



League Letter

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Editor: Gisell Sirianni

THE UNIVERSITY LEAGUE, INC 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION *Special Newsletter Edition

Celebrating 125 Remarkable Years

On Wednesday, May 6th, 2026, members and friends of The University League gathered at Blackhawk Country Club to celebrate a truly extraordinary milestone—125 years of service, scholarship, and enduring friendship.

From the warm welcome and fellowship over coffee to inspiring reflections on our League's rich history and hopeful vision for the future, the day was filled with gratitude, laughter, and cherished memories. Through shared stories, honored traditions, and joyful reunion, we celebrated the women and men whose dedication has sustained our mission across generations.



This special commemorative edition captures moments from this unforgettable anniversary gathering—a tribute to our past, our present, and the promising future of The University League.



Welcoming Members & Gathering in Fellowship

The celebration began with members arriving and reconnecting with friends old and new. Smiles, embraces, and animated conversations filled the room as guests gathered to mark this historic occasion.

A DELIGHTFUL ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

Guests enjoyed an elegant luncheon thoughtfully prepared for this special occasion. Before lunch, members were treated to **Hester Van Vleck's delicious mini-muffins**, served alongside coffee, tea, and milk as conversations flowed warmly throughout the room.

The luncheon featured a choice of two exceptional entrées:

- * **Margaret Andrews Allen's** *Chicken Veronique with Riesling Sauce, Grapes, Almonds, Asparagus, and Wild Rice* or
- * **Hontas Daniells' Grilled Chicken Raisin Berry Salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette.**

The meal concluded with **Angelina Lenehan's Apple Crumble Crisp**, a delightful ending to a memorable gathering.



A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM

Guided by Linda Harvey, Master of Ceremonies, the anniversary program honored The University League's rich legacy while celebrating the organization's vibrant present and inspiring future.



THE UNIVERSITY LEAGUE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The University League Past

Rose Fahien, President (1980–1981) and author of *University League History 1901–2001*, offered thoughtful reflections on the League’s remarkable journey over the past 125 years, reminding us of the dedication and vision of those who built our enduring foundation.



The University League Present



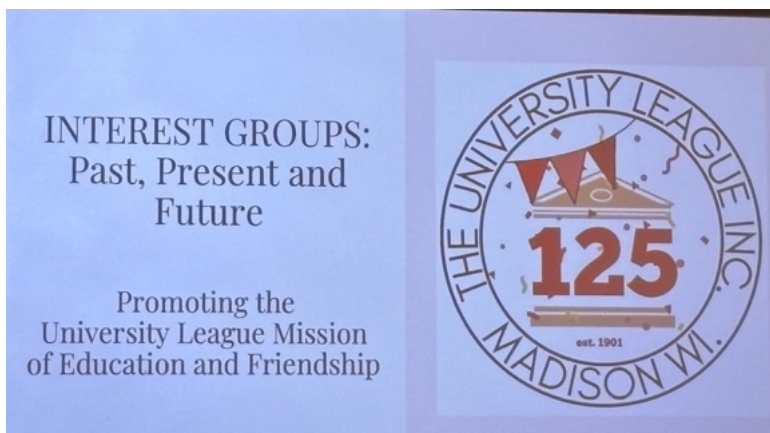
Kathy Knox spoke about the meaningful work of the **Great Dane Readers** program and shared a touching story that beautifully illustrated its impact.

After visiting a school to read with children and distribute books, she later encountered one of the students in a public place. The child recognized her immediately, thanked her warmly, and proudly showed her the new book he was carrying with him. Moments like these remind us that even small acts of kindness and encouragement can leave a lasting impression.

Experiences such as this affirm the importance of the League’s outreach efforts and serve as a rewarding reminder that we are truly making a difference in the lives of young readers.



“Great Dane Readers making a lasting impact, one book at a time”



Today, The University League continues to thrive through meaningful programs, active interest groups, and enduring friendships.

Sally Lorenz introduced the presentation on the League's many Interest Groups (18 Groups), highlighting the opportunities they provide for members to connect, learn, and engage.

Gabriela Cerheadegan (Interest Groups) and Larry Hubbard (Interest Group Assistant) compiled and presented information generously shared by the

Interest Group leaders, offering a wonderful overview of the activities and friendships that continue to enrich League life. Their presentation beautifully reflected the vibrant connections that strengthen our membership and sustain the spirit of The University League.



A meaningful family contribution, the **125th Anniversary logo** was created by Sally Lorenz's granddaughters, celebrating 125 years of University League history. Their creative contribution added a personal touch to this milestone event, symbolizing both the League's rich legacy and the generations it continues to inspire.



The University League Future

Looking ahead, attendees were reminded of the lasting impact of The University League's scholarship mission and its enduring commitment to supporting education and excellence for future generations.

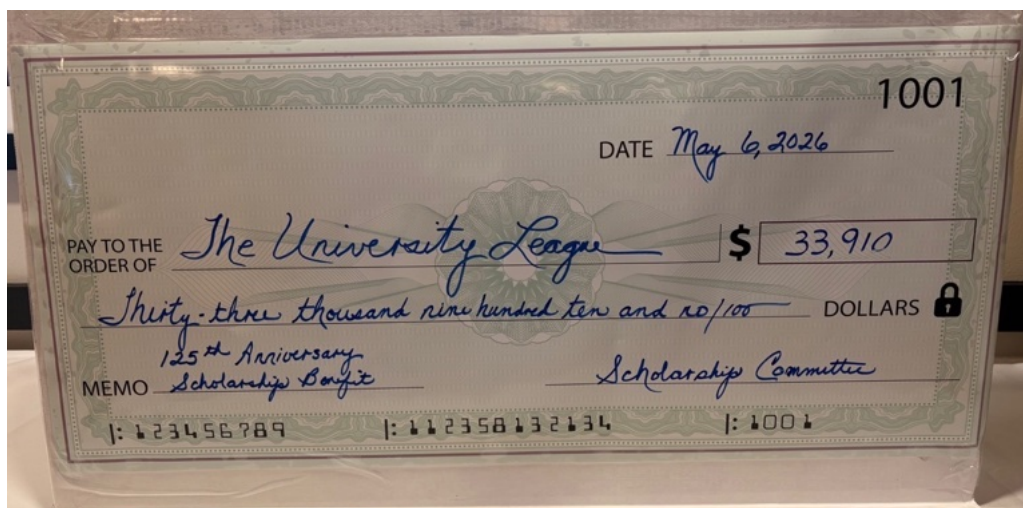
Peggy Wiederholt shared remarks about Braedon Lukey, recipient of the 2025–2026 Mrs. William F. Allen University League Scholarship. Braedon, who attended the celebration with his mother, is currently a second-semester freshman in the University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Letters and Science, where he plans to double major in biochemistry and German. In addition to his studies, Braedon is an accomplished musician and a member of the University of Wisconsin Concert Band. Although he began playing the saxophone, his favorite instrument is the bassoon, and he has performed with the Concert Band throughout the academic year, recently earning the honor of a featured solo.

As a scholarship recipient during The University League's 125th Anniversary, Braedon represents the League's past, present, and future commitment to investing in students and helping them pursue academic excellence.



Scholarship Benefit Results

A proud and memorable moment followed as Peggy Wiederholt presented the symbolic scholarship check, announcing that the League had not only met—but significantly exceeded—its fundraising goal. With a goal of \$25,000, members celebrated the extraordinary achievement of raising \$33,910 in support of scholarships. This remarkable accomplishment reflects the generosity, dedication, and enduring commitment of The University League to transforming lives through education.



“The power of giving: supporting scholarships and transforming lives.”

Following this celebration, Eric Salisbury, Vice President and Managing Group Leader at the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA), delivered inspiring remarks on the importance of philanthropy and the lasting impact of scholarship support. His thoughtful message underscored how generosity can open doors of opportunity for students and help shape brighter futures through education.



COMMEMORATIVE ANNIVERSARY KEEPSAKES

The University League gratefully recognizes the Quasquicentennial Committee, whose creativity and careful planning helped bring many memorable touches to this celebration. Our sincere thanks to John Shanda, Jacqui Shanda, Rose Fahien, Rich Leffler, Linda Harvey, Sally Lorenz, and Mary Jo Willis for their dedication in honoring this historic 125th Anniversary.

As a lasting remembrance of The University League's 125th Anniversary, each participant received a thoughtful commemorative gift, carefully selected by the Quasquicentennial Committee.



Practical keepsakes—including a beautifully designed anniversary pen, notepad, and a custom Swedish dishcloth—were chosen for members to enjoy and use while remembering this historic milestone, creating meaningful mementos of a truly memorable celebration.

Special thanks to Orange Schroeder of Orange Tree Imports, who helped arrange the custom-printed Swedish dishcloths at a discounted price through her vendor, and to Mary Jo Willis, who made the connection possible.

These meaningful gifts serve as lasting reminders of a celebration honoring 125 years of friendship, service, and scholarship.

Thoughtfully Chosen, Fondly Remembered

CARRYING THE LEGACY FORWARD

The celebration concluded with thoughtful remarks from John Shanda, whose words reminded attendees of the enduring strength of the League's mission and the importance of carrying its legacy forward. As the League's first male president, John's leadership reflects both the rich traditions and the evolving future of the organization.



Adding a touch of humor and festive spirit to the occasion, John marked the celebration in style, wearing a bright red jacket and matching red shoes—purchased especially for this memorable event—bringing smiles and laughter to all in attendance.



A beautiful finishing touch to the luncheon was provided by Jacqui Shanda, who thoughtfully arranged the table centerpieces. Since the club did not have red decorations available, her elegant floral displays brought warmth, color, and a perfect celebratory touch to the room, beautifully reflecting the spirit of the League's 125th Anniversary.



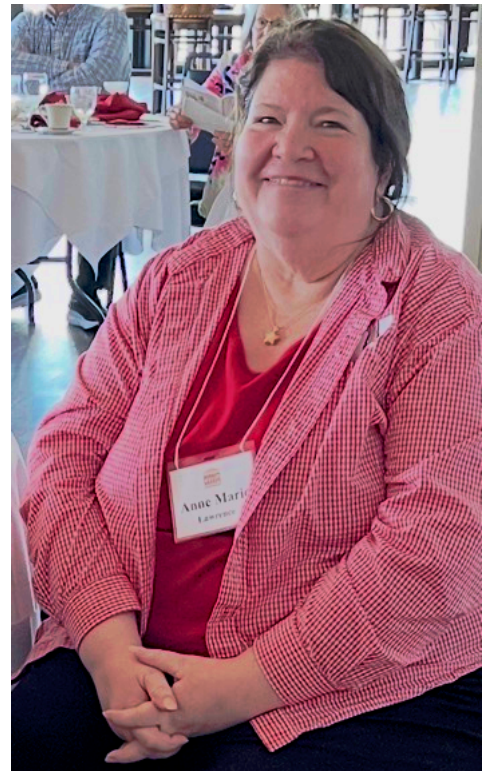
As members departed, they carried with them renewed inspiration, gratitude, and pride in belonging to an organization whose impact has spanned more than a century—honoring the past while looking ahead with hope and purpose.















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Photo credits: Special thanks to Donna McCarthy Beckett for capturing many of the memorable moments from The University League's 125th Anniversary celebration.