

WALSAA Football Fire-Up: Tailgate and Silent Auction at UW Foundation on Saturday, September 20

Congratulations, Julie!



WALSAA will present the ninth WALSAA Daluge Red Jacket Award to Julie Larson at the Fire-Up event on September 20. "Julie Larson embodies the very best of what it means to be a CALS alumna and WALSAA leader. During her six years on our board, including three years as chair of the Marketing & Development Committee, she brought unmatched passion and vision to strengthening our alumni community. Julie's leadership, service, and lifelong dedication to dairy make her a truly deserving recipient of the prestigious WALSAA Daluge Red Jacket Award, and it is an honor to celebrate her with this recognition," shares WALSAA President June Roush.

More on page 6.

What: WALSAA continues a 53-year mission to connect the University of Wisconsin-Madison, CALS and CALS alumni. **Fire-Up** is a fantastic event that fosters camaraderie and showcases the Badger spirit.

When: Saturday, September 20, 2025. WALSAA's Annual Meeting will be held 3 ½ hours

before game time and Fire-Up will kick off 3 hours before.

Where: This year, Fire-Up will return to the parking lot of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, 1848 University Avenue, Madison.

What to Expect: Guests will enjoy special appearances from Bucky Badger and Alice in Dairyland, a tailgate meal including steak sandwiches, brats, chicken, The Williams Family's famous potatoes olé, along with a variety of beer, wine, and drinks. Fire-Up will feature the WALSAA Silent Auction and a NEW Jewelry Raffle to raise money to support scholarships, awards and student activities. Last year, more than \$14,000 was raised.

How to Engage: Tickets are \$40 for alumni, \$20 for students and children ages 6-18, and free for children under 5. \$20 of the alumni ticket price is a fully tax-deductible donation to WALSAA. Student volunteers receive FREE tickets. Tickets can be ordered at **WALSAA.org**. Registrations in advance of the event are appreciated, however walk-ins are also welcome.

Our Sponsors: WALSAA would like to give special thanks to the generous people, companies, and organizations that donate to Fire-Up. These cash and in-kind donations help reduce the overall cost of the event, benefiting both WALSAA members and future scholarship recipients.

Registration form can be found on page 5.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rich with Purpose and Shared Vision



June Roush, WALSAA President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As summer settles in across Wisconsin, I'm reminded how much can grow when we simply come together. Recently, I had the opportunity to gather with leaders from WALSAA, CALS, and the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA) at the Memorial Union Terrace—a place as iconic as the connections formed around its colorful tables.

While the setting was relaxed, the conversation was rich with purpose and shared vision. Dean Glenda Gillaspy and Curt Lauderdale from CALS, Ayana Blair and Annie Engebretson from WFAA, and the executive team from WALSAA reflected on how we can more effectively support CALS students, faculty, and programs—now and into the future.

Some of CALS' most pressing and promising priorities include:

- **Historic Enrollment Growth** – CALS is preparing to welcome more than 800 new students this fall—one of the largest incoming class in its history. It's a milestone that reflects the college's relevance, reputation, and reach.
- **Expanded Mental Health Services** – CALS students access mental health services at significantly higher rates than their peers across campus. Yet currently, only a 50% counselor position is available. A full-time, dedicated mental health professional is a vital need for student well-being and success.
- **CALS Student Center in Ag Hall** – A vision is underway to create a dynamic student-centered space in Agricultural Hall. This would give students a place to study, collaborate, and connect—right in the heart of their academic home.
- **Wisconsin Rural Scholars Program** – This impactful program is training a new generation of rural health leaders, many of whom come from the communities we call home. Learn more: ruralpartners.wisc.edu/wisconsin-rural-scholars-program/

Our conversation also explored how WALSAA can work in alignment with WFAA to leverage our existing funds in ways that create broad, lasting impact. Whether it's supporting new initiatives or elevating our visibility with current students to build lifelong alumni engagement, there's tremendous opportunity ahead.

CALS' future will be shaped not only by institutional investment, but by personal stories, alumni pride, and meaningful partnerships. The willingness of our WALSAA community to connect others who might support these initiatives is a powerful tool—and one I encourage us all to use.

This moment marks more than progress—it marks purpose. I left our meeting inspired and deeply grateful for the collaboration and trust among CALS, WALSAA, and WFAA. Together, we are shaping a future worthy of the legacy we've inherited.

Let's keep building it—one conversation, one connection, one commitment at a time.

On, Wisconsin!

June Meixelsperger Roush



L-R (back): Ayana Blair, Cathy & John Brunnquell, Curt Lauderdale, (front) June Roush, Dean Glenda Gillaspy, Jane Hillstrom

Annual Meeting Invitation

Join us on Saturday, September 20 for the WALSAA Annual Meeting held 30 minutes prior to the start of the WALSAA Football Fire-Up. We will be recognizing outgoing board members, holding elections for new board members, along with new business. Congratulations and thank you to our CALS student representative Nicole Broege and board members Kay Maas and Andrew Stevens for sharing your time and talents with WALSAA!

CALS MESSAGE



**Show Your Support
for Research at UW**



Federally funded research at UW–Madison drives invention, innovation, and job creation, and helps prepare the next generation of scientists, engineers, creators, and leaders. **It makes Wisconsin stronger.** The Wisconsin Alumni Association has a variety of ways for you to advocate for higher education. Take action today.

uwalumni.com/advocate

In Pursuit of Mudpuppies



Mason Polencheck has spent many days searching lakes and streams for mudpuppies – reclusive, little-known salamanders. Mudpuppies have been the focus of Mason's undergraduate research since sophomore year, when he developed and led a detailed research project to look at the skin microbiome of mudpuppies.

What he's finding could reveal microbial secrets and new ways to protect struggling amphibians across the globe.

Learn more about Mason's research at grow.cals.wisc.edu.



CALS Launches New Programs

CALS continues to develop academic programs to equip our undergraduate and graduate students with the skills and experience they need to head into the world. Here are the new programs we've launched this year. You can learn more at news.cals.wisc.edu.

- Plant Science and Technology – BS, MS, PhD
- Genetics in a Modern World – undergraduate certificate
- Animal and Dairy Science – MS, PhD
- Ecology and Evolutionary Biology – MS
- Science Communication – PhD



WALSAA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Giving Back as a CALS Alumnus



Kay Maas, WALSAA Board Member

At this year's Fire-Up, Kay Maas will be retiring from the WALSAA Board of Directors after serving six years. She will remain involved with the scholarship committee and the interview and selection process for the Outstanding Sophomore Awards, Senior Impact Awards, and WALSAA Student Impact Grants. Thank you, Kay, for giving back to WALSAA and CALS!

Tell us about yourself

I attended UW-Madison and CALS to earn an undergraduate degree in bacteriology, meat and animal science, and a master's degree in meat and animal science. I worked with Dr. B.B. Marsh at the Muscle Biology Lab while receiving my master's. I began my career working in Chicago where I met my husband, Duane. Since then, I have had a rather varied background which included adding an additional master's degree before becoming a registered dietitian nutritionist. We live in Pewaukee, Wis., and have three daughters, as well as a second home in Williamsburg, Va. where I am beginning to volunteer at Colonial Williamsburg. I have served on the WALSAA Board of Directors for the past six years and have also served on the CALS Board of Visitors.

What inspires you to serve as a board member and what message would you share with students/alumni interested in serving on a board of directors?

Serving on a board of directors is a wonderful way to give back. You get to contribute ideas as well as listen to other views about important issues. With WALSAA, I have been

involved with the scholarship committee and had the pleasure of interviewing the student candidates. It makes me so proud to be a CALS alumnus knowing that we have so many amazing students as well as the faculty and staff who support them.

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What was the biggest influence UW-Madison, CALS and/or WALSAA had on you?

The biggest influence on me was the wonderful professors and staff who gave me opportunities and encouragement.

What is your favorite WALSAA Football Fire-Up memory?

I remember bringing our daughters to the Fire-Up when they were young and it was held in the Stock Pavilion. Die Deutsche Kapelle with Dr. Kauffman played music and our daughters ran around collecting a lot of the red and white balloons that were used to decorate the space. We would then stuff the girls and the balloons into the minivan and drive back to Pewaukee. We all had a wonderful time!



New Fire-Up Jewelry Raffle

Support CALS Scholarships by purchasing a raffle ticket for a chance to win a \$1,500 shopping experience/gift certificate for William Thomas Jewelers in Madison. Tickets are \$25/each or \$100/6 tickets. Winner will be drawn at Fire-Up and you do not need to be present to win.

William Thomas Jewelers is a custom jeweler that also redesigns existing jewelry gems. At Fire-Up, you will have the opportunity to meet the owner, Bill Furman.

Tickets can be purchased at: WALSAA.org

WALSAA FOOTBALL FIRE-UP

2025 Ticket Order Form



Online registration available at: WALSAA.org

Saturday, September 20 ♦ 3 hours before kick-off ♦ WFAA Parking Lot ♦ 1848 University Ave.

VARSITY SPONSORS:



Wisconsin Foundation
& Alumni Association
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Badger Sponsors:



& June Roush

Babcock Hall Sponsors:



Henry Mall Sponsors: Bob Behnke, The Conleys, , Al & Lynn Herrman,

Marcy Heim

THE ARTFUL ASKER

Red & White Sponsors: Green Bay Packaging, Dave & Dawn Patterson, Varsity Meats, The Williams Family, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip Code: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Names for name tags: _____

Make checks payable to: WALSAA

Mail registration and payment to:

WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705

Advance registration is encouraged - Walk-ins also welcome

****Football tickets are NOT included with luncheon tickets**

\$20 of each adult ticket includes a fully tax-deductible donation to WALSAA to support CALS student scholarships

| | |
|--|----------|
| Number of reservation(s) | |
| Fire-Up Luncheon Adult Ticket** \$40/ea _____ | \$ _____ |
| Fire-Up Luncheon Student Ticket** \$20/ea _____ <i>*Note: free for student volunteers</i> | \$ _____ |
| Fire-Up Luncheon Child Ticket** \$20/ea _____ <i>*Under 5 are FREE</i> | \$ _____ |
| Jewelry Raffle Tickets \$25/ticket or \$100/6 tickets _____ | \$ _____ |
| Additional 100% tax deductible donation to WALSAA | \$ _____ |
| Total Cost | \$ _____ |

STUDENT IMPACT GRANT FEATURE

AHANA-MAPS Pre-Health Society

AHANA-MAPS

Pre-Health Society



The African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American-Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (AHANA-MAPS) Pre-Health Society aims to remove barriers for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students in medicine and provide an opportunity to build community among pre-health and science students.

Each year, the AHANA-MAPS Pre-Health Society hosts a campus conference to network with various healthcare professionals and provide hands-on experience with clinical skills. This conference also provides opportunities to connect with other minorities interested in healthcare and to discuss healthcare disparities among underrepresented populations.

The 13th Annual Healthcare Disparities Conference was held on April 12, 2025 at the Health Science Learning Center.

AHANA-MAPS Pre-Health Society members also attend the American Medical Education Conference (AMEC) and Regional Medical Education Conference (RMEC). These conferences provide immersive experience focused on academic enrichment, professional skills development and leadership training, along with the opportunity to network with other medical and pre-medical students.

For more information about WALSA Student Impact Grants, visit: WALSAA.org/students/impact-grants/

Larson to Receive WALSA Daluge Red Jacket Award at Fire-Up

Continued from page 1.

Julie Larson leads the U.S. commercial business for Connecterra, a part of the Smart Farming product portfolio at Datamars. Connecterra is a smart dairy platform using AI to turn farm data into actionable insights, helping farmers optimize herd health, productivity and sustainability. Her work is grounded in a lifelong commitment and passion for dairy farmers and the dairy industry.

Larson is a dedicated contributor to the agricultural and dairy communities, having held board roles with organizations including WALSA, World Dairy Expo, National Dairy Shrine, Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), Wisconsin FFA Foundation, Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, and the Wisconsin FFA Alumni Council. She also was a founding member of the Vernon County Dairy Youth Fund and started the Vernon County Agriculture Women's Group and has spent many years coaching 4-H and FFA dairy judging teams.

A proud alumna of the UW-Madison, Julie earned her degree in Agricultural Extension Education. She and her husband, Kevin Larson, a Corteva Agri-Science sales agent and farmer, operate a small dairy, beef and crop farm outside Viroqua, Wisconsin. They are parents to Thomas (CALS alum) and Katherine, both of whom work in agriculture, holding degrees in the field and careers as a Software Test Engineer and Dairy Calf Specialist, respectively.

The WALSA Daluge Red Jacket Award honors Rick and Peggy Daluge. Rick was WALSA's Executive Director for many years and a founding member of the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association (NAADA). Rick served as CALS Placement Director and CALS Assistant Dean before retiring as FISC Director in 2008. A red jacket is presented in honor of someone who has made a significant contribution to WALSA and the future of the organization.

To be a part of Larson's recognition on September 20, visit: WALSAA.org to purchase tickets for the Fire-Up event.

WALSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025

June Roush '87 - 2026
President
Middleton, Wis.

Jane Hillstrom '80 - 2025
Vice-President
Dodgeville, Wis.

John Brunnuell '85 - 2025
Past President and Treasurer
Port Washington, Wis.

Curt Lauderdale
CALS Rep/Ex-Officio
Madison, Wis.

CALS Ambassadors Student Rep
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Amanda Bender
Derek Gehin

Brian Koch '90 - 2027
Waupun, Wis.

Kay Maas '79, '82 - 2025
Pewaukee, Wis.

Dawn Manthei '93 - 2026
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Julie McKiernan '87 - 2027
Dane, Wis.

Paul Mitchell '92 - 2026
Madison, Wis.

Michael Murphy '87 - 2026
DeWitt, Iowa

Tracy Propst '91 - 2027
Beaver Dam, Wis.

Lindsey Sarbacker '21 - 2026
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Lizzy Schultz '13 - 2027
Madison, Wis.

Brooke Trustem '20 - 2027
Evansville, Wis.

Rachel Zwiig FISC '08 - 2027
Ixonia, Wis.

Interested in joining the WALSA Board or becoming a committee member?

Reach out to any of our current board members or contact Stephanie at: admin@walsaa.org or 608.438.1994.

FIRE-UP SILENT AUCTION

Supporting CALS Scholarships

Here is a partial listing of items that will be up for auction at Fire-Up. To see all the auction items, attend the event on September 20. Unable to attend? There will not be an online auction this year, however, you can place a bid by emailing: admin@walsaa.org. More photos will be added to WALSAA's social media.



1-week stay at Manney Place in vibrant Door County, Wisconsin June 5-12, 2026

Donated by: The Wilson Family/The Manney Place



4-night stay at Daluge's Hurley area lodge for up to 12 people

Donated by: Rick & Peggy Daluge



Wisconsin Memorabilia including a Back-to-Back Rose Bowl Football, Ron Dayne signed Wisconsin & NY Giants footballs in cases, a Ron Dayne signed 2000 Rose Bowl framed print & a Jimmy Leonhard signed framed jersey
Donated by: Pierce Dopp



UW Men's basketball ticket packages

Donated by: Al & Lynn Herrman, Hook's Cheese, Paul & Sarah Patterson and WALSAA



4-pack of Green Bay Packers Football tickets vs. Carolina Panthers on November 2, 2025

Donated by: Al & Lynn Herrman

Gift Basket

Donated by: Dirty Dog Taphaus



Overture CENTER

2-tickets to a performance at the Overture Center & restaurant gift card

Donated by: Jerry & Nancy Kaufmann



1-week timeshare stay in Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii

Donated by: Duane & Kay Maas



UW Men's Hockey tickets & parking

Donated by: Carol Phillips



BAILEY'S RUN
VINEYARD & WINERY

Gift Basket that includes a bottle of wine, logoed wine class, along with coupons for a WI Old-Fashioned and a pizza

Donated by: Bailey's Run Vineyard & Winery

Wisconsin Supper Club Basket

Donated by: Lindsey Sarbacker



Gift Basket
Donated by: The Jimmys



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WALSAA.org

What's New @CALS

CALS hosted high school students and teachers for the **Wisconsin Rural Scholars Program**, a summer pre-college experience. This program connects students from rural school districts with faculty, staff, and students for college planning insights. The program is a project of the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute, which is part of the USDA-funded Institute for Rural Partnerships. Read more at news.cals.wisc.edu.



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 20 ♦ WALSAA Annual Meeting &
WALSAA Football Fire-Up
WFAA, 1848 University Ave

October 24 ♦ WALSAA Leadership Reception

Share Your Email With WALSAA



Have you not yet received the digital version of the WALSAA Connection e-newsletter? Scan the QR code and share your email with us to opt-in to the e-newsletter.