

WTG Achievers

Vol. 6, No. 2

September 2005

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.

WTG Achievers is published monthly by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), 122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703-2718; 608-256-7761; mail@waicuweb.org. For more information or for back issues of **WTG Achievers**, visit our website: www.waicuweb.org

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Mari McCarty, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President
Paul Nelson
Senior VP for Public Policy
Deborah Holbrook
VP for Communications, Editor

WTG helped English/Spanish major plan future



Julie Kersting of Wauwatosa, a graduate of Mount Mary College

Photo reprinted with permission from M Magazine

Mount Mary College graduate Julie Kersting began her college career at a large urban state university but felt "lost in the shuffle." She transferred to

Mount Mary as a sophomore. She is convinced that her choice was a good one.

After a year or so at Mount Mary, she had a clear idea of what she wanted to do with her life. She chose English and Spanish as her majors and served an internship with one of her professors, helping to teach an American English class that is required for all English majors.

A pivotal event during Julie's college years took place during the summer of 2003, which she spent in Peru on a college study abroad program. She lived with a local family in

Arequipa and took classes in cultural anthropology and art at Mount Mary's sister college, the Universidad Catolica Santa Maria. She also did service work with the people in the community of Alto Cayma.

The experience had a profound effect on her, and she wants to travel extensively after she graduates, in order to work on her language skills before returning to the workforce.

"I want to travel and study in South America to improve my Spanish and to teach English as a second language there."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WTG recipient spearheads a Habitat for Humanity project in Beloit and finds a calling



Ruth Vater of Middleton, a graduate of Beloit College

Many students make the city in which they attend college a "a home away from home." But Beloit College senior Ruth Vater didn't stop there. While working toward her

undergraduate degree, she also invested time, energy, and effort into making sure that at least one local family could also establish deeper roots in the city of Beloit.

Ruth was a two-term president of the Beloit College chapter of Habitat for Humanity, which broke ground on its first college-sponsored "house-build" in April. "That was my proudest moment," she says.

Ruth led a team of more than 20 Beloit College students in raising \$60,000 from local

citizens, businesses, college faculty, staff, alumni, family, and friends over a period of two years. She was at the forefront of the project, even as she balanced the considerable demands of an economics and management and international relations double major.

Leadership and teamwork are two essential skills that Ruth honed during her years at Beloit. In 2003, she participated in a college-sponsored leadership training

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

JULIE KERSTING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mount Mary provided another epiphany for Julie. Although she began her studies there in fashion merchandising, an English professor turned her on to the possibility of graduate study in linguistics. "It was like the light bulb had always been there in my head, and she reached in and turned it on. It was an amazing and perfectly clichéd moment of clarity," Julie says.

After her travels, Julie will attend graduate school to study comparative literature and specialize in linguistics. Julie plans also to obtain a teaching certificate for English as a Second Language, Spanish, and/or English.

"I know that I am interested in the linguistic end of enabling computers to recognize the human voice, and actually, there's a lot of demand for linguists in this area."

When asked what would have changed if

she had not had a Wisconsin Tuition Grant and other financial aid available to her, Julie says, "It's simple. I would not have been able to attend Mount Mary and would certainly not have the clear set of goals and sense of confidence that is with me every day. I would probably have settled for some job I would have no passion for. At Mount Mary, I feel that everyone believes in me and wants me to succeed. What could be a greater aid to actual success than that?"

"I was happy to learn that the state government had included an increase in funding for Wisconsin Tuition Grants in his next budget. It is a vitally important source of help to young people hoping to attend the colleges of their choice. I can personally testify to the fact that it is money well spent, and it is very much appreciated."

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average price for tuition and fees at a WAICU-member college or university in 2003-2004 was \$17,848.

The average freshman financial aid package was \$13,777, leaving net tuition costs of \$4,071.

Institutional figures reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005 (averages computed by WAICU)

RUTH VATER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

institute and interned in the office of the Rock County chapter of Habitat for Humanity. In 2004-05, she served as a resident assistant in a campus residence hall and helped to train the next generation of student leaders for Beloit College Habitat for Humanity.

Just prior to graduating, she was awarded the 2005 Ruth C. Peterson Award in Political Science or International Relations and the 2005 Lewis Severson Prize in Economics.

Ruth says that her varied experiences

have given her a great foundation and a long-term vision for her career.

"Eventually, I would like to manage an international development or non-profit organization — maybe with connections to Latin America," Ruth says.

Although she was deeply involved with campus co-curricular activities, Ruth also had to work to help fund her education. The Wisconsin Tuition Grant money that she received helped relieve some of the financial burden and freed her up to participate more fully in campus life. "I

worry about my student loans already," she admits. "But grants make it possible to worry less and get more out of the academic and co-curricular opportunities here."

As she looks to the future, Ruth is appreciative of many influences that shaped her college career. "Beloit College has given me the freedom to try different things, challenged me to grow, and strengthened my desire to be a lifelong learner. That is something I will take with me as I leave. I am very grateful."

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