest Cherries and the Washington State Fruit Commission.

## '90

**CRYSTAL DONNER** ('90 Civ. Eng.) received the ACEC-WA Engineer of the Year Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies. Donner works for engineering firm Ardurra.

**MICHAEL REISIG** ('92 MA Crim. Jus., '96 PhD Poli. Sci.) received the 2025 Alumni Achievement Award from the WSU Alumni Association. Reisig is a professor of criminology and criminal justice at Arizona State University.

**GEORGE BUSCH** ('95 Agribusi., '98 MBA) is senior vice president at Banner Bank and manager at Spokane Commercial Banking Center.

**MARK SHUSTER** ('95 Accounting) is director of industry connected programs at WSU Tri-Cities. In his new role, Shuster oversees industry-focused programs Career Center and Cougar Tracks.

**JEFF HANEY** ('97 Biol.) is senior vice provost for health sciences at WSU. A medical doctor, he was vice dean for clinical affairs and the chair for the Department of Medical Education and Clinical Sciences in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

**SAM** ('97 Accounting) and **ANDY LARGENT** (x'06), owners of the Seattle-based, golf-centric Flatstick Pub, are opening another location in Woodinville. The brothers opened their first location in Kirkland in 2014 and expanded across the Puget Sound region and to Bellingham and Spokane.

## SPOTLIGHT



More than 40 years. Some 60,000 DVDs. And hundreds of CDs, VHS tapes, video games, vinyl records, and more.

They all add up to Video Horizons in downtown Astoria, Oregon, established by **NEAL CUMMINGS** ('79 Arch.). Cummings owned and operated what he calls the Pacific Northwest's largest for-profit video rental store for 41 years. Last December, he announced the sale of the store and its collection, organized by category: classics, suspense, Disney, *The Goonies*.

The famed 1985 adventure flick, filmed in and around Astoria, follows kids as they search for pirate loot. The historical home where they find old treasure map sits uphill from the town's last video rental store—and one of

the last around, well, anywhere.

Video stores began opening in the late 1970s and early 1980s. After college, Cummings worked in video rentals at 7-Eleven and National Video, an early chain, before borrowing money from his dad to go into business for himself in 1984—a year before Blockbuster. His initial inventory: 600 VHS tapes.

Among the titles are movies filmed in Astoria, such as *Kindergarten Cop*, *The Ring Two*, *Free Willy*, *Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home*, and *Short Circuit*. In recent years, Cummings had been growing his inventory by buying remaining stock from video rental stores that were closing. Customers also donated DVDs and VHS tapes. "My goal is to save physical media of all forms," Cummings told the *Oregonian* in June 2024.

The appeal of physical media still runs across generations—from nostalgic Gen Xers reminiscing about their youth to Gen Zers interested in the novelty.

Cummings is no new release. "I've been thinking about (selling the store and retiring) for probably a decade," he told the *Astorian* in December 2025. "It just took a long time to find the right person—someone who would keep it local—because I was concerned about my customers and keeping it in Astoria."

December 31, 2025, was his last day at Video Horizons, which reopened under new ownership—including a former employee—January 6, 2026.

**SHAWN MCWASHINGTON** ('97 Comm., '02 MA Higher Ed. Admin.) is director of sales for Delta Dental of Washington. McWashington was a WSU wide receiver at the 1998 Rose Bowl.

## '00

**ANDREW MILLER III** ('06 Psych.) was appointed chief financial officer for commercial operations across North and Latin America at SharkNinja.

**MICHAEL BUMPUS** (x'07), former WSU wide receiver, was inducted into the Pacific Northwest Football Hall of Fame. He hosts on the Seahawks Radio Network and a weekday sports radio show on KIRO-FM.

**BRAD GUTHRIE** ('09 Poli. Sci.) is the west coast area vice president for Medicreations, a leading innovator in aesthetic medical devices.

**JULIANNA SIMON** ('09 Bioeng.) is director of the Penn State University graduate program in acoustics. She is a Penn State faculty member in acoustics and biomedical engineering since 2017.

## '10

**ASTI GALLINA** ('12 Poli. Sci.) has rejoined the Spokane office of Foster Garvey as counsel in litigation practice.

**ERIC ROBERTSON** ('14 Finance), an attorney with Miller Nash LLP, has been named president-elect of the Nonprofit Organizations Law Section of the Oregon State Bar.

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SPOTLIGHT



As an 8-year-old, **KURT BEECHER DAMMEIER** concocted a butter-and-sugar reduction, transforming his family's cinnamon toast. As a teen, he pondered the operations of places like the Farman Brothers Pickle Company that he noticed along State Route 410 on his way to ski at Crystal Mountain.

"The food aspect of my business started with my mother and leveling up cinnamon toast," he says. "But seeing privately owned food businesses with a famous product inspired me."

Dammeier ('82 Econ.) is the owner and head chef of Sugar Mountain, comprising luxury food brands and restaurants. The company produces award-winning Beecher's Handmade Cheese and manages The Butcher's

Table, a Seattle steakhouse featuring his premium American wagyu beef brand, Mishima Reserve.

"When we started Beecher's Handmade Cheese, we made 27,000 pounds of cheese and had 50 cows," he says. "Now we make 8 million pounds of cheese and, with the addition of our American wagyu beef brands, have 180,000 cows."

When he bought Mishima Ranch in 2017 he "recognized people loved wagyu, and it would be a good growth market," says Dammeier, who changed the name to Mishima Reserve. The cattle are fed only high-quality, vegetarian feeds and are never given hormones or growth supplements. He uses artificial intelligence tools for managing animal production across categories including genetics, feed, weather, and location.

Sugar Mountain's biggest growth engine is packaged foods such as frozen mac and cheese.

The common thread: commitment to pure ingredients and practices and a philosophy of trust.

"Your brand has to permeate through your company. There can't be any disconnect. When I started Beecher's, I wanted to stand for something, and so all of our brands are built on a foundation of real ingredients," Dammeier says.

Dammeier discussed his brand and guiding principles during the Carson College of Business Power Breakfast in Seattle last September, noting employee empowerment and transparency are other hallmarks of his leadership.

At Washington State University, he discovered Cougar Gold cheese, which later inspired the development of Beecher's Handmade Cheese, launched at Pike Place Market in 2003. Flagship Reserve, Beecher's clothbound and open-air aged cheese, has received the highest honors given to American artisan cheese.

Dammeier also influences eating habits through his books, *Pure Flavor* and *Pure Food*, as well as The Beecher's Foundation, an educational program for fourth graders on healthy food choices and production. In addition to promoting clean ingredients, Sugar Mountain significantly invests in reducing plastics and carbon emissions.

"I spend time in appreciation of my team and cook lunch for them every week," he says, noting the company employs a 360-degree review process—a method of gathering anonymous feedback from colleagues at all levels. "I really value this personal feedback. As a result, I've become a better CEO when conveying my values."

**DWIGHT TARDY** ('15 Soc. Sci.) is head football coach at Moscow High School in Moscow, Idaho. As WSU running back, he amassed 788 all-purpose yards during his senior season.

**BRADLEY WARREN** ('18 Comm.) traveled to Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, to cover Super Bowl LX. Warren is a regional reporter for KHQ-TV in Spokane.

**JAMIE CLARK** ('19 DVM) received the American Association of Equine Practitioners' inaugural Olive Kendrick Britt Rising Star Award. She is a Montana-based equine ambulatory relief veterinarian.

**NICK ZIEGELMANN** ('19 Econ.) is an assistant coach for women's volleyball at McNeese State University.

'20

**ALYSSA FISK** ('21 Kinesio.) is a doctor at Chewelah Family Chiropractic in Chewelah.

**ALEX FRANKE** ('21 MD) is one of two fellows matched to the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine's first fellowship program. Franke, who was in the inaugural class of Cougar Docs, will join Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett for the critical care medicine fellowship.

**ALBERTO PRECIADO** ('23 MBA) is finance director for the city of Davis, California.

**RYAN SCOTT** ('23 MS Ag.) is president of Monterey Pacific, a leader in vineyard management across coastal California.



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## SPOTLIGHT

**MARGARET VIEBROCK**'s Extension coursework has changed since she started working for Washington State University in 1970, but the mission of strengthening her community never has.

Believed to be WSU's longest-serving employee, Viebrock, director of Chelan-Douglas County Extension, has helped educate fellow Washingtonians for over 55 years. She received university, national, and state awards for her length of service and impactful outreach this past fall.

"I like to connect with people," Viebrock says. "I began with teaching people how to cook with microwaves safely. Then, as now, we use university research and information to guide our educational work. I'm most proud of the many people we've helped."

Prior to receiving WSU's length-of-service award, the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences bestowed their Hall of Fame Award to Viebrock.

"These awards represent rare and distinguished honors that celebrate sustained, transformational impact across our state and nation," says WSU Extension Director Vicki McCracken.

"For over 55 years, Margaret's leadership has elevated the Extension profession and delivered measurable benefits to families and communities, setting a national bar for innovation, service, and excellence."

Viebrock has led educational outreach from food safety to parenting strategies and youth development programs with 4-H.

"That 'aha' moment from people of 'oh, that's why food preservation has to be done this way,' or 'that's how you communicate with youth and set limits' — you really see people digesting what you've taught," Viebrock says.

Other notable achievements in Viebrock's career include leading the state's SNAP-Ed program and the Women in Agriculture program in the early 1990s.

"When I started working for WSU Extension, not many women were farm owners," she says. "Now, nearly half of the farms in Washington list a woman as the main operator. I'm proud we could help support women-owned farms in my time with WSU."

Viebrock believes she was awarded honors in part for her commitment to understanding challenges facing local residents.

"Find out what's important to your community and what it needs, then figure out the way you're going to approach it," she says. "To attract an audience, be creative, and make the subject exciting."

For Viebrock, the key to success, then as now, is a focus on the mission.

"I reassess every three years to see what's working in our programming or if we can do something differently," she says. "You need to stay innovative to be impactful."



COURTESY WSU NEWS

## 1940s

**Alma Mae (Kirpes) Druffel** ('47 Pharm.), 100, June 18, 2025, Lacey.

**Ted L. Cowan** ('49 Gen. Stu.), 97, January 17, 2026, Naches.

**France L. Mathison** ('49 Socio.), 95, August 31, 2023, Wenatchee.

## 1950s

**Mary Eliason Lange Anderson** ('50 Home Econ.), 97, November 10, 2025, Vancouver.

**John Dewey Hartup Jr.** ('50 Civ. Eng.), 97, November 20, 2025, Portland, Oregon.

**Irene (Gray) Knutsen** ('50 Spanish), 98, May 31, 2025, Spokane.

**Anna Catherine "Kibby" Allen** ('51 Theatre Arts, Speech, Kappa Alpha Theta), 98, February 20, 2026, Sublimity, Oregon.

**Hugh D. Van Liew** ('51 Zool.), 95, December 24, 2025, Seattle.

**William Hoyt Hine** ('52 Civ. Eng.), 98, January 24, 2026, Olympia.

**Si L. Matthies** ('52 Ag.), 95, November 26, 2025, Kalispell, Montana.

**John A. Morey** ('52 Mech. Eng.), 96, February 8, 2026, Bellingham.

**Dale Edward Snyder** ('52 Ag.), 98, October 25, 2025, Issaquah.

**Janey (Laney) Wiggins** ('52 Home Econ., Alpha Phi), 95 December 21, 2025, Joseph, Oregon.

**Ben Nelson** ('54 Elec. Eng.), 94, January 21, 2026, Redmond.

**Charles Lou Butkovich** ('55 Pharm.), 93, February 2, 2026, East Wenatchee.

**Robert ("Bob") Morcom Fearn** ('55 MA Econ.), 97, February 25, 2026, Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Alvin R. Greening** ('55 Chem. Eng.), 91, August 29, 2025, Spokane.

**Lester R. Greenwood** ('55 Accounting), 92, December 12, 2025, Shoreline.

**Mary Jo Kuechmann** ('55 Gen. Stu.), 91, December 1, 2025, Wenatchee.

**Elinor F. McCloskey** ('55 Elem. Ed., Delta Gamma), 92, December 12, 2025, Pullman.

**Robert Dale Alessandro** ('57 Busi.), 91, December 3, 2025, Gig Harbor.

**Stephen Eben Dibble** ('57 Pharm.), 87, December 3, 2022, Mission Viejo, California.

**B. Eugene Omev** ('58 Soc. Stu., '68 MA Ed.), 89, January 14, 2026, Bellingham.

**Earl A. Wineck** ('58 Psych.), 97, August 20, 2024, Anchorage, Alaska.

**Jean F. Galbraith** ('59 Home Econ., '77 Med Counseling, Kappa Alpha Theta), 88, March 7, 2026, Yakima.

**Donald Wayne Moe** ('59 Soc. Stu.), 90, January 17, 2026, Richmond, Virginia.

**Bill H. Steiger** ('59 Forest & Range Mgmt.), 90, December 1, 2025, Redmond.

## 1960s

**John Kendall Evans** ('60 Mech. Eng.), 86, June 2, 2024, Walnut Creek, California.

**Orlin King Jeffreys** ('60 Chem. Eng.), 88, January 31, 2026, Pomeroy.

**Roger Lee Briscoe** ('61 Music), 85, October 31, 2025, Bernardsville, New Jersey.

**Manley J. Niemczek** ('62 Ag.), 91, June 2, 2025, Centralia.

**Janice Diane Schwab** ('63 Math.), 85, January 21, 2026, Kennewick.

**Kenneth D. Thompson** ('63 MS Phys. Ed.), 90, December 24, 2025, Mount Vernon.

**Gary Paul Anderson** ('64 Elec. Eng.), 83, February 18, 2026, Annapolis, Maryland.

**David Delos Bathrick** ('64 Poli. Sci.) worked for over 23 years with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Vietnam, Peru, Bolivia, Thailand, and Nicaragua. Bathrick died November 4, 2025, in Alexandria, Virginia, at age 84. He had retired in 1991 as director of USAID Office of Agriculture and a minister-counselor in the US Senior Foreign Service. Even in "retirement" Bathrick advocated to help lift the world's poor out of poverty for nearly 20 years across 15 Asian, African, and Latin American countries.

**Bruce Jarrett Eyer** ('64 Math.), 84, February 3, 2026, Longview.

**Evelyn Jager McLaughlin** ('64 Elem. Ed.), 82, August 5, 2025, Everett.

**Barbara Jane Ducat** ('65 English), 84, October 30, 2025, Valencia, California.

**Nancy Ann Preston** ('65 Elem. Ed.), 82, February 22, 2026, Bowling Green, Ohio.

**Robert E. DeLong** ('66 Industrial Tech.), 82, January 7, 2026, Hillsboro, Oregon.

**Ernest Melvin Loudon** ('67 MA History), 89, November 23, 2025, Eugene, Oregon.

**Jack Franklin Sadler** ('67 MS Psych.), 91, February 11, 2026, Bellingham.

**Victoria Cranor Hazard** ('68 Socio.), 79, December 28, 2025, Montecito, California.



**Ammon McWashington Jr.** ('68 Phys. Ed.), running back on WSU's legendary 1965 "Cardiac Kids" football team and a dedicated educator for four decades, died at age 80 on February 1, 2026. He began as a teacher in Tukwila and then became a high school principal, athletic coordinator, and administrator in Seattle area schools. His son, Shawn McWashington ('97 Comm., '02 MA Higher Ed. Admin.), was a Cougar wide receiver on the 1998 Rose Bowl football team.

**Christopher A. Mooney** ('68 Gen. Stu.), 84, October 22, 2025, Mount Vernon.

**Raymond Arthur Mooney Jr.** ('68 Busi.), 81, January 17, 2026, Deer Park.

**Barbie Ann (Vaughan) Olson** ('68 English, Pi Beta Phi), 79, December 6, 2025, Spokane.

**Lauretta J. Ruby** ('68 MA Music), 85, November 19, 2025, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Carroll M. Hayden** ('69 Human Resources), 86, January 1, 2026, Vancouver.

**Marc Roman Mutz** ('69 Gen. Stu.), 76, November 18, 2025, Seattle.

**Ronald John Sessa** ('69 Civ. Eng.), 79, December 3, 2025, Nordland.

**Tom Tien-Shui Wang** ('69 MA Ag. Econ.), 84, October 28, 2025, Bellevue.

## 1970s

**Calvin Henry Delegard** ('70 Chem.), 76, February 19, 2026, Richland.

**Claude Karl Irwin Jr.** ('70 Econ.), 78, January 14, 2026, Mountlake Terrace.

**Jack C. Johnston** ('70 Phys. Ed.), 78, November 5, 2025, Everett.

**John Ramage** ('70 Civ. Eng.), 81, December 30, 2025, Seaview.

**Carl F. Startup Jr.** ('70 Busi.), 84, December 15, 2025, Sequim.

**Allen Roy Wicklund** ('70 Busi.), 77, January 2, 2026, Henrico, Virginia.

**Mel R. Haberman** ('71 Nursing, Zool.), 79, January 17, 2026, Spokane.

**Beryl Jeane Kinney** ('71 Gen. Stu., Delta Delta Delta), December 18, 2025, Moxee.

**Fred Raymond Miller** ('71 English), 81, January 14, 2026, Loon Lake.

**Janice L. Stewart** ('71 Math.), 77, December 19, 2025, Spokane.

**Dan Kenworthy Hull** ('72 Ag., Sigma Nu), 76, January 11, 2026, Yakima.

**Steven Anthony Smith** ('72, '82 MA Econ.,

Phi Sigma Kappa), 73, January 1, 2026, Richland.

**James "Jim" Douglas Thornes** ('72 Forest & Range Mgmt.), 82, February 17, 2026, St. Maries, Idaho.

**Arnold M. Aljets** ('73 Police Sci.), 77, January 23, 2026, Gig Harbor.

**Larry L. Granger** ('73 Gen. Stu.), 77, December 28, 2025, Chehalis.

**James Daniel Guptill** ('73 Math.), 70, March 23, 2022, Flagstaff, Arizona.

**Dean Edward Jackson Jr.** ('73 History, '75 Ed.), 76, October 26, 2024, Olympia.

**Leon E. Sanders** ('73 Phys. Ed.), 75, January 29, 2026, Seattle.

**Ronald Albin Anderson** ('74 PhD Ag. Econ.), 94, November 24, 2025, Fargo, North Dakota.

**Michael Jon Mosman** ('74 Elec. Eng.), 74, August 3, 2025, Columbia, Maryland.

**Susan Elizabeth Adams** ('75 English), 73, February 6, 2026, Beloit, Wisconsin.

**Alice Hansen-Long** ('75 PhD Zool.), 74, April 20, 2021, Moscow, Idaho.

**Gary Ellis Reed** ('75 MA Police Sci.), 78, December 5, 2025, Albany, Oregon.

**Dan Randal Wright** ('75 Phys. Ed.), 72, January 31, 2025, Littleton, Colorado.

**Crystal Kay Disotell** ('77 Home Econ.), 72, February 10, 2026, Vista, California.

**Lynn E. Rodda** ('77 Pharm.), 83, February 27, 2026, Sandpoint, Idaho.

**Gregory E. Smitman** ('78, '80 MS Forest & Range Mgmt.), 75, September 4, 2025, Sidney, Ohio.

**Claudia Suzanne Nilson** ('79 Nursing), 69, January 28, 2026, Wenatchee.

## 1980s

**Frank Douglas Alguire** ('81 MRP Regional Planning), 73, December 13, 2025, Oneida, New York.

**Brandon White** ('81 MS Comp. Sci.), 70, November 9, 2025, Granite Bay, California.

**Daniel Matthew Fine** ('82 English), entrepreneur and volunteer, died January 1, 2025, at age 65 in Vancouver, British Columbia. After founding and leading multiple successful companies, he received numerous honors, including Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year and the US Small Business Administration's Small Business

Person of the Year Award. Fine volunteered with his dogs on therapy teams and with other organizations. He later started the Ukrainian War Animals Relief Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to rescuing and treating animals impacted by the war. He was executive producer of the award-winning documentary *War Tails*, to draw awareness to this cause.

**Steven Ray Culton** ('83 Mech. Eng.), 66, December 27, 2025, Yuma, Arizona.

**Eric Larned Dunham** ('83 Gen. Stu., Sigma Nu), 72, February 5, 2026, Phoenix, Arizona.

**Connie Jo Sanders** ('83 Zool., '87 DVM), 64, February 5, 2026, Anchorage, Alaska.

**Michael Wayne Van Liew** ('83 PhD Eng. Sci.), 74, February 11, 2026, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Robert Thomas Lobingier** ('84 DVM), 69, October 8, 2025, Sherwood, Oregon.

**Sridhar Sourirajan** ('85 MS Comp. Sci.), 60, November 10, 2020, Cary, North Carolina.

**Alan D. Basso** ('86 History, '89 Ed.), 59, November 27, 2020, Longview.

**William H. "Billy" Sammons** ('86, '91 PhD Psych.), 75, November 11, 2025, Churdan, Iowa.

## 1990s

**John Heaton** ('92 Poli. Sci.), 80, September 28, 2025, Richland.

**Christopher Lloyd McDougall** ('92 Econ.), 55, November 22, 2025, Seattle.

## 2000s

**Melinda Culver** ('00, '06 PhD Ani. Sci., '04 DVM), January 23, 2026, Lüchow, Germany.

**Beth Lynn Madison** ('00 Elem. Ed.), 47, December 12, 2025, Spokane.

**Benjamin James Parrish** ('01 Busi.), 47, November 27, 2025, Walla Walla.

**Martin Luther Boston** ('06 Comp. Ethnic Stu., '08 MA Amer. Stu.), 41, August 17, 2025, Elk Grove, California.

## 2020s

**Jackson R. Carroll** ('22 Finance), 23, March 28, 2025, Edmonds.

## Faculty and Staff

**Michael Adams**, 76, Plant Pathology, 1974–2023, September 18, 2025, Pullman.

**Donald Barton**, 89, Facility Operations, 1983–2001, October 1, 2025, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

**Theodore "Mark" Blacker**, 80, Facilities Services, 1978–1996, December 6, 2025, Moscow.

**Coralie Borning**, 106, Libraries, 1976–1978, August 16, 2025, Moscow, Idaho.

**Thomas Brigham**, 83, Psychology, 1972–2011, June 25, 2025, Pullman.

**Edwin Creson**, 67, Puyallup Research and Extension, 2010–2023, November 12, 2025, Auburn.

**James "Jim" D. Cronrath**, 76, Animal Sciences, 1973–2004, June 18, 2025, Cashmere.

**Keith A. Felton**, 86, Central Stores, 1987–2004, February 10, 2026, Lewiston.

**Donald Hart**, 80, Information Systems, 1983–2009, September 22, 2025, Palouse.

**Charlotte "Charii" Higgins**, 83, Registrar, 1982–2007, July 21, 2025, Ferndale.

**Moreita "Pat" Leslie**, 93, Extension, 1954–1989, October 27, 2025, Olympia.

**Julita Lewis**, 85, Facilities Services, 1990–2002, July 23, 2025, Pullman.

**Cyril Morgan**, 88, Management and Decision Sciences, 1980–2003, September 19, 2025, Pullman.

**Jeffery Newkirk**, 77, August 12, 2023, IT Services, 1976–2007, Pullman.

**José Agustin Parés-Avila**, 61, Nursing, 2022–2025, November 29, 2025, Seattle.

**Stuart "Stu" Richard Perry**, 73, WA Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab, 2004–2015, January 9, 2026, Steilacoom.

**Mary Patricia Slinkard**, 73, Social & Economic Science Research, 1999–2016, October 8, 2025, Palouse.

**Ralph G. Yount**, 92, Molecular Biosciences, 1960–2004, June 13, 2025, Pullman.

# 100% Online. 100% WSU.

As Washington State University adds more options for online learning to its popular **Global Campus**, it's worth remembering where it all started.

Not during the pandemic that mainstreamed online education. No, WSU began offering "distance education" in 1992 when the Internet was almost unknown, most people didn't have cellphones, and no one had Zoom.

"We would mail out study packs that had readings and assignments, VHS and cassette tapes," says Dave Cillay, chancellor of the WSU Global Campus.

The distance degree program became the WSU Global Campus in 2012. Today nearly 3,500 students are enrolled, with another 4,000 students on WSU campuses across the state taking Global classes to supplement their schedules. Sixty percent of the master's degrees conferred by WSU are earned through Global Campus, due in large part to the popular online MBA.

Online education is changing the whole concept of higher education, Cillay says. Rather than a set menu, students have a smorgasbord of options. Younger students might want the traditional, on-campus college experience, while working adults can finish a degree or pursue advanced certifications online.

Rich Galtieri, a fire marshal with the Spokane Fire Department, wanted an MBA to help him with a future business venture.

"As a brand-new student coming back 13 years after my last school, I thought, 'Did I make the right choice here?' But it's turning out to be great, actually," he says. He chose WSU rather than another online program because the university is a known quantity, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

Sara Vannoy ('25 Psych.), a single mom who works full-time, had an associate degree but wanted to finish her bachelor's. She works for a program in Benton City that's administered by WSU and "it opened my eyes to what a great university this is," she says.

Offering that kind of opportunity helped the WSU Global Campus grow 30 percent in the past decade. Currently it's ranked among the **top online programs in the nation** in multiple categories by *U.S. News & World Report*, including the 8th best undergraduate program for veterans and the 11th best bachelor's program overall.

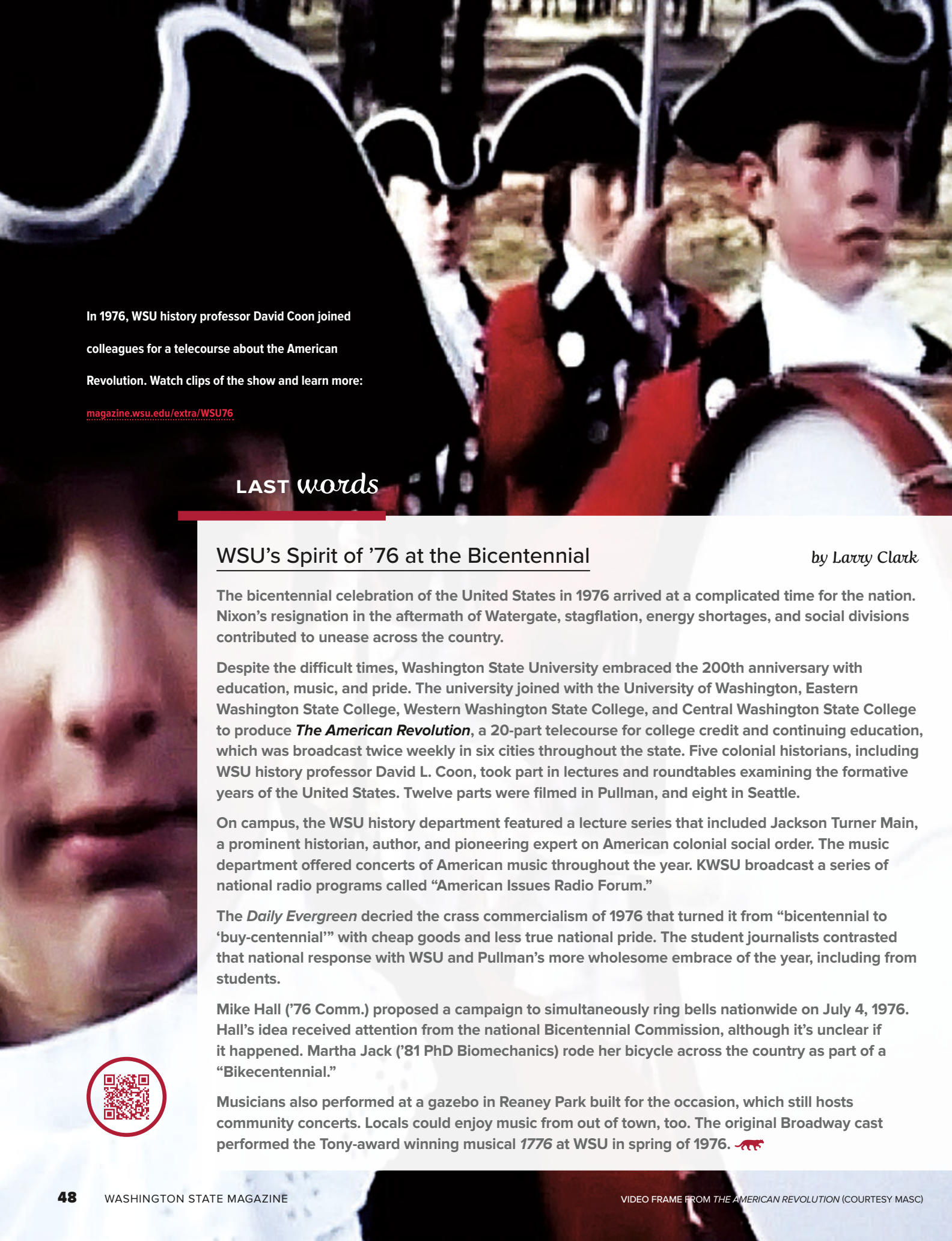
WSU works hard at creating a connection between the university and online students.

Says Cillay, "Students may have never set foot on a physical campus but man, they are Cougs. They bleed crimson and gray."

**Learn  
more**

[online.wsu.edu](https://online.wsu.edu)





In 1976, WSU history professor David Coon joined colleagues for a telecourse about the American Revolution. Watch clips of the show and learn more:

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/WSU76](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/WSU76)

## LAST words

### WSU's Spirit of '76 at the Bicentennial

by Larry Clark

The bicentennial celebration of the United States in 1976 arrived at a complicated time for the nation. Nixon's resignation in the aftermath of Watergate, stagflation, energy shortages, and social divisions contributed to unease across the country.

Despite the difficult times, Washington State University embraced the 200th anniversary with education, music, and pride. The university joined with the University of Washington, Eastern Washington State College, Western Washington State College, and Central Washington State College to produce *The American Revolution*, a 20-part telecourse for college credit and continuing education, which was broadcast twice weekly in six cities throughout the state. Five colonial historians, including WSU history professor David L. Coon, took part in lectures and roundtables examining the formative years of the United States. Twelve parts were filmed in Pullman, and eight in Seattle.

On campus, the WSU history department featured a lecture series that included Jackson Turner Main, a prominent historian, author, and pioneering expert on American colonial social order. The music department offered concerts of American music throughout the year. KWSU broadcast a series of national radio programs called "American Issues Radio Forum."

The *Daily Evergreen* decried the crass commercialism of 1976 that turned it from "bicentennial to 'buy-centennial'" with cheap goods and less true national pride. The student journalists contrasted that national response with WSU and Pullman's more wholesome embrace of the year, including from students.

Mike Hall ('76 Comm.) proposed a campaign to simultaneously ring bells nationwide on July 4, 1976. Hall's idea received attention from the national Bicentennial Commission, although it's unclear if it happened. Martha Jack ('81 PhD Biomechanics) rode her bicycle across the country as part of a "Bikecentennial."

Musicians also performed at a gazebo in Reaney Park built for the occasion, which still hosts community concerts. Locals could enjoy music from out of town, too. The original Broadway cast performed the Tony-award winning musical *1776* at WSU in spring of 1976. 🐾



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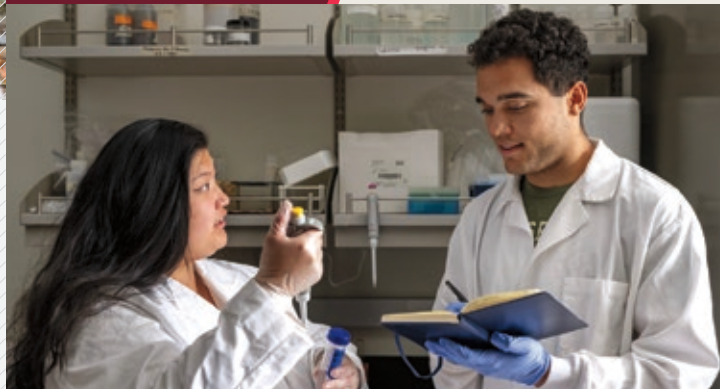
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