

# The Advance-Titan

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Courtesy of Gabrielle Kametz

Virginia Sorenson, a Milwaukee dancing group member, was one of six people killed in the Waukesha holiday parade where Darrell Brooks Jr. drove his SUV through the crowd.

## Hug your loved ones a little tighter

### Waukesha parade victim's granddaughter remembers her best friend

By Katie Pulvermacher  
pulvek45@uwosh.edu

Virigina Sorenson was holding a Milwaukee dancing group's banner in the Waukesha Christmas Parade when a man driving a SUV came barreling through the parade, killing her and five others and injuring dozens of participants and bystanders.

"I felt a lot of anger, anger that someone would do this, let alone to someone as good and pure as my grandma," said granddaughter Gabrielle Kametz, a junior at UW Oshkosh. "I never got to say goodbye. She was my best friend."

Darrell Brooks Jr. is accused of driving his SUV through the crowded streets on what was supposed to be a festive holiday night and killing Kametz's grandmother, 79-year-old Virginia "Ginny" Sorenson, 52-year-old Tamara Durand, 81-year-old Wilhelm Hospel, 71-year-old LeAnna "Lee" Owen, 52-year-old Jane Kulich and 8-year-old Jackson Sparks.

Sorenson was holding the banner for the "Milwaukee Dancing Grannies," a group she was a member of for 19 years. Original-

ly, Kametz was supposed to hold the banner, but the morning of the parade, she woke up in excruciating pain, to the point where it hurt to walk.

"My grandma said, 'Don't worry, we have backup,'" Kametz said. "I didn't know she was the backup. I was supposed to be the one that was hit technically, not her."

Kametz is majoring in nursing at UW Oshkosh and is following in her grandma's footsteps. Sorenson was a registered nurse and graduated from the Milwaukee School of Nursing.

"I wish I could've told my grandma that I was accepted into nursing school," Kametz said. "I'll become the best nurse possible in her honor. I know that's what she would want for me."

The community of Waukesha has come together to celebrate the lives of lost loved ones. The memorial at Veterans Park continues to grow with flowers, stuffed animals, lights, crosses, letters, candles and more.

"I'm so glad I live in a community with all this support," Kametz said. "It's nice having people who



Courtesy of Gabrielle Kametz

Sorenson was a member of the "Milwaukee Dancing Grannies."

care."

A GoFundMe page was started for Sorenson's memorial, which raised more than \$20,000 for the funeral and memorial arrangements. Leftover funds were passed on to her husband, David Sorenson, to "support him in the difficult times ahead."

"She didn't have a bad bone in her body," her husband told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "She loved her grandchildren."

The memorial service for Sore-

son was held at Hales Corners Lutheran Church on Dec. 4.

Kametz has a tattoo and a cross necklace made from Sorenson's ashes to honor her grandma and keep her close to her heart.

"I want people to take away the fact that life really is short," Kametz said. "As cliché as it sounds, you really don't know when your last day with someone is. Hug the people you love a little tighter next time you see them. Tell them you love them ... every single day."



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to all majors and students.



Courtesy of Kate Mann

From left, Executive Director of the Day By Day Warming Shelter Molly Yatso Butz, Public Affairs and Crime Prevention Officer Kate Mann, Outreach Specialist Maddie Conley, Operations Director Amanda Hammond and Program Director Denise Holz.

# OPD helps the homeless

By Katie Pulvermacher  
pulvek45@uwosh.edu

During the frigid winter months, it is almost impossible to think about not having a coat, winter boots or even a house with heat to fight off the cold. Homeless people are a population of people who often face the winter without these things, but this year, the Oshkosh Police Department (OPD) turned two homeless men’s lives around.

“Everyone deserves a warm place to sleep at night,” said Executive Director of the Day By Day Warming Shelter Molly Yatso Butz. “Many times, people fall on hard times and need their friends and neighbors to help pick them up and get them back on solid ground. OPD showed what good friends and neighbors we have in them.”

Early in the summer of 2021, citizens contacted OPD expressing concerns about homeless people sleeping under the bridges near the Fox River. Public Affairs and Crime Prevention Officer Kate Mann and Lt. Brian Schuldes made contact with the individuals.

In Mann’s email shared with community members, she wrote: “The gentlemen we spoke with pointed out some bags of property and said that he was watching the property while two of his friends were at work and then pointed to

a male who was sleeping and said that he just got done working third shift. The person we were talking with also told us that he works, but that he works the second shift so when he is gone, the others will watch his property.”

According to Day By Day and Butz, money, specifically paying the security deposit and first month’s rent, is the biggest issue in preventing individuals from finding somewhere to rent.

When figuring out how to get money for two men to get an apartment, Mann thought about The Police Lights of Christmas. In this program, “police officers participate in fundraising events throughout the year,” Mann said. “The donations that are raised are then used to give out citizens in need in our community.”

The OPD has participated in this program for the last several years, with officers giving out the donated funds in December.

Day By Day staff assisted in locating an apartment that would fit the two men’s needs. They ended up choosing Black Teak Properties.

In order to stay on top of finances, both men are working around 50 to 55 hours per week. The property managers at Black Teak were impressed with their efforts and offered to pay half of December’s rent. The men already have

January and February’s rent saved in the bank.

The next thing they are saving up for is a car since both of them use the bus to get back and forth to work every day.

One man had been in the shelter for a few years, and the other had been a guest since December of 2020. They became friends at the shelter since they have a lot in common. They are now both doing well and are happy with their new apartment, Butz said.

Many guests at the shelter eventually leave for housing. However, this is the first time it has been paid for by a community organization.

“The Day By Day staff was so appreciative of this opportunity for two great men who had fallen on hard times,” Butz said. “These gentlemen were working so hard at getting themselves out of shelter and living an independent life; this was the ‘springboard’ they needed to make it happen.”

The Police Lights of Christmas program has also given some of the donations to three families who were in need of assistance this year.

“It was such a great feeling knowing that OPD could assist in helping the two men get housing, especially as the cold weather was approaching,” Mann said. “It definitely was the highlight of our day, as we watched the keys to the



apartment being handed over to the two gentlemen who are now no longer homeless.”

To donate to the Police Lights of Christmas program, go to your local Community First Credit Union where there is an account set up for donations. Additional information can also be found on their Facebook page.

To donate to the Day By Day Warming Shelter, their wish list is always updated on their website at [www.warmingshelter.com](http://www.warmingshelter.com). They also have a “Boot Campaign” going on for anyone who wishes to donate money so all their guests can receive new boots on Christmas Eve.

“It truly does take a community working together to achieve amazing goals and to create long lasting positive effects on others’ lives,” Mann said. “We are so thankful to have such a supportive city.”

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MONDAY, DEC 13-SUNDAY, DEC 19, 2021 20% OFF all Incense, Sage and Candles! 20% OFF Locally-blown Glass Pipes! (18+)	MONDAY, DEC 20-FRIDAY, DEC 24, 2021 20% OFF all Blankets, Woolen Knits, & Clothing! 20% OFF all Hand Pipes & Dugouts! (18+)



# Textbook shortages expected for spring

By Amber Brockman  
brocka24@uwosh.edu

Due to disruptions in global supply chains, publishers have been reaching out to bookstores to warn of possible shortages for the spring semester.

“From labor shortages to transportation delays, to raw material scarcity, supply chains everywhere are being affected,” University Books & More Assistant Director and Course Materials Manager Nikki Stoll Olthoff said. “The paper and publishing industries are no different. There is a shortage of wood pulp used to make paper, a shortage of ink to print the pages, a shortage of operational printing presses and the staff to operate them and a shortage of truck drivers and transportation labor to get the product from point A to point B.”

University Books & More Director Thomas Wolf said they have been monitoring the supply chain situation and were already seeing supply issues with clothing, gifts and consumables in its convenience store.

“To try to mitigate the textbooks situation, we reached out to faculty and administration to urge them to submit their required textbook and supply orders earlier than normal and as soon as possible,” Wolf said. “In our position as the bookstore, our hands are tied until we receive those official orders from faculty and instructional academic staff. That is the first step.”

Wolf said they immediately started sourcing copies as they received these book requests.

“With print materials, we always try to source used copies first to save students money,” he



Amber Brockman / Advance-Titan

Due to shortages of raw materials to make physical textbooks, publishers are reaching out to bookstores to warn of plausible shortages in the upcoming spring semester.

said. “We will then purchase new from publishers to fulfill any remaining demand.”

Wolf said they are also in a better situation since they partnered with an ebook provider to offer ebooks for many courses.

“Students can purchase those ebooks directly through our website and have the ability to charge the cost to their student account just like a regular print book,” he said. “This allows students to be able to utilize their financial aid on digital [books] as well.”

As in every other industry, Stoll Olthoff said, a low supply and high demand will eventually lead to an increase in prices.

What’s different in the course

materials industry, she said, is that the publishers dictate pricing by establishing the list price of a book, whether it’s print or digital.

“Profit margins on course materials are extremely small compared to other consumer products,” she said. “Because University Books & More is institutionally owned and operated (versus a leased operation like Barnes & Noble or Follett), we have more control over our margins and will continue to keep our pricing as low as we possibly can for our students.”

The University Books & More spring book orders are arriving daily, and so far, Stoll Olthoff said, pricing from publishers has remained fairly stable.

“Average semester spending by students on course materials has actually been on a decline in recent years,” Stoll Olthoff said. “This is in part due to the increase in ebook usage and availability.”

This current supply chain issue has not necessarily changed the content that instructors are assigning, Stoll Olthoff said, and instructors that have been using courseware and access codes are continuing to use them.

“More instructors have been choosing to assign digital materials like courseware and access codes for the last few years, but that usage was trending upward long before the pandemic,” Stoll Olthoff said. “If anything, we

have noticed that more instructors are specifically indicating that they will allow students to use ebooks in addition to print.”

In addition, Wolf said, we began informing the provost and reaching out to faculty and instructional academic staff in mid-October, with the potential for shortages and the need for early adoptions of spring course materials.

Spring semester course materials are available at University Books & More starting Jan. 10, both in-store and online.

“Our advice to students is to order their course materials early for the best selection, especially if they prefer print,” Stoll Olthoff said.



Courtesy of Eli Oskey

Eli Oskey, a UW Oshkosh junior and avid hunter, shot this buck in Seymour in 2019. Oskey said despite white-tailed deer testing positive for COVID-19 in Illinois and other states, he is not worried about contracting COVID-19 from game meat.

## Deer test positive for COVID, caution urged for hunters

By Mackenzie Seymour  
seymom53@uwosh.edu

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) is encouraging people to wear masks when field dressing game during the hunting season due to recent studies discovering white-tailed deer testing positive for COVID-19 across multiple states.

While Wisconsin’s nine-day gun season is over, the bow season extends through the end of the year, and an antlerless holiday hunt goes from Dec. 24-Jan. 1.

“Close contact with an infected person is still the most likely way a person would be exposed,” the WDHS website stated. “However, we still have much to learn about white-tailed deer and SARS-CoV-2 infection, including learning what risk, if any, an infected deer may pose to hunters.”

According to several studies across the country, white-tailed deer are testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, the same virus that causes COVID-19 in humans. Studies include those by the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Iowa DNR, and a survey from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA survey discovered

COVID-19-positive deer in Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York.

“Antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 were detected in 40% of the 2021 surveillance samples. Antibodies were also detected in three samples from 2020 and one sample from 2019,” the USDA survey stated.

“Current evidence suggests that the disease has been able to spill-over from human populations to white-tailed deer,” said Lindsey Long, a wildlife veterinarian from the Wisconsin DNR. “The exact mechanism for these spill-over infections is not yet known.”

Wisconsin has not tested white-tailed deer for COVID-19, but the DNR is currently engaging with federal and state partners to participate in a multi-state study to monitor deer within the state, Long said.

As for the potential impact this has on hunting, Long said that there is no evidence of COVID-19 spreading from white-tailed deer to humans and that the risk is low.

“According to the CDC, there is no evidence that people can get COVID-19 from preparing and eating hunted game meat,” Long said. “However, hunters can get infected with many diseases when processing or eating game, and they should always practice good hygiene when processing animals.”

Eli Oskey, a UW Oshkosh junior and avid hunter, said he is not worried about contracting COVID-19 from game meat.

“Overall, I’m not really worried about wearing a mask while handling deer,” said Oskey. “I’m more worried about other diseases like chronic wasting disease (CWD) in the deer population, but when it comes to being in large groups, it is smart to wear masks.”

Even though there is currently no evidence that indicates COVID-19 is spreading from animals to humans, the CDC suggests hunters can reduce potential risks by using personal protective equipment such as a mask while field dressing deer.

“Wear a mask to reduce your risk of coming into contact with pathogens transmitted through respiratory droplets. Preparing a carcass may make aerosols (small droplets and particles in the air) which could contain the virus,” according to the CDC.

In addition to white-tailed deer, other animals have tested positive, including pets (cats, dogs and ferrets), animals in zoos and sanctuaries (big cats, otters, non-human primates and hyenas) and mink on mink farms.



Calendar



Scoreboard

**Saturday, Dec. 4**  
**Swimming and Diving**  
Men's 9/10, 508.5  
Women's 6/11, 1,034  
**Women's Basketball**  
UW Oshkosh 55  
UW-La Crosse 49  
**Men's Basketball**  
UW Oshkosh 56  
UW-La Crosse 53  
**Wrestling**  
7/17, 63

Upcoming Events

**Friday, Dec. 10**  
**Wrestling**  
at UW-Whitewater

**Saturday, Dec. 11**  
**Track and Field Invitational**  
10:30 a.m.  
**Men's Basketball**  
North Central College 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 16**  
**Wrestling**  
at University of Chicago 7:00 p.m.

**Saturday, Dec. 18**  
**Wrestling**  
at Sandusky, Ohio 9:00 a.m.

**Monday, Dec. 20**  
**Women's Basketball**  
Ripon College 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, Dec. 21**  
**Women's Basketball**  
at Lawrence University 7:00 p.m.  
**Men's Basketball**  
St. Norbert University 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, Dec. 29**  
**Women's Basketball**  
at Northfield, Minnesota 3:00 p.m.  
**Men's Basketball**  
Calvin University 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 30**  
**Women's Basketball**  
at Northfield, Minnesota 3:00 p.m.  
**Men's Basketball**  
Ripon College 7:30 p.m.



Luc Valdez 125, battles for dominance against his Pointer opponent. Luc head wrestles and attempts to control his opponents hands. April Lee / Advance-Titan

Holiday hungers for wrestlers

By Nolan Swenson  
swensonno56@uwosh.edu

For anyone unaware of wrestling and what it requires of one's eating habit, you must keep your weight within certain classes. These classes are rigid and require wrestlers to keep a close eye on what they consume in order to stay within classes and not be bumped up and go against wrestlers who could potentially weigh more. With that out of the way, could you imagine a more unfortunate time of year for wrestling to run through? Between Thanksgiving, the holidays, and being stuck inside, wrestlers have

to fight tooth and nail against their food cravings. two experienced athletes elected to talk about actions they take in order to maintain their weight in those trying times. Luc Valdez is a lightweight at the 125 pound class, which puts him on a razor's edge of gaining weight due to his off-season weight being about ten pounds over his max allotted weight for his class. When it comes to the holidays wrestlers are given a week off which is more than enough for Luc to gain excess weight. "My weight can boost to 130 or 131, if I relax for the next day and not

eat, my body does a lot of work by shedding it off naturally." He also went on to say: "people have misconceptions about college wrestlers, that we eat a lot and have a hard time maintaining weight but we're really smart about how we eat and how much we allow ourselves to gain." Junior Denis Murphy, a 133 pound wrestler for UWO, when talking about maintaining weight during holiday, he said the hardest part is, "Going back to see friends and guys who used to wrestle who now eat whatever they want, compared to being with my Oshkosh

wrestling friends. We're all on the same page which makes it way easier." When it comes to the day of celebration, he doesn't starve himself, but he does watch what he eats: "I get a big workout in on the day of, and the days after I just watch what I eat." When it comes to what almost drags him over the line of food temptation, "it has to be Politos or Nikos." These guys make walking around cake seem like a cake walk. To attend upcoming matches, you can view dates and times by accessing the UW Oshkosh Athletics page online.



Players Brooke Freitag, Leah Portah and Nikki Arnenson attempt to force their way down the court against UW-Eau Claire. April Lee / Advance-Titan

Women's basketball conference begins

By Cory Sparks  
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The UW Oshkosh women's basketball team split their first two games against conference competition this year when they fell to UW-Eau Claire 70-57 on Dec. 1 and took out UW-La Crosse 55-49 on Dec. 4. After finishing the 2020-2021 season, where UWO played only conference games and finished the regular season 6-2 before taking the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) championship, the Titans have now started this season off with a 7-2 overall record and a 1-1 conference record.

The Titans' road loss against UWEC featured a rough start, where they only scored five points in the first quarter on a 1-for-10 shooting effort from the field. UWO cleaned up its game and caught fire in the shooting department to put up 52 points in the next three quarters on 20-for-39 shooting from the field, but the comeback never happened as UWEC won every quarter of the game. Not only was this game UWO's first conference game of the year, but it was the team's first conference game with a live crowd in almost two years. Senior guard Leah Porath, who led the Titans in scoring with 14 points in the loss, said the team

was feeling some of the pressure in their first conference game. "With it being the first conference game, there definitely [were] some jitters. Playing on the road doesn't usually have an effect on us," Porath said. "In the past we've almost always played better on the road. We are still working on the flow of our offense, which is getting better each day." With the team currently being ranked No. 20 after their first conference loss, the team quickly recovered. Junior Guard Ava Douglas led the Titans in scoring with 13 points, and senior forward Nikki Arneson scored six of her 12 points in the fourth quarter while

converting on all four of her free-throws down the stretch. Despite the height mismatches at almost every position, UWO held UW-La Crosse to a mere 49 points. The only game where UWL scored less points was in their 64-48 loss against UW-Platteville on Dec. 1. Going into the home conference opener and alumni game against UWL, the defending WIAC champions were facing a tall task with a pair of 6'2 forwards, Gabby Ritchie and Kat Fitzgerald, getting minutes against the Titans' characteristic small-ball lineup. View the rest of the story online at [advancetitan.com/sports](https://advancetitan.com/sports).



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# Lohrenz runs XC leaderboard all year

By Cory Sparks  
sparkc21@uwosh.edu

After a record-breaking cross country season, Hannah Lohrenz finished 31st in the nation, and the UW Oshkosh senior ended up earning conference-wide recognition.

After representing UWO on a national level and finishing with a 21:42 time at the NCAA championship on Nov. 20, Lohrenz took home the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Cross Country Athlete of the Year.

Lohrenz also finished in third place overall at the NCAA North Regional meet with a 22:08 time and even won the WIAC Championship earlier this year.

The Hortonville native also had second place finishes at the Concordia University Wisconsin Weidt Classic and the OC Inter-Regional meet.

When reflecting on her season, Lohrenz said she felt thankful and appreciative for the experiences she was able to have this year. She also said that the closer the season got to the championship meets, the more she was enjoying herself.

“I honestly feel like I couldn’t have asked for much more this cross-country season,” Lohrenz said. “I am grateful for how everything turned out, especially once we got into championship season. It was fun to push myself against other competitive athletes to see how strong I was or what I needed to work on.”

Lohrenz said that her roots in running stem all the way back to her middle school days, when she started running competitively as soon as she was eligible to do so in sixth grade.

She has met a lot of people along the way, and enjoys being able to push her physical and mental limits.

“I love the people that I’ve met because of the sport and how you are constantly testing what your body and mind can do,” she said.

Lohrenz is the 10th UWO women’s cross-country athlete to win the WIAC championship.

While it is Lohrenz herself who achieved many personal accolades throughout UWO’s 2021 cross-country season, she said she owes a great amount of gratitude to the supporting cast that she has around her for helping her become who she is on and off the trail.

“I am incredibly grateful for my coaches and teammates who have helped to make me into the athlete and person that I am today,” Lohrenz said. “I’ve made a lot of memories being at UW Oshkosh and really wanted to do all that I could to succeed in my last season of competition in cross-country.”

Going into her last fall season under head coach Eamon McKenna, Lohrenz said that she gained a new appreciation for each of her races while representing the gold and black.

With the entire 2020 cross-country season being canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lohrenz said she made the most of every race that she had this



Courtesy of Hannah Lohrenz

Lohrenz’s skills in running the countryside has landed her at 31st in the country, which creates high hopes for track.

year, as she had no clue if there would even be a season.

“The key for me this year was to not take any race for granted and to give it all that I had each time,” she said.

While Lohrenz did all that she could to physically prepare for her last cross country season, she said that self-belief was her key to finishing in the top three in five consecutive races (with the NCAA national championship being the exclusion).

“Building confidence and trusting myself was important since

once you are in shape for the season, most of racing is a mental battle,” she said.

As Lohrenz faced the possibility of each race possibly being her last throughout conference and regional competition, she said that she made sure to leave it all out on the running trail. The senior ran for her ability to continue running.

“My goal going into the cross-country season was to treat each race like it was my last one, which I guess technically each one was,” she said. “I didn’t want to leave the season having any regrets and

I wanted to be able to say that I ended my cross-country career in the best way that I possibly could.”

While Lohrenz’s UWO cross country career has already laminated itself as a past memory, she still has an entire indoor and outdoor track and field season ahead of her. The Titans have their first home indoor meet on Dec. 11 for the UW Oshkosh Early Bird Invitational, where Lohrenz will start her last track and field season as a Titan.

# This spring season is right on track for UWO athletes

By Jacob Link  
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The indoor track and field season for the Titans is beginning to heat up as they participated in their first meet at Ripon College. The Titans will be looking to make a run at the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic conference title after last year’s WIAC indoor track and field championship meet was canceled due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

For the men’s side, UW Oshkosh finished as runner-up in the 2020 WIAC championship, scoring 148.5 points, falling short of UW-La Crosse’s 169 points. The win was UWLa’s 19th straight WIAC title.

On the bright side, Oshkosh’s 148.5 points was their highest total since 2003, where they accumulated 168. The Titans, who won the 2009 NCAA indoor championship, finished ninth at the Division III indoor meet in 2019 behind performances from four All-Americans.

UW Oshkosh fifth-year head coach Justin Kinseth brings back 38 former letter winners to this year’s team, including 10 All-Americans from 2020 in Jamyle Brantley (long jump), Andrew George (mile run), Adrian Giron (1,600-meter relay), Jaylen Grant (60-meter dash), Robert Ogbuli (60-meter dash), Steven Potter (800-meter run), Lochlan Siegmeier (heptathlon), Eli Tranel (pole vault), Amitai Wheat (1,600-meter relay) and Jonathan Wilburn (triple jump). Ogbuli and



Courtesy of UWO Athletics

Riley Kindt performs a high jump. With a height of 5-3 3/4 she won the event, two inches above the competition.

Wilburn were named All-Americans at the 2019 NCAA Division III indoor championships, with fifth place finishes in the 60-meter dash and triple jump, respectively. Wilburn has had outstanding 2020 and 2019 seasons, as he won the WIAC indoor triple jump title both years. Jamyle Brantley won the 2020 WIAC indoor long jump title.

“Robert Ogbuli is a fifth year senior on our sprints squad,” said sophomore Jaylen Grant.. “I believe he will have an outstanding year and I think he will surprise a lot of people with his performances this year.” Grant added: “We lost a couple of seniors who graduated on the men’s and women’s sides. But we have brought in some freshmen that I believe will

make a big impact this season.”

On the women’s side, the Titans, who have won the WIAC championship 13 times, finished third at the 2020 WIAC indoor championship with 92 points. Once again, UW-La Crosse won the title, scoring 230 points to claim their 27th WIAC crown. UWO finished 27th at the 2019 Division III Championship with nine points.

Oshkosh has scored at least three points at the national meet for the last 34 Division III Championships. The Titans have won nine national titles in women’s indoor track and field, and seven-time runners-up, most recently in 2015. Head coach Justin Kinseth welcomes back 38 former letter winners, led by 2020 All-Americans Libby Geisness (800-meter run),

Hannah Lohrenz (mile run) and Emma Warr (pole vault). Geisness won the WIAC indoor title for the 800-meter run in 2020. Carla Volz is also a defending champion in the WIAC, where she won the triple-jump crown in 2020 and 2018.

On Nov. 4, the Titans kicked off their season in impressive fashion, as Oshkosh won 14 events in the men’s and women’s events. Saturday’s meet featured athletes from UW Oshkosh, Edgewood College, Carroll University, Ripon College, St. Norbert College and Viterbo University in a non-scoring meet.

Winning events on the men’s side were Jaylen Grant in the 60-meter dash with a time of 6.78 seconds, Adrian Giron in the 200-meter dash at 22.68 seconds, Amitai Wheat in the 400-meter

run at 50.23 seconds, Ryan Potter in the 800-meter run at 1:53.25, Andrew George in the mile run at 4:17.80, John Thill in the 3,000-meter run at 9:12.67, Mitchell Bradford in the 5,000-meter run at 15:10.66 and Aaron Kiela in the 60-meter hurdles at 8.64 seconds. Jonathan Wilburn also won the triple jump with a measure of 48 feet and 3 ½ inches.

After George’s mile winning run, he said, “It was a decent season opener, but I wanted to run quite a bit faster. The first race of the year is always a reminder of how painful racing is. I do think that the race set me up very well for a fast 3k on Saturday.”

For the women, Riley Kindt won the 60-meter dash with a time of 9.10 seconds and won the high jump with a height of 5 feet and 3 ¾ inches. Amanda Starzynski took first place in the long jump with a distance of 17 feet and 1 ¼ inches. Libby Geisness won the 800-meter run with a time of 2:18:08 and Hannah Lohrenz took first in the mile run with a time of 5:01.27.

Grant said: “My expectations for the team on the men’s side specifically is to win a National Title for our program. The men’s track and field hasn’t won a title since 2009. I believe we’re long overdue. We’ve been so close the past two years and now we just have to put everything together at the end of the season.”

The Titans will look to continue their great form by hosting the UW-Oshkosh Early Bird Invitational on Saturday.



Features

# Titans market their own art creations

## UWO ceramics students ‘gauge the success of their work’ by creating pieces for new downtown shop

By Katie Pulvermacher  
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As an artist, often your biggest goal is to market and sell your art. Having the reassurance that others like what you are producing is a huge form of validation. For a few UW Oshkosh students, this validation is happening thanks to a few downtown businesspeople.

“I was definitely a self-proclaimed artist from very little on,” ceramics student Emma Hathorne said. “I’ve been doing pottery since 2016. Art has been a part of my life and my parents’ lives; it’s kind of a family thing.”

Walking into the ceramics lab for the first time, it is different from what one might expect. Somehow spacious, yet crammed, the lab screams “artists work here.” Clay dust covers the floor from hundreds or maybe thousands of pottery pieces. Shelves around the room and in the back are lined with multitudes of pieces.

“[The lab] is pretty much my little safe haven on campus,” Hathorne said. “What’s really cool about this space is that you have a community. If I was working at home in my studio, I’d be alone, where here I have people to bounce ideas off of. That’s probably the biggest thing that I’m going to miss when I graduate ... having the community of artists that school gives you.”

Hathorne and three other UWO students have been commissioned by The Elsewhere Collection to create mugs, salad plates, dinner plates, bowls, serving bowls, vases and more. Hathorne is in charge of mugs.

She has prior experience in commission work. Her aunt and uncle who own Inn at the River in Wausau commissioned her to produce mugs for their business.

“That got me some experience with low pressure because I knew the client,” she said. “When [working with the business downtown] came along, I said ‘Sweet, I guess this is the next step.’”

The Elsewhere Collection was founded by Kristen and Eric Hoopman. The pair are big travelers and into real estate and renovating historic properties and beautiful old homes. They own several Airbnb properties including two in Wisconsin, Oshkosh and Waupaca; two in Georgia, Savannah and Tybee Island and one in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

According to the Elsewhere website, “Elsewhere is a state of being. It’s a feeling of being thousands of miles away without having to journey that far. Elsewhere is an invitation to slow down, realign, explore — to just be.”

When vacationers stay at one of the Hoopman’s Airbnbs, one of the things that most people take away is how beautifully designed and curated the homes are.

Kristen Hoopman is not only an owner of the properties, but is also the designer. It has always been one of her goals to open a retail shop that highlighted the Airbnbs in the way



Emma Hathorne creates a pottery piece in her free time. Elsewhere’s goal of imperfection and realness makes for an inclusive environment where anybody with the time to create their own art work can go in and work on a personal creation.

they design them. When she thought about opening a retail space, she wanted it to reflect those properties.

Managing Director Jessie Tadder and Event and Marketing Director Kristin Kane both work under the Hoopmans at The Elsewhere Collection. Both are also UWO journalism alumnae.

“Every single light fixture, every single piece of furniture, everything you see in any of the properties, including the Gibson Social Club, was designed and curated by Kristen,” Kane said. “With no formal interior design training, she is the one that makes the spaces as beautiful as they are.”

The Gibson Social Club is the neighboring building to The Elsewhere Market & Coffee House, also owned by the Hoopmans.

Tadder said Elsewhere wanted to source as many local items as possible to support and help Oshkosh grow. Having UWO students contribute to the shop by crafting ceramic pieces made the most sense.

They heard from another shop owner about the ceramics lab at UWO and reached out to Associate Arts Professor Craig Clifford.

“The goal of an artist is to have their work out in the world, and this gives the students that chance,” Clifford said. “We have ceramic sales every semester, but it’s different to have their art in a professional store. Being in the store exposes their work to a larger audience and gives the students a different way to gauge the success of their work.”

Clifford, after meeting with Tadder and Kane, introduced them to a few students he thought might be able to help with the shop.

Tadder and Kane worked directly with the students who showed them examples of what they have produced in the past. Since Hathorne had prior experience doing mugs, including stamping logos on her work, they started with her. They liked the style of her mugs and asked for a white glaze to match the store’s aesthetic.

After a few conversations back and forth on shapes, sizes and a sample mug, the deal was finalized. Hathorne made 25 mugs to sell at the market.

After seeing the style of what Tadder and Kane were looking for in the mugs, the other students were able to

pick up on the style and start crafting their pieces.

Clay shrinks after it is glaze fired. This is typically the second firing of a piece of pottery that the glaze melts to form a glasslike coat. Hathorne did a summer research project to learn more about pottery and its processing.

“There’s three stages to a mug,” Hathorne said. “You can calculate the rate of shrinkage of the clay. I know my clay shrinks 12%. Anything I make is going to be 12% smaller by the time it’s fully glaze fired.”

Every clay has a different shrinkage rate, and therefore it took a few times to get the perfect 10-ounce mug Elsewhere was looking for.

Looking around in The Elsewhere Market & Coffee House, the aesthetic Tadder and Kane mention in Kristen Hoopman’s design work is evident. The UWO ceramics fit in perfectly.

The main goal of Elsewhere was for nothing to be too perfect. Everything is organic in shape, which is what makes the shop special.

“[Ceramics] are obviously never all exactly the same, but if they

were, it wouldn’t be handmade,” Hathorne said. “The perfectionist in me has to take a backseat.”

The grand opening of the market side was Dec. 3 with champagne and cookies. This opening was a part of First Fridays in downtown Oshkosh. This occurs the first Friday of each month, which is dedicated to “art, music and awesome dining and experiences downtown.”

Kane estimated over a couple hundred people stopped in. Many customers were delighted to see the UWO ceramic pieces.

“It’s a very good thing [Elsewhere is working with students] because the university is a big part of our community, so it’s very nice to tie it together with some of the retailers,” customer Patty Francour said.

She also commented on the aesthetic that Elsewhere is hoping to achieve.

“This is the first time we’re doing the First Friday walking around and obviously the first time we’ve been in here,” Francour said. “It’s a really cool feel. It does not feel like Oshkosh, maybe kind of like Door County.”

The Coffee House is projected to

open in early 2022. For the time being, the market will be open while Elsewhere is working with a consultant on their coffee and menu.

“We want to make the coffee right and make it worth coming to get a cup of black coffee that you could enjoy without cream,” Tadder said. “However, we’ll have all of the condiments to spice it up however anyone wants.”

As far as food is concerned, the menu will be simple with mostly toasts and maybe salads, soups, pastries, bagels, grab-and-go options and more. They are tentatively planning on using Hathorne’s mugs for serving coffee and tea in-house.

“We don’t want to just open a coffee shop to open a coffee shop,” Tadder said. “We want it to be an experience for people to really come in and hang out and kind of feel like they’re in a different space that we don’t really think Oshkosh has at this time.”

Kristen Hoopman’s mom, Sue Collins, is a part-time employee of the market. She loves how downtown is flourishing again.

“Main Street is filling up again; it’s nice,” Collins said. “We want students to be comfortable and come

back and know that they’re welcome.”

The market and coffee house have been a long time coming. It is all finally becoming a reality since the market opened.

“I think for a lot of people, Main Street might feel intimidating because there are a lot of bars and that’s great for some of the older students, but for those who either don’t participate in bar culture, or maybe aren’t of age yet, having a really special coffee house to relax, study, read, hang out with friends and bring their families to is going to be a really exciting thing for us to be able to share with UWO,” Kane said. “I wish I had this when I was in school.”

Elsewhere is just as passionate about working with UWO students as the students are to work with them.

“There’s just something about making [pottery] that’s going to be used, that’s beautiful, unique and different, but is going to have a purpose,” Hathorne said. “[This opportunity] really fell in my lap. I was quite lucky.”





# Arts & Entertainment

## Top 10 stories of 2021

By Mattie Beck  
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### 1. UWO student gave a ride to Petito’s fiance

Earlier this year, UW Oshkosh became involved in the case of a travel TikTok influencer, Gabby Petito, who was suspected to have been murdered by her fiance. Miranda Baker posted a video to her TikTok explaining how the morning of the suspected murder she gave the fiance a ride to his get-away destination. This story was viewed nearly 29,000 times on the Advance-Titan website.

### 2. Frederic March, have we misjudged you?

In August of 2020, Chancellor Andrew Leavitt decided to remove actor Frederic March’s name from the UWO theater building due to allegations of March being affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan at UW-Madison. After the decision to repeal was named, letters to the editor flew in asking for the decision to be reconsidered, with many letter writers noting that March later contributed to racial equality and social justice. However, Leavitt said his decision stands.

### 3. Haunting at Horizon?

One of the buildings on campus, Horizon Village, had rumors flying of ghosts being present in the building. Though it can’t be confirmed if there are ghosts present, it was certainly entertaining to hear claimed



Kylie Balk-Yaatenen / Advance-Titan  
The top 10 stories of 2021 were hard to determine, but here it is.

stories of supernatural sightings on campus.

### 4. UWO celebrates 150 years

UWO celebrated being an educational institution for 150 years during 2021. To begin the celebration, the campus held a huge event on Sept. 12, 150 years to the date that the first classes were held at what was then the Oshkosh Normal School.

### 5. ‘Justice is not just Chauvin’s conviction, justice would be George Floyd being alive’

After Derek Chauvin’s guilty verdict for George Floyd’s murder, local community leaders rejoiced in the accountability, but they also acknowledged the need for police reform. Chancellor Andrew Leavitt himself weighed in on the situation and addressed how systematic racism exists even at UW Oshkosh.

### 6. In freakin’ person

In March 2021, it was announced that the graduation ceremony in May would be held in person. Though there were not a lot of details on how the celebration would go, it was exciting news as the last two commencement ceremonies had been completely virtual events.

### 7. ‘Women’s sports are underappreciated’

Women’s sports were put into

the spotlight last year for being unfairly represented throughout the media and in the treatment of female athletes in sports.

On campus, female athletes took notice of this, weighing in on how they thought women’s sports are underappreciated.

### 8. It’s a bird! It’s a plane! No, it’s spectators in stands!

COVID-19 took a huge hit on a lot of events, with sports at UW Oshkosh suffering the loss of spectators for most of last year’s sporting events. Finally, in April, spectators were allowed back into the stands to watch players, and even though guidelines were set, it was a win for athletes as they no longer had to play to empty stadiums.

### 9. Athletes play to empty stadium

Back before COVID-19 wasn’t as managed as it is now, athletes were forced to play to empty stands.

### 10. Advance-Titan staff wins 22 awards

The Advance-Titan staff entered the 2020 Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation’s Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest and was able to take home 22 awards. The staff was also able to take third-place honors for the overall publication as well.

## The late night breakfast is back at UWO

By Mattie Beck  
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During finals week in both spring and fall semesters, the chancellor holds the Chancellor’s Late Night Breakfast, an event where students are welcome to come to de-stress and enjoy a good meal.

In addition, there are also fun activities that students can participate in, like photo booths, air-brush tattoos, games, prizes and more.

A lot of students are going to experience this for the first time, as it’s the first one held since the start of the pandemic, but for students like Kylie Balk-Yaatenen, a senior at UW Oshkosh, it’s not a new experience.

Balk-Yaatenen said the event is a fun-filled experience for students.

“They always have games to play where you can win cups, T-shirts and bags,” she said. “They also usually have a band playing at Blackhawk.”

While some may think of it as a studying event, according to Balk-Yaatenen, it’s more of a time to hang out and de-stress. “It’s more like allowing students to take a break from studying and enjoy your friends and good food,” said Balk-Yaatenen.

Students like Cory Sparks, a junior, are excited for the event to get a “break” during finals.

“I am looking forward to unwinding during what is typical-

ly a very stressful time during finals,” Sparks said. “While it is important to study for such heavy exams, it’s important to remember events like this exist.”

The event is a great chance to unwind and take a breather during one of the hardest weeks of the school year for students, which is why Sparks also thinks it’s a beneficial event.

“I believe that this event benefits students because it is a sign of the school encouraging to take a break and relax for a little bit,” Sparks said.

He also said how nice it is to see the university putting in the effort to help students.

“Rest and recovery are important aspects of the learning process, and it is refreshing to see that the university prioritizes both those things by putting events like this together,” Sparks said.

This year’s event will be held 8:30-10:30 p.m. Dec. 14 at Blackhawk Commons, where students can be served a good food by UW Oshkosh administrators. The event is free for students on a meal plan and it is \$5.42 for others.



## Celebrating ‘20 years of holiday magic’

By Kelly Hueckman  
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Menominee Park has once again illuminated Oshkosh with the return of its annual Celebration of Lights as it also celebrates “20 years of holiday magic.”

The event allows community members to enjoy the holiday magic of over a million glistening lights decorating the park each night until Jan. 1.

Community members remember the event not only for its 1.2 mile-long twinkling light display, but also for visitation hours with Santa in his workshop and now sold-out carriage rides.

Although the Celebration of Lights organization is nonprofit, they annually support other organizations like the Salvation Army, the Boys and Girls Club and the Oshkosh School District.

This year, Oshkosh Celebration of Lights is asking members to bring in donations of sealed hygiene products to distribute to those in need. For cars that bring in a donation, \$1 will be taken off the general admission price of \$10.

Admission prices are used to repair broken lights and displays so visitors can enjoy the holiday cheer for years to come.

However, thanks to various local sponsors, the event allows one “Community Night” each week, when admission is free. Upcoming Community Nights are on Dec. 14, 17 and 25.

The community festivities would not be possible without the help of local volunteers, though. Each year, volunteers help set up lights, find sponsors and make sure the event runs smoothly each night.

One long-time volunteer is UW Oshkosh staff member Cindy Schultz, who has donated her time each holiday season since 2006.

Schultz said she works with other volunteers to direct visitors, collect donations and provide a helping hand in Santa’s Workshop.

Schultz’s experience proves that volunteerism not only allows community members to give back, but to also use the time to connect with friends and family.

On her first night volunteering, Schultz recalls ordering a pizza for

her and her daughter to the park.

“It was hard to tell them where to deliver the pizza,” Schultz said as she reminisced on one of her favorite Celebration of Lights memories. “So I just told them, ‘The North Pole!’”

Now, ordering pizza delivered to “The North Pole” is an annual tradition for her and her fellow volunteers as they work to serve thousands of people each season.

In 2020, over 16,000 vehicles packed with friends and family visited the Oshkosh Celebration of Lights.

Among this year’s visitors, UW Oshkosh sophomore Hannah Allen experienced the light displays for the first time.

“I loved seeing the tunnel of lights and all of the trees wrapped in different colors,” Allen said of her visit.

Allen, along with the other drivers at the event, also tuned into WRST 90.3 FM to enjoy a perfectly curated Christmas playlist that complimented the animated light shows.

Other notable attractions for visitors to plan into their visit are



Advance-Titan  
The Celebration of Lights is celebrating 20 years of magic.

sculptured light displays, a Celebration of Lights gift shop and 120 lit-up Christmas trees—one of which is 100 feet tall!

The Oshkosh Celebration of

Lights is open from 5:30-9:00 p.m. every day until Jan. 1.





**Top Stories**

- #1 UWO connection to Petito case
- #2 Naming the COVID-19 generation
- #3 Increased sex offenders in Oshkosh
- #4 IT specialist faces theft charges
- #5 Haunting at Horizon

**Top Writers**

- #1 Cory Sparks
- #2 Katie Pulver...
- #3 Mattie Beck
- #4 Sophia Voight
- #5 Jacob Link

**Articles Written**

352

**Website Visits**

462,644



# UWO alum writes ‘The End of the Beginning’

By **Kylie Balk-Yaatenen**  
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UW Oshkosh alum Carrie Voigt Schonhoff wrote a book that is a collection of poetry called “The End of the Beginning” where she writes poems about her own experiences. This is the second poetry book she has written.

“The title ‘The End of the Beginning’ signifies moving on from a place I was,” she said.

Schonhoff said she is inspired by experiences, people, travel, landscapes and thoughts on topics she thinks will connect with her readers.

“With the help of a mentor, I put together a book that charted an emotional journey,” she said. “After my first book, ‘The Liminal Space’ was released in 2019, I realized how validating the experience was on so many levels; I received such wonderful feedback from people that read my books and it has helped me understand that writing poetry is one of my purposes in life.”

She said she began writing when she was younger and that she enjoyed it but she didn’t end up doing it as a job.

“I loved writing for the Advance-Titan when I was in college, but I did not pursue writ-

ing as a career as it seemed like it would be challenging to make a living as a writer,” she said. “Fast-forward 30 years and I began writing again.”

Schonhoff said that she draws



Carrie Voigt Schonhoff

upon many different experiences when writing her poetry whether it is about life, love or grief.

“My husband passed away suddenly in 2012 from a pulmonary embolism and it flipped my life upside down,” she said. “I became a single mom with two kids and a 26-acre farm overnight.”

“My writing definitely deals with the topic of grief, but it also deals with love, hope and overcoming challenges that life

throws you.”

She said that poetry can be hard at times because there are not a lot of words and all the words have to convey the message of the poem but there are also parts of poetry that are easy to write.

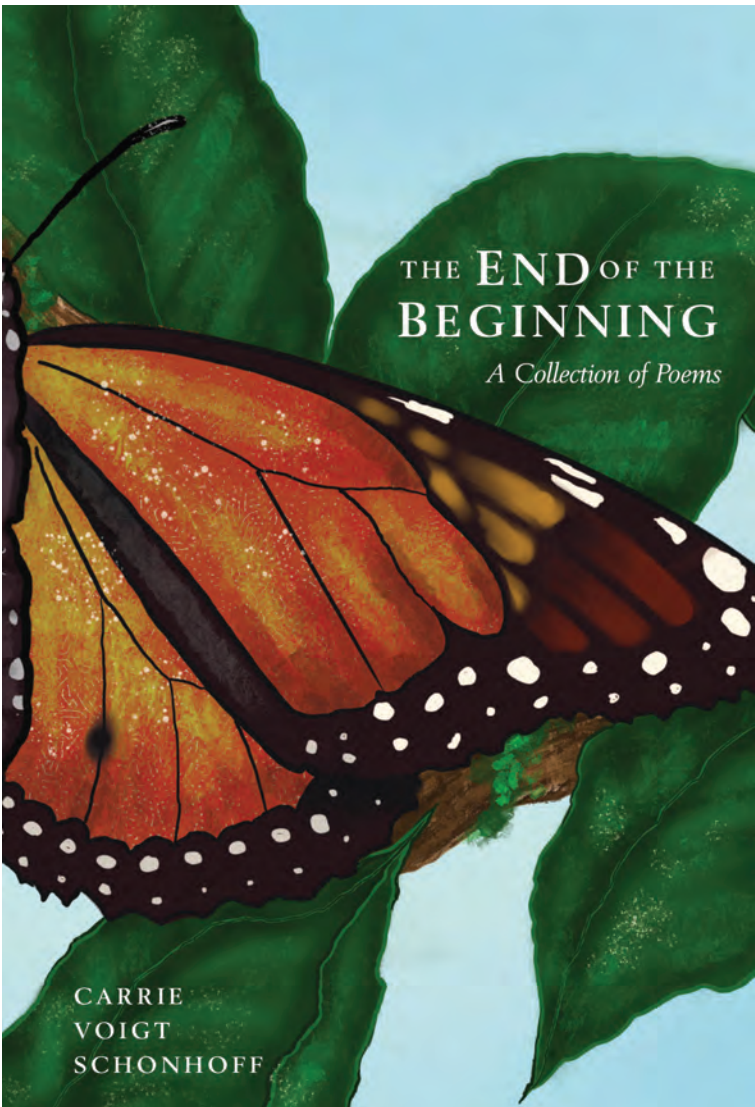
Schonhoff said that her two books are written from different stages of her life and the names of the two books are used to explain where she was at that time in her life when she wrote them. She said that the title also is about how there are always choices and opportunities to grow.

“In the first book, I was in the liminal space, in-between and awaiting great change and transformation; after a new beginning, I’m moving to another stage,” she said.

On the cover of her new book is a butterfly and Schonhoff said that this is a metaphor for change, like the beautiful butterfly coming out of a cocoon.

“My daughter, Sydney, is an artist and we were fortunate enough to collaborate on the cover,” she said. “The last poem in the book is the same as the title and it involves surrendering to something new.”

“The End of the Beginning” is available on Amazon or local bookstores all over Wisconsin.



Courtesy of Carrie Voigt Schonhoff

UWO alum publishes poems “The End of the Beginning.”

## Senior Sendoffs

On behalf of the A-T staff, we say goodbye to our two seniors

### ‘I guess it’s over’

By **Amber Brockman**  
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It’s only been two years, but I feel I’ve lived a thousand lives during my time with the Advance-Titan, and a thousand more for every person I was lucky enough to meet along the way.

I’ve heard many people say that no day looks the same when you work for the media, and I never would’ve known how true this was if I hadn’t taken the opportunity to join the A-T.

It all started in spring 2019 when news editor Christina Basken reached out to me to start writing for the A-T.

My position as a news writer quickly turned into assistant news editor in fall 2019, and soon after I got this promotion I was moving up the ladder once again to news editor in spring 2020.

I remained news editor until this semester, when I took on the role of managing editor and got the opportunity to oversee the paper with Editor in Chief Cory Sparks, otherwise referred to throughout the newsroom as “Grandpa.”

While many people have come and gone during my time at the A-T, there has been no shortage of unique personalities, to say

the least.

I could go on and on about the people I’ve been privileged to work with and how much the A-T means to me, but I, regretfully, decided to wait till production night to start writing this. With that being said, I’ll get to the point so I don’t hold the newsroom up any longer.

Joining the A-T was the best decision I made since I decided to attend UW Oshkosh.

Although the journalism department is excellent, I think the A-T gave me the experience that will be most beneficial in transitioning to life after graduation.

Basically, the classes gave me the skills I need to succeed as a journalist, and the A-T showed me how to apply those skills in the real world.

Besides the hands-on experi-

ence of working in a newsroom, the A-T helped me make connections on campus as a commuter student living almost an hour away from UWO.

I could have done without the long drives home at 2 a.m. after late production nights, but being able to spend that time with some of the funniest, most inspiring people I’ve met made it very much worth it.

There are so many moments I wanted to reference in my senior send-off. But now, to reduce these memories to words seems to be an impossible task.

So, I’ll leave this story as cheesy as it began: the A-T and everyone I was privileged to meet here has made my college experience better than I imagined and I wouldn’t trade it for the world.



### ‘What matters’

By **April Lee**  
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“The road to success is never a straight line” was the best advice I was given. For a while, I compared myself to others who graduated and had a career going.

A lot of my graduating high school class went to college right after graduating from high school. I worked for a few years before I went back to school, and it took me almost six years to get my bachelor’s degree. Through this journey, I realized that everyone’s path is different and it doesn’t matter how long it takes you to reach your goals. What matters is that you did it.

I’ll always be grateful for my experience at UW Oshkosh. I couldn’t have asked for a better school to graduate from. The diversity, inclusivity, classes, professors, students and resources on campus met all my expectations. Of course, I can’t forget The Advance-Titan. Thanks to the A-T for giving me the chance to photograph events on campus. I’ve never been much of a writer, so thank you for letting me tell stories through my photographs. One time, adviser Barb Benish reached out to me to photograph a story about senior living and COVID-19, where my photo won third place in the WNA Foundation Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest. I never expected to win so that was special to me.



I’m forever thankful to Barb and the rest of the crew for believing and trusting in me.

Speaking of photography, I’d like to thank Dr. Gleason for sparking my interest in studio photography. I really enjoyed my last semester due to his Special Topics in Visual Media class. Even though Dr. Gleason is a tough grader, I am a better photographer because of it. In addition, I wouldn’t be graduating if it weren’t for him. Thanks for being the best adviser and making sure that I am graduating on time.

I’ve had a lot of setbacks in the last several years, but let me tell you, graduation ain’t one. No matter where you are in life, don’t compare yourself to others. Know that you’re doing your best and don’t ever stop reaching for your goals!



# Black hair deserves respect

By Sie’anna Mitchell  
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I am excited to be a new college graduate starting my first corporate job in public relations, a job I earned after working as an intern this semester. But I’m nervous about what is ahead of me as a professional Black woman with natural hair.

So far, being in a corporate setting has been one of my proudest experiences. But if I’m honest, I am also apprehensive. Though my workplace is welcoming and supportive, I feel uneasy as I navigate the realities of being a Black woman with natural hair in a mostly white environment.

I am used to being in predominantly white settings; there was little diversity at my high school, university and the offices where I interned. Feeling like the odd person out in the room is not new to me. I always stand out because of my skin color and the different hairstyles that I choose to wear.

Honestly, sometimes I feel alone because I look different when I wear a new hairstyle to work. I wear different hairstyles like braids, cornrows and dreadlocks, or I go natural, because it is part of my culture and who I am as a person. I choose these styles to express myself and to keep my hair protected and healthy. In its natural form, African American hair takes a lot of time to manage. Wearing my hair in braids, cornrows and dreadlocks protects and reduces damage to it from straightening and coloring.

I dislike stereotypes and the attention they bring me. Yes, I know that not everyone internalizes these stereotypes, but we all have biases in our head that are attached to these kinds of hairstyles. Subconscious biases are the stereotypes and assumptions that individuals form outside their own consciousness. In some cases, the biases we have are centuries old.

I love all the compliments I get about my hair, but I dislike it when people want to touch it or say something like it does not look neat or clean or that it looks better than other hairstyles I have had. Why is what others think of Black hair so important? Simple: It can impact your career.

Black women have been fired and turned down for jobs because their hair does not look “professional.” AJ Walker, an Emmy award winning investigative news reporter, worked at different news stations for more than 10 years. For a long time, she asked to wear her hair in braids on air, the answer was no.

According to Walker, when she would try to ask why they wouldn’t allow her to braid her

hair, they said: ‘We like your hair the way it is, you look good the way you are ... That’s a really dramatic change, AJ, I don’t know if that’s something we want to do right now.’”

“It was always a roundabout way, but the end result was always me walking away without my braids every time,” Walker said.

Stories like Walker’s aren’t unusual in that they show how black hair can limit opportunities for Black women. In order to stop this from happening and to make the world a more inclusive place for everyone, people must become more aware of what is going on in the world and learn about others’ cultures.

The discrimination that has happened to Black people because of their hair have brought upon the CROWN Act, which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair. The bill was introduced in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and in March 2021. GovTrack estimates that the bill has a 3% chance of being enacted federally.

However, several states have passed versions of the CROWN Act, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and Washington, making discrimination against natural black hairstyles in those states illegal. In addition, 34 municipalities have passed CROWN Act legislation, according to CrownAct.com.

The CROWN Act generally states that hairstyle and texture would be added to the statutory definition of race. Protected hairstyles include knots, twists, locs and braids, according to Multistate Policy Analyst Lisa Kimbrough. This means that employers would be prohibited from discriminating against these hairstyles.

The CROWN Act’s goal is to change the perceptions of what people think of Black women’s hairstyles and cultural hairstyles, while also making the workplace more accepting and comfortable for women of color, Kimbrough said.

Black women feel the discriminatory effects more than others because they feel like they must make significant alterations to their natural hair textures and presentation. In the workplace, Black women are 3.4 times more likely to have others perceive their hair as unprofessional, 1.5 times more likely to have an employer send them home because of their hair, 80% more likely to change their natural hair and twice as likely as white women to straighten their hair to fit in at work, according to a 2017 study.

Although the CROWN Act



Courtesy of Sie’anna Mitchell

The CROWN Act, which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural hair, argues that hairstyle and texture should be added to the statutory definition of race. If it were to get passed, it would prohibit employers from discriminating against Black hairstyles.

is far from becoming a federal law, its introduction is just one step in the right direction of acknowledging that black hair is professional. Hopefully, the CROWN Act will foster more diversity and inclusion in the workplace as well.

In the corporate world it is common to see people that fit the societal norms put in place long before anyone can remember. But having diversity in the workplace can help people become more educated about different cultures and stereotypes. The CROWN Act can break the stigma of Black hair being seen as unprofessional and allow Black people to feel more comfortable when wearing their natural hair in the workplace, at school and elsewhere.

Biases and stereotypes toward African American hair have been in the U.S. for too long. It’s time for these biases and stereotypes to end so people feel

included and comfortable. We need to start by making advertisements, movies, TV shows, etc. more inclusive so that little girls will see themselves in their favorite media. This will help create positive affirmations of black natural hair and let people know it is OK to wear your hair in cornrows, dreadlocks or other styles.

But the CROWN Act is a start in encouraging Black women to wear their hair as they want in the workplace, school or other public settings. It lets Black people know that they are supported, and that people respect what they are going through.

In the future, I hope people become more educated about things happening in communities that are not their own. It means people will have to do their own research or that training must be offered on the job so people can learn to understand and appreciate cultural differ-

ences. But it does not need to be formal training; education can start by just talking to someone who does not have the same cultural background as you.

Today’s African Americans are paving the way for the next generations to be considered equal by everyone. But there is still so much work to be done before Black people can feel comfortable in their own bodies and are willing to wear their hair in braids without fear of someone saying that it is not professional.

Mother Teresa once said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” As a UW Oshkosh alumna, I hope to spread awareness about the African American culture in whatever I end up pursuing. I hope my “stone” will create “ripples” that spread awareness, too.





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