

Washington **State** Magazine

FALL 2026

WATER AND WEATHER
FORECASTING,
SUPERCHARGED
WITH AI

WSU'S FAMILY
MEDICAL CLINIC IN
SPOKANE

TAILGATING
TRADITIONS FOR
COUG FOOTBALL

MAKING ROBOTS
SAFER AND MORE
RELIABLE USING AI

THE STATE OF
BUTTERFLIES AND
HOW YOU CAN HELP

Real-world
applications
of **Artificial
Intelligence**





Libraries at Washington State University have always supported students, faculty, staff, and community members. Now, WSU Libraries' role is evolving.



Spotlight

WSU Libraries provide robust support for researchers and students *beyond* books and journals. Library staff conducted trials of **AI-enhanced search tools** last spring to explore how emerging AI technology can better support research and learning across **WSU**. Implementation is planned for the coming academic year. During spring semester 2026, the library managed more than **250,000** e-book requests, almost **460,000** journal requests, and **249** laptop checkouts. Physical spaces are changing, too, with the **Cougar Commons** academic support center in **Terrell Library** and a **Synth Lab** for music and sound design in **Holland Library**.

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ON THE COVER:

Gearing AI to the Real World

Staff photo illustration from Adobe Stock

In this **issue**



24

FEATURE SERIES

Real-World AI:

AI is transforming the world. WSU researchers
are harnessing its predictive abilities for safer and more
reliable robots, better weather and snowpack forecasting,
identifying endangered wildlife, and more practical uses.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

8

Health Care Goes to School

WSU opens its first off-campus medical clinic in Spokane.

10 Our Food, Our Farms, Our Washington Ag history and WSU impact stories at Washington State Fair, and an essay on WSU's mission

21 Special dreams come true WSU ROAR students are state champs in Special Olympics.

THE COUG EXPERIENCE

12

Cougs by the Tailgate

A fun tradition when Cougs find their way back home

YOUR POSTS

4 Letters and Photos from Cougs Kudos for stories, remembering Gay Selby, Murrow's 1962 commencement speech, the magazine's 25th anniversary

FROM THE PRESIDENT

7 Pioneering Practical AI WSU President Betsy Cantwell looks at how WSU can best apply AI for teaching and research.



OUR STORY

20 Climbing Higher for 25 years The Student Recreation Center hits a milestone.

RESEARCH IMPACT

14 Our State of the Butterflies New report shows some butterflies declining, but people can help.

16 Taming the Nightmares Treatments for people suffering nightmares from PTSD

17 Second Chance Bald eagle chicks saved by WSU veterinarians

SPORTS

18 A Cougar Football Family Four generations of WSU football players

19 Leading the Cougs New WSU Athletics leaders and coaches for a reinvigorated Pac-12 Conference

IN SEASON

22 Fennel The aromatic and whimsical vegetable is edible, foot to flower.

PROFILES

32 Abdi Warsame ('24 MBA), rolling forward

Roger Nyhus ('90 Comm.), former US ambassador

Tim Mulligan ('90 Hosp. Busi. Mgmt.), late-blooming writer

Iris Scott ('06 Fine Arts), finger-painting entrepreneur

Gary Hill Jr. ('00 Comm., Psych.), Mariners broadcaster

Deone Bucannon ('26 Soc. Sci.), former NFL linebacker

AI IN THE REAL WORLD

The massive disruption of artificial intelligence and large language models causes a swath of understandable responses: skepticism, optimism, ambivalence, even some fear. For Washington State University, with its mission to serve the state, increasingly sophisticated AI might also provide more practical ways to help people and communities.

The predictive capabilities of AI are already improving forecasts of weather, snowpack, and other conditions that Washington state farmers need for effective management, especially as the climate becomes unpredictable and extreme. WSU's AgWeatherNet has given the agriculture industry a powerful tool for years, and now it's getting even better with data from farmers that improve AI forecasting.

Robots have been working in factories and other places for decades, but advances in AI promise to make robots more adaptable and efficient. WSU researchers study ways to improve the safety and reliability of robots, particularly ones that work with and around people. Establishing more trust could bring in robots for jobs that have a shortage of human workers.

Even in the wildest parts of the natural world, AI has the potential to support endangered animals. WSU wildlife biologists partner with Google to have AI models analyze hundreds of thousands of camera images from remote areas and identify animals. That enables almost real-time understanding of habitat and animal behavior for better management.

AI might help out in some areas, but we still don't lose sight of the essential human connections. Whether we're tailgating before a football game in the new Pac-12 or taking care of kids in Spokane at WSU's first external medical clinic, the WSU community, the state, and all its people remain the top priority.

Larry Clark
Editor



REVIEWS

39 *The Origin of Ava; If We Don't Get It: A People's History of Ferguson; Believing in Indians: A Mixed-Blood Odyssey; Washington State on the Air; Crab Creek Chronicles: From the Wheat Fields to the Ball Fields and Beyond; Briefly Noted*

CLASS NOTES

42 Spotlight: Paul Hirzel ('69 Gen. Stu.), accomplished WSU architecture professor

Spotlight: Top Ten Seniors for 2026

IN MEMORIAM

44 Sam Hunt ('67 English), WSU Regent and state legislator

Richard "Dick" Fry, WSU storyteller

Chris Stoski ('98 Arch.), visual artist for movies and games

John Fabian ('62 Mech. Eng.), astronaut and RDAA recipient

LAST WORDS

48 The quiet poetry of everyday life A photo collection at the museum

I WANT TO GIVE THE MAGAZINE and Addy Hatch kudos for another wonderful article from [our university's history] in the Spring 2026 magazine. We never would have known about Catherine Roberts Frasier and all she accomplished had her story not been written in the magazine. Articles like this always surprise me and make yours the very best alumni magazine I have ever read.

— Barbara A. Petite x'76

THERE ARE MANY Gay Selby truthisms about superintendent-board relationships ringing in my ears daily. Fond memories!

— Jeff Hardesty '97 English, Ed., '18 EdD

[*The Spring 2026 issue memorialized WSU alum and education faculty member Gay Selby.*]

I WISH TO COMPLIMENT the magazine staff on your excellent publication. I look forward to reading every issue of *Washington State Magazine* because I learn so much about my alma mater and the exceptional work that is happening at WSU.

I was motivated to write after reading the recent Summer 2026 articles "The Legacy Stays Alive" and "Redford's Palouse Legacy." Both articles bring pride to alums because they illustrate program creativity, openness to new ideas, and willingness to experiment.

Edward R. Murrow spoke at my graduation in 1962. I still am thrilled that he was our commencement speaker, but I have no idea what he said. Somehow when one is graduating there is so much excitement that the thoughtful words of commencement speakers don't stay in the memory bank. It could be quite interesting to review that commencement address to see if any part of it would be worth sharing with your readers so many years later. If you have any advice on how I could access his address, I would be delighted.

Thank you for bringing us the WSU of today and the remarkable work that is happening at the university. Your publication is beautiful, readable, and brings enormous pride.

— Earlyse Allen Swift '62 Ed.

[*Editor's note: Thank you for the kind words, Earlyse. Our colleagues at WSU Libraries Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections posted Murrow's 1962 commencement speech on a YouTube video. You can listen to it via magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Murrow-1962*]

Correction

In the Summer 2026 profile of Kevin Peterson, former architecture professor Jack Jackson's last name was incorrect.

Washington State Magazine turns 25!

WSU's magazine has delivered stories of research, history, alumni, sports, food, and more since 2001.

Visit our website to see a retrospective of *Washington State Magazine*. You can also find how to get the two magazine anthologies that collect the best of 25 years' worth of articles.

magazine.wsu.edu/25years



Opening Doors for the Next Generation of Innovators

For more than 40 years, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories and Washington State University have worked together to advance education, develop talent, and drive innovation.

Through internships, mentorship, and real-world experience, SEL helps WSU students apply what they've learned in the classroom. Today, we are proud to employ more than 700 WSU alumni across SEL.

The next chapter of this partnership continues with the opening of Schweitzer Engineering Hall this fall. We look forward to welcoming Cougs into this new space and supporting the next generation of engineers and innovators.

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WSU Athletic Hall of Famers Sue Durrant (shown above), former women's basketball and volleyball coach, and Joanne "Jo" Washburn, former women's athletics director and sport management founder, helped secure equal resources for women under Title IX. After retiring, they established an endowed internship in Cougar Athletics.

As part of their plan, when Jo passed away, she left her home to Sue with the understanding it would be donated to WSU to support athletics internships.

Contact the **Office of Gift Planning** to learn more.



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Pioneering Practical AI

by Betsy Cantwell

I remember when calculators were beginning to be used in schools. Some people thought that amounted to cheating, that students weren't learning. But studies found that wasn't true; students were learning how to solve instead of how to calculate.

I think we're at a similar place right now with artificial intelligence.

From a 30,000-foot view there's uncertainty about AI and what it will mean for the economy and for society. But the reality is that AI is already becoming common in the workplace, in schools, and in our lives.

At WSU, we're pioneering practical applications of AI—from forecasting wildfire behavior and strengthening the resilience of our food systems, to expanding advanced rural health care, accelerating next-generation materials and energy solutions, and helping communities adapt to a changing world.

Our researchers are using AI to sift through vast amounts of data to more quickly pinpoint promising treatments and technologies. A \$50 million federal investment will lay the foundation for an aquaculture research center whose work will include using AI science to address complex challenges like improving the health of Pacific salmon.

Our faculty are exploring the use of AI in their teaching, and our counselors are using AI to augment the services they provide to students.

As a university, our job is to make sure our students are prepared for what the future brings because these are the people who'll preside over the major transformations that lie ahead. That means they need to be flexible, and know how to make choices in the framework of an AI world that are wise and ethical.

As a state, it's in our interest to use AI appropriately to make sure our industries remain globally competitive.

I know there's unease about the rapid pace of change caused by AI. But as many people have observed over the centuries, knowledge is the best antidote to fear. That's why WSU will continue to test practical applications for AI and to educate our students on responsible use of AI. As I told graduates at our commencement ceremonies in May, now is not a time to be afraid. It's a time to act and to build.

Go Cougs!





by Becky Kramer

Health Care Goes to School

WSU opens its first off-campus clinic at a Spokane elementary school

GETTING TO MEDICAL

APPOINTMENTS can be challenging for families whose children attend Spokane's Logan Elementary School.

Sometimes, parents are juggling busy work schedules. Often, they don't have access to reliable transportation.

WSU Health Logan Family Clinic opened in March with the goal of reducing obstacles to care while also providing training opportunities for Washington State University nursing students. Located on the grounds of Logan Elementary School, the clinic offers primary care services to children, their families, and the greater public.

"Schools tend to be community hubs," says Sarah Fincham, WSU College of Nursing's interim associate dean of academic affairs and director of faculty practice. "By being here, we're trying to make health care more accessible and break down some of the barriers for parents. But we're not just serving school families. Anyone can schedule a visit, and we also accept walk-ins."

Launched through a partnership with Spokane Public Schools, Logan Family Clinic is the university's first off-campus health clinic.



WSU faculty who are nurse practitioners and physicians provide staffing for the clinic, and nursing students will start community health rotations there this fall. Logan Family Clinic offers a range of primary care services and accepts most major insurance plans, Medicare, and Medicaid.

You can get an annual physical, sports exam, or pre-employment screening at the clinic. Be seen for minor illnesses. Get vaccines and cancer screenings. Or receive help managing chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma, or high blood pressure, among other things.

Logan Elementary serves a diverse neighborhood northeast of Spokane's downtown. Many of the school's students have experienced trauma, lack of housing, and food insecurity, says Becky Doughty, director of School Support Services for Spokane Public Schools.

"The clinic idea was born several years ago, really from the perspective of wanting to increase access to health care in the Logan area, which is among our neighborhoods with the greatest needs," says Doughty ('10, '12 MN Nursing).

The clinic provides services beyond what school nurses can offer, she says. And it will be an asset for students deal-

ing with ongoing health issues, such as asthma.

"Being able to walk into a clinic during the school day really changes things for students and their families," Doughty adds. "I love that they can access services in one spot instead of being referred to different places in the community."

" "
*Being able to walk
 into a clinic during
 the school day really
 changes things for
 students and their
 families.*
 " "

Logan Family Clinic is attached to the school, but it has a separate, outside entrance that members of the public can access during school hours.

Besides the reception area, the clinic has two exam rooms. Future plans call for a third room in the clinic to be used for telehealth appointments for behavioral and mental health services.

During their community health rotations, undergraduate nursing students will be involved with patient care at the clinic, such as taking vitals and giving

vaccines. But they'll also work on projects to understand the community's needs and develop health education programs for patients.

Beginning next spring, students in WSU's family nurse practitioner program will start clinical rotations at the clinic, working under a preceptor. And after the clinic starts offering mental health services, students in the psychiatric nurse practitioner program will do clinical training there as well.

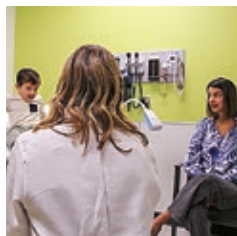
The clinic operates under the umbrella of WSU Health, which includes the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, and the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. So faculty and students from all those colleges could be involved with the clinic in the future, Fincham says.

Elizabeth Serven, a nursing student starting her senior year, says she's interested in pediatric-focused care. If she ends up doing a rotation at Logan Family Clinic, it would be a chance to work with elementary-age students and their families.

"Kids have a positive drive to get better, and I enjoy watching them bounce back from illness," she says. "This is an opportunity to understand what working in a family clinic would be like and to see repeat patients over time."

Doughty hopes that working at the Logan Family Clinic will encourage some of the WSU nursing students to consider careers in school-based settings.

"This is a great place to see what access to health care looks like in underserved communities, and why it's important," she says. 🐾



Opposite: Sarah Fincham examines a child at the WSU Health Logan Family Clinic. **From top:** Nursing student Elizabeth Serven interacts with a young girl. The clinic offers convenient appointments for parents and children in the Logan neighborhood. COURTESY SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

See the Logan Family Clinic and hear about WSU's role:

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/LoganClinic



The exhibit will be open every day during the entire fair, September 4-27. The fair is closed Tuesdays and on September 9.

by Scott Weybright

OUR FOOD OUR WAS

LAST YEAR, more than 85,000 people visited the “Our Food, Our Farms, Our Washington” exhibit in its first year at the Washington State Fair in Puyallup. The exhibit is expanding this year, as is Washington State University’s role in the display.

“Our goal is to tell the story of the importance of Washington agriculture,” says Renee McClain, CEO of the Washington State Fair Event Center. “We want to make people aware of how agriculture impacts their lives every day. WSU plays an important role in that story.”

The focus of WSU’s role in this year’s exhibit is technology and how it is helping the agriculture industry and the food people eat.

“This exhibit is a powerful platform to celebrate our farmers and demonstrate the critical work WSU does to support them and strengthen our food systems,” says Raj Khosla, Cashup Davis Family Endowed Dean of WSU’s College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. “I’m excited for fairgoers to experience this information in a way that is both meaningful and easy to understand.”

WSU’s placement is growing in the exhibit’s second year.

“We featured WSU research and education last year with a dedicated display in the exhibit,” says Andrea Thayer (’99 Busi.), chief experience officer of the Washington State Fair Event Center. “This year, we’re incorporating WSU’s work throughout, connecting how they work with commodities and aspects of the agriculture industry across the state.”

The exhibit, near a main fair entrance, is a natural attraction for guests.

Displays also feature work to bolster livestock from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine, and AgAID, whose mission is to build and foster partnerships between AI and ag communities.

“We are so excited about the chance to demonstrate the impact WSU has on agriculture in so many different ways to so many people,” says Katie Gziryan, director of public affairs for WSU Government Relations. “Farmers are working 365 days a year to make sure the world has the food it needs. This exhibit will help honor that work in a compelling and educational way.”

In addition to widely known Washington commodities, like tree fruit or grains, the fair is adding features this year on other products like berries and timber. According to the Washington



Washington’s top ten agricultural commodities are exhibited, with displays showcasing the university’s research discoveries, faculty and alumni expertise, and enrollment information.

PHOTO DARRELL WESTMORELAND/
WASHINGTON STATE FAIR

THIS YEAR, WSU’s work with commodities and the agriculture industry will be shown throughout the “Our Food, Our Farms, Our Washington” state fair exhibit in the Centennial Tent in Puyallup.

OUR FARMS HINGTON

State Department of Agriculture, the state is the country's number one producer of blueberries and number two raspberry producer. The state is the second-largest producer of softwood timber in the United States, according to the Washington State Department of Commerce.

"We need people who are agriculturally literate," Thayer says. "That aligns with WSU's mission of advancing agriculture through technology and research while also educating students. WSU is preparing the people who will lead the agriculture industry in the future, and we hope this exhibit opens more people up to those potential careers."

Exhibit makers also work with commodity groups, like the Washington Grain Commission and Washington State Mint Commission.

"Our partnership with WSU has opened doors to deepening relationships with other groups," Thayer says. "We're so excited to work with WSU, WSDA, and industry leaders to promote agriculture and move the whole state forward." 🐾



"Our Food, Our Farms, Our Washington" is near the Gold Gate entrance of the Washington State Fair. Displays represent over 300 different crops grown in Washington state. VIDEO FRAMES COURTESY KAITLYN THORNTON '23 / TIKTOK



“
**The land-grant mission is alive...
and it matters
more than
ever before.**
”

Raj Khosla is the Cashup Davis Family Endowed Dean of WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. PHOTO COURTESY CAHNRS

THIS FALL, across Washington, millions will gather at state and county fairs, wander through orchards and pumpkin patches, and take in the beauty of the season. In those moments—often without realizing it—they will come face-to-face with one of the most enduring and impactful ideas in higher education: the land-grant mission of Washington State University.

WSU carries a responsibility unlike any other, delivering knowledge beyond the boundaries of campus and placing it directly into the hands of the people who need it most. Through WSU Extension, that promise comes to life every day, in every county, every community, and Tribal areas across the state.

Extension is, and has always been, the front porch to WSU for the public. It creates safe places for people and community to come together and create solutions together to the challenges in their communities. It connects families, farmers, youth, and communities to research-based knowledge, practical solutions, and life-changing opportunities. It is where education meets real life—where science, innovation, and service converge to strengthen Washington from the ground up.

The impact is both visible and profound. It lives in the work of more than 6,000 WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers, who contribute hundreds of thousands of service hours each year to build healthier, more resilient communities. It shines in the confidence and leadership of over 36,000 4-H youth, who develop skills that will guide them for a lifetime. It fuels the success of Washington agriculture—from globally recognized wine and grain industries to innovations like the Cosmic Crisp® apple.

We at WSU believe that food is everybody's business, and we therefore take it seriously. We recognize that food is not just a commodity—it is a fundamental pillar of health, community well-being, and economic vitality. Through research, education, and outreach, we work to ensure that our food systems are safe, nutritious, resilient, and accessible to all. This is more than outreach. This is impact at scale.

At a time when opportunity, access, and community resilience matter more than ever, the land-grant mission is as relevant today as it was at its founding. It continues to shape lives, expand opportunities, and build a stronger, more vibrant Washington for generations to come.

And behind it all are the people. Extension professionals, volunteers, and partners carry this mission forward with dedication and purpose. They are the bridge between knowledge and action. They are the stewards of service. They are the embodiment of what it means to be a land-grant institution.

So the next time you visit your local grocery store, enjoy a sip of WSU student-produced wine paired with Cougar Gold cheese, or indulge in Ferdinand's ice cream, Cosmic Crisp apples or other fruits and vegetables, local honey, or freshly baked bread, we encourage you to give a shout of "Go Cougs!" 🐾



Cougs by the Tailgate

*We always find
our way
back home...*



by Adriana Janovich

SOME COUGS MOTOR THEIR RVs over Snoqualmie Pass. Others fly in from Sea-Tac, grab their rigs out of a nearby storage lot, and head for campus.

No matter the route or method, as the saying goes, *We always find our way back home.*

Every Pullman football game is a homecoming. Perhaps no one knows that better than the die-hard Coug fans who come to campus with their motorhomes.

To meet new fans and catch up with old classmates and other alumni and friends. To share favorite tailgate recipes. Play Cougar cornhole. High-five and take photos with Butch T. Cougar. Shout along with Glenn Johnson, "Voice of the Cougs" for 47 years this year, as he announces, "Aaaaaaand that's another Cougar first down!"

And forever root for the home team.

SOUTH BEASLEY LOT

South Beasley Lot, aka RV Lot One, holds Washington State University's premier motorhome sites. For many Coug tailgaters, this spot, located directly across Stadium

Way from the football field, is most desirable because of its proximity to the starting line.

No matter the lot, "everyone's a friend when you tailgate," says William "Will" McGaughey ('24 Const. Mgmt.), showing off his Coug mobile: a 2006 Wilderness by Fleetwood. "This was my grad present. My parents bought a new one and gave me their old one."

McGaughey, of Pullman, helped organize the Alpha Gamma Rho alumni tailgate for the 2025 Homecoming game. On the grill: burgers. "The active members can take back anything we don't eat," says McGaughey, president and advisor of his fraternity's alumni board.

His uncle and aunt happen to be tailgating next door. On the menu at their RV, a 2025 Alliance Delta: a game-day hashbrown omelet, their go-to steak tacos, and four cases of beer.

Karen (Jentges) ('93 Comm.) and Bruce McGaughey ('93 Comm.), of Issaquah, met in a classroom in the basement of Murrow Hall. The best part of Coug tailgating? "Community," she says. "Camaraderie," he says.

"It's the liveliness," she continues. "It's the mixing of current students and alumni. It's parents and their kids. Parents get to come back and relive little glimpses of their college years, the best years, the easy years."

The year 2026 marks their fourth of WSU tailgating. "We like to keep it easy," Karen says, noting their daughter, Gracie, the second of their three kids, is now a junior at their alma mater. Youngest Ian is a freshman this fall. Tailgating reminds Bruce "how special it is here. It feels really good to be here."

Winding around toward Stadium Way frontage, where the toniest of parking lot parties take place, find Ron Claudon ('82 Busi.), owner of Valley RV in Kent and Valley GMC in Auburn, winner of the 2025 Biff Brotherton Cougar Spirit Award, and "mayor" of RV Lot One. He and wife Lorianne (Betts) ('85 Apparel, Merch., Des. & Tex.) have been season ticket holders and Cougar Athletic Fund members for four decades.

Since 2010, Valley RV has sponsored the premier lot, basically turning the couple into its hosts. Their rig, a 2022 Jayco Seneca, "ends up being a stop-off place," says Claudon, who was on the Cougar football team in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Injuries stunted his career on the playing field. Tailgating "is special to me," he says. "It's a way to stay in touch with teammates, fraternity brothers, and classmates, especially for those like me who don't do Facebook or social media."

The three Claudon kids—Bryant (x'06), Jaclynn ('09 MEd), and Nicole (x'15)—are Cougs, too. The nine Claudon grandkids also get decked out in crimson-and-gray gear for tailgates.

"When our kids were attending WSU, it was a time to connect with them and their friends. Now their friends are all coming back to tailgate and, instead of just drinking beer, they are also changing diapers in the motorhome," Claudon says. "Lorianne and I cherish those friendships among the Coug RV family."

*Share your
Coug tailgate
traditions:*

wsm@wsu.edu

SPRING STREET LOT

From the far-flung RV Lot Six, located on the west side of campus near Reaney Park and Brelsford WSU Visitor Center, it's a quick walk downtown. That's one reason Ward ('90 Mech. Eng.) and Lin Kellogg ('89 Gen. Stud., Hum.) of Loon Lake like this spot.

"We like it because it's easy," she says.

Her husband waxes nostalgic about coming to college 40 years ago. "I remember the first time I drove here, me and my pickup and this little trunk of clothes. It was a beautiful summer evening. I saw the Cougar sign on the side of that building on Highway 26. It was so beautiful. It really was," he says, reiterating. "This is it. This is home."

FIRST DOWN ON THE FARM

Former student Kirk and wife Mellissa (Ferguson) Dugger ('00 Ag. Tech.) host Cougar campers on their Palouse farm nearly seven miles north of Pullman, providing free shuttle service to and from campus as well as live music on the "farm stage" and no-host food and drink vendors. Weather-permitting, there are family-friendly movies on an inflatable movie screen.

Since 2019, she says, they've aimed to "provide Cougs with an affordable and convenient place to camp in a family-friendly environment ... We enjoy ... fostering Cougar spirit!" 🐾

From top: A few of the Claudon grandkids show their Cougar spirit. COURTESY RON CLAUDON. Tailgaters at the Spring Street Lot in 2025. PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER. Aerial image of First Down on the Farm. COURTESY MELLISSA DUGGER.



Want to read more tailgating stories?

[magazine.wsu.edu/
extra/tailgate](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/tailgate)



Our State of the Butterflies

by Melissa John Mayer

While seven species in the Pacific Northwest actually increased in the Xerces report, 17 species declined with a 2.7% decrease in overall abundance.

SOURCE: STATE OF THE BUTTERFLIES IN THE UNITED STATES:
A ROADMAP FOR BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BUTTERFLIES ARE IN TROUBLE.

That's the conclusion of the first-ever comprehensive report on the fate of butterflies, released last year by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and led by Cheryl Schultz, a conservation biologist at Washington State University.

It turns out that butterfly enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest may be in a good position to protect our fluttery neighbors. The numbers for Pacific Northwest butterflies dropped just 2.7%, though about 25% of species with sufficient monitoring data showed significant declines. That's stark—but the declines here may be less severe than in other parts of the country.

Regional experts are already using the data to drive conservation decisions.

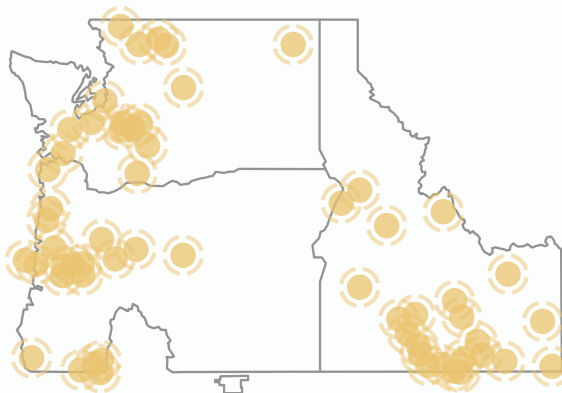
"What we're trying to do in Washington is incorporate those species into our priorities," says Ross Winton of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, referencing the recent Washington State Wildlife Action Plan. "Just like we need systematic monitoring,

we need a systematic approach to identifying our conservation needs."

We know butterflies are disappearing because of habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate stress. *Here's what we can do now to help Washington butterflies.*

LEARN MORE ABOUT BUTTERFLIES.

Butterflies need three things: nectar plants to feed on, host plants for their young, and clean habitats with limited exposure to pesticides.



Monitoring sites across the Pacific Northwest region

ADAPTED FROM EDWARDS ET AL. (2025)

The report looked at monitoring data for 342 butterfly species—about half of known US species—and found that butterfly numbers declined 22% from 2000 to 2020. That means someone who counted 100 individual butterflies in 2000 would only see 78 butterflies during the same count in 2020.

"In many ways, it's depressing because there are so many butterflies tanking," says Schultz. "But there are things we can do ... and, collectively, we can make a big difference."



PLANT NECTAR PLANTS THAT BLOOM THROUGHOUT SPRING, SUMMER, AND FALL. Adult butterflies feed on flower nectar whenever they are in flight. Install native plants when you can—but don't pull exotic or invasive flowering plants without replacing them with another butterfly-friendly plant.

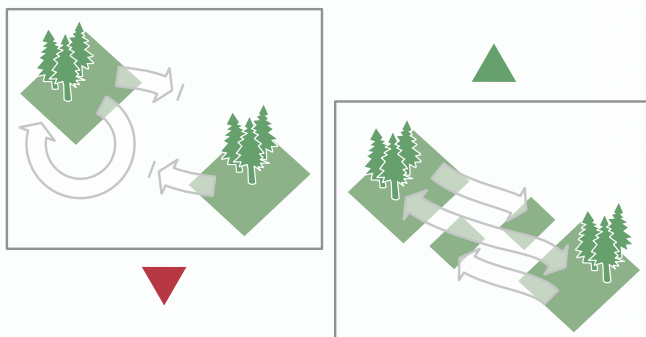
PROVIDE HOST PLANTS for caterpillars. Butterflies lay eggs on or near plants suitable for their caterpillars to eat. Those host plants may be different from their nectar plants. Monarch caterpillars famously only chow down on milkweed. But adult monarchs sip nectar from a variety of flowers.

SUPPORT WILD SPACES. While some butterflies are strong fliers, many are habitat specialists that stick close to home. Restoring wild patches so they are close enough for butterflies to fly from patch to patch will allow butterflies to rest and refuel as they lay eggs, seek mates, drink nectar, and expand their populations. Many butterflies overwinter as eggs or caterpillars in dense vegetation or leaf litter.

REDUCE PESTICIDES. Reconsider using these at home. Instead, choose nonchemical techniques to manage pests. Avoid using chemical controls on flowering

weeds or in wild spaces like bike paths or roadsides that may connect natural habitats. Speak up for butterflies in your community spaces.

LOOK FOR BUTTERFLIES AROUND YOU. You may spot important butterflies when you're gardening, fishing, hunting, or walking your dog. Snap photos and identify what you see using apps like Seek. Upload your observations to iNaturalist to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge. Last year, a photo uploaded by



Fragmented versus connected butterfly habitats

ADAPTED FROM POLLINATOR PATHWAYS/WARREN SWCD

a new user alerted Washington scientists to a population of Taylor's checkerspot on the Olympic Peninsula. Now they can monitor those endangered butterflies.

Butterflies are beloved. They help pollinate our wildflowers and crops. They make great meals for birds and other animals. And they're environmental sentinels, informing us about the health of our ecosystems. 🐛



Oregon's Willamette Valley community worked together to bring back the native **Fender's blue** from 1,500 to over 30,000 butterflies—a real success story.

To learn more visit the Dr. Universe butterfly resource webpage:

askdruniverse.wsu.edu/butterflies



STAFF ILLUSTRATION



Taming the nightmares

by Becky Kramer

MOST OF US EXPERIENCE OCCASIONAL NIGHTMARES, waking up after dreams of being chased, confronting intruders, or other scenarios that leave us feeling scared or anxious.

But trauma can supercharge nightmares, as Christine So observed when she worked at a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Philadelphia.

Many of the veterans she worked with had post-traumatic stress disorder. Nightmares regularly jarred them awake.

One of her clients had witnessed the death of a close friend in combat. Night after night, he relived the moment his friend was killed—reexperiencing the feelings of helplessness, grief, and fear for his own

Last year, she published a review of studies about nightmare interventions with researchers affiliated with VA health care systems in Birmingham, Alabama, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Their work is part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness of trauma-related nightmares, understand the causes, and provide relief for people who experience them.

So recently began offering psychotherapy for sleep disruptions at the WSU Psychology Clinic. The community mental health center serves residents of the greater Palouse region, including veterans. Services are provided by advanced clinical psychology doctoral students under So's supervision.

MOST DREAMS, INCLUDING NIGHTMARES, occur during the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep. People's closed eyes move rapidly while their arms and legs are temporarily immobilized to prevent them from acting out their dreams. Heart rate, blood pressure, brain activity, and breathing increase, according to Harvard Health.

another nightmare," So says. "They start to dread bedtime. Disrupted sleep has a ton of health consequences, including worsening physical and mental health."

Nightmares are also a strong predictor of suicidal thoughts. And even after people are successfully treated for PTSD symptoms, their nightmares can linger, she says.

Standard nightmare treatment involves imagery rehearsal therapy. Clients write out their nightmares in detail, then work with a therapist to rescript the nightmare into a less distressing dream that they rehearse over and over.

"Our brains process and consolidate information while we sleep," So says. "If you constantly wake up for nightmares, that process is interrupted. By rehearsing a new, less disturbing version of the nightmare, you feed your brain something that's easier to process and consolidate. And then hopefully, you will be able to sleep through the night."

In addition, prazosin is sometimes prescribed for nightmares. A blood pressure



STAFF ILLUSTRATION FROM ADOBE STOCK

safety, says So, an assistant professor in Washington State University's Department of Psychology.

Another client repeatedly dreamed that he was a mouse being chased by a large snake.

Besides combat veterans, trauma-related nightmares are common for survivors of abuse, accidents, conflict, and natural disasters like wildfires. About 70 percent of people treated for PTSD report experiencing nightmares. And when the dreams are sensory nightmares, they feel like they are back in the moment of the original trauma.

"No one is immune to experiencing a traumatic event," says So, who is board-certified in behavioral sleep medicine. "Anyone can be susceptible to developing PTSD, and sleep problems are a huge issue for people experiencing PTSD."

Important cognitive functions take place during REM sleep, such as brain development in infants and protection against dementia in older adults. REM sleep is also associated with memory consolidation, emotional processing, and creative problem-solving.

Waking up during REM sleep interrupts those functions and hampers sleep routines.

"Nightmares can make people fearful of going back to sleep because they're scared that they will have

medication, the drug reduces the adrenaline effect of a rapid heart rate and higher blood pressure. Pioneering work on the use of prazosin to reduce nightmares took place in the VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

PERPLEXINGLY, THE TREATMENTS WORK WELL for some people, but not others, So says. That's led to conflicting recommendations for treating nightmares.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine identifies imagery rehearsal

therapy as the only recommended treatment for PTSD-related nightmares. Meanwhile, clinical practice guidelines from the Department of Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense say there isn't enough evidence to recommend for or against the therapy. The VA/DoD guidelines do recommend prescribing prazosin for nightmares but say the evidence of its effectiveness is weak.

More research is needed to unlock effective treatment, So says.

"We really don't understand what contributes to nightmares," she says. "Some people speculate it's an overactivation of the sympathetic nervous system. Others say it has to do with emotional dysregulation, which is difficulty in managing intense emotions."

In the meantime, trauma-related nightmares are a reality for many, including those who don't seek out help.

"Providers don't regularly ask about nightmares in primary care and mental health settings," So says. "It's easy for nightmares to fall through the cracks." 🐾

“

*By rehearsing a new,
less disturbing version of
the nightmare, you feed
your brain something
that's easier to process
and consolidate.”*

”



WSU psychology researcher
and assistant professor
Christine So COURTESY WSU
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Second chance

Veterinary Medicine



As the country celebrates its 250th anniversary, **two bald eagle chicks** found themselves at the center of an extraordinary rescue mission.

One was only days old. The other was still trying to hatch from its egg when an emergency nest removal near active power lines suddenly brought both birds into human care.

After weeks of intensive treatment at Washington State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the eaglets have been successfully placed into a wild foster nest, where they are being raised alongside a third eaglet by adult bald eagles.

"It really took a village," says Marcie Logsdon ('08 Vet. Sci., '12 DVM), an avian specialist and certified wildlife rehabilitator with WSU's Exotics and Wildlife Service. "We had experts from across the country helping us figure out how to give these birds the best possible chance to grow up as wild bald eagles."

The chicks came to WSU after their parents built a nest on a power structure near Bonneville, Washington, where branches were beginning to contact electrical lines, creating the risk of fire and power outages. After consulting with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and obtaining permits, crews removed the nest and transferred the birds to WSU for care.

One eaglet required especially intensive treatment. Because the bird was in the middle of hatching when the nest was removed, it became stuck inside the egg and had to be carefully assisted out by Logsdon. The chick also had an exposed yolk sac, creating a potential route for infection.

"Things were definitely touch and go there for a bit, but they recovered quickly and were soon eating 20 to 40 percent of their body weight every day," Logsdon says. "They were growing like weeds."

The birds are the youngest bald eagles ever treated by WSU's wildlife team. To prevent them from imprinting on people, staff wore face coverings during feedings, used eagle-themed puppets, played recordings from bald eagle nest cameras, and avoided talking around the chicks.

Logsdon says bald eagles are one of her favorite patients. Their story, she says, is one of the great conservation successes in American history.

by Will Ferguson

Rescued eaglets recovered quickly and were placed in a foster nest.

PHOTOS TED S. WARREN/
WSU COLLEGE OF VETERINARY
MEDICINE



Marcie Logsdon
COURTESY VITICUS GROUP

Read the full story and
watch video of the eagles:

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/eagles





A Cougar Football Family

by Larry Clark



At top: Scott and Peyton Pelluer at 2018 Senior Night. **Above, clockwise:** Carl Gustafson; Arnie Pelluer. PHOTOS COURTESY WSU LIBRARIES Peyton Pelluer coaches at his high school alma mater. COURTESY ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT 411

THE FAMILY LEGACY started in the early years of Washington State College.

Carl “Iron Man” Gustafson (1928 Phys. Ed.), known for his pluck and fighting spirit, played fullback for the Cougar varsity football team from 1925 to 1927.

Along with quarterback Butch Meeker (1928 English), the WSU Cougar mascot’s namesake, he heroically led the Cougs to a 9–6 upset victory over the University of Washington in 1926.

The college’s alumni newsletter called out Gustafson’s play: “In that contest his single-handed efforts paved the way to a touchdown that eventually won for the Cougars in one of the bitterest battles in the history of either school.”

Gustafson received WSC’s coveted J. Fred Bohler medal in 1927–28 for inspiration of the football team. He also went on to inspire three more generations of Cougar football players.

“I would have loved to go back in time and see what that was like for him. This

is about my family’s legacy,” says Peyton Pelluer (’17 History), great-grandson of Gustafson and standout linebacker for the Cougs under Coach Mike Leach.

Peyton’s grandfather Arnie Pelluer (’61 MS Phys. Ed.), Gustafson’s son, played end for WSU from 1953 to 1955 and was drafted by the Los Angeles Rams.

Arnie’s son, Scott Pelluer (’82 Phys. Ed.), stepped up to the family tradition of WSU football in 1977. He played linebacker for the Cougs through 1980, finishing his college career among the all-time WSU leaders in tackles and sacks. He also received WSU’s Bohler Award like his grandfather.

Scott played six years in the NFL for the New Orleans Saints. After his pro football career, he coached two stints at UW, and at Arizona, Boise State, and Northern Arizona. He also spent the 1999 football season alongside legend Bob Robertson as color analyst on Cougar radio broadcasts.

Sadly, Scott died in 2023 following a heart attack at age 64. Many former players and coaches recalled Scott's passion and integrity.

"Scott was a tremendous person, a really good man, and a real treat to be around all the time. He was an excellent captain for the Cougs," Jim Walden, WSU head coach from 1978 to 1986, told Cougfan.com in 2023.

Scott left many other Cougar connections. Scott's wife Kimberly ('80 Ed.), mother Jodee ('57 Phys. Ed.), and uncle Rich Gustafson ('63, '68 MA Phys. Ed.) all went to WSU.

Scott wore the number 47 at WSU, another tradition he passed to son Peyton.

In 2016, Scott told Cougfan.com: "You couldn't draw it up any better, I feel really fortunate as a father that Peyton is wearing my number [47] ... I couldn't be more proud of him, with how conscientious and passionate Peyton is about the game. That's all you ask for as a dad."

Peyton joined the WSU football squad in 2014, where he shone as both a player and a team leader.

He played a program-record 54 games under Leach, earned Defensive MVP honors at the 2018 Alamo Bowl, and received All-Pac-12 Conference selection three times and Pac-12 All-Academic selection five times.

Peyton was WSU's tackling leader in a thrilling 9-4 season in 2015 and then repeated as top tackler in 2016. He is WSU's fifth-best career tackler.

"We believed in Leach's vision and we really embraced the brotherhood. We embraced the fact that, hey, this is on us to turn this place around," Peyton says.

Peyton was a team leader as well, tutoring linebackers while nursing an injury and helping support the team in the aftermath of quarterback Tyler Hilinski's tragic death by suicide.

Beyond WSU, Peyton's brothers, Tyler and Cooper, also played college football. "We're a sports family and believed in the benefits of playing sports," Peyton says. "From an early age, we were instilled with values and attributes that it takes to be a great teammate."

After college, Peyton had coaching stints at the University of Southern California and Mississippi State University. Peyton left college sports in 2024 to coach football and teach special education at his high school alma mater, Skyline High School in Sammamish.

"I come from a family of educators," Peyton says. "High school is just a lot more pure than college sports. And I've got my teaching, so all my cups are filled." 

Hear more from Peyton Pelluer and family:

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



Leading the Cougs

THE NEW PAC-12 CONFERENCE LAUNCHED ON JULY 1, with a group of fiercely competitive schools joining Washington State University and Oregon State University in the hunt for championships in football, basketball, soccer, baseball, volleyball, and more.

At WSU, new leaders and returning coaches across athletics will guide Cougs to future success. They face some tough challenges in the rapidly changing world of college sports, but they're determined to keep the student-athlete experience as the top priority.

Here are some of the new Cougar sports leaders.



ATHLETIC DIRECTOR JON HAARLOW

Haarlow became the 16th person to lead WSU Athletics in April. He was chief financial officer for Cougar Athletics since 2021 and has 15 years of experience in college athletics.



HEAD FOOTBALL COACH KIRBY MOORE

WSU named Kirby Moore as the 36th head football coach in December 2025. Moore brings an innovative offensive background and strong ties to eastern Washington. He grew up in Prosser and played wide receiver at Boise State University before moving to coaching.



HEAD SOCCER COACH CHRIS CITOWICKI

Chris Citowicki became head coach of Cougar soccer in December 2025. Citowicki brings a record of success and student-athlete development from his tenure at the University of Montana.

Climbing higher for 25 years

WHEN IT OPENED IN 2001, it boasted the largest university weight and cardio rooms in the country. This year, it's welcoming its 15 millionth patron and celebrating 25 years as one of the busiest spaces at Washington State University.

The **Student Recreation Center (SRC)** on the Pullman campus has been hosting a yearlong series of activities to commemorate its quarter-century milestone, including a September 19 reunion for staff, student employees, and advisory board members.

Unlike most campus buildings, the SRC is a student legacy—conceived, financed, and managed through student leadership and mandatory fees. The model of student ownership remains rare among universities nationwide.

"It speaks to how important this facility is to students and the university community," says Joanne Greene ('02 MBA), executive director of University Recreation (UREC). She was working as a graduate assistant when the SRC was built and remembers the rush leading up to its opening in January 2001. She says, "It is not only a place to work out but also where you can meet other students and community members, socialize, and relieve stress."

Prior to the SRC, the Hollingbery Fieldhouse was the key campus spot for physical education, intramurals, and recreation programs. In 1980, an annex was added to provide space for racquetball courts and a small weight room. It also housed the Outdoor Recreation Center.

Students began lobbying for a larger facility in 1996 when a task force was formed to determine the feasibility of building the SRC. The idea was put to a student vote, and the proposal to fund the SRC through a mandatory fee received the support needed to finance the construction and operation.

Steve Wymer ('01 Comm.) served on the building's planning committee and helped the multi-year project unfold while first serving as an Associated Students of Washington State University senator, then vice president, and eventually president.

"I probably knocked on 5,000 doors campaigning for it, and I'm not exaggerating," recalls Wymer. He also remembers parking his beat-up Honda Accord across the street from the construction site, with snow on the ground and the heat cranked up, to watch with amazement his dream project become reality.

Today, the building boasts 160,000 square feet of exercise space where patrons can engage in activities for just about every interest: swimming in a five-lane 25-yard lap pool, running on an eighth-of-a-mile indoor track, playing racquetball, taking a spin class, shooting baskets, ascending the climbing wall, and using the fitness, weight, and cardio machines.

JoJo Maestas ('26 Comm., Socio.) visited the SRC almost every evening to play volleyball with his friends during his senior year. "Being able to move, decompress, and be part of a community helps me manage stress, stay balanced, and supports my overall happiness and success as a student," Maestas says.

Because the SRC had such a positive impact on his student experience, Maestas volunteered on the UREC Advisory Board, serving as its chair. "Serving in a leadership role on the board has shown me how much student input truly shapes this space, and I'm excited to see how the SRC continues to grow and adapt to support future generations of Cougs." 🐾

A SRC GALLERY

[magazine.wsu.edu/
extra/SRC-gallery](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/SRC-gallery)



by Steve Nakata

Special dreams come true

by Becky Kramer

COACHES DREAM of moments like these, and players remember them forever.

The Whitman County Superstars basketball team was down two points at the beginning of the second half of a championship game against the Lewis County Vipers at the Washington Special Olympics Winter Games.

Then Aiden Fitzgerald executed a flawless pull-up jump shot, despite being guarded by an intimidatingly tall player from the other team. "It was a floater," Fitzgerald says of his shot.

supervisor. Fitzgerald's pull-up jump shot was one of many proud moments for him during the championship game.

"We had tremendous depth on the team," Brock says. "Seven of our nine players scored points during the final game, and they really played team ball. Everyone had a part in the win."

"Winning a gold medal at state was awesome. And spending time with these guys and girls was awesome," Fitzgerald adds. "We had each other's backs throughout the season. When someone

Throughout the season, the Superstars also received compliments for their sportsmanship.

"Parents and community members came up and said they were one of the nicest, most respectful teams," Brock says. "They were helping other players up and encouraging other teams. They are not just good players; they are good people."

Desmond "Dez" Moses, the team captain, says he's proud of the Superstars' reputation. "Even when things are tough,



Above: Coach Brock being doused by his players after the win*

VIDEO FRAME KRISTI
TIPPETT/WSU ROAR
PROGRAM

Right: The Whitman County Superstars (which includes WSU ROAR students) won the gold medal in the Washington Special Olympics Winter Games.

COURTESY SPECIAL
OLYMPICS

*WATCH THE VIDEO:

[magazine.wsu.edu/
extra/victory-splash](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/victory-splash)



He and his teammates watched the basketball rise majestically before it descended to swish through the basket. The crowd erupted with cheers. The burst of momentum carried the Superstars to a 28-17 victory against the Vipers and a gold medal in their Special Olympics division.

Fitzgerald and most of his teammates are part of Washington State University's ROAR program. Established in 2017, ROAR provides a two-year college experience for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Shortly before March Madness started, the Superstars played in a five-game tournament in Wenatchee from February 27 to March 1.

The win at the Winter Games capped a season of teamwork, camaraderie, and growth for the Superstars, says Korey Brock, the team's volunteer coach, who is also the WSU Creamery production

missed a basket, we were like 'That's OK. You'll get the next one.'"

This is the third year that WSU ROAR students have played on Whitman County's Special Olympics basketball team. Some of the students had previous experience, but it was Isabel Fox's and Damon Landeros's first time playing on a basketball team.

Both players said their ball handling skills and teamwork improved during the season. They credited the twice-weekly practice sessions at the Pullman Recreation Center, where Brock and assistant coaches Ted and Lisa Uhlenkott focused on skill development and conditioning.

The conditioning drills paid off during the tournament, where the Superstars consistently outran other teams' players and kept the ball in play through defensive rebounds. "We had the speed," Fox says.

we still show good sportsmanship, because that's what Special Olympics is about," he says.

Sometimes, showing respect to the other teams meant backing off when the Superstars had a big lead and letting the other team score, Xander Piatt adds.

Other WSU ROAR students who played with the Superstars were Justin Braza and Sarah Rowley. After they won their championship game, the players celebrated in a time-honored fashion. They pulled Brock outside and soaked him with their water bottles.

While the Superstars bask in the glow of their successful season, they're also thinking ahead to next year. The Special Olympics basketball season starts in November, and Moses sees another trip to the Winter Games in the teams' future.

"Next year, we are going right back," he says. 🐾



Fennel

ADOBE STOCK

IT'S A WHIMSICAL-LOOKING, somewhat intimidating sort of vegetable, with green feathery fronds sprouting from long white fingers emanating from a bulbous, also white, human heart-shaped base. Its appearance might be a reason it's often overlooked—although it shouldn't be.

For its wispy, herbaceous leaves, reminiscent of dill. For its celery-like stalks. For its crisp, licorice-scented, swollen, layered stem. For its punch-packing seeds that imbue a gently sweet, grassy flavor with a hint of anise.

Fennel is edible, foot to flower. It acts like a spice, leafy herb, and root vegetable—although it grows aboveground and isn't

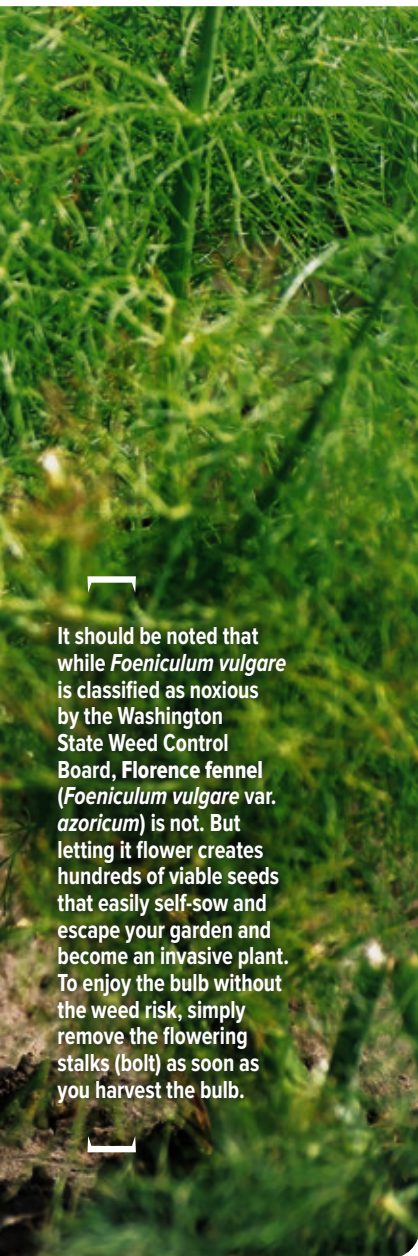
a true bulb. The versatile, ancient crop enjoys multiple uses and a long season. In Washington state, it's generally available from late spring through late fall.

"I always say northwest Washington could be the fennel bulb-producing capital of the US based on the quality we can produce here. But the market demand is not present yet," says Carol Miles, Extension vegetable specialist at Washington State University's Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC).

SHE ENCOUNTERED AN ABUNDANCE of fennel, or *finocchio*, while working on a

US Department of Agriculture grant in Sicily, one of Europe's high-volume fennel producers. "I was there in March, and it was being harvested. Every meal had fennel in it," she says. "When it's in season, they put it in everything. My favorite was fennel topped with pork. They were baked together, and the fennel had a very subtle flavor."

In the late 2010s, following the Sicily trip, Miles led two fennel trials at NWREC to identify the best cultivars, seeding dates, and planting methods for northwest Washington. In all, she and her team evaluated 16 fennel types. Findings showed five cultivars had the greatest



It should be noted that while *Foeniculum vulgare* is classified as noxious by the Washington State Weed Control Board, Florence fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* var. *azoricum*) is not. But letting it flower creates hundreds of viable seeds that easily self-sow and escape your garden and become an invasive plant. To enjoy the bulb without the weed risk, simply remove the flowering stalks (bolt) as soon as you harvest the bulb.

production rate, yield, and quality—and are well-suited for production in the region. Another finding: Direct seeding yielded better results than transplanting starts.

In Sicily, seeding starts in November or December, with harvest in March or April. But, “for us,” Miles says, “it’s too wet.” Plus, she says, “Sicily doesn’t get as cold as we get. Our March is like their December.” In northwest Washington, seeding starts in April or May, with harvest in September or October. “Then, it’s a matter of keeping the bulb tender. You don’t want it to overmature and become woody,” Miles says.

Recently, during a free WSU Extension San Juan County Master Gardeners workshop on growing vegetables, Miles asked audience members if they eat fennel. “About 50 percent of them raised their hands, and I was amazed,” Miles says, noting the response prompted her and a graduate student to craft a fact sheet on fennel for home gardeners. “I personally think fennel is an easy crop to grow. It grows like a carrot: slow and small until it’s about a month old. Then it’s off and running.”

FENNEL LIKES FULL SUN, consistent watering, and moist, organically rich, well-drained soil.

India is the global leader, producing more than half the world’s fennel, mainly in seed production for the spice market. Egypt, China, Turkey, and Syria are the next top producers. While Italy ranks sixth, it dominates Europe’s fresh market. Production centers around southern Italy, particularly Puglia, Calabria, and Sicily, where, Miles says, the growing climate is similar to Mount Vernon.

“We’re about the same latitude. We’re not hot and dry; we have a mild Mediterranean climate: cool and humid. We also have long day length, which leads to bolting for some varieties. If you want seed, you want bolting. But if fennel is bolting, you’ve lost your bulb. The flower stalk is woody, and the entire bulb is no longer palatable. It’s about choosing varieties that aren’t going to bolt.”

Florence fennel, the most common type of bulb fennel—the variety found in grocery stores—doesn’t grow well in northwest Washington. “It just bolts for us,” says Miles, who evaluated “every seed variety that I could get—every one sold in the US plus some sent to me from an Italian company.” She and her team identified varieties that grow well in northwest Washington: Finale, Orazio, Preludio, Solaris, and Tenace.

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) isn’t related to licorice. A member of the carrot family, it’s a cousin to cumin, coriander, caraway, dill, parsley, and—no surprise here—anise. Its flavor comes from anethole, an aromatic oil shared by fennel and anise as well as licorice.

FENNEL HAS BEEN USED in Europe, Asia, and North Africa since ancient times. In Greek mythology, a fennel stalk concealed the spark of fire Prometheus stole from the gods. The modern marathon race comes from fennel’s Greek name: *marathos* or *marathon*. According to legend, the Greek herald Pheidippides was sent running to Athens from the fennel field upon which the Battle of Marathon

took place to announce the outnumbered Athenians’ win over invading Persians in 490 BCE.

Pliny the Elder outlines fennel’s medicinal uses—an aid in digestion and treatment for snakebites and poor eyesight—in his *Naturalis Historia* (*Natural History*), written in the first century AD. *De Re Coquinaria* (*The Art of Cooking*), attributed to Marcus Gavius Apicius and also written in the first century AD, features fennel seeds—along with crushed pepper, wine, broth, and other herbs and spices, in sauces for boar and stag.

A rich source of dietary fiber, raw fennel has just 27 calories per cup and a crisp, cool, neutralizing bite, making it a natural palate cleanser. It’s perfect between courses or mixed into salads. Classic combinations include fennel and blood orange or grapefruit, and fennel and apple or pear. Add arugula and feta or goat cheese.

Use fennel’s delicate, frilly, threadlike fronds as garnishes or as a substitute for dill. Add whole seeds to pickling liquids. One of the main ingredients in Chinese five spice, fennel seeds are also fantastic for seasoning sausage, pork, beef, fish, and bread. They lend depth to marinara, meat, or pizza sauces. Don’t forget the flower; sprinkle sweet, earthy fennel pollen on, well, almost anything.

Roasted or braised, fennel mellows much like sautéed onion, its flavor becoming light and delicate. Make mussels with lemon, garlic, white wine, and thinly sliced fennel. Try pureed fennel soup or fennel fritters. A 15th century recipe for fennel fritters from Martino da Como, Italy, largely considered the Western world’s first celebrity chef, notes “...You can take all the little branches or leaves one by one, or two by two if you’d like, tossing them well in ... batter. Then fry in good lard, or in a mixture of half oil and half butter.”

Add fennel, along with a whole chicken, potatoes, leeks, celery, and carrots, to a Dutch oven for a classic French *poule au pot* Sunday dinner, famously referenced by “Good King Henry” IV of France in his 1662 biography. His promise, loosely translated, was “a chicken in every pot.” Don’t forget *fenouil*, or fennel, a fundamental element in modern French and Italian cooking.

“It’s good in soup, like a white bean cassoulet,” says Miles, noting her favorite way to enjoy fennel is “simple, flavorful, and crisp”—in a salad with blood orange slices, served with homemade vinaigrette, salt, and pepper. “And, if you’re open to it, very thinly sliced red onion. It’s very refreshing.” 🐾



Recipes for all parts of fennel:

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/fennel





People working with robots

require a safe environment,

where humans can trust their

mechanical companions. AI

helps build that reliability.

and robotics

A matter of trust

by Larry Clark

ROBOTS ARE NOTHING NEW in factories, warehouses, and even homes. They could be a giant arm welding pieces on a car, a small food delivery bot rolling around college campuses, or a robo-vacuum getting stuck under a chair.

Most early automatons, going back to the first industrial robot in a 1961 General Motors plant, were programmed to perform basic, specific tasks. Robots eventually gained sensors and better programming, but they often weren't very sophisticated in responding to changes around them. The real world is messy and complicated.

Artificial intelligence, especially predictive large language models like Gemini or ChatGPT, is changing that dynamic by shifting how robots learn and ushering in an era when robots will adapt quickly to new situations.

Carolina Parada ('04, '06 MS Elec. Eng.) works on the cutting edge of the field as senior director and head of robotics at Google DeepMind, where researchers have integrated Gemini's models into robots and the physical world.

"We have believed from the beginning that AI is the way to transform robotics so that we can build robots that are truly intelligent, so that they can interact with you, (so) that they can reason about their environment, and they can take action in a way that feels very general," Parada said in a 2025 Google DeepMind podcast.

However, robots now require even more safety and reliability, especially ones that operate alongside people. Collaborative robots that work with humans, called "cobots," have been a focus of industry and Washington State University researchers for many years. Advances in AI, which enable faster and more effective learning in the physical world, could also increase safety and resilience.

That's crucial for the next robotic evolution. Humans effectively sharing space with robots—whether it's a self-driving car or an automated factory machine—depends heavily on breaching a trust gap. The challenge for robots, on the other hand, is human unpredictability.

"For our work here, it's mainly technical trust," says Mehdi Hosseinzadeh, assistant professor of mechanical engineering at WSU. "We should really make sure that the

robots are reliable. Their operation and their performance should be reliable enough that I can guarantee nothing will happen to your kid with a robot."

BUILDING TRUST IN COBOTS

Hosseinzadeh, an expert in control systems, joined WSU in 2022 and now leads the Safe and Intelligent Autonomous Systems Laboratory (SIAS). One area of research is training robots to manage unexpected human behavior.

Humans excel in unstructured environments, Hosseinzadeh says, so robots should mimic that intelligence to succeed as cobots.

As humans, "we can easily understand uncertainty. Imagine I put you in an environment that you don't know anything about. Just by looking, you will understand everything. Is this place safe or not? Is there an obstacle? With maybe less than a couple of seconds, you can really understand and you adjust your behavior," Hosseinzadeh says.

He explains that if someone uses classic methods to train robots, with multiple sensors and mathematical formulations, it takes time when you might need a fast decision. That's unacceptable with, for example, autonomous cars that are essentially robots on wheels.

A solution is to train robots to react safely using AI. Neural networks similar to a human brain—like LLMs—can react much faster than calculating math formulas every time. When a self-driving car encounters a kid playing in the street, a split-second decision can mean the difference between tragedy and relief.

One method to prevent problems, Hosseinzadeh says, is for robots to understand and even predict human behavior. Are people distracted with their cell phones, angry, or unaware of their surroundings? "Robots should be able to see a human and just get some cues from the human face," he says.

Hosseinzadeh notes it's impossible to add all scenarios for an AI-driven robot. Instead, SIAS researchers can group scenarios, which assist in training robots when they face similar situations.

Returning to the example of vehicles, he emphasizes the need for demonstration outside the lab.

"When people see autonomous vehicles, they might think, 'Is this autonomous vehicle going to hallucinate something and crash?' You should be able to guarantee it is not going to happen," Hosseinzadeh says.





From above, left to right: Robotic apple-harvesting system with a 3D-printed soft robotic end effector; Ming Luo PHOTOS COURTESY SCHOOL OF MECHANICAL AND MATERIALS ENGINEERING Mehdi Hosseinzadeh in his lab PHOTO (DETAIL) SHELLY HANKS



OUT OF THE LAB, INTO THE FIELD

Far outside a lab, WSU robots labor in apple orchards, using AI to improve their picking.

Ming Luo, Flaherty Assistant Professor in the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering, says those robots can harvest apples efficiently and safely in modern high-density orchards, but they need to navigate complexity in real-world trees.

Luo and his team overcome the limitations of traditional programming with AI-powered computer vision to identify fruit clusters. They pair that with human-guided machine learning to train the robots in complex maneuvers.

He emphasizes that robots can be affordable, practical tools meant to complement human workers rather than replace them. “There’s a real labor problem in agriculture,” he says, noting that, without robotic assistance, “apples are going to rot, and they’re not going to get picked.”

Luo has also studied psychological aspects of human-robot interaction. His team’s unusual robots—made with soft,

fabric-based designs to protect fruit and human coworkers—increase trust and physical safety. He says standards for robot behavior, such as safe distances, can also help with technical trust.

ROBOTS KEEP LEARNING

Parada says she was partly inspired by Rosie the Robot from *The Jetsons* sci-fi cartoon from the 1960s. Rosie was fast, efficient, and kept the family safe in their far-future household. Such a robot might take a while, but it’s getting closer.

Parada’s team uses data-driven robot learning through Gemini Robotics, the latest advanced model. It brings LLM understanding, both visual and verbal, to the physical world. And it’s interactive, so robots can talk to people and translate discussions to physical action.

“We are now at a point where we are confident that if you can teach a robot, if you can operate a robot in a very complex task, it can learn it,” Parada said in the podcast.

There’s still much for robots to learn, though. The messy world is constantly changing. Humans do unexpected things



all the time, which creates problems for cobots.

Still, increasingly sophisticated AI models are fueling a revolution in robotics and the ability of robots to adapt. Questions remain: What is acceptable risk and how can the trust gap be bridged?

“AI-driven robots are going to happen. But building trust is challenging,” Hosseinzadeh says. “What I can do in the engineering department is I can do my best to make sure that everything is reliable.” 🐼



Learn more about AI and robotics:



Video frame from the “Redefining Robotics with Carolina Parada” podcast

COURTESY GOOGLE DEEPMIND

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/smarter-bots

Smarter Farming with AI

by Addy Hatch

ALMOST ANY CONVERSATION WITH A FARMER will include the weather. Crops thrive or struggle based on rain, heat, or one of many other environmental shifts that affect plants.

Fortunately for farmers, orchardists, and ranchers in Washington state, robust monitoring from Washington State University has helped—and it's getting supercharged.

WSU's AgWeatherNet is the nation's oldest and largest system of its kind, used by farmers and ranchers to track heat and cold, wind and moisture. It's a valuable asset for a major industry in the state.

Now, artificial intelligence and machine learning will use the trove of real-time data collected by the system's nearly 370 weather stations to create more effective tools and computer models. Producers are already able to make improved farm-specific decisions about crops, livestock, and human health using the system.

"It is happening now and we are improving it further," says Lav Khot, director of AgWeatherNet and professor of precision agriculture at WSU. "That's where AI comes in: How can we mine the information from this data and make better management decisions? It's really changing the game."

AgWeatherNet stations measure air temperature, relative humidity, soil temperature, rainfall, wind speed, wind direction, and solar radiation. Recently the stations were upgraded to also monitor air quality, which has become an important element of agricultural work during wildfire season. Measurements are done every five minutes.

Models combine this information with data from the National Weather Service and historic trends for location-specific forecasts. This helps growers decide when to plant, whether they need to plan ahead for frost or heat, and how much to water.

Data from AgWeatherNet also feeds into WSU's Decision Aid System, which helps growers decide when they should spray pesticides. The Potato Decision Aid System was launched in 2021 and is already saving the industry in Washington nearly \$10 million each year. It's a version

of a similar tool used in the tree fruit industry for decades. Other agricultural producers are looking at the Decision Aid System for their crops, too.

In recent years AgWeatherNet began integrating growers' own weather stations and plant and soil sensors into the system, making it available to that grower via the AWN Smart Farms platform. Aside from monitoring conditions and aiding decision-making, the sensors help trigger automated overhead cooling and irrigation.

Commission, says growers are dependent on AgWeatherNet and are looking forward to more AI-powered tools from WSU that use its data.

She says, "I would say that all growers are using AgWeatherNet without exception. It is so incredibly valuable."

Shawn Vestal of WSU News contributed to this story.

How can we mine the information from this data and make better management decisions? It's really changing the game.

From top: A field AWN station, locations of AWN active stations, AWN field team members upgrading the Prosser station, AgWeatherNet director Lav Khot

COURTESY AGWEATHERNET, BACKGROUND SATELLITE IMAGE COURTESY NASA

Learn more and sign up for AgWeatherNet:



weather.wsu.edu

TO MEASURE THE SNOWPACK near Hart's Pass in Washington's North Cascades, Toby Rodgers first boards a helicopter at the Skagit Regional Airport for a 40-minute flight. After the pilot lands in the rugged terrain, he straps on his snowshoes to trek to the sampling site.

In early April, Rodgers ('00 MS Soil Sci.) measured near-normal snowpack levels at the site above 6,000 feet—an anomaly after the Northwest's warm winter.

"I was standing on 100 inches of snow—more than eight feet. The depth was startling because of all the bare ground we flew over to get there," says Rodgers, a water supply specialist for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The state of the snowpack is a multibillion-dollar question for the Northwest economy and its quality of life. The answer determines how much water is available to generate hydropower; irrigate high-value crops like apples, cherries, and potatoes; fill reservoirs for summer recreation; mitigate wildfire risk; and sustain culturally important fisheries like salmon and steelhead.

Rodgers, who is based in Mount Vernon, is part of a network of government employees who track the snowpack's water content across the western United States through manual and automated snow sampling.

Washington State University researchers are studying how artificial intelligence's predictive qualities could augment their work. Modeling by the researchers suggests AI could help fill in gaps in snowpack and streamflow data and also improve forecast accuracy during "snow droughts" like the past winter, when mountain precipitation fell as rain instead of snow.

The research is part of the university's AgAID Institute, which is deploying AI to tackle some of agriculture's biggest challenges, including water availability.

"Here in the Northwest, most of our watersheds are snowmelt driven. Depending on the area, 50 to 70 percent of the streamflow could be generated from melting snow," says Kirti Rajagopalan, associate professor in WSU's Department of Biological Systems Engineering. "Water is a scarce resource, and we manage it for multiple competing uses."

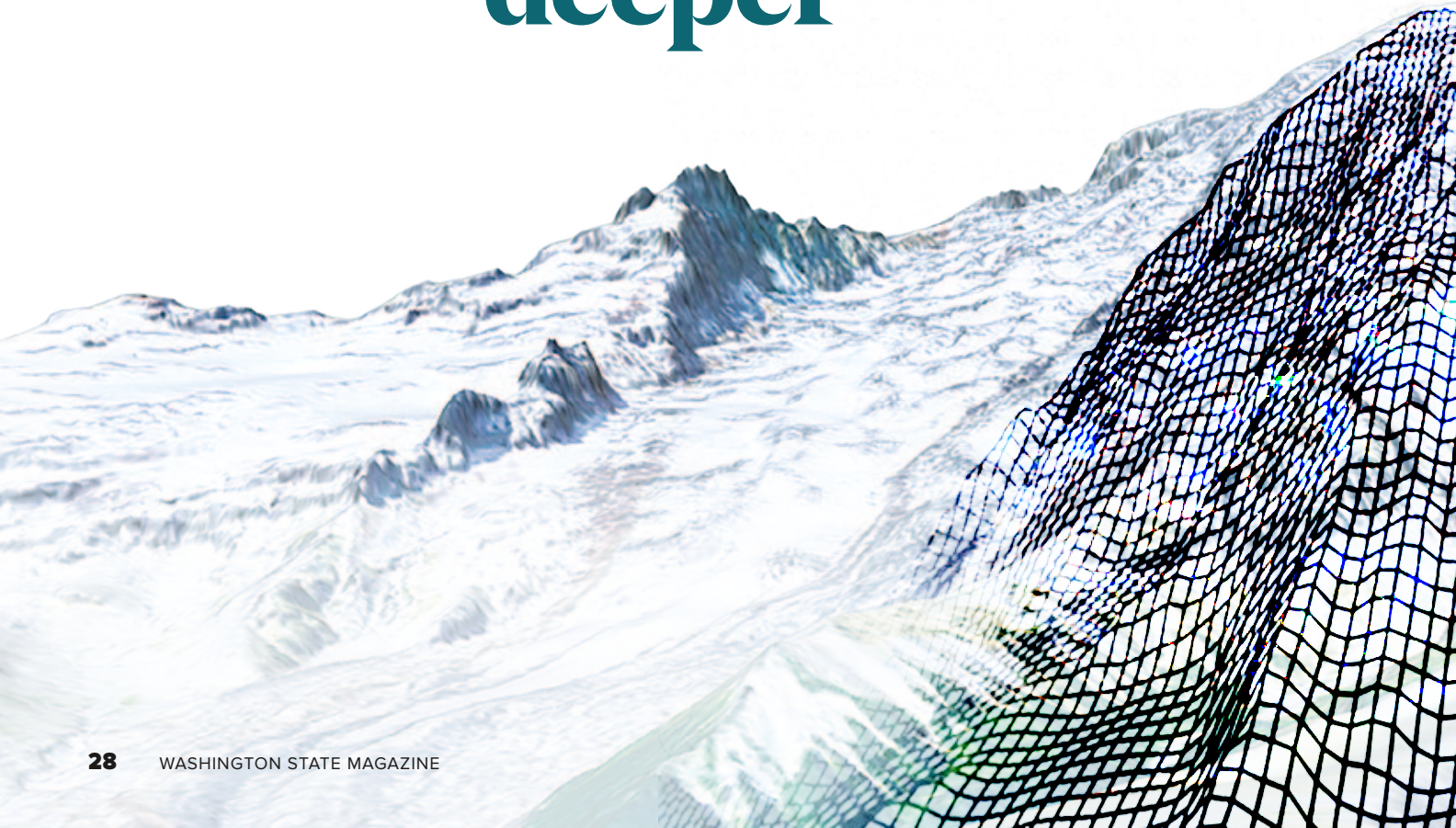
MEASURING SNOWPACK IN THE WEST dates to the early 1900s, when a professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, cored snow in the Sierra Nevadas with a hollow tube. By weighing the tube, James E. Church could calculate the snow's water content. He worked with engineering faculty to develop the first water supply forecasts for the Lake Tahoe area.

During the Dust Bowl, farmers lobbied for better streamflow forecasting. Congress provided the first federal funding in 1935 for snowpack surveys. Church's methodology—already adopted in other basins—went into widespread use.

For decades, measuring the snowpack was a laborious process that required winter survival skills. People skied, snowshoed, and snowmobiled to remote sites to collect and weigh snow samples. By the 1970s, however, automated snow telemetry stations were providing hourly readings on snow depth, temperature, precipitation, and relative humidity.

Washington has 77 automated sites, but Rodgers and other federal employees and partners still manually check about 50 sites each winter. "We're ground-truthing what's happening with the snowpack," he says.

A_[II] understanding deeper



AI SHOWS PROMISE as another breakthrough tool for estimating snowpack, streamflow, and water availability, say WSU researchers, who've published models based on 25 years of snowpack and streamflow data at more than 500 locations across the West. The researchers integrated biophysical models with AI's machine learning to achieve high accuracy rates for streamflow estimates.

"If you're only using AI for streamflow modeling, you'll get results that aren't scientifically sound," says Rajagopalan, a coauthor of the study, who worked with computer science faculty and students on the model. "AI tends to be really good with predictions, but we need the physical processes that drive hydrology to generate results that obey the laws of math and physics."

Used with existing data, AI-enhanced hydrologic modeling could offer a more complete look at how much snow-water the mountains hold, she says.

Some 800-plus stations throughout the West collect snowpack information. They're strategically, yet sparsely located at mid-range elevations in remote locations.

Even within a small geographic area, the snowpack can vary, Rajagopalan says. Adding datasets that depict features like terrain, vegetation, and prevailing winds to AI modeling can produce a better understanding of conditions within watersheds.

WSU researchers are also working on refining their modeling to describe the range of uncertainty in water forecasting for water users.

During drought years, for instance, irrigation districts need to know how their water allocations could fluctuate, Rajagopalan says. Understanding the level of uncertainty in forecasts helps irrigators plan for different scenarios, such as purchasing additional water or leaving fields fallow.

The next steps are for WSU researchers to work with state and federal water resource agencies to test the AI models, while WSU economists evaluate their usefulness to growers.

Rajagopalan anticipates that the modeling will prove its worth over time. In a warming climate, more winters will be like the last one—where watersheds accrue a fraction of their historic snowpack levels. Forecasting future water supply is more challenging when precipitation falls as rain instead of snow.

"When we transition to rain-dominant watersheds, we expect our forecast accuracy to decline," she says. "But if we can improve the forecasts with AI, perhaps we can restore some of the accuracy." 🐾



of potential snowpack

by Becky Kramer

Above: Helicopter lands for a snowpack survey near Hart's Pass in the Washington North Cascades.

PHOTO ALLEN BUCKMAN/USDA-NRCS

Learn more about the AgAID Institute:



STAFF ILLUSTRATION FROM MOUNT RAINIER SKETCHFAB 3D MODEL



Quick, Spot the Animals

AI Cuts Wildlife Tracking Time from Months to Days

Speed and knowledge matters in protecting endangered wildlife, so identifying species quickly from a flood of images could inform timely conservation decisions.

Artificial intelligence can dramatically speed up the painstaking work of tracking wildlife with remote cameras, cutting analysis time from months or even a year to just days while producing nearly the same scientific conclusions as humans.

That's according to a 2026 study led by researchers at Washington State University and Google, published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*. The team tested whether a fully automated AI system could replace humans in processing hundreds of thousands to millions of camera trap images collected in Washington state, Montana's Glacier National Park, and Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve.

They found that, for most species, models built from AI-identified images closely matched those produced by human experts. Across key measures such as where animals occur and what environmental factors influence them, the results aligned in roughly 85–90 percent of cases, with limited divergence for rare or difficult-to-identify species.

The implications could be significant for conservation. Faster processing means researchers and wildlife managers can move

more quickly from collecting data to making decisions, potentially enabling near-real-time monitoring of species such as jaguars, wolves, and grizzly bears.

"We're not trying to replace people," says WSU wildlife ecologist Daniel Thornton, lead author of the study. "The goal is to help researchers get to answers faster so they can make better decisions about managing and conserving wildlife."

Traditionally, that process has been slow and labor-intensive. Camera traps, which are motion-activated cameras placed in forests and other habitats, can generate enormous datasets. A single project may produce hundreds of thousands or even millions of images that must be reviewed to determine which species appear in each frame.

If we can process
data faster, we can
respond faster,
and that's really
what matters for
conservation.

Even with a team of undergraduate assistants and a graduate student verifying identifications, Thornton says the process typically takes six to seven months, and sometimes up to a year, before analysis can begin.

Early AI tools offered some relief by filtering out blank images, often 60–70 percent of the total, but still required humans to review tens of thousands of photos containing animals. The new study tested whether that final human step could be eliminated.

Using a general AI model called SpeciesNet, developed by Google, the researchers ran images through a fully automated pipeline with no human review and compared the results to traditional, expert-labeled datasets.

"The key question wasn't whether the AI got every image right," says Dan Morris, a senior staff research scientist at Google who helped create SpeciesNet and is a coauthor on the study. "It was whether the ecological conclusions you care about would end up being basically the same."

For most species, they were. Even when the AI made mistakes, such as misidentifying animals or missing detections, the overall models remained robust because occupancy models rely on repeated observations over time.

In practical terms, the time savings are dramatic. Fully automated processing can now be completed in just a few days, reducing a months-long bottleneck to roughly a week.

That efficiency could be transformative, particularly for smaller or underfunded

conservation groups. It may also allow researchers to expand monitoring efforts without being limited by data processing capacity.

The project also contributed to the broader AI-for-conservation community by making part of its dataset publicly available, helping support tools like SpeciesNet that rely on shared data to improve.

Morris emphasizes that the study takes a practical approach. Rather than developing new AI algorithms, the team focused on what current tools can already do.

“We weren’t trying to invent a new model,” he says. “We were asking whether, given where the technology is today, people can rely on it for the kinds of analyses they already do.”

The answer, at least for many common species and standard ecological models, appears to be yes.

There are still limitations. Human review is needed for many other applications of camera trapping data, and this paper only dealt with a small subset of species that may be caught on camera. For example, very rare and easily confused species are still problematic for AI detection. But the findings suggest that in some cases, image processing no longer needs to be a major constraint on large-scale camera-trapping studies.

“The big takeaway is that this doesn’t have to be a bottleneck anymore,” Thornton says. “If we can process data faster, we can respond faster, and that’s really what matters for conservation.”



Daniel Thornton COURTESY
WSU SCHOOL OF THE
ENVIRONMENT

More Practical AI

IDENTIFYING RECYCLABLE PLASTICS WITH AI

Advanced spectral imaging and machine learning could make plastics recycling more efficient and reduce landfill waste, using a new method developed by WSU scientists and graduate students coordinating with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and the University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez.

The study’s lead author was Maria Paula Garcia-Tovar, a WSU materials science and engineering doctoral student, with coauthors Macy Christianson (’22, ’24 MS Comp. Sci.) at PNNL, associate professor of computer science Luis de la Torre, emeritus associate professor of computer science John Miller, and others.

Their imaging method offers the promise of a sorting system that is more accurate in distinguishing and separating different types of plastics on conveyor belts, which is crucial for producing high-quality recycled materials.

SUPPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS

An AI-powered, open-source mobile app built by WSU’s Complex Social Interactions (CSI) Lab can walk law enforcement officers through collecting information during domestic violence incidents. Officers often juggle chaos on the scene of a domestic violence call: a victim in distress, conflicting accounts, possible weapons, children in the room, and a long list of legal steps that must be followed exactly.

With funding from the Washington state legislature, the CSI Lab is recruiting law enforcement agencies, victim advocates, and other partners to test the system in real-world settings and help refine it.

David Makin, principal investigator of the CSI Lab and a professor in WSU’s Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology says, “This is about giving officers the right information at the right time so they can make better decisions when it matters most.”

A VIRTUAL TEACHING ASSISTANT

WSU researchers and students are developing an AI-driven framework to support teaching and learning: a virtual teaching assistant. Thanks to a grant from artificial intelligence company and chipmaker Nvidia, Parteek Kumar, associate professor in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, will lead the design with help from WSU colleagues and students.

The virtual TA “will help students better understand complex concepts while also supporting instructors in delivering more adaptive and personalized learning experiences,” Kumar says. “We are reaching a point where we can use AI in a responsible way for making teaching and learning more engaging.”



**More AI
research
at WSU:**

research.wsu.edu/ai





“
So that’s
been my life:
to push the
envelope ...
I keep rolling
forward.”

Rolling Forward

by Adriana Janovich

ABDI WARSAME WAS TWELVE when his older cousins invited him into the city. They were in their 20s and wanted to fetch belongings from the apartments they had fled in central Mogadishu, Somalia. Warsame wanted adventure.

“My instant reaction was ‘Yes!’” says Warsame, who didn’t tell his parents about his plans. “As a young kid, I looked up to my older cousins. Any time I spent with them was bonus time.”

It was January 12, 1991. The Somali Civil War raged around them. But Warsame didn’t really comprehend the danger until he heard the distinctive sound of bullets flying and saw soldiers lying dead in the street. On the long walk back to the suburb where Warsame lived with his family, the trio encountered sniper fire, shelling, and a rocket explosion. One moment, Warsame remembers darting across an open field. The next, he was lying on the ground.

“I blew into the air and landed on my tailbone,” Warsame recalls. “I looked to my right, and the younger of my two cousins was face down. His hip was wide open and bleeding. I tried to get up and run, and I noticed my legs were strangely soft. I looked to my left

and saw my other cousin in the distance. I yelled, ‘Please come back!’ I wished to see my mom and dad again.”

Texas-based Warsame (’24 MBA) was born in Somalia and came to the United States as a teenager in 1995 with the dream of being able to walk again. What followed was rigorous physical therapy and many milestones: enrolling in American high school, earning a driver’s license, becoming a US citizen in 2002, graduating from college, getting a job at a telecom company. But walking again wasn’t an option.

“The doctors said, ‘There’s nothing we can do.’ That was a knife to my heart,” Warsame says. “I was completely demoralized. I lost hope. And I am not one who loses hope easily.”

A paraplegic who advocates for other differently abled people and chairs a foundation to aid disadvantaged youths in his native Somalia, Warsame now sees what happened to him as destiny. There’s no use in regretting going into the city that fateful day, he says. “It was meant to be.”

Still, leaving his homeland was one of the hardest things he’s ever done. “People don’t love to leave their homes and their communities. It’s one of the most difficult decisions they could make to say goodbye to loved ones and the places they have known all their lives. It has to be something dramatic that makes them say, ‘I can’t stay here; I have to go.’”

Warsame’s hope was reignited when he met a representative for a mobility company who was professionally dressed and navigating life in a wheelchair. “I was taken by his look,” Warsame says, recounting their exchange at the inpatient treatment center where he was undergoing full-time physical therapy.

Through a mixture of hand gestures and limited English, “I said, ‘How did you get here?’ And he said, ‘I drove.’” Then he showed Warsame his two-door sedan with hand control, which, Warsame says, “is exactly what I use today. He said, ‘I have a full-time job. I have my own apartment and car. I go anywhere I wish.’ That was the first and last time I saw him. I wish I could find that guy. He gave me a road map for success.”

Determined to be independent like the young professional he crossed paths with at the rehabilitation center, Warsame studied extra hard during summers. Learning English was difficult. So was navigating high school in a wheelchair and experiencing culture shock. But Warsame persevered.

He details his experiences in his 2018 memoir *Always Rolling Forward: The Power of Hope Against Insurmountable*

Odds. In the eight years since the book published, he's earned his MBA online without visiting a physical Washington State University campus. "I wanted to further my career and expand my knowledge base," says Warsame, who worked full-time while going back to school. He's worked for two decades at AT&T, where he's held multiple roles. Today, he does financial analysis, managing a portfolio of more than half a billion dollars.

"I always want to go above and beyond what I'm doing," Warsame says. "And I was missing some of the leadership skills that would give me an edge. The online MBA wasn't an easy thing. But it was a good experience, and I enjoyed it."

Serendipitously, he learned his neighbor and now best friend, fellow Somalian **Guled Ali** ('06 Ag. Econ.), is also a Cougar. "He talks about all the experiences he had in Pullman," says Warsame, who's hoping to visit campus for the first time this fall and watch his first Cougar home football game.

Also serendipitously, Ali happens to share the same first name as the foundation Warsame helped launch while still in graduate school. In 2021, he cofounded the Guled Foundation, which works to educate Somali youth with the aim of lifting them out of poverty and increasing the country's literacy rate.

"*Guled* in Somali means success," says Warsame, chair of the foundation. "It's a popular name in Somalia, where education has been privatized. That's why we organized: to fill the gap for kids who can't afford to go to school. Education is the most important development one could have. If I were not educated, I can only imagine what my life would have been."

The foundation plans to build a school in central Somalia with the capacity to educate more than 700 students.

"These kids are what inspire me the most," says Warsame, who served one term on the Rehabilitation Council of Texas. He's also a past president of the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of AT&T's Ability employee resource group and advisory board member of To Be Like Me, a nonprofit disability awareness program, as well as AbleThrive, which offers resources for people with spinal cord injuries.

"You don't have a choice. You don't get to say, 'I'm not going to be disabled tomorrow,' and have that be true. It's part of your life," Warsame says. "But I've always felt ambitious and as hardworking as anybody. So that's been my life: to push the envelope. I don't even think on a daily basis about my disability. I keep rolling forward." 🐅



Abdi Warsame reps WSU in Texas. COURTESY ABDI WARSAME

Read more about Abdi's book at the Nonfiction Authors Association: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Warsame



Ambassador Roger Nyhus welcomes Saint Michael—born Rihanna back to Barbados at the US Embassy in 2024. COURTESY US EMBASSY BRIDGETOWN/ WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



The diplomatic spirit

by Adriana Janovich

WHEN ROGER NYHUS received then-vice president Joe Biden at the side door of his stately Seattle home in 2019, he quipped, "Welcome to the White House."

Biden, wearing his signature aviator sunglasses, smiled and cocked his head, but didn't immediately reply.

Nyhus, who lives in a highly recognizable 1906 Capitol Hill home dubbed "Seattle's White House," worried the politician didn't get the humor in his good-natured greeting. But their afternoon together—the first fundraiser in Washington state in support of Biden's 2020 presidential bid—was a success.

Biden exited the front door. From his car, he looked back toward the Ionic columns of the grand facade of the neo-Classical/Beaux Arts mansion and called out the window, "Roger, Roger, I get it! The White House"—which I loved," recalls Nyhus, then-CEO of public affairs firm Nyhus Communications, one of the largest Native-owned businesses in Washington state. He found the whole situation "very funny because I'm sure he had been thinking about it the whole time he was in my home."

That event, coupled with decades of progressive political engagement, helped lead to the role of a lifetime. **Nyhus ('90 Comm.)**, an enrolled member of the Chinook Indian Nation, served under the Biden administration as the US ambassador to Barbados and six other eastern Caribbean island countries. When he was appointed in late 2023, he became one of only a handful of Native American ambassadors in US history.

"That was a proud moment, representing my tribe in a region that was pivotal in the slave trade" in the 17th and early 19th centuries, Nyhus says. "Most of the people who had been living there were largely wiped out by colonizers. There are pockets of Indigenous people, and I traveled to visit one of them, the Kalinago, in Dominica. That was very meaningful to me."

While Nyhus was representing the United States in the eastern Caribbean, his own tribe was—and which remains—unacknowledged by the US government. The Chinook Indian Nation has been fighting for federal recognition since the 1890s. The irony is not lost on Nyhus, who now runs global consulting firm AMBO Strategy, advising corporate CEOs, C-suites, and boards as well as other top-level representatives of organizations.

Nyhus discussed this paradox—as well as other aspects of his ambassadorship—during his keynote address for the 50th Murrow Symposium at Washington State University, where he received the Alumni Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by the WSU Alumni Association. “From his distinguished leadership in public affairs to his steadfast commitment to elevating communities, Roger Nyhus exemplifies the very spirit the Alumni Achievement Award was created to honor,” WSUAA Executive Director Mariah Maki said.

Roger Nyhus recently received the Alumni Achievement Award—the highest honor bestowed by the WSU Alumni Association.

Shortly before the 2020 election, Nyhus received a call asking if he wanted to join the Biden administration if Biden won. “I didn’t want anything in return. I was not seeking the ambassadorship. I was not seeking anything. I believed in the candidate and his politics. I said, ‘Absolutely not.’”

Later came the same question, re-framed and with an emphasis in the second word. “‘There’s *nothing* you would want?’ So I took a leap and said, ‘Well, if you ask it like that, how about ambassador?’”

About a year later, he got a call from Washington, DC’s White House with the offer of the ambassadorship to Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, “and I accepted on the spot,” says Nyhus, who served from November 2023 to January 2025. Vetting and Senate confirmation took a year and a half.

His diplomatic priorities: addressing climate change, enhancing regional security, and promoting economic prosperity for all.

Nyhus helped secure nearly \$1 billion in financing for the region. “That’s my biggest legacy. That will have a multiyear, maybe even multigenerational, impact,” says Nyhus, who also led the embassy’s multi-agency response to Hurricane Beryl, securing millions of dollars in relief.

Another proud moment: flying the rainbow flag at the embassy throughout LGBTQ+ Pride Month in June 2024. Nyhus, along with being one of few known Native American US ambassadors, is also one of about only two dozen openly gay US ambassadors. “One of the ideas I had going into this role was I wanted my ambassadorship to reflect my life. I’m a gay man. I’m Native. I live in Seattle. I love art.”

Nyhus personally commissioned foot-long glass feathers by Seattle-based glass artist Dan Friday, an enrolled member of the Lummi Nation. His “Diplomatic Feathers” were done in the colors of the flags of the Caribbean nations to which Nyhus served as an envoy. He gifted them to dignitaries as a symbol of trust, his heritage, and understanding between

the United States and those nations. Each leader of the seven nations received one. So did Rihanna.

Early in his tenure as ambassador, Nyhus received a call that the Barbadian singer, songwriter, actress, and entrepreneur would be coming to his office the next day. Nyhus was a fan. After their half-hour meeting, he became a Rihanna “super-fan.” He says, “She could not have been more gracious. She gave me a hug at the end and said, ‘You’re fun. I hope this isn’t the last time I see you.’”

Nyhus was allowed extra luggage—“I think eight suitcases in all”—to his appointment. One was filled with Cougar Gold.

“Cheese is a rarity in the Caribbean. It’s imported and very expensive. They don’t have a lot of cows,” he explains. “Cougar Gold was a huge hit. I would occasionally give a can to an important guest. Mostly, I would serve it at my official residence and let guests know where it came from.”

He also brought a case of wine made by students in the WSU enology and viticulture program and, Nyhus says, “I served it to the president of Barbados.” 🐾

TIM MULLIGAN had always enjoyed writing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he tried a new genre: supernatural horror.

“I hadn’t done anything creative like this before,” says Mulligan (’90 Hosp. Busi. Mgmt.), chief human resources officer for California Coast Credit Union. “I started creative writing in my mid-50s when many people are looking to retire. Now that I’m an empty-nester, I’ve become addicted to writing and creating. I feel like I am just getting going. You’re never too old to start something new.”

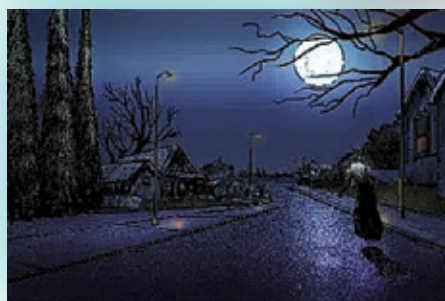
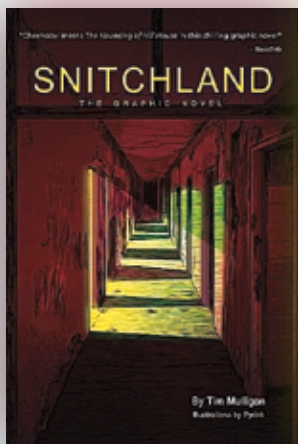
Mulligan’s first two graphic novels were published in 2024. A third was released in 2025 and a fourth in 2026. The dark, spooky, and semi-autobiographical *World of Witchland* series is set in his hometown of Richland. “People who live there don’t talk about the nuclear reactor,” Mulligan says. “But you can’t deny its history. It’s part of living and growing up there. I hear from people reading the books who aren’t from Washington, and they can’t believe it’s a real place.”



Witchland started as a play Mulligan later adapted. San Diego’s Backyard Renaissance Theatre Company staged the work in late 2021. It follows a same-sex couple as they move from Seattle to Richland for a fresh start and instead find a witch who terrorizes residents. The saga continues in the ghostly *Snitchland*, which explores political conspiracy and environmental corruption. In *Twitchland*, toxic waste turns bats into violent zombie-like creatures.

Ditchland features what Mulligan calls “my version of werewolves.” The fifth, and likely final installment, *Switchland*, is a flashback, slated for publication in late 2026 or early 2027. “It’s the origin story of my witch, but it also tells the story of UFO or flying saucer sightings at Hanford in the 1940s,” Mulligan says.

The decommissioned nuclear production complex looms large in the series. Queer subthemes and social commentary run throughout the books, which feature characters based on Mulligan’s own family—himself, his longtime partner, and their adopted daughter. They also have an adopted son, who’s not depicted in



Left turn to the supernatural

by Adriana Janovich

the books. “He was like, ‘Leave me out of it,’” Mulligan says. “But the main character is based on my daughter. She thinks it’s fun.”

Mulligan splits his time between San Diego and Palm Springs. But he was born and raised in Richland. “I have a lot of affection for it,” he says. “But it wasn’t great for me. I got bullied quite a bit. Luckily, I had a good group of friends.”

He did at Washington State University, too. In fact, several Cougs inspired characters in the *Witchland* books.

Mulligan was “super involved” with WSU’s hospitality program, serving as president of the Sigma Iota student club and completing internships in Los Angeles and New York City. After graduation, he moved to San Francisco to work for Westin Hotels and Resorts.

Terry Umbreit (’84 PhD Ed.), director of the School of Hospitality Business Management until his retirement in 2008, “was a mentor to me,” says Mulligan, who later taught at WSU Everett, mentored and hired WSU students, and served on Carson College’s Human Resources and Management Advisory Board. He also set up the Mulligan Hospitality Scholarship.

“My ties to WSU go long and deep,” says Mulligan, who also earned a law degree from Gonzaga University. In 2000, he moved from Seattle to San Diego, where he was the human resources director for the famed San Diego Zoo—and where he wrote his first book.

Quarantined in Palm Springs during the pandemic, Mulligan wrote two cookbooks and the *Witchland* play. “I’ve been cooking forever, and hospitality is in my roots,” Mulligan says. But “I never thought anyone would see the play. It was kind of my own fun project.”

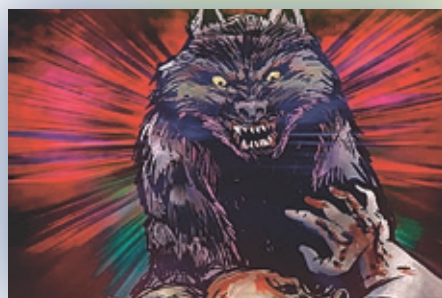
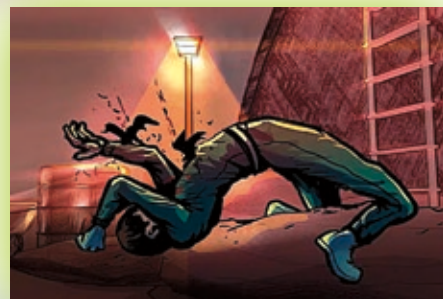
After San Diego, *Witchland* was performed in Palm Springs as well as off-Broadway in New York City. Encouraged by the response, Mulligan decided to turn the story into a graphic novel.

Each book is “a little different in tone.” But the target audience is the same: “horror fans or thriller fans, and fans of graphic novels and comic books.”

The books are “creepy and scary and fun,” Mulligan says. “I want people to enjoy themselves and give into the supernatural elements. If they learn something about Hanford, that’s a plus. There’s a little bit of history and a lot of craziness and the chance to read something that’s unlike anything they’ve ever read before.” 🐾



The *Witchland* series of graphic novels are all written by Tim Mulligan with artist Pyrink illustrating them for publication by Highpoint Lit.



An **artful** success hands down

by Addy Hatch

IRIS SCOTT has been called “the world’s first professional finger-painter.” Her colorful works are big and bold and are indeed created with oil paints, canvas, and her fingertips. They’re also in big demand.

Her story has been told many times in national media and art publications. But what a lot of people don’t know is that her path was partly influenced by her counselor at Washington State University.

The Maple Valley native had planned to get a teaching degree at WSU and work on her art on the side. “You grow up hearing you can’t make a living from art,” says Scott (’06 Fine Arts). Instead, her counselor advised her to go all in on art and get a master’s degree in teaching as a fallback.

Her finger-painting technique was born of laziness: She didn’t want to spend time washing paintbrushes. But it found an appreciative audience via social media, which she says has been critical to her success.

“I was right on the front wave of content creation. I had something to share, and it was such free advertising. Not like it is now,” she adds.



Above: Iris Scott in studio.

Below: *Mustard Greens*

COURTESY IRIS SCOTT



Also important has been creating works that people want to buy—paintings that “hit them like a force.” Scott’s large-scale canvases might feature a dog shaking off water, or a tiger in a forest. There are sea creatures and mystical figures, landscapes and florals.

The biggest canvases sell for upward of \$50,000 each, a level of achievement that helped Scott relocate in 2019 from her New York City studio to a 500-acre ranch in northern New Mexico.

The landscape there reminds her a little bit of the Palouse.

“WSU is yellow and blue, and kind of golden and expansive,” she says. “I resonated with that landscape.”

And with life at WSU.

Driving through the Palouse with her best friend, listening to music. Going to football games. Taking classes in subjects she never knew she was interested in, such as entomology.

“Just the freedom of coming into your young adulthood,” she says. “I was on cloud nine. I was just so in love with my college experience.”

After WSU, she moved to Taiwan expecting to teach English. She ended up turning to art full-time, and it’s there she

Read the 2019 Artnet
“On View” article
chronicling the beginning
of Scott’s career:

[magazine.wsu.edu/extra/
scott-on-view](https://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/scott-on-view)



began using her signature finger-painting technique.

Scott embraces that period because it taught her valuable lessons about surviving as an artist. She was selling paintings for \$50, but that was a lot of money relative to her living expenses. That's why, asked what advice she'd give to other artists wanting to build a career, she starts with controlling spending.

"It's such a big deal that you don't spend a lot of money," she says. "I was very happy to be in an apartment with no hot water and living out of a backpack. I painted for eight hours a day and, if I made more money than I spent that day, I felt like a rich lady."

*Scott earned a BFA
at Washington State
University, studying
abroad at the
Accademia Italiana
in Florence, Italy, her
junior year. In 2014,
she moved to New
York and relocated to
northern New Mexico
in 2019.*

More advice: Know your audience, because there is a market for art. But if your art isn't selling, your prices are too high, she says.

Scott has moved beyond solely painting with her fingers. In recent years, she's been incorporating brushstrokes and is now experimenting with a technique she calls cell blasting, using an air compressor. When she started finger-painting, it was partly to become very good at one thing. Now, "a decade and a half later, a thousand finger-paintings later, I was like, 'Yeah, I have thoroughly explored that,'" Scott says. "The next decade will certainly be more about range than limitation." 🐾

Right out of
WSU, Hill was the
"go-to" at UW,
TESC, Seattle U,
and UPS for
sportscasting.

COURTESY
UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON

the scenes of the Mariners broadcast and occasionally filling in on the radio, he finally got his shot in the booth in 2025.

"It's so special, and doing it in my hometown, close to my family and friends that are here, with the team I grew up loving, it's indescribable," says Hill ('00 Comm., Psych.). "I pinch myself every day. I'm thankful for it every day."

On his first day at WSU Pullman, he walked into student-run radio station

KUGR and got his start calling volleyball. He eventually began calling basketball, football, and baseball. "KUGR was phenomenal," he says. "I would not be here without the experiences I got there."

Public speaking was challenging. "My personality is a little different from most people in my business because I'm not outgoing. For the most part, I'm an introvert," Hill says. "That class made a real difference for me early on."



His favorite class: baseball history. But he credits journalism classes as most impactful. "They sharpened my writing and thinking skills, and have helped me over time, not only as a broadcaster but in all the other stuff I do," says Hill, who called baseball for the University of Washington and basketball for the Evergreen State College right out of college.

That led to being a finalist for the radio play-by-play position with the Seattle

Calling the game

by Will Arthur

Storm. While he didn't get that job, he was recruited for a producer position with the Sonics.

A year later, the Storm job opened again, and Hill took the opportunity. He also parlayed his experience into working for Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, 710 ESPN Seattle, and UW—often in overlapping roles—before eventually working for the Mariners.

He started filling in as a pre- and post-game host, working his way to full-time as a producer and engineer in 2018. Hill says his WSU experience doing pre- and post-game shows was invaluable preparation for his initial work with the Mariners.

Now, he's part of the Mariners radio broadcast, partnered with his childhood icon. "I'm in the booth with Rick (Rizks) every day, the guy I grew up listening to."

He says he'll never forget being on the call for Mariners pitcher James Paxton's no-hitter in Toronto. Paxton is Canadian, and Hill says it was special to be a part of that game when even Blue Jays fans started cheering for Paxton as he chased history.

Last season, the Mariners came one game away from their first World Series appearance in franchise history. "Just to be on the call

IN REFERENCE TO WSU'S
STUDENT-RUN RADIO STATION KUGR:

“
I would not be here
without the experiences
I got there.”



for some of these all-time moments is incredible to me, and I take the responsibility so seriously in those moments because they mean so much to Mariners fans.”

When he isn't traveling with the team, Hill spends as much time as possible in Burien with his family: wife and high-school sweetheart Mary, teens Finley and Baker, and dog Satchel Blue.

At work, a collage of baseball cards, all Hall of Famers, adorns his office. “My goal is when guys come in, they sign their baseball card,” says Hill, who also spruced up the radio booth at T-Mobile Park. “My goal is for our radio booth to feel like a museum to the Mariners for visitors.

“I just love it. I love the game, the preparation, and finding and telling stories. That's the motivation. I just want do everything I can to make the listening experience great for Mariners fans.” 

Will Arthur is a senior broadcast news major from Littlerock.

Hill was named the
executive producer/
engineer for the
Seattle Mariners radio
broadcasts in 2018.

COURTESY SEATTLE MARINERS

Chasing down *a* diploma

by RJ Wolcott

More than a decade after playing his final football game as a Cougar, former NFL linebacker **DEONE BUCANNON** returned to Washington State University. This time, he received his diploma instead of intercepting a football.

From 2010 to 2013, Bucannon accumulated more than 370 tackles and a dozen interceptions as a member of the WSU football team under head coaches Paul Wulff and Mike Leach. Following his senior season, Bucannon was selected by the Arizona Cardinals in the first round of the NFL draft. He played for four teams during his professional career, earning a Super Bowl ring in 2021 with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

But when he packed up and left for the NFL, Bucannon ('26 Soc. Sci.) left something behind in Pullman—a college degree.

A desire to complete his academic pursuit—coupled with the opportunity for his parents to see him walk across the stage inside Beasley Coliseum—motivated Bucannon to reenroll at WSU.

“My mom has a few college degrees of her own, and I was there to celebrate her receiving each of those,” Bucannon says. “I know she wanted the same opportunity to see me graduate.”

In high school, Bucannon's talents drew college coaches from across the country. But, as he recalls, it was a lot of talk and “pump faking” rather than solid commitments.

“Coach Chris Ball was different,” Bucannon says. “He kept it real with me.

He knew I wanted to go to a school where I could get on the field if I showed what I could do, and so WSU was my first and only visit.”

Bucannon was taken aback by the community’s response to him during his visit to campus.

“Everybody out there was crazy friendly, saying hello to me,” he recalls. “It was just such a welcoming environment.”

Bucannon hit the field right away as a first-year student-athlete. It suited his preference for getting after it on the field rather than swaying idly on the sidelines.

Standout moments included knocking off the University of Washington in the 2012 Apple Cup, kicking off the 2013 season against Auburn, and playing in the Cougs’ first bowl game in a decade to close out his time with the team.

His last few months in Pullman were a blur of team workouts, NFL combines, and interviews with team officials. Playing professionally was his dream and required all his attention. But he promised his parents that he’d come back and finish his degree, a commitment his dad never let him forget.

Once the time was right, WSU was ready to help make it happen.

When Bucannon left Pullman for the NFL, he did so just four classes short of a

degree. Late last year, he reached out to Heather Erwin, WSU’s associate director for athletics, academic services, and student-athlete development, to see how he could come back and earn his diploma.

“Being a Cougar doesn’t end when eligibility does,” Erwin says. “We work intentionally to keep the door open so former student-athletes have the opportunity to come back, finish their degrees, and achieve something they, and we, are incredibly proud of. Life can take people in many directions after their playing days end, but education is something that stays with you forever.”

“Watching someone return years later to finish what they started and walk across that stage is incredibly meaningful, for them, their families, and for the entire Cougar community,” Erwin says.

Bucannon wants to help others accomplish their own goals, whether or not football is part of their plan.

“I want to show other people I believe in them, and inspire kids to follow their dreams,” Bucannon says. “I was relentless about my dream and there were a lot of people who helped me along by not stepping on my flower, and so I want to pay that support forward and nurture the next generation, however that manifests.” 🐾



PHOTO DEAN HARE/AP

“

Everybody out there [WSU

Pullman] was

crazy friendly,

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me,” he recalled.

“It was just such

a welcoming

environment.

”



THE ORIGIN OF AVA

Annie Lampman

Torrey House Press: 2026

It’s wildfire season on the Palouse, and ornithology professor Ava Estmund suddenly finds herself stunned by the deaths of both her star student and her estranged father. Ezra Kittredge works the fire line alongside other convicts. And eleven-year-old Greer Groff witnesses something no one should ever have to see. All three flee.

The trio of compelling characters, linked by their losses, feels the heat and flies away. Two, separately but simultaneously, to a coastal community in Ecuador, chasing freedom and healing or, at the very least, a time and place to grieve. Another, into the wilds of western Idaho, where wit and skill—along with two llamas and a dog—aid in survival.

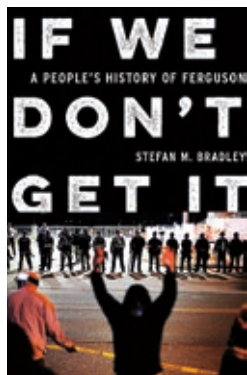
“Pay attention to everything nature says,” a neighborly father figure tells the girl before she splits. “You’ve got to listen to nature if you want to know anything about yourself or this earth—breathing its air, drinking its water, eating its plants and its creatures. Nothing else can teach you what you need to know about real things.”

Annie Lampman, associate professor of creative writing at Washington State University Honors College, deftly braids the journeys of each escapee into a riveting narrative of trauma, redemption, and chosen family. Each protagonist is a broken bird who must face their past—and themselves—in the wake of their pain.

Their carefully crafted story is as timely as it is timeless, offering a commentary on the climate crisis as well as the current state of higher education while examining the

human condition. Native American mythology—specifically surrounding the revered Raven, creator and cunning trickster—threads through the entire tale. And Lampman's deliciously lilting language ignites each page, suffused with bits and pieces of Pacific Northwest history and vivid description of remote regional landscapes.

—Adriana Janovich



**IF WE DON'T GET IT:
A PEOPLE'S HISTORY
OF FERGUSON**

**Stefan M. Bradley '98 MA History
The New Press: 2025**

Ferguson, Missouri, became the center of a national movement for justice in 2014 when Black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by White police officer, Darren Wilson. Stefan Bradley, a young faculty member from Saint Louis University, joined the ensuing protests and became a key media activist.

Bradley writes of his experiences and those of more than two dozen other Black activists in the movement, through oral histories he conducted, in his book about Ferguson's turbulent early days. He covers motivations and tensions of the uprising, problems of media representation (and misrepresentation), intergenerational conflict over protest tactics, and clashes with police and politicians.

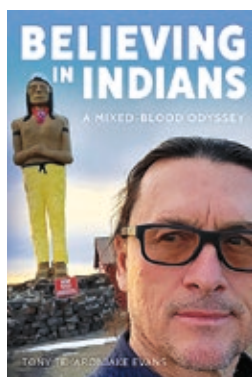
Ferguson was a sleepy suburb of St. Louis at the time of Brown's death. Yet, Bradley writes, as the uprising grew, "Black youth, as citizens, influenced politics at every level. In that way, they fortified American democracy by making

law enforcement recognize their constitutional rights."

The local Ferguson protests sparked broader movements and inspired a new generation of young Black political leaders, including former Missouri Democratic Congresswoman Cori Bush, to seek and achieve victories at the polls.

Bradley—now the Charles Hamilton Houston '15 Professor of Black Studies and History and department chair of Black Studies at Amherst College—shares authentic voices from the Ferguson movement, which also teach valuable lessons for future protest movements. Those lessons in leadership, political awareness, self-awareness, and a vision for a better future can inspire activists who wish to make a difference.

—Larry Clark



**BELIEVING IN INDIANS:
A MIXED-BLOOD ODYSSEY**

**Tony Tekaroniack Evans
Basalt Books, WSU Press: 2026**

In third grade, Tony Tekaroniack Evans was surprised to learn Indians didn't exist. Evans had excitedly told his classmates he was Indian while they worked on Thanksgiving decorations, but his teacher disagreed. They were extinct, he had told Evans.

But Evans, a Kahnawake Mohawk of Quebec through his mother, grew up learning the tales of their people from his grandmother, who still spoke their Iroquoian language at home. Indians weren't gone, he realized—they just didn't fit the mainstream narrative of the American Dream.

His memoir, bursting with humor and heartbreak, details every step of his journey to find out what it means to be an Indigenous American in

today's world. Positioned between two cultures, he tackles stereotypes that obscure and divide while decoding the political landscape that birthed them.

Through his work as a journalist, Evans connects with his own culture and the cultures of other Indians he meets along the way, each with their own approach to being Indian. For Evans, seeking official recognition, in the form of a waterproof package from the Canadian government, brings solace. Yet, despite their shared background, his older brother Chris eschews official Indian status, preferring to find meaning on a different path.

Evans also explores the sinister methods used to erase and assimilate the Indigenous peoples of North America. Residential schools, broken treaties, stolen land—it was no mistake his third-grade teacher didn't believe in Indians. He also details more recent political struggles, including the 1990 land dispute between the Mohawk and the city of Oka, Quebec, where members of the tribe barricaded access to ancestral land slated to be turned into a golf course and condominiums.

For outsiders looking in, his memoir opens a window into a world where just being yourself is a struggle against the powers that be. There is no one way to be Indian, Evans realizes, but to be Indian will always be a political act—one that shouldn't be shied away from.

—Alysen Boston

**WASHINGTON STATE ON THE AIR:
AT THE CENTENNIAL**

**Burt Harrison and Albert Powell '73
Comm., '79 MCE**

**KWSU Radio-Television Services and
the Edward R. Murrow College of
Communication: 1993, 2026**

Radio at what's now Washington State University traces its roots to the humblest of beginnings. When the college station first went on the air in late 1922, its microphone was an old telephone mouthpiece amplified by coils encased in a soup can. The can "had been painted black to give it a professional look," according to Burt Harrison's original version of *Washington State on the Air*, detailing the history of broadcasting at

Washington State University through the early 1990s.

That anecdote is also included in the update by Albert Powell. It includes Harrison's original work, to which Powell added his own experience and research from 1968 onward. His voice overlaps with Harrison's through the early 1990s then continues on its own through present day. Harrison, who worked in radio at WSU from 1949 to 1976, died in 2004 at 87. Powell, grew up in Pullman, worked at KWSU and other local stations, and earned a degree in broadcasting.

The new edition of *Washington State on the Air* contains the original foreword, Harrison's original author's note, and a new author's note from Powell, a member of the Murrow College Advisory Board. Together, they tell the story of how a small, college-town station produced a string of famous broadcasters, including the legendary Edward R. Murrow ('30 Speech), and became a cross-state media network.

Radio was growing in popularity—and largely unregulated—in the early 1920s, when Washington State College started its station. That souped-up soup can wasn't its only reused or recycled component. Most of the equipment was second-hand, scrounged from the dismantling of the school's ham radio station or borrowed from the Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering's laboratory supplies.

The scrappy station broadcasted three nights per week, eventually evolving into a public radio and TV network with 24-hour programming, smartphone apps, Internet streaming services, and more. The past three decades of Northwest Public Broadcasting, in particular, feature tremendous change in technology,



media usage, faculty and staff, and funding. Fallout from 2025 cuts to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting included the discontinuation of KWSU-TV as well as operational reductions. However, while call letters, content, frequencies, and more have changed since the station began broadcasting just over 100 years ago, WSU has remained on the air.

—Adriana Janovich

His straightforward stories will resonate with fans and critics of programs for which he worked—the University of Montana and the University of Oregon as well as WSU and Nebraska—football enthusiasts, other ADs, and Cougs.

Moos fell in love with WSU as an eight-year-old in 1959, when his parents, Parmalee ('47 Psych.) and Don Moos ('47 Animal Sci.) took him and his older sister to the homecoming football game. His father, a four-term Republican legislator, went on to lead the state departments of agriculture, fisheries, and ecology. While Moos graduated from high school in Olympia, where the family moved for his dad's government work, he had largely grown up on a farm 35 miles southwest of Spokane. Early chapters offer an intimate look at family and farm life in the 1950s. In fact, the title comes from the waterway where Moos fished as a kid.

Moos writes of loyalty, family history, and words he lives by. Perhaps the most influential line came to him from Shakespeare via his mother, who said this to him when he was deciding whether to attend University of Washington or WSU: "This above all: To thine own self be true."

—Adriana Janovich

Briefly Noted

ON RESILIENCE: STORIES OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION ACROSS WASHINGTON'S LANDSCAPES

Harriet Morgan, Lindsay Senechal, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Writing the Land Poets 2025

This anthology combines prose, poetry, and images exploring the ongoing impacts of climate change on Washington state's ecosystems, including warming stream temperatures, shifting snowpack, and increased wildfire risk. Linda Russo, director of creative writing in the English department at WSU Pullman, and Julian Ankney, director of the Native American program at WSU Vancouver, contributed poems to the collection.

LIFE ALONG THE TRACKS: CANDID STORIES FROM A CAREER RAILROADER

Mike McLaughlin and Jim Providenza Basalt Books, WSU Press: 2025

His railroad obsession started as a kid. Mike McLaughlin was a regular stowaway in the 1950s, riding switch engines in Seattle, before embarking on a railroad career that spanned the United States. Before his death in 2012, he penned gritty personal accounts of life on maintenance and signal gangs, in bunk cars, and more. Jim Providenza, who has written extensively for specialty railroad publications, and Dave Clemens, who does hand-drawn maps, compiled his essays into a book.

BENNETT'S ALPHABET ADVENTURES

Whitney (Little) Weigum '21 MBA Wonder Press: 2026

A first-time author, mom, Amazon employee, and West Seattle-ite penned a children's book inspired by—and starring—her own young son with the aim of teaching 2- to 6-year-olds the ABCs. Whitney Weigum also illustrated the book, which is based on educational games they played together.

ONE DAY BETTER: MENTAL PERFORMANCE CONCEPTS TO TRANSFORM YOUR GAME AND LIFE

Jeff Troesch '82 Busi., '88 MA Ed. 80/20 Publishing: 2025

Jeff Troesch shares 150 mental skills he developed throughout his nearly 40-year career coaching elite and professional athletes in high-pressure sports. These include focusing during distracting situations, managing pressure when stakes feel high, building self-belief and confidence, coping with destructive self-talk, and handling emotions during training and competition.

PRISON VAGABONDS: THE ROLE OF AMERICAN PRISON PERSONNEL IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM AND BEYOND

Mike Pannek '69 Anthro. Book Publishing Group: 2026

Mike Pannek argues the corrections profession is one of the most difficult, most dangerous, and least appreciated occupations in the world.

He describes programs designed to counter extremism in developing countries' prisons as well as the nature of working in inhospitable locations, often amid war, to try to bring systemic change to overseas prisons that have long resisted modernization. His book includes anecdotes from and about prison personnel who have worked in developing nations worldwide.

THE SELF-AWARE INTERVIEW: ESSENTIALS FOR EVERY ENNEAGRAM TYPE

Carolyn Illman '07 Comm. Hire Possibilities Press: 2026

Carolyn Illman contends job seekers can't script their way through a great interview. Drawing on more than 15 years of experience as a hiring leader, she argues great interviews are about self-awareness, not performance, and it's imperative people understand why they say what they say. Using a framework of nine personality types, she helps readers understand how to prepare for an interview to actually reflect who they are and what they bring to a role.

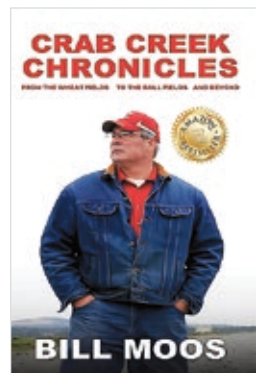
ARTIFACT: A MEMOIR

Michael Riley '89 English Purple Breeze Press: 2026

The son of an Arkansas businessman and a World War II survivor meet in Copenhagen, rush to marry, and travel the world from Europe and Asia to Oceania. Having children—three boys and a girl—slows them down a little as they pursue careers in academia. Michael Riley discusses the strangeness and familiarity of each new location as well as how individuals use hard work, resilience, and smarts to escape the chaos and find their own peace.

Give a listen to stories on the WSM webisodes podcast

magazine.wsu.edu/podcasts



CRAB CREEK CHRONICLES: FROM THE WHEAT FIELDS TO THE BALL FIELDS AND BEYOND

Bill Moos '74 History 2026

Bill Moos was alone on his Special K Ranch near Spokane when he noticed a vehicle driving slowly down the lane. He scratched his "three-day beard" and "watched intently as a well-dressed black man got out of the car and walked quietly until he stood face to face with me on the porch."

The stranger shook his hand. "I'm Elson Floyd, president of Washington State University, and I have come here today to bring you home."

The unexpected meeting, sealed with a handshake, left Moos temporarily speechless. After a few more formal meetings in Pullman the following week, it was official. The former Coug football standout was WSU's new athletic director.

That 2010 anecdote is one highlight in the four decades Moos spent as an athletic director at four institutions, including his alma mater. This memoir details his childhood in the wheat-field community of Edwall, his glory years playing football for WSU, and behind-the-scenes moments of his highly publicized career.

Bill Moos talks about WSU and his life: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Moos

'60

ROBERT OLDS ('64 Vet. Sci., '67 DVM) received the College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award.

'70

GORDON GIBBS ('70 Forest Mgt.) runs Gibbs Consulting in Forks, and wrote the 2025 guidebook *Basic Training for Managers and Supervisors*.

PAMELA TUOMI ('70 DVM), who cared for contaminated sea otters after the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, received the College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award.

'80

KERRI MARSHALL ('81 Zool., '85 DVM) was appointed to the board of directors for Fear Free, the leading authority in the emotional wellness of companion animals. Marshall invented Trupanion Express, the first real-time direct pay model for pet insurance.

JAMES ABESHIMA ('85 Mech. Eng.) is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Cleveland-based Austin Company, a construction engineering firm.

DONALD KALKOFEN ('85 Accounting) is chief financial officer for biotechnology company Genvor, Inc.

JULIA OXFORD ('85 MS, '86 PhD Bio. Chem.), the Duane and Lori Steuckle Endowed Chair in Biology at Boise State University, received the College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award.

RENA CARLSON-LAMMERS ('86 Vet. Sci., '89 DVM), former president of the Idaho Veterinary Medical Association, received the College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award.

JEFFREY E. GEIER ('86 Ag. Econ.) was recognized as a lifetime member for the Inner Circle, which celebrates excellence among professionals in their industries. Geier's firm, Phoenix Coaching, helps senior executives build effective teams.

STEVE HERBIG ('86 Hort.), known for tending the rose garden and planting approximately 100,000 plants at Tacoma's Point Defiance Park, has retired after 38 years at Parks Tacoma.

PHIL OHL ('87 Mat. Sci. & Eng., '92 MEM Eng. Mgmt.), director of Tri-Cities Angel Alliance, is the 2026 Tri-Citizen of the Year.

'90

DON KOWALCHUK ('90 Const. Mgmt.) is executive vice president and general manager of Skanska's Washington operating unit.

MIKE GRUBER ('92 Poli. Sci.) is chief operating officer of the Household & Commercial Products Association.

DREW BLEDSOE (x'93 Gen. Stu.), former star WSU and NFL quarterback, is the 2026 Honorary Chair of the Auction of Washington Wines.

MIKE WORDEN ('94 Crim. Just.) is undersheriff of Okanogan County.

ERIC SAINDON ('96 Arch.) was awarded his second Best Visual Effects Oscar at the Academy Awards for his work on *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. His first Oscar was for *Avatar: The Way of Water*.

AARON SCHUTT ('96 Civ. Eng.) was appointed to the board of directors of Alaska Silver Corp. in May. An Alaska Native, Schutt is currently president and CEO of Doyon Limited, with a broad portfolio of natural resources and other businesses in Alaska.

SPOTLIGHT

PAUL HIRZEL ('69 Gen. Stu.), emeritus professor of architecture at Washington State University, received a lifetime achievement award this spring from the Inland Northwest Architectural Foundation.

The award, the organization's highest recognition, honors individuals whose work has made "an extraordinary and enduring contribution to the built environment" in the Inland Northwest, according to the award announcement.

Hirzel taught at WSU's School of Design and Construction from 1989 until his retirement in 2022. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees of architecture from Cornell University and another bachelor's from the University of Washington.

He received numerous regional, national, and international awards for his designs, including American Institute of Architects Honor Awards for his Canyon House and Mountain House projects. In 2018, his work was featured at the Biennale Architettura, the world's most prestigious architecture exhibition. He was one of only 15 US architects invited to participate.

Hirzel was also recognized nationally for his teaching, where he received the National American Institute of Architects Education Honor Award for his site and landscape design course. The course, which emphasized ideas of place, setting, and context in design, was also featured in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Hirzel received three outstanding teaching faculty awards in the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture.

"His commitment to thoughtfully integrating architecture with the surrounding environment is evident and enduring," says Jason Peschel, director of the School of Design and Construction. "This well-deserved honor reflects Paul's enduring leadership, design excellence, and lasting contributions to the architectural profession and the communities he has served."

KRIS STRICKLER ('98 Civ. Eng.) joined engineering and design firm STV as senior vice president and national highways director. Strickler has more than two decades of leadership with the Oregon Department of Transportation and Washington State Department of Transportation.

DAWN MENGE ('99 Soc. Sci.) received the Empowered Woman Award for 2026 from the International Association of Top Professionals.

'00

TAWNY DOTSON ('02 Comm.) is the first female president of Mt. San Jacinto College in San Jacinto, California.

MANUEL VILLAFAN JR. ('02 Socio.) is president and CEO at Catholic Charities in Yakima.

MOLLY LONDON ('04 Kinesio., '14 Nursing, '19 DNP), a nationally certified nurse practitioner, joined Inland Orthopaedics in its Express Care clinics in Pullman and Moscow, Idaho.

ELENI WILLIS ('03 MBA) is the new vice president of risk management for Kitsap Credit Union.

C. BRANDON CHAPMAN ('04 Comm.) is the City of Olympia's new strategic communications director. "Chappy" spent the last 12 years as director of communications with WSU's College of Education.



DENISE HURST ('04 Music) coordinates music for Walla Walla Public Schools.

MELINDA ROBERTS ('05 MA, '09 PhD Crim. Just.) serves as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Fresno State University. She previously was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana State University.

BRIAN KEITH ('06 Busi.) is chief marketing officer of Chang Robotics, an automation engineering firm.

'20

SMITA SRIVASTAVA ('20 PhD Mgmt.) is associate dean for faculty and research in the Barton School of Business at Wichita State University.

RYAN BOOTH ('21 PhD History), an assistant professor in the history department at WSU, received the 2026 Library Excellence Award from WSU Libraries.

LUCAS PAUL LEMASTER ('21 Civ. Eng.) was promoted to the rank of captain in the US Army. He's assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Carson, Colorado.

NATALIE STURM ('25 PhD Soil Sci.) is farm manager of Dakota Lakes Research Farm near Pierre, South Dakota.

SPOTLIGHT



TOP TEN SENIORS FOR 2026

They represent the highest standards of the college experience. In academics, athletics, and the arts. In campus involvement and community service. Each year, Washington State University recognizes 10 outstanding seniors. The WSU Alumni Association and Student Alumni Ambassadors oversee the effort. A committee of faculty, staff, and students chooses two winners in each category based on criteria such as leadership activities and academic achievements.

Meet this year's Top Ten Seniors:

ACADEMICS

Joan "Jo" Castaneda Gonzalez, of Everson, studied chemistry and biochemistry at WSU Pullman. He's planning to get a doctorate in organic chemistry at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, then become a research professor or work at an industrial pharmaceutical company.

Eva Rickard, of Billings, Montana, studied data analytics at WSU Pullman. She's planning to attend medical school and is interested in anesthesia, family medicine, and women's health.

ATHLETICS

Ben Borgida, of Shoreline, studied biology at WSU Pullman. Because he redshirted his freshman year, he's eligible for a fifth year on the WSU men's golf team.

Emily Lundgren, of Chula Vista, California, studied digital technology and culture at WSU Pullman. She's planning to get an MBA, then continue swimming professionally to qualify for the 2028 Olympic trials or begin a creative video career.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Bhargav Iyer, of Puyallup, studied biology at WSU Pullman. He's planning to take a gap year, then go to dental school.

Mauro Ramirez, of Wenatchee, studied biology at WSU Pullman, where he was president of Hermandad de OeMeTe, the first and only Aztec-based brotherhood in the Pacific Northwest. He plans to take a two-year gap before starting medical school.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Aunjelique Andersen, of Fallbrook, California, studied media innovation at WSU Global Campus, for which she served as student ambassador. She runs her own video and photography business.

Audrey Elliot, of Belgrade, Montana, studied rhetoric and professional writing at WSU Pullman, where she was president of the WSU Country Swing Club. She wants to travel before working in environmental justice and sustainability.

VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

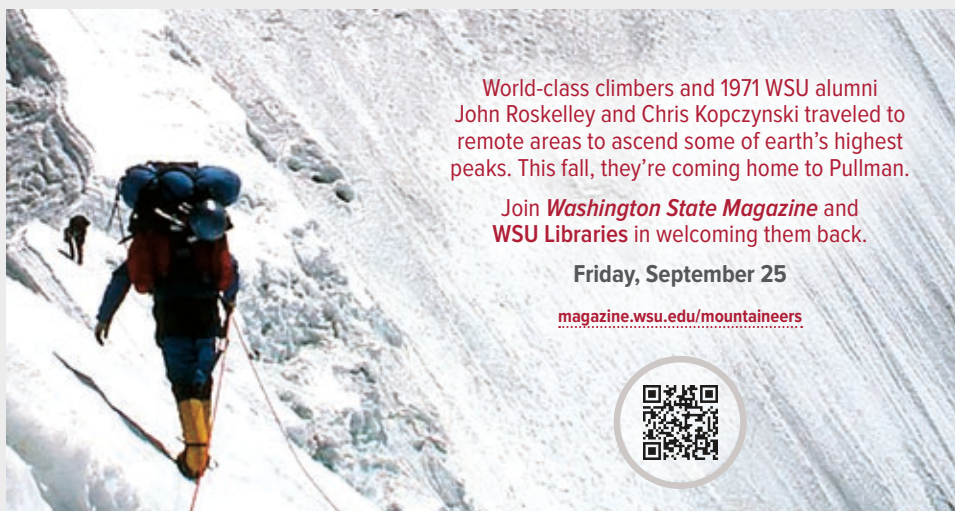
Kendal Clifton, of Puyallup, studied music education, instrumental, choral, and general music at WSU Pullman, and dreams of being a high school band or choir teacher.

Hai Xing Lewis, of Bend, Oregon, studied art history at WSU Pullman, where she was a visitor ambassador and gallery assistant at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU. She plans to take a gap year before pursuing a master's degree in curatorial studies in hopes of becoming a collections manager at an art museum.

Read profiles of the 2026 Top Ten Seniors: [wsu.edu/toptenseniors](https://www.wsu.edu/toptenseniors)

Send us your class notes:

magazine.wsu.edu/send-a-class-note



World-class climbers and 1971 WSU alumni John Roskelley and Chris Kopczynski traveled to remote areas to ascend some of earth's highest peaks. This fall, they're coming home to Pullman.

Join **Washington State Magazine** and **WSU Libraries** in welcoming them back.

Friday, September 25

magazine.wsu.edu/mountaineers





COURTESY WSU NEWS

Remembering Sam Hunt

Sam Hunt ('67 English), a statewide civic leader, longtime legislator, and member of the Washington State University Board of Regents, died April 26, 2026, of complications from leukemia. He was 83.

Hunt devoted more than five decades to state and national public service, education, and civic leadership.

After retiring from the Washington legislature in 2024, he was appointed to the WSU Board of Regents, a position his family described as a dream come true for him. Hunt's Senate office had included a six-foot rug emblazoned with the WSU logo. On his last day in the legislature, he was presented with a custom WSU jersey imprinted with his legislative district.

"Regent Hunt spent a lifetime strengthening the very systems that make Washington State University's land-grant mission possible, from championing public education in Olympia with our students to shaping the policies and investments that sustain our work," says WSU President Betsy Cantwell. "We have established the Sam Hunt Memorial Scholarship to honor the incredible legacy he leaves."

Sam grew up in Seattle and Yakima. After graduating from WSU, he taught at Pasco High School, was elected to the Pasco City Council, and worked for the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction. He later moved to Washington, DC, to work with the US Senate Appropriations Committee.

In 1981, he returned to Olympia to work in numerous state government positions and as a teacher in the Montesano School District. He was elected to the Washington state House of Representatives in 2000, then the state Senate in 2016. In 2015, then-Rep. Hunt was honored with the inaugural Gabrielle Giffords Award for Civility in State Government.

Sam's wife, Charlene, preceded him in death, in 2017. He is survived by children Hillary and Nathan, daughter-in-law Amanda, grandson Rory, all of Olympia, and his loving companion Roberta Stanley of East Lansing, Michigan. 🐾

1940s

Marian G. Donohue ('47 Socio.), 97, December 26, 2022, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Joyce Lorine Lee ('47 Gen. Stu.), 100, January 16, 2026, Colville.

Mary Jo Ann Minor ('48 Pharm.), 99, February 9, 2026, Meridian, Idaho.

Ruth Mary Petersen ('48 Home Econ.), 99, May 13, 2026, Federal Way.

1950s

Thomas Frank Paul ('50 Psych.), 100, November 9, 2025, Seattle.

Mary Joan Pratt ('51 Music), 95, March 24, 2025, Portland, Oregon.

Dolores Ruth (Plaster) Allen ('52 Home Econ.), 92, May 29, 2022, Burien.

P. Clarence Ames ('52 Chem. Eng.), 95, August 26, 2024, Vancouver.

Mary Ruth Howard ('53 Home Econ., Ed.), 94, May 6, 2025, Woodland, California.

Lorraine H. Albright ('54 Int. Des., Kappa Kappa Gamma), 94, May 4, 2026, Carmel, Indiana.

Mary Lou Guenther ('54 Elem. Ed., Pi Beta Phi), 93, January 17, 2026, Portland, Oregon.

Louis C. Torre ('54 Hort., Alpha Gamma Rho), 92, June 27, 2023, Puyallup.

Edward T. "Tom" Cooney Jr. ('55 Pharm.), 84, August 27, 2017, Woodinville.

Marilyn L. Swift Cranston ('55 Ed.), 93, March 13, 2026, Longview.

Henlof Gene Wick ('55 Arch.), 91, April 24, 2025, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Audrey M. Yoshinaga ('55 Nursing), 86, December 11, 2019, Kaunakakai, Hawaii.

C. Douglas "Doug" Brown (x'56), 87, August 24, 2021, Seattle.

Bud Etherton ('56 Psych., '62 PhD Botany), 95, April 4, 2026, Shelburne, Vermont.

Roger M. Gardner ('56 Vet. Sci., '60 DVM), 92, March 28, 2026, Castle Rock.

Joe E. Brewer ('57 Industrial Tech.), 89, March 31, 2018, Auburn.

James Carl Ellingsen ('57 Zool.), 91, April 15, 2026, Post Falls, Idaho.

John Everett Truax ('57 Geol.), 91, February 22, 2026, West Covina, California.

Donald Jack Lee ('58, '61 MS Ani. Sci.), 94, March 29, 2026, Moscow, Idaho.

Ira Dale Branson ('59 Ani. Sci., '65 MA Ag. Econ., Alpha Gamma Rho), 88, January 23, 2026, Olney, Maryland.

Donald R. Breitenfeldt ('59 Elem. Ed., '72 EdD Higher Ed. Admin.), 94, May 1, 2026, Yakima.

Marilyn M. Dillsi ('59 Socio., '91 MCE Cont. Ed.), 90, March 15, 2026, Pullman.

Sally Delight Kilpatrick ('59 Ed.), 88, December 21, 2025, Anacortes.

Jeanette Naomi Otis ('59 Chem., Delta Gamma), 88, January 1, 2026, Graham.

Gary Dale Pittman ('59 Mat. Sci. & Eng.), 91, March 19, 2026, Shelburne, Vermont.

Leslie Earl Stone Jr. ('59 Ag. Eng.), 88, November 18, 2025, Spokane.

1960s

Richard L. Brunner ('60 Gen. Stu.), 85, March 12, 2021, Ventura, California.

John J. Fanning III ('60 Phys. Ed.), 89, June 3, 2026, Spokane.

Kathleen R. LeMaster ('61 Soc. Stu.), 86, July 18, 2025, Mercer Island.

Judith D. McDonald ('61 Elem. Ed., Kappa Kappa Gamma), 85, November 30, 2024, Bellevue.

Patrick W. Siler ('61 Fine Arts) was an internationally known ceramic artist and

retired professor at WSU. He died May 15, 2026, in Pullman at age 86. Siler's first public art piece was a mural at Grand Coulee Dam. After many years in the Bay Area, he returned to WSU in 1973 to teach. His work was acquired and shown at the Smithsonian, the American Museum of Ceramic Arts, the Seattle Art Museum, Tacoma Art Museum, WSU, and elsewhere.

John M. Fabian ('62 Mech. Eng.), 87, May 21, 2026, Port Ludlow.

Dwight F. "Crow" Wilson ('62 Civ. Eng.), 88, March 6, 2026, Wimberley, Texas.

Harriet Marion Boyer ('63 English), 85, May 11, 2026, Seattle.

Susan Madge (Myklebust) Williams ('63 Elem. Ed., Kappa Alpha Theta), 84, April 2, 2026, Couer d'Alene, Idaho.

Judith Harris Campbell ('64 Music), 84, April 27, 2026, Pullman.

Gary William Pence ('65 Phys. Ed.), 83, April 17, 2026, Choctaw, Oklahoma.

Robert Charles Daniel ('66 Comm.), 81, March 26, 2026, Tacoma.

Darrel Wayne Stuver ('66 Police Sci.), 82, April 11, 2026, Redmond.



Joy Gaynell Glover ('67 Elem. Ed., Pi Beta Phi), 79, January 17, 2025, Kennewick.

Samuel W. Hunt ('67 English), 83, April 25, 2026, Olympia.

Ronald Stephen Rice ('67 Busi.), 81, April 9, 2026, Seattle.

John Edward Salisbury ('67 Psych., '74 Elem. Ed.), 81, December 19, 2025, Oregon City, Oregon.

Thomas M. Clement Jr. ('68 Wildlife Biol.), 79, January 9, 2025, Baker City, Oregon.

Leonard J. "Butch" Bevaart ('69 Wildlife Biol.), 85, April 20, 2026, Enumclaw.

Janet Lee Elliott ('69 Home Econ.), 79, April 2, 2026, Silverdale.

1970s

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

Pauline "Polli" E. Hamlin ('70 Ed.), 78, March 16, 2026, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Gary J. Heintz ('70 Gen. Stu.), 84, April 8, 2026, Hayden, Idaho.

David Eugene Howard ('70 Busi.), 77, July 23, 2025, Clarkston.

Forrest Alouis Miller ('70, '72 MS Mech. Eng.), 78, April 6, 2026, Vashon.

Joel Keith Thorson ('71 Chem. Eng.), 76, April 17, 2026, Everett.

Rebecca Ann "Becky" Bailey ('72 Ed.), May 12, 2026, 75, The Dalles, Oregon.

Richard "Dic" J. Gribbon ('72 Comm.), 75, May 16, 2026, Sun City, Arizona.

Janice Ellen Lagler ('72 Fine Arts, Delta Delta Delta), 75, March 21, 2026, Vancouver.

Susan "Sue" Mahrt Perkins ('72, '03 MN Nursing) trained generations of nurses at WSU after serving as a school nurse in Spokane for more than 25 years. She died April 19, 2026, in Spokane at age 76. Perkins put her students first and was known for her kindness, enthusiasm, and welcoming spirit. In 2018, Perkins was honored with the university's Undergraduate Faculty Excellence Award. She retired as a full-time professor in 2023.

Richard O. Shelton ('72 History, Ed.), 76, August 19, 2025, Camano Island.

Ina Ames ('73 Math.), 75, April 17, 2026, Richland.

Greg Royer ('74 Busi.), 76, May 4, 2026, Clarkston.

Russell M. Frye Jr. ('75 Ani. Sci.), 74, April 2, 2026, Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

Dennis L. Pedersen ('76 Pharm.), 71, May 16, 2025, Kennewick.

Artis Vaughan ('76 Fine Arts), 94, December 16, 2023, Richland.

Claudia Mary McBride ('77 Fine Arts), 71, April 14, 2026, Deer Park.

Michael Lee Snodgrass ('77 Arch.), 72, September 20, 2025, Marysville.

Lewis Milton Chere ('78 PhD History), 79, January 6, 2024, Wysox, Pennsylvania.

Penelope Jean Hitchcock ('79 DVM) was a veterinarian, infectious disease researcher, and public health leader whose work advanced the study of sexually transmitted diseases and biosecurity policy in the United States. She died March 15, 2026, at age 78. Hitchcock led departments at the National Institutes of Health, and her work helped guide national and international research efforts focused on infectious diseases

and contributed to initiatives addressing biosecurity and emerging health threats.

Kate Anne Overman ('79 Ed.), 64, December 6, 2020, Pasco.

1980s

Guadalupe S. Richardson ('80 Ed.), 71, March 20, 2026, Selah.

Jerry C. Keiser ('81 EdD Ed.), 88, May 29, 2026, Jefferson, Wisconsin.

1990s

Kathryn Leigh Wasem ('97 Pharm.), 67, March 9, 2026, Silverdale.

Darcy Marie DeBord ('98 History), 51, May 3, 2026, North Plains, Oregon.

2000s

Amy Christine Tams ('03 Nursing), 54, May 2, 2026, Vancouver.

Faculty and Staff

Marilyn M. Dillsi, 90, Music, 1990-2007, March 15, 2026, Pullman.

Richard "Dick" Fry, 103, Athletics and News, 1952-1985, May 27, 2026, Pullman.

Calvin Leroy Johnson, 85, Veterinary Medicine, 1986-2002, April 21, 2026, Lewiston, Idaho.

Joseph Judy, 82, Information Services, 1997-2008, February 25, 2026, Eagle Point, Oregon.

Michael Kenny, 81, WSU Police, 1969-2000, February 12, 2026, Lakeside, Montana.

Reba McCoy, 86, Custodial Services, 1986-2000, February 20, 2026, Tensed, Idaho.

Duane Mickelsen, 89, Veterinary Clinic Sciences, 1972-1998, March 3, 2026, Pullman.

Ray Nelson, 85, Agronomy & Soils, 1959-1989, March 16, 2026, Pullman.

Mary Ellen Radziemski, 81, Child Development Center, 1979-2010, March 20, 2026, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Greg Royer, 76, Business Affairs, 1973-2011, May 4, 2026, Clarkston.

Patrick W. Siler, 86, Fine Arts, 1973-2005, May 15, 2026, Pullman.

Malachi Trimble, 26, Northwest Public Radio, 2023-2026, May 24, 2026, Pullman.

Miguel Vasquez-Aguilera, 35, University Advancement, 2014-2026, May 8, 2026, Caldwell, Idaho.

Halvor Westberg, 85, Civil Engineering, 1971-2006, March 5, 2026, Kennewick.

Elia Whelchel, 99, Faculty Senate, 1973-1995, April 13, 2026, Waitsburg.

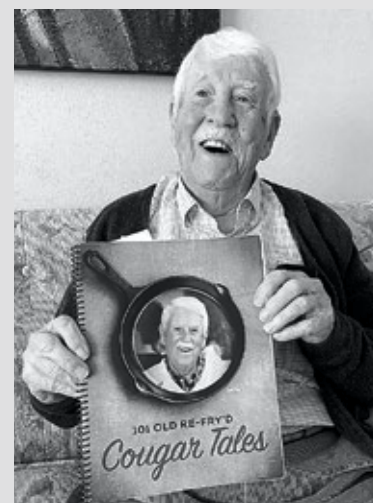
RICHARD B. "DICK" FRY—writer, historian, and beloved storyteller of Washington State University—died May 27, 2026, in Pullman at the age of 103.

Fry wrote WSU stories for more than 50 years and penned a history of Cougar athletics for the centennial of the university, *The Crimson and the Gray: 100 Years with the WSU Cougars*.

Born in California, Fry served in the US Army Air Corps in China during World War II, then worked in newspapers. He arrived at WSU in 1952, where he began writing alumni news. He became the sports information director for the athletic department in 1957 before eventually serving as director of news and information services in 1970.

Even after retirement, Fry wrote stories of WSU sports and published a collection in *101 Old Re-Fry'd Cougar Tales*.

COURTESY FRY FAMILY





COURTESY LUCKY JUICEBOX

Chris Stoski

Chris Stoski ('98 Arch.), a visual storyteller who shared his experiences with Washington State University students, designed scenes for a wide range of iconic movies and later for video games.

Stoski died February 10, 2026, at age 52. He is survived by his wife, Tonia ('98 Arch.), whom he met at WSU.

While studying architecture at WSU, he learned 3D animation along with friend and visual effects Oscar winner Eric Saindon ('96 Arch.). Stoski then went to work in architectural visualization at Industrial Light & Magic, George Lucas's special effects house, where he was a matte painter—creating digital scenes that augment live-action footage. He worked on many top films, including the *Star Wars* prequels, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Jurassic Park*, the Percy Jackson series, *The Hunger Games*, *Indiana Jones* films, and many others.

He later transitioned to video game and augmented reality design. Stoski joined Niantic as a designer on the popular *Pokémon GO!* app and game in 2014.

In addition to his career, Stoski would come talk to classes whenever asked by WSU professor Gregory Turner-Rahman. "He was a consummate professional who cared deeply about his craft and sharing his knowledge," Turner-Rahman says.

"The most important thing that he imparted was, at WSU, there are a lot of opportunities to try new things," Turner-Rahman adds. "Students should enjoy the exploration because that will help them be adaptable designers in the future." 🐾

John M. Fabian

Former NASA astronaut on two space shuttle missions, former director of space for the US Air Force, and WSU Regents' Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient **John M. Fabian** ('62 Mech. Eng.) epitomized pioneering spirit, selfless volunteerism, and the get-it-done Cougar attitude.

Fabian died May 21, 2026, age 87, in Port Ludlow.

He was born in Texas, but considered Pullman his hometown after his father took a job teaching at WSU and moved the family there.

Fabian studied mechanical engineering and joined Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and Air Force ROTC at WSU. He was commissioned after graduating and spent five years flying KC-135 refueling tankers, including 90 combat missions during the Vietnam War.

He received a doctorate at the University of Washington, then served four years on the aeronautics faculty at the US Air Force Academy. It was there that he was accepted by NASA as an astronaut candidate in 1978, one of 35 out of 17,000 applicants.

Fabian's interest in space exploration was sparked in college. "I was a freshman at Washington State University in October 1957, when Sputnik went up, and obviously we all know that changed the world," he told NASA historian Jennifer Ross-Nazzari ('04 PhD History) in 2006. "I followed with great interest the early flights of the American space program, first the unmanned and then the manned flights."

However, he previously hadn't considered becoming an astronaut because he was too tall at six-foot-one for previous missions. That changed with the shuttle program.

In 1983, he became the first person to deploy and then retrieve a free-flying satellite, while aboard the space shuttle *Challenger* as a mission specialist with Sally Ride, the first US woman to enter space.

His second mission was aboard space shuttle *Discovery* in 1985, deploying satellites. He logged 13 days, 4 hours, and 3 minutes in space.

Fabian had been scheduled to fly on *Challenger* in May 1986. Instead, 27 days before the shuttle tragedy, he left NASA to become the director of space and deputy chief of staff, plans and operations for the US Air Force.

He retired from the Air Force with the rank of colonel in 1987 and joined Analytic Services, a nonprofit aerospace public service research institute. He retired as president and chief executive officer in 1998.

Fabian then became a public speaker, volunteer with the Association of Space Explorers, and environmental advocate as founder of the Hood Canal Coalition. He and wife Donna ('63 Math.) also volunteered with WSU Foundation, and established the John and Donna Fabian Scholarship in Engineering and the Association of Space Explorers Scholarship.

Fabian received the NASA Space Flight and Exceptional Public Service medals, among many other honors. WSU awarded him the university's highest honor, the Regents' Distinguished Alumnus Award, in 1983.

Fabian is survived by his wife, Donna; two children, Michael and Amy; and three grandchildren. 🐾

Fabian display in the Lewis Alumni Centre. Wearing his "This is Cougar Country" button in space.

With his wife, Donna Kay Buboltz '63, on a trip to Pullman. COURTESY WSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Read more about John Fabian's life and achievements:

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/John-Fabian



THE COUG EXPERIENCE

A New Day for a Classic Conference

A 110-year-old sports tradition at Washington State *transformed* on July 1.



Washington State University and Oregon State University welcomed new universities to the revamped, reinvigorated Pac-12 Conference: Boise State, Colorado State, Fresno State, Gonzaga, San Diego State, Texas State, and Utah State.*

Starting this fall, the new conference teams will compete in football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, and more. And not just against each other.

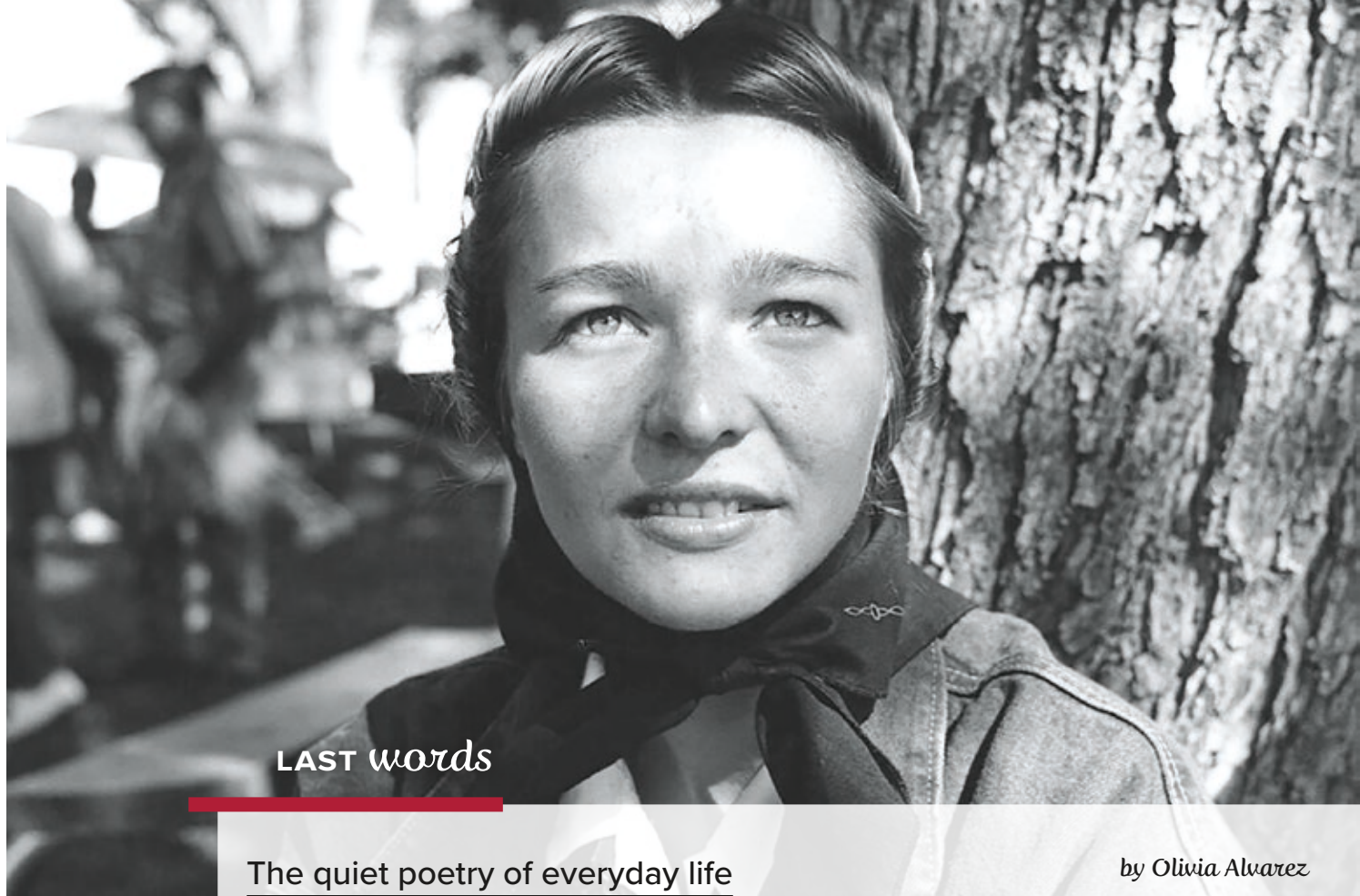
They're hungry to challenge the world of college sports—disrupting and innovating, but focused on what really matters: **student-athletes**.

Keep watching, join the fun, and get excited about the future.

Go Cougs ... and Go Pac-12!



* Three other schools will join the Pac-12 as single-sport affiliate members: Dalla Baptist (baseball), Northern Illinois (wrestling), and Southern Utah (women's gymnastics).



LAST words

The quiet poetry of everyday life

by Olivia Alvarez

Acclaimed photographer **Kristin Capp** gives a rare glimpse into the lives of Hutterite communities in eastern Washington through images acquired by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at Washington State University.

Created over four years and published in 1998, *Hutterite: A World of Grace* shows the lives of people in collective-based settlements, largely self-sufficient farming communities that balance tradition and modernity—preserving Anabaptist customs while embracing advanced agricultural practices. Photographs of Hutterite life are uncommon, and Capp’s work captures moments of fieldwork, shared meals, and quiet reflection with sensitivity and respect.

“This acquisition is highly significant for the museum, bringing us closer to the lived experiences that shape our region and our nation,” says Ryan Hardesty, executive director of the museum. “Capp’s photographs invite us into spaces that are often unseen, revealing a quiet dignity in daily life and a deep connection to land, labor, and community that resonates profoundly with our land-grant mission.”

The 80 photographs at the museum also include works from Capp’s *Americana* portfolio, created during extended travels across the country. Working in the documentary tradition, she sought out the quiet poetry of everyday life—photographing rural towns, overlooked spaces, and intimate domestic scenes. From a solitary bedspread in Nantucket to the direct gaze of an adolescent boy in Soap Lake, these images reveal the persistence of local character and the subtle textures of American identity.

This acquisition significantly expands the museum’s photography holdings while strengthening connections to the agricultural and cultural landscapes of the Pacific Northwest and the broader United States. 🐾

Olivia Alvarez is a marketing assistant at the museum. She graduated from WSU last December with a major in digital technology and culture and a minor in fine arts.

Read more about Capp and the JSMOA collections:

magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Capp





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foundation.wsu.edu/butchs-club



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