Remembering Roland Burke

From St. Louis and Boston to Texas and Florida, WIU alum was a builder

*Rolling for the river
*Physics, Poli Sci alums reflect
*Media ignore education: Brookings
Join the College of Arts and Sciences and Chicago-based alumni for the Second Annual Fund Raising event aboard the “Mystic Blue” to raise funds for the CAS Fund for Excellence.

This cruise will depart Navy Pier at 6:00 p.m. and will return at 8:30 p.m. allowing plenty of time to catch a commuter train home or enjoy the Pier and all the fun that the Miracle Mile and the rest of Chicago has to offer.

Guests on this cruise will enjoy exclusive use of the Vista Deck of the ship, as well as a private buffet and bar. Space is limited to 80 passengers, so get your reservation and payment in early. The cost is $125 per ticket (non-refundable). A $60 charitable giving receipt will be issued for each ticket sold.

For more information, please call the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office at 309-298-1828 or E-mail Bryce Dexter at BM-Dexter2@wiu.edu

Everyone who joined us last year had a great time. We hope you will join the fun in June.
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Western Illinois University College of Arts and Sciences
Dean
Sue Martinelli-Fernandez

Editor
Bill Knight

Graphics and layout
Robert Johnson

Contributors

Editorial board

Administration
President Al Goldfarb
Provost and Academic Vice President Jack Thomas

Western’s CAS is made up of 17 departments whose disciplines span the areas of the social sciences, the humanities, mathematics and the natural sciences: African American Studies, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, English and Journalism, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Geography, Geology, History, Institute for Environmental Studies, Mathematics, School of Nursing, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, and Women’s Studies.

“Focus will inform college stakeholders about College of Arts and Sciences activities and encourage their involvement in the life of the college.”
Is it "Money is the root of all evil"? Or, is it that "The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil"?

In Western Illinois University’s College of Arts and Sciences, our love is for education, the liberal arts and sciences, our students, and our academic and community stakeholders. In contrast, we appreciate what money can do to help in our mission.

In this context, please read a conversation I had with WIU’s Vice President for Advancement and Public Services, Brad Bainter, on the work done by the Foundation and Development Office.

SMF: What role does the annual fund play at Western?
BB: Our annual fund is one extremely critical component of our overall development plan and the funds raised play a very important role in the day-to-day operations at Western. This year, we will raise over $2 million through our various annual fund appeals. This includes nearly $500,000 through our phonathon effort. Tim Hallinan is our Director of the Annual Fund and has done a tremendous job of incorporating new ideas into our appeals. He works with all the departments and colleges on campus to assist in the development of their annual fund solicitations and he also coordinates our phonathon effort. He hires between 30 and 40 student callers each year and provides the necessary training for them to be successful volunteers for us. The students get great work experience that they can add to their resumes and they also get paid, which helps them with their college expenses.

Do our alumni and friends take advantage of corporate matching gift programs available through their employers?
We received over $106,000 in matching gifts during our 2008-09 fiscal year and we will be over $115,000 in matching gifts when our current fiscal year ends. So, yes, those that are aware of such programs with the companies they work for do take advantage of this opportunity to match, double and even triple their gift to Western. Companies with matching-gift programs generally cap the amount they will match, but we have received matches up to $10,000 for a contribution to Western. When we receive a contribution from someone who we know works for a matching-gift company, we send a note back to the donor reminding them of the matching opportunity available through their company. They simply need to visit their human resources office and request the matching gift form to complete this process. I urge all of our alumni and friends to take advantage of this opportunity because there are times when we go into a company looking for corporate support and we will be asked how many of our alumni who work for that particular company actually contribute to Western and that will factor into the decision to support or not support our request for a corporate donation. (Editor’s note: Please see article on page 6.)

In recent years, have there been changes in how contributors use different options, such as gifts of stock, real estate, etc.?
We do receive many different types of gifts that support Western in various ways. It is a very simple process to make gifts of stock to Western as it can be done electronically by brokers in a matter of a few seconds. Giving highly appreciated stock is a great way to reduce taxes on capital gain and at the same time receive a charitable deduction. We do offer charitable gift annuities and in these times of low interest rates and declining dividends, charitable gift annuities offer an opportunity to increase annual income and receive tax incentives at the same time. We have recently were given a house near campus and we have turned that into a veteran’s assistance center for our veterans returning to school. We have received gifts of farmland that we use the income from to support scholarships. There are many ways for our alumni and friends to achieve their charitable goals with contributions to Western and at the same time maximize their tax savings. I am happy to say, however, that it is not very often that I have sat down with someone wanting to support Western and hear that they want to do it for tax reasons. It is almost always about helping Western first and if the donor receives some benefit, then great!

As the Foundation Board’s executive officer, have you noticed a distinctively creative way someone has donated to or financially helped WIU?
By far, supporting our students is the number-one priority of our donors. We have had funds established to provide short-term loans, emergency
Checkup of nursing: healthy

By Lisa Kernek

P. Lea Monahan has the kind of problems administrators envy: She needs more classrooms and instructors for WIU’s new School of Nursing.

Monahan was hired in 2007 as the director of the program, which opened on the Macomb campus in fall 2008 with six students. The first students were Registered Nurses who were pursuing bachelor’s degrees.

In fall 2009, the bachelor’s program for RNs was expanded to the Quad Cities campus. That same semester, the Macomb campus began offering a second track—a basic bachelor’s program for students with no prior nursing credentials. This brought total enrollment on both campuses to 22 in the 2009-2010 school year.

“We have a very small group right now,” Monahan said, sitting in her closet-sized office in Waggoner Hall. “Part of that is by design,” she added, as a new curriculum is established.

The number of nursing majors is expected to grow to 30 in fall 2010.

Meanwhile, 264 admitted freshmen in fall 2010 are expected to begin the two-year pre-nursing curriculum. Once they have completed the prerequisites, they would be eligible to apply for admission to the School of Nursing to complete their bachelor’s degrees.

Now based in Waggoner Hall, which also houses the biology and psychology departments, the nursing school will gain the use of more classrooms in neighboring Currens Hall in the fall.

The need for more space was evident in a basement lab in Waggoner that was set up to resemble a hospital room. Life-size mannequins of a man and a woman lay in beds next to monitors and IVs. A crib held a child mannequin and a bassinet held that of an infant. But a fifth model of a pregnant woman—complete with a life-size fetus for students to practice deliveries—was still packed away in a box for lack of space.

Monahan entered the lab as a job candidate was visiting the room with Sandy Nash, one of five instructors in the nursing school. The candidate was interviewing for one of two teaching openings. But faculty members, Monahan said, are “very difficult to come by.” Less than 2 percent of registered nurses have Ph.D.s, she said, though nurses with master’s degrees can teach in universities. Many nurses could earn higher salaries working as nurses than in teaching, Monahan added.

Monahan holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from the Medical College of Georgia and a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska.

All nursing faculty are required to have work experience as nurses. Nash combines teaching and nursing; she works as a critical-care nurse at McDonough District Hospital in Macomb.

“I’m a nurse first,” Nash said. The WIU nursing school teaches include research, theory-based practice, and leadership and management, in addition to basic skills. While it’s possible to earn a nursing license without a bachelor’s, Monahan emphasized the need for bachelor’s degrees as patients’ needs become more complex.

One reason for that complexity is that hospitals admit fewer patients as more procedures are performed on an outpatient basis. That means that the patients who are admitted to hospitals are those requiring more care.

“Many of the patients on a regular floor these days would have been in ICU 10 years ago,” Monahan said, referring to Intensive Care Units.

As for job prospects for new graduates, the Washington-based American Association of Colleges of Nursing advocacy group reported on its Web site that the recession has temporarily eased a national shortage of nurses. The report quoted data from different professional journals that found that retired nurses have returned to the field, other nurses have delayed retirement and part-time nurses have moved into full-time jobs. But the report quoted one journal that predicted the shortfall of nurses would grow to 260,000 by 2025.

Most nurses with bachelor’s degrees can expect to earn starting salaries of $35,000 to $45,000, Monahan said.

Monahan has long-term plans for establishing post-graduate programs. But for now, she is focusing on building the bachelor’s program, which she expects will receive accreditation this fall. The school was visited in February by three evaluators from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, an accrediting agency.

That accreditation is expected, she said, just before the School of Nursing graduates its first class of students on Dec. 10.

“Nursing programs really need to be accredited,” Monahan said. “We need to know that education is the best it can be.”

Kernek is an Assistant Professor of Journalism at WIU

Spring/Summer 10
Giving through WIU’s ‘match game’

By Richard Moreno

For non-profits like Western Illinois University, the only thing better than a donation is a matching donation.

A matching donation is a charitable contribution of money that is literally matched, sometimes by multiples of two or three, by a business, corporation or foundation. In fiscal year 2009, about 111 companies contributed more than $138,000 to Western using some type of matching gift program.

“It’s a win-win,” said Debbie Wisslead, clerk in charge of gift and pledge processing at the Western Illinois University Foundation.

“Because these companies match the contributions, it’s like a bonus.”

Wisslead said typically many companies offer voluntary contribution programs through their human resource departments that allow employees to have money automatically deducted from their paychecks that is donated to a charity of the employee’s choice. As an added incentive, the company matches the employee’s gift, sometimes on a two-to-one or three-to-one basis.

“These companies are looking to encourage their employees to contribute to charitable groups,” Wisslead said. “Many of the employees (who contribute to WIU) are our alums.”

In 2008, the most recent year for which records are available, national companies contributing to Western included the Archer Daniels Midland Corporation, Bank of America, the Caterpillar Foundation, the Harley-Davidson Motor Company and the State Farm Insurance Companies.

Debra Miller, Dean of Extension Services at Carl Sandburg College and Western alum (B.A. English, ’84, M.A. English ’86), said she and her husband, Jerry “JO” Oitker (Board of Trustees/BA 2007) both participate in matching gift programs through their employers.

“WIU enriched my life and I wouldn’t be where I am today without the school,” she said. “I truly believe in giving back.”

Miller said she and her husband, who works for Archer Daniels Midland, have donated an average of $1,500 annually to Western for the past five or six years, which means their total contribution has been closer to $3,000 each year because of corporate matches.

She described matching gift programs as “a terrific benefit” because it allows companies and corporations to target their charitable giving.

“This is a way for them to give to the things their employees care about,” she said.

Wisslead noted that since the September 11, 2001 tragedy, the number of companies participating in matching gift programs that benefit institutions like Western has dropped. Additionally, she said some companies that once doubled or tripled employee donations have reduced their giving to a one-to-one match.

Moreno is WIU’s Director of Student Publications

Students get boosts from pre-professional programs

By Jim Schmidt

Some College of Arts and Sciences courses of study may be less publicized, but they’re still very important: our pre-professional programs.

Pre-professional programs prepare students to apply to a variety of advanced professional degree programs in fields such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering and the law.

Historically, College programs have met the needs of students who plan to pursue these fields of professional study; for example, Biology has been the discipline of choice for students planning careers in health-related fields such as medicine, optometry or dentistry. Physics has prepared countless students for further study in engineering, and Chemistry has taken the lead in preparing students who plan to pursue careers in pharmacy or chemical engineering.

A number of the College’s programs have taken it upon themselves to improve the visibility of their pre-professional programs or to increase the opportunities available to pre-professional students after their time at WIU.

The Department of Physics has long provided preparation for students who plan to study engineering, and the department has a history of helping students successfully gain
entry to some very competitive engineering programs (such as the one at the University of Illinois). Building on this tradition, the department recently developed an Engineering Physics degree, for which students complete three years of Physics education at Western and two years of Engineering curriculum at a School of Engineering, leading to two bachelor’s degrees: a B.S. in Engineering Physics from WIU and a bachelor’s degree in engineering from the receiving school. In addition to the development of this rigorous and versatile degree, the department has helped broker an articulation agreement with the University of Iowa that guarantees admission to Iowa’s highly regarded engineering programs to any WIU pre-engineering or Engineering Physics students who maintain certain academic standards (such as completing prescribed coursework and maintaining a suitable GPA).

Of particular benefit to WIU students, says Dr. Jim Rabchuk, pre-engineering coordinator in the Department of Physics, is that the agreement with the University of Iowa “provides students interested in transferring into a Biomedical Engineering program an opportunity to go into one of the best programs in the nation.”

Pharmacy is another profession many WIU students pursue, and their studies typically begin in the College’s Department of Chemistry at WIU – who complete a certain curriculum while maintaining a strong GPA and who are nominated by the department – are guaranteed admission to UIC’s College of Pharmacy at either the Chicago or Rockford campus. “With the UI-Chicago articulation agreement and our strong pre-pharmacy program, Western Illinois University will likely become the place to go for those students interested in pharmacy careers,” notes Dr. Rose McConnell, chair of WIU’s Department of Chemistry.

WIU’s Department of Biological Sciences also has a long history of preparing students for professional training in medicine, dentistry, optometry, physical therapy and veterinary medicine. The department recently developed the Medical Sciences option in the B.S. in Biology curriculum specifically tailored for students who plan advanced study in a health-related field. These courses of study, more commonly referred to as pre-med, pre-dentistry and the like, have been designed to provide a solid foundation for study in these health-related professional fields, and to help students perform well on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) as well.

Many of the College’s majors provide excellent preparation for law school; this type of professional training emphasizes oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and the application of logic. CAS disciplines provide excellent pre-law preparation and to make that connection explicit, several of our departments are developing pre-law options in the major. The B.A. in Philosophy is the first to have received approval for such an option, and others are expected in the upcoming academic year. These pre-law options will still feature the content of the various disciplines that offer such an option, but they will also emphasize courses’ content and skill development designed to improve students’ chances at gaining admission to law school.

These programs all represent another venue in which CAS students can excel while preparing them for further study in a professional field.

Schmidt is Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences
Raising a big stink in Western’s greenhouse

Sunday night and Titan is in full bloom
Western Illinois University’s Biological Sciences Botany Greenhouse is home to a rare Titan Arum, shown blooming this spring. Also known as the “Corpse Flower” due to its unpleasant odor – WIU Titan Arum plants are among the first generation cultivated in the United States.

Native to Indonesia’s rainforests, Titan Arum is a member of the Araceae family, which includes plants such as the Philodendron. WIU’s plant recently grew nearly 4 inches in a 24-hour period.

Western’s Titan was acquired as seeds in 2002, according to greenhouse gardener Jeff Hillyer, who added that a Titan from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Big Bucky,” was the ovule donor and the pollen donor was “Mr. Magnificent” from a botanical garden in Sarasota, Fla. Their seeds were first collected in 1993 by James Symon while filming for Sir David Attenborough’s BBC documentary The Private Life of Plants.

“When one of these plants bloomed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, more than 30,000 people viewed its splendor. It’s extremely exciting that Western’s greenhouse is housing the first generation of this flower grown in the U.S.,” Hillyer noted. “It is pretty cool to have it in all three conditions: dormant, vegetative growth and flowering, at the same time for all to see. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to work with a rare species.”
African-American Studies
Jo-Ann Morgan produced a DVD compilation of her University Television program 15 Minutes with Jo-Ann Morgan and reviewed Picturing the Banjo, ed. by Leo G. Mazow for the Southeastern College Art Conference Review.

Biological Sciences
Althea Alton wrote “Staying Within an ‘Understanding Distance’: One Feminist’s Scientific and Theological Reflections on Pregnancy and Abortion” in Interdisciplinary Views on Abortion: Essays from Philosophical, Sociological, Anthropological, Political, Health and Other Perspectives.


Bonnan also co-authored “Differential Limb Scaling in the American Alligator (Alligator mississippiensis) and its Implications for Archosaur Locomotor Evolution,” in The Anatomical Record: Advances in Integrative Anatomy and Evolutionary Biology.

Jeff Engel co-authored “Neurogenetic Approaches to Habituation and Dishabituation in Drosophila” for Neurobiology of Learning and Memory.

James Lamer co-authored “Know Your Illinois Turtles” for Outdoor Illinois.

Kenneth McCravy, Sean E. Jenkins and others co-authored “Abundance and Diversity of Thread-Waisted Wasps (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae: Sphecinae) at Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station, Hancock County, Illinois USA” for Transactions of the Illinois State Academy of Science.


Eric Ribbens wrote “A Midwest Cactus Hunt” and several other pieces for The Vasculum, and “Opuntia Fragilis” in Opuntiads of the USA. Ribbens also co-authored with others “Opuntia Fragilis in Iowa” for Cactus and Succulent Journal, and “The Coelacanth: An Odd Fish” for Case Studies in Science.

Susan P. Romano co-authored “Site Modelling Methods for Detecting Hydrologic Alteration of Flood Frequency and Flood Duration in the Floodplain Below the Carlyle Dam, Lower Kaskaskia River, Illinois, USA” for River Research and Applications.

Jeanette A. Thomas co-authored “Acoustic Analysis of Underwater Vocalizations from Crab eater Seals (Lobodon carcinophagus): Not So Monotonous” for Aquatic Mammals, and she co-wrote “Ross Seal (Ommatophoca rossii)” and “Weddell Seal (Leptonychotes weddellii), both for the Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals.

Thomas Vogel wrote Fear and Loathing in Introductory Biology.

Chemistry


Netkal M. Made Gowda co-authored “Synthesis, Characterization and Antioxidant Activity of Zinc(II) and Ruthenium(III) Pyridoxine Complexes,” and “Manganese(III) Oxidation of L-Methionine in Aqueous Acetic Acid Medium: A Kinetic and Mechanistic Study” both for Synthesis and Reactivity in Inorganic, Metal-Organic, and Nano-Metal Chemistry.

Xiaoping Pan co-authored “Expression of MicroRNAs in Cotton” for Molecular Biotechnology, “Uptake, Bioaccumulation, and Biodegradation of Hexahydro-1,3,5-Trinitro-1,3,5-Triazine (RDX) and its Reduced Metabolites (MNX and TNX) by the Earthworm (Eisenia fetida)” for Chemosphere, and “Large-Scale Genome Analysis Reveals Unique Features of MicroRNAs” for Gene, plus individuals wrote “RDX and miRNA Expression: Zhang and Pan Respond” for Environmental Health Perspectives and “RDX Induces Aberrant Expression of MicroRNAs in Mouse Brain and Liver” in Environmental Health Perspectives.

Thottumkara K. Vinod co-authored “Benzylic Carbon Oxidation by an
In Situ Formed o-Iodoxybenzoic Acid (IBX) Derivative” for Synlett. Lisa Wen co-authored “An Enzyme Possessing both Glutathione-Dependent Formaldehyde Dehydrogenase and S-Nitrosoglutathione Reductase from Antrodia camphorate” in Food Chemistry. Wen also co-authored “Cloning, Expression, and Characterization of an Enzyme Possessing Both Glutaredoxin and Dehydroascorbate Reductase Activity from Taiwanofungus camphorate” for the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, and “Putative Phospholipid Hydroperoxide Glutathione Peroxidase from Antrodia camphorate,” for Food Chemistry. Wen, Jenq-Kuen Huang and others co-authored “Functional Expression of Francisella tularensis FabH and FabI, Potential Antibacterial Targets” for Protein Expression and Purification.

English & Journalism
David Banash reviewed Beauty by Dave Beech, Ferus by Roberta Bernstein and Kirk Varndoe, Ryan Seacrest is Famous by Dave Housley and The Grid Book by Hannah G. Higgins, all in PopMatters.


Lisa Kernek presented "An Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Poverty" at the annual conference of the Popular Culture Association in St. Louis in April.

Bill Knight wrote a newspaper column named one of a “Golden Dozen” opinion pieces by the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. Knight writes a twice-weekly column for newspapers in Pekin, Peoria, Monmouth, Galesburg and Kewanee. He also wrote “Cherry Mine Disaster Remembered” for The Labor Paper, “Designing Newspapers in a Visual-Driven Age” for Illinois PressLines, entries on Mark Grace and Jim Thome for Great Athletes: Baseball, and a review of Was Superman a Spy?: And Other Comic Book Legends Revealed by Brian Cronin for Magill Book Reviews. Lastly, Knight presented “Canon Fodder: reporter/poet Carl Sandburg’s advice to journalists” at the annual conference of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature at Michigan State University in May.

Charles McLeod wrote “Domestica” for Alaska Quarterly Review and “Edge Boys,” in Pushcart Prize XXXIV: Best of the Small Presses.

Rich Moreno wrote Mysteries and Legends of Nevada: True Stories of the Unsolved and Unexplained.

Merrill Cole wrote five poems and the article “Dances of Vice, Horror and Ecstasy,” both for ACTION YES Online Quarterly, and wrote the Trials of Fiction” for MFS Modern Fiction Studies, and reviewed Conversations with American Writers: The Doubt, the Faith, the In-Between by Dale Brown for Literature & Theology.


Lisa Kernek presented "An Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Poverty" at the annual conference of the Popular Culture Association in St. Louis.

Geography
Yongxin Deng co-authored “Using NDVI to Define Thermal South in Several Mountainous Landscapes of California” for Computers & Geosciences.

Jongnam Choi co-wrote “Farmers’ Perception of Wetlands and Their Attitude on Government Wetlands Policies: A Study of Four Illinois Counties in the United States” for Continued on page 20
Hardworking. Motivated. Loyal. Optimistic. These are the words that Matthew Burke used to describe his father, the late Roland P. Burke, who, at the College of Arts and Sciences’ scholarship fund-raising dinner in October, was posthumously presented the College’s 2009 Distinguished Alumnus Award. The elder Burke, 63, of Creve Coeur, Mo., passed away Aug. 6.

To celebrate Burke’s life as a respected and successful real-estate and multi-family housing developer, as well as a dedicated community volunteer and leader, the Roland P. Burke Scholarship in Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences, has been established through the Western Illinois University Foundation.

There were no pretenses with Burke, who came from humble beginnings in Springfield, Ill., and worked various jobs throughout high school to earn money for college. At Western he worked in food services and as a resident assistant, and during the summers he would work in foundries in Michigan. Burke earned his bachelor’s degree in political science with honors from Western (1968), and he earned his master’s degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Iowa (1977).

His professional successes and his reputation as a community-conscious individual who worked with various municipalities to develop low- and moderate-income housing through HUD and its Section 8 programs were recognized throughout his career.

His father was not interested in all the trappings that came with multi-million-dollar real-estate deals, Matthew recalled.

“He wanted to provide low- and moderate-income people with a decent place to live,” he said.

The Roland P. Burke Scholarship in Political Science will be awarded to a junior who shares Burke’s values of the importance of working hard to achieve an education and then using those skills and knowledge for the good of all people.

“Roland was one of the most generous, honorable, civic-minded men I have ever known,” said his widow, Connie Burke. “From his first days at WIU, he made up his mind to help others better their lives. His credo was to look only for the best in others, and to work to bring that out. In this, as in all things, he was successful.”

Connie and Roland had known each other since first grade in Springfield.

“We lived just a block apart, and he would pull me around the neighborhood in his little silver wagon,” Connie said. “After high school, we went our separate ways and lived very different lives. Both of us had happy marriages of 30-plus years, Roland in greater Boston, and me in rural Illinois. We became reacquainted at our 40th high school class reunion; both then free, and hit it off immediately. We meshed in many ways, and in 2008 we were married. Sadly, although extremely happy...
together, Roland died just 14 months later. His memory lives on in the lives of many, and he has received several posthumous honors.

“Roland retired after we were married, and we planned to volunteer together, probably with the homeless, but that dream was never fulfilled,” she added.

Burke began his professional life in Boston, working at the Boston Housing Authority. He later worked as a multi-family real estate developer with the Bartlett Development Company and went on to become an executive vice president of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company of Boston, where he stayed from 1984-1999. In 1999 Burke moved to St. Louis and served as the president of Gannon Development Company until his retirement in December 2008. During his tenure as president, the Institute of Real Estate Management named Gannon the Saint Louis Multi-family Property Management Company of the Year three times. But honors did not help those who were in need of decent housing, so Burke led another successful effort in redeveloping an older housing area of St. Louis through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

An active member in community service, Burke served as chairman of the board of the YMCA in West Roxbury, Mass. He was a member of the Ethical Society of Saint Louis (ESSL) and served on its board of directors and building and grounds committee. He was also a principal participant and leader in the ESSL Great Books/Great Conversations series for many years. Burke served on the board of directors and program committee of the World Affairs Council of Saint Louis, arranging for programs which included eight United Nations ambassadors, authors and other individuals with national reputations related to timely issues.

“(Dad) had great success in Boston, and in building developments in Florida and Texas; but when we moved back to St. Louis in 1999, it was like his dream come true,” said Matthew, who has followed in his father’s footsteps and is an asset manager located in Florida.

“He was a big Cardinals (baseball) fan,” he continued, “ – big into the arts; loved nature; loved to travel; and he loved community service projects. He was also an avid runner, and he kept a running journal. His goal was to run 1,000 miles each year. Every Sunday he would play basketball with my (older) brother Christopher, and we would watch sports together.

‘From his first days at WIU, he made up his mind to help others better their lives.’

“He was my mentor, professionally,” Matthew added. “He was so successful in developing quality multi-family housing because he was an expert in getting government income for housing developments. It was complex, and he liked complex. And because of his knowledge, he was often a guest lecturer at Harvard, MIT, Boston and many other New England universities.”

Both Matthew and Christopher earned MBAs. Christopher worked in mutual funds before deciding to train as an FBI Special Agent. He had a month left of training when this edition of Focus was released.

Perhaps Roland Burke explained it best in his April 14, 2009, letter to College of Arts and Sciences Development Director Bryce Dexter, when he was sending in support let-

ters for his nomination for the college’s distinguished alumnus award. Burke wrote: “While I played a principal role in the quality operation of major hotels (e.g. the 640-room Sheraton Bal Harbour Convention Hotel north of Miami Beach); while I transformed large Class A and B office towers in Houston and Dallas into award-winning business environments serving their business tenants; while I redeveloped/expanded a major regional mall and smaller shopping centers; while I redeveloped large industrial buildings to provide space for small and large businesses, all the above done simultaneously, perhaps my major satisfaction has been in providing quality, affordable multi-family housing to tens of thousands of people over a career of nearly 40 years.

“Not many years after leaving WIU, I worked killer hours in leading scores of people in the beginning of turning around large Boston public housing family developments, which had deteriorated into hellholes,” his letter continues. “When I left, the Boston tenants gave me an award for that effort, and others successfully continued the process of converting those projects into livable environments.”

How many people benefited from Roland Burke’s kindness, his sense of community, his skill in real-estate management and development, and his driving desire to provide decent and affordable housing to those in need? The numbers are probably countless.

And more will be added on because of the Roland P. Burke Scholarship in Political Science at Western Illinois University.

“I’m happy there’s a scholarship named for him,” Matthew said. “He was a great guy.”

Barker is Assistant Director of WIU’s University Relations
Clearly, many challenges arise when a limited natural resource is utilized by many different stakeholders for so many different—and often conflicting—uses. To address these issues, many groups have formed significant networks for the collection and sharing of important river observations. Ecologists meet with ecologists, planners with planners, activists with activists, etc. The positive outcomes of these efforts cannot be disputed; however, a key element was being neglected—discussion across stakeholder boundaries.

In 2007, representatives from federal resource management agencies, regional, state, and local planning agencies, higher education, municipal government, and nongovernmental organizations came together to meet the need for dialog between stakeholder groups by convening the first Upper Mississippi River Conference (UMRC), held in August 2008. WIU was represented by the

By Roger Viadero

Residents of west-central Illinois often overlook the scale and the environmental, economic, and cultural significance of the Mississippi River and its tributaries. From its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., the Mississippi River makes its way along a 2,350-mile path, through 10 states, to the Gulf of Mexico. When combined with the Illinois River, the Missouri River, the Ohio River, and numerous other tributaries, the Mississippi River Basin forms a watershed that covers about 1.8 million square miles—some 40% of the total land area of the contiguous United States, covering 32 States and 2 Canadian provinces.

One unique portion of this vast network of waterways is the Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRB), which is the only U.S. water body recognized by Congress for both its ecological and economic significance. The Upper Mississippi River consists of the 1,300 river miles that begin at its headwaters in Minnesota, continuing to its junction with the Ohio River in southern Illinois. Notably, about 850 miles of the Upper Mississippi River, from the Twin Cities in Minnesota to the river’s confluence with the Ohio River, is commercially navigable due to a network of 29 locks and dams. This system of infrastructure allows the Upper Mississippi River to serve as a transportation corridor for more than half of the nation’s annual corn exports and approximately 40% of soybean exports. The UMRB contains more than 285,000 acres of national wildlife refuge, which is supplemented by an additional 140,000 acres managed by various UMRB states.

The significance of the UMRB extends well beyond wildlife habitat and river commerce. It also provides vital energy production and public services for the towns and cities that line its banks. According to the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA), an estimated 7 billion gallons of water are removed from the Upper Mississippi River and its tributaries each day. About 80% is returned to the system after being used in power generation and industrial cooling. The River also serves as a source of drinking water for millions of people living in communities along the River.

Mississippi River attracts attention, efforts of WIU, partners

Teaching and research “landing craft” from the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station on display at the i-wireless Center.
Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has tentatively committed to provide the keynote address at the conference.

“As the current USDA Secretary and former Iowa Governor, Secretary Vilsak’s long history of involvement with the Mississippi River and natural resource conservation issues are sure to provide valuable insights into current and future river-related priorities,” said Wine.

In the past, the conference has hosted other well known keynote speakers including Richard Louv, author of internationally acclaimed book, Last Child in the Woods. In 2009, Joe Riely drew on his experience as the long-serving mayor of Charleston, S.C., when he spoke on the need to integrate environmental and community livability factors into urban development.

WIU maintains facilities located in the vicinity of three major regional rivers: The Mississippi River, the Rock River, and the Illinois River. Not surprisingly, WIU researchers have amassed a substantial amount of important information on these river systems. Consequently, WIU students, faculty and staff play important roles in understanding these complex systems. At UMRCs, WIU researchers share their findings with stakeholders during a mini WIU environmental expo held on the opening night of the conference. Last year, the Department of Biological Sciences, the Department of Geography, and the Institute for Environmental Studies were represented by eight faculty members, three staff members, seven graduate students, and one undergraduate student. Their exhibits included poster presentations, exhibits of live river fish, plus opportunities for conference attendees to have “hands-on” experiences with scientific equipment and field gear. A major highlight from the first UMRC was the showcasing of the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station’s new research and teaching boat – a 28-foot “landing craft” equipped to accommodate participants in wheelchairs.

Other groups such as the WIU Geographic information Systems (GIS) Center have provided hands-on demonstrations of the latest geospatial data collection and mapping equipment. Rick Anderson, Ph.D., former chair of the Department of Biological Sciences and current Interim Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, even had a game for participants to play. Based on a real skill used by river ecologists in the field, Anderson’s game required participants to reach into a box, find, and identify common river mussels. The one “catch” was that the identification had to be made based on feel – no looking allowed. At the third annual conference, even more student, faculty and staff involvement is expected.

To learn more about the upcoming conference, visit www.riveraction.org or www.wiu.edu/ies.

Viadero is Director of WIU’s Institute for Environmental Studies.
By Bill Knight

In a country that watches TV’s Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?, it may not be that surprising that media don’t cover education very well.

It’s also not unusual that Americans sometimes want quick-and-simple solutions to complex problems, whether economics or education.

However, media attention to education is almost invisible, according to the Brookings Institution.

“News reporting on schools is scant,” says Brookings’ study, released this spring. “There is virtually no national coverage of education.”

Only about one-third of U.S. adults have children in primary or secondary schools, so society relies on mass media for information. The absence of that information makes it difficult for the public to follow the issues at stake in education and to understand how to improve schools.

Of the education news that is reported, little relates to school policies and ways to improve curriculum or learning processes, Brookings’ report shows. There’s been little coverage of school reform, teacher quality, or other matters thought to be crucial for educational success.

“Most stories this year dealt with budget problems, school crime, and the H1N1 flu outbreak,” Brookings states. “The emphasis on school budgets isn’t surprising given the country’s dismal economic news. Indeed, educational finance and the economic stimulus package together made up 17 percent of all national stories this year. However, the lack of coverage of the actual work of schools remains a significant problem.”

Local newrooms are more likely to cover area school boards than regional or national media, but even that coverage can be difficult to maintain in a comprehensive way when cutbacks limit resources. So broadcast and print news outlets alike often don’t assign reporters to cover all education stories in their markets, citing financial constraints.

“Beat reporters who cover education and other policy areas are being laid off and not replaced,” Brookings says.

Web news aggregators and so-called citizen journalism efforts ranging from blogs and YouTube videos to Facebook and so on are inadequate substitutes, the report notes.

“None of these can replace regular, systematic and ongoing coverage of education by news outlets,” Brookings says.

Also, public interest – or the lack of it – could be an unintended consequence of meager attention by the media.

Indeed, do people care? Is the audience for information about education there?
Writing in The American Conservative magazine, National Association of Scholars director Peter Wood writes, “If we chose to throw ourselves wholeheartedly into schooling, America might well do a much better job of it – but that is a highly unlikely choice for Americans to make. As a people, we are just not that interested in the tedious work of learning or teaching things that don’t appear to have direct application. We expect from schools more in the way of affirmation of popular conceits than the slow building up of knowledge. A great many Americans actually want schools that promote faddish ideologies, though, of course, dressed up as cutting-edge insights. We want diversity. We want creativity. But we have never been of a single mind whether we actually want education.”

There’s a disconnect between what American adults say they want education to provide children and what current law requires schools to achieve, according to Rockefeller University researcher Joel E. Cohen, author of International Perspectives on the Goals of Universal Basic and Secondary Education.

“Where do we want to go with education?” Cohen asks. “Most people want students to develop skills in critical thinking and problem solving, social skills and work ethic, citizenship and community responsibility, physical and emotional health, love of the arts and literature, and preparation for skilled work that does not require a college degree. By contrast, the [bi-partisan] Bush-era law, now up for revision and renewal, overwhelmingly relies on standardized testing.”

WIU Associate Professor Bonnie Sonnek, coordinator for the English Education program, said, “There is a long history, explained very well in Among Schoolchildren by Tracy Kidder. The author talks about how education is not a profession like others for two main reasons: After an initial hiring of men, the profession became a woman’s profession, thus carrying little clout. These women often were wives of men who had ‘real’ jobs, and it was considered more of a babysitting job that actually took few skills since we had all been in school, anyway, so we should all know how to do it. Right?

“Secondly, education is often the area attacked when we have problems in society. For example, during Sputnik, the U.S. administration ‘blamed’ schools for the shortfall in skills and technology – no mention that our country needed to address these skills as a population. This continues today with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and all of the other work being done in education. Instead of rewarding teachers for work done well, the blame is placed on teachers for what parents, society and others are not doing with youth. And then we fire the teachers because they are not doing their jobs. Teachers are scared, and since many are unable to teach strategies and pedagogies that they know are best for students, they are forced to teach to the test. Teaching to the test is not teaching critical thinking skills, which our students need. One woman told me she took her young girl to kindergarten, and before she could enroll the child, the girl had to be tested.

“C’mon – this is nuts,” Sonnek added. “I also have to say that I believe, and I think our students believe, we can be more than factories for students. But it is a tough philosophy to teach and maybe getting tougher.”

Sonnek echoed Cambridge, Mass., educator Jim Horn, who’s criticized U.S. schools in the 21st century as “dumbed-down test factories run by corporations,” a situation so dire that tens of thousands of New Jersey high school students walked out in April, protesting proposed cuts in state funding.

A WIU student shared similar concerns: “We learned about Obama’s changes to NCLB from our Ed Law class, and it was brand-new information that came out in March. I’m not sure why his changes haven’t been a hit in the press rooms. They seem to be significant changes that affect current education students. Maybe it is because some of the current teachers will freak out when they find out that the structure of their schools could change if their teaching does not improve in five years.”

Cohen’s book compares other countries’ educational aims and asks a provocative question.

“People have amazingly diverse views of the goals of education,” he said. “We hear about the need to teach tolerance and open-minded understanding of sacred texts in the Arab world from the late, great former minister of education in Tunisia. We hear from the headmaster of a Nigerian Koranic school about the need to inculcate moral behavior. A Chinese educator favors education for world commerce and collaboration in business. A Singaporean diplomat favors developing skepticism and a questioning attitude in the spirit of Socrates.”
“The diversity of voices, views and assumed purposes for education should provoke any thoughtful reader to consider why we should educate children,” he added.

Wood, the conservative scholar, says America is responsible for showing it values education.

“America will never be as good at schooling as some other nations that are more profoundly attached to learning for its own sake and have the benefit of being proud rather than ashamed of their cultural inheritance,” he commented.

“Most children take education seriously when they see that it has some urgency in the larger culture.”

Given the lack of media attention, No Child Left Behind probably seemed like a relatively quick fix. But that simple – simplistic, arguably – approach backfired, critics say.

“There is a thoughtlessness in education that has emerged with this emphasis on testing and stripped-down pedagogy and teacher-proof curriculum,” said educator Henry Giroux, author of dozens of books, including Education Under Siege and . “It’s an assault on everything that is decent and basic about education. It’s an assault on creativity. It’s an assault on kids. And that method may be good for measuring the heights of trees, but it has nothing to do with education.

“Teachers have a responsibility to engage critical pedagogy as an ethical referent and a call to action for educators, parents, students and others to reclaim public education as a democratic public sphere – a place where teaching is not reduced to learning how to master either tests or acquire low-level jobs skills, but a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students.”

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**Researchers’ recommendations**

“We believe there are a number of steps for improving the quantity and quality of education coverage that will make a positive difference,” Brookings’ report says:

1. Schools need to understand that communications is important to their education mission. Time spent to inform reporters, parents and the community about what is happening inside schools is a good investment in public understanding.

2. Young people can be a valuable part of this communications effort through student newspapers, social media, citizen journalism, and other outreach activities. Budget cutbacks are reducing extracurricular activities of all kinds, including student newspapers. Some school officials discourage student reporters from asking difficult questions or raising controversial issues. In fact, student journalism of this kind should be encouraged.

3. Government officials and education administrators must draw attention to education policy through events, forums and speeches that highlight noteworthy reforms and discuss ongoing problems and challenges. Public officials have an agenda-setting and problem-definition capacity that can drive news coverage.

4. Reporting should become more proactive and less reactive. Much of coverage today is episodic and driven by events. Focusing on long-term trends would help to inform communities about the content of education and ways schools are seeking to move forward.

5. Reporters should draw on education research in the way that health-care reporters use medical research. Journalists who follow medicine and health often highlight new studies, clinical trials, or other evaluative research that help consumers understand new treatments, new drugs, and new medical therapies. There should be better use of education research that evaluates school reforms, teacher quality, and classroom practices.

6. Newspapers and other media outlets that have cut back on education reporting should reconsider these decisions both on public-interest grounds, and also because there is widespread interest in the issues surrounding education – on the part of parents especially, but also among employers and other community leaders. It is only through on-going, day-to-day beat reporting that journalists develop an understanding of the subject, gain a sure feel for the issues at stake, and develop sources who keep them informed.

7. Media publishers and editors should find ways to integrate quality education blogs and forms of citizen journalism into press outlets. Newspapers could develop their own blogs and community talkbacks, and also provide links to education blogs that already exist in the community. This could help fill the policy void left by staff cutbacks on education beats.

8. Foundations and non-profit organizations should focus on developing alternative forms of education coverage both nationally and locally. At both levels, they should encourage more emphasis on reporting about teaching and teaching methods, curricula, course offerings, testing and other issues that directly affect learning and are receiving scant ongoing coverage. They can also encourage both investigative journalism and in-depth reporting of particularly successful (and troubled) schools and school systems.
You are cordially invited to attend the

Fourth Annual College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship
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Saturday Evening
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University Union Lamoine Room

Please join us for an evening of fine dining and camaraderie

Social hour followed by dinner and program

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to

Bryce Dexter, Director of Development
Dean’s Office
309-298-1828
bm-dexter2@wiu.edu
the Journal of the Korean Geographical Society. He also wrote three entries for the *Encyclopedia of Global Warming* and “Seasonality and Criminal Incidents On and Off Campus” for the Journal of Humanities.

**Geology**

Jack Bowman Bailey co-authored “X-Ray CT Scan as an Aid to Identification and Description of a New Bivalve Species (Mollusca) from the Mississippian Bluefield Formation, Southeastern West Virginia,” and “Shell Orientation Terminology among the Bivalvia (Mollusca): Problems and Proposed Solutions,” both for the Journal of Paleontology.

Amy L. Brock co-authored “Polygenetic Development of the Mormon Mesa, NV Petrocalcic Horizons: Geomorphic and Paleoenvironmental Interpretations” in *Catena*.

Leslie Melim co-authored “A Biosignature Suite from Cave Pool Precipitates, Cottonwood Cave, New Mexico” for *Astrobiology*.

**History**

Lee Brice was awarded a three-month residential Margo Tytus Fellowship by the University of Cincinnati for the Fall 2010 semester. Brice also reviewed *L’inizio di un Paradossos* by Luigi Loreto for the Journal of Military History.


Barclay Key reviewed *BlackPast.Org: Remembered and Reclaimed for the Journal of American History, Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* by Joe L. Coker and Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights by David Brown and Clive Webb, both for *Alabama Review*. Key—who recently completed his Fulbright Lectureship in Poland—also presented “Southern Confessionals: Racial Reconciliation in the 1960s,” Dec. 14, at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, Poland, “High Achieving Students in a Mainstream Schooling System” Jan. 16 at *Świętokrzyska* (Holy Cross University), Kielce, Poland, and “The Bible and Birdaths: Student Activism at Christian Colleges in the South” at the National Conference on “Student Activism, Southern Style” hosted by the University of South Carolina March 21.


Roberto Mazza presented “The Effects of the First World War upon
the Identities of Jerusalem” in January at the Workshop on Violence, Trauma, and Displacement in the Middle East and Eurasia held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mazza also authored “Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita: the Spanish Consul in Jerusalem, 1914-1920,” published in Jerusalem Quarterly.


Jennifer McNabb wrote “Teaching the Black Death” in Quidditas and reviewed Marriage and Violence: The Early Modern Legacy by Frances E. Dolan for History: Reviews of New Books. The faculty adviser to Alpha Sigma Tau, McNabb also received WIU’s award for Greek Adviser of the Year at the Greek Week awards banquet.

Scott W. Palmer wrote “How Memory was Made: The Construction of the Memorial to the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad” for The Russian Review.


Nicholas Pano served as chair and discussant for the session on “The 2009 Albanian Parliamentary Election” at the National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies on Nov. 15 in Boston, and authored the article, “Stavro Skendi dhe studimeve albanologjike ne SHBA,” published in ILLYRIA. Pano also wrote the chapter “The Albanian Orthodox Church” in Eastern Christianity and the Cold War, 1945-91.

Timothy Mason Roberts was selected to receive the Joan Nordell Fellowship, one of eight visiting fellowships awarded by Harvard College’s Houghton Library for the 2010-2011 academic year. Roberts also wrote “Learning about Civil War, Separatism, and Nation Building through Teaching in the Turkish Republic” for the Journal of American History and “Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism” for Jeffersonian America, and was selected as a participant in the 2010 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Seminar on “The American Civil War at 150: New Approaches.”

Edward J. Woell reviewed Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France by Joseph F. Byrnes for Church History. He also reviewed Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance 1789-1799 by Joseph Clarke for American Historical Review and Les Sacrements Dans la France des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles. Pastorale et Vécu des Fidèles by Marcel Bernos for Catholic Historical Review.

Mathematics


John Chisholm co-authored
Victoria Baramidze
both for Teaching Children Mathematics.


Philosophy & Religious Studies


Brian Powell wrote “Discourse Ethics and Moral Rationalism” for Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review.


Physics

Brian Davies edited The Illinois Physics Teacher for the American Association of Physics Teachers.


Political Science

Keith Boeckelman co-authored Barack Obama, the New Face of America.

Janna L. Deitz co-authored “If You Can’t Join ‘Em, Beat ‘Em: The Gender Gap in Individual Donations to Congressional Candidates” for Political Research Quarterly.


Erin Taylor, political science, and Lora Ebert Wallace, sociology/anthropology, together presented “Feminist Breastfeeding Advocacy and the Problem of Guilt” at the 5th Symposium on Breastfeeding and Feminism, March 19-21 in Greensboro, N.C.

Psychology


Curtis Dunkel and Colin R. Harbke co-authored “Direct and

Melanie Hetzel-Riggin wrote “A Test of Structural Invariance of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in Female Survivors of Sexual and/or Physical Abuse or Assault” in Traumatology.


Sandra L. McFadden co-authored “Evaluation of Inner Hair Cell and Nerve Fiber Loss as Sufficient Pathologies Underlying Auditory Neuropathy” for Hearing Research.

Sociology & Anthropology


Patrick McGinty wrote “Teachers and Teaching During Educational Restructuring and Reforms” in International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching.


Craig D. Tollini wrote “The Behaviors that College Students Classify as Political Bias:

Preliminary Findings and Implications” for Teaching Sociology.

Jess White wrote “Geometric Morphometric Investigation of Molar Shape Diversity in Modern Lemurs and Lorises” for the Anatomical Record: Advances in Integrative Anatomy and Evolutionary Biology. White, Tollini and others co-wrote “Evolution and University-Level Anthropology Textbooks: The ‘Missing Link’?” for Evolution: Education & Outreach.


Women’s Studies

Lori Baker-Sperry wrote “Orphans, Abortions, and the Public Fetus in The Cider House Rules” and “Pedagogical Considerations for an Interdisciplinary Course on Abortion,” both for Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Abortion: Essays from Philosophical, Sociological, Anthropological, Political, Health and Other Perspectives.


Professor Jeanne Stierman and staff from the Malpass Library assisted in compiling this information.
By Bill Knight

Born and raised in Galesburg, Ill., with family throughout western Illinois, Frank Rodeffer came from what he calls a modest background but went on to graduate from WIU and travel the globe, achieving much in the public and private arenas. Now living in Colorado, Rodeffer appreciates Western’s influence on his life and work, and has been generous in supporting WIU’s Department of Physics to help ensure students have an opportunity to pursue careers in physics and related fields. For instance, he funds the Frank E. Rodeffer Scholarship in Physics, which awards $500 each semester to a junior Physics major selected by Physics faculty and their department chair.

Initially choosing Western was a matter of convenience, he says. “It was close to home and was affordable given our limited financial resources,” Rodeffer says. “Galesburg had Knox College. However, we could not afford the tuition. [Attending Western] started out as merely more challenging work, but after the first year it definitely became a world beyond my hometown.”

As a youngster, Rodeffer had a fascination and an affinity for science, especially physics. To help pay for college he worked in the Audio-Visual department repairing equipment and by his sophomore year obtained an FCC commercial radio-telephone engineering license to work as an engineer at WIU’s radio station, then known as WWKS-FM. (He still holds an FCC Amateur Radio License.) During summers he supervised corn detasseling crews, then at Boy Scout Camp Pearl outside Tennessee, Ill., about 10 miles west of Macomb. Dedicated to service activities, Rodeffer served as an Assistant Scoutmaster and then Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 9 at Western’s old Lab School. He was also a charter member of the Mu Nu chapter of Alpha Phi Omega national service fraternity, established at WIU in 1958/59.

Such activities contributed to Rodeffer’s interest in pursuing graduate school and perhaps teaching, he says. The 1961 Western graduate, with a degree in Education-Physics, in 1962 began graduate studies in guidance and counseling, and became a Graduate Assistant and again worked in Audio Visual.

“My work with youth through the Scouts and the desire to be better prepared to teach inspired me,” he says. Of course, “this all came undone as I was about to be drafted into the Army, and the Air Force recruiter convinced me there was a better way.”

He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in December 1962 and became a distinguished graduate of its Officers Training School. “I was a communications electronics officer throughout my career,” he says. “I spent seven years at Headquarters of the Strategic Air Command, in plans and programs and as chief of the ICBM comm.-maintenance division.”

In a military career that went from SAC to NATO, Rodeffer remembers some highlights. “While stationed on Guam, I went to Thailand to bring a special switchboard to operational status to enable encrypted voice communications – turning around a completely unsatisfactory organization to one with outstanding and excellent ratings within 18 months,” he recalls. “I was in the engineering
division of the Regional Signal Support Group while in The Netherlands with NATO. While there, I led an effort to establish some comm. installation standards similar to what was then known in the U.S. commercial industry as Bell System Practices.”

Rodeffer achieved success in the private sector, too, working for TRW/Northrup Grumman in Layton, Utah, and Colorado Springs, Colo.

“Positives were the ability to technically influence major programs and other aspects of comm. systems,” he says, “working with Air Force Space Command to establish and define comm. system requirements. Looking back, the only real negative is the slow pace at which major programs move. This may not be all bad from a taxpayer perspective.”

A husband and parent – he married the former Peggy Vogler of Macomb 47 years ago in March and they raised two children, Robert Rodeffer (who himself is married with three children in Box Elder County, Utah) and Linda Hagedorn (also married and also with three children in Colorado Springs) – Rodeffer was pressed for advice. What does he recommend to students, recent graduates or even “mid-career” alum?

Life-long learning.

“There were so many challenges, that I will say that you must constantly educate yourself and keep up with whatever you are working at so you can stay one step ahead of whomever you’re leading (or at least stay even with them!),” he says.

“For example, I basically ‘self-taught’ myself in relation to nuclear weapons’ effects on communications systems. I had to in order to intelligently have dialogue with all levels of people.’”

He continues, “I think that setting goals for your life should be emphasized more in high school. However, you must also remain flexible, as life doesn’t always turn out the way you plan. I never intended to join the military although I knew the draft was out there; I just denied it would happen to me. [But] I joined the Air Force [and] got into a career field that was a perfect fit for me and my abilities, which led to a very reward-

‘I’m not sure [comparing liberal arts and vocation training] should be either/or. I had an electrical engineer working for me. He not only was only a barely competent engineer, he couldn’t write a coherent sentence.’

Grateful for the educational and other opportunities available to him during his WIU years – which he still acknowledges as key to his successful military and civilian careers – Rodeffer remembers one scene when he was working with the Air Force Space Command.

Rodeffer continues to have a strong belief in and commitment to helping the nation’s youth and making their lives more meaningful, and he’s proud of his years dedicated to working in the defense of the nation. And underlying all that, he remains grateful for the educational and other opportunities available to him during his years at Western, which he acknowledges as key to his successful military and civilian careers and relationships he still recalls fondly.

"I became very good friends with the Stiffler family in Macomb [and] a farm family (now deceased) south of Blandinsville," he said. "I was able to make some very good friends in the area."
tal illness, and it is real. It is a real thing that made me get lost in my own neighborhood, where I’d lived for 21 years.”

Eventually, Smola attempted suicide. He then spent more than four months in a mental health facility. With the help of treatment, Smola now knows that he has a chemical imbalance of serotonin, and that depressive episodes can be triggered by the kinds of stressors he described. And he has learned how to identify the symptoms and causes of clinical depression— the latter of which has re-occurred but been largely in remission throughout his adult life.

“That’s the thing that I want to tell people: the bottom line is, with the help of medication and/or therapy, you can recover from this. I wanted to show that you could have a horrible episode like I experienced and that I describe in the book, but that you can still live a normal, productive life if you get treatment. I want to remove the stigma associated with depression.”

Smola has been a social worker since the first job he took after being released from the hospital, working with developmentally disabled adults as a training counselor. He went on to earn a master’s degree in the University of Illinois-Chicago in 1994. He’s now a vice president of program operations at Chrysalis Consulting Group in River Grove (Ill.). He is also a husband and father of two children. He is married to Lisa (Toland) Smola ’89, whom he had originally dated at Western University.
before the aforementioned troubled relationship.

“When I started to have my issues, before going into the hospital, I had told a mutual friend, Lisa (Riehm) Schomer ‘89, ‘Tell Lisa (Toland) to hang in there, she’s a smart girl.’ Well, Lisa (Riehm) Schomer passed that message along. By then, Lisa (Toland) was trying to reach me; she got my number from my mom. She reached me in the hospital. I got out in February of 1990, we got married after that, and we’ve been married for 19 years.”

It has also been nearly 19 years since Smola began work on the process of getting “La La Land” published.

“When I got out of the hospital, I wanted to come to some sort of peace and understanding, and I wrote it, literally, one page at a time. It took me about a year to finish. My goal was just to get it on paper. And then it was to help others.

“Every time I wanted to quit, I got a little piece of encouragement,” Smola said. “Finally, a year ago, I made a decision: I’ve gotta give it one more shot. I found this website of publishers, and eventually found a small publisher in Minnesota.”

Since then he has spoken to some college psychology classes, something he hopes to do more of, in conjunction with students reading his book.

“I loved my experience at Western,” he said. “I can’t speak more highly of my teachers, and of my experience there. In fact that’s one of the reasons I speak to college students. I think they’re vulnerable, because… I tell them, ‘College is hard work, but it’s the time of your life. You have this great set of friends, you blossom… and then one day it’s over. You start going, Where’s my big job? Where are my friends? You know what, it’s hard’.”

Smola’s book can be found online through Amazon.com or through the publisher’s website at kirkhouse.com/Books/A-Waltz-Through-La-La-Land.

McGaughey is a Public Information Specialist with WIU’s University Relations office. This is reprinted from Western News.

WIU gymnastic team from 1959

Coach Clow deserves a great deal of credit for bringing the Western Gym Squad up to the standard it is today and what it is to be in the future. Kneeling is Coach Clow with his returning gymnasts.
I can’t think of anything more rewarding than establishing a scholarship as a commemorative gift. Each year we have two scholarship recognition brunches on campus that bring together our donors and our scholarship recipients. I can’t imagine a better feeling than to know that you have established a scholarship in memory of a loved one that is helping a student achieve his or her dream by providing financial support that, in many cases, may be keeping the student in school. Many times our donors and the scholarship recipients they support become life-long friends.

Similarly, have there been alumnae or family members that you have visited with about giving to Western that moved you? One of the more difficult aspects for anyone that works in development is working with a family that has lost a loved one to establish a memorial scholarship. Many times this is a celebration of a life lived well, including many years of service to Western. But it is particularly heart-wrenching when we meet with families that have lost loved ones that were also students. You so much want to do anything you can possibly do to provide some measure of comfort but you know you really can’t help. In these cases, it is very touching to see the recipients of these memorial scholarships meet up with family members who have provided the funding for the memorial scholarships. It took me some time but I finally realized that these scholarships were more than just memorials for the family members that had lost a loved one, a student whose life was cut short before graduating from Western. To those family members – every time one of their scholarship recipients walks across the stage in Western Hall and graduates from Western Illinois University it is their loved one walking across the stage and getting ready to start a new life after Western. They have helped a student achieve the same dream that alluded their loved one.

Lastly, give a couple of examples in the College of Arts and Sciences that are putting Foundation funds to good use. Norm and Carmelita Teeter are certainly well-known at Western and in the College of Arts & Sciences. Their planned gift is the largest in our history and will support so many different areas at Western. Annually, their gifts support scholarships in our new nursing program and research grants for our students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Kay Kennedy made a wonderful gift this year that supported the purchase of much-needed equipment for our biology program. It is particularly rewarding when you receive a call from a donor and they simply ask what they can do to help.

We are very excited about your recent appointment to Vice President for Advancement and Public Services. What are some of your goals for the first year? Thank you! I am very honored and feel privileged to be given the opportunity to work for my alma mater in this capacity. Our number-one priority now is to prepare for the second half of our comprehensive campaign. We will announce the public phase of our campaign this fall. We set many goals when we embarked on this campaign, and we need to evaluate what we have achieved so far and what new objectives and needs may have emerged in the past four years. I also must thank our alumni and friends for their tremendous support! Even in these tough economic times they have stepped forward to support Western. If anyone would like to talk about what they can do to make a difference at Western, I would be happy to visit with them. Talking about Western, its history and its future is one of the many enjoyable aspects of my job!

From “Letter” page 4