



League Letter

Volume LXI, Number 1, August 2026

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Editor: Roma Lenehan and Gisell Sirianni

UNIVERSITY LEAGUE FALL COFFEE

Katie Gillespie

Clinical Associate Professor, UW School of Nursing

Wednesday, September 23rd, 2026: 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Blackhawk Country Club



Networking and schmoozing will begin at 9:00 a.m., providing an opportunity to reconnect with friends and meet fellow University League members before the program begins.

Featured Presentation: “The Role of the Nursing Profession in the Future American Medical System”

Join us for what promises to be an engaging and timely presentation on the evolving role of the nursing profession and its place in the future of American healthcare.

Professor Gillespie is the board president of Madison Street Medicine and board vice president of the Wisconsin Center for Nursing. She serves on the Workforce Advocacy Council of the Wisconsin Nurses Association.

FALL COFFEE

Wednesday, September 24
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

Cost: \$30 per person
Reservation Deadline:
September 14, 2026

Menu: Scrambled eggs, bacon, toasted English muffin, breakfast potatoes, orange juice, water and coffee and or tea. Please list any dietary restrictions on your reservation form on page 11.

Dr. Katie Gillespie received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Northern Illinois University and her Doctor of Nursing Practice in Community and Public Health from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Prior to joining the UW School of Nursing, she served as Deputy Director of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Prevention Research Center.

With extensive experience in governmental public health and clinical nursing practice in maternal and child health, Dr. Gillespie’s work has fostered her research in risk-based maternal care. Her interests also include evaluating the effectiveness of integrating public health programs that support women during the perinatal period with clinical care, as well as supporting public health nursing practice.

Join us for an engaging and thought-provoking morning!



Register for the Fall Coffee

Scan the QR code with your phone to register, or use the online registration link below.

Register online:

[UL Fall Coffee Registration – Wednesday, September 23, 2026](#)

Register by mail:

Complete the registration form on page 11.

Great Dane Readers update

Books, Books, and More Books!

Books about friendship, weather, colors, growing vegetables, and even a wild chase through all the letters of the alphabet!

These are among the books that University League Great Dane Readers will donate to an estimated 460 Dane County preschoolers during the 2026–2027 school year. That means an incredible 3,680 books will make their way into the hands of young readers—and these donations are possible because of the generous financial support of University League members.



University League
GREAT DANE READERS

So, if you have contributed to Great Dane Readers, thank you! Thank you for helping us promote early literacy and for helping put so many wonderful books into the hands of children.

Thank you for the many, many, many books! 📖

For more information about Great Dane Readers, please contact:
Mary Warfield at 608-273-9809 or mbwarfield@gmail.com.



From the President



Dear University League Members,

It's August, and our new League year is getting underway! Our Fall Coffee is coming up soon, our new Yearbook will be available shortly, Interest Groups will be kicking off again, and we're on our way. It's hard to believe we are beginning our 126th year!

I hope you enjoyed our special newsletter commemorating our Quasiquicentennial Celebration in May. Many thanks to member Gisell Sirianni, who created this wonderful souvenir of the festivities and helped us preserve the memories of this special occasion.

As we begin the 2026–2027 League year, membership needs to be one of our priorities. I hope you returned your Pay-in-May form. I'm also asking each of you to invite someone new to join the League. Bring a prospective member to the Fall Coffee or invite them to your favorite Interest Group so they can experience what a wonderful organization we are. Growing our membership is critical to ensuring that our four major efforts—Scholarships, Service, Education, and Friendship—continue to thrive.

If you have questions or suggestions for improving our organization, please reach out to me. My contact information is in the Members section of the Yearbook. Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts and ideas. Thank you all for being members and for continuing to work together to make the University League successful.

John Shanda
President 2026-2027

Interest Groups

Join our new interest group! - Artificial Intelligence: Promise and Peril

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming part of our everyday lives—but how much do we really understand about it?

The University League's newest Interest Group, Artificial Intelligence: Promise and Peril, will explore this fascinating and rapidly evolving field. We'll look at the history of AI, how different forms work—including Large Language Models (LLMs)—and how they are trained.



We'll also explore some of the important questions surrounding AI today: its emerging regulation, constructive uses, potential dangers and abuses, and the impact of AI data centers on electricity, water, and land use. Whether you are excited about AI, concerned about where it is headed, or simply curious to learn more, this group offers an opportunity to explore both the promise and the peril of this transformative technology.

Interested in joining?

The group meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. The September meeting date will be announced shortly. To join, please contact Larry Hubbard, Interest Group Leader, at 608-692-0496 or larry.hubbard99@gmail.com.

Wine Divas and Divos

A Season of Sips, Tastes & Friendship

The Wine Divas & Divos Interest Group wrapped up its 2025–2026 season with two memorable wine-tasting evenings, exploring wines from Wisconsin and Italy.

On April 16, the group enjoyed a tasting of wines from the Door County Wine Trail, guided by Bev Priefer and Ken Martin. Along with sampling a variety of whites and reds, members enjoyed an assortment of cheeses and other goodies from the area. Commercial winemaking has been part of Door County for more than 50 years, beginning with wines made from apples and cherries and expanding to include locally grown grapes and grapes from other regions.

The season concluded with a taste of Tuscany, hosted by the Shanda's. Member Mary Lou Tyne generously procured the wines directly from Tuscany and provided the photographs of the wineries featured in the program. Members enjoyed white, rosé, and red wines paired with delicious appetizers while learning about the Tuscan wineries where the wines were produced. Although Tuscany is best known for its dry red wines made from Sangiovese grapes, the group's favorite for the evening was the white Vernaccia di San Gimignano, Tuscany's first DOCG wine.

As always, the group discovered that wine preferences can differ—but everyone agreed that good wine, good food, and good friends make for a wonderful evening!

The Wine Divas & Divos will take a summer break and begin a new season of tastings in **September**. If you enjoy discovering wines and sharing an evening with friends, consider joining us!

Interested in learning more? Contact Elaine Rosenblatt at elainer49@gmail.com or 608-213-4958.



**Good wine,
good food,
and good
friends!**



Spotlight on the University League Centennial Endowed Scholarship

A Legacy of Supporting UW–Madison Students

For more than a century, the University League has supported the education of UW–Madison students. As early as 1916, the League provided student loans and eventually scholarships. In 2015, as the organization prepared to celebrate a Century of Giving, several members led the effort to establish the University League Centennial Endowed Scholarship, reaffirming the League’s enduring commitment to education.

Among those instrumental in establishing the scholarship were Kay Jarvis-Sladky, Mary Jo Willis, Linda Harvey, Sally Lorenz, and Judy Stang, all of whom remain active members and leaders of the University League. Many other members also helped make the scholarship a reality through their generous contributions.

The Difference a Scholarship Can Make

Kay Jarvis-Sladky is a strong supporter of the Centennial Endowed Scholarship and has seen firsthand how financial assistance can change a student's educational path. She notes that scholarship funds can provide the additional support students need to pay tuition, allowing them to focus on their studies and, in some cases, reduce the need to work while pursuing their degrees.

Scholarships can be especially important for students continuing on to professional schools, such as medical, law, or engineering programs, where tuition and educational requirements can be significant.

At a past University League meeting, Kay shared the story of a scholarship recipient whose experience deeply moved those in attendance. The student described growing up in a difficult environment and making unhealthy choices earlier in her life. With the support of a University League scholarship, she was able to move toward a more stable and productive future, raise her child, and prepare for a demanding career in nursing.



For this student, receiving a University League scholarship was truly life-changing.

A Gift That Continues

The Centennial Endowed Scholarship Fund was initiated by the League Board in 2015 and officially established through the University of Wisconsin Foundation on May 28, 2015. It was fully funded by the time of the League’s Celebration of a Century of Giving in March 2016. Since its inception, the fund has awarded \$14,282 in scholarships. As of July 8, 2026, the fund's market value was \$53,606.97.

The scholarship is managed through the UW Office of Student Financial Aid, which awards funds to a diverse group of students pursuing a wide range of fields of study and career goals. As an endowed scholarship, the fund will continue providing financial support to UW–Madison students in perpetuity.

Interested in Supporting the Centennial Endowed Scholarship?

**University of Wisconsin
Foundation**
US Bank Lockbox
Box 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-8807

If you would like to contribute, please make your check payable to:
The University of Wisconsin Foundation

Please write “The University League Centennial Endowed Scholarship” on your check and include the scholarship name in an accompanying note.

2025–2026 University League Centennial Endowed Scholarship Recipient: Irene Kim



After completing her freshman year at UW–Madison, Irene Kim reflected on the impact the University League Centennial Endowed Scholarship has had on her life and her plans for the future.

Irene is majoring in Neurobiology and plans to pursue a Certificate in History. Her long-term goal is to attend medical school and become a physician, with particular interests in psychiatry and pediatrics. She hopes to work with underserved communities and help bridge the gap between quality healthcare and accessibility.

A First Year as a Badger

Irene describes her first year at UW–Madison as a rewarding experience. She appreciated the university's diverse and open-minded community and was grateful for the close friendships she developed and the professors who shared her passion for their fields.

She was also struck by the sense of community among Badgers. “The students here are so helpful and willing to stick together during tough times,” she shared. Even in challenging and competitive courses, she found classmates willing to help one another.

Her biggest lesson from freshman year? Grit.

“Don't let one mistake from freshman year determine your outlook on the rest of the three years you have left.” Irene learned that perseverance is essential, particularly at an academically rigorous university. Showing up and continuing forward—even after mistakes—became easier with practice.

Dreams with a Purpose

Irene hopes her UW–Madison education will prepare her not only as a scholar, but also as a compassionate physician. She wants to combine scientific knowledge with empathetic patient care and ultimately advocate for both mental and physical health.

“I want to be a doctor who listens well, treats holistically, and advocates for mental and physical health with equal importance,” she said.

Her family has encouraged her to work hard, remain calm in uncertain situations, and pursue her desire to help others. As the first person in her family planning a career in healthcare, Irene recognizes both the challenges and opportunities ahead.

A Life-Changing Gift

For Irene, the University League scholarship means much more than financial assistance.

“As a low-income student and the first aspiring female doctor in my family, receiving this scholarship is not just financial relief, it's a life-changing gift.”

She added that the scholarship reminds her that “my dreams are valid and supported” and affirms that others believe in the potential of students who come from humble beginnings but have big aspirations.

The University League is proud to support Irene as she continues her journey toward a career dedicated to serving others.

Meet Our Scholarship Mom

Every year, the University League awards scholarships to deserving UW–Madison students. We meet many of these students and their families at scholarship receptions and enjoy learning about their accomplishments through the League Letter. But what about the parents?

Meet Stephanie Karwacki



Left to right: Tina Bouril and parents Bob Bouril and Stephanie Karwacki

Stephanie attended the L&S reception in 2014, when her daughter, Christina, received the University League Angelena Lenehan Endowed Scholarship. For Christina, the scholarship provided more than financial assistance—it “provided a boost of confidence and an encouraging welcome to the university.”

As the first person in her family to attend college, Stephanie was impressed by the League's commitment to supporting education. After retiring from a career in Clinical Psychology, she found herself with more time to connect with her community and become involved with organizations that give back while also providing opportunities for friendship and fun.

The University League was a perfect fit.

A Scholarship Story That Comes Full Circle

We often wonder what happens to our scholarship recipients after graduation. Christina is a wonderful success story. She earned a B.S. in Psychology from UW–Madison, followed by an M.S. in Genetic Counseling Studies. Today, she works in Genetic Counseling, Medical Genetics, Hematology and Oncology with Dean SSM Health in Madison.

Christina expressed her appreciation for the support she received, saying, “I am beyond grateful and appreciative.” And today, her mother Stephanie is part of the organization that helped give Christina that important start—a wonderful example of how the impact of a University League scholarship can extend far beyond a single award.

Past Presidents' Luncheon

Cindy May

As Past President, I had the pleasure of hosting the annual Past Presidents' Luncheon at Blackhawk Country Club on April 23rd.

Those attending included Theresa Calderon, Rose Fahien, Janice Golay, Betsy Haimson, Linda Harvey, Kay Jarvis-Sladky, Bobbie Johnson, Roma Lenehan, Caroline Liedtke, Sally Lorenz, Sandy Nuernberg, and Barbara Rogers. President John Shanda and Vice President Donna McCarthy-Beckett also joined us.

Over lunch, each Past President shared a favorite memory from her time in office. It was a wonderful opportunity to reminisce, catch up with old friends, and celebrate the history and traditions of the University League.

A very pleasant time was had by all!





**Thank You for Your Generous Donations to the 2026 Scholarship Benefit,
including with the Spring Luncheon and the 125th Quasquicentennial Celebration**

\$25 - \$249

Ruth Arnold
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Jacqui and John Shanda
Cindy May
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2025-2026 University
League Board
Verelene Morris
William Zarnstorff
Beverly Zarnstorff

University League Fall Coffee
Wednesday, September 23, 2026: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Blackhawk Country Club

Katie Gillespie, Clinical Associate Professor, UW School of Nursing
The Role of the Nursing Profession in the Future American Medical System

Reservation deadline: September 14, 2026 (No refunds after this date)

Member: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Additional member: _____ Phone: _____

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

____ Reservations @ \$30 each (includes meal and program)..... \$ _____

General Scholarship \$ _____

Great Dane Readers..... \$ _____

For donations “In Honor of” or “In Memory of” please circle IHO or IMO here and provide contact information below. (General Scholarship only please.)

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Contact information for IHO or IMO _____

Menu (list any dietary restrictions below):

Orange Juice, scrambled eggs, bacon, toasted English muffin, breakfast potatoes

Water, coffee and/or tea

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.)

Or register online using the link or QR code on page 2

Mail to: University League, Inc., PO Box 5064, Madison, WI 53705
Reservation form and payment must be in hand by September 14, 2026
Questions? Call Rich Leffler at (608) 345-7782



The University League, Inc.
Post Office Box 5064
Madison, WI 53705-0064

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2026-27

University League
Scholarship Awards

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

 Benefit/General Scholarship Awards \$45,480	 Endowed Scholarship Awards \$142,462	 Total Scholarship Awards \$187,492
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Because of your generosity, we can continue investing
in the future of UW–Madison students.