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Blue for WWU

More than 180 trees in downtown Bellingham are dressed in strings of blue lights thanks to a gift from the WWU Alumni Association.

The lights went up for Western’s second annual “Paint B’Ham Blue for WWU” event Sept. 27 to welcome new students to Bellingham. In November, the lights turned white for the holiday season.

The WWU Alumni Association’s assistance helped with the purchase, installation and maintenance of the lights, adding a festive evening air to Bellingham’s downtown.

Photo by Rhys Logan ('11, Visual Journalism)
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On the cover: The glass-skinned walls on a new, expanded section of Carver reflect the familiar red brick facade of Bond Hall next door. Photo by Rhys Logan.
Advancing Inclusive Success, Advancing Washington

When I started as president of Western last fall, I was excited not only by Western's distinctive excellence and student-centered education, but also by the ways that Western could become even more responsive to the needs of our students, Washington and the region. This fall, as we welcomed the largest and one of the most diverse incoming classes in Western's history, we have had several opportunities to celebrate how Western is evolving to meet those goals.

On Oct. 13 we celebrated the grand reopening of Carver, one of the most heavily used buildings on our campus. Of course we are thrilled that Western Athletics teams and coaches are back in a beautifully renovated home, but Carver is much more than a gym. It's truly an all-purpose academic facility, and home to some of our fastest-growing, high-demand majors in fields that prepare students for careers in physical therapy, occupational therapy and nursing. Expanded class and lab spaces will ensure that students have access to state-of-the-art facilities and a path to timely graduation.

This fall Western also received a $1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to increase inclusion and representation in STEM disciplines. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of faculty members from the departments of biology, chemistry and geology, Western was one of 24 colleges and universities nationwide to receive this funding from one of the world's foremost biomedical research institutions.

Ultimately, Western's future success is not about us, but about the positive differences we are making in people's lives and communities throughout Washington and beyond. In my mind, that's exactly what Western is all about.

Sincerely,

Sabah Randhawa
President
Brenda Miller: Memoirs allow us to look back with compassion

Western Washington University English Professor Brenda Miller recently won a Washington Book Award for her new memoir, “An Earlier Life.” These prestigious awards are given annually through The Washington Center for the Book, a partnership of the Seattle Public Library and Washington State Library.

We asked Miller a few questions about the book and her writing process.

How is writing a memoir different from a typical novel or non-fiction work?

Memor is based on, as the word suggests, memory. It differs from an autobiography in that the memoir usually doesn’t try to encompass an entire life, but instead focuses on a particular topic that connects these memories. This book is a collection of mostly stand-alone personal essays that accumulate into a memoir about the ways we can lead many different lives in one lifetime, and how we can look back on our “past selves” with compassion.

Many of our most personal memories are often painful or difficult to write about. Was dealing with those issues cathartic for you?

I wouldn’t say “cathartic,” but my purpose in writing memoir or personal essay is to find out what I don’t already know. In other words, to make connections or discovery through the writing itself. Sometimes I don’t realize what I’ve revealed until after the essay’s been published. For example, one of the essays in “An Earlier Life” is written in the form of a series of rejection notes. By utilizing the recognizable voice of rejection notes, the essay becomes humorous, though deep emotional material finds its way into the form, almost on its own.

The book focuses on a number of central pillars that have helped you move through life, such as your religion and other things that give you joy, such as music and your work with rescue dogs. How do these things allow you to move forward in an authentic way?

For me, authenticity is one of the recurring themes in my work and my life: how to cultivate the most authentic life possible. When I’m working with my foster dogs or singing with the Bellingham Threshold Singers or creating a holiday meal for Hanukkah, I feel a deep joy that signals I’m in touch with my most authentic self. I now also volunteer at Whatcom Hospice House, and I look forward to being there each week, when my focus is fully on others.

How does winning this award alter or encourage your plans for the next, as-yet-unwritten phase in your life?

I was so amazed and grateful to have received the Washington State Book Award for “An Earlier Life,” especially because the book was published by a small, independent press (Ovenbird Books). It showed me that I don’t need to alter my style to appeal to more mainstream publishers, that I am fine in my “lyric essay” niche!

—Interview by John Thompson, excerpted from westerntoday.wwu.edu

Meet Western’s new vice president for University Relations and Marketing

Western’s new vice president for University Relations and Marketing has experience in global marketing for some of the world’s best-known brands, including Nike, Mattel, Apple and Microsoft, and helped bring about a digital transformation in marketing and communications at Pacific Lutheran University.

Donna Gibbs was vice president for Marketing and Communications at PLU from 2013 until coming to Western this fall.

Gibbs now leads Western’s newly renamed University Relations and Marketing Division, which includes communications and marketing, web communications, community relations, Western’s Small Business Development Center and Washington Campus Compact.

“I am honored to join one of the top public universities in the West,” Gibbs says. “I look forward to working with the talented team at Western to advance the university’s mission and elevate Western’s distinctive profile regionally, nationally and internationally.”

A $1 million grant for excellence and inclusion in STEM

A new five-year, $1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Inclusive Excellence Program began in September with the goal to enhance student success in STEM fields, especially for those students typically under-represented in the natural sciences.

Under-represented minority students, female students, and first-generation students in the natural sciences have lower success rates than university averages. Western’s HHMI IE team of STEM faculty, led by Biology Professor Emerita Joann Otto, proposed a multi-faceted approach, including establishing student cohorts and mentorship opportunities, providing professional development in student-centered learning for faculty and teaching assistants, and analyzing policies and procedures to identify issues that get in the way of student success.

“All of our strategies are designed to be sustainable so they will continue after the five years of grant support are over,” Otto says. “Ultimately, we anticipate the demographics of majors graduating in the natural sciences will mirror those of the university and our community as a whole.”
Western's solar concentrator project gets a business deal

A New Mexico company has licensed a solar panel project that has been in the works for several years at Western's Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Center and the University of Washington.

UbiQD, a Los Alamos nanotechnology development company, has exclusively licensed the groundbreaking luminescent solar concentrator technology, which was funded in part by the National Science Foundation. The lightweight solar concentrators are partially transparent, enabling windows or other surfaces to become solar energy collectors.

"We envision a world where sunlight harvesting is ubiquitous, a future where our cities are powered by quantum dot-tinted glass on skyscrapers," said Hunter McDaniel, founder and CEO of UbiQD.

Western faculty and students have been working for several years on developing the technology through WWU's AMSEC and collaborating with the UW's CoMotion Innovation Center.

Western's first doctoral program in audiology

The new four-year program, created to prepare entry-level professionals for the field.

The program is offered through Western’s well-regarded Communications Sciences and Disorders Department, which also runs the on-campus clinics in speech-language, hearing and aural rehabilitation, where undergraduates, graduate students in speech-language pathology, and now doctoral students in audiology gain a wealth of practicum experience. The clinic serves adults, adolescents, young children and infants.

After all coursework has been completed, the fourth year of the program consists of a clinical externship in a public school, specialized clinic, or hospital in the U.S. or Canada, all settings where newly minted audiologists may find themselves employed in the years to come.

Western's first clinical doctoral program in audiology.

Love on the run

Forty-two miles into the legendary Hardrock Hundred Mile Endurance Run in the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado, Jeffery Hart curled up in a whimpery heap, exhausted.

Hart, an experienced ultramarathoner, had already run to the top of 14,048-foot Handies Peak, the highest point in the grueling 100-mile race that totals 66,000 feet of elevation—33,000 up and 33,000 down. The stress on his body was causing fluid to build up behind his corneas; he could barely see and he still had 60 miles to go.

After an hour's rest, Hart's vision cleared, and he headed back up the next mountain. He had a delivery to make and a promise to keep.

Hart, an assistant professor of special education at Western, was carrying a three-diamond ring he had picked out with his son Xander. Assistant Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders Jen Thistle was going to meet him at Mile 88 and run the last 12 miles with him to the finish line.

Hart went off to graduate school at Pennsylvania State University and Hart joined her a year later. After they completed their doctoral degrees, they went to work in separate states. Landing faculty jobs together at Western in January was a dream come true.

Even with Thistle on the trail at his side, Hart was hallucinating, hearing voices and country music. They were climbing a series of false summits, with a new climb beginning every time they thought they had reached the peak.

At the top of the last peak, 12,400-foot Putnam-Lime Creek Saddle, Hart asked Thistle to stop and look at the alpine view. In the fading light, they could see 50 miles in every direction, including the mountain passes they had just crossed together.

Hart got on his hands and knees to get his phone and take a selfie. He asked Thistle to take his hand to help him to his feet. Thistle went off to graduate school at Pennsylvania State University and Hart got on one knee instead and wouldn't let go of her hand. He asked her to be a part of his life just like she had been such an important part of the race. "To not make you a part of all this would be a crime," he told her.

Thistle said yes. Then she helped him up so they could run the last few miles together.

Mountain High: WWU faculty Jeffery Hart and Jen Thistle, with Hart's son Xander in inset photo, became engaged during the Hardrock Hundred Mile Endurance Run. They plan to get married in June. "We'll take our guests for a run," Thistle jokes.
Modern art icons get a permanent home at the Western Gallery

By Mary Gallagher

In 1975, five museums in Washington cobbled together a total of $200,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Virginia Wright Fund to create and share a collection of contemporary art.

Wright, a prominent art patron in the Pacific Northwest, set out for New York City on behalf of the newly formed Washington Art Consortium to acquire dozens of works by important 20th century artists such as Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Roy Lichtenstein, and Helen Frankenthaler.

The collection, “Works on Paper: American Art 1945–1975,” has long been housed at the Western Gallery and owned by the Washington Art Consortium’s member institutions. When the consortium disbanded earlier this year and divvied up its collections, “Works on Paper” got a permanent home at the Western Gallery.

The collection has 97 works by 48 artists, including 10 prints of Warhol’s famous “Chairman Mao” series and work by Mark Rothko, Jo Baer, Robert Rauschenberg and Willem de Kooning.

Wright selected many of the works herself with the help of her friend, the late Richard Bellamy, a New York art dealer whose Green Gallery launched the careers of many iconic avant-garde artists; Bellamy’s biographer Judith E. Stein called him “The Eye of the 60s.” Together, Bellamy and Wright had a good eye and access to the art community, Western Gallery Director Hafþór Yngvason says. They were able to amass the collection for about $355,000 before the market for American contemporary art exploded. Today, the collection is worth millions of dollars.

It’s hard to pick a favorite piece, Yngvason says, but he’s captivated by “Untitled,” a delicate, perfectly aligned grid drawn in 1965 by Agnes Martin, ’37. Martin earned a teaching certificate at Western decades before she became influential in the minimalist and abstract expressionist art movements.

The pieces have traveled to other museums, too. A 1967 sketch by Bruce Nauman, “Wax Template of My Body Arranged to Make an Abstracted Sculpture,” is on loan to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

And Pollock’s 1951 drip painting, “Number 3,” was included in “Blind Spots,” an exhibition of Pollock’s controversial black-and-white work at the Tate Liverpool museum in the U.K. in 2015 and the Dallas Museum of Art in 2016. For decades, critics had maligned Pollock’s black drip paintings as evidence of the super-star artist’s decline, perhaps due to alcohol consumption. But bringing 31 of the paintings together gave viewers a chance to see that Pollock was in fact striving to explore new ground in the painting technique that made him famous.

The collection includes works on paper by artists whose sculptures can be seen on Western’s campus, including di Suvero, Nauman, Rauschenberg and Richard Serra. (A sculpture by Donald Judd is being restored.)

The Western Gallery has also begun offering a series of summer exhibitions that bring drawings and prints from the “Works on Paper” collection together with the Campus Sculpture Collection, which Wright also helped shape through donations of funds and major artworks.

“Works on Paper” gives a good background for the outdoor sculptures by providing an overview of American minimalist and post-minimalist art,” Yngvason says.

A selection of abstract expressionist work from the collection will be shown at the Western Gallery in spring 2018.
A NEW DAY FOR CARVER

Two-year, $81.5-million renovation and expansion creates a new home for Western’s academic and athletic hub

When LeaAnn Martin, a handball champion with a newly minted doctorate, was recruited to join Western’s physical education pedagogy faculty in 1991, Carver was already due for an upgrade.

The 1935 gymnasium had last been renovated in 1960, and clearly needed some work in order to keep up with the growing student body and replace the aging infrastructure systems.

Martin took the job at Western despite her misgivings about the building. “I fell in love with the people,” she says, “and it was just a matter of time before Carver would be rebuilt.”

Over the next 26 years, Martin and others who worked, studied and played in Carver learned to live with leaky roofs, a fritzy electrical system and precious little space. She also rose through the academic ranks, became dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and sat on many committees about the eventual rebuilding of Carver.

She vowed to do cartwheels in Red Square if funding ever came through. And she promised to teach a class in the new building, though she had to come out of retirement to do it.

But the 2017 Carver was worth the wait.

Over the last two years, Carver’s 1935 and 1960 buildings were renovated down to the studs and are now surrounded by a modern, glass-skinned structure that adds nearly 58,000 square feet of space, mostly classrooms and labs, to the academic and athletic facility.

Carver is home to Western’s largest and fastest-growing department, Health and Human Development, which offers degree programs in kinesiology, physical and health education, community health education and recreation.

The renovated basketball court has a new name, too: WECU Court in Carver Gym. And more space in smaller gymnasiums—Gym C was doubled in size—creates more room for classes, team practices and club sports.

Carver Gymnasium, Whatcom County’s largest interior gathering space, now has refurbished bleachers, a new basketball floor and a state-of-the-art, seven-camera webcast system. Watch games live or on-demand at portal.stretchinternet.com/wwu.

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The gymnasium side of the building now includes much more space for Western’s 15 intercollegiate varsity teams, with new space for locker rooms for more than 300 student-athletes, training, conditioning and rehabilitation rooms, and team rooms for the basketball and volleyball teams. All head coaches and Athletics administrators are housed under one roof for the first time. And a new Hall of Fame Room offers space for game-time events.

It goes without saying that the electrical and other backbone systems have been brought up to date, too. Offices, labs and classrooms throughout the building now meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Finally, the new building comes with some urgently needed seismic reinforcement.
The new exercise physiology labs now include a dedicated teaching lab, creating much more space for classes and student research exploring motor control, physical performance, injury prevention and more. Students can open up connecting doors in the labs to create a runway to the force plate to examine runners’ strides, with 16 high-speed cameras collecting data throughout. Filled with natural light and room for more equipment and workspaces, the labs are also much more inviting than the previous basement accommodations. From here, many students go on to study physical therapy, occupational therapy or nursing.

Funded by longtime donors to WWU Athletics, the Hall of Fame room features plaques commemorating all 140 members of the WWU Athletics Hall of Fame—with room for future hall of famers—along with two large-screen televisions for guests to watch WWU games, and one of Western’s best views of Red Square. Some of the room’s wood paneling was re-purposed from planks salvaged from Carver Gymnasium’s old floor.

A light-filled collaboration space provides the kind of welcoming place to work or linger that was impossible to find in Carver before the renovation. The collaboration space also overlooks a green roof, just one aspect of the building that is expected to earn LEED accreditation.

With its new glass exterior, Carver lights up the heart of campus at night. The expansion also created more space in the lobby with window seating and a sunny place to linger.
Ten minutes before class on a dreary February morning, Joseph E. Trimble, Distinguished University Professor and professor of psychology at Western, was pulling together lecture notes and a few PowerPoint slides in his office on the top floor of the Academic Instructional Center. The desk phone rang, and he wasn’t going to answer. But the caller ID said “Washington, D.C.,” so he decided to pick up. The American Psychological Foundation was calling to tell Trimble he had been awarded the 2017 Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in Psychology in the Public Interest. The foundation is the philanthropic arm of the 117,000-member American Psychological Association, the nation’s largest scientific and professional organization for psychologists. And they were giving him an award whose citation would begin: “Joseph Everett Trimble is one of the most extraordinary psychologists in our profession.” Once some of the shock wore off, Trimble recalls, he politely excused himself from the call so he could go teach. “I was in a daze for most of my class, and I had to often pinch myself that what I heard was actually true,” he says. Trimble accepted the award in August at the American Psychological Association national convention in Washington, D.C., while an audience of about 200, including colleagues, family, friends and former students, looked on.

This award is by no means Trimble’s first recognition. Awards line the walls and cover the bookshelves in his office, including four from Western, honoring his teaching and scholarship. In the citation for the lifetime achievement award, Trimble is recognized for being an “unquestioned leading contributor in the field of psychology and the American Indian.”

“Besides his expertise in indigenous issues,” the citation continues, “he is a recognized authority in multicultural psychology.” Trimble’s work with multicultural populations arose from a curiosity about how group and cultural influences were accounted for in psychology, which had been regarded as a singular pursuit to understand the minds of all individuals. Our minds, according to the prevailing wisdom of the time, all worked the same—or the same as a white male’s—regardless of our genders, ethnicities, upbringing and experiences. Trimble wasn’t having it. “Culture matters in all aspects of our lives,” Trimble says, but psychology as a discipline hadn’t yet come to that realization in the mid-1960s when he began exploring the idea as a graduate student at both the University of New Hampshire and Harvard University. For him, this notion of culture intimately tied to the

Culture Matters
Fifty years ago, Joseph Trimble knew that understanding the human condition requires a multicultural approach. Now, the rest of the psychology profession knows it too, and they’ve thanked him for it.

By Hilary Parker
individual was an epiphany that would propel him for the rest of his career. Trimble has tackled matters of mental health, substance abuse and spirituality in his work, not only in academic research but also in helping to create counseling protocols that acknowledge cultural differences. His work has also shaped public policy, and opened the psychology community’s eyes to what had been a gaping hole: the understanding of culture’s influence on each of our lives.

Today, the American Psychological Association now recognizes multicultural approaches to understanding the human condition as integral to the profession. Trimble’s choice to work with American Indian and Alaska Native cultures took root during his doctoral studies in the social psychology program at University of Oklahoma. The program fostered some of the ideas he’d been eager to understand, but perhaps more important, it gave him the opportunity to spend time with the families of friends he made at the University, including members of many of the local Native American tribes.

As he saw the people in these communities struggle with problems such as prejudice, poverty and alcoholism, he realized he couldn’t get too absorbed in textbook psychology and should instead use his cultural knowledge to help in “solving fundamental social problems.”

He continues with this quest today, still researching, writing and speaking on the intersection between psychology and culture. His recent work explores subjects including advances in culture, ethnicity and race; counseling psychology and culture; diversity and leadership; ethical mental health interventions for indigenous populations; and disparities in mental health problems among American Indians/Alaska Natives in comparison to other Americans.

“He has been an advocate for addressing the needs of ethnic minorities within a profession and society where they are often overlooked or marginalized,” says Jean Lau Chin, a psychology professor at Adelphi University, and co-author of Trimble’s two books about leadership. Trimble remembers the names and stories of countless students—many of whom came to Western as graduate students specifically to study with him.

“Let’s be honest, the lecture halls are empty, the students aren’t cutthroat. We can actually have good conversations with people,” Trimble said. “I think it’s a great time to be a college professor right now.”

The American Psychological Association’s Division of Cross-Cultural Psychology, whose focus on the intersection of culture and psychology was groundbreaking at the time, “The PAC was packed on a Saturday. Packed!” Trimble remembers.

The talk and the book examine how people in different cultures lead in many effective ways. In Trimble’s TEDx Talk he declares, “Bid farewell to the alpha male leadership style.” Trimble himself, Chin says, embodies the values of the cultures he has spent so many years learning about.

The cover of Chin and Trimble’s book is an image of origami cranes of many different colors flying together to create the globe.Trimble says he hopes this can make it easier for people to understand the differences of people worldwide, how they live, how they think, how they cope.

Mentorship & collaboration

Trimble remembers the names and stories of countless students—many of whom came to Western as graduate students specifically to study with him:

“I have had wonderful students who have gone on to do wonderful things,” he says. “That in and of itself is more valuable to me than any other part of my profession.”

One student who appreciated Trimble’s mentorship in the 1980s is Trudi Nicholas, who is now a fellow faculty member as an associate professor of Human Services at Western. It wasn’t just the grant Trimble pointed her toward that paid for Nicholas’ second year of graduate school, but also the way he made her feel welcomed. Nicholas, who earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in psychology at Western in 1985 and 1987 respectively, explains that psychology as a field is not always welcoming to people who are outside the mainstream. As a person with a multicultural heritage, Nicholas says, having “someone who understood that was really important,” she says of Trimble.

She noticed how Trimble made her and other students feel welcomed, for instance, introducing her to another student of color in the class. That feeling of belonging sets the stage for students to do the best they can, she says.

Today, Nicholas is the one creating welcoming spaces for students, an example set by Trimble. She’s also carried his passion for equity and social justice into her own teaching, her research and her work in the community. In 2016, Nicholas and Trimble shared Western’s Diversity Achievement Award. “Being able to zero in on social justice topics was unusual (in psychology),” Nicholas says. That focus in her studies excited and emboldened her to keep pursuing those topics.

Mentorship of his students is a key driver for Trimble, as is collaboration with colleagues at Western and around the world. One of his recent collaborations is with Chin of Adelphi University. The two published “Diversity and Leadership” in 2015, and Trimble gave a TEDx Talk on the ideas in the book at TEDxWWU that same year.

“The PAC was packed on a Saturday. Packed!” Trimble remembers.

Our students are saying, “We need to talk more about cultural diversity, and we need to learn more about it when we’re freshmen,” Trimble says, adding that students are telling faculty they want to understand the differences of people worldwide, how they live, how they think, how they cope.

“A student was an epiphany that would propel him for the rest of his career. Trimble has tackled matters of mental health, substance abuse and spirituality in his work, not only in academic research but also in helping to create counseling protocols that acknowledge cultural differences. His work has also shaped public policy, and opened the psychology community’s eyes to what had been a gaping hole: the understanding of culture’s influence on each of our lives.

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Today, Nicholas is the one creating welcoming spaces for students, an example set by Trimble. She’s also carried his passion for equity and social justice into her own teaching, her research and her work in the community. In 2016, Nicholas and Trimble shared Western’s Diversity Achievement Award. “Being able to zero in on social justice topics was unusual (in psychology),” Nicholas says. That focus in her studies excited and emboldened her to keep pursuing those topics.

Mentorship of his students is a key driver for Trimble, as is collaboration with colleagues at Western and around the world. One of his recent collaborations is with Chin of Adelphi University. The two published “Diversity and Leadership” in 2015, and Trimble gave a TEDx Talk on the ideas in the book at TEDxWWU that same year.

“The PAC was packed on a Saturday. Packed!” Trimble remembers.

Our students are saying, “We need to talk more about cultural diversity, and we need to learn more about it when we’re freshmen,” Trimble says, adding that students are telling faculty they want to understand the differences of people worldwide, how they live, how they think, how they cope.

A student was an epiphany that would propel him for the rest of his career. Trimble has tackled matters of mental health, substance abuse and spirituality in his work, not only in academic research but also in helping to create counseling protocols that acknowledge cultural differences. His work has also shaped public policy, and opened the psychology community’s eyes to what had been a gaping hole: the understanding of culture’s influence on each of our lives.

Today, the American Psychological Association now recognizes multicultural approaches to understanding the human condition as integral to the profession. Trimble’s choice to work with American Indian and Alaska Native cultures took root during his doctoral studies in the social psychology program at University of Oklahoma. The program fostered some of the ideas he’d been eager to understand, but perhaps more important, it gave him the opportunity to spend time with the families of friends he made at the University, including members of many of the local Native American tribes.

As he saw the people in these communities struggle with problems such as prejudice, poverty and alcoholism, he realized he couldn’t get too absorbed in textbook psychology and should instead use his cultural knowledge to help in “solving fundamental social problems.”

He continues with this quest today, still researching, writing and speaking on the intersection between psychology and culture. His recent work explores subjects including advances in culture, ethnicity and race; counseling psychology and culture; diversity and leadership; ethical mental health interventions for indigenous populations; and disparities in mental health problems among American Indians/Alaska Natives in comparison to other Americans.

“He has been an advocate for addressing the needs of ethnic minorities within a profession and society where they are often overlooked or marginalized,” says Jean Lau Chin, a psychology professor at Adelphi University, and co-author of Trimble’s two books about leadership. Trimble remembers the names and stories of countless students—many of whom came to Western as graduate students specifically to study with him.

“Let’s be honest, the lecture halls are empty, the students aren’t cutthroat. We can actually have good conversations with people,” Trimble said. “I think it’s a great time to be a college professor right now.”

The American Psychological Association’s Division of Cross-Cultural Psychology, whose focus on the intersection of culture and psychology was groundbreaking at the time, “The PAC was packed on a Saturday. Packed!” Trimble remembers.

The talk and the book examine how people in different cultures lead in many effective ways. In Trimble’s TEDx Talk he declares, “Bid farewell to the alpha male leadership style.” Trimble himself, Chin says, embodies the values of the cultures he has spent so many years learning about.

The cover of Chin and Trimble’s book is an image of origami cranes of many different colors flying together to create the globe. Trimble says he hopes this can make it easier for people to understand the differences of people worldwide, how they live, how they think, how they cope.
Alaska Stories

Alumna Eowyn Ivey weaves fantastical yarns about the unforgiving beauty of the Alaska wilderness. Her own story about a small-town bookstore worker whose first novel nearly wins a Pulitzer Prize is just as inspiring.
By John Thompson

Parched high on a ridge overlooking the Matanuska River valley about 2 1/2 hours north of Anchorage, novelist Eowyn LeMay Ivey takes a deep breath and scans the landscape.

To the southwest, the crumbling terminus of the huge Matanuska glacier perches above its namesake river, having pushed its way downhill more than 25 miles from its origin in the high spires of the Chugach Mountains. To the northeast, the valley opens up into a vast, seemingly impenetrable taiga of black spruce and soggy bogs that stretch to the horizon. To the west are the massive, buttressed flanks of the Talkeetna Mountains, a wedge of upthrust peaks, ridges and high glaciers separating the Matanuska and Susitna river valleys.

“It’s not easy to convey what this feels like, to be a tiny part of this big picture,” Ivey says, doing a slow 360-degree spin with her arms outstretched, her hands slowly framing the vista like a pair of bookends. “The scope and the magnitude of this place can be almost overwhelming at times as a writer. And those feelings of beauty and awe are always counterbalanced in equal measure by the brutal reality of how short life can be here.”

Everything about Alaska feels big; this state was constructed to a different scale than the rest of the country. The raw beauty of the landscape is inescapable; so too is the feeling that even now, at the height of summer, it is an unforgiving place.

“Even after living here my whole life there are times, especially in the winter, when I get a bit perplexed by my attachment to rural Alaska,” Ivey says. “Alaska is the only place I feel at home, but it’s not for everyone.”

And Ivey is about as “home-grown Alaskan” as you can get. Her playground growing up near the small town of Chickaloon, population about 270, was the mile-wide expanse of the Matanuska floodplain, an interwoven system of shallow braided channels, cobble bars and small islands.

From the time she was old enough to hunt and fish, her summer vacations consisted of family caribou hunts near Denali or netting salmon on the Copper River. Ivey got her first caribou at 16.

“Our objective on summer vacations was to fill the freezer for the winter,” she says. “Everything we caught or killed, we ate, whether it was caribou or moose or bear or salmon or halibut. In rural Alaska, hunting and fishing aren’t just hobbies or activities, they are done for subsistence.”

Not surprisingly, given the state’s overwhelming natural majesty, the magic inherent to Alaska’s landscape is ultimately at the core of each of Ivey’s two novels.

Her debut novel, “The Snow Child,” a finalist for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize, is about a childless 1920s Matanuska valley homesteader whose lives are changed forever after a young girl emerges from the woods near their cabin. It’s an Alaskan take on a classic Russian fairytale.

Her most recent novel, “To the Bright Edge of the World,” tells the story of an 1885 U.S. Army expedition up the Copper River to explore the Chugach Mountains, an expedition being viewed in the present day. As the expedition plunges deeper into an almost otherworldly landscape, the group begins to understand that they are in a land where Western ideas of reality and science have given way to the mythical elements and lore of Alaska’s indigenous peoples.

In both books, Alaska itself is the force that imbeds the characters and their world with a magical realism that takes the reader, literally and figuratively, to places far from what they had imagined.

“With ‘Bright Edge,’ I wanted to ask, what would it be like for a military expedition to not just explore the unmapped landscape of Alaska, but to actually walk into the stories of the indigenous people who already lived here,” she says.

As she was working on the novel, Ivey reached out to her friend Argent Krivoskok, a visual artist and member of the Nuninlik Dena’ina tribe. “We had a long, thoughtful discussion about what it means to grow up in Alaska with Native ancestry, and he really inspired me and helped me approach aspects of the book in a new way. In many ways, he inspired my character Josh in the novel.”

The desire to tell stories is what brought Ivey to Western in 1991. After graduating from high school, Western seemed like the perfect choice; not too big, not too small, far from home but not too far. Her husband of 24 years, Sam, who was then a sophomore at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, was persuaded to transfer to Western, where he got his degree in biology. Sam Ivey, ’93, is now an area manager for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Palmer.

“That first year we just loaded up our beat-up pickup truck and drove south,” Eowyn Ivey says. “Every time we went back (to Bellingham) we’d pack our huge coolers full of moose and caribou and salmon to take back with us, and, frankly it sort of freaked out a lot of people in Bellingham. Not everyone understood that this was the food we had eaten all our lives. There was a strong anti-hunting sentiment on campus, and it was a source of painful culture shock for me.”

Both her parents have degrees in science; they taught her early on that the mythical and the scientific coexist in Alaska’s landscape.

“I loved the structure of it, and I learned so much at Western that I realized at the time was setting up the building blocks for what I would end up doing with my fiction,” Ivey says.

After graduating with a journalism degree in 1995, Ivey worked for four weeks in internship at her local newspaper, the Frontiersman in Palmer and Wasilla, which turned into a full-time reporting job.

“When I was in junior high, I always imagined wanting to be a sportswriter for Alaska,” Ivey says. “And I’m glad we did leave and go to Western. It was a great experience. But by the time I graduated, we both were ready to come back here. Alaska was just too much a part of who we were,” she says.

After 10 years at the Frontiersman, covering school boards, city council meetings, and every kind of local news, Ivey began to feel a desire to work outside the boundaries of journalism.

“I had always loved fiction, and the structure of my job began to feel a bit like shackles,” Ivey says. So she left the newspaper and began a 10-year stint at a nearby bookstore, Fireside Books in Palmer, where she could work during the day and begin writing fiction at night.

As a bookseller, she felt she had real hopes for her work: Maybe a small, regional publisher could get her books out into the world.

But there she was at the Kachemak Bay Writers’ Conference in 2011, where she was discussing her latest project across a table from literary agent Jeff Kleinman of Folio Literary Management in New York City. Kleinman wanted to see a few chapters; she was totally unprepared. But after a mad scramble that involved her husband logging on to Ivey’s computer and sending her a few files, she was able to get Kleinman what he wanted. Then he wanted more.

“I was shocked,” she says. “He was excited about the novel, though, and it all ended up working out.”

“The Snow Child” was published in 2012 by Little, Brown & Co. to rave reviews and numerous awards, including a nomination for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. When her publicist told her the news about being a finalist for the Pulitzer, Ivey was in disbelief, and her mother even more so.

“I called, and I said ‘Guess what, Mom? My book is a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize,’ and she thought I was pulling her leg,” she says. “I guess in retrospect I can hardly blame her. Over the years I have played a lot of pranks on her.”

Beautiful, Dangerous, Unforgiving

Even as the news about the Pulitzer began to sink in and she garnered other honors such as the International Author of the Year at the United Kingdom’s National Book Awards, she was already spinning for her next project, and “Bright Edge” began to take shape.

Ivey said she knew it would be a much different kind of story than “The Snow Child,” and would involve the complicated task of flipping back and forth not only between different characters but different timelines, as much of the story unfolds from records of the expedition being viewed in the present day.

As is often the case, such a difficult and challenging endeavor hit a snag—the book began to unravel before her eyes. She needed inspiration.

“The fictional river in ‘Bright Edge’...
sits very close and follows a similar path to the Copper River, and the two rivers share many of the same attributes: beautiful, dangerous and unforgiving. To move forward, I needed to immerse myself in what the expedition would have been like. It worked.


At Home in Chickaloon

Despite the accolades, Ivey remains very much at home in Chickaloon. The house she and Sam share with their two daughters—Grace, just left for McGill University in Montreal to study opera singing, and Aurora, 10, got her first caribou this summer—and two golden retrievers is a former seasonal cabin that they have been renovating for 10 years. The storage shed down the hill from their house has a black bear hide nailed to it ("Have you ever had bear? It's delicious."). Another bear, this one presumably still meandering through the Alaskan bush somewhere, briefly set up camp in their yard earlier in the summer. Ivey lives just a few miles from the house she grew up in, which she proudly says was built by her father—in fact, he hand-dug the foundation with a shovel. And when he needed help, well, that's what neighbors are for.

"Here, we all work together. Because it's really, really hard to do it alone," she says.

Last year, a group of neighbors came over to help the Iveys with some electrical wiring issues in their house. Earlier in the summer, the neighborhood converged on a neighbor on the water to help put a roof on his wife's art studio.

"That's a great example of why I live where I live, and why I probably always will," she says. "Alaskans, by their nature, are incredibly self-sufficient and take an enormous amount of pride in that fact. But at the same time, I've never seen people who are more willing to give of themselves to help a friend or neighbor."

That reality about the natural beauty that surrounds her is why Ivey rarely goes for a hike without her rifle and never without bear spray. She knows that falling off a raft in the Copper River could mean a quick death because there is so much sediment in the frigid water, the silt attaches to your clothes like a plaster cast in seconds. She knows a sunny spring day in the mountains can turn into a blizzard in 10 minutes, and that you always need to plan for it, no matter where you are. She knows all these things, and she wouldn't change any of them.

"These are the realities I live with and which make up the core foundation of my work," she says, gazing across miles of open taiga at the distant, snowy ramparts of the Chugach. "I want my writing to reflect Alaska, its places, its history and its people. But like all writers, I have no idea if I'll publish another novel. I have to find a story I think is worth telling, and a way to do it that is interesting and exciting to me. I can never take any of that for granted."

John Thompson is the assistant director of Western's Office of Communications and Marketing. He visited Eowyn Ivey in Chickaloon in July on his first trip to Alaska, and his mind is still officially blown.

Suggested Reading: Eowyn Ivey's favorite books about Alaska, by Alaskans

- "Two Old Women," by Velma Wallis: "An inspiring and gripping story based on an indigenous legend about two women who are abandoned by their people in the middle of winter."
- "Ordinary Wolves," by Seth Kantner: "Depicts the contrast between rural and urban life in Alaska. Beautifully written and brutally honest."
- "The Raven's Gift," by Don Rearden: "A vivid, page-turning thriller that follows a young teacher as he struggles to survive in the Alaska wilderness after an epidemic."
- "Turn Again," by Kris Farmen: "Set in 19th century Alaska, and it has it all—romance, murder, shape-shifting—yet it remains compassionate and true."
- "The Woman Who Married a Bear," by John Straley: "Northern noir with a poetic heart, featuring investigator Cecil Younger. I was so thrilled to learn that Straley's tenth Cecil Younger book is coming out next year."
REAL NEWS: WWU alumni journalists who are surviving in the media industry aren’t giving up their watchdog roles—and are finding new career hope in unexpected places.

By Zach Kyle

Earlier this year, I walked away from a job as a reporter at Idaho’s biggest newspaper. Subscription and advertising dollars in print and broadcasting have been in free-fall for more than a decade, as readers and advertisers take their attention and their ad business to the internet. Newsrooms across the country, including my former workplace, are feeling threadbare after rounds of layoffs, buyouts and vacated positions left unfilled.

As newsrooms shrink, the good days come less frequently. And by “good days,” I’m talking about time we spent producing stories that keep a watchful eye on our local powers that be. Reporters spend less time in statehouses and city halls now. That’s a problem: Politicians don’t work well on the honor system. And those who spread fake news for the purpose of deception don’t seem to mind the dwindling numbers of legitimate reporters either.

Meanwhile, the papers delivered to doorsteps shrink. Reporters try to fit important topics into their schedules while meeting rising expectations for more—but not necessarily more in-depth—stories, online posts, videos, tweets and story clicks, and all with fewer editors supporting them.

I once had an editor who pointed out the obvious: We aren’t going to do more with less. That math doesn’t work. We will do less with less.

Most media outlets have done less with less for a long time. I read too many earnings reports showing corporate losses in the tens or hundreds of millions. It wore on me, so I left. The following week, the paper announced more layoffs and beat reshuffling.

It’s grim, and I’m not the only journalist with concerns about corporate media’s ability to remain a reliable fourth estate, especially at the local level.

But despair isn’t the answer. Journalism is still filled with thousands of talented, dedicated journalists, including Western alumni, who are busy producing quality work or teaching the next generation of investigative journalists. They know the challenges their industry faces, yet they are optimistic.

Duff Wilson, ’75, B.A., journalism, built a career in investigative reporting at Seattle newspapers before working at the New York Times. He now works for Reuters, where his sole job is chasing the kind of deep, investigative stories many newspaper reporters aren’t given time for—a “journalism oasis,” he says.

There aren’t many well-staffed investigative teams like the one featured in the Oscar-winning film “Spotlight” anymore, Wilson says. But nonprofits like ProPublica, which has won four Pulitzer Prizes, and the Center for Investigative Reporting are helping fill the void.

“Nonprofits don’t make up the difference for other losses, but they are a really good breeding ground for investigative reporting,” Wilson says. “They have enough resources to make a difference.”

Local journalism nonprofits are starting to make their mark, including Crosscut in Seattle. The reader-supported nonprofit was largely built on the work of ex-patriots of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, which greatly reduced its staff when it went online-only in 2009.

Here in Idaho, the nonprofit Idaho Education News has seven employees, easily making it the state’s best education watchdog.

The Seattle Times has three grant-funded programs for special coverage of homelessness, education and traffic. The Seattle Times has another advantage over many papers: dedicated family ownership.

Mark Higgins, ’82, B.A. journalism, now presides over the Seattle Times Opinion page as the deputy opinion editor.

Corporate media chains answer to shareholders. Families that own newspapers are typically more civic-minded than shareholders and usually more averse to cuts, Higgins says. The Seattle Times certainly hasn’t been immune to reductions, but the paper has weathered the storm better than other papers, thanks in part to the Blethen family, which owns a majority stake in the operation, Higgins says.

What kind of difference can ownership make? Compare my city of Boise, population 223,000, to Charleston, South Carolina, with about 134,000 people. The Statesman in Boise, owned by a large corporate newspaper chain, now has 10 reporters. The privately-owned Post and Courier in Charleston boasts more than three times as many reporters at 34, including an investigative team that won a Pulitzer in 2015 for a series on domestic violence.

“Local ownership is of critical value,” Higgins says. “You’ve seen how a corporate mindset can wrench a newsroom around from being productive and putting out high-value content to one that’s been diminished, demoralized or both.”

Higgins, who as metro editor and senior digital editor led teams that helped...
the Times win two Pulitzer prizes, stresses that there is a bright future for those interested in a career in journalism.

“Today, more than ever, a free press is essential to democracy,” Higgins says. “At a macro level, there’s every reason to be optimistic about the role and power of the press. I’d encourage anybody seeking a career in journalism to follow their passion. And it takes passion. If you want to be in journalism, you can make it happen. But you have to hustle.”

David Cuillier, ’90, B.A., journalism, worked in newspapers and journalism organizations in Washington and Idaho before coming to the University of Arizona, where he’s now director of the journalism school.

Mainstream media has helped its shrinking staffs by collaborating with other news organizations formerly seen as competitors, says Cuillier, who was president of the Society of Professional Journalists in 2013-14.

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I watched that play out in Idaho media, especially at the statehouse, where it makes more sense for four newspapers to cover four different hearings, then share their articles, instead of writing four stories about the same thing.

Collaboration will be the future of mainstream journalism because it has to be, Cuillier says, especially for time-intensive investigations. The Panama Papers is one recent, Pulitzer-winning example. Led by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, reporters around the globe teamed up to digest 11.5 million documents released from a law firm that showed widespread money laundering using off-shore accounts. More than 150 government officials were implicated, including the prime minister of New Zealand, who resigned.

Cuillier says he wants to see newspapers and TV stations working together to expose corruption at the local level.

“The Panama Papers was near, but I want to see that in every town,” Cuillier says. “Right now, cities and school districts play reporters off against each other. Journalists need to work together and not get sucked into that.”

Journalism is the last bastion for society for holding power accountable,” Cuillier continues. “I’m not sure if journalists realize how important their job is right now. I think it’s the most important job out there.”

And the traditional print and broadcast worlds are no longer the only viable career path for talented journalists.

Amy Harder, ’07, B.A., journalism, rose quickly through the print ranks and worked at the National Journal for six years before taking what she considered a dream job at The Wall Street Journal in 2014.

Harder saw both publications go through rounds of cuts and buyouts, and the well-regarded National Journal suspended its print edition in 2015. She managed to “rise off of a sinking ship” because she was young and hungry and in part because she specialized in covering energy, global warming and environmental news and policy, a coveted expertise.

Harder’s niche—and the fact that she built a reputation as a down-the-middle reporter on often-politicized topics—led to unsolicited job offers from several national media outlets. Harder says she was in no hurry to leave The Wall Street Journal, but she accepted a job offer at a brand-new media startup called Axios, which offered “everything I wanted and more,” including a column on energy trends and the chance to do video stand-ups.

Harper left The Wall Street Journal for the online Axios for another reason: To be part of a new media company that she says represents the future of journalism.

“It can be hard for newspapers to rapidly adapt to the internet,” she says. “That’s what makes Axios more nimble. We don’t have to deal with that print mindset.”

Based in Washington, D.C., Axios covers politics, media, technology and business and built its employee roster to more than 85—many poached from old-guard national outlets—and 10 paid interns after launching in January. The online-only publication promises to deliver fair and analytical coverage of complex issues in relatively short and digestible posts.

The Axios’ site includes a manifesto, which begins: “All of us left cool, safe jobs to start a new company with this shared belief: Media is broken—and too often a scam.”
Wolters says she’s been disappointed by the lack of critical thinking in broadcasting, both in the lack of scrutiny in stories by newsrooms and by the audience’s distaste for stories challenging their preconceptions.

“People don’t even care whether (boxer) Floyd Mayweather knows how to read,” Wolters says. “The fact is they are watching the fight because they don’t want to watch what other news is on.”

Wolters already had print chops—she won four Society of Professional Journalist awards for her work on The Western Front—and now can apply for work in TV and radio. Her youth should be an advantage: Longtime broadcast pros are adjusting to a changing field that now demands they shoot, interview, edit and produce TV segments on a daily deadline. Wolters has done that from the beginning.

She plans to apply to a wide swath of media jobs in TV and beyond, including work in corporate media. But given a choice, she would rather take an untraditional career path.

“People my age are looking for other sources, which creates a lot of other job opportunities for journalists who don’t want to work for CNN or for Fox,” Wolters says. She says she sees opportunity in covering the marijuana industry, especially the friction between medicinal use, changing laws and professional sports.

“The cannabis industry is growing,” she says. “It’s all news. If you leave it up to the stoners to write it, it won’t be.”

Fred Obee, ’82, B.A., journalism, worked at small Washington newspapers before taking over as executive director of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association in 2015. Young journalists can dabble in opportunities as they arise across the media spectrum instead of considering themselves purely print reporters, he says.

“Young people today have a much broader vision for how they can do good journalism than people like me, who always saw print journalism as be-all and end-all,” Obee says. “If you go into it with an idea of all of the different projects you could apply yourself to, the sky’s the limit.”

But even the new, nimble generation will need a place to work. Government corruption may enjoy a golden era if papers and TV stations continue closing, Cuillier says.

“Corporate greed is what is killing journalism,” he says. “I want all those chains to die. We’re already seeing papers closing and news deserts forming around the country. That will be painful in the short-term. But from the ashes will emerge some good, quality journalism where organizations can accept a 2-percent profit margin. I hope those chains move into other industries that don’t require a higher purpose.”

I’ve read enough media earning reports to share Cuillier’s cynicism about mainstream media’s future. I’ve heard all of the buzzwords—“digital-first strategy,” “pivot to video,” “content optimization,” and the depressingly hilarious “news funnels”—and wonder if the media executives uttering them believe any of it.

But, like Cuillier, I have faith in journalism and hope in nontraditional outlets like ProPublica and Axios filling a void if some of the media chains go belly-up. I won’t be surprised when Harder breaks a big story online or when Wolters succeeds with or without mainstream media as her career escalator. I won’t be surprised when vets like Wilson and Higgins keep speaking truth to power.

And, despite my cynicism, I won’t be surprised if I find my way back into the news business, either. Too much work needs to be done.

Zach Kyle, ’07, B.A., journalism, worked for a decade in Idaho daily newspapers, most recently as a business reporter at the Idaho Statesman.

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WWU History Professor Johann Neem believes that in order to strengthen public education we must remember its roots. “Today our public discussions of education are almost entirely about economic benefits—or ‘college and career readiness,’ in the words of the Common Core State Standards,” Neem says.

But public school pioneers were interested in more than graduates’ earning potential, Neem says. America’s public schools were also meant to develop the capabilities of citizens, to promote the development of human beings and to bring together a diverse society.


We asked Neem why the history of public education is a story we need to hear today.

Who’s your audience for this book—besides, perhaps, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos?

This book was started well before DeVos became Education Secretary. It’s not just about her. President Obama’s Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in 2012, “our president knows education is about jobs.” There’s nothing wrong with expecting schools to prepare young people for work, but I believe that we should expect more from them.

My audience is any American who cares about the future of our schools. I wrote this book to be accessible to all readers. I would love Secretary DeVos to read this book, but she has already lost faith in public schools. She believes that we are too diverse a society to have common schools. An increasing number of Americans share her concern. I believe that it is precisely because we are so diverse that we need common schools to bring us together.

Did the growth of public education help build our nation’s democracy?

No doubt. Our nation’s founders were extremely nervous about whether Americans would be prepared to govern themselves. They worried that the people, if not educated, would be easily swayed by demagogues—a Caesar. They also worried that leaders would take advantage of their power to serve themselves rather than the people.

Widening access to education was one of their solutions to this problem. All Americans, boys and girls, would need access to the kind of education once reserved for elites. This meant the liberal arts and sciences, those subjects that enabled people to think critically about the world. It also meant ensuring that citizens were taught to place the common good ahead of themselves. It’s hard to exaggerate the faith that many of our nation’s founders placed in education—and their fear that an ignorant citizenry would be easy prey for would-be tyrants.
Your book illustrates that a recurring theme in the history of public education is disagreement over the schools themselves. But those disagreements are actually part of the democracy-building function of schools, right? So these fights are...good for us?

Believe it or not, I think that they are good for us. I understand the temptation to ask citizens and politicians to put politics aside—and, when politics is just about partisanship, that's fair to ask. But politics is also about legitimate disagreements. Education is about shaping the hearts and minds of the rising generation. How can we not have public discussions about something so important? We are a diverse and changing nation. What values do we want public schools to inculcate? What are the goals or outcomes that we share collectively? Each of us can advocate our perspective, but we should recognize those who disagree with us as fellow citizens.

What can we learn from this history about how to improve public schools?

First, we can learn about our failures. For example, we never fully achieved the kind of equality that education reformers between the Revolution and Civil War sought. I don't want to paint too rosy a picture of the past. White southerners did not provide education for black children, and racism and segregation were rampant in the North. Catholics felt uncomfortable in schools biased against their faith. Yet at their best, reformers after the Revolution imagined public schools that brought together rich and poor, native-born and immigrant. Do we still aspire to do so?

Second, we can learn about what matters. When reformers increased access to the liberal arts and sciences, they did so because they believed in equality. Every child's heart and mind mattered, not just because they were future workers, but because they were citizens and human beings. Why should we deny any American access to the best works of literature, the insights of history, or knowledge of science? Every life is enriched by studying these subjects, as is our society more generally.

Third, we can learn that the schools' success was premised on balancing local control with central oversight. The public schools were popular because ordinary citizens were stakeholders. At the same time, most of us are not experts in education or in the academic subject matter. That's why we need professional teachers and administrators. Americans then, like now, disagreed about how to balance local versus central control, and there's no one formula for all times and places. Yet I think we must always have a place for meaningful local involvement.

How has public education affected your own life?

I'm an immigrant. I was born in Mumbai, and came to the U.S. when I was young. I attended public schools in the suburbs of San Francisco from kindergarten through high school. The schools provided me with knowledge and skills necessary for future success. They also brought together a diverse community of people, some of whom had been in the country for generations, and some, like me, who were new. We were taught to respect each other's backgrounds and differences, but we were also taught that we collectively belonged to a nation with a common past and future. I am deeply grateful to my teachers. It takes a village.

Johann N. Neem is chair of the History Department at WWU and a senior fellow at the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. He is also the author of "Creating a Nation of Joiners: Democracy and Civil Society in Early National Massachusetts."

Scenes from American classrooms, from the Library of Congress Collections: Students, top, vie for their teacher's attention at Public School Eight in New York City in January 1943. Students, bottom, begin the school year at Anacostia High School in Washington, D.C., in September 1957.

Top: Marjory Collins, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-DIG-FSA-8D24388.

To learn more about programs in your area, visit www.edu/locations.
As the year comes to an end, consider these acts of kindness:

- Make your end-of-year gift to Western
- Take advantage of your employer’s matching funds
- Get in touch with your college roommate
- Mark your calendar for WWU Give Day on June 1, 2018

During the season of giving, remember Western.

Chris Witherspoon ('94) Alumni Board President

In his fifth year on the WWU Alumni Association Board of Directors, we are pleased to announce Chris Witherspoon is taking the helm as president. Chris is president and chief growth officer at DNA, a Seattle-based advertising and branding firm. A 1994 graduate of the College of Business and Economics, Chris earned a bachelor’s in business administration with a marketing concentration. While at Western, he was a proud member of the Vikings football team. In addition to leading the board, Chris and his wife Kathy, who met at Western, support WWU scholarships. In his Seattle community Chris has served on the boards for Pacific Science Center, Seattle Sports Commission, and Issaquah Girls Basketball Association.

The Alumni Board has spent the past two years talking with hundreds of alumni to ask, “What can we do to be of value to you and the university?” Those conversations helped the board create the following strategic objectives:

- Increase engagement with each of you and introduce students to the Alumni Association and our network of Western grads earlier in their academic career.
- Elevate the benefits that matter to you, our alums.
- Use data to drive decision-making, direction and future engagement.

As a result, here’s what you can expect from your WWU Alumni Association’s new direction:

- An invitation to participate in the alumni survey.
- A different menu of program and event offerings.
- Opportunity for facilitated professional development, networking, and mentoring.

Why is this work important? Because like Western, the university’s Alumni Association isn’t your typical alumni organization. Our students and alumni are special, and what makes the Western experience unique is the community built around that individualism.

I’ll work alongside Chris, and our Alumni Association Board to get Western Engaged (WE) in supporting our alumni success alongside our university’s goals for student success.

Go Vikings!

WWU Alumni Board Welcomes New President, Strategic Direction

By Deborah DeWees
Executive Director
Western Alumni Association
2003 – Cara Leverett (M.S., biology) joined the science faculty at Otis College in Arizona.

2004 – T.J. Martin (B.A., Fairhaven interdisciplinary concentration, American cultural studies) co-directed a 14-sec. documentary about the 1992 riots in Los Angeles following the acquittal of four L.A. police officers in the Rodney King case. The documentary, which appeared on the National Geographic Channel, is an Emmy and in September for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking. Erin Thompson (B.A., history) is a senior HR business partner at Seattle City Light. Paintings by Michael Kindred (B.A., art) – painting – were recently featured in an exhibition at the De Lusse gallery in Los Angeles.

2008 – Mark Leuning (B.Mus., performance) became an M.A.-Ph.D. program in French Studies at Brown University. Shawn D. (B.S., environmental science), also known as “Tuckas” is a musician whose work can be seen throughout Bellingham. Dan Harvey (B.S., pre-physical therapy) is a physical therapist.

2009 – After nearly five years working on health policy in Washington D.C., including working for U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, Anna Walden-Newman (B.A. political science) recently graduated from Columbia University and is now a policy associate for Social Watch and Makers in Public Health. She is now a clinical social worker in Colorado working with children and adolescents. Harriet Elizabeth Huyse (B.Mus., performance concentration) received a $65,000 grant from the Peace Center for Arts and Heritage to execute a performance of the American premiere of TOSCA at TU. TOSCA is an epic, 21-part, 14-hour piece of contemporary chamber music that explores the history of the Romanov family. The project was funded by the Grammy Foundation.

2010 – Katherine Shaw (B.A., sociology) recently became the managing director of the Central Washington Family Medicine Clinic in Yakima. Playlist Emily Landmann (B.A., theatre) co-directed the book for the musical “Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again” at the University of Washington Northwest Repertory RXE. Playing film critic and in order because of its length “KLANC” will be performed at FringeArts in Philadelphia April 26-28. Christine Hayes (B.A., sociology) became the city’s prosecutorial attorney for the city of Bellingham. Ground Krystal Marone (B.A., business administration – international business) is a professor at INSEEC Business School in Paris, where she has lived for years. Kelly Bechard (B.A., business and community development information systems) became a freelance illustrator based in Seattle who works have been published in McSweeny’s Internet Tendency, The Stranger, Seattle Met and Fresh Magazine. Spencer Ellsworth (M.A., English) recently entered the space at Everett Community College. His new space is the popular podcast “Starter: A Red Peace.”

2012 – Charles Grant III (B.S., chemistry) became the chief financial officer for the Washington State University Boonshoft School of Medicine. chocolates management) became an associate professor of the Student National Medical Association, which is committed to advancing minority medical students. Germaine Konmigay (B.A., human services), business owner, foster parent and member of the Seattle-Woo City Volleyball Club, was recently named Women of the Year for 2017 by the Skagit Women’s Alliance and Network. Anthony Vitelli (B.A., business administration – finance) became a commercial analyst for KeyBank in Idaho.

2013 – Oscar Amenez (B.A., communication, Spanish) joined the Louisville Football Club of the United Soccer League. He previously played for a professional team in Costa Rica and was the team’s leading goal scorer for the season. His team won the championship and performed in the finals of the CONCACAF. Haley Apollo (B.A., general studies) opened a kennel-door facility in Bellingham. The name of the kennel is Red Peace, “was recently published in Concretes Magazine.”

2014 – Emily Kunz (B.S., environmental science – freshwater ecology) was selected to play on the women’s soccer team that will represent the U.S. in the 2017 World University Games in Taipei, Taiwan. Aquax Tess Park (B.A., theatre) wrote and directed a one-act play about cats at a cat café/shelter. The project was funded by the Grammy Foundation. His work has been published in McSweeny’s Internet Tendency, The Stranger, Seattle Met and Fresh Magazine.

2015 – Ashton Bitton (B.A., English literature) recently began a master’s program in international development and studied at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Samantha Harrison (B.A., psychology) became the mental health specialist at the University of Washington

Western Today is the university’s daily internal and external communications piece that is sent out to about 20,000 people. The news class is asynchronous. It’s full of news, events and features about campus, from research to arts and performances to more. Want to keep track of what’s happening on campus? Western Today is a no-fee, no-hassle way to do it – and you can subscribe and unsubscribe whenever you’d like.

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1962 – Judith Craig, 74, a retired teacher in Bend, Oregon. Charles Noyes, 82, a teacher who taught in Seattle, Mount Vernon, Germany, the Netherlands, Bermuda and Japan, on May 7, 2017, in Bellingham.

1963 – Norma Macaulay Graham, 86, a retired music teacher in Mount Vernon schools and director of the Skagit Valley Community Orchestra, on May 13, 2017, near Bow. Dick Parker, 77, who worked in advertising sales for several newspapers and wholesale companies, on July 19, 2017, in Bellingham.

1964 – Maxine MacDonald, 93, a retired teacher in Bellingham public schools, on Feb. 23, 2017, in Bellingham.


1966 – Walter James Blanton, 72, an accomplished musician in Las Vegas who also toured with the Woody Herman Band and taught music at several universities, on Apr. 18, 2017. Lisa Christensen, 73, who taught fifth grade for 15 years at West View Elementary in Bellingham, on Apr. 21, 2017. John "Jack" Harvey Eastman, 87, a reired teacher and coach in Lynden and Blaine, on Sept. 11, 2017. Bruce Allen Murray, 78, a former service district manager in Southern California who retired to Gig Harbor, on Dec. 21, 2016. Margaret Jane Grenier Wilson, a retired teacher and architect in Snohomish, on May 1, 2017. Larry Sheets, 88, a retired teacher and coach, on Apr. 20, 2017.


1975 – Thomas William Monnahan, 66, a former aide to Seattle Mayor Norm Rice and advocate for LGBTQ rights, on May 2, 2017, in Palo, California.


1978 – Keith Anderton, 90, a retired teacher and principal in Port Townsend and Mukilteo, on May 17, 2017. Robert Glen Dawes, 96, retired superintendent of the Bellingham School Supply and longtime community volunteer, on May 17, 2017. Wayne B. Dralle, 88, a retired school librarian and district administrator also who served as the director of educational media at the University of Washington, on May 17, 2017, in Bellingham.


A Look Back

Sanford Ester “Sam” Carver was captain of the Bellingham State Normal School basketball team in 1911, here in the team photo, third from the left. A quick, wiry player and an early adopter of the overhand jump shot, Carver was considered one of the best basketball players in the state. When Carver graduated in 1913, he became the school’s first full-time physical education teacher and athletic coach. Over his 42-year career at Western, Carver coached baseball, basketball, football, golf, tennis, and track and field. He was also a well-respected athletic director and department chair, known for high expectations, fairness, a quiet demeanor and an insistence on fair play.

In 1961, Western dedicated its newly renovated gymnasium to Carver, “the Father of Western Athletics.” In 2017, Carver’s grandchildren attended the rededication of the expanded and modernized building that still bears his name.

Today, Carver Academic Facility sits next to a building named for another person in the photo above: Longtime mathematics professor Elias Austin Bond, Carver’s basketball coach in 1911, is on the far right.

Sam Carver: The father of Western athletics

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Give an Alumni Association Membership and you’ll be giving benefits to your family and friends as well as benefiting a student with scholarship support.

Anyone can join, even non-WWU graduates, and many do. Membership strengthens the Viking community!

alumni.wwu.edu/join
Alaska Stories
Alumna Eowyn Ivey weaves fantastical yarns about the unforgiving beauty of the Alaska wilderness.