



College of Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Jottings

& DIGRESSIONS

INFORMATION SCHOOL

VOLUME 50, NO. 2 • SPRING 2021



UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

2021 Distinguished Alumnus: Patrick Losinski | PAGE 3

iSchool Receives Major Gift | PAGE 4

Student Pandemic Experiences | PAGE 5

Spring time on Library Mall.

CONTENTS

2	FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR	6	ALUMNI NEWS
3	2021 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS	7	FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES
4	MARY ELIZABETH KOCH DONATION	8	HISTORICAL FACTS
5	STUDENT NEWS		



iSchool Director Kyung-Sun 'Sunny' Kim

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

From the Director's Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As the academic year progresses, I am encouraged by the dedication and resilience of our faculty, staff, and students to make the most of this challenging time. Campus leadership has been steadfast in their commitment to providing a safe learning environment for all on campus through extensive COVID-19 testing protocols and tracking. Despite ongoing challenges, the iSchool continues to grow in order to expand our influence and anchor our traditions. The first MS Information cohort will begin in Fall 2021 and we anticipate new projects and passions to flourish for both MA and MS students under the expanded curriculum. With these new opportunities comes the need for more student and staff space. The iSchool is lucky to be included in a new campus building project anticipated to be completed in late 2024. Watch the iSchool's social media and future *Jottings* publications for information about the new building's design and location. And, last but not least, I am extremely grateful for an unprecedented donation made by the estate of Ms. Mary Elizabeth Koch. The Mary Elizabeth Koch Fund will continue in perpetuity and support the research and diversity missions of the iSchool.

This academic year concludes my term as director of the Information School. Throughout the years I served as director, I enjoyed connecting with alumni and friends of the school. Thank you for all you do to help the iSchool educate strong leaders and practitioners in the LIS community.

With gratitude,
Dr. Kyung-Sun 'Sunny' Kim

Jottings is the alumni newsletter
of the Information School
600 North Park Street
Madison, WI 53706
ischool.wisc.edu

E-mail: alumni@ischool.wisc.edu

Director of the Information School:
Professor Kyung-Sun Kim

Jottings Editor: Molly Jensen
Staff Advisor: Anna Palmer

Contact for gifts information:
Tanya Cobb, Alumni Relations
alumni@ischool.wisc.edu

Design: University Marketing

On Facebook:
UW-Madison Information School
On Twitter: @UWMadiSchool
On Instagram: @UWMadiSchool

Send news for *Jottings*:
alumni@ischool.wisc.edu



UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Please consider contributing to the iSchool scholarship, facilities,
student travel, or research funds.

Online and mail-in options are available.

Learn more at go.wisc.edu/ischoolgiving

2021 Distinguished Alumnus: Patrick Losinski



The iSchool is excited to name **Patrick Losinski (MA'83)** as the 2021 Distinguished Alumnus. Patrick is currently the CEO of the Columbus Metropolitan Library in Ohio.

Tell us a little about your background.

I grew up in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and attended UW–Stevens Point. My

degree included an internship for the local cable access television station located in the Portage County Public Library. One day, I had an in-depth discussion with the library director about how he became a librarian. Years later, I applied to the then named School of Library and Information Studies and went on to work in Wisconsin, Illinois, Colorado, and finally, Columbus, Ohio. It's been a very rewarding experience. My work with the Urban Libraries Council and the International Federation of Library Associations led to global travel with my family, enriching our lives with greater cultural appreciation. We have deep roots in Wisconsin and anyone who knows our family knows that we are all Badgers, all of the time!

How did your time in Madison influence your career?

My professors were amazing. They created thought-provoking classes, often utilizing librarians as guest speakers, and challenged us to do our best work. Faculty members were very networked and demonstrated their commitment to the profession at conferences and symposiums. Students were encouraged to co-design practicum experiences that led to practical skills and a robust professional network. Finally, professors were authentic and accessible mentors for all students. Receiving the Distinguished Alumnus Award is a reminder to be intentional and purposeful about how to pay it forward.

Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will permanently change how libraries operate? How can libraries leverage this time to serve their communities better?

The Columbus Metropolitan Library was founded in 1873. Our Main Library opened in 1907 and it has served continuously as a library since that date. We have stories about our library during the 1918–1919 pandemic! We need to take the long view on current events and understand that libraries will continue to thrive because people will need help and have the desire to participate in civic endeavors. Libraries are always evolving so the pandemic may not be the only catalyst for changes on the horizon.

However, the pandemic is the greatest career challenge most of us have ever faced. Libraries have demonstrated our remarkable ability to innovate and serve customers in new ways. We also benefit from our professional culture of sharing. It's hard to name another profession that freely gives away its best ideas to "competitors." That's why it works — because libraries are not in competition — we are collaborators who serve and help. Recently, we've talked about evolving from the "business of libraries" to the "business of community recovery." We have the ability partner with nonprofits, government agencies, and private industry to do whatever it takes to help our communities recover.

What do you enjoy most in your role as CEO of the Columbus Metro Library?

It is impossible to single out what I enjoy "most." One of the aspects of being the CEO of an urban public library is the variety of work, including: strategy, finance, personnel, public relations, information technology, fundraising, new building design, community relations, government relations, collections, history, children's programming, security, and on, and on, and on! No two days are the same and it is a perfect career for someone with interests in many aspects of life. I didn't understand how satisfying librarianship would be when I started, but I'm very grateful for all of the experiences afforded to me during my career. This honor has provided me with the opportunity for deep reflection on my time in libraries that all began thanks to UW–Madison.

Lifelong Reader Gives to the iSchool

The iSchool recently received an unprecedented gift: a **\$5.5 million donation** with the flexibility to be used at the discretion of the school. The gift will support the research and diversity missions of the iSchool. Specifically, the gift is expected to fund the research of new junior faculty members, helping them become prominent scholars in the information field and giving iSchool students more opportunities to collaborate with faculty in their research. Diversity projects may include scholarships, as well as support for projects seeking to further strengthen inclusivity and equity at the iSchool.

The generous donation was made by the estate of **Mary Elizabeth Koch**, an avid reader with connections to Madison. Born in Pasadena, California, in 1920, Ms. Koch's family moved to Madison when she was seven years old. Her father completed a PhD and joined the faculty at UW–Madison, and Ms. Koch eventually earned a bachelor of science degree in education.

After teaching for a year and spending a few years working in the private sector, Ms. Koch accepted a position in Washington, DC, where she worked for the Civilian Personnel Division of the United States Air Force at the Pentagon. In 1956, she moved to the Los Angeles area and married Oliver T. "Joe" Koch in 1961. When she retired in 1978, she held the rank of Deputy Chief of Civilian Personnel for the Air Force Ballistic Missile and Space Program.

Ms. Koch loved books and reading. Upon retiring, she found time to indulge that love. Averaging about 68 books per year, she recorded reading more than 1,900 books from 1986 to 2014. Though her reading habits are documented less after 2014, she still read many books every year until the end of her life in 2019.

The iSchool is humbled by the generosity of Mary Elizabeth Koch and will use her gift to continue its mission to educate responsible leaders, critical thinkers, and creative innovators in the information professions.



WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

As Ms. Koch was an annual supporter of the iSchool, former iSchool Director Kristin Eschenfelder had been in regular correspondence with her. In 2017, Ms. Koch called Eschenfelder seeking help placing a memoir written by a Wisconsin-born Civil War soldier who escaped from a Confederate prison in Virginia. She hoped that the volume would find a permanent home in a Wisconsin archive. Eschenfelder consulted with iSchool staff member Meredith Lowe to determine where it belonged. Meredith contacted the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, which gladly accepted the volume. *Personal Reminiscences of Libby Prison and My Escape Therefrom, 1904* by Albert Wallber is now part of the collection at the Veterans Museum.

Librarianship Runs in the Family

First year student Monika Hetzler is about to have more in common with her mom. Her mother, Svetha Hetzler, is the library director at the Sun Prairie (WI) Public Library and had a significant influence on Monika's decision to pursue the library profession. "Growing up, my mom would always take us to the library with her. I would see my mom and other librarians lead programs, help patrons find books, and continue to put in the ongoing work of fostering a safe and welcoming environment for patrons. Those trips to the library were my favorite."

During college, Monika learned about the opportunity gap and the role literacy plays in inequality. While working at a literacy intervention non-profit, she realized she wanted to further her education to work in public libraries and provide services that support literacy for all. As an iSchool student, she works for the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC). "Working in a library that specializes and does ground-breaking research about representation and racial equity in publishing has been my favorite experience so far as a student," she says.

All the while, she remembers the days she enjoyed hanging out at the library with her mom. Now, however, with almost a year of coursework completed, Monika has conversations about library theory and database vocabulary with her mom. As she enters the library profession, she'll always have a mentor.

Monika Hetzler is the recipient of the Olive Dornfeld Busjaeger Centennial Scholarship Fund donated by Mr. and Mrs. George G. Babcock.



Svetha and Monika Hetzler

For iSchool giving information, visit go.wisc.edu/ischoolgiving

What is graduate school like during a global pandemic?

We asked four iSchool students to share their experiences.



Kristen Huset

I have found being a student during a pandemic to be a bit of a mixed blessing. As a part-time student with a full-time job, I find it hard to balance work, school, and a social life. I have more free time now because I'm not commuting and no longer

feel pressure to go out when I know I should be reading or writing. However, I really miss being in person and the connection to others that comes with it.

Rebeca Jefferson

I live just outside Madison with my elderly parents. Before the pandemic, they were quite independent. I have now become their full-time driver, errand runner, and sole source of social activity. On top of my full-time course load

and teaching assistant job, it has certainly been a lot to manage. However, the upside: I no longer have to make the commute. On snowy days, I'm especially grateful to participate in class without braving the roads.



Jason Thomason

I've had online classes before, and I found that I much preferred learning in a classroom to learning through my laptop. Despite that, this past year has taught me new ways of connecting and learning with people that I wouldn't have

considered in ordinary circumstances. Even if things haven't gone the way I was expecting, I've still been able to broaden my horizons and gain valuable new experiences that I can carry with me into the future.

Peg Watson

I moved to Madison specifically for an on-campus program. My experience has deviated significantly from my original vision yet has still turned out to be fantastic. Socially isolating has provided time to be outdoors: hiking with my dog more than I



anticipated, getting my bike reconditioned and starting to ride again, and kayaking on Lake Monona in the summer. While these are not studious pursuits, they have been a very rejuvenating aspect of my iSchool experience.

Rachel Vagts (MA'97) Heads SAA as President



Rachel Vagts did not anticipate that serving as the president of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) would involve responding to a global pandemic, but she has successfully helped the organization through the unprecedented circumstances. This meant moving programs to virtual formats and adjusting the budget to avoid layoffs. The

organization has had overdue conversations about systemic racism and organized a successful members-driven fundraiser for archival workers in pandemic-related financial challenges.

The variety of Rachel's experiences at the iSchool helped her be adaptable as SAA's president. "I knew I wanted to be an archivist, but also did a practicum at the reference desk at College Library. I've never had a job exclusively as a librarian, but I definitely used those versatile skills during my career." She encourages current students to keep their options open by taking advantage of the many opportunities available during the master's program.

Between learning theory in the classroom and working at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Rachel made lifelong connections with mentors and classmates. "It's been really good to see how our lives have taken us to academic institutions, business, public libraries... even into municipal administration. Our education at Madison definitely prepared us for lots of options." Classes led by Dee Michel, Louise Robbins, and Wayne Wiegand were especially memorable.

Rachel has applied her professional skills all over the country. As a student, she worked as a project archivist, which led to her first job preparing Katherine Anne Porter's papers for microfilm at the University of Maryland. Following, she spent fifteen years at Luther College in Iowa before moving to Berea College in Kentucky. At Berea, she led two major projects: implementing an archives management system for finding aids and a digital preservation solution to provide access to digital collections.

Currently, Rachel is the manager of Special Collections and Digital Archives at the Denver Public Library and stays connected to Madison through her deep loyalty to Badger basketball. Thank goodness for the Big Ten Network! She will lead SAA as president until August 2021.

Rita Ormsby (MA'92) Inducted in the SLA Hall of Fame



It was not a straight road to librarianship and a 2020 induction into the Special Library Association (SLA) Hall of Fame for **Rita Ormsby**. Rita's career started with a journalism degree and continued with twelve years as a legal assistant. After volunteering for the public library in Minneapolis, she decided to apply to the then named School of Library and

Information Studies in the early 1990s.

While studying in Madison, Rita focused on learning as much as she could about the variety within library and information professions. Reference practica under Michael Enyart of the Business Library and Ron Larson (MA'78) at the Madison newspapers helped her learn about the different shapes librarianship could take. She recalls, "I tried to take courses that helped develop practical skills. I found Louise Robbins, in her first year

of director, as being very encouraging." Additionally, being a student member of SLA provided contacts with Madison librarians and offered opportunities to gain experience with informal learning experiences.

After graduation, Rita moved to New York City and worked at a few different institutions before joining Baruch College as an information services librarian. She eventually achieved tenure and the rank of associate professor. At Baruch, she realized the rewarding aspect of introducing students, who were often the first of their family to attend college, to information resources and watching them advance to pursue their own careers.

Rita continued her active involvement with SLA, leading her fellow information professionals to recognize her contributions by nominating her to the SLA Hall of Fame. In response, Rita states, "I spent most years in awe of the work and accomplishments of many members of the association and the New York chapter so I was surprised to receive the award." She was inducted into the Hall of Fame in October 2020 at the (virtual) SLA Conference.

Faculty and Staff Updates

Catherine Arnott Smith, professor, published a new health informatics textbook, *Consumer Health Informatics: Enabling Digital Health for Everyone*, in the CRC Healthcare Informatics series. She also published two book chapters: “Consumer Health Literacy, the National Library of Medicine, and the Public Library: Bridging the Gaps” and “Science Education as a Barrier against ‘Fake Health News.’” Both her informatics and LIS research center on problems of health information provision outside of clinical spaces.

Corey Jackson, Anna Julia postdoctoral scholar, published five research articles with co-authors from the iSchool at Syracuse, Zooniverse (Chicago’s Adler Planetarium), and IBM Research. Two articles received Honorable Mention Awards for Best Paper, “Shifting Forms of Engagement: Volunteer Learning in Online Citizen Science” from the ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (top 5% of submissions) and “Methodological Reinforcements: Investigating Work Through Trace Data and Text” at the International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics.

Meredith Lowe, outreach specialist, is serving as the new administrator for the Human Computer Interaction Consortium (HCIC), a membership organization of academic, research, and industry experts in the field of human-computer interaction. She is also serving on the Society of American Archivists A*Census II working group.

David Price, the friendliest face at the iSchool, retired in August 2020. Everyone will miss seeing him in the front office when we return to campus. His kind and welcoming manner to all at the iSchool will be unmatched.

Dorothea Salo, distinguished faculty associate, published the chapter “Is There A Text in These Data?” in the MIT Press book *Reassembling Scholarly Communications*. The IMLS-funded Data Doubles research project on which she is a co-investigator published “We’re Being Tracked at All Times” in *JASIST*. Her article “Physical-Equivalent Privacy” appeared in *Serials Review* in early 2021. She has also given several Badger Talks webinars on rescuing A/V materials and protecting personal privacy and security online.

Rebekah Willett, associate professor, published three pieces in 2020: 1) “The Can-do Girl Goes to Coding Camp: A discourse analysis of news reports on coding initiatives designed for girls” in *Learning, Media and Technology* with Maureen Mauk and Natalie Coulter; 2) “Methodological Issues in Researching Children and Digital Media” in *The Routledge Companion to Digital Media and Children* with Chris Richards; and 3) “Children and Media” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood Studies*. She also received a grant with Peter Wardrip (UW Department of Curriculum and Instruction) from IMLS for a project entitled “Designing Home Learning Materials for High-Need Families: Lessons from/for Museums and Libraries.”

In Memoriam

Jane L. Anderson (MA’79) passed away on January 5, 2021, at the age of 75. She worked as a librarian for Evansville Community School District for 33 years and advised several student organizations including AFS (American Field Service), enjoying the close relationships she built with students and their families.

Helen L. Hartley Kuntz (BLS’43), one of the oldest graduates of the UW–Madison iSchool, passed away on October 11, 2020, at 100+ years old. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University, she enrolled in the bachelor of library science program at UW–Madison. Early in her career she was a librarian at Madison’s Central High School and founded the church library for First United Methodist Church. In Nigeria in the 1970s, she volunteered in libraries and collaborated with local librarians. Upon returning to Madison, she was a librarian for the Department of Plant Pathology. In retirement, she continued to volunteer, sharing her professional skills for over 70 years.

Brian Mulhern (MA’87) passed away in August 2020. His career included working at the University of Minnesota Social Welfare History Archives, Luther Seminary Library, the Minneapolis Public Library, the Minnesota State Law Library, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Brian was an enthusiastic supporter of many LGBT organizations such as Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, Out and About Theater, and the Minneapolis Gay Pride Parade. His personal papers have been donated to the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. He is survived by his life partner of 47 years, Dave Wood.

Father Francis Steffen (MA’68) passed away on December 28, 2020. He was proud of his degree and was an active member of the Wisconsin Library Association, especially in the school library media area.

Richard West (MA’74) passed away on November 29, 2020. Richard was a senior academic librarian at UW–Madison’s Wendt Library for 38 years and a recognized scholar of J.R.R Tolkien, serving as an advisor to the UW–Madison Tolkien and Fantasy Society.



Information School
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #658
Madison, WI

Information School
4217 Helen C. White Hall
600 North Park Street
Madison, WI 53706

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2021 Virtual iSchool Commencement

Please watch for information via
email/social media to help us
celebrate the class of 2021!

DID YOU KNOW?

HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE ISCHOOL

- The first library education courses in Wisconsin were held as a summer program in 1895.
- The school was formally established in 1906 as the Wisconsin Library School. That makes the iSchool 115 years old!
- The degree became a master's program in 1950, aligning with national trends.
- Non-credit professional development courses have been available through the school since 1964.
- The first PhD graduate was Mary L. Woodworth in 1968. Dr. Woodworth eventually joined the faculty.
- The school moved into Helen C. White Hall in 1974 after being located in at least three different locations.
- The online master's degree began in 2005 as a program with courses delivered from Madison via live broadcast video to three sites in Illinois.



Students in front of the Library School, 1962