

WTG *Achievers*

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About the WTG

The twenty private, or independent, colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 56,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need help to attend the college of their choice.

The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965 to help financially needy Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the needy students who apply for the WTG are turned away every year for lack of funds. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom the WTG has made a difference.

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WTG aids Lawrence singer's musical goals



Megan Hamm of Madison, a graduate of Lawrence University

During Megan Hamm's junior year at Lawrence University, she recorded her first-ever solo audition tape, singing her version of Miles Davis' up-tempo tune "Four" and the classic Thelonious Monk ballad "Round Midnight."

The audition was recorded as an entry for *Down Beat* magazine's 28th annual national student music awards contest.

In May 2004, thanks to that tape, Megan learned she was named one of two "outstanding performers" in *Down Beat*'s college jazz voice category. Ironically, the magazine selected fellow Lawrence jazz vocalist Charlie Christenson as the category's other outstanding performer.

"I was so excited when I found out I had won. It was beyond surprise. I never thought it was

possible," says Megan, 22, a music education major.

A pianist since the age of six, Hamm first got turned on to jazz by listening to Ella Fitzgerald scat on a rendition of "How High the Moon." After enrolling at Lawrence, Megan sang with the Lawrence Jazz Singers for three years, spent two years as a member of the Lawrence Concert Choir, and made her opera debut in Lawrence's production of "Hansel and Gretel," singing the title role of Hansel.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Carroll College student's many activities show that he is an expert at overcoming challenges



Mike Biver of New Berlin, a senior at Carroll College

For Mike Biver, overcoming challenges is a daily occurrence. A senior at Carroll College, Mike has five off-campus jobs, a strong dedication to his family,

and leadership roles in the community.

Mike, who lives in New Berlin, became interested in Carroll after talking with his high school football coach who was working at the college. Mike played football for Carroll for three years and was a member of the swim team for two.

An elementary education major, Mike wants to teach "wherever the job is," but said he would prefer older students so he can also coach athletics and have the same

influence on his students that his coaches had on him.

Mike isn't shy about acknowledging the importance of not only working hard in class, but having an array of activities outside of the classroom to make his college experience a well-rounded one. His schedule may seem daunting, but to Make, keeping himself engrossed in activities he is passionate about fully complements his success in college.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MEGAN HAMM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“There’re almost too many opportunities at Lawrence,” says Hamm, a soprano. “As a freshman, I was like the proverbial kid in the candy store. I’ve done so much performing, which has really been great, but I’ve had to learn to step back a bit and learn to prioritize my interests.”

Coming out of high school, Hamm was leaning toward pursuing a degree in English and vocal performance. To that end, she says, Lawrence, with its liberal arts tradition and award-winning conservatory of music, was a logical choice. “There are so few places where you can get the kind of outstanding musical expertise along with the strong academics that you do at Lawrence,” Megan says.

Without the help of a Wisconsin Tuition Grant and a prestigious \$10,000 Trustee Scholarship from Lawrence, one of the top awards accorded to incoming students, Hamm says the decision

of what college to attend would have become a moot point.

“Without the financial assistance I’ve received, it would have been very difficult to attend college at all, much less a college of Lawrence’s caliber, so I’m extremely grateful for both its support and that of the WTG program,” Megan says. “That help has really enabled me to pursue my dreams.”

While a *Down Beat* award was a dream come true, Hamm is trying to sort out the direction in which to steer her musical talents. “I studied classical voice as well as jazz,” she says. “Lawrence is a really unique place in that sense because I was able to study both, which is rare for vocalists. I enjoy both styles. I’m not going to take the *Down Beat* award as a ‘sign’ that I should focus on jazz. I want to use all the skills I’ve learned, performing as well as teaching, and see how things work out.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

“According to Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, some 70 percent of Fortune 1000 companies cite the lack of trained employees as their most significant barrier to sustained growth.”

Betsy Bedigian, marketing and PR manager, Hezel Assoc., *The Greentree Gazette*, July 2005, page 20

MIKE BIWER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When Mike is not in class or studying, he is likely at one of his many off-campus jobs. He is the head diving coach at New Berlin West High School and a swim instructor at a private swim club.

He also works part-time at three area businesses.

Even with his many other responsibilities, Mike finds time and energy to volunteer. A 4-H club member since third grade, he is now a leader for the Cleveland Challengers, a local 4-H club. He also coaches a youth basketball team.

Family, including two younger brothers and a sister, is very important to Mike and he spends as much time with his family as possible. He is particularly close to his grandparents who live nearby.

As the oldest of four children, Mike knows his parents also face financial challenges. Without scholarship aid, including the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, he would not be able to attend college, much less a private one. And, as a special needs student who has dyslexia, Mike is particularly grateful for the personal attention he gets at Carroll.

Mike knows that all the effort and work he puts into the individualized education he receives at Carroll is an investment that will pay off for him in his career and life. But individual attention does not mean that his college education is a walk in the park.

“College is difficult for me,” Mike says, but he remains motivated. “I put my full heart into everything I’m doing. I appreciate that the Wisconsin Tuition Grant is there to help. It shows me that others have faith in my ability to accomplish my goals.”

Wisconsin’s Private Colleges and Universities

Alverno College *Milwaukee*
 Beloit College *Beloit*
 Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
 Carroll College *Waukesha*
 Carthage College *Kenosha*
 Concordia University *Mequon*
 Edgewood College *Madison*

Lakeland College *Sheboygan*
 Lawrence University *Appleton*
 Marian College *Fond du Lac*
 Marquette University *Milwaukee*
 Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design *Milwaukee*
 Milwaukee School of Engineering *Milwaukee*

Mount Mary College *Milwaukee*
 Northland College *Ashland*
 Ripon College *Ripon*
 St. Norbert College *De Pere*
 Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
 Viterbo University *La Crosse*
 Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

