Students record Milwaukee’s religious history for “Gathering Places”

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Last spring, History graduate student Ken Bartelt stood beneath the I-794 overpass, recorder in hand, talking to former parishioners on the site where the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii Church used to sit before it became a victim of urban renewal in 1967.

“What really stood out from the interviews was the fact that the Italian community felt that they were under attack by the city of Milwaukee, and the plan to demolish the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii Church to build a highway punctuated that assault,” Bartelt said. “The church was truly the backbone of Milwaukee’s Italian community, and it was a joy to see the gentlemen we interviewed recall and share those joyous parts of their lives.”

Those memories are just one of the discoveries uncovered by graduate students in UWM’s Public History program as part of assistant professor of History Christopher Cantwell’s ongoing “Gathering Places: Religion and Community in Milwaukee” project. Cantwell, who just marked his second year at UWM, teaches the program’s Research Methods in Local History class.

Rather than lecture at his students, he said, he decided to show them how to research local history by pairing them up and making them do it.

And he had the perfect project in mind. Each day on his walk to campus, Cantwell passes by at least four houses of worship.

“I am a historian of religion in cities. I’ve always had a fascination with how religious communities adapt to the curiosities of the urban environment,” Cantwell said. “So I charged the students with partnering with a local house of worship and working with them to write their history.”

So far, Cantwell’s students have investigated Plymouth Church, the Chinese Christian Church, Epikos Church, Calvary Presbyterian, Congregation Emanu-El B’Ne Jeshurun, St. Casimir Roman Catholic Church, and Blessed Virgin of Pompeii Catholic Church.

All of the research is compiled on a website that includes an interactive map, timelines, recorded interviews with church members, old photographs, and more.

The Gathering Places project is available online. Visit uwm.edu/gatheringplaces to read about the histories of local houses of worship, hear interviews of members, and view church artifacts.
UWM wins national award for undergraduate research excellence

By John Schumacher, University Relations

UWM has won a national award for the quality and depth of the research opportunities it provides to its undergraduate students.

The Council on Undergraduate Research honored UWM and one other institution, Union College in Schenectady, New York, with the 2018 Campus-Wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (https://bit.ly/2r1nfNX). The annual award “recognizes institutions with exemplary programs that provide high-quality research experiences for undergraduates,” the council said in a news release.

Research is wired into the core of UWM as part of the university’s mission. It’s not just graduate students: More than 1,000 undergrads are involved in research each year, and half of graduating seniors have been involved with research.

“When many peer institutions have summer research programs, UWM is committed to supporting undergraduate research through campus employment throughout the entire year,” said Kyla Esguerra, deputy director of the Office of Undergraduate Research at UWM.

UWM has a long tradition of engaging undergraduate students in research, but over the last decade, the university has substantially expanded opportunities for collaboration between faculty and students through a wide array of programs offered through the Office of Undergraduate Research.

“This award recognizes UWM’s commitment to supporting faculty who want students to be involved in state-of-the-art research, said Nigel Rothfels, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research. “It is gratifying that the university is now receiving national recognition for the work of faculty, staff and students over many years.”
Dept. of Education grants provide funds for international education
By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

UWM is the recipient of two prestigious grants from the U.S. Department of Education totaling over $2.4 million to be distributed over the next four years.

That’s good news in any language.

The Title VI grants are meant to support international education programs and student scholarships. UWM’s Center for International Education (CIE) received nearly $1.8 million and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS), which applied jointly with UW-Madison’s Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies program, received $600,000 in support, both to be spent over the next four years.

That means that both programs can continue supporting community outreach efforts, teacher training, and language learning, critical missions in a global society.

“It is really the money that allows us to expand our support for research, teaching, and public engagement. It is increasingly competitive … so we’re very proud of the funding,” said Julie Kline, the associate director of CLACS. Only 55 other schools in the nation received Title VI funding, including institutions like Stanford, Columbia, UC-Berkeley, and the University of Michigan.

The money has the potential to have a direct impact on Milwaukee, added Jeremy Booth, an administrative specialist for CIE.

“(We’re able) to bring ideas of global citizenship and learning tools around universal human rights and the United Nations framework into the classrooms in Milwaukee Public Schools,” he said. “That’s where it’s really impacting students, and as a feeder into UWM to get them interested in foreign language study and international issues.”

Support for education, training, and outreach

Both CIE and CLACS are charged with promoting international education and discourse. The Title VI funding allows CIE to host trainings to help community college and technical college faculty and staff internationalize their curriculums, for instance. Funds also support UWM’s Language Resource Center and help instructors get certified in language instruction.

CLACS uses federal funding to train both K-12 teachers and post-secondary educators to address topics of race and ethnicity and introduce Hispanic and Latino elements in areas like children’s classroom literature. They’re also hosting new events this year, like panel discussions about Brazilian politics or American immigration policy.

CLACS director Natasha Sugiyama thinks early investment in multi-cultural education will pay big dividends in Wisconsin’s future.

“One of things I think educators in the region are thinking about is how to prepare students to be a part of this global economy and global workforce and understand Wisconsin’s role in the larger international community,” she said. “Milwaukee is a changing community. We have a growing Latino population. I would hope that better understanding of the Americas would be beneficial to the whole community to understand how and why our neighbors are coming from the Americas and the unique perspective they could bring.”

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A historian, a psychologist, and a comedian walk into a comedy club.

It’s no joke; it’s stand-up comedian Shane Mauss’ newest venture, a travelling show he calls “Stand Up Science.” Hopping from city to city, Mauss invites local scientists and comedians to take the stage so audiences can learn while they laugh. In October, his show came to Milwaukee. Local comedian Carter Deems provided the stand-up and UWM Distinguished Professor of History Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Psychology professor Karyn Frick provided the science.

And boy, did they deliver.

“It sold out days in advance. It was a huge success. I thought everyone had a great time,” Mauss said.

Mauss is a Wisconsin native who has found great success as a comic, appearing multiple times as a guest of Conan O’Brien and Jimmy Kimmel, and on “Showtime,” and “Comedy Central ‘Presents.’” He’s also the host of his own podcast, called “Here We Are” (www.herewearepodcast.com) where he interviews scientists about everything from consumer behavior to the meaning of life.

Comedy and science might seem light-years apart, but Mauss is fascinated by science and has built a network of scientist acquaintances to appear on his podcast. Stand Up Science was another way to marry his two loves.

“I’ve always liked the TED Talk type of formula, and I wanted to give academics a space to talk a little more about the things they’re most interested in,” Mauss said. “And I wanted a place to share some of my more thought-provoking ideas and not have to pander to the lowest denominator to get through a show. That’s how the idea of Stand Up Science came about.”

Milwaukee was Mauss’ third test market out of eight for the experimental format. Shows are 90 minutes long and feature a stand-up routine sandwiched between two presentations from scientists.

Mauss reached out to Wiesner-Hanks and Frick after seeing examples of their work on YouTube and the UWM website and asked them to be a part of the show. Comedy, they said, is definitely not in their wheelhouse, but both were intrigued by Mauss’ invitation.

“I’ve often said, if this teaching gig didn’t work out – which it did, so I didn’t have to worry about it – what I could do with the least amount of retraining is stand-up,” Wiesner-Hanks joked. “I teach up to 200 students at times. So it’s stand-up. You’ve got to gauge your audience, you’ve got to tell occasional jokes, you’ve got to know what’s going on and what the Packers did yesterday. It’s a little bit like that.”

She started her presentation with the question, ‘Is history a science?’ and took audiences on a journey through world history, pointing out the big patterns that stretch across centuries. Frick talked about her work researching Alzheimer’s Disease – what it is, its symptoms, and why it affects women more frequently than men.

(From left) Comedian Carter Deems, UWM Psychology professor Karyn Frick, and UWM Distinguished Professor of History Merry Wiesner-Hanks take questions from the audience after the Stand Up Science show, hosted by Shane Mauss (right). Photo courtesy of Jasmine Alinder.
Professor’s book uncovers persuasive power in children’s biographies

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

At first glance, children’s biographies seem pretty innocuous. Detailing the life and achievements of influential people, they’ve been the subject of countless book reports over the decades.

But look closer, says UWM Communication assistant professor Sara VanderHaagen, and hidden in the pages are hopeful messages to young readers: You, too, can change the world.

“Biographies are immensely powerful in the United States; they’re in all the libraries, in all the classrooms,” she said. “At the same time, they’re dismissed by children’s literature scholars as ‘not scholarly enough.’ They’re not really understood in the same way by education scholars because they’re primarily thinking about what reading level this biography is at.”

That’s a mistake, she argues in her new book. Published in November, Children’s Biographies of African American Women: Rhetoric, Public Memory, and Agency examines biographies of Phillis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, and Shirley Chisholm and how the rhetoric in each encourages young readers to be changemakers working to make a positive impact. The book is available at https://bit.ly/2DJkCIh.

The book grew out of VanderHaagen’s dissertation for her doctorate, completed in 2010 at Northwestern University. She chose to focus on Wheatley, Truth, and Chisholm not only because they were each trailblazers from different time periods – the first African American to publish a book of verse, an outspoken abolitionist and feminist, and America’s first black Congresswoman, respectively – but also because she felt it important to promote the voices of African American women, a group that has often been forgotten or outright silenced in American history.

And, of course, there were plenty of children’s biographies written about them.

VanderHaagen’s book explores those biographies through a new lens adapted from philosopher Paul Ricoeur, who advanced the idea of “three-fold mimesis” (see https://stanford.io/2QqmzA2 for more detail). It revolves around three elements of historical narrative texts: Prefiguration – determining what a particular culture defines as action – Configuration – how a storyteller constructs a narrative about that action – and Refiguration – how audiences are invited to use those stories as inspiration to act in their own lives.

“I took his idea of three-fold mimesis, and I adapted it to thinking about agents. I called it the ‘agential spiral,’” VanderHaagen said. “You start with the person who acts in history, and then you have the person who’s writing about the person who acted, and then you have the people reading what those people have written about the person who acted. Once you get back to this point, the reader ideally will become someone about whom someone in the future might write a biography. It’s a spiral of action.”

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Alum donates liver

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“I had already lost one child,” she says. “Whatever I could do to help Zanyah, to save Zanyah, was what I wanted to do.” Vaughn and Zanyah were officially matched, and the transplant surgery was scheduled.

As the day approached, Huggins explained the process to her daughter in terms Zanyah could understand. “I told her it was like a car that isn’t working,” Huggins says. “Sometimes, you have to take a part out and replace it with a new part.”

On Dec. 11, 2017 – two weeks before Christmas – Zanyah, Huggins and Vaughn had that first face-to-face meeting. “It was one of the best days of our lives,” Huggins recalls. “I said, ‘Zanyah, this is where your new liver is going to come from. Kristian is going to give you part of his liver.’ I was holding back tears, but Zanyah was really excited.”

The next day, surgeons removed a portion of Vaughn’s liver during a 10-hour procedure at Froedtert. The tissue traveled through a tunnel to Children’s Hospital, where it was transplanted into Zanyah. “The transplant team and the people in ICU were amazing,” Huggins said.

Seven months later, in summer 2018, 5-year-old Zanyah was still recuperating, with a few “bumps in the road” that Huggins says are expected in the first year after transplant surgery. Because Zanyah’s immune system remained suppressed, she still hadn’t been back to school since the surgery. But in July, the family was able to visit Disney World through the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Vaughn, meanwhile, is back at his job as a land use and economic development specialist at GRAEF, and he continues his doctoral studies at UWM. He says the surgery just meant “pushing the pause button” on his life for a few months of recuperation while his liver began regenerating, a small price to pay to help Zanyah.

“She was being treated for a medical condition that affected her quality of life,” Vaughn says. “She had regular hospitalizations and wasn’t able to run around or go to preschool or kindergarten or do things other children her age could do. I just wanted to ensure that her life would be successful, and she’d have the same opportunities as other children. That was important to me.”

Today, their connection endures. Vaughn and his family remain friends with Zanyah and her family.

“I told Kristian that he was the person that saved Zanyah’s life,” Huggins says. “I wanted her to know him. During her entire journey, it’s only right that Kristian is a part of things.”
Biologist’s father provides inspiration for two new books

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Beautiful illustrations of orchids and a deep respect for his father permeate two new books published by UWM associate professor of Biological Sciences Rafael Rodríguez Sevilla. Launched at Costa Rica’s International Book Fair this past August, *Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero: Botanist, Artist and Humanist* is a biography (https://bit.ly/2zqR67n) while *Watercolor Orchids; The Unpublished work of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero* contains original art (https://bit.ly/2P3nVvO). Both books are written in Spanish.

What inspired you to write your father’s biography?

It was one of my undergraduate professors who suggested that I write dad’s biography. I wondered whether I should, as I could well be seen to be favorably biased to the subject. But I was 10 when my dad died, and I was interested in learning about his life. He was an educator, artist, biologist, and humanist. His early training was in design, as apprentice to a famous goldsmith, and as high school teacher. Then he studied biology at the University of Costa Rica and botany at the University of California, Berkeley.

He considered careers in design or academia in the U.S., but was recruited to return to Costa Rica to found the School of Biology at his old university. He also co-founded or strongly influenced several institutions that have steered the course of tropical biology and environmental education within and beyond the country – the Organization for Tropical Studies, and the Instituto Centroamericano para la Extensión de la Cultura, for example. He was also very effective in disseminating biological knowledge and enthusiasm for natural history in the general culture. His most renowned research project was an exploration of the variety of form and color in orchid flowers, which he dissected and illustrated in gorgeous watercolors. Some of them were published posthumously in the book *Géneros de orquídeas de Costa Rica*. The new book finally presents all the other 1000+ watercolors.

What was the process of creating the book of your father’s illustrations?

The watercolors published in the first book are at the University of Costa Rica, but my mother has looked after the others all these years. To put the new book together, my sister Leonora Rodríguez Sevilla, with help from myself and my wife, Gerlinde Hoebel, arranged them to showcase Dad’s intent of comparing variation within and between species, and fit all the notes he made on the back of the watercolors at the end of the book. The purpose was to make all of these observations available to biologists, artists, and historians.

What were the best and most challenging aspects of creating these books?

The best and worst were the same: To see my dad as an enthusiastic youth full of promise (which became quite well-realized) but knowing the story ends with him dying at 66. The most challenging: Even though I study evolution, it took me an inordinately long time to come to understand that the purpose of his orchid project was evolutionary. It is a bit embarrassing, but it took tracing the course of his interests over the years and studying his first publications for me to see where he was headed with it.

Rafael Rodríguez Sevilla shares a love of biology with his father. Rodriguez Sevilla’s latest research focuses on spiders and the unusual methods they use to locate items in their web. https://youtu.be/x4B1Q4RuH7w
November 28-Dec. 20
Stanley William Hayter & The Death of Hektor. Emile H. Mathis Gallery. Exhibit is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday through Dec. 20. Free and open to the public.

November 28
Women’s & Gender Studies Fall Brown Bag Series: Just One of the Boys: Female-to-male cross-dressing, gender and class in nineteenth century popular theater. Curtin 904. Noon. Gillian Rodger, UWM.

November 29

November 30

Anthropology Colloquium: Weathering the Middle Ages – Bioarchaeological Research in Southern Germany. Sabin G28. 3:30 p.m. Leslie Williams, Beloit College.


Planetarium Show: Constellations of the Zodiac. Manfred Olson Planetarium. Shows run Fridays at 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. through December 14 (no 8:15 p.m. show Dec. 7). Family-friendly. Tickets are $5 ($4 for UWM students). https://bit.ly/2PybcCy

December 2
Kingship and Compassion: The Paradox of Jayavarman VII, Emperor of Angkor. Sabin G90. 3 p.m. Alan L. Kolata, University of Chicago discusses the Angkorean Empire. Sponsored by the Arachaeological Institute of America, Milwaukee Society; the departments of Anthropology and Art History; and the Classics program. http://aia-milwaukee.uwm.edu/

December 6
Geosciences Colloquium: GIS and Other Technologies; What they (and I) can do for your Research. Lapham N101. 4 p.m. Brett Ketter, UWM.

December 7
Geography Colloquium: Are high capacity wells mitigating or intensifying climate change effects of stream baseflow in the state of Wisconsin? A case study 1984-2017. AGS Library. 3 p.m. Susan Borchardt, UWM.

December 8
Italian Consul General Visits UWM Italian Program. AGS Library. 2:30 p.m. Italian Consul General will visit the UWM Italian program, followed by informal conversation and refreshments.
Children’s biographies

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But, she adds, writers have to use rhetoric to inspire that action in their readers. It turns out that children’s biographies have found ways to do just that.

Many times, VanderHaagen says, books will ask young readers to envision themselves in Wheatley or Truth or Chisholm’s shoes – “Could you imagine doing such a thing?” is a common question. Many books list questions to think about at the end of each chapter.

“In others, it’s subtler. A lot of these texts have a concluding paragraph or chapter called something like, the “The legacy of…”’’ VanderHaagen said. “It will tell you about how there was a Mars rover named after Sojourner Truth. There was a stamp for her and there’s a giant statue of her in Battle Creek, Michigan – all of those kinds of commemorative things. They do that to demonstrate that these people are worthy of remembrance.

“Sometimes they’ll go beyond that and say, ‘How do we remember these people rightly?’ We remember them rightly by continuing their work. How could you continue to do the kind of work that they did?”

Those direct invitations to action are encouraging children to think about their own agency and ability to impact the world around them, VanderHaagen argues. Though, these books are not without fault; she notes that some promote a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” message that ignores the societal support that made many of these women’s achievements possible.

That is why children’s biographies are important to study, she added. Biographies are important vehicles to convey history, and that’s especially pertinent as America grapples with what society wants to remember and forget – whether cities should tear down Confederate monuments, for example, or who appears in textbooks.

“I think it’s important to understand the tools that we sometimes overlook that can help us to make change,” VanderHaagen said. “This is why I wanted to look at biographies about African American women. … I think it’s important to see how these texts can be used positively and negatively to think about what is the best way in which we can use biographies.”
Kimberly Blaeser (English) read from her works at the New York University Gallatin Writing Program’s closing event for the Kimmel Widows Gallery’s exhibit featuring excerpts from Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology, in November. https://bit.ly/2D2fZJT

Does a smile or a sad face earn more charity dollars? That depends on whether you’re already inclined to give, Xiaoxia Cao (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) said on Philanthropy Daily. https://bit.ly/2F0Pruy


Hong Min Park (Political Science) shed some light on election fundraising in a Marquette Wire article. https://bit.ly/2OiOkWn

When a leaked memo suggested President Trump’s administration was working to define sex as “either male or female” determined by a person’s “genitals at birth,” Cary Costello (Sociology) told The Guardian that such a move seeks to invalidate the progress of intersex individuals. (https://bit.ly/2zfe7Jn) Costello also sent out a call-to-action in a PAPER article exploring how transgender and intersex people would be effected by any federal policy to define sex and gender. (https://bit.ly/2JuLexz)

Neal Pease (History) delivered the keynote address at the Valdosta State University Department of History’s 100 Lat Conference, “Celebrating the Centennial of Poland’s Rebirth as a Sovereign Nation and American-Polish Diplomatic Relations,” on Nov. 9.

NPR called on Krista Lisdahl (Psychology) to critique a recent study suggesting that abstaining from marijuana improves teens’ memory capabilities. The segment was aired on more than 75 radio stations around the nation. https://n.pr/2AzFsYz

Kathy Dolan (Political Science) was quoted in articles that appeared on Vox (https://bit.ly/2OZW58E) and Inquistr (https://bit.ly/2qlpyeA), who wanted her take on what high numbers of early voters might indicate for the mid-term election outcome.

Tri-County News reviewed Liam Callanan’s (English) latest novel, Paris By the Book. https://bit.ly/2CV34IQ

A study conducted by the Center for Economic Development determined that the JobLines bus route was a great success for connecting employees to job opportunities, Urban Milwaukee reported in an article regarding the Milwaukee County Board’s decision to save the route. https://bit.ly/2QdeOKH

Smoke from wildfires raging in California made its way to Wisconsin via the Jetstream, according to graduate students James Ryan and Teresa Turner (Atmospheric Science) on Fox6 News. https://bit.ly/2PunorS

Amanda Seligman (History) appeared at the Chicago Humanities Festival in Chicago’s South Shore neighborhood. The festival sponsored an event exploring the history of Chicago’s block clubs. (https://bit.ly/2qxNCej) She was also quoted in a Chicago Magazine article (https://bit.ly/2qXaPa7) for her take on the signs that became the hallmarks of such block clubs. Seligman is the author of Chicago’s Block Clubs: How Neighbors Shape the City.

Amanda Seligman

Bettina Arnold (Anthropology) presented the inaugural Ann Santen Endowed Lecture at the Archaeological Institute of America Cincinnati chapter on Nov. 7.

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Title VI grant

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Support for students

In addition to funding education efforts, the Title VI grant will provide monies for 10 Foreign Language Area Studies fellowships each year. Allocated for undergraduate students who are taking one of a handful of Less Commonly-Taught Languages – including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian – FLAS awards give students up to $10,000 for tuition and fees and another $5,000 to cover living expenses. The grant also provides up to $7,500 for five summer intensive language awards.

Some students will use this money to study abroad, Booth said, while other students stay on home soil to take language classes they might not otherwise be able to.

“A lot of these students want to go into the world and be language teachers or work for the U.S. State Department, and they have really diverse goals. In a resource-deprived environment, this really helps them,” Booth said.

The job outlook for polyglots is bright; Booth points to increasing foreign investment into the U.S. economy leading to larger demand for culturally and linguistically competent workers. And, he added, the public and nonprofit sectors are always looking for language experts in those less commonly-taught languages.

Tools for a global society

Language and culture education has always been critical, but as debate rages about America’s place in the world and about its immigration policies, it’s especially necessary today, Sugiyama says.

“As an educator, I will always value the idea that if you have more information, you can be a better consumer of the rhetoric taking place in this highly-charged political climate,” she said. “That’s our role: To give our students, faculty, community partners, and the public at large, the knowledge they need to sift through the language that’s taking place at the national stage.”

Thanks to Title VI, both CLACS and CIE will be able to continue doing just that.

Media mentions

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Too many of today’s cop dramas problematically feature a white protagonist bravely taking on his superiors, who include women and people of color, in a battle against political correctness, graduate student Elizabeth Hoover (English) argued in a column for the Washington Post. https://wapo.st/2STztVN


Nov. 14 marked GIS Day across the world, and Donna Genzmer (Geography) was a guest on Wisconsin Public Radio to talk about the technology and all it can do. https://www.wpr.org/listen/1358616


Asking a professor for a letter of recommendation after you’ve graduated can be tricky, but student Taylor Strickland (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) provided some tips in a HerCampus.com article. https://bit.ly/2QaClPp

Letters & Science graphic designer Milo Miller (College Relations) spoke to Our Lives Madison about the Queer Zine Archive Project, which he co-founded and runs with partner Chris Wilde. https://bit.ly/2Tsu6e

Title VI grant money provides funding for CLACS and CIE to encourage global thinking, especially as the U.S. grapples with its relationships with countries like Cuba, where several UWM classes have traveled in the past.
Laurels, Accolades, and Grants

Graduate students Bretta Speck, Rachel Giglio and Shashini Welmillage (all Biological Sciences) each won best poster/best talk awards at the sixth annual Riveredge Nature Center's Student Research Symposium. Students from seven Wisconsin universities (UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Platteville, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Whitewater, Marquette and MSOE) participated in the symposium, and UWM associate professor of Biology Gerlinde Höbel gave the keynote presentation.

Jessie Garcia Marble (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) won a “Battle of the Pitches” contest as part of the Milwaukee Film Fest. She had five minutes to tell a panel of three judges about her documentary, “Leaps and Bounds: The Men Who Changed Track and Field.” The first-place prize awarded her $1,000 towards the completion of the documentary.

Dave Edwards (WUWM) has been awarded the 2018 U:SA Madison Hodges Innovator Award for Public Media Advancement. This national award reflects the organization’s mission to “strengthen the public media system through improving the relationship between broadcasters and their licensees to help the station/licensee transition to success.” The award recognizes the individual’s attempts to make a greater impact in their communities and their profession as a public media professional. Edwards has announced he will retire as the general manager of WUWM in 2019.

Anita Alkhas (French, Italian, and Comparative Literature) was nominated by the Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers (WAFLT) as the Wisconsin representative at the state level for the Teacher of the Year program sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. She will represent Wisconsin at the regional level selection at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Milwaukee in March 2019. Alkhas was recognized for her passion for the French language, her desire to support educators and learning, and her services to the WAFLT.

Shinji Takahashi (Foreign Languages and Literature) received a Recognition of Merit award for excellence in teaching and contributions to the language teaching profession at the annual conference of the Wisconsin Association for Foreign Language Teachers.

Cary Costello’s (Sociology) blog, The Intersex Roadshow, was selected as a Noted LGBTQ+ Studies Website that will be archived by the Library of Congress so that it is available in perpetuity, as digital platforms and technologies change. This is a great honor and recognition for Dr. Costello’s public engagement with sociological topics.

Passings

Bruce Winter (WUWM) passed away in November. The long-time program director and on-air voice at WUWM-FM (89.7) was 64.

Winter began his tenure at WUWM when he was still a student at the university and majoring in Mass Communications. After taking a brief break from the station upon graduation in 1975, he began work as an operations manager and was named program director in 1986, a position he held for the next 32 years.

During his career, Winter did everything from news to hosting classical music shows. His colleagues remember him as a driving force at the station and Milwaukee will remember his signature voice for years to come. A full obituary is available at https://bit.ly/2FzwX4z.
Alumni Accomplishments

Joseph E. Kerschner (’87, BS Biology) has been named the chair-elect of the board of directors of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Kerschner began his one-year term on Nov. 6 and will become the chair at the end of the year. He currently serves as the dean of the school of medicine and executive vice president of the Medical College of Wisconsin. [Link]

David Michael Williams (’01, BA English) recently released his second novel, If Sin Dwells Deep. The book is a parallel novel to his debut work, If Souls Can Sleep, and tells the story of Allison, a mild-mannered woman by day and a rebellious goddess when she dreams at night. [Link]

Derrick Harriell (’03, BA; ’12, PhD English) was awarded a Mississippi Arts Commission Fellowship of $5,000. Harriell is the director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at the University of Mississippi and a professor of English and African American studies. The award will allow him to continue work on his latest collection of poetry. [Link]

Michael O’Neill (’81, BA Psychology) recently co-authored a new book called The Healthy Workplace Nudge, which draws on research that claims employers need to overhaul employee wellness programs to become proactive, rather than reactive, when it comes to chronic health conditions like diabetes or obesity. O’Neill is the director of workplace research and workplace strategy at Haworth Inc. [Link]

Katherine Wilson (’13, PhD English) is the executive director for the Frank P. Zeidler Center for Public Discussion and has helped to do the seemingly impossible in today’s charged political climate: foster civil, meaningful dialogue between Wisconsinites on both sides of the political spectrum. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published an article examining “Across the Red & Blue Divide,” a series of dialogues coordinated in part by the Zeidler Center. [Link]

John Koker (’90, PhD Mathematics) was named provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He was previously the dean of the College of Letters and Science at UW-Oshkosh. [Link]

Melissa Sears (’17, BA Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) joined Rhea + Kaiser as a Media Assistant. She will be responsible for generating media orders, gathering media kits, and other associated duties. [Link]

Christopher Gartman (’06, BA Political Science) joined the litigation and dispute resolution group of the law firm of Miller Canfield. He was previously the assistant head brewer at The Five Points Brewing Company in London. [Link]

Stand Up Science

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“It was different being in a comedy club atmosphere. It was very casual and welcoming, but I just didn’t know what kind of reaction to expect from the audience,” Frick said. “They're coming for a comedy show and I'm going to be talking about Alzheimer's Disease, which is a little bit of a downer.”

Downer or not, the audience enjoyed the show; the crowd stayed for a Q&A session and peppered both professors with questions about their work. “It may have inspired people to read something or go to a museum, or just to think about history in a different way,” Wiesner-Hanks said. “That would be great.”

She and Frick enjoyed connecting with the Milwaukee community in a new way.

“People don’t have a good sense that research is happening here. … But (our research) is exciting; it’s federally-funded, and it’s really important,” Frick said. “It was a great opportunity for Merry and I to be able to go out into the community and reach even a relatively small group of people to say, yeah, cool stuff is going on here.”

Stand Up Science has left the city, but Mauss, encouraged by the success of the show’s test run, plans to embark on a national tour, and he might just plan another stop in Milwaukee. Mauss himself will be back in the city for a New Year’s Eve show featuring some science and philosophy, all about humanity’s search for meaning in life. Visit [Link] for details.
Gathering Places project

While they record the usual dates, prominent figures, and stories, Cantwell also tasked his students with studying each house of worship’s “lived religion.”

“[They’re] looking at religion as to how it’s practiced, rather than as what a minister might say. If they pay attention, that should unveil some surprising things,” Cantwell said.

For example, St. Casimir is one of the oldest Polish Catholic churches in the city, but it’s been folded into another parish due to dwindling attendance – except when it comes to the popular parish festival, which is held yearly at the historic Falcon Bowl.

“You wouldn’t think about writing about a bowling league would be part of religion, but that is just as much as part of religion as a Sunday Mass for that community,” Cantwell said.

In addition to visiting community events and interviewing members of each congregation, the students had to do some old-fashioned legwork to track down church records.

“We spent multiple days in the Milwaukee County Historical Society archives looking at old photographs, maps, and even correspondence between city officials and a group of church members that organized to try to save the church from demolition,” Bartelt said.

Then too, students are challenged to place each congregation’s story within the greater arc of American history. The Polish congregation of St. Casimir, for example, is a direct reflection of shifting immigration patterns in the 1800s as more Eastern Europeans began striking out for America.

“They’re able to situate these histories within immigration, within urban renewal, within white flight,” Cantwell said.

The education has been invaluable for Bartelt and his classmates.

“I have a greater understanding of what an incredibly rich resource the stories of everyday people can be,” he said. “Everyone was impacted by the events of history in unique ways, and this class allowed me to sit down and hear some stories that my partner and I were privileged enough to get to share with more people through our class project.”

It’s important to compile these stories in one place because the history of its religious institutions is integral to the history of Milwaukee, Cantwell said. And he’s only getting started.

“Every time I teach this class, we’ll have new material to engage with and new stories to tell,” he added. “I want this project to contribute to our ongoing understanding of the community. They’re doing interviews with people right now so that there are resources to tell these stories later on, and they’re not overlooked or forgotten.”

The Gathering Places project website features an interactive map, photographs, recordings, and interviews surrounding seven of Milwaukee’s religious communities.
Undergraduate research  
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Plenty of support

The Office of Undergraduate Research coordinates a long list of programs that include opportunities as early as the summer before a student begins at UWM. The office also provides funding — in 2017-18, it gave out 659 awards that totaled more than $900,000.

Multiple programs at UWM support undergraduate research:

• In the Support for Undergraduate Research Fellows program, students and faculty work together to write up a proposal for research, which can be funded for up to $2,000 per semester. So far this academic year, SURF is funding 258 students, with more to be added in spring and summer.

• The UR@UWM program offers the opportunity for incoming freshmen and transfer students to work as research assistants in the summer before beginning school. Many students cite the program as the reason they came to UWM, and many continue that research throughout their college careers.

• First- and second-year students are paired with faculty mentors and participate in weekly seminars in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

• High-achieving first-year students can participate in the Course Based Research Projects program, in which they take part in small, research-focused seminars.

• Senior Excellence in Research Awards funds seniors who have been significantly involved in research with $5,000 in support for their final undergrad year.

• The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement program, a federally funded TRIO program run out of the graduate school, is designed to increase the number of students from underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation backgrounds who enter graduate studies leading to the doctorate. The program is open to juniors and seniors, and it offers a paid research internship.

In addition, UWM provides funding for research overseas and for travel to conferences to present research. Also, undergrads can present their work at an annual symposium on campus, the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, the UW System Symposium, and the Research at the Rotunda event at the Wisconsin Capitol.

Research benefits students

UWM’s focus on research from the very start of a college student’s career pays dividends, Esguerra said.

“Undergraduate research is important because it provides the opportunity for undergraduate students to apprentice with their faculty, who are investigating questions that matter in their discipline,” Esguerra said. “Working closely with a research mentor and their team allows the student to hone problem-solving and critical thinking skills, learn relevant methods and techniques, and practice synthesizing information.”

“UW-Milwaukee is pleased to be recognized as a leader in undergraduate research,” Chancellor Mark Mone said. “Our undergraduates have the opportunity to make a difference right now by working side-by-side with our faculty on some of the toughest problems facing our community and our world. These experiences help students develop the critical-thinking and analytical skills desired by major employers.”
Newman named Television Academy Foundation Fellow

Michael Newman, Journalism, Advertising, & Media Studies professor and department chair, went Hollywood the week of Nov. 5-9 as a newly named Television Academy Foundation fellow. Television Academy members name just 25 fellows per year to participate in their prestigious Faculty Seminar Program.

During the weeklong seminar in California, Newman attended panel discussions with broadcast and cable networks' programming and scheduling executives, legal experts and cutting-edge content creators. Also included on the seminar itinerary were private studio tours and trips to top Hollywood production facilities to meet with producers, observe productions and get firsthand updates on the latest in television technologies.

Newman has written several books about American media and popular culture, including Indie: An American Film Culture, Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status (co-authored with Elana Levine, UWM JAMS professor), Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium and Atari Age: The Emergence of Video Games in America.

“I’m was excited to learn from insiders in the television industry in LA about how media is made today amidst so many rapid changes in technology and audience behavior,” said Newman. “I will take this knowledge back home to UWM to share insights with my Introduction to Mass Media class that are timely and direct from the source.”

Check us out on Instagram!

You can follow us at @UWMLetSci to catch photos of your friends, favorite professors, and the occasional turkey. Plus, we like to showcase our faculty students with #TakeoverTuesdays, as well as throw in helpful reminders about scholarship and registration deadlines.

Tag us in your photos, too! We’d love to hear from you.