



League Letter

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UNIVERSITY LEAGUE FALL COFFEE

John Stofflet

News Anchor/Reporter NBC 15 Madison, WI

Wednesday, September 24th, 2025: 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.



Talk about your frequent flyer miles: In his broadcasting career, NBC-15 News Anchor/Reporter John Stofflet has traveled on assignment to 40 countries on all seven continents—including Antarctica. He has even flown to The White House for a one-on-one interview with President Obama.

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences has awarded Stofflet 25 Emmy Awards, including two Best News Anchor Emmys in the Chicago/Midwest Region. He has also received Edward R. Murrow Awards for his reporting, and "Best Live On-Scene Reporting" and "Best News Writing" Awards from the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association. In addition, Stofflet's story about an artist with cerebral palsy who creates paintings using a typewriter has gone viral, and has been viewed by nearly 23 million people (and counting) on YouTube.

Known to have an appetite for adventure, Stofflet has flown through a hurricane, been in the middle of an avalanche, ventured inside a developing tornado, and jumped off the 72nd story of a building in New Zealand, suspended from a thin cable. He has also dived with sharks & killer whales, and has put his hand in a live polar bear's mouth. (Okay, the bear was

tranquilized).

Wednesday, September 24th
Brunch: 9:30 a.m.
Speaker: 10:15 a.m.
Short Meeting: 11:00 a.m.

Blackhawk Country Club
3606 Blackhawk Drive
Madison, WI 53705

\$25 per person
Deadline: September 14th
No reservations accepted
after this date

Menu: Scrambled eggs, bacon, toasted English muffin, breakfast potatoes, orange juice and coffee—Please list any diet restrictions on your reservation, page 11.

In addition to President Obama and Governors Tony Evers and Scott Walker, Stofflet has also had one-on-one interviews with dozens of celebrities, including Julia Roberts, Robin Williams, Brad Pitt, Will Ferrell, George Clooney, Will Smith, and Jodie Foster, and has also hosted several specials that aired nationally on HGTV.

After reporting for 16 years at KING-TV (NBC) in Seattle, and working as a freelance correspondent for the National Geographic Channel, Stofflet jumped at the chance in May of 2005 to return to his home state of Wisconsin to anchor and report for NBC-15 News.

Stofflet serves on the board of directors of the Badger Childhood Cancer Network and the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin. He is actively involved in NBC 15's "Share Your Holidays" campaign for the Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. In addition, he regularly speaks to area organizations and schools about his experiences as a broadcast journalist, and serves as an emcee for charitable organizations and events. In recognition of his service to community, the Janesville Noon Rotary named Stofflet a Paul Harris Fellow.

A Middleton native and UW-Madison Journalism School graduate, Stofflet has two children—son Taylor and daughter Kaia.

Education

University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism & Mass Communications

Awards

25-time Regional Emmy Award winner

Three-time Regional Edward R. Murrow Award winner

Numerous AP Awards

Multiple Wisconsin Broadcasters Association Awards

Numerous Best of the West Awards

FINAL PRINTED, MAILED NEWSLETTER (unless)

The University Board of Directors has voted to change the primary method of delivering our newsletters to the membership. Beginning with newsletter 2, your full color newsletter will be delivered electronically to your email address on record. This change will save the organization both time and money.

If you feel you must have a paper copy of the newsletter you will have two choices. First you can print your own copy from your email. If you still want a printed, mostly black and white, copy mailed to you we are asking that you pay \$5.00 to cover printing and postage in the 2025-2026 League year. This fee will rise to \$10.00, annually in the 2026-2027 League year.

To continue to receive a paper copy please send your check, payable to The University League, Inc. to P.O. Box 5064, Madison, WI 53705-0064.

Thank you for your membership
and continued support of our
League mission!

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It's hard to believe that we are entering our Quasiquicentennial year. The University League is reaching 125 years of raising monies for scholarships, promoting volunteering, education and social activities. Do you think the original forty-seven women had any idea of what the League would evolve into when they organized in May of 1901?

As the new year gets going mark your calendars for our Fall Coffee at Blackhawk Country Club on September 24th at 9:30. John Stofflet, retired NBC 15 News Anchor and Reporter will be our speaker. This will be the first of the great lineup our Program Committee has in store for the 2025-2026 League year.

The Fall also marks the startup of our now nineteen Interest Groups. From Artiques to Wine, from Birds to Ballet, from Travelers to Technology we try to offer something for everyone's interest.

Check the website univleague.wisc.edu or the League yearbook for listings and try something new.

Finally, we'd really like to increase our number of members during this year. Maybe you can invite a friend to the Fall Coffee or to an Interest Group you enjoy. Just think of ways you can help us grow.

If I can ever help you or answer a question, please reach out to me directly. Let's all join together to make this a great new year!

John Shanda
President 2025-2026

INTEREST GROUPS

Genealogy Interest Group
Submitted by Mary Jo Willis

A new season will be starting for the Genealogy Interest Group beginning September 29th at 6:45pm on Zoom. Our focus will be to share our information, identify successful strategies to answer questions, have a fun time, learn some history and foremost, make everyone feel welcome no matter where they are in their family and genealogy research. Anyone can participate in the Genealogy Interest Group, even if you have not started research.

To join the genealogy Interest Group, contact Louise Thompson at louisesylvesterthompson@hotmail.com or Mary Jo Willis at mjwillis@wisc.edu.

- September 22: Get Acquainted and a presentation by Mary Jo Willis on "Death by Drowning of a Close Relative-the Usefulness of Newspaper Articles".
- October 27: Ancestry Convention Tips and Highlights from Germany - Louise Thompson
- November 24: My Favorite Ancestor

There is no meeting on December 22 due to the holidays. We resume on January 26, 2026.

Wine Divas & Divos Explore the Flavors of Spain



In May, the Wine Divas & Divos took their tastebuds on a journey to Spain for an evening of food, wine, and camaraderie. Our gracious hosts, the Shandas, welcomed the group into their home and treated everyone to a delightful spread of traditional Spanish appetizers.

Cindy May guided us through the world of Spanish wines, sharing insights into their renowned boldness, depth, and complexity. As the third-largest wine producer globally—following Italy and France—Spain boasts 42 Protected Geographical Indications, with Rioja standing out as the most celebrated region.

The evening was the perfect blend of education, flavor, and fun—a fitting way to toast the start of our summer break. The Wine Divas & Divos will resume in Fall 2025. If you're interested in joining the group or want to learn more, feel free to reach out to Elaine Rosenblatt at elainer49@gmail.com or 608-213-4958.



MAY ANNUAL LUNCHEON MEETING



The University League held its Luncheon and Annual meeting on May 7th at Blackhawk Country Club. Brian Borland entertained us with a moving account of his mother's achievements in the world of high school girls' basketball in a small Ohio town in the 1950's.

He was introduced by Gail Schomisch who also gave him a poem. It was a very entertaining time and we really enjoyed his company and his talk.

Thank you, Brian Borland!



At the Annual Meeting, which immediately followed the presentation, Cindy May summarized the activities of our intrepid Board members, thanked them for their hard work on behalf of the University League throughout the year, and then passed the gavel to our new President, John Shanda.



MAY ANNUAL TRI-BOARD LUNCHEON MEETING

On May 20th the annual Tri-Board Luncheon brought together all the University League members who were retiring from the Board, continuing on the Board, or new to the Board. Current assistant chairs became chairs, and were seated with their new assistant chairs so they could become acquainted and begin their work together.



Left to right: Betty Zeps, Mary Jo Willis, Peggy Wiederholt, Linda Mayfield, John Shanda, Louise Thompson, Sheila Lynch, Julie Sadowsky, Susan Lauffer



Left to right: Rich Leffler, Elaine Rosenblatt, Charlotte and Jim Burns, Linda Baumann, Larry Hubbard, Jane Dunn



Left to right: Sally Lorenz, Anne Marie Lawrence, Marcia Janota, John Shanda, Cindy May, Gisell Sirianni, Roma Lenehan

**MAKING A LASTING IMPACT:
The University League Scholarships Support Adults Returning to School
and Nontraditional Students at UW-Madison**



Left to right: Peggy Wiederholt, Barbara Bahr, Cindy May, John Shanda
At the ACSSS "Celebration of Outstanding Students Reception"

One of the most enjoyable scholarship award receptions for The University League representatives is the “Celebration of Outstanding Adult Students.” This reception is held each Spring by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Adult and Special Student Services (ACSSS) unit within the Division of Continuing Studies. ACSSS students come from all walks of life and often include mothers and fathers who are raising or have raised families, or veterans who have completed military service and are returning to civilian life. It is not unusual for honorees to accept their awards with their children or family members beside them as they celebrate this special accomplishment together. It is truly an uplifting experience with many tears of excitement, gratitude and admiration shed by all in attendance. This year 2024-25 President Cindy May, 2025-26 President John Shanda and Scholarship Chair Peggy Wiederholt had the honor of witnessing this celebration on April 24th.

Established in 1993, the University League Scholarship for returning adult students is supported through The University League General Scholarships funded by the annual Scholarship Benefit as well as individual donations throughout the year, including gifts received during membership renewals and program reservations. The 2024-25 recipient of The University League Adult Career and Special Student Services Scholarship is Barbara Bahr.

A second scholarship, the Cynthia McCreary Holbrook Youmans University League Endowed Scholarship was added in 2004 to support ACSSS students. Cynthia was the 1965-66 University League President and was well known for her distinguished service in championing housing assistance on the UW campus. The 2024-25 recipient of the Cynthia McCreary Holbrook Youmans University League Endowed Scholarship is Linda Serna.

Anne Niendorf, ACSSS Academic Advising Counselor, does an excellent job describing the history of the Adult Career and Special Services unit, the importance of The University League Scholarships, and the impact the scholarships have on student recipients as well as their families and their communities.

“The Adult Career and Special Student Services (ACSSS) unit within the Division of Continuing Studies, has a long history of advocating for and supporting adults returning to school in addition to other nontraditional students such as student parents and veterans. In 1972, Continuing Education Services (CES) began providing grants, counseling, return-to-school workshops, and a career resource center.

CES eventually became the Adult Career and Educational Counseling Center (ACECC) which ultimately merged with the University Special and Guest Students (USGS) office, creating the current day ACSSS. In the ensuing years, scholarship and grant support grew, and we currently award over \$100,000 a year thanks to support from donors like the University League and many others.

Among all the barriers faced by the students we serve, tuition and the other costs of obtaining a degree are some of the hardest to overcome. For this reason, the scholarships and grants we are able to award have a meaningful impact on students reaching their higher education goals. And that impact goes beyond the students to their families and communities. Many students tell us about how furthering their education helps them to serve as role models for their children, other family members, and community youth. The financial support provided by scholarships has lasting implications for lifting families out of poverty.

Over the years, several students supported by the University League and Cynthia McCreary Holbrook Youmans scholarships have shared their career goals with us. Several planned to pursue social work in areas including corrections and reentry for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, youth services for those who have experienced trauma, oncology patient advocacy, reforming sex offender policy, and geriatrics and palliative care. Other career goals shared include, becoming a Spanish speaking psychotherapist providing accessible and affordable services, working as a data analyst, biotechnology, teaching history, teaching PE and health education, becoming a doctor of nursing practice, and bridging the gap between schools and communities as a professional educator.

The scholarships provided by University League make a lasting impact on the students who have been their beneficiaries, but also on the communities these students go on to serve.”

REMINDER: If you make a scholarship donation and want an acknowledgement sent to a loved one of the deceased, you must request this and **provide the name and full address** of the individual who should receive the acknowledgement. If you do not include this information, an acknowledgement cannot be sent.

Thank you!

IN MEMORIAM

Kathleen Murphy Sherry
Jerry Dunn
Laura (Toby) Cohen

**Meet Barbara Bahr, 2024-25
Adult and Special Student Services (ACSSS)
University League Scholarship Recipient**



Barbara Bahr is a first-generation student and recipient of the 2024-25 University League Scholarship for returning adults in the ACSSS unit, Division of Continuing Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Although Barbara wanted to become a teacher from an early age, her educational aspirations were postponed when she married and began having children at the age of 18. Over the next 25 years she helped put her husband and three children through college while co-operating a successful photography business with her husband.

After a contentious divorce and leaving California homeless, she moved back to Wisconsin and began her job fixing phones in inmates' cells at the Dane County Jailhouse. The technician training her had made the remark that she would have a difficult time going into cells with men to fix the phones and that no woman had the job prior to her. Despite him telling her she'd quit by the end of the day, Barbara was still working at the jail a year later but began seeing her work in jail as both literal and metaphorical. Although she had always aspired to become a teacher, she had felt trapped in an abusive marriage and unable to break free. The day she came across Mary Oliver's poem "The Journey"

Barbara realized that she needed to begin her own journey and break free of how she thought she needed to live her life and begin pursuing her dream of going to college herself.

That year Barbara had checked out numerous math, science and history books from her local library to catch up, after decades of being out of school. Although she was terrified of failing, she enrolled at Madison College and within two years, she was the president of the Honor Society PTK leading civic projects for students on campus. In addition to being president of the Honor Society, she was also continuing to volunteer at both the Madison College food pantries as well as the Badger Prairie Needs Network where she had been volunteering for years. As someone who dealt with food insecurity herself for years, Barbara understood the importance of its impact.

Although she had accomplished her goal of obtaining her associates degree from Madison College with a 4.0 GPA, Barbara knew she'd have to continue her studies to become an elementary teacher at a 4-year school. She was accepted to UW Madison where she maintains a 4.0 in the School of Education. Barbara credits her success with the support she's been given from her advisors, mentors, teachers and the University League Scholarship. Barbara is committed to continuing her "Journey" through her continual volunteer work in the community and fulfilling her dream of becoming an elementary school teacher.

University League Fall Coffee
Wednesday, September 24, 2025: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Blackhawk Country Club

Program: John Stofflet - News Anchor/Reporter NBC 15 Madison
Reservation deadline: September 14, 2025* (No refunds after this date)

Member: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Additional Member: _____ Phone: _____

Guest(s) name(s): _____ Phone: _____

____ Reservations @ \$25 each (includes brunch and program) \$ _____

General Scholarship (IHO/IMO name): _____ \$ _____

For donations "In Honor of" or "In Memory of," please circle IHO or IMO and provide contact Information – (General Scholarship only please)

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Menu (list any dietary restrictions below):

Scrambled eggs, bacon, toasted English muffin, breakfast potatoes, orange juice and coffee

Dietary Restrictions: _____

Need a ride? _____ Can you offer a ride? _____

Make Checks payable to: **The University League, Inc.**

(Note: Your check will be cashed a few days following the event.)

Mail to: Betty Zeps, Cardinal View, 3820 Tribeca Dr. #212 Middleton, WI 53562

***Reservation Form and payment must be in hand by September 14, 2025**

Questions? Call Betty Zeps at (608) 698-1414

Quasquicentennial Trivia.....

* University League was founded May 4, 1901.

* In 1916 the University League Fund for Women first awarded \$50. Tuition was \$24 per semester.

* In 1941 the Scholarship Fund was established. It totaled \$150 (two \$75 scholarships).

* The first annual dues were \$0.50.

Our Quasquicentennial will be celebrated in May, 2026.