Fall 2017

Window: The Magazine of Western Washington University, 2017, Volume 10, Issue 01

Mary Lane Gallagher
Western Washington University, Mary.Gallagher@wwu.edu

Office of Communications and Marketing, Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/window_magazine

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://cedar.wwu.edu/window_magazine/19

This Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Publications at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Window Magazine by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.
A new CARVER
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)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

WWU News .................................................................................................................. 6
English’s Brenda Miller wins a Washington Book Award; Donna Gibbs is Western’s new vice president of University Relations and Marketing; Western wins a $1 million grant for excellence and inclusion in STEM fields; a WWU solar cell project gets the attention of private industry; Western’s first doctoral students are here; two faculty members have a memorable engagement story.

Modern art icons at home at the Western Gallery ........................................... 10
Works by Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Helen Frankenthaler and Agnes Martin, ’37, are all housed at Western.

A new day for Carver ............................................................................................... 12
A massive two-year renovation and expansion have created a new home for Western’s academic and athletic hub.

Culture matters ........................................................................................................ 16
Fifty years ago, Psychology’s Joseph Trimble knew that understanding the human mind requires a multicultural approach. Now, the rest of the psychology profession knows it, too. And they’ve thanked him for it.

Alaska stories .......................................................................................................... 20
Alumna Eowyn Ivey, ’95, 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.

The big story ............................................................................................................ 26
Here’s some real news: WWU alumni journalists who are surviving in the media industry aren’t giving up their watchdog roles—and they’re finding new career hope in unexpected places.

Schools for America .............................................................................................. 32
History’s Johann Neem reminds us that building schools—and arguing about them—builds our democracy.

Message from the President ................................................................................. 4
Stay Connected ......................................................................................................... 5
Alumni Conversations ............................................................................................. 36
Class Notes ............................................................................................................... 38
A Look Back .............................................................................................................. 44

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.
Message from the President

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 foundations. With this grant Western is positioned to become a national leader in STEM inclusion, which will in turn increase our ability to recruit more diverse faculty and students.

We’re also excited to announce that the first cohort of students has just been enrolled in our new Clinical Doctorate in Audiology (Au.D.). Responding to a national need for audiology professionals, this four-year program, including clinical experiences, will provide students with the knowledge and skills to diagnose and treat hearing and balance disorders for people of all ages. 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 Action Minds Changing Lives 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?

Memoir 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 theme 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 multifaceted 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 place Western’s first clinical doctoral program in audiology, began this fall in the university’s new $33 million six-story Science and Engineering Innovation Building.

Western’s first eight doctoral students - four women and four men - are expected to receive their Au.D. degrees in 2021.

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 practical 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.

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 and Thistle met about eight years ago when both were working in public schools in New England, he as a special education teacher and she as a speech-language pathologist.

Hart went on 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, only he 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.
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.

Photo by Rhys Logan (’11)
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 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.

Carver Gymnasium, Whatcom County’s largest interior gathering space, now has refurbished bleachers, a new sound system and LED lighting, 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.

The refurbished 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 NUMBERS:

- 80,918 ft² of renovation
- 25,019 ft² of replacement
- 57,885 ft² of new addition
- 163,822 ft² of total building area
- $81.5 million total
- $77.4 million from the state of Washington
- $4 million from WWU
- 24 months of construction
- 1,000-plus construction workers
- About 267 jobs on the work site and in the community
- $55.6 million in local economic impact

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.

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.

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.
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

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.

Trailblazing career

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

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.
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 importantly, 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 research and 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 care; 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.

Championing culture and diversity

In 1979, a decade after completing his graduate studies at Oklahoma and still hungry for an academic department that accepted the notion that culture mattered in psychology, Trimble came to Western Washington University.

He was attracted by the Psychology Department’s Center for Cross-Cultural Research, whose focus on the intersection of culture and psychology was groundbreaking at the time. “That was not happening anywhere—anywhere—in the world,” Trimble says. The center, and its Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, continue to be a bellwether in the field, and the idea that “culture matters” has become woven into the fabric of the Psychology Department. This awareness and appreciation is not isolated to the Psychology Department, Trimble notes, but runs throughout the university, and comes directly from the student body. “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.

Trimble’s other major honors include:

- The 2001 Janet E. Helms Award for Mentoring and Scholarship in Professional Psychology, which is given each year at the Annual Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education at Columbia University Teachers College.
- The 2013 Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award for educators who have inspired their former students to make a difference in their communities.
- The Massachusetts General Hospital’s Francis J. Bonner, M.D., Award for Diversity, for significant contributions to the field of ethnic minority mental health in 2013.

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. “And 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 Troila 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,” Packard 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.

On 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 he can make that idea relatable to students and to those who care deeply about the future of our relationships with one another.

Certainly, my goal is to have them understand that culture matters in the lives of all people, so much so they don’t even think about it,” he says. “We can foster an understanding of these differences and come to appreciate these differences and learn from them. And maybe even embrace them.”

“Diversity and Leadership” is a textbook that Trimble and Chin will publish three more books on the topic of leadership and diversity in the next few years, starting with “The Culturally Diverse Leader: New Dimensions, Opportunities and Challenges for Business and Society,” published in October by SAGE Publications. Retired Western management Professor Joseph Garcia (75, M.A., psychology), the first director of Western’s Morse Leadership Institute, also collaborated on the book.

So far, Trimble has published over 150 journal articles and book chapters and 22 books. His CV is a small book unto itself.

Trimble received the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in Psychology in the Public Interest from Terence Keane, president of the American Psychological Foundation in August 2017. Photo courtesy of the American Psychological Foundation

And nearly 50 years after completing his doctoral, Trimble doesn’t show signs of stopping. He’s spending the next several months in Scotland as a visiting scholar in the School of Psychology and Neurosciences at the University of St. Andrews, where he’s gathering perspectives from culturally diverse leaders from around the world.

Plus, he’s collaborating on yet another book series about culture, ethnicity and race in social and behavioral sciences.

“Trimble doesn’t dream of retirement because, he says, what he does isn’t work.”

“Work is hard. Work to me is like digging rocks in a garden. That’s work,” he says.

Instead, Trimble is free to think, study and connect.

“I can read, write, interact with people from all over. What more can I ask for?”

Hilary Burke, ’95, journalism, is a freelance writer in Bellingham. Her most recent story for Window magazine was “Charting a Course for College,” about Western’s Compass 2 Campus program.

“Culture matters in the lives of all people, so much so they don’t even think about it. We can come to appreciate these differences and learn from them. And maybe even embrace them.”

Western Washington University • window.wwu.edu
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.
Chickaloon, population about 270, was growing up near the small town of Talkeetna when I got my 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 two childless 1920s Matanuska valley homesteaders whose lives change forever after a young girl emerges from the woods near their cabin. It is an Alaskan tale told on a classic Russian fairytale.

River Research: A lifelong outdoorswoman, Ivey and her husband Sam—who is a WWU alumnus—spent eight days floating down the Copper River as Ivey gathered inspiration for the river expedition in “To the Bright Edge of the World.”

“Oh, it was a magical experience,” she says. “Everything I 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 two childless 1920s Matanuska valley homesteaders whose lives change forever after a young girl emerges from the woods near their cabin. It is an Alaskan tale told on a classic Russian fairytale.

Ivey’s most recent novel, “To the Bright Edge of the World,” tells the story of an 1885 U.S. Army expedition up the fictional Wolverine River in an effort to open up the interior of a region only recently purchased from Russia. 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 imbues the characters and their world with a magical realism that takes the reader, literally and figuratively, to places that exceed experience. Ivey says, “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 Kramluskoff, a visual artist and member of the Ninilchik Denaina 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.”

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 newsroom 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-

Ivey 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 two childless 1920s Matanuska valley homesteaders whose lives change forever after a young girl emerges from the woods near their cabin. It is an Alaskan tale told on a classic Russian fairytale.

Ivey’s most recent novel, “To the Bright Edge of the World,” tells the story of an 1885 U.S. Army expedition up the fictional Wolverine River in an effort to open up the interior of a region only recently purchased from Russia. 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 imbues the characters and their world with a magical realism that takes the reader, literally and figuratively, to places that exceed experience. Ivey says, “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 Kramluskoff, a visual artist and member of the Ninilchik Denaina 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.”

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 newsroom 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-
I can find no means to account for all that we have witnessed, except to say that I am no longer certain of the boundaries between man & beast, of the living & the dead. All that I have taken for granted, what I have known as real & true, has been called into question."

— To the Bright Edge of the World

2017 Book of the Year.

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 mute 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 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.

 collegewritten seal, 2017

The snow child

Eowyn Ivey

Author of the Pulitzer Prize finalist

The Woman Who Married a Bear

On a sunny spring day in the mountains, Ivey saw two young 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 mute 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 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.
THE BIG STORY

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, 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 expatriates 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, 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 everything 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 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.

I watched that play out in Idaho media, especially at the statehouse, where it makes

“arrest records, court records and court records,” Cuillier says, “are not the only way to look at things.

“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.

Harder 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 manifests, 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.”

FAKE NEWS 101

Nearly a quarter of Americans have passed along a fake news story—or a story they later learned was fake—according to a survey two years ago by the Pew Research Center.

In WWU Associate Journalism Professor Maria McLeod’s Introduction to Mass Media class, students learn how to not be one of them.

McLeod encourages her students to realize that media messages have the power to shape our beliefs and biases, so they deserve a healthy dose of skepticism.

“Becoming media literate is not so much a fixed state, but a constant and consistent attempt to be vigilant and critical of media messages,” she says.

Here are some questions McLeod suggests we should all ask before we click ‘share’:

Who’s the author and what qualifies them to be an expert? Go to the original website that published the story and learn more. Avoid. Ask questions about design and spelling errors are a clue, of course, but do the other stories seem legit? Look for an “about” section to learn who sponsors the site. Check out the original date of the story’s publication: it could have a totally different meaning in current context. Find the author on LinkedIn, Twitter or elsewhere and see what other stories they have written—and for which news organizations.

Are you looking at what you think you’re looking at? Sometimes fake news hijacks authentic elements to appear more believable. Last year, the details of a real Skagit Valley Herald story about an accidental shooting were mashed up into a racist, viral yarn about a “thug” who shot himself while “taking an anti-Trump selfie.” If a photo is used with a suspicious-looking story, search for the image and see if it’s been taken out of context. And watch out for look-alike URLs that are very similar to those that belong to authentic news sites. When in doubt, see if the story has been debunked on a reputable fact-checking website such as snopes.com, factcheck.org or politifact.com.

Why are you seeing this?”

Are you making it worse?”

Are you making it worse? Sharing a false news story in hopes of exposing the lie can actually backfire, according to a study from the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Repeating misinformation, even to discredit it, can help spread fake news. Instead, share new, credible information.

— By Mary Gallagher

Are you looking at what you think you’re looking at? Sometimes fake news hijacks authentic elements to appear more believable. Last year, the details of a real Skagit Valley Herald story about an accidental shooting were mashed up into a racist, viral yarn about a “thug” who shot himself while “taking an anti-Trump selfie.” If a photo is used with a suspicious-looking story, search for the image and see if it’s been taken out of context. And watch out for look-alike URLs that are very similar to those that belong to authentic news sites. When in doubt, see if the story has been debunked on a reputable fact-checking website such as snopes.com, factcheck.org or politifact.com.

Why are you seeing this?”

Are you making it worse?”

Are you making it worse? Sharing a false news story in hopes of exposing the lie can actually backfire, according to a study from the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Repeating misinformation, even to discredit it, can help spread fake news. Instead, share new, credible information.

— By Mary Gallagher
“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.”

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.

“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.

But it won’t last.

“Corporate greed is what is killing journalism,” he says. “I want all those chains to die. We’ve already seen papers closing and news deserts forming around the country. This 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 depressing hilarity of “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.
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 education. 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 enable 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.

"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.”
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.

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

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!

Deborah DeWees
Executive Director
Western Alumni Association
COME TO WESTERN’S BIGGEST CELEBRATION! 

Send us your Class Notes! Get a promotion? Got married? Published a book? Graduated? Made a difference in your community? Share your news with other alumni! E Mail Class Notes. We collect information from published accounts, press releases and alumni themselves. Notes are edited for style, clarity and length and are published as space permits. For more information or to submit your own information for Class Notes, email Marc Gallagher at Marc.Gallagher@wwu.edu.
2003 – Cara Leverett (M.Biog.) joined the science faculty at Okanagan College in Kelowna.

2003 – T. Martin (B.A., Fairhaven inter-disciplinary concentration, American cultural studies) co-directed “140 SQ,” a documentary about the 1992 riots in Los Angeles following Rodney King’s acquittal. The documentary, which appeared on the National Geographic Channel, received an Emmy Award 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) were recently featured in an exhibition at the De Lesseps gallery in Los Angeles.

2008 – Mark Leuning (M.Bus., performance arts, B.A., Wilmot) joined an M.A./Ph.D. program in French Studies at Brown University. Shawn Basa (B.S., environmental science), also known as “Tuckas,” is a musician whose work can be seen throughout Bellingham. Dan Harvey (B.S., pre-physical education) is a pre-physics health educator.

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 grad- uated from Columbia University with a dual degree in Social Work and Masters in Public Health. She is now a clinical social worker in Colorado working with children and adolescents. Harriet Elizabeth Hussey (B.Mus., performance con- centration) received a $650,000 grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage to execute a performance of “The Scarlet Letter” at Theatre X. It was a a major event in her life and helped her achieve her goal of becoming a successful composer.

2017 – Katherine Shave (B.A., sociol- ogy) recently became the manager of the Central Washington Family Medicine Clinic in Yakima. Playwright Emilie Landmann (B.A., theatre) co-wrote the book for the musical “Hannah and Her Sisters,” which was performed in the first time in the New York Musical Festival Next Link Project. Matthew Fisher (M.S., biology) teaches at Oregon Coast Community College, where he was named the 2017-18 Instructor of the Year. John Whiffield (B.A., man- agement information systems, B.S., MBA) is a consultant for Microsoft in Washington, D.C., where he also plays for the Federal Triangle Social Club. Haley Markey (B.A., art) be- came a landscape architect. Ian Bivins (B.A., theatre) became a planning commissioner for the Veterans Administration electronic health system.

2018 – Erica Witherspoon (B.A., history) became the city/prosecut- or of the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

2019 – Ashley Cottle (B.A., theatre) became a planning commissioner for the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

Class Notes

Tell us a good Viking love story
Share your wedding announcement in Window
Email your wedding news, including your names, class year and the date and place of your marriage to mary.gallagher@wwu.edu

Obituaries

1939 – Doris A. Olsen, 106, was a 1917 graduate of University of Washington and served with the Farm Bureau and the Republican Party, on May 26, 2017.


1949 – Ellynne E. Brown, on April 15, 2017, in Nipomo, CA. For more updates, please visit window.wwu.edu.


1957 – John R. Swanson, 89, who ran a cherry orchard in Cour, Oregon, and was active in the Farm Bureau and the Republican Party, on May 27, 2017.


2015 – Ashton Bilton (B.A., English literature) recently began a mas- ter’s program in international development and peace studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Samantha Hutchinson (B.S., psychology) be- came the Marketing Research and Data Analyst in Bayside, Maine.

2016 – Charles Grant III (B.S., chem- istry), a medical student at Wright State University, became the father of a baby girl.

2017 – Caroline Kindred (B.S., human services) was named the co-ordinator of the Student National Medical Association, which is com- mitting to finding new ways to promote dental care.

2018 – Maria Macion (B.A., journalism) recently became an AmeriCorps NCCC volunteer working on disaster relief and community service in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Most re- cently, she was a reporter for the La Conner Weekly. Kayla Adams (B.A., biology) became a principal software engineer at The Boeing Co.

2019 – Elizabeth Kaitlyn Austin (B.S., business administration) became the associate artistic director of The Artistic Home, an acting ensemble and studio in Chicago, where she completed a directing internship.

Wedding

Sarah Nace Bean (B.S., recreation) attended the University of Oregon, where she served as a teaching fel- low and research assistant at the Dance Graduate Student Award. She also received the Doug Roney Albert Award for Emerging Dance Researchers from the Journal of Dance Education and the National Dance Education Organization. She returned to Bellingham and is currently a faculty member at Whatcom Community College and perform and produce in partnership with Bellingham Repertory Dance.

2019 – Oscar Amemz (B.A., communica- tion, Spanish) joined the Louisville City Football Club in the United Soccer League. He previously attended the University of Oregon.

2019 – Jaclyn O’Donnell (B.S., envi- ronmental science – freshwater systematics) 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.

2020 – Todd Boyd Kolb and Erin Marie Wallace (B.A., English) were married on April 29, 2017, in Loxton, Idaho.

2020 – Michael Bivins (B.A., theatre) joined the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

2020 – Aaron Starr (B.A., history) became the president of the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

2021 – Teague Parker (B.A., dance), presented by Bellingham TheatreWorks in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Most re- cently, he was a member of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

2021 – Robert (B.A., English) was named one of three winners of the DNW. Eugene, OR. For more updates, please visit window.wwu.edu.

2021 – Anthony Vitulli (B.A., art) recently began a master’s program in international development and peace studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Samantha Hutchinson (B.S., psychology) be- came the Marketing Research and Data Analyst in Bayside, Maine.

2021 – Daniel Harvey (B.S., physical therapy) became a medical student at Wright State University.

2021 – Kayla Adams (B.A., biology) became a principal software engineer at The Boeing Co.

2021 – Amber Austin (B.A., physical therapy) became the executive director of the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

2021 – Taber Stroer (B.A., journalism) recently took over public relations and events at Boo Park on Aug. 27, 2016, in Seattle.

2021 – Candis C. Miller (B.A., history) plans to work in Orange County in 2017.

2021 – Krystal Marie Romano (B.A., theatre) is an artist specializing in paper cut and installation art.

2021 – Mark Leuning (M.Bus., performance arts, B.A., Wilmot) joined an M.A./Ph.D. program in French Studies at Brown University. Shawn Basa (B.S., environmental science), also known as “Tuckas,” is a musician whose work can be seen throughout Bellingham. Dan Harvey (B.S., pre-physical education) is a pre-physics health educator.

2021 – Michael Bivins (B.A., theatre) joined the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas.

2021 – Aaron Starr (B.A., history) became the president of the Central Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Pacific Islander-Serving College in Arkansas. For more updates, please visit window.wwu.edu.

High School, on Feb. 18, 2016.  


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.


Ellsworth Ward Ernest Phillips, 84, a retired teacher who taught at Skagit Valley Community College for nearly 20 years, on April 24, 2017. Judith Marie Ruh, 73, a retired lab technologist at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, on Aug. 24, 2017.
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

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.

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.