From buyer to owner

The path you end up taking may not always be the one you visualized for yourself while in college. Amy Skarda Stout graduated from UW-Stout in 1983 in fashion merchandising. After graduation, she moved to Minneapolis where she worked for Donaldson’s Department Store and Dayton Hudson as a planner distributor in their buying offices.

In 1994 life felt as if it had become the typical ‘rat race’ for Swanson and her family. She and her husband, Oscar, had very busy schedules that left little time for family. “I was often traveling to New York for a week at a time, leaving my husband and child to fend for themselves,” she said. “At the same time, my husband was becoming frustrated with his career as an attorney working for West Publishing, so we re-evaluated our lives and decided to try something new.”

An opportunity to buy an already established business presented itself to the couple. Swanson’s father had started a bowling center during 1960 in Manitowoc, Wis., and was ready to retire. “We had never really thought about moving back to my hometown, but when this situation presented itself, we thought we needed to look into it,” Swanson said.

Leaving such secure jobs with benefits and good salaries was a difficult decision for the couple, but they felt that they couldn’t pass up the opportunity even though it meant living with Swanson’s parents for a while.

In June 1994 the Swansons made the big move back to Manitowoc, becoming the new owners of Meadow Lanes West Bowling Center and Sports Bar. The establishment had not been updated since the early 70s, so Swanson and her family, nutrition, child development, art appreciation and consumer skills,” she said.

If you are ever in the Manitowoc area, the Swansons invite you to stop in and visit them at the bowling center and check out their ‘Cosmic Bowling.’

Quality a high priority for Mueser

When purchasing clothing and home fashions, how many times do you pull off the fabric to check for strength or stretching, check the fasteners (snaps, zippers) or look for possible signs of color fading or ‘bleeding’? Do you think about the durability and wear of the fabrics or the thread quality? If not, that’s okay, because if you’ve purchased those items at Sears one of our grad, Karen Mueser, B.S. ’70 Home Economics Education and M.S. ’77 Clothing and Textiles, has done that for you.

Mueser, group engineering manager for product quality assurance, and her staff at Sears corporate offices spend their days testing fabrics to assure their products are consistent and of superior quality. An integral part of the decision making, Karen spends much of her time meeting with Sears buying teams and vendor’s sales representatives to determine what goes on the shelves meets Sears quality specification.

During a tour of the lab Mueser commented that there have been changes in the equipment used for testing, but not as much as one might expect. For example, the Scott Tester is the same type as she used as a student. This does not mean the lab is using old, outdated equipment, Mueser commented. “It works well and gives us valuable information, so why change something that has been working effectively for years?” she said. “My training at Stout gave me a chance to further my education, a chance that other universities were okay, because if you’ve purchased those items

“When I began at Sears, because I already had experience with the testing methods and equipment. Plus it demonstrates what we have always known—Stout is heads above other schools in technical, hands-on training.”

A member of the women’s gymnastics team for four years, Mueser established herself as a leader in women’s athletics and was recently inducted into UW-Stout’s Hall of Fame (see page 6 for more information). After graduation Mueser continued her involvement with gymnastics as a coach while teaching junior high prior to her employment with Sears.

“Like many young girls in the 1950s, I grew up in a small rural conservative community, in a family with limited cultural experiences. Stout was my ‘finishing school’ and it started with dorm life and dorm mothers — strict and vigilant. You came to the table with your hair combed and all your clothes on. I learned and practiced proper table etiquette three meals a day. It’s where I learned to wear a hat to church, teas and even field trips.

Codes of etiquette and dress have served me well and given me confidence in my professional and personal experiences.

“I was employed the school year after graduation and was never without a job. Goodness, how frightened I was to begin life in the classroom as a ‘real’ home economics teacher. But, armed with many previous demonstrations and a seam ripper that had served me well, before long I was dashing off lesson plans, instilling skills and values (yes, values!) to a feisty, challenging bunch of kids. I loved them!”

“I ended my strict and vigilant career as the coordinator and teacher of a parenting program for young mothers and their infants. I loved them, too.

“I often thought, more recently especially, of the many dedicated and wonderful teachers I was so fortunate to have. I can picture petite Miss Jeter bustling about, encouraging us to make that perfect stitch, that perfect set-in sleeve. Of course, it was more than the sleeve or the perfect cream sauce, it was always ‘aim for perfection.’

“Of the subject matter, the curriculum, it fits! I don’t think so. Foods, clothing, textiles, marriage and the family, nutrition, child development, art appreciation and consumer education are core skills. Magazines, newspapers, books, Internet, radio and TV make their living off these topics. I had my first consumer education class in 1955, and Ralph Nader could still learn something from those notes. Remember, Martha Stewart’s mother was a home economist.

“Yes, I was not only privileged to teach the curriculum, I was able to ‘live’ the curriculum of home and family life.”

“Since enrolling in graduate school, I have structured my classes around the students’ needs. Forty percent of my students are in some type of special program, so it is essential that I meet their needs. Without the help I received at Stout, this would never have been possible.”

John Schindhelm ’71

Second Annual Alumni Dinner

American Marketing Association

Second Annual Alumni Dinner

Don’t Miss the Social of the Year!

March 2002

Located in the Terrace of the UW-Stout Memorial Student Center

AMA Alumni: Be sure to watch for your invitation in the mail!
Degree enhances fitness career

Kim Landry-Ayres '97 did not have the typical college experience. As a nontraditional student, Landry-Ayres knew what she wanted from the dietetics program at UW-Stout. This degree was an enhancement, a complement to her already growing fitness career.

The dietetics program at Longwood College in Virginia was where she was working toward a double major in biology and psychology, playing varsity field hockey on a partial scholarship, and teaching aerobics for the university programming recreation she helped to create. During this time Landry-Ayres joined the Army ROTC and eventually was offered a full scholarship for medical school. Although the scholarship was tempting and Army airborne training was exhilarating, she knew this was not the direction she ultimately wanted to go. After refusing the scholarship, she packed up, dropped out of school and ended up in San Diego.

Two years later, and taking night classes on a part-time basis, she received her associate degree as a medical assistant from Apollo College in San Diego. “Once the degree was completed, I realized this was still not what I wanted to do,” Landry-Ayres said.

In the meantime she met her future husband, Jim Ayres, at Gold’s Gym where she was working part-time as a group fitness instructor and computer-aided design personal trainer. They eventually decided to return to Jim’s hometown of Eau Claire, Wis., where they purchased a 140-year-old farmhouse. Their first few years in the house were spent cleaning up the property and making the house livable. “We had no furnace for almost four years; we used a small potbellied stove during the winter months. The place was really in bad shape,” she said.

While working on the house, Landry-Ayres began working at various fitness centers in the area, where she essentially introduced personal training to the Eau Claire area fitness industry. “When I arrived here, there was basically no personalized fitness training going on. I was amazed at the difference between the fitness industry here as compared with the east and west coasts,” she said. It was at this time that she decided to return to school for a degree that would complement her fitness background and take her career to the next level.

While enrolled in the dietetics program, Landry-Ayres was also part of the university’s weight-loss consulting program and fitness staff. Originally hired by Dusty Naatz, she soon began working with Lori Anda-Bowen as a lead student manager, teaching aerobics and helping to develop a Personal training program for the university’s weight training facility. More recently Kim met with Anda-Bowen to review the equipment purchases for the new recreation complex. “This new recreation complex is a first-rate facility,” Landry-Ayres said.

After graduation, she continued for about two years at Stout in the physical education department, teaching the aerobic course and developing and instructing the fitness yoga course (which she continues to offer during WinTerm). She also began building her client base and before long, her husband’s carpentry shop became the home of their new business, Mission Accomplished, and YogaFit studio. Meeting with clients for an assessment of their fitness and nutrition needs and goals, Landry-Ayres assists them in developing a personalized fitness and nutrition program to meet their specific circumstances. “I would rather be on the preventative side of the medical field. It’s much more positive,” she said.

For more information on Mission Accomplished and Kim’s training, consulting and yoga instruction you may visit her Web site at: www.kimayres.com

Sorrell named Risk Control Center head

Elbert Sorrell B.S. ’78, M.S. ’83 professor in the industrial management department at UW-Stout, has recently become the director of the UW-Stout Risk Control Center. The center performs applied research and provides technical services and program development to business and industry in the areas of safety, health and environmental risk control. Sorrell also serves as program director for the M.S. in Risk Control. He is responsible for the total curriculum of the program and is charged with aiding students in meeting all requirements of the program.

After receiving his B.S. in industrial technology, Sorrell worked for Kearney and Trecker in Milwaukee as a service engineer, providing customer support related to the electrical and mechanical end of computerized numerical control machines. In 1980, Corning Glass Works in Corning, N.Y. hired him. While there he worked in a number of different production operations.

In 1982, Sorrell returned to UW-Stout to pursue his M.S. in safety. Upon graduation, he was hired by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company as a safety loss control consultant. Sorrell was hired by UW-Stout in 1988 to teach in the graduate-level safety program (now M.S. in Risk Control). In 1995, he completed doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota. According to Sorrell, he enjoys the challenges associated with his position. “UW-Stout is involved in several exciting projects, and I am delighted to be affiliated with the university,” he said.

Engineering and art a good combination for Siewert

Greg Siewert ’84 recently sent this update to the Alumni Association: “Right off the start, I have to confess that I’ve fallen into a career that, prior to my graduation from UW-Stout over 17 years ago, I would have never imagined. The path to my current position has been strewn with uncertain decisions, a fortunate association, and a solid foundation from Stout.

“For the last five years, I’ve been developing my yacht design firm here in Charleston, S.C. Siewert Design, LLC offers services in interior and exterior styling of both sail and motor yachts from eight to 180 feet in length. The office is primarily concerned with the conceptual and details design of both yacht exterior styling and interior styling, but it also offers services in market research, illustration and project planning.

“Technically, I call myself a ‘marine industrial designer,’ because industrial design has been my vocational background. However, the trade has encompassed a wide variety of disciplines, including many aspects of naval architecture. Naval architecture itself has a wide range of specialties, such as structural engineering, performing prediction and fluid dynamics. Other fields that I’ve had to gain fluency in are interior architecture and joinery, composites, computer-aided design and computer graphics. I also have a few skills in art that I wasn’t sure how to apply. At the time, I’d never heard of industrial design as a career, and at the time it was a pitifully small one. Of course since then, it has become an important role in most successful companies.

“My good friend John clued me in on this new field and how it included aspects of both engineering and art, and of his plans to go to Stout. “What the heck, let’s give it a whirl,” I said. I was pleasantly surprised when I arrived. Industrial design classes were diverse, and ranged from drawing and sculpture to production methods and economics. “This is interesting and fun,” I thought, “but can you make a living?”

“This is where a couple of fortunate circumstances came together. Having Jim McCormick as an instructor was the first. He was instrumental in giving students the core skills in problem solving which is, after all, what constitutes a good product. Second, he gave insight in how we interacted with other aspects of a company, such as engineering and manufacturing. Lastly, Jim made us remember not to take all this too seriously, to be creative and have fun!”

“The other fortunate circumstance came just before graduation. There was a posting on the job bulletin board in the art department for a staff designer position at S2 Yachts in Holland, Mich. S2 is a builder of sail and powerboats, and is considered one of the highest quality manufacturers in the industry. The job posting was in the direction I ultimately wanted to go. I went to the Alumni Office and a previous work associate of Jim’s and former industrial design instructor at Stout. I found this position and have type of industry very interesting because I enjoyed boats, and my dad had been sailing together for many years. I figure this last skill may have helped secure my first job in yacht design, which has lead to working with boat companies all over the world.

“Industrial design’s contribution to boat building back in the mid-80s was very limited, and we were considered to be a curious, peripheral department in the company. Often designers, (Mark hated the title ‘stylist’!) were delegated to just picking stripe colors or choosing the brand logos. Slowly, though, like the rest of many corporations, CEOs observed that their competitors better-designed products were lower cost and/or selling much better. Now, nearly every boatbuilder employs industrial designers. Some of the major companies are US Marine, and Sea Ray, have very large design staffs.

“Yacht design is a close-knit community, and personnel move regularly from one company to the next. I’ve done the same, managing several design departments. Although this diversity has given me a broad background in production methods and valued personal friendships, I found the technical boom and bust cycles tiring. Following my last corporate position that took me from San Diego to New Zealand, and then Raleigh/Durham, my wife Barb and I decided to move to the coast here in South Carolina and try to build my own design practice. Although it’s been said that the only difference between employment and self-employment is a state of mind, I’ve found it extremely interesting and fairly secure.”

Attention snowbirds!

If you head south for the winter or north for the summer, let us know! The Alumni Office’s new computer system allows mailings to be sent to alternate addresses during different times of the year. You’ll get alumni information on time and save the office time and money forwarding your mail. Send your addresses, and the times of the year you live there, to:

UW-Stout Alumni Office
PO Box 730
Menomonie, WI 54751
fax: 715/232-5015
or email: alumni2@uwstout.edu
Arzoumanian is superintendent

Twenty years after graduation from Stout State College, Linda Luck Arzoumanian ’64 relocated to Arizona. After 17 years and an Ed.D. in middle and early childhood, she became the Pima County school superintendent and is now responsible for the monitoring and reporting of budgets for 14 school districts, amounting to $342 million. In addition to her fiscal responsibilities, Arzoumanian is in charge of providing school bus transportation for children living in unincorporated territories and education to children in jail and detention center programs. She also operates the Center for Education Development. The center provides statewide counselor education, implements multicounty tech-prep programs and assists with multidistrict collaborations.

Wisconsin to Arizona was not a direct route as Arzoumanian spent a number of years in West Virginia, Maryland and New York. While in New York, she was an advocate for quality children’s education and special education services. She also concentrated on providing early childhood education to young children. Arzoumanian was appointed to the Child Development Committee working with public and private agencies to enhance services to meet the socioeconomics needs of families in Dutchess County.

After moving to Arizona, Linda volunteered on multiple district wide committees and worked diligently to establish a strong school community partnership council representing 104 schools. She also worked as a consultant in early childhood education for Pima County’s largest school district and was recruited to join a behavioral health agency in 1993 to develop a quality full day childcare program in the most economically depressed area of Tucson. She leveraged her work there to win a $5 million federal grant based on community development. Her program is recognized nationally as a promising program for early childhood/community development. During the same time she was responsible for the provision of clinical services to more than 400 children from birth to 18 years old.

In the fall of 1999, Arzoumanian was asked to submit her application for Pima County school superintendent, and joined a field of eight candidates. Although appointed last year to fill the position, the constituency of Pima County later elected Arzoumanian to serve as their superintendent. She has set high goals for herself and the district, currently working to explore the building of an alternative high school, professional development for the teachers in rural school districts through distance learning, linkages between the local community college and high schools countywide for shared credit arrangements, and workforce development.

Arzoumanian has high compliments for Stout and the education she received. She has maintained correspondence with several of her classmates as well as two former professors, Dr. Rimel and Dr. Harrison (now deceased). She credits the education she received at Stout with keeping her focused on quality and accountability in education. The educational rigor of much of her coursework allowed her to cross boundaries and enter other fields easily. She also believes that the high expectations that Stout professors had for her students was instrumental in providing her with the impetus to move forward with her M.Ed. in human relations, as well as her doctorate.

B & B dreams come true for Parker and family

How many of you have dreamed of living in one of the beautifully built homes of the late 1800s? If so, Marie Slowe Parker ’88 has taken on that dream and the work that comes with ownership of such a home. When Marie and her husband Andy purchased their 1866 Milwaukee home, “everything was pretty much demolished and or missing—even the entire stairway and furnaces were gone,” according to Parker. They were not discouraged (at least not terribly discouraged) as they had a dream. This inspiration began while on their honeymoon in 1989, touring Georgia. Instead of the typical hotel and honeymoon suites, they opted to stay in bed and breakfasts—and thus the beginning of a dream.

Five years after her graduation, Parker and her husband purchased the home that eventually became the Manderley Bed & Breakfast. During four of those five years, she was busy with her job as a technical representative in the research and development department for Eskimo Pie. Leaving Eskimo Pie after the birth of her two sons, Parker returned to work at Foran Spice Company, a research and development test kitchen. “It was a great job, I got to cook and was able to develop new food combinations. Andy stayed home with the boys and worked on making our home into a B&B,” she said. In 1996 she left Foran to help Andy with the construction and work on the house.

In April 2000, after one year of “practice” guests, Manderley opened for its first official

Alumni Testimonials

Reminiscing

“It is difficult to remember 30 years ago when my wife Nancy and I decided we needed a college education. We were married with two small children and no money. Nancy worked two jobs, taking the children with her to work, and I worked three jobs.”

“We had made a decision that Stout was the college of our choice. Many years later, after completing a B.S. in ’75, M.S. in ’78 and Ed.D. in ’85, our lives had changed forever. I had the opportunity to work for several companies including Menard’s Home Furnishings as the general manager (they only had five stores at that time).”

“When I was offered the opportunity to teach at Stout, it was another opportunity for the university to change our lives. While teaching at Stout, I was able to work on my doctorate at the University of Minnesota.”

“None of this would have been possible without the complete support of my wife and several Stout icons who I will never be able to thank enough. Phil Roehl, Jack Sampson and Bob Swanson are men of integrity, principle and have ‘hearts of gold.’”

“I am currently blending the lessons learned at Stout in business and industry to include consulting and pursuit of entrepreneurial ventures. Many thanks to everyone listed above and especially to my wife of 36 years and 134 days (but who’s counting) Nancy.”

“Seeing the communication from Joan Schwanengil in the 2001 spring issue of Stout Outlook brought back a flood of memories. I along with her and about 20 others, lived in historic Tainter Hall in ’49 and ’50. It was with sadness that I learned that that beautiful building was razed several years ago. There were six rooms on the second floor and four rooms on the third, surrounding a lovely spiral staircase. One day, someone on third shouted, ‘bat on the floor.’ Joan emerged from her room with a paper bag on her head, covering her hair, no doubt believing the myth that bats love to nest in human hair. Muriel Roffers, however, came out of her room wielding her tennis racket with which she gave the hapless bat a huge blow, sending it spiraling down the spiral staircase. She was taking tennis for a P.T. credit and turned to us proudly and said ‘did you see my follow through?’”

“Mrs. Nelson was our clueless housemother. She was a very poor judge of human nature and doted on the ‘bad’ girls, one in particular, who on our last night as freshmen in Tainter Hall, came in drunk, as usual, and fell on Mrs. Nelson. We all silently cheered to see Mrs. Nelson finally witnessing what all of us had known all year! I commend Joan on obtaining the highest salary of the class of ’52. She was always very focused on her goals.”

Mary Ann Constantine ’53

Alumni Testimonials

Reminiscing

“Would you believe our first guest was Stout graduate Dewey Fimreite ’85?” Parker said.

Parker credits her education and experiences at UW-Stout for her employment successes and the operating of a bed and breakfast. “The quantity food production class has helped me more than any other,” she commented. “Recently I’ve started ‘Thee Tea’s’ for retire-ment groups. Some of the things I learned in QFP have been a tremendous help.”

She also compliments the faculty and still remembers Peter D’Souza’s comment when she was asking for permission to leave classes for an interview. “Of course I’ll let you take off, this is what we are training you for,” he said.

With the first bed and breakfast up and running, the Parkers are in the process of purchasing the historical house next door. The previous owners, Clara and Charles Millert (daughter of Fredrick Miller, of Miller Brewery) entertained the society of Milwaukee in the home. They anticipate having nine rooms, making it an inn versus a bed and breakfast. Parker said it is on a five-year plan.

The next time you are looking for rooms in the Milwaukee area, consider the Manderley Bed & Breakfast at 3026 West Wells Street. You may also visit their Web site at: www.bedandbreakfastmilwaukee.com
The alumni office is always delighted when we “find” a lost alumnus, especially when they have expressed feelings of appreciation for the education they received at Stout.

Burton A. Pontynen B.S. ’51 and M.S. ’53 in industrial education, is such an alumni. We would like to share portions of a letter we recently received from him.

“I have not been a supporter of Stout by any financial contribution through the years. This does not mean that I have not appreciated the education I received there. I feel that Stout definitely helped me to live the life of my dreams. I have had what, for me, has been a very enjoyable and fulfilling life of experiences using the education I obtained at Stout.

“My teaching career started by organizing and teaching a general metal shop program at a rural high school in Stephenson, Mich. Two years later I moved to Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif., where I taught for the next 28 years. During my tenure at PUC, I completed my Ed D at Arizona State University.

“I’ve had the opportunity to experience some interesting and unique activities including taking a group of 10 PUC students to the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific. One of the assignments for the students included building a small school on the island. Credits were given to the students for physical education as we swam every day, and home economics since they were responsible for cooking their own meals. They were also given credit for a social service class.

“Another opportunity allowed me to be a visiting professor at Mountain View College in the Southern Philippines. In this position I was in charge of a work-study program in construction technology. The project involved team teaching 25 students with three Philippine instructors and foremen. Our project involved a 20,000 square foot new dormitory, which was started from scratch and completed during the school years. All work on this project was done by the most primitive and improvised techniques. Other interesting projects have taken me to Bolivia for a short time to facilitate in the start up of an orphanage in a primitive part of the country, and to central Mexico for a student work-study program.

“Now, during retirement, I still am enjoying good health and am active as a volunteer at PUC and as a member of the college development board. I still use my welding skills, learned from Professor Betterley at Stout. On an intermittent basis, I fabricate safety handrails on campus. All in all, I have had an enjoyable and satisfying 50 years since leaving Stout.”

Most graduates hope and usually expect to be employed in their field of study after graduation. It’s not unusual, however, for Stout graduates who have experienced the “hands-on, minds-on” training to use their degree for more than one career. That is the case with Roger Johnson, a 1972 industrial education major.

Roger’s first career was just what he had planned—teaching industrial arts. He spent 25 years in Alma Center, Wis., and two years in Augusta, Wis. Teaching industrial arts was his love, and he expected that he would remain in this field until his retirement “at an older age.” Although he was not quite ready to leave the teaching profession, Roger retired early, partly due to a hearing impairment.

This was the beginning of his second career. According to Roger and his wife Sally, this was “an accidental happening.” A number of years ago, they were scheduled to have their sofa recovered but an unfortunate incident prevented the person they had hired from completing the job. Not daunted by disappointment, they decided to take a course at a technical college nearby and learn how to do it themselves. To diversify their learning experiences, they each took different classes.

Not only did they completely re-do their sofa, they began doing refinishing for friends. Never expecting to make this into their full-time profession, Sally continued to run the business with Roger’s part-time help beginning in 1979. With Sally’s energy and encouragement, both continued to expand their experiences and training. Realizing the need for quality refinishing and restoration of furniture in their area, they added refinishing to their skills. “That (refinishing) has since surpassed the need for upholstery and constitutes a larger portion of our business. As each piece is done by hand, it is really labor intensive,” Roger said. He also said he truly appreciates the finishing classes taken from Dr. Persher. “While taking his classes, I did not even think about having my own business. Just appreciated his teaching skill. It sure has been helpful in this business,” he said.

Window coverings were added to the business when Sally completed an intensive course for certification. Roger and Sally’s business, RJS Custom Furnishings, is located Alma Center, Wis.

Roger is not the only Johnson from his immediate family to graduate from UW-Stout. His brother Tom graduated in 1973 and son Shayne completed his degree in 1998.