Professor emeritus Ron Rada and his wife Jane created this award in 2002 to honor recent to mid-career alumni who have made exceptional contributions to their professions and/or communities. The award provides another point on UWL’s continuum of awards that recognize excellence at various career stages of our alumni.

THE PURPOSE ...

of the Rada Distinguished Alumni Award is to recognize living alumni who have graduated within the last 20 years from UW-La Crosse and meet one or more of the award criteria.

THE AWARD IS PRESENTED ANNUALLY ...

at the UWL Distinguished Alumni Awards Luncheon and Ceremony in September. Up to two awards may be given each year. The award includes a scholarship of $2,000 presented to a current student in a department of the recipient’s choosing. Recipients receive a gift showcasing their accomplishments.

CRITERIA ...

for the award. Recipients must meet one or more of the following:
» achieved distinction in a chosen field of endeavor since graduation
» made an outstanding contribution to their profession
» demonstrated exceptional personal qualities through participation in activities that provide long-lasting benefits to communities and society

TO NOMINATE ...

an alum, contact Janie Morgan at jmorgan3@uw lax.edu or 608.785.8495. Simply forward the alum’s name; the Alumni Association will contact nominees.
2017 Patrick Gonzales, ’05
High-impact, peer-reviewed researcher in microbial genetics and genomics, addressing problem of antibiotic resistance.

2017 Hollie Nyseth Brehm, ’08
Asst. professor of sociology, The Ohio State University, since 2014. Ohio State Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching, College of Arts and Science Outstanding Teaching Award, 2016.

2016 Ryan Johnson, ’01
Emerging entrepreneur, real estate and restaurant owner, Board of directors member of UW-L Club, La Crosse County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

2016 Ron Sissel Jr., ’95
Deputy associate administrator for budget at the National Nuclear Security Administration, providing leadership and direction for a $12.5 billion budget.

2015 Brian Puerling, ’06
Innovative educator using digital technology. Authored “Teaching in the Digital Age: Smart Tools for Age 3 to Grade 3.”

2014 Corey Sorenson, ’03
Professional actor in more than 50 plays nationwide, numerous network TV appearances, films, web series, voiceovers and commercials.

2013 Brian Lammi, ’96
Founder and president of the Lammi Sports Management, focusing on athlete appearances and endorsements, sports media.

2013 Nathaniel J. Melby, ’02
Chief Information Officer (CIO) at Dairyland Power in La Crosse. Served as a firefighter for the Town of Campbell since 1997, currently as fire chief.

2012 Thomas Harris, ’01
Distinguished professional in the field of student affairs, Assistant Director of the UWLMulticultural Student Services Office since 2003.

2011 Robert F. Jacobs, ’94
Immigration lawyer in Los Angeles County honored as a Certified Specialist and Super Lawyer with nationwide court appearances.

2010 Brenda Moraska Lafrancois, ’97
Great Lakes Area Aquatic Ecologist for the National Park Service since 2002; advocate for restoring native ecosystems; Midwest Region recipient of many National Park Service awards.

2009 Chris Finn, ’96
Advocate for people with disabilities; Worldwide leader in power soccer; Vice chair and commissioner to the Oakland (Calif.)

2009 Jennifer Shilling, ’92
Wisconsin State Senate Democratic Leader; State Senator for the 32nd Senate District, representing Vernon, Crawford, La Crosse, and part of Monroe Counties since 2011.

2009 Todd Ellenbecker, ’85
Physician and Clinic Director of Physio in Scottsdale, AZ. Doctorate in physical therapy from Massachusetts General Hospital – Institute of Health Professions in 2006.

2008 Chad Hammerschmidt, ’97 & ’99
Assistant professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio; a top young scientist in the country in mercury chemistry.

2008 Michelle Schry, ’92
Development Manager, National Cooperative Grocers; former General Manager, People’s Food Co-op, La Crosse.

2007 Lauren Lieberman, ’88
Distinguished Service Professor & Director of Camp Abilities. The College at Brockport Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies Physical Education.

2006 Jay Hertel, ’93
Professor of Kinesiology at the University of Virginia and a renowned researcher in athletic training and sports medicine.

2006 Elice Rogers, ’83, ’89, & ’91
Assoc. professor in Counseling, Administration, Supervision, Adult Learning and Development at Cleveland State University.

2005 Rob Stefan, ’84
Current owner of Blue Crab Lures in Cape Coral, Florida; worked in the environmental industry for more than 25 years; authored more than 85 scientific papers and has received 11 patents.

2004 Stan Davis, ’94
Former assistant attorney general in the Wisconsin State Justice Department and deputy chief of staff and chief legal counsel for Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle.

2003 Jan Gallagher, ’88
Retired director of the UWLM Small Business Development Center; founding member of the 7 Rivers Alliance; leader in various civic, business and economic development activities.

2001 Kelly Rusth, ’86
Assoc. professor of civil and environmental engineering at Louisiana State University; founding member of the Women in Engineering Leadership Institute at the University of California-Davis.