



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

CLASS NOTES

OCTOBER 2026

CLASS NOTES SUBMITTED AUGUST 15 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

'69

James Bird looks forward to attending the Ohio State's homecoming football game against Maryland this fall, joined by his younger daughter and granddaughter. The former (OSU BS '00, MBA '09) and latter (current first-year student) will join Bird in celebrating his 50th anniversary (OSU MA '70, PhD '76) and remembering that it all started at UWL in '69.

'81

Thomas Leaver was inducted into the Baraboo High School Athletic Hall of Fame in late September, along with his wife, Dawn Buntman Leaver, a graduate of UW-Stevens Point. Tom was Baraboo's track and field coach for nearly four decades, winning 17 conference titles. At UWL, he was a tri-captain of the 1980

men's track and field team that went on to win the WSUC indoor and outdoor titles.

'85

Jeff White is a finance analyst for City National Bank in Los Angeles.

'91

Linda Muraski (Uecker) is a retired instructor for Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.

'93

Christina Wingate Dusseau is a senior director of client accounts at Argano, a digital service consulting company, in Plano, Texas.

'05

Jerod Sommerfeldt is an associate professor of electronic music, theory and composition for the SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music.

'08

Shelly Reed (Mattson) is serving as president of the Nashville chapter of the Association for Talent Development. Reed says she is honored ... "to lead an incredible board dedicated to supporting talent development professionals across Middle Tennessee. Together, we've expanded professional development opportunities, strengthened chapter partnerships, launched new initiatives and focused on building a thriving learning community."

'11

Justin Backeberg is a high school math teacher for the School District of Reedsburg.



'19

Kyle Beckwith was appointed senior advisor in the Office of Domestic Finance at the U.S. Department of the Treasury in June. He had previously served as a policy advisor in the U.S. Department of Labor. A political science major at UWL, Beckwith was active in student leadership, serving as a student senator and president of the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity. After earning his law degree from Northern Illinois University College of Law, he practiced law in Texas before entering public service. He now works in federal policy and finance, supporting senior leadership within the Treasury Department.

'20

Patrick McCormick is an associate director of compliance for UW-Madison.

'26

Mayson Taylor is a recreation coordinator for the City of Onalaska.



In Remembrance

Alumni

1951 – Phyllis Branson (Schuttenhelm), La Crosse
 1956 – Katherine Martell (Harbecke), La Crosse
 1958 – Don Van Loon, Red Wing, Minn.
 1960 – Ronald Albrecht, Oshkosh
 1960 – Kenneth Pfaff, Holmen
 1963 – Bill Engaas, Menomonee Falls
 1963 – Ted Harris, Viroqua
 1963 – Jim Jiracek, Milwaukee
 1964 – Carol Crothers (Heitman), La Crosse
 1967 – Gerald Strittmater, Onalaska
 1969 – Lee Harwell, La Crosse
 1970 – Dave Arneson, Rochester, Minn.
 1970 – Sharon Melby (Brieske), Endicott, N.Y.
 1970 – Clay Nelson, Onalaska
 1971 – Charles Anderson, Sparta
 1971 – Myron Swenson, Onalaska
 1973 – Marie Christenson, Onalaska
 1973 – Ruth Kielley (Hillis), La Crosse
 1973 – Shirley Sidie (Sagmoen), Westby, Wis.

1974 – Arthur Ustby, La Crosse
 1975 – Cheryl Netwall, Centuria, Wis.
 1975 – Thomas Quinn, La Crosse
 1976 – Artis Aasen (Torgerson), Holmen
 1976 – Bill Hansen, West Salem
 1976 – Kathleen Tessmer (Myszewski), Sun Prairie
 1977 – Mike Kohnert, La Crosse
 1978 – Bill Espe, La Crosse
 1980 – Chuck Zimmer, La Crosse
 1981 – Kelly Murphy, Onalaska
 1981 – Roderick Ostrem, La Crosse
 1983 – Gary Priem, Denver
 1984 – Julia Hagen, La Crosse
 1984 – Terri Olson, Onalaska
 1986 – Tim Kauffman, Burnsville, Minn.
 2001 – Josh Wallace, Luxemburg, Wis.
 2002 – Erin Eberhardt (Gmeinder), Madison
 2003 – Diane Brys, Madison



Faculty & Staff



Bob Hetzel

Bob Hetzel, vice chancellor emeritus for Administration & Finance, died Aug. 27, 2026, at age 71. A driving force behind UWL's success over the past two decades, Hetzel provided expert management of the university's finances, a forward-looking vision for campus growth and capital improvements, and a deep dedication to supporting his colleagues. Read more about Hetzel's legacy.

Alan C. Cole

Alan C. Cole, former board member for the UWL Foundation, died July 29, 2026, at age 87.

Richard Kistner

Richard Kistner, professor emeritus and former board member for the UWL Foundation, died July 10, 2026, at age 89. Kistner taught chemistry at UWL for nearly four decades. He served as chair of the Chemistry Department and retired after spending his final year as interim dean of the College of Science and Allied Health.



Submit UWL Class Notes

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Class Notes Policy:

Class notes and obituaries are published online in January, April, July and October.

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