

# WESTERNCONNECT

THE ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE | A publication for alumni & friends of Western Technical College



*(Standing left to right) Jason Lewis, Chad Hofslie, Cody Bork, (seated) Casey Eglinton  
Diesel & Heavy Equipment Instructors  
See story on page 4!*

# Greetings, Western Alumni & Friends!

Oh summer, where have you gone? It's hard to believe that fall classes have already started! The campus is bustling with new and returning students, all ready to take on their class schedules and get one step closer to graduation. We're excited to see so many smiling faces, and the energy from these eager students is electric!

This edition of *Western Connect* highlights some of our summer activities and showcases what's on the horizon for Western.

Continue sharing your success stories with us! Your experiences inspire current students and fuel excitement for their future.

We sincerely hope you all had a fantastic summer and are looking forward to fall as much as we are!



Stephanie Knutson  
Alumni Relations Coordinator



Stephanie Knutson

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*Western Connect* is published twice a year for alumni and friends of Western Technical College.

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## Welcome to the Alumni Association Board



The Alumni Association Board is excited to introduce our newest member. Join us in welcoming **Alyssa Deneen '18** to the Alumni Association Board. We are thrilled to have Alyssa on board to help us strengthen relationships and drive the College's mission forward.

"I am pleased to be aboard! I grew up in rural southeast Minnesota and graduated from Caledonia High School in 2013. I moved to La Crescent to attend Western Technical College, and in 2018 I graduated with an Associate Degree in Culinary Management. I've held various culinary positions since college—from being a chef to managing a local bakery. However, I've recently decided to focus less on work and more on achieving my goals, such as starting my own bakery or a food truck.

In my free time, I enjoy writing, drawing, and other forms of art. I also love swimming, hiking, camping, and barbecuing. I've been craving a fresh perspective on my field of study, and I believe helping students and alumni with my unique skills will bring me much fulfillment. I sincerely look forward to meeting and getting to know everyone."



### Connect opt-in

In a world where costs seem to only keep rising, we are asking our audience if you prefer to receive an online version of the *Western Connect* or continue receiving the printed version.

Your feedback is very important to us! Please visit: [www.westerntc.edu/connect](http://www.westerntc.edu/connect) to let us know your preference.



## Meet Courtney Chambers: Western's Inspiring Student Ambassador

We're thrilled to introduce **Courtney Chambers**, from La Crosse, as Western Technical College's Student Ambassador for the 2024–25 academic year. As a dedicated Human Services student set to graduate this December, Courtney embodies the spirit of Western, showcasing resilience, passion, and a commitment to making a difference.

As our Student Ambassador, Courtney has the unique opportunity to share her journey with prospective students, community leaders, and various organizations, highlighting the vital role that technical and occupational education plays in our society. She'll also be representing Western at the state level, collaborating with other student ambassadors across the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

Courtney chose Western because of the incredible support systems that help students thrive, and she firmly believes that these resources have paved the way for her future success. "Western has truly been a home for me," she says. "I feel comfortable asking questions and reaching out when I need help. The support I've received through PALS, Access Services, the SPACE, and my Human Services instructors has been amazing.

It's reassuring to know that my hard work is recognized, and I'm deeply grateful to Western for this opportunity."

When she's not studying, Courtney is busy giving back to the community. She's actively involved with Western's on-campus food pantry, the Cavalier Cupboard, and works with The Bridge, a youth program at United Methodist Church in La Crescent. Additionally, she's a member of the Black History Committee at Western and serves as Vice President of the Human Services Club.

"Respect is a core value of mine," Courtney shares. "I was raised to treat everyone with kindness, regardless of where they come from or what their background is."

**AJ Clauss**, Western's Equity and Inclusion Leader, couldn't be more proud. "Courtney is the essence of Western," AJ says. "She has faced and overcome so many challenges with an unwavering belief in herself and humanity. She stands up against injustice while inviting others into meaningful conversations. This ambassadorship is a well-deserved platform for Courtney to shine, and the world is ready for her light."

After graduation, Courtney plans to enter the workforce, continuing her journey of service and leadership. In her spare time, she enjoys volunteering with the youth ministry at Onalaska Church of Christ.



*Courtney Chambers*  
Western's 2024–2025 Student Ambassador

## Western Honors Cheryl Brenengen as 2024 Distinguished Alumnus



*Cheryl Brenengen*  
2024 Distinguished Alumnus

The Western Alumni Association is proud to announce **Cheryl Brenengen** as the recipient of the 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award. A dedicated community member and former registered nurse, Cheryl has made significant contributions to the La Crosse area through her leadership, philanthropy, and volunteer work.

Cheryl graduated from Western in 1971 with a Practical Nursing diploma and later in 1986 with an Associate Degree in Nursing. Her career included roles at both Mayo Clinic Health System and Gundersen Health System. Beyond her professional achievements, Cheryl has been a driving force in establishing a Boys and Girls Club in West Salem and continues to play an active role in various local organizations.

Reflecting on her journey, Cheryl emphasizes the enduring value of education: "No matter when one decides to further their education, once accomplished, it can never be taken away. When we build on it with determination and our unique life experiences, there is nothing we can't achieve."

An advocate for Western, Cheryl is grateful for her educational experiences and continues to support career and technical education opportunities for students in the region and beyond.

"Cheryl's dedication to the community and her passion for Western make her an outstanding representative of our alumni," said **Stephanie Knutson**, Alumni Relations Coordinator at Western. "We are thrilled to honor her with this award."

# More Than Mechanics: The Heart of Western Diesel Program

At Western, the Diesel and Heavy Equipment program is about more than just engines and transmissions; it's a community where students and instructors form bonds that last a lifetime. Guided by dedicated educators like **Casey Eglinton '94** and his fellow instructors—**Cody Bork '15**, **Jason Lewis '95**, and **Chad Hofslie '89**, '18—this program thrives on inclusivity, collaboration, and a full commitment to supporting one another.

For the Diesel team, teaching isn't just about sharing knowledge; it's about creating an environment where every student feels valued. "We're all on the same team here," Casey says. "Our goal is for students to learn, have fun, make friends, and leave this program ready to contribute to the world." This approach is rooted in enthusiasm and mutual respect. Casey learned early on that positive energy and encouragement go much further than a heavy hand. The influence of mentors like **Duane Yachwak**, who emphasized treating students as people first, continues to guide the entire team. The strength of this philosophy comes from a united front of instructors who each bring their own expertise and passion to the program.

The success of the Diesel program is a testament to the collective efforts of all its instructors. "We've got Cody on engines, Jason on powertrains, Chad on heavy equipment, and me, Casey, on electrical," Casey says. "Together, we make a great team, and we are very, very good at what we do." But it's not just about technical expertise. Casey, Cody, Jason, and Chad have cultivated a culture where students feel—and actually are—integral. "We don't show up with our work uniforms perfectly pressed or our pocket protectors full of pens," Casey jokes. "We're not perfect, but we know what our students need to succeed—and we strive to give them that every day."

In the Diesel and Heavy Equipment program, teaching goes far beyond the classroom. The instructors are deeply connected to their students, and instinctively notice when something's off. This daily interaction builds an environment where learning isn't just about acquiring knowledge—it's about belonging—and how these factors are linked to each other. When fellow instructor Cody Bork was a Diesel student, he noticed that his instructor at the time, Casey, was struggling



*Instructor Casey Eglinton with a Diesel and Heavy Equipment student.*

with personal issues and reached out to offer help. It reflected the culture they had built together—one where everyone looks out for each other. This kind of mutual care and openness is what makes the Diesel program so special.

Success in the Diesel program isn't just about mastering technical skills; it's about problem-solving, critical thinking, and being a reliable team player. Every instructor emphasizes starting with the basics—learning by the book—and then developing your own methods as you gain experience. But beyond these technical skills, the program instills values of cooperation and respect—qualities just as vital in the workshop as they are in life. It's this blend of expertise and personal growth that prepares students for success in the industry.

The culture in the Diesel program is one of camaraderie, inclusivity, and genuine care. From day one, students are encouraged

to be themselves, share their struggles, and support one another. "You might be sitting next to your new best friend," Casey tells his students. And for many, that's

exactly what happens. These connections often extend beyond graduation. Former students attend each other's weddings, become godparents, and remain close long after they leave Western. "We're not classmates, we're family," says former student **Corey Clark '08**, '11, capturing the program's spirit of unity.

The relationships formed in the Diesel program have a lasting impact, providing students with confidence and support throughout their lives. One example is **Gage Guillaume '22**, a former student who went above and beyond to help a current student in crisis. When a current student, found herself dealing with frozen pipes under her trailer home during a brutal cold snap, she was overwhelmed. Not knowing what to do, she mentioned it to one of the instructors. That's when Gage, who owns and operates G&S Equipment in Black River Falls,

***"Our goal is for students to learn, have fun, make friends, and leave ready to contribute to the world."  
— Casey Eglinton***

WI, stepped in. He didn't hesitate to offer his help. Gage drove out to her home, equipped with heaters, insulation, and the know-how to get the job done.

But Gage didn't stop there. After thawing the pipes and wrapping them with heat tape to prevent future freezing, he noticed that the student in need and her kids needed more than just a quick fix. He went out of his way to pick up groceries and supplies to make sure they had everything they needed to get through the cold spell comfortably. Gage's generosity and care were a lifeline for her, showing just how strong the bonds formed in the Diesel program can be.

This sense of community extends well beyond the classroom. Graduates often become active members of local organizations, like volunteer firefighters or Lions Club members. The Diesel instructors lead by example, showing students the importance of giving back. Western's Diesel program is more than just an education; it's a crucial part of the local community. The program acts as a "graduate mill," producing professionals who are not only technically proficient but also deeply connected to their community. One student working at Allstate Peterbilt in West Salem found that everyone in the shop had either been a Western Diesel student or worked with one of the instructors. This network of alumni continues to support and uplift each other long after they've left the classroom.

The Diesel program's impact is further amplified by support from the Foundation and scholarships, which are essential for many students. Initiatives like the Cavalier Cupboard ensure that no student must choose between their education and a meal.

The story of Gage Guillaume, stepping up to help a fellow student in need is just one example of the generosity and care that define this program. Truth is, it's one of many stories that highlight the power of this close-knit community. "I truly believe that nine out of ten students in this program would do the same if asked," Casey says. It's stories like these that illustrate the deep bonds and sense of responsibility that make Western's Diesel program more than just a place to learn—it's a place to belong.



*Diesel and Heavy Equipment student*

## Donation Opportunity

### Diesel Bay Campaign:

The Western Technical College Truck and Heavy Equipment Facility offers a unique corporate marketing opportunity to attract future diesel and heavy equipment technician employees.

We invite you to sponsor a bay where your name or logo will be proudly displayed on the exterior of one of the bays where students, staff, and community members will then refer to your company when speaking about the bay. The interior of the area will display your logo and any information you would like shared with potential employees and the public, such as internship opportunities, employment openings or company values for 10 years!

## LEARN MORE

To learn more about this naming bay opportunity, please reach out to the Western Technical College Foundation @ 608.785.9487 or [foundation@western.tc.edu](mailto:foundation@western.tc.edu)



# Western Scholarship Golf Outing

What an amazing event we had! We are deeply grateful to all our participants and sponsors of this SOLD-OUT event. Each year, the Alumni Association hosts this event to raise money for student scholarships, and each year it's a roaring success thanks to the continued support from community organizations, alumni, and friends of Western.

With deepest gratitude, we sincerely thank our primary sponsors and team sponsors. This event would not be a success without you!

Please save the date for next year's event, which will be held on May 21, 2025, at Cedar Creek Country Club in Onalaska, WI.

Thank you



## Primary Sponsors



## Hole and Team Sponsors:

Bossard Park Ltd., Chart Energy & Chemicals, Inc., Cleary Management, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Driftless Recovery Services, Fowler & Hammer, Inc., Gillespie & Associates, ISG, Johns, Flaherty & Collins, SC, Merchant's Bank-Winona, Performance Foodservice, ServiceMaster Commercial Cleaning, The Wedding Tree, UMR, Wieser Brothers General Contractor, Inc., Winona Nursery



May 21, 2025  
Cedar Creek Country Club, Onalaska, WI

# Congratulations, Western Graduates!

Congratulations to all April graduates and welcome to the Alumni Association!  
As a Western alum, you have access to several benefits, including career resources,  
shopping discounts, athletic event admission, and more!

We are so proud of your accomplishments and look forward to seeing you succeed in  
your chosen careers. Please keep us updated on your future successes!



Visit [www.westerntc.edu/services-and-benefits](http://www.westerntc.edu/services-and-benefits) to learn more.

# Western's Cavalier Cupboard Celebrates 10 Years in Operation



We've really worked on letting everyone know this space is for everyone."

The items available at the Cavalier Cupboard have changed as well. Throughout the years, the cupboard has added the ability to offer frozen meals, perishable food, and personal hygiene products.

Berry leads a team of three student workers, who collect 350-500 pounds of food each week from the Hunger Task Force in La Crosse, which supplies 120 food banks in the region. Each week, the students stock the pantry, ensuring each student has equal access to essential items.

*"I have learned to be open-minded when it comes to other people. I now understand that people might be going through something and need support. You can access this pantry, and we have enough for everyone."  
— Seth Eriscon-Huneck, a student worker*

The need for this food continues to rise. A 2023-24 report from the Cavalier Cupboard showed the total amount served rose to 3,682, an increase from 2,299 the year prior. In total, 389 households and individuals were served by the pantry. When the pantry began, the total amount served was 727.

Much of that increase comes from reducing the stigma around food insecurity.

"I've worked to help students understand if we can help welcome people with a coffee, sit down with us, before signing up it seems less of a transaction," says Berry. "It becomes a welcoming environment, and we naturally guide them through the process."

In just 10 years, the Cavalier Cupboard has come a long way, but more work is needed to continue to expand the features of the cupboard and to further reduce equity gaps.

One very special spot at Western is celebrating a big milestone in the fall of 2024. The on-campus food pantry, the **Cavalier Cupboard**, is turning 10 years old!

Back in 2014, the cupboard was launched by a student who recognized the need to provide food for students. Since that time, it has transformed several times, including location changes, sign up processes, and the items they offer.

Food insecurity remains one of the bedrock basic needs for Western students. According to national figures from the United States Department of Education, 23 percent of college students faced food insecurity in 2023. At Western, nearly 40 percent of students had experienced food insecurity in the past month, according to a similar survey. Without food, experts say, learning becomes nearly impossible.

Throughout its history, the Cavalier Cupboard has shifted to meet growing needs and to accommodate the most students. In 2021, the cupboard moved from the second floor of the Integrated Technology Center to the Learning Commons, to centralize the service on campus. The process to access the pantry has also changed. Once a student activates their ID card at the **Student Place of Action, Culture, and Engagement (the SPACE)**, they can reach the cupboard whenever the Learning Commons is open.

"Students feel like they're being looked at if they need food. They wouldn't access it all the time," says **Mitch Berry**, Student Inclusion Specialist at Western. "You just have to be a Western student. There are no restrictions.



**389**  
households and  
individuals served in  
2023-2024



# The Enduring Spirit of Partnership at Western Technical College

At Western, the graphic design classroom is where creativity meets real-world impact. Under instructor **James Bushman's** guidance, students engage in Community-Based Learning (CBL), blending academic rigor with meaningful community contributions.

This past spring, Westby EMS, a local volunteer emergency service, sought a new logo. For Bushman's students, it was more than just an assignment; it was a chance to apply their skills to a project with real-world significance.



"Community-based learning offers invaluable experience for students while nonprofits and small businesses benefit from their talents," Bushman explains. **Kevin Dean**, Western Health and Public Safety Dean and Chief of Westby EMS, adds, "Our volunteer force thrives on community support, so partnering with students felt natural."

**Emma Moseley**, a Digital Media Production student, embraced the challenge. After discussions with Westby EMS, she developed a design that captured the essence of the organization. "Seeing the logo I created on their vehicles and uniforms was surreal," says Moseley. "Working with a real client was nerve-racking at first but became an invaluable experience."

The project provided students with hands-on experience in client communication, project management, and the iterative design process.

The impact is now visible across the community, from EMS uniforms to service vehicles.

Reflection is key to CBL, deepening students' understanding of their work's significance. "It's not just about the work," says Bushman, "It's about understanding the value of what we do for each other. Western is a true partner in making this community the best it can be."

The Westby EMS project exemplifies the power of education and community partnership. It's not just about creating a logo; it's about co-creating a future that reflects shared values and aspirations. As Moseley adds the logo to her portfolio, she reflects: "It's incredibly rewarding to see my design in action."



*"Seeing the logo I created on their vehicles and uniforms was surreal."  
— Emma Moseley*

This spirit of partnership—where compassion, collaboration, and shared purpose meet—continues to be the cornerstone of Western Technical College, shaping a vibrant and inclusive future for all.

## Western Expands Athletic Legacy with New Sports Offerings



This fall, Western is excited to introduce two new athletic programs, expanding the opportunities for student-athletes and continuing the Cavaliers' tradition of excellence. These additions are the result of extensive research and offer flexibility for students, whether they are enrolled full-time or part-time.



**Timothy Klug**  
Clay Target Head Coach

**Clay Target:** This sport will see participants competing in the USA-Clay Target League. Students can join the team regardless of their enrollment status and will have the chance to participate in weekly competitions. Additionally, there will be opportunities for individual or team practice throughout the week. The competitive season will take place each Fall, providing a new and exciting challenge for our students.

**Powerlifting:** Our powerlifting team will compete in the USA-Powerlifting League, offering students the chance to engage in competitive weightlifting. With the guidance of a dedicated coach, team members will follow structured training routines and prepare for competitions held throughout the year. Students can choose to compete or simply enjoy being part of a supportive team environment.

These new sports join Western's existing varsity offerings, including baseball, volleyball, and esports, which continue to compete at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) level. For those looking for more recreational options, Western also offers a variety of intramural sports to suit students of all abilities and schedules.



**Jordan Beenken**  
Powerlifting Head Coach

### A Legacy of Athletic Excellence

The addition of clay target and powerlifting reflects Western's ongoing commitment to providing diverse and inclusive athletic opportunities, while honoring the legacy of the Cavaliers. Since the college's first intercollegiate basketball team took to the court in 1965, Western has fostered a spirit of sportsmanship, teamwork, and perseverance. The Cavaliers' name, adopted in the mid-1960s, has become synonymous with pride and athletic achievement.

For more information about our athletic programs, visit [www.westerncavaliers.com](http://www.westerncavaliers.com).

## New Data Analytics Program and Transfer Agreement Offer Pathway to Success

Western has taken a significant step to enhance educational opportunities for students by launching a new **IT-Data and Analytics Specialist program** and establishing a transfer agreement with Viterbo University. This collaboration provides a seamless 2+2

they are asking for more employees who can manage it all," says **Josh Gamer**, dean of the Integrated Technology Division at Western. "The demand for these positions is growing, and Western is at the forefront of providing the appropriate training."

The transfer agreement with Viterbo University allows students in the program to transfer at least 47 core Data Analytics credits and 13 general studies credits into Viterbo's IT-Data Analytics program. This guarantees a clear and efficient transfer process, providing students with a cost-effective pathway to a bachelor's degree.

"The expansion of articulation agreements between Viterbo and Western benefits both institutions, but the real winners are the students," says Viterbo President Rick Trietley. "This ensures quality education remains convenient and affordable."

Western President **Roger Stanford** echoes this sentiment, stating, "This agreement is a huge win for our community. Both Western's and Viterbo's programs were launched in response to workforce demand, making this a significant boost for our region's economy."

As the demand for skilled data professionals continues to rise, Western's new IT-Data and Analytics Specialist program and the partnership with Viterbo are poised to provide students with the knowledge and credentials needed to succeed in this dynamic field. These initiatives reflect Western's commitment to offering cutting-edge education that meets the needs of both students and the local workforce.

pathway for students, enabling them to transition smoothly from Western to Viterbo, where they can further their studies in the growing field of data analytics.

The IT-Data and Analytics Specialist program starts this fall and is designed to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in a data-driven world. Students will learn to uncover data insights, build and manage databases, and craft comprehensive reports. The program also covers emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and Big Data, ensuring graduates are prepared for the evolving demands of the industry.

"Businesses and organizations continue to collect and amass large amounts of data, and



## Planned Giving

Imagine leaving a lasting mark on Western, a legacy that will inspire future generations of students and shape the college's future. By including Western Technical College in your estate plans, you can make a transformative impact that extends beyond your lifetime.

A planned gift is a powerful way to contribute to our mission and ensure that Western students continue to thrive. Whether through a bequest, charitable trust, or other estate planning options, your generosity can support scholarships, enhance facilities, and fund groundbreaking teaching.

Join us in making a difference that improves our community for years to come.

To learn more about how you can create a legacy at Western, please visit [www.westerntc.edu/legacy-giving](http://www.westerntc.edu/legacy-giving) or contact us at 608.785.9487 or [foundation@westerntc.edu](mailto:foundation@westerntc.edu)

## Western Way donations

### Looking for ways to support Western students and our community?

The Western Foundation works diligently to provide supportive funding to students as they are achieving their academic and career goals. Donating to the fund enables us to help students financially. During our last academic year, 550 students requested and were awarded some type of emergency funding. The average gift for these requests is around \$90.

Students face many unexpected challenges that hinder degree completion. We are dedicated to alleviating these financial barriers.

### The Western Way fund supports:

- tuition assistance
- childcare support
- gas & grocery gift cards
- so much more!

Consider donating!



## Moon Tunes Community Outreach While Supporting Lee Rasch

On July 25th, the **Alumni Association** attended the Moon Tunes concert at Riverside Park in La Crosse featuring a performance by **former College President Lee Rasch** and his band, The Executives. It was a perfect evening filled with great music and community togetherness. We loved

seeing so many Western employees, retirees, students, alumni, and community members come together. If you haven't experienced Moon Tunes yet, you're truly missing out! This outstanding community event, organized by the Valley View Rotary, is not to be missed.



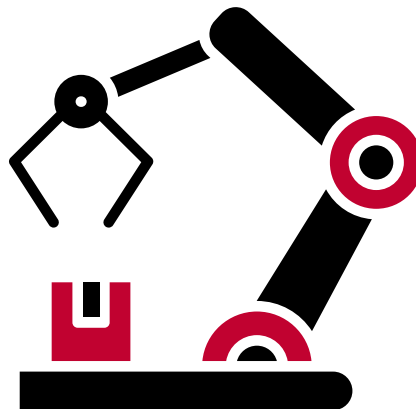
## Western Leads Statewide Initiative to Boost Manufacturing Education with \$5.75 Million Grant

In partnership with eight other colleges in the **Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)**, Western has secured a significant \$5.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. This four-year grant, part of the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants program, is set to revolutionize advanced manufacturing education across the state.

This initiative represents a crucial step in aligning education with industry demands, ensuring that future graduates are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving manufacturing sector. The grant will fund the development of embedded, short-term credentials within advanced manufacturing programs and the creation of Open Education Resources, providing students with industry-relevant, job-ready skills.

The collaboration between Western and its WTCS partners highlights the college's commitment to fostering strong ties between education and the workforce. Alumni working in manufacturing can take pride in their alma mater's role in shaping the future of the industry by providing new generations of workers with cutting-edge training.

"This grant's impact extends beyond our classrooms," adds **Josh Gamer**, dean of the Integrated Technology division. "It's about strengthening our state's manufacturing sector by aligning educational outcomes with industry needs. We're excited to lead this initiative and set a new standard for technical education."



A graduation cap with a gold tassel resting on a stack of US dollar bills. The cap is dark grey with a gold tassel. The bills are partially visible, showing the number '118' and 'SERIES 2008'.

**SCHOLARSHIP**

**Are you or someone you know planning to attend Western?**

Check out the Western Foundation scholarships:  
[www.westerntc.edu/scholarships](http://www.westerntc.edu/scholarships)

*Many are available!*

## Western Helps High School Students Save Millions on College Credits

Western's Transcribed Credit program saved students and families an impressive \$3.1 million in the 2023–24 academic year. This initiative allows high school students to earn college credits free of charge, easing the financial transition to higher education. The program has seen remarkable growth, doubling participation since 2017–18.

In total, 19,905 credits were awarded across 58 Western courses, with 32 school districts involved. "As questions about college affordability continue to rise, Transcribed Credit is growing as a cost-saving option," says **Tyler Ludeking**, K12 Relations Specialist at Western. "By partnering with schools in our district, we provide seamless transition from high school to post-secondary opportunities, equipping students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in their future endeavors."



## Western's Public Safety Team Joins Vernon County National Night Out

The fifth annual Vernon County National Night Out event took place at the Vernon County Fairgrounds with Western's Public Safety team as active participants.

National Night Out is a nationwide initiative designed to strengthen police-community partnerships and foster neighborhood camaraderie to create safer communities. This event offers Vernon County residents a unique opportunity to meet their neighbors and interact with local law enforcement, fire, and EMS officials in a relaxed and fun environment.

Western's Public Safety representatives were on hand to showcase their expertise and dedication to community and safety.



## Western Night at the La Crosse Loggers & Alumni Fundraiser

Each year, Western sponsors a night at one of the La Crosse Loggers games. This year's sponsored event was on June 10, 2024. The Alumni Association decided to use this Western-sponsored event as an additional fundraising opportunity by selling tickets, with 50 percent of the ticket sales going back to the Alumni Association to help support students. It was a perfect night for baseball, and fun was had by all! **College President Dr. Roger Stanford** threw out the first pitch. Thank you to everyone who came out to support and enjoy a great game of baseball!



## Refer a student to Western

Do you know someone looking to pursue an education? We'd love your help identifying the next generation of Cavaliers.

Refer a student by clicking "Request Info" at [www.westerntc.edu](http://www.westerntc.edu).

Indicate you're filling out the form for someone else by checking the box at the top of the form. After submitting the form, one of our admissions coaches will reach out to the student.



## Remembering Karl Friedline: Educator and Community Icon

**Karl Friedline**, who passed away on May 30, 2024, at age 94, made his mark at Western as a dedicated instructor in the TV production program in the 1980s. Karl's commitment to his students and passion for media education were evident throughout his career.

One of his former students, Kevin Millard, now a content manager at WXOW, shares, "I gained so much knowledge about video production from Karl, whether it was the weekly Media Meets broadcast or working in the Media Center. His lessons have served me well throughout my career in broadcasting."

Beyond the classroom, Karl was best known for his musical talents, particularly his iconic performances of the German National Anthem at La Crosse's Oktoberfest. His legacy as a community icon and iconic educator endures in the hearts of many.

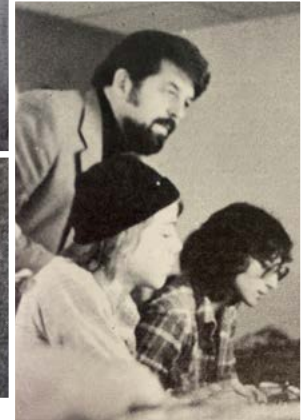
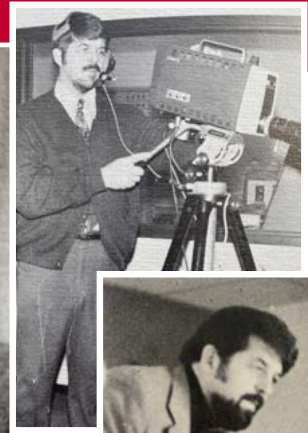


Image courtesy of House Hike Photography

**Karl Friedline and  
Gail Cleary, an  
Oktoberfest tradition,  
celebrating  
with friends.**



## Honoring Gail Cleary: A Lifelong Advocate for Education and Community

**Gail Cleary**, who passed away on July 11, 2024, at age 90, was a beloved figure in the La Crosse community and a dedicated supporter of Western. As a long-time member of the Foundation Board and a generous donor, Gail's contributions helped shape the future of the college.

Her involvement with Western was a family tradition; her father, Roy Kumm, served on the district board from 1964 to 1971, and the Health-Science building was renamed the Roy E. Kumm Center in his honor. Her mother, Hope, was the first recipient of Western's Legacy Award, and the family's generous donation in 1973 established the Foundation that continues to support the college today. Gail upheld this legacy with her contributions, recognized through the Cleary Courtyard between the Kumm Center and Lunda Center.

Gail's warmth, kindness, and passion for community service, alongside her enduring dedication to Western, will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

# In Memoriam

**Paul J. Bakke** 2/25/2024  
1978 Auto Body

**Joan M. Bendickson** 2/21/2024  
1996 Nursing

**William H. Blanchard** 12/8/2024  
2017 Business Management, 2011 Supervisory Management

**Harlan S. Bolster** 2/10/2024  
1968 Air Conditioning, Heating, & Refrigeration Tech

**Mathew L. Brasic** 5/26/2024  
1992 Nursing

**Douglas Breidel** 4/3/2024  
1971 Commercial Art

**Dawn M. Callahan** 3/12/2024  
1989 CIS Microcomputer Technician

**Boyd E. Dow** 2/16/2024  
1969 Machine Shop

**Roger Everson** 3/31/2024  
1993 Human Resource - Business Administration

**Clarence N. Forer** 10/13/2024  
1981 Marketing

**Brady L. Fredrickson** 1/18/2024  
1981 Automotive Servicing Mechanic

**Irma Fricke** 4/11/2024  
1980 Ward Clerk

**Marjorie F. Fries** 5/25/2024  
1984 Nursing - Technical

**Carol M. Hanson** 1/24/2024  
1980 Nursing - Technical

**Dennis R. Herold** 8/6/2024  
1966 Auto Mechanics

**Lori L. Horman** 3/2/2024  
1991 Nursing

**Douglas O. Hussa** 4/2/2024  
1979 Marketing

**Jeneane M. Jacobson** 4/23/2024  
1984 Medical Lab Technician

**Shirley J. Jambois** 4/12/2024  
1986 Medical Record Technician

**Gary P. Kiehne** 3/13/2024  
1977 Visual Communications

**Vernon A. Klingbeil** 3/29/2024  
1984 Welding

**Debra J. Krenzke** 1/8/2024  
1988 Finance

**Larry R. Lichtie** 5/10/2024  
1973 Electronic Servicing

**Candace L. Lund** 2/27/2024  
2004 Office Assistant

**Jane L. Maas** 4/28/2024  
1992 Medical Assistant

**Mary E. Marcou** 8/9/2024  
1987 Nursing

**Karin M. McLain** 1/22/2024  
1987 Police Science

**Rachel Muehlenkamp** 2/21/2024  
1979 Accounting

**James E. Page** 2/18/2024  
1980 Auto Body, 1984 Marketing

**Dawn E. Reisner** 1/14/2024  
1987 Accounting

**Gregory L. Schild** 8/10/2024  
1991 Marketing

**Thomas G. Schmitz** 5/17/2024  
1989 Data Processing

**Michael H. Schuldes** 5/31/2024  
1974

**James M. Schultz** 2/4/2024  
1969 Foods - Institutional

**Jerry M. Schulze** 2/6/2024  
1977 Machine Tool Operation

**Marsha J. Senn** 7/19/2024  
2002 Nursing

**Susan E. Skemp** 8/10/2024  
1967 Business Administration

**Roger J. Sorenson** 5/28/2024  
1965 Accounting

**Larry D. Soucheck** 8/11/2024  
1976 Mechanical Design Technology

**Daniel L. Stoda** 2/23/2024  
1980 Welding

**Charlotte M. Swenson** 2/9/2024  
1986 Food Service Management

**Janeen Symicek** 5/14/2024  
1973 Medical Assistant

**Alan D. Topel** 4/27/2024  
1976 Marketing

**Dean P. VanRiper** 7/6/2024  
1979 Electronic Servicing

**Elna J. Witt** 1/12/2024  
1977 Practical Nursing

**Mary C. Wood** 4/13/2024  
1994 Commercial Art

**Sylvia J. Wyland** 6/13/2024  
1986 CETA Clerk Typist

## Western Retirees & Former Employees

**Lindsay D. Garvin** 2/13/2024

**Joan Marchiando** 2/23/2024

**David W. Visser** 3/5/2024

**Robert L. Andraschko** 3/16/2024

**Margret Demgen** 7/9/2024

**Truman Everson** 7/24/2024

**George L. Findlen** 2/2/2024

**Karl Friedline** 5/30/2024

**Wilbert W. Hutchens** 2/2/2024

**Donald Lake** 1/19/2024

**David Mellem** 7/20/2024

**Thomas D. Vedell** 2/9/2024

# Fall Open House

Wednesday, October 9 | 4–7 p.m.

Design your future on your terms—check out all things Western at the annual open house. Explore the campus, learn about academic programs and financial aid assistance, scholarships, refreshments, and get a jump on the application process.

Stop by any time; join us at any of our locations:

La Crosse, Black River Falls, Independence, Mauston, Tomah, and Viroqua.

For more info, go to: [WesternTC.edu/OpenHouse](https://WesternTC.edu/OpenHouse)

Apply during the open house and the application fee is waived!

Business Science Technology

## Tell us your story!

Keep current with changes in contact information and tell us what you've been doing since graduation. New job, baby, marriage, or honor? We'll print it in an upcoming edition of *Connect*. Include your email address and the classnote will be sent to you before publishing.

Mail to: **Western Technical College, Alumni Office, 400 7th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601**

or complete online at: [westerntc.edu/stay-connected](http://westerntc.edu/stay-connected)

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
First M.I. Last

**Name at Graduation (if different)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program** \_\_\_\_\_ **Yr.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell** \_\_\_\_\_ **Landline** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Spouse** \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse is a Western Alum  Spouse program/graduation year \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional news for college publication:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** I would like to continue to receive a printed copy of the *Western Connect* newsletter.

An electronic copy is preferred.

### Western Alumni Association

Western Technical College, Alumni Office, Coleman Center Room 111  
 400 7th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601

[alumni@westerntc.edu](mailto:alumni@westerntc.edu) 608-789-6083 [westerntc.edu/alumni](http://westerntc.edu/alumni)

Join us  
for **CAVALIER PRIDE WEEK**

**SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 5**



**CELEBRATE WHAT IT MEANS  
TO BE A CAVALIER!**

We've got a week full of fun, starting with snapping a selfie at the Be Your Own Cavalier Photo Booth, snagging some seriously cool swag, and testing your speed at the Esports Cavalier Arena (Mario Kart bragging rights included). Plus, our newly updated Wellness Center is ready for you—yes, alumni, that means you too!

**PRIDE**

*Don't forget to wear your **RED** and **BLACK** on October 2 and flood social media with your **CAVALIER** pride using **#CavalierPrideWeek!***

**BE YOUR OWN CAVALIER—BECAUSE NO ONE DOES IT BETTER!**

Check out [WESTERNCAVALIERS.COM](http://WESTERNCAVALIERS.COM) for full schedule.