



Torchlight eNewsletter - Fall 2022



Torchlight is a companion publication of the Torch for alumni and friends of UMN Crookston.

Is UMN Crookston a time machine?

Earlier this month we celebrated Homecoming 2022. It was a wonderful time to welcome alumni back to campus, reminisce and catch-up during socials, recognize achievements during the Alumni Awards Celebration, and show our maroon and gold pride during the many events scheduled throughout the week. The cherry on top was the amazing weather we had – warm with a bit of fall crisp in the air, sunny blue skies, and surprisingly only a little wind.

I had the privilege of leading the alumni campus tour that Saturday morning. It reminded me of the tour we gave during last year's homecoming to a fun group of 1990 alumni. It is such a joy to bring our visiting alumni to spots on campus that bring forth incredible memories of their time as students. It's also an honor to be a part of those moments – to see the look in their eyes and the smile on their faces while they share stories of those fun and important times in their lives while at UMN Crookston. For some, these memories may have resurfaced for the first time in decades by just being in the location again – whether visiting a classroom in Dowell Hall, walking past McCall Hall or through Skyberg Hall, or taking a seat in Kiehle Auditorium. It's fun to share the changes that have occurred on campus since they were students – the locations where current students are creating their own memories.

Participating in homecoming and leading these tours makes me wonder if UMC is a time machine. Within just a brief amount of time, our visiting alumni are transported back to their youth through the flood of cherished memories when they were students, while touring historic and new parts of campus, and when we share the exciting ways we're preparing our current students for their own bright futures.

No matter how long you've been away, one year or 60 years, you're always welcome back to campus. Reconnect with the richness of your UMC experience, see what we're up to today, and learn about what's ahead. If you want to experience time travel, a visit to campus may be just what you need.

Remember, UMC will always be your home.



Kevin D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Interim Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations
University and Alumni Relations

#UMNproud #WingsUp #IAmCrookston



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HOME COMING



That's a Wrap! HOME COMING

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GO MAROON.
GO GOLD.
GO HOME COMING!



That's a Wrap!

Homecoming week was held October 2-9, 2022 and it was full of fun maroon and gold activities for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community. Check out the moments captured in our [Homecoming photo gallery](#) as well as read about award recipients and Athletic Hall of Fame inductees from this year's Alumni Awards Celebration event held October 7.



Brant Moore 2014

Business Management

Written by Sandra Yerges 2022

Seeing is believing: a phrase exemplifying Brant Moore's 2014 experience at the University of Minnesota Crookston. After Moore's father sent in his football highlight reel and caught the attention of the Golden Eagle football coach, Moore took a trip from his home in Saint Paul, Minn., to Crookston to narrow down his potential college options. He met with his admissions counselor, Paige Eskelson 2008, a staff member who would become an instrumental member of his college career. His grade point average was nothing to brag about, but he knew college was the next step. With his collection of excellent recommendation letters and his desire to attend college close to home, Moore applied and was accepted to the University. At the time, he believed his references opened the door for him, but it was not until later he found out there was someone rooting for him from the very beginning.



With the large influx of students attending UMN Crookston in 2010, Moore's freshman year, the dorm room availability was scarce. According to Moore, the overflow of students would stay at the Crookston Inn and commute a small distance to campus for class and other activities. Living off campus may sound like a fun adventure for some, but Moore was not thrilled to hear he was almost considered to live there. Without a vehicle, the sub-zero walk to campus in the winter was not something to look forward to. When a room for him opened in Skyberg, he happily moved in. Little did he know this room placement in Skyberg would be the meeting place that shaped his future. This same year in the dorms, Moore met his wife, Toynell Delaney 2014. They dated through their four years of college and were married their senior year. In addition to his wife, he also met his friend and 2014 Crookston Student Association President Alexmai Addo 2014 in the dorms, who stayed close to him ever since.

There was another side of dorm life Moore was able to experience as he worked as a Community Advisor (CA) for Skyberg Hall after his freshman year. This role allowed him to lead the campus community and prepare enjoyable activities for the residents to attend, including movie nights and meals catered from Hong's Chinese Restaurant. The CA's were also expected to change the bulletin boards on a monthly basis and develop creative themes to go along with them. Although Moore does not remember every design he created, there was one he continues to be proud of to this day. One month, he created a board with the message, "there is beauty in everyone." He collected photos and the height, weight, and ages of celebrities and wrote "beauty: 100%" next to them. Moore's goal was to show students that differences are what make each other beautiful. Memories like these made the job rewarding. "I wouldn't give it back for anything," he expressed.

While working as a CA as well as a security officer one summer, Moore became close with Gary Willhite, director of residential life and security. Willhite worked as Moore's boss and they often worked on projects with one another. Around the end of Moore's sophomore year, the talk of the campus was the newly-constructed Heritage Hall. Once the building was standing and in need of decor, Willhite enlisted his help in choosing wall decorations for the lobby. The large buffalo head greeting everyone who enters the building was a decision Moore was a part of. He recalled Willhite being thoroughly excited about adding this to the wall, and it continues to be a conversation piece for residents and guests to this day.

Rachel Lundbohm, associate professor in the business department, was another individual who played an important role in Moore's Crookston journey. He was an intern for Lundbohm in the Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES) where he worked on various business-related projects. Moore explained the responsibility he was granted gave him a glimpse into a professional career. Lundbohm focused on teaching and held him accountable for his work, which pushed him to strive for success with the work he was given. She was always there for him and a great mentor as well. It was impactful for Moore "to have people who actually care about the outcome you have when you graduate."

Moore maximized his four years at UMN Crookston by involving himself and being the starting force of many clubs and activities. Outside of his membership in Enactus and the National Society of Leadership and Success, Moore and his friends recognized there was an opportunity to create a club for black students on campus. With this in mind, they developed the Black Student Association at the University that is still in session today. His role within the organization was chair of events, a position allowing him to plan and host events on campus. He fondly remembers a February event where performers and poets would visit the school and show off their talents to students. Adding on to his list of founding activities, Moore and his friends were also the first group to start the powderpuff football game during Homecoming. These games were often intense as the players put their all into this activity. It was a great way for the students to get together, dress up with face paint, and cheer on their friends. Moore feels grateful some of the efforts he created a decade ago continue to impact the lives of today's students.



On the day of his graduation, Moore was handed a letter from Eskelson, his guiding resource from his first visit to Crookston. After the ceremony and celebrations concluded, he opened the envelope to find a note with a powerful sentiment inside. Eskelson explained she saw something in Moore and knew he was going to go far with his Crookston education. She continued by stating because of his grades, he was not going to be considered in the admissions process. That did not stop Eskelson from advocating for him and acting upon her instinct that he was going to achieve greatness. "I got into college because someone believed in me," Moore proudly shared. During the four years of his time at UMN Crookston, the campus community became closer with his work in founding various on campus programs, he received his degree in business management, and was accepted into grad school at DePaul University. All of these successes stemmed from Eskelson's unwavering belief in Moore.

When faced with a career offer from Frito-Lay right out of college, Moore could not pass up the opportunity to begin his professional life. He deferred from DePaul University for the time being as he worked in a sales leadership role in Fargo, N.D., for the following two years. Going from one large company to another, Moore made his way over to Microsoft and joined the cloud Azure team. It was then he realized how much he enjoyed the technology industry and never looked back. One year later, he and his wife moved to Austin, Tex., and started a new chapter of their lives there. Throughout the first few years in Austin, Moore worked for Box as well as a start-up technology company.

Another beginning occurred around this same time: he and his wife became parents. In 2020 when his daughter was born, Moore took a step away from the technology business and became a stay-at-home dad. While he was taking in all the new memories he could with his daughter, he also began a financial coaching business, Atlas Financial Coaching LLC, giving advice to businesses in need. He mentioned an entrepreneur class he previously enrolled in helped in beginning this new venture. Even though it was a lot of hard work, it was rewarding to see how far the business has come and the impact he continues to make in others' lives. After two years, Moore began applying to new technology businesses and was granted a position at Google, an accomplishment Moore is both proud of and attributes to his education from UMN Crookston. Learning how to problem solve through his internship experiences and be a leader as a CA were all skills he takes with him in the working world. He also uses the unconventional lessons he learned from his business courses, such as "thrive with ambiguity" and the importance of empathy throughout everyday life in his profession.



As a father of two, one daughter and another baby on the way in October, Moore cherishes the time he spends with his family. Together, they enjoy visiting parks and eating out at restaurants in Austin and the surrounding area. With big dreams in mind, Moore wishes to attend graduate school in the near future as well. No school is off limits as he is planning to apply to various Ivy League universities. He stated, "Maybe I won't get into those schools, but now I have the confidence to know that I'm smart, and to know that I can do something, and know that I am worth something because someone fought for me, and that's what Crookston does."

Paul Gregg 1977

Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management

Written by Adria Peters, student intern

Paul Gregg, who has owned the Irishman's Shanty in Crookston since 1984, got his start at the University of Minnesota Crookston Technical College as a Trojan. He studied hotel, restaurant, and institutional management with a restaurant management concentration, earning an associate in applied science degree in 1977, and was involved in tennis. He even worked at the Irishman's Shanty while he was in school.



Gregg's favorite memory from his time at the college was an end-of-the-year-project where he created a mock restaurant with employees, a head chef, manager, and recruited Crookston citizens as customers. Gregg was in charge of the advertising aspect of this project, and his team chose a Polynesian restaurant theme where their slogan was, "If you can't afford a vacation, eat like you're on one." He said their project even made it on Channel 11 news.

"This project was so real and authentic that the team even had to do profit and loss, marketing, and payroll for the employees," Gregg stated.



After graduating from UMN Crookston, Gregg landed a job working for Holiday Inn in Mankato, Minnesota. He then made the decision to go back to school at Minnesota State University, Mankato where he graduated with a business major and finance concentration. Deciding if he wanted to go the corporate route with Holiday Inn, or the proprietor route with a new opportunity posed to him by his brother, he eventually landed on what he referred to as, "buying yourself a job, or a prison sentence." This led him to where he is today, owning the Irishman's Shanty, which has been around since 1945.

Gregg's family includes his wife of 33 years, Cindy 1988 and 2004, and two sons, Andy and Matt. His oldest son, Matt, is an engineer and has one child and another on the way, making Gregg a grandfather. Gregg's youngest son, Andy, will be taking over the Irishman's Shanty, carrying on the business.

"Andy always wanted cooking supplies and cooking things for Christmas," Gregg recalled. "He is so excited and has already jumped right into it with many great ideas and suggestions for the restaurant."

Gregg says he is forever grateful for the opportunities the University of Minnesota Crookston Technical College offered him during his two years as a student; which helped him learn the ins and outs of owning a successful restaurant. Gregg says he loved the small classes, great teachers, and amazing community of the college. He's always willing to hire UMN Crookston students to work for him because they are "always such hardworking, ambitious people." Gregg currently has three UMN Crookston students working for him.

“I love watching the students mature and grow from freshman to graduates,” he said proudly. “This college is truly a hidden gem.”

UMN Crookston will always hold a special place in his heart, Gregg adds.



Allan Dragseth 1957

*Northwest School of Agriculture
Written by Jess Bengtson 2010*

He’s used to the local attention for his involvements, but Northwest School of Agriculture alumnus Allan Dragseth 1957 received national attention during the summers of 2021 and 2022 for one of his special projects. Dragseth built a “Radio Flyer” car modeled after the original little red wagon he had as a child and has been seen at area events and cruising the streets of Crookston.

The project got its start after Dragseth, a retired farmer of 65 years, saw something similar on YouTube and began looking for cars. In the fall of 2020, he found a Ford Fiesta at a junkyard but it didn’t have a key so he kept looking and a couple weeks later he stumbled upon a Pontiac Sunbird.



“We had some aluminum sheets from a grain wagon laying in the trees on our farm for about 20 years, so I brought five in and made the box of the car,” Dragseth explained. “People thought I was making a duck boat before I got the decals from Kustom Kollision.”

Dragseth brought the finished product to Crookston’s annual summer festival Ox Cart Days in August 2021 and parked the Radio Flyer car in the middle of the Crookston Sports Center during a visit from The Hershey Company of Pennsylvania, who were there to promote a smores fire table project built by local high schoolers. The Radio Flyer car even made it in several scenes of Hersheys’ YouTube video that’s now been viewed over 30,000 times.



Then came 2022 when Twin Cities news station KARE 11 featured Dragseth and his project in Boyd Huppert's Land of 10,000 Stories series. The story's subtitle reads, "80 years ago, Allan Dragseth played with a little red wagon. Now he drives one." KARE 11's story video has been viewed on Facebook close to 50,000 times and was shared by hundreds of people.

"They came to Crookston and spent five-and-a-half hours recording video then they got it to three minutes," Dragseth explained. "Scott Maves and his son came out from True Value Hardware for an interview."

Dragseth's Radio Flyer project story was also picked up by networks in New York, Illinois, Idaho, and California.

The Radio Flyer car is now put into storage at the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Museum in Crookston, a place Dragseth helped found. Dragseth recalls being on the Polk County Museum board of directors in the 1990s and hoped to devote a place exclusively to sugarbeet equipment, so, years later, he and others found property on Crookston's south end for exactly that.

"Before we signed the papers, Tri-Valley (Opportunity Council, Inc.) got a hold of me asking about the other buildings on the site and we worked it out so we got the land and the rent on the building," said Dragseth. "I had a lot of equipment and then we added some, now they're here in the museum. We also have movies we can show about different projects and videos of farm work done in the 1930s and 1940s that we've recorded to DVD."



The RRV Sugarbeet Museum houses dozens of antique machinery and hosts an annual "Harvest Festival" event the second Sunday in September. Harvest Festival activities include a live sugarbeet harvest using both old and new equipment to compare, showcasing museum machinery, using an "old-fashioned" combine to cut grain, and, in the past, they've had a tractor pull and steam engine thrashing.



One future plan for the Sugarbeet Museum Dragseth would like to see come to fruition is to get a video kiosk designed like a tractor where guests could use a steering wheel to move the screen and pull a lever to shift between videos that would show farm work, machine restoration, and other museum-worthy clips.

Other involvements Dragseth is known for include being on the Care and Share homeless shelter board and the foundation board for Benedictine Living Community's Villa St. Vincent nursing home and Summit Apartments for assisted living, plus he was previously on the Crookston School Board, RiverView Health hospital board, and the Eldred Elevator board. He and his wife of 63 years, Judy, also have a student scholarship they provide.

The Dragseth's son, Paul, sadly passed away in the fall of 2021 and Allan's grandsons have now taken over the family farm in which Allan has offered to them advice stemming from his years of experience.

Before his decades of running the family farm where they grew and harvested sugar beets, wheat, barley, soybeans, and sunflowers, Dragseth attended the Northwest School of Agriculture from 1953-1957 with “longer days” of “pretty intense” education.

“The classes I took were mainly towards agriculture,” Dragseth recalled. “We started October 1 and were out by the end of March. On the weekends I went home and helped on the farm. One of my favorite classes was geometry.”

Dragseth was even named valedictorian in 1957.

Today, Dragseth looks forward to watching his grandsons farm and working to finish yet another project - a 1928 International truck with a handmade box that’s currently sitting in the back of the museum.



What's Your Story?

We want to hear about your experiences at UMN Crookston or NWSA and how they have made an impact on your life.

[Tell Us](#)

ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES



Join the UMN Crookston
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

What does the Alumni Board entail?

Are you interested in serving on the University of Minnesota Crookston Alumni Association Board (UMCAA)? The UMCAA represents all UMN Crookston alumni from 1968 to the present.

Board members (volunteer position):

- Are elected during the board's annual meeting
- Serve a two-year term
- Attend board meetings (at least three board meetings are held annually)
- Take part in at least one alumni association sponsored event each year of their term (if permitted by distance and/or via Zoom)
- Serve on board committee(s)
- Contribute your time, UMC pride/passion, and imagination to create fun and exciting opportunities to grow alumni connections and engagement

Complete the UMC Alumni Association Board Member Interest Form below before November 11, 2022 if you are interested in becoming a board member.


[Join the UMC Alumni Board](#)

Advancing Climate Solutions. NOW.
PRESENTED BY THE HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MARSHALL JOHNSON
U of M Crookston alum and Audubon Society Chief Conservation Officer

Thursday, November 10
6 p.m. | Northrop
Free | Tickets required

Made possible by
the Swain Climate Fund



Audubon's Marshall Johnson is our Next Climate Policy Speaker

Climate change threatens to drive nearly two-thirds of North American bird species to extinction, unless we act now. Johnson will speak about the pivotal role that birders can play in addressing the climate crisis on Thursday, November 10 at Northrop. [Register to attend >](#)

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Advancing Climate Solutions. Now. with Marshall Johnson

University of Minnesota Crookston Alumnus, Marshall Johnson 2012, will be the November 10 featured speaker at the Advancing Climate Solutions. Now. presented by The Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

[Get Tickets and Information](#)



GIVE TO THE DAY
17 NOVEMBER 2022

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CROOKSTON



Rory Wutzke of the men's golf team during a Fall 2022 tournament

Athletics Update

Minnesota Crookston athletics is coming off a busy weekend of Homecoming. The weekend was highlighted by a 2-1 victory for **Minnesota Crookston soccer** over Upper Iowa University, their first win in the NSIC in 2022. Alyssa Pavlacic scored the game-winning goal in the 59th minute. The fall teams are currently entering the home stretch with under a month left for most sports.

The **volleyball team** received big news last week with the promotion of Nick Meseck from interim head coach to head coach, and Bret Cariveau from interim assistant coach to assistant coach. Meseck stepped in as the interim in June 2022 and has instilled competitiveness back into the program. The Golden Eagles have a 3-16 (2-9 NSIC) record, tripling their win total from 2021. In addition, Minnesota Crookston has tested a lot of opponents this season. The Golden Eagles have won 18 sets in 2022, compared to nine during the entire 2021 season.

The **men's golf team** has had their best fall season in the past decade led by a second-place finish at the Bemidji State Invitational. Devin Kucy (So., Camrose, Alberta) tied Jake Sanders 2012 with a 67 for the best round since 2009. In addition, the Golden Eagles have shot three of their top 10 rounds since the 2009 season, including a season-low 293 at the Bemidji State Invite. Minnesota Crookston has one tournament remaining during the fall season.

In addition, the **women's golf team** has had their best fall season in program history. They have shot their four-lowest rounds in school history, including a 319 at the Tipsinah Mounds Invitational September 18. UMN Crookston has been guided by stand-out freshman, Anaka Lysne (Wahpeton, N.D.), who shot the two lowest individual rounds in program history, with a 72 and a 74 at the Tipsinah Mounds Invitational.

The **men's and women's cross country** teams have been going strong and continue to show marked improvement. The men's cross country team's best finish was 15th out of 23 teams at the St. Olaf Invitational. Colton Uber (R-So., Brunswick, Ohio) led the team with a time of 28:04.9. The women's cross country team has been propelled by freshman Madison Hilliard (Jacksonville, N.C.). Hilliard placed 76 out of 313 runners at the Augustana Twilight to open the season, defeating a plethora of NCAA Division I runners. She had the 27th-best time of NCAA Division II runners. The best finish for the women's cross country team has been 15th of 20 teams at the St. Olaf Invitational.

The **Golden Eagle equestrian team** has competed in two NCEA meets and two IHSA meets. Minnesota Crookston picked up points from Julianna Gullo (Fr., Itasca, Ill.), Ashlyn Montague (Fr., Draper, Utah), and Fahren Kolpack (Jr., Ontonagon, Mich.) in a 13-3 loss to Delaware State University. Against University of South Carolina, UMN Crookston picked up points from Belle Sand (So., Spicer, Minn.), Gullo, and Olivia Becker (Sr., Deer Park, Wis.). To open the IHSA season, the Golden Eagles picked up high point team honors against North Dakota State University, with Gabriella Siefkes (So., Aberdeen, S.D.) earning high point rider accolades.

The **Minnesota Crookston hockey team** is just getting underway with their season, while the Golden Eagle **men's and women's basketball teams** opened up practice October 15.

SAVE THE DATE



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CROOKSTON



JOIN US IN *Arizona*
FOR TWO GOLDEN EVENTS

ARIZONA SOCIAL

Friday, February 17, 2023

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Apache Wells Country Club

5601 E Hermosa Vista Dr. Mesa, AZ 85215

BREW BASH

Saturday, February 18, 2023

4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Location TBD



Arizona Social and Brew Bash - February 17 & 18, 2023

Alumni and friends of UMN Crookston and the Northwest School of Agriculture are invited to join us in Arizona for socials and fun! RSVP for the events by February 10, 2023 to Angelika Huglen in the Alumni Office at ahuglen@crk.umn.edu or (218) 281-8401.



Pictured from left to right: Keri Youngstrand, Betsy Ferwerda, and Ashley Helgeson

Hello from the UMN Crookston Library Team!

Learn a little about the team, hear what their favorite fall season book is, and get an update on some of their programs!

What is your favorite fall season book?

Keri Youngstrand

Breeds of Cattle, it's a "coffee table book" that lists breeds of cattle and shows photos

Betsy Ferwerda

Any *Harry Potter* book by JK Rowling

(fun fact: the library recently hosted a Harry Potter themed faculty and staff social!)

Ashley Helgeson

Miss Maple's Seeds by Eliza Wheeler

Director of Library Services Keri Youngstrand highlights the library's archives:

"The University archive is being created by our friendly archivist, Betsy, and what we are doing is working on archiving the history of our institution from its inception including Extension with materials from 1895 and on. We also have thesis books that have been digitized online that are the capstone project from graduating seniors from the Northwest School of Agriculture from approximately 1915 to 1935. Some of our current projects are some videos that will be published online most likely this year and we're hoping to do an oral history project with two alumni plus we're looking for more volunteers. If anyone has any materials they'd like to donate to the archive we'd gladly accept them. We'd love them from any time period, but particularly

the tech school timeframe. We will scan them and put them online. Some of those items include photos, programs from events, yearbooks, copies of videos, slides, institutional records, newsletters, and other items deemed appropriate to the mission of the archive. Contact Betsy for more information at bferwer@crk.umn.edu or call 218-281-8404.”

Assistant Librarian Betsy Ferwerda highlights the library’s lease program:

“We have a lease program through Baker and Taylor, and we pick out things for students, staff, and faculty based on the popular fiction that’s been published in the last year or so. We keep it pretty recent and it’s a pretty successful program with the highest checkout rate. That rate has helped increase our circulation statistics. Students really do check out books to read for fun!”

Library Circulation Supervisor Ashley Helgeson highlights the library’s programs:

“I do programming for the library and one of those programs recently held an event during Banned Book Week. We talked about book censorship and dangers, and why you should be reading banned books. It’s kind of a heated topic and we can imagine wanting to shelter kids from heavy topics. I also think books are a really safe place to listen to the whole story. Reading those books helps you develop empathy. The top 10 banned books last year were related to LGBTQ and people not agreeing with lifestyles.”

FACULTY FEATURE

Rachel Hawn, BMM 2016 and 2017

Lecturer & Program Director, Business Department

Written by Jess Bengtson 2010

Rachel Hawn 2016 and 2017 says she admittedly has somewhat of a “geeky” passion for manufacturing and her former coworkers would regularly remind her that she had over-the-top enthusiasm for the industry. Now, she’s taking that passion and turning it into education for her students, as this fall she started as the program director and lecturer for the manufacturing management and quality management programs at the University of Minnesota Crookston.



Hawn grew up in southwest Minnesota in Jackson, and had an original plan to follow in her mother’s footsteps and go into nursing. During her senior year in high school, she enrolled and took post-secondary education option (PSEO) classes at Minnesota West Community and Technical College while working full-time as an assistant manager at a local Burger King 45 hours a week. Hawn’s first official freshman semester, she was still thinking about nursing but changed her path to law enforcement, where she graduated with an applied science degree in 2007. She was licensed as a police officer in Minnesota, but never worked in that role.

After graduation, still trying to figure out where and what exactly she wanted to do, she went back to her roots and continued to work as a nurses aide at the nursing home she had worked at through college, and later transitioned to a role as activities director at a local assisted living facility. About six months after she graduated, Hawn found herself moving to a job in manufacturing working with medical cables where, within a year, she learned how to do every aspect of the job outside of molding.

“The first manufacturer that I worked with was small and had a good variety of tasks, but I needed more of a challenge,” said Hawn.

Hawn later transitioned to AGCO Corporation and began working as a material handler for the lean engineering department. After a year she was promoted to an engineering technician, then senior technician, and then as a supply chain analyst. Her last few years at AGCO were spent working on a highly cross-functional global ERP implementation team, where she learned to navigate the pandemic via Zoom calls with her coworkers around the world.



“We were a very culturally diverse team,” Hawn explained. “I had coworkers in France, Finland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Switzerland - and we all became very close, even through the pandemic. Getting to see them again afterwards was like this amazing reunion.”

In February 2022, Hawn transitioned to a role on the Global IT team, working with the Enterprise Application Services (EAS) team as an IT SAP business analyst for Materials & Logistics.

Hawn was recognized in 2018 with a “STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Production) Ahead” Emerging Leader award from The Manufacturing Institute. Annually there are just 30 women nationally that are honored as emerging leaders. The STEP Ahead initiative launched in 2012 to bolster

manufacturing’s attractiveness to women and to help improve the perception of careers in the industry, plus empower women leaders.

“I enjoy advocating for manufacturing careers because, personally, when I told my mother I was going to work in manufacturing, I received a lengthy lecture about how this was the worst decision ever, and that it wasn't safe, it was dirty work; it was where people went to do horrible monotonous work and not use their brains,” Hawn shared. “Manufacturing today is really anything but that! If you’re willing to learn, manufacturers are willing to train and the opportunities that these employers offer are really endless, all the way from the shop floor to the c suite, the sky is the limit, and the only real limit is your aptitude for dreaming. Manufacturers offer stable work, good benefits, and a safe working environment. Advances in technology are coming in leaps and bounds and it’s amazing to see the manufacturing industry transform before my eyes. Most employers offer tuition reimbursement, which then allows those currently working in the industry to continue their education and to up-skill, this is really a win-win for both the employer and the employee, as the employer is investing in an employee who will bring critical skills back to their workplace, and the employee is then able to advance their education and position themselves strategically for advancement with their employer.”

“We’re working to change perceptions or stigmas people may have about manufacturing because this isn’t the manufacturing that our parents and grandparents worked in,” she added. “A few years back, I had the honor of giving my mother a tour through the AGCO facility in Jackson and I think she was truly amazed at the opportunities that I’ve been given and the work that I had done over the years there. I remember her saying that it seemed like there wasn’t an area of the plant that I hadn’t had some part in developing.”

Hawn mentioned all the literature there is on the underrepresentation of women in the manufacturing sector, including articles within The Manufacturing Institute, which is said to “inspire the next generation of female industry leadership” and “empower women through recognition, research, and leadership, encouraging them to engage their skills in modern manufacturing.”

“Manufacturing has always been a male dominated industry, and sadly women are still underrepresented today,” Hawn continued. “Changing this involves educating, advocating and raising awareness about these disparities. I want to be an example for women everywhere, to show them that they can start at the bottom and work their way to the top, they can do it while they’re raising babies and working towards furthering their education and careers.”



“I started my undergrad at UMC in 2011 and worked gradually towards my manufacturing management and quality management degrees,” she went on. “My last semester at UMC for my manufacturing management degree was with a full credit load, a full-time job, a husband who worked opposite shifts, a one and three year old at home, and a broken leg while I was pregnant with our third son. That semester was one of the most trying times of my life, but I stayed focused and came out on top. I want people to see that if a real person, a mom, a woman, a wife, can make this happen, then they can too.”



Before starting with UMN Crookston, other notable items from Hawn’s past include serving on the Superior City Council in Iowa, writing grants for Superior’s parks committee and fire agency which helped secure new playground equipment and wildland firefighter gear, and, oh yeah, raising seven kids including five of her own, a stepson, and a foreign exchange student. Her husband was formerly the mayor of the small town they lived in and a volunteer firefighter for 20 years before they relocated to Minnesota in 2017 where he now works as an ag service supervisor for Ziegler CAT.

In her “spare” time, Hawn likes “reading” (audible), camping, gardening, kayaking, photography, and fishing with her sons. She also teaches a small group at her local church for Wednesday night AWANA and they’ve spent the last five years remodeling their house, which they turned from a three

bedroom to a six bedroom. Plus, she’s the local international exchange coordinator for EF High School Exchange Year, which helps find host families for international high school students. Hawn does home visits for

the program, works with the schools that the students will attend, and oversees the students while they're in the states for the year.

"I think the opportunities for both the exchange students and their host communities is monumental," said Hawn. "We have a real opportunity to bring the world to our communities, to develop these relationships, and to understand things from a different perspective. I know that the students that we've hosted personally, as well as the students I've gotten to meet over the years, have truly changed my life for the better. I now have a global family and a part of my heart belongs in Denmark, Italy and France now too."

STAFF FEATURE

Vern Shafer

Carpenter

Written by Jess Bengtson 2010

Campus carpenter turns craft into works of art

University of Minnesota Crookston's maintenance carpenter, Vern Shafer, has a knack for repurposing things and after seven years on campus, he's still turning heads with his projects. Among his most popular pieces of art are wood tables he created using the former bleachers of Lysaker Gymnasium. The tables can be seen in the Leadership Room on the second floor of the Sargeant Student Center plus there's an additional side table and bleacher feature wall nearby.



When campus leaders first began talking about replacing the bleachers in Lysaker, Shafer and others asked to save the bleachers, risers, and seating so they could be repurposed. A large container was purchased, and the bleacher pieces were taken out one at a time and stored.

"We scraped all the gum and glue, cleaned them, stacked them, and then I started making projects out of them," Shafer explained. "It took about five to six weeks to tear apart and students helped, too."

Over the next months and years, Shafer worked on places to feature the bleachers such as inside the Welcome Center in Kiehle Building where a wall was covered, in place of random ceiling tiles in Kiehle, and as a surround for picture frames around campus.

"I don't like throwing things away, so I like to recycle and use different things for different projects," Shafer added. "I've taken some sliding doors from the library and converted them into tables, I've made dividers in study rooms from recycled countertops, and I've also created a built-in display case from an open desk area."

If you've ever followed Shafer on one of his "normal" workdays, you might find yourself visiting a variety of buildings as he has project requests from many departments. He's worked on ceilings and roofs, redone duct

work, built shelves, moved heavy equipment for labs, cut doorways, retrenched water lines, helped with snow removal; you name it.

“I work with the children’s center fixing kids’ bikes and trikes, I work near the animals building gates and fixing things, I help in the Sports Center setting up equipment, and I’ve helped design different office spaces,” he explained. “I’m always up to something different.”

“That’s what I like about my job, there’s always something to do,” Shafer continued. “I’m in one of those trades that work with just about everyone. I’ve been in just about everyone’s office to fix or do something.”

Shafer even reconfigured a wood trophy for the campus North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) team after it was broken three separate times.

Shafer is presently wrapping up a renovation project for the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship after flooding in Hill Hall had them temporarily relocated. In that space he has rebuilt walls, reframed doors, and adapted to special requests from employees to ensure the flow of the office matches students’ needs. Adding to his long list, he also just finished helping put together 24-foot long portable dugouts for the soccer team.

“I love my job,” said Shafer. “I get to do some pretty fun stuff.”

When Shafer isn’t going from project to project at work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, three kids, and his grandkids. He even continues his carpentry work at home where he’s currently working on a murphy bed.

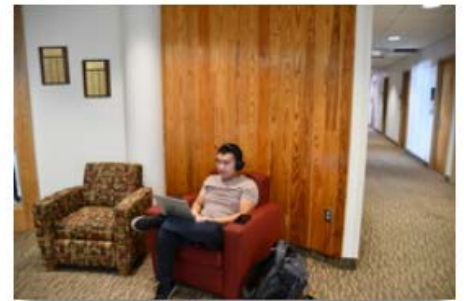


Photo captions: (1) Vern Shafer sits at the table he made using old bleachers from Lysaker Gymnasium - the table is housed in the Leadership Room on the second floor of Sargeant Student Center. (2) Vern Shafer works on a gate for the horse barns. (3) A bleacher wall is featured on the second floor of Sargeant Student Center. (4) Bleacher ceiling tiles can be found in Kiehle Building near the Rotunda. (5) The NACTA team trophy was reconfigured by Vern Shafer. (6) A bleacher wall is featured in the Welcome Center inside Kiehle Building.



Hispanic Heritage and Latinx Month Spotlights

All stories written by Monica Kustritz, Student Programs

Jacqueline Calderon

Marketing and Communication, Women's Soccer

Jacqueline Calderon was born and raised in Indio, California by her mother, Virginia Ortega, and father, Jesse Calderon, who were also born in Indio, Calif. Both of Jacqueline's grandparents were born in Mexico and her maternal grandfather originally came to the United States as a member of the Bracero Program (a Mexican Farm Labor Program from the 40s which permitted millions of Mexican laborers to work in the US legally) and later settled in California to start a family in the 60s. Calderon's family worked hard and always pushed the value of education. Many of her aunts and uncles pursued degrees, with several choosing the education field. Along with her two older siblings, Calderon is among the first

grandchildren to obtain or receive college degrees in her family. She has been playing soccer since she was four years old and has worked extremely hard in hopes to be able to give back to her family in her future.



Calderon came to UMN Crookston because she was recruited to play soccer on a scholarship and it was an amazing opportunity to continue her athletic and academic careers. She was also interested in UMN Crookston because her sister plays soccer at UMN Morris and was excited to play soccer close to her sister despite being over 2,000 miles from home. Calderon enjoys that she can get involved in so many things on campus like being a Lead Community Advisor, a member of SAAC (Student Athletic Advisory Committee), the VP of Marketing in DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), an intern in athletic media relations, and a student representative on various committees. In addition to her exemplary involvement, Jacqueline was also named to the 2021-2022 UMC All-Academic Team.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is so important to Jacqueline because she gets to celebrate and embrace her Mexican-American culture and appreciate the sacrifices her family made so that she is able to have amazing opportunities like attending college and pursuing her athletic career. Calderon is extremely proud to be Mexican-American, and she is grateful that UMN Crookston has allowed her the opportunity to pursue a degree while continuing to play in the sport she loves.

Sammy Gutierrez

Exercise Science & Wellness, Women's Softball

Sammy Gutierrez is from Riverside, California, and because part of her family is from Michoacán, Mexico, she grew up in a Spanish speaking household with her three sisters. Gutierrez played softball throughout her childhood, and started playing tennis in high school. Sammy was recruited to play softball for UMN Crookston, but after switching her sport to tennis, she says that she “couldn’t be happier.” She is also extremely proud to have been honored as a member of the NCAA NSIC All Academic & Athletic Team.



Although moving to Crookston has been a big change from city life, Gutierrez has fallen in love with both the University and the city of Crookston. She has found that Crookston is what you make of it, and she has already made quite a bit.

Gutierrez is majoring in Exercise Science and Wellness while also minoring in Communication. As a first generation college student, her family couldn’t be more proud of all the hard work she has put into her studies, athletics, three on-campus jobs, and her job at Riverview Health. Gutierrez’s independence and strength have not gone unnoticed by those around her. Despite hardships her family has faced, they have instilled in Sammy the belief that nothing is given for free, and you have to work hard. Gutierrez considers her family her greatest support system even though they are far away from Crookston.

Gutierrez is very appreciative to everyone at UMN Crookston who has welcomed her and made Crookston feel like a home away from home. Celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month means a lot to Sammy.

“I am very humbled and blessed to have lived the bicultural life I've lived, it has truly made me who I am today,” said Gutierrez. “I am proud to be a Mexican American.”

Sarah Velasquez

Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement, Women's Softball & Tennis

Sarah Velasquez is from Chino, California, where she grew up with her sister, Amanda, and parents, Tony and Maria Velasquez. She played softball throughout her childhood, and played four years of varsity softball and tennis in high school. Velasquez discovered UMN Crookston when she was offered a softball scholarship, and was ultimately drawn here by the great academics UMC has to offer. After playing one year of softball as a Golden Eagle, Velasquez was also offered a tennis scholarship.



Velasquez is very proud to come from a large, loving, Mexican American family. Her grandparents were born in Mexico, and both of her parents were born in California. Sarah's parents worked hard to help her get to where she is today, and they're very proud of all that she's accomplished. Velasquez's hard work has allowed her to be a Division II athlete while also maintaining a 4.0 GPA, which resulted in her earning a place on the Chancellor's List last semester.

To Velasquez, celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month means celebrating and embracing Mexican culture.

"We are very full of culture and are welcoming to all who would like to hear our stories," said Velasquez.

A graphic for the 'Then & Now Photos' campaign. It features the words 'THEN' and 'NOW' in large, bold, sans-serif font. 'THEN' is white and 'NOW' is maroon, both set against a solid orange background.

**THEN
NOW**

Then & Now Photos

Send us your photos from when you were on campus to where you are at now. We'd love to feature you in the next newsletter.

[Submit Photos](#)



[#1 for 2022-2023 with US News & World Report for public Midwest Regional Colleges](#)



[Homecoming 2022 Photo Gallery](#)



[Flag Raising Ceremony with White Earth and Leech Lake Nations](#)



[UMN Crookston is bananas about their Campus Tree](#)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



MAROON & GOLD
P R I D E

GET YOUR APPAREL >

Hey Alumni!

We want to celebrate our mini Golden Eagles by **featuring your babies, children, and pets** wearing maroon, gold and Golden Eagle apparel in one of our next Alumni publications. If you want a chance to be included, email your photos to petro087@crk.umn.edu.

*Update your maroon and gold apparel
[check out the University Bookstore.](#)*

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

Update Your Info

We'd love to stay in touch with you. Please help us do so by updating your contact info.

[Update Alumni Info Now](#)

Free sticker when you update your alumni info!



CAMPUS HAPPENINGS

Friday, November 11, 2022

[Teambacker Hockey Tailgate](#)

Crookston Sports Center or Drafts - 5-7 p.m.

Thursday, November 17, 2022

Give to the Max Day

All Day

Friday & Saturday, February 17 & 18, 2023

[Arizona Social and Brew Bash](#)

Mesa, AZ

Friday, June 23, 2023

[Northwest School of Agriculture Reunion](#)

UMN Crookston



Call for Nominations!

We are seeking nominations for the Top Aggie Award. The Top Aggie Award is the highest honor bestowed on Northwest School of Agriculture alumni by its alumni association and given annually at the NWSA Reunion. This award recognizes alumni who have displayed exemplary commitment and service to community, education, family, or in their occupational field.

Questions, contact Rose at 218-281-8439 or rose445@umn.edu.

[Nominate a Top Aggie](#)

VIDEO TOUR



Virtual Campus Tour

Haven't been to campus lately?
Check out our [virtual campus tour](#) with an interactive map and videos!

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS PUBLICATIONS



Digital Archives

Dig deep into our new Crookston digital archive through the University of Minnesota's Digital Conservancy. Our collection includes: Aggie, Aggie Yearbook, Bulletin and Catalog, Commencement Programs, Commentator, Fourth Estate, New Student Directory, Northwest Monthly, Torch Magazine, Torchlight e-Newsletter, and more.

[Visit the Crookston Collection](#)



[How To: Navigate the Digital Conservancy \(Video\)](#)

LET'S BE SOCIAL

Check out our social media accounts!



>>> [UMN Crookston Event Calendar](#) <<<



The torch is a symbol of enlightenment used in faith, in the Olympics, and as part of our nation's Statue of Liberty. It's a sentiment our campus has used as a way of passing the responsibility and pride of our beloved institution to the next generation. Specifically, the torch has been passed to each class during commencement since 1968, illuminating the quality of education as well as the educational philosophy of the University of Minnesota.

Questions about our Torchlight e-Newsletter?

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