

Alumni in the News

Yurcisin honored for service

Ann Yurcisin, MS '78, Ed.S. '81, director of the Office for Students with Disabilities at Ohio State University (OSU) was awarded the Ronald E. Blosser Dedicated Service Award, the highest honor for service to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). The award was presented to Yurcisin at a banquet held in her honor during AHEAD's 21st annual International Conference in Las Vegas, Nev.

AHEAD is an international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities, and a vital resource promoting excellence through education, communication and training. The Ronald E. Blosser Dedicated Service Award honors "individual members who have given extraordinarily outstanding, selfless and quality dedication and service to the Association on Higher Education and Disability, and whose service to the association has consistently been of the utmost quality."

The presentation cited Yurcisin's "leadership, professionalism, concern for the members of AHEAD and the association itself, her long-term involvement as a professional in the postsecondary disability service field, as well as her calm, friendly demeanor, traits that have made her one of the association's greatest assets." Yurcisin has served AHEAD for many years in various roles and joined its board of directors to

head up its marketing efforts from 1987-1989 and again from 1991-1992. Elected to the position of president-elect in 1993, she served as president from 1994-1995 and immediate past president from 1995-1996. Since then, she has been active on AHEAD's Past



Yurcisin

Presidents Council and is perhaps "the most consulted of the past presidents because of her warmth and her thoughtful and analytical advice." Her presenter commented that, most strikingly, she is "extraordinarily genuine and warm to all people, that she gives people curiosity and makes them feel special by asking questions, showing her genuine interest in them and, thus, giving them support."

Before coming to Ohio State University in 1996, Yurcisin was director of Disability Support Services at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, from 1993-1996, and director of the Services for Students with Disabilities Office at UW-Stout from 1978-1993. She has been in the disability services and higher education professions for 20 years. She recently represented OSU and AHEAD at the Third International Conference on Higher Education and Disability in Innsbruck, Austria. Congratulations, Ann.

Wanted: Families With More Than Two Stout Graduates

Thank you to all who have forwarded information, photographs and stories on your families. It has been tremendous fun to see the history of many of our families and alumni. For those who have this on your "to do" list, take the time soon to send it in.

In a future issue of *Stout Outlook*, we would like to feature families who have had more than two members graduate from Stout. Please forward the following information to

the Alumni Office: name and year of graduation for each family member, degree earned for each, and relationship of family members (*may include aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws—not just parent and child*). Also include any interesting or fun tidbits of information. Please include photographs of all graduates, if possible. A group picture would be even better. We look forward to receiving your information.

Alumni Connections Online Community

The Alumni Association is taking you into the next century with an Alumni Connections Online Community, a cutting-edge virtual campus exclusively for Stout alumni. Features include Career Center, an online forum for career-related activity; Permanent E-Mail;

Personal Home Pages; Bulletin Boards; Yellow Pages and Hot Links to other exciting Internet sites.

For more information as it develops, watch our website at: <http://www.uwstout.edu/alumni/>

Give your degree the status it deserves.

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Distinctive framing package includes:

- ▶ Gold-embossed with the UW-Stout seal and name
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- ▶ 100% satisfaction guaranteed or your money back
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For more information or to order your diploma frame call the alumni office at 715/232-1151

Alumni Testimonials

What Stout Did For Me

"I am a 1982 graduate of Stout. I have been employed at Schreiner's Restaurant (*the busiest independent family-owned restaurant in the state of Wisconsin*) for the past 21 years. I began working at Schreiner's in 1977 as a dishwasher and by the time I graduated from Stout, I went through the ranks and was promoted to my current position as general manager. My most recent achievement was the Restaurateur of the Year award given to me by the Lake to Lake Chapter of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. I am very active in our community and over the past several years have been involved in many organizations. Most recently, I have been involved in a pilot program called "W-2, Work Not Welfare." Currently, we have taken approximately 630 recipients off welfare and provided assistance to them in finding employment and becoming productive individuals in our community. The University of Wisconsin-Stout, a true benchmark of universities, has given me the necessary tools, skills and education needed to meet the challenges of the restaurant industry, as well as to help shape our wonderful community. My wife, Cheryl, and I have two children, Michael, 2, and Erin, 6. We enjoy family time with our children on weekends and days off."



Langenhorst

Thomas Langenhorst '82

"My years at Stout gave me a lot of valuable hands-on skills that I needed to be successful in my career. I use many of those skills, which include problem solving, communication and listening, on a daily basis. I could not have chosen a better university for my degree and would encourage anyone looking for a college where they will get personal attention, hands-on skills and great professors to attend Stout."



Hurd

Kirstin Brennan-Hurd '94

"Attending UW-Stout prepared me to be an educator—whether in the classroom for 10 years in both public and private education systems, or as a homemaker for our four children. The requirements for each degree I received strengthened the skills I needed to be a home economics teacher, workshop planner, presenter, curriculum author, pastor's wife and mother. Dr. Nancy Bean, a mentor like no other, encouraged and nurtured my budding skills. The course work encouraged self-confidence along with educational, organizational and consumer skills learned in home economics; home management; food production management and services; clothing, textiles, and design; family relationships and child development. The ability to speak confidently in public is also a skill I learned at Stout, along with leadership skills through membership in the Stout Student Association and Phi Upsilon Omicron. Thank you Mike Nicolai. Each instructor I had contact with or worked for nurtured and strengthened my abilities. I'd like to thank Chancellor Swanson for his dedication and vision for the future; Ruth Thomas for her skill in resumes and placement; Max Herback for writing skills; John Williams for dealing with family dynamics; Zeke Smolarek for humor and help in analyzing people; Sandra Gill for teaching technique; Denise Skinner for child development skills; Carolyn Barnhart for curriculum work; Leslie Koepke and Karen Zimmerman, my graduate advisers; the ever-present and always enthusiastic Pat Reisinger; and so many others. UW-Stout helped prepare me for my adult life. Attending Stout was one of the best decisions I have ever made."

Debra Kae Fischer Kenyon BS '79, MS '85



Mars brothers a winning duo



If you have checked out the August 1998 issue of the Stock Car Racing magazine and looked on page 82, you would have noticed the "kid" with the big smile holding the winning flag and a cardboard check (*the real one was in his pocket*). That "kid" is one of us. His partner, who happens to be his older brother, is also one of us. The "kid," Jimmy Mars, and his brother, Chris, have teamed up to make a winning combination in the world of race car driving.

Chris '87 and Jimmy '95, both industrial technology graduates, did not have what we would consider the typical college life. "We had to sacrifice some things while in college," Jimmy said. "We didn't participate in other activities." Working with their dad on the farm, keeping up with their studies, plus everything connected with racing and building cars allowed no free time to get involved. "Sometimes it was difficult," Chris said. "I wish I would have met more of my classmates, lived in the residence halls and experienced more of the college life."

Professional racing had been their dream since childhood. They would race three- and four-wheelers around their farm in Elk Mound before Jimmy was a teenager. Their determination and hard work has helped them achieve this success. "I don't think successful people know what a 40-hour work week is," Chris said. "By staying focused and working hard at something you want, you can achieve it." Jimmy added, "A couple little sayings stick in our heads which we apply quite often: 'Know what you don't know' and 'Don't sweat the little things in life.' They get us through the bad times and help us cherish the good." Both Jimmy and Chris attribute much of their success to their parents. Both agreed that their parents instilled in them good values and work ethics. It was always "get the work done before playing." They also taught them a don't give up attitude.

Commenting on their Stout education Jimmy said, "We've used almost everything we learned at school, from engineering to the business aspect of racing." "We are not just building cars," Chris added. "We are building a business. We have to market ourselves when it comes to searching for

"We've used almost everything we learned at school, from engineering to the business aspect of racing."

Jimmy Mars

sponsors. We have a web site, a fan club has been developed, and small cars (*matchbox type*) and T-shirts bearing our names have come as a result of our success. All of this requires a business sense. All we learned in college is applied in some way."

Jimmy and Chris have demonstrated the true meaning of teamwork many times over. "Chris and I have always been the best of friends," Jimmy said. "We probably have one of the closest working relationships around. I rely on Chris for suggestions on and off the track, as well as on the work that goes into our racing program." The results of this teamwork have been extraordinary, and they have a room full of trophies to show for it. "The last three years we have really taken off," Chris said. "We are now racing in the levels where we are being noticed. The next step is Bush Grand National, a division one step under NASCAR Winston Cup." Jimmy added, "That is an incredible record, considering we've accomplished more in five or six years than many people have in their whole racing career. We have exceeded the expectations others had of us, but not our own. Each year we set new goals for ourselves. We've done a lot but we're not finished."

Jimmy reflected back to his days at Stout and commented on the quality of education received. "The professors were great," he said. "Ken Neuburg, especially, was a definite help. He was always supportive and even though he didn't understand racing, he went to watch me. I learned a lot from Ken besides in the classroom. He had a very positive outlook. I'm glad I went to Stout. I know it has been a big help in this business."

The Mars brothers, as they have become known on the racing circuit, are looking forward to obtaining their goal for 1999 which is the NASCAR ReMax series championship. We wish them well. Congratulations, Jimmy and Chris.

Reminiscing

"Enclosed you will find a \$100 donation for the Foundation. When I applied for a teaching job in Flint, Mich., in 1939, I was night watchman at Stout. As I was making my rounds, the president's light was on, so I went in to say hello. He said, "How are you getting to your job?" I said I had a ride but no money. He said, "Will \$100 help?" I said that would be great. "You must pay me back," the president said. "I'll do that," I said. So I was on my way to teach in Flint, Mich. The president was Burton E. Nelson. P.S. I was 86 on January 11."



Beckman

Earl C. Beckman '39

"Little did I think I'd be a home ec teacher. My interests were more in the medical field. But, it was during the depression and I felt fortunate in having a college in my own hometown. So, instead of the medical field, I chose home ec (*with no regrets*). Because it was the depression and I lived right in town, I did not stay in the dorms. I lived at home. However, it was almost like living in a dorm as my mother had girls from school live with us. Becoming friends with Dorothy Vaaler Spreiter '40; Carol Snell Kyle '40; Virginia Wild Hansen BS '40, MS '62; Mary Blair Vandenberg '40; and Marian Peterson Tremain '39 added to my college life.



Winberg

"The one time I did stay on campus was for my six-week home management course on Sixth Street. This was my first time away from home, and I felt a need to test the stringency of the hours set for curfew (*which was 10 p.m. for the girls*). Upon arriving at the Home Management House, after curfew, I found the front was unlocked and entered the vestibule. However, the door to the house was locked, and on the floor waiting for me was a blanket and pillow. Miss Trullinger was going to teach me a lesson. After a few raps on the door, she took pity on me and let me in.

"Now, living back in Menomonie, I have come full circle. I am excited about my upcoming move into The Oaks, an active adult retirement home. There I will be reunited with other Stout alumni, Ray and Shirley Doane, Bob and Helen Krause, and perhaps others. If other alumni are interested in joining us, give the alumni office a call, and they will put you in contact with the appropriate personnel."

Catherine Kirk Winberg '39

Schmit Prototypes is Business of the Year



Mike Schmit (center), won the Greater Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year Award at the Business and Industry Technology Fair held recently. With him are his wife Ann and Charles Yost, director of UW-Stout's incubator service. Yost worked closely with Schmit during the three-year incubation period for Schmit's business, "Schmit Prototypes." See the employer profile, next page, for more details.

Photo courtesy of Dunn County News



Employer Profile

Schmit Prototypes Inc.

When Mike Schmit '82 transferred to UW-Stout from Iowa State, little did he know he would become known as the "Model Employer," a description given him by the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram in their May 10, 1998 issue. Just how did he receive this title? While still in school, Mike and his brother, Mark BS '76 MS '90, started a small business in the garage of their home on Ninth Street "building the first working models of consumer products." Mark left the business in 1987, and in 1990 Mike moved Schmit Prototypes Inc., to Stout's Incubation Center. The center, part of the College of Technology, Engineering and Management, was designed to assist small companies in the development of their businesses, providing low rent along with technical and business advice.

When Mike Schmit moved to the center in 1990, he had three employees. After three and a half years at Stout, he moved to his current location in Menomonie's Industrial Park with 20 employees. He commented about his time at the university center. "The Incubation Center worked great for us. It gave us an opportunity to expand more quickly and take more chances. Dr. Yost was a great help. I'm happy to have been a part of it. It was a good partnership, and we still have a good relationship. We still have students come and do some of their course work here, providing what Stout is known for, hands-on experience."

Just exactly what does Schmit Prototypes do? "We build the very first working models of numerous consumer products," Schmit said. "We don't do any manufacturing. All we develop are prototypes. A prototype proves the design. It can save a company a dollar to a million dollars in tooling costs because of design changes."

Although the company does no advertising, the client listing of Schmit Prototypes reads like a Who's Who of Business, from Rubbermaid tackle boxes to Naval Air Warfare Center gas masks to Compaq Computer frames for computer desktops. "We go strictly by word of mouth and reputation on the quality of our work," Schmit said. "Their quality and delivery come together," said Tom Cervenka, past president of Phillips-Origin Clean Room Molding and the medical devices manufacturing business units.

Included in the staff of 55 employees are 22 Stout graduates. Schmit commented, "Stout is our first choice in hiring. As I've said before, they offer hands-on experience that many other schools are unable to provide. Students can truly learn everything they need. Stout offers a good balance of technical and applied knowledge. But the bottom line is, it still comes down to the student and individual."

"This is a great place to work," said Mary Rybarczyk, a 1994 Stout graduate and Schmit Prototype employee. "It allows each of us to grow in a variety of areas. And, because of the different training opportunities available at Stout, I am able to mold myself into what this company needs." Andy Rabideau '82, one of the original employees hired by the Schmits in 1982 (while still working out of their garage) agrees. "This is an excellent company to work for," he said. "They have experienced a terrific



Schmit



Rabideau



Rybarczyk



Crawford

growth at a steady pace. And Mike is doing what he can to stay competitive with the larger companies when it comes to benefits and so on. This community, location and company fits my lifestyle perfectly. Sure, I could go to a larger company in a bigger city, but I wouldn't care to leave this." Justin Crawford '95, one of two persons who run the computer lab, says he also likes the physical location of the company, but the great thing is that "Schmit's has given us the ability to learn a variety of tasks." "I received a good solid background at Stout," he said. "They brought in two pre-engineer stations just before I left. They were a tremendous help in my work in the computer lab." Rybarczyk, Crawford and Rabideau all agree the outlook for Schmit Prototypes is excellent. They are looking forward to the development of a new company where their own designs will be manufactured. They are also appreciative of the cross section of skills in the company. "When a client comes to us with a problem with their design, we can usually find someone who has some knowledge in that area," Rybarczyk said. "We all work together. Also, this is a fun place to work. Fun keeps the creativity flowing freely."

According to Schmit, plans for the future include a manufacturing company called BRAINSTORM DESIGN. "We will develop our own designs and manufacture them," he said. An estimated 30 employees are expected to be hired for the new company, and an additional 20 at Schmit Prototypes.

As one tours Schmit Prototypes, you will find a dedicated staff of employees and high quality equipment, and as you look out the front door, a basketball hoop (*great fun for lunch time activity*). If you check out the back door of the facility, you will find several beautiful peacocks. "What better way to enjoy beauty and relieve stress," Schmit said.

You may contact Mike Schmit at:

Schmit Prototypes, Inc.

Phone: 715/235-8474

Fax: 715/235-0111

E-mail: SCHMIT@discover-net.net.

Romans dedicated to success

From UW-Stout's Corner III to the top of the John Hancock Building in downtown Chicago, Rick '81 and Susan Mark Roman '80 made the transition from students in Phil McGuirk's class to owners of one of the finest restaurants, The Signature Room, in Chicago.

Susan came to Stout via University of Northern Colorado where she was a business education major. "About halfway through the first semester," Susan said. "I realized this was not what I wanted. My family had a resort and restaurant in Door County and all the while I was growing up, my mom said I would end up in the service industry in some capacity. I had heard about Stout from some of the bartenders in Door County and made the decision to attend. It was one of the best decisions I've made."

Rick's trek to Stout was somewhat similar to Susan's. He started at Marquette as a pre-med student. Knowing this wasn't his field, he decided to attend Stout. Rick said, "When I came to Stout, I found my niche. I knew I was born to be in this business. The knowledge gained from the field experience and professors was wonderful." Susan and Rick laughed as they talked about some of their professors. Susan said, "Neville Cartwright was the only teacher who made me cry." Rick commented, "Lee Nicholls inspired me... and still does. Teresa Schulz was a great adviser. She kept me on the straight and narrow path, always saying to me, 'Let's look at this in perspective.' I thank her. I thank all of them." Susan agreed, even after being kicked out of Charlie Metelka's class for wearing overalls. He said we had to dress appropriately for the business world and overalls did not fit in this business. "Jim Buergemeister saved me," Susan said. "My mom was ill and I was going home a lot. He helped me through that very difficult time."

Prior to the Romans first meeting, a mutual friend, Scott Ohrwall '80, said to Rick, "I'm going to introduce you to your future wife." Their first date was in a restaurant setting as well, the Game Feast at TJ's in Downsville.

The Romans' path to the Signature Room was not direct. Susan started at Hyatt in the management program and soon became the director of human resources. There were also other employment moves for Susan prior to their opening of The Signature Room. Rick said, "I couldn't get into the Hyatt training program immediately but after a few months began working with them as manager of room service. This was an invaluable experience. In fact, all our jobs have been invaluable. We have learned a great deal from all of them."

In 1984 Rick was recruited by Aramark to be the dining room manager of a fine dining service site, the 95th of the John Hancock Building. "I fell in love with the property," said Rick. In 1988 he became the general manager and continued in that position until 1992 when the contract with Aramark and the John Hancock Building expired. By this time Rick was committed to this site. He, Susan, and another partner, Nick, made the "big" decision to form their own company and develop their own style of fine dining. "This was a huge decision. We knew we would have to dedicate our lives to its success," said Susan. Rick added, "We set out to make this a special place for dining, but not stuffy. We had to redevelop an approach to food service. We had great input from our consumers on the development of our menu and worked hard on making this a wonderful environment for families. We wanted to combine good value and excellent food and did not want



Rick and Susan Roman

"When I came to Stout, I found my niche. I knew I was born to be in this business. The knowledge gained from the field experience and professors was wonderful."

Rick Roman

price to be a deterrent. We have had a huge success with our daily lunch buffet. On Sundays we offer a 'for kids only' buffet in addition to the adult selection."

Getting to that point was not easy. The Romans did a complete remodeling of the interior and kitchen while keeping the restaurant open. "We did it in stages," said Susan. "We took away the Louie 13th chairs, the sheers that covered the most beautiful view, the chandeliers, and have made it more contemporary. It was very stressful at times but well worth it."

Susan continued, "We have been extremely fortunate and blessed, and it is very important that we share our good fortune with others. The first week we were open, we started a charity program. Each month we feature a special menu and charitable organization. Ten percent of the gross sales for that evening go to the organization." Rick added, "It was sometimes a little hard writing out a check to the organization when we were not taking home any paychecks, but we were committed to this. We realize the importance of giving back to a community that has allowed us such great opportunities." "In the first five years of our business," Susan added, we have given back more than \$350,000 to the community through our featured charity plus other fund-raising activities with which we have been involved. Today there are at least 12 other restaurants in Chicago who feature a Charity of the Month."

Currently, Rick is chair of the Illinois Restaurant Association. "This has been an exciting experience," Rick said. "I feel our board has really made a difference, one that positively affects the consumer. It has been a tremendous honor to hold this position."

Not ones to sit on their successes, the Romans have great plans for the future. Plans are under way to open a banquet facility and conference center in the western suburbs named Signature Rooms. The expected opening is scheduled for the spring of 2000.

Rick and Susan again expressed the value of the education they received and the quality of professors. Rick stated, "Working on the Haute Cuisine dinner was the best experience. I knew then that I had to be on the high end of the food service business."

Next time you are in Chicago, make an effort to dine at The Signature Room, and let Rick and Susan know you are Stout alumni.