

# The Laker

SUMMER 2023



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# From the Head of School

Laker Friends,

What could be more ULS: an Upper School English class devoted to the study of great journalism decides to take over the Laker Magazine. Brilliant! And a strong signal to me that we are in solid Laker territory. On Hawk Hill there is no requisite waiting period between study and practice or between learning and doing. And we all know the result will be great.

Much love and effort goes into our work with students, but let this Laker also be a reminder that one of the best things we can do as educators is get out of the way. Lest we need the reminder having been roundly shellacked by the senior basketball teams this winter. It helps leaven the inevitable if we learn to always be a little bit in love with our own obsolescence.

Observe Middle Schoolers designing and building their own risky play structure. Take note for archery this year I hear they will be fashioning their own bows and arrows from trees just over there. Take heed when the students see fit to take over: that's a sign we're doing a great job.

Life is not a dress rehearsal and school is not just preparation. John Dewey defied most carefully considered aims of education by saying that the highest thing for which great learning can be called preparation is more learning. If that's true for our students then they can and will accomplish anything they want- and already do.

A heartfelt hello from our beloved School in the trees.



John Dewis  
15th Head of School  
University Lake School

One of the best parts of this gig is that I'm able to keep one foot in the classroom, where the real magic happens. Hoping my enthusiasm for journalism would be contagious, I taught the namesake course in its rookie season this semester. After mastering AP Style, newsworthiness, and the inverted pyramid, students penned a news article, investigative report, press release, photo essay, and sociological data analysis; hosted a documentarian, sports broadcaster, visual journalist, and social media expert; and visited the local newspaper, city magazine, and university major. They researched historic breaking news, dissected advertisement rhetoric, and debated duty versus ethics. Students flourished as writers – **they became storytellers** with a sentient audience. Our senior reporters researched Hawk Hill features, which you'll find in the pages that follow. I can't wait to see how the Class of 2023 tells their stories in this next chapter of their lives.

Enjoy. And come visit.



Allie Reeder  
Upper School Head  
English Teacher

# Senior Send Off



Jamal Akanbi	Undecided (Ireland)
Joe Brand	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Kate Buerger	Elon University
Avery Chang	University of Wisconsin-Madison
Amy Colananni	Miami University (Ohio)
Victoria Dallen	University of Wisconsin-River Falls
Emmanuel Ejakita	Undecided (Ireland)
Will Fair	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Sarah Foster	Indiana University
Lili Franke	Liberty University
Cole Greco	Michigan Technological University
Ava Hanke	University of Wisconsin-Madison

Ava Lewin	University of Chicago
Ashleigh McCarthy	Marian University
Hannah Myhre	University of Denver
John Newman	Grand Canyon University
Zach Paulin	University of Alabama
Kaine Pfeifer	Farmer at Korbels Quarters
Callow Soto	Lewis and Clark College
Egann Stack-Vaughn	Minnesota State Mankato
Sawyer Van Ooyen	Tufts University
Liam Yauchler	University of Minnesota
Harrison Ziegler	Eckerd College

As our upper school seniors prepare to embark on their next chapter in life, here are a few of their post-high school plans:

## Ava Lewin - University of Chicago Major: Biology



I first heard about UChicago in my junior year when the admissions counselor came to ULS for an informational session. I liked everything she said about the school—a student community that seems passionate about just about everything; professors who have not only won Nobel Prizes but also truly care about their students; thousands

of paid internships reserved for students—but when I heard how low the acceptance rate was I thought I wouldn't be able to get in and decided not to apply. However, during the College Tours intersession later that year, Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Niemczyk encouraged me to apply and said I had a good chance of being accepted, so I applied in the fall and got in.

I'm planning to major in biology since I want to be an epigenetic researcher after graduate school. While taking several science courses at Stanford the summer before my senior year, I was especially interested in the epigenetics unit in my cancer biology class, which inspired me to follow that path for my career. I did know before then that I wanted to be a scientific researcher, as I believe that this is the best way to help others on a large scale, but only decided on epigenetics specifically last summer.



## Kate Buerger - Elon University Major: Marketing Division 1 Track and Cross Country



The skills I would take from ULS to succeed as a college athlete are time management between school and sport, and also being a leader. ULS has taught me how to communicate well with others and lead a group.

## Will Fair - Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology Major: Mechanical Engineering Minor: Business



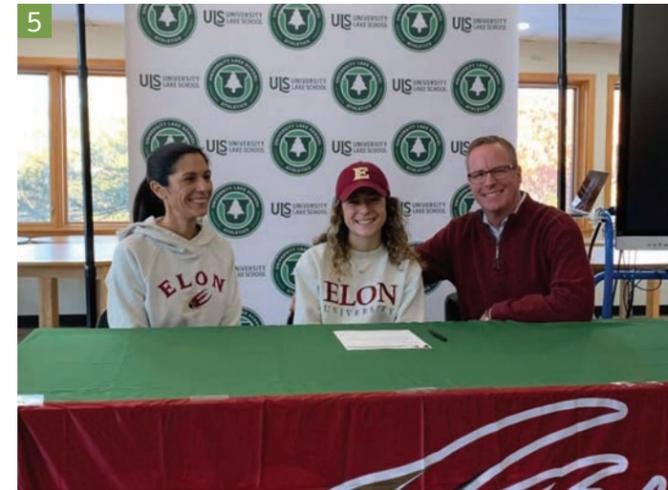
I picked Rose-Hulman because it is a small school that focusses on its students and makes sure they all have the funding and experience to complete any project or dive into any field they want. I toured the school and it instantly just felt like a fit for me, which made it a pretty easy choice.

## Kaine Pfeifer - Korbels Quarters Occupation - Farmer



I am excited to get to spend the rest of my life doing what I love and growing our family farm, Korbels Quarters, larger. I am going to be starting to raise beef cattle, previously my parents boarded horses; however, they always had the idea of raising beef. I took their idea and started working with it. I bought a few beef cattle, more equipment that we would need, and found more fields for us to rent. I hope to be able to continue to expand this in the future.





## Hawk Hill Happenings

### 1 Let's Glow with Friendship!

Our Lower School students and families enjoyed dancing and playing among the neon decorations and glow sticks at this February's "Let's Glow with Friendship" dance. The glow dance was planned by several enthusiastic parents and students and attended by more than 200 students, family members, and teachers.

### 2 Wild Wild ULS

Yee haw! The 2023 Wild Wild ULS Spring Auction was a night to remember! 175 parents, alumni, staff, and friends donned their best cowboy boots, bolo ties, belt buckles and hats in support of our School. Donors contributed more than \$233,000 in support of the auction, all of which benefited our important Annual Fund.

### 3 Performing Arts Hall of Fame

This year's musical production of *Annie* was a smashing success! Several alumni, parents, and staff gathered before one of the shows to welcome two new members into the ULS Performing Arts Hall of Fame. Congratulations to Alexa Andrews '15 and Amy Schwaab, former ULS faculty member and Theatre Director. We are thankful for their many contributions to the arts at ULS as well within their own communities following their time on Hawk Hill!

### 4 Ahoy, Alumni!

Three Lakers connected at the International Boating Water Safety Summit in Little Rock, AR this April. Lili (Koch) Colby '79, Paul Treiber '85, and Emlie (Barkow) Veinot '01 discovered their shared Laker roots during a casual chat

in the vendor hall and enjoyed reminiscing about their favorite teachers. Paul owns Walsh Marine, a leading manufacturer of safety buoys, Emlie is the President of Safe Lakes Marine Products, a new business retailing boating safety products formed with her husband Chad, and Lili works for Mustang Survival after selling her life jacket company, MTI, in 2020. Lakers leading in the U.S. boating safety industry!

### 5 Three Seniors to Play Collegiate Athletics

Pride is an understatement as we recently celebrated three stellar senior student-athletes who have committed to play collegiate athletics. Congratulations to Callow Soto who will play soccer for Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Ashleigh McCarthy who will play volleyball for Marian University in Fond du Lac, and Kate Buerger who will run for Elon University in Elon, North Carolina.

### 6 Intersession - SEW WHAT'S NEW

The sew crew students became familiar with their sewing machines by making a small pincushion. Not only did it help in learning some machine basics, it also became a useful tool! They spent 3 sessions designing and sewing some of the orphan costumes for our spring musical *Annie*.

### 7 Camp Edwards - 5th and 6th or DC trip

The 5th and 6th graders enjoyed a successful leadership trip to Camp Edwards where they participated in team-building activities such as the low ropes course and fire building. Highlights included a game played outside at night called Alpha Wolf where each "pack" had to use their deductive reasoning skills to locate the Alpha Wolf as quickly and quietly as possible using only their sense of hearing.

# DO YOU KNOW THESE LAKERS?

Written by Sarah Foster, Ava Hanke, and Joe Brand

*Following the sale of the Vettelson Farm, numerous families and individuals gave it their all to make ULS the successful and positive campus it is today.*



Current University Lake School campus

Following World War II, a group of parents in Lake Country no longer wished to send their children almost an hour away from home to receive an adequate education. After founding the first Lake Country nursery school for their kids in Waukesha County, they did not know where their children would go next. Crowded public schools were not appealing, and the parents wished only the highest academic standards for their children.

In September of 1956, University Lake School was founded, opening a temporary building on Nagawicka Lake with just 45 students in grades seven through ten. Later in the year, ULS moved to Nagawicka Road onto the property of the Vettelson Farm. Although it was just shy of 50 learners, word spread about this new and improved school and its educational philosophy. As a result, enrollment began to rise and grades were added every year.

Many founding family names like Friend, Manegold, Brumder, and Pabst are still

seen throughout campus today. One additional name came up in conversation when talking with the granddaughter of Mrs. Vettelson: Harrison Boone Porter, who played a vital role in the sale of the Vettelson Farm.

John Friend offered Anne Vettelson, the former owner of what is now the ULS campus, \$2,000 of his own money for the property. Vettelson had originally asked for \$4,000, but Friend had been struggling to gather funds. A gravel company had also approached Vettelson offering her a competing, and more desirable, offer. The gravel company explained to Vettelson that the property would be turned into a mining site. However, Vettelson heard of Friend's plans to build a school instead, and she agreed that he would make better use of the acreage that had been in her family for generations.

Anne Vettelson was a prominent member of her local community church, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church, which later became Nashotah House. During the

negotiations for ULS, she requested Episcopal Priest Harrison Boone Porter to be present at the sale.

As ULS expanded, other prominent figures, such as Joseph B. de Peyster, aided in broadening the idea of what it means to be a Laker. De Peyster introduced the idea of the branches of the pine into the ULS mission, which helped students elicit their fullest academic and moral potential. De Peyster later became the first Headmaster of ULS with Friend by his side as the original Board President.

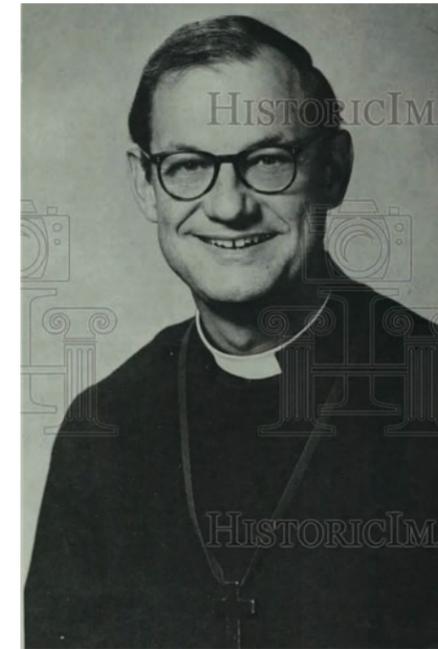
As the years passed, ULS prospered, gaining more students, faculty members, and new buildings to create the campus we see today. What began as one small building on almost 180 acres flourished into a learning community that equips all students to be critical leaders and stewards of humanity. Students now have an abundance of space to learn and grow in ULS' five main buildings and multiple outdoor spaces. The families and friends of ULS reflect a culture of belonging where everyone's identity is appreciated. If it was not for Vettelson, Porter, Friend, de Peyster, the students, faculty, and many more founding families, our community would be nonexistent today.

## REVEREND HARRISON BOONE PORTER

*Porter played a vital role in the purchase of University Lake School's land. As one of the original Lakers and founding members of Hawk Hill, Porter greatly contributed to ULS' rich history.*

Born on January 10, 1923, in Louisville, Kentucky, Harrison Boone Porter became a prominent figure in the sale of University Lake School, a deal that would not have occurred without him. He also had a role in forming our school's ancient motto: "Libertas Veritate."

Porter was an alumnus of St. Paul's School, a highly selective college-preparatory school affiliated with the Episcopal Church. After graduation, Porter received a Bachelor's Degree from Yale University in 1947 and then went on to attend Berkeley Divinity School three years later. In 1952, he received a Bachelor of Sacred Theology and General Theological Seminary in Manhattan. After that, he earned a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Oxford in 1954, where he was ordained into the priesthood.



Reverend Harrison Boone Porter

From 1954 until 1960, Porter resided in Lake Country while teaching Ecclesiastical History at the Nashotah House, a theological seminary school that teaches individual ministry. In the brief time that Porter resided in Wisconsin, the sale of the Vettelson farm was occurring.

Vettelson was a strong believer in Christ and valued her religion increasingly in her later years. She had much trust in Porter, and when she decided to sell the land, she chose Porter as a witness and notary.

Friend also had a say in selecting Porter for this particular role in our founding. Joni Friend, John's daughter, described their connection as close family friends, adding that in her younger years, she remembers him frequently dropping by for dinner or a quick chat with her parents.

During the School's preliminary years, much was to be deliberated, including our school's motto. Friend and Porter shared their affection for the language of Latin, believing that it was an indisputable fact that it was the true basis for all languages. When it came time for a motto, it simply "had to be Latin." With combined thought they landed on "Libertas Veritate" (Translation: "Freedom through truth"). University Lake School today still strives to make this motto a living reality.

A few years after the transaction, Porter left the Nashotah House and became the Professor of Liturgics, the study of formal public worship, at General Seminary until 1970. Before retiring in 1990, Porter became the editor of The Living Church magazine. He then furthered his education by receiving a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

In addition to many other responsibilities in the Episcopal Church, Porter served on the Standing Liturgical Commission from 1961 until 1976 and the General Board of Examining Chaplains from 1970 to 1982. He was also a member of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, the Anglican Society, the Alcuin Club, and the Living Church Foundation, Inc.

While Porter never had an official ULS title, he is an honorary Laker as well as a cherished member of the Hawk Hill Community.

## JOSEPH B. DE PEYSTER

*The man that watered the sprouts of University Lake School.*

The life of a Laker incorporates academic challenge, athletic discovery, artistic distinction, and the ability to lead and serve society. By exemplifying the four branches of the pine, de Peyster further nourished the ULS community by having students rise to their fullest potential in multiple aspects of life.

De Peyster was the first Headmaster of University Lake School, carefully selected by Friend. De Peyster was described as a person of "uncommon grace and character." He is repeatedly mentioned for his kind eyes and intuition.

De Peyster was a graduate of North Shore Country Day School, Williams College, University of Michigan Law School, and Northwestern University from which he obtained a Master's Degree in Education. He was Assistant Head at Kansas City County Day School when he was hired by University Lake School.

De Peyster came to the School while it was still looking for a permanent home and thus got to be part of the initial construction of the Hawk Hill campus. He became an important consultant to ULS architect Maynard "Mike" Meyer, whose children proudly attended ULS. Mike also designed St. Anskar's Episcopal Church in Chenequa and several timeless structures on the Milwaukee campus of University of Wisconsin. De Peyster helped grow the young school to forty-seven strong in his first year.

De Peyster's most important initial responsibility was to locate and hire a faculty. He assembled a very capable group of teachers. University Lake School was incorporated at the very end of 1956, and the building's foundations were placed in late 1958.

His daughter speaks of him as being "determined to set a good example for



**Joseph B. de Peyster**

his own children and all ULS students” while looking back at her time at ULS as a student under his leadership. He was more than a man in a suit; he became involved in the community, forming a legacy of making student connections the basis for all communications.

De Peyster became deeply involved in National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), which provided him with his lifetime job after he left ULS.

The de Peyster Society was established to recognize those who have designated ULS in their will or estate plans in honor of the vision and generosity of our first Head of School. Gifts include bequests, beneficiary designations, trusts, IRAs, gift annuities, and insurance policies. In this way Joe continues to give in perpetuity to the School he launched.

## JOHN M. FRIEND

*Friend helped broker the sale of the Vettelson Farm, transforming it into the current ULS campus.*

Friend was the first President of the Board and the first Headmaster of ULS before passing that role to Joseph de Peyster. He was a good friend to Porter and one of the original founders who made University Lake School a reality.

Fellow founders Herbert Brumder and Bob Manegold decided Friend would make a good president. He was a good man and a strong leader, equipped perfectly for the job.

Along with the Manegolds, Pabsts, and Brumders, the Friend family was one of Pine Lake’s earliest “year-rounders,” establishing Provident Realty Company in Lake Country. Friend’s mother Nieta founded Pine Lake’s first day camp and

had a long-time record of educational involvement.

Members of the Friend family have been regular and generous donors for decades. Their donations include the Krause meeting room in its entirety and the Treiber Theater’s famous Steinway World-Class piano.

University Lake School has always prided itself in creating leaders. Friend was just that – a truly dedicated leader. He was selfless in his mission to make University Lake School happen and ruthless toward anyone who stood in this dream’s way. Every Laker should strive for the same drive and leadership abilities that Friend showed throughout our history.



From left: Rodney Stebbins, David Pabst, John M. Friend, Morton R. Spence, Robert C. Brumder, Joseph B. de Peyster, Herbert E. Brumder, Edward Yewer.



## Senior Spotlight

# HARRISON ZIEGLER



**Q: What is it you love most about ULS?**

My favorite part of ULS is the class size and teacher support with being able to ask questions and receive one-on-one time with a teacher if need be.

**Q: What are you involved in?**

I am involved in theater as the light board operator for the play and musical. However, I am typically not involved in sports since I do flight lessons and receive tutoring for Japanese.

**Q: What made you decide to learn Japanese?**

I was not a fan of the structuring of the Spanish language, mainly the fact of gendered words with A for girls and O for guys. Since I have more interest in Japanese culture I wanted to learn the language. Even though it

is not a Romance language and it is difficult to learn new words, I have the determination to continue learning Japanese.

**Q: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

In my free time I am either flying, studying Japanese with my tutor, or at home playing flight and racing simulators.

**Q: Plans after graduation? Please tell us more about your pilot experience and plans.**

After graduation I will be going to Eckerd college to major in Business Administration and minor in Japanese. After this I will be building flight time most likely by becoming a flight instructor. From here I will be taking a test called the ATP that allows me to fly for the airlines. Eventually, I would like to

be flying long distance Asian flights for one of the legacy airlines, and possibly start up a business.

**Q: Words of wisdom for younger students?**

Please use your study halls to finish homework and avoid procrastination. My friends rarely did their homework during these times and would procrastinate constantly and so I would always have free time after school to hang out or play video games. But, when I asked them if they wanted to join, they were always busy finishing their homework.

**Q: Favorite memory from ULS?**

This is really difficult because I have so many, but one that comes to mind are the Annie shows since I feel that I am leaving the theater department with a very good cast and crew for future productions.

**Q: Favorite subject at ULS?**

History class with Mr. Flaherty.



# Bee Inspired!

Written by Kate Buerger, Lili Franke, and Jamal Akanbi

*The addition of bees to the University Lakes School campus will further the mission to get back to nature.*

On April 18th, 2023, 9,000 bees came to campus to help further ULS' mission to connect closer to nature. The hope is for all grade levels to use bees in their education.

Bringing bees to campus originally stemmed from a ULS environmental club charge, and Outdoor Specialist Jennifer Bennett and Head of School John Dewis quickly supported the idea. Dewis said, "Bees teach us about pollination, flowers, complex insect societies with unusual self-sacrificial behavior. They also remind us that our campus is already happily used by many non-human creatures who fly great distances to get here."

"It takes more than soil, water, and sunshine to make the world green. At least 30% of the world's crops and 90% of all plants require cross-pollination to spread and thrive... bees are our most important pollinators," according to Premier Tech.

Pollination is integral for the earth to thrive - without it, we would all starve. Slowly, animals would die off from lack of plant-based nutrition, leading humans to lose their main source of food: animal meat and plants. Bees truly are the most valuable and important animals in the world, but a combination of climate changes, droughts, pesticides, and parasites has threatened their global population.

For these reasons and more, ULS is installing honey bee hives on campus - to give bees a home, and to fight against our ever-changing and challenging environment.

The outdoor committee reached out to the Schimelfenys, a ULS family that owns bees, and they recommended an expert to help. The School was soon introduced to local beekeeper Quentin Stedman, who grew up on a dairy farm in Ontario, Wisconsin with a neighbor who was a beekeeper. Now he mentors beekeepers at Gwenyn Hill Farm.

Stedman helped Director of Curriculum and Assessment Becky Tiffany execute the idea. Tiffany said, "Quentin is the perfect opportunity for ULS. He's local, knowledgeable, and can help ULS throughout the process."

Stedman ensured a smooth arrival for the bees by finding a safe home on campus. In addition, he led presentations on bee



safety for students, parents, and faculty. Not only was this an open and educating conversation, but it also sparked interest in students, furthering the excitement for our new friends.

According to Tiffany, the hope is to incorporate the hives into science and social studies. The Middle School is planning on researching how bees are essential pollinators and how they work to keep the natural circle of life flowing. Lower School students will study the intricate communities bees build, exploring their different roles. With Director of Field Studies Mr. Bisbee's Upper School Ecology class next year, he will help maintain the hives and sell honey.

Although many are excited to have bees nearby, some question the safety risks. Bennett stated that allergy medicine will be supplied for students' safety. The hives have been located away from students to ensure the students and the bees will not be in each other's way. There are also barriers; students are not permitted to explore near the beehives without the supervision of a teacher. Finally, the types of bees are unlikely to sting unless provoked.

The hives are located by the retention pond off of Vettleson Road and behind the Hawks and Eagles Nest near the apple trees.

# ULS ROBOTICS TEAM HAS SUCCESS IN FIRST TECH CHALLENGE

Written by Amy Colananni and Will Fair

Robotics team wins Team Improvement trophy at their first competition in the **FIRST Tech Challenge.**



University Lake School's Robotics team is making waves in the FIRST Robotics Tech Challenge. The team, composed of students from different grades, has been working tirelessly to build a robot that can solve complex problems.

"It's almost like a sports team in that you meet all year with the shared goal of building a robot that will solve a problem," Kirsten Huberty, Robotics Coach, said.

Robotics competitions follow a certain structure. Every school builds a robot with the goal of earning the most points. This year's challenge is to move, grab, and drop cones onto poles.

Bob, the robot, has an interesting backstory. During an assembly, team member Cole Greco came up with the name Bob on the fly while speaking on stage, and the name stuck. Despite being in their first year, the Laker Robotics team competed in their first FIRST Tech Challenge on January 28th, 2023.

They finished third from last, only missing advancing to state by one position. The robot's arm was designed like a theater lift, but the belt kept falling off the pulleys, which made it difficult to reach the highest poles.

Despite their initial struggles, the team did not give up. They continued to work on their robot and competed in their second FIRST Tech Challenge on February 11th, 2023, at Brookfield Central. The team did much better in their second attempt, thanks to the lessons they learned from their previous competition.

"That's the thing with building - you'll always find things to improve," Huberty stated.

The Robotics team is currently working on improving the stability of the robot's arm, code bugs, and ease-of-life elements for controlling the robot.

The team is proof that hard work and determination can lead to success. Their progress is a testament to their commitment to excellence. With continued dedication, they are sure to make their mark in the world of robotics and in the school.



# JULIA MCRAE

Written by Egann Stack-Vaughn and Zachary Paulin

“Coach” Julia McRae is University Lake School’s Athletic Director, soccer coach, and teacher. Growing up in Canada, she immersed herself in the world of sports, playing soccer and ringette throughout high school. She continued her passion for soccer in college, where she played four years at Jacksonville University in Florida. From there she traveled back to Canada to play at the highest level in the Nova Scotia Premier Soccer League, and later assisted in coaching the U15 and U17 Canadian women’s national team. Once she made her way to Wisconsin, she became involved in a program called “Let Kids Fly” (LKF). At that time, she was asked to coach high school soccer on Hawk Hill, which turned into her current role.



**Q: What made you decide to work at ULS?**

I was on vacation visiting my family for the first time since Covid and I got a phone call from Mrs. Putnam asking if I had any interest in coaching boys’ soccer. At the time my husband was playing baseball so it was just me and Charlie. I said, why not? Once I got here, I wanted to stay.

**Q: What are your goals in this job?**

I want to leave this place in a better spot than where I found it, and realistically, where I found ULS was a funky spot because of Covid. I would love to see new banners up in the gym that reflect the hard work of our current student-athletes. I also want more students to enroll, and I want sports to be a reason why they choose ULS.

**Q: Do you have any hopes or plans for the future at ULS?**

I have two little girls planning on coming to school here. One starts next year and the other in two years. My biggest hope is that when they become freshmen in high school they have a fantastic sports program to play through. I want seniors to come back as alumni and be proud of our athletics program. I would also love to see our sports teams at the top of our conference in every sport we compete in.

**Q: What’s your favorite part about your job?**

My favorite part about my job is the cheesy answer – the kids. I never thought I would be teaching a freshman English class but it’s been the best because I get to meet every single student who walks through this school. The best part about the job is connecting with kids. This spring we have about 80% of our Upper School playing a sport. I also love that students that have never played sports are playing sports.

**Q: We know you’re Canadian – what’s ringette!?**

Ringette is super popular in Canada. It combines ice hockey, lacrosse, and basketball. The stick is like a hockey stick but without a blade at the end, and instead of a puck, there is a ring. It’s a fast paced game and only played by women.

**Q: Is this something you anticipated for your career?**

No, I went to school to become a pediatric sports psychologist. I wanted to work with kids that either have anxiety with competition or whatever that looks like on the field. I stumbled into this opportunity at ULS and now I’m obsessed with this place and I’m here all the time. I believe in everything it stands for, I believe in what the school is trying to do across the board. Is being an Athletic Director at a small private school in Wisconsin what I imagined? No – but it’s so much better!



# BE KIND, BE CREATIVE, BE BRAVE!

Written by Hannah Myhre and Avery Chang



The Be Brave Nature Play Area began with a need for middle school students to have a place outside where they could take risks. Liz McSorley, Middle School Head, proposed the idea of a risky play area at the beginning of the school year. “Kids this age like to take risks. They crave that. Giving kids a safer way to take risks will hopefully lead them to learn how to safely assess risks in the future.”

The Middle School introduced elective classes to the curriculum, offering students new opportunities to explore their interests. Beth Radtke, 7th and 8th grade teacher, ran a STEAM elective where middle schoolers could put their creativity to use. The elective focuses on incorporating science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics into a fun and collaborative course where students take what they’ve learned in the classroom and put it into action. Sitting in a classroom all day is difficult for middle schoolers, and building with their hands provides an opportunity to move around throughout the day in a constructive manner. Students could build and engineer anything their imaginations would allow, making the creation of Be Brave the ideal project.

In collaboration with our outdoor specialist, Rob Fuhr, the STEAM class took advantage of the ULS campus for this project. Throughout the building process, students learned how to use numerous tools such as a laser cutter and wood burner, and took initiative when it came to building the playground. Students poured concrete, cut and measured wood, arranged and secured pieces together to build the platform, and hung up the slackline under Fuhr’s guidance.

After months of planning and constructing, the area officially opened in the fall of 2022. However, for the middle schoolers, the beauty of the Be Brave area is that it is never completed. They continuously try to utilize the natural resources around them to improve and blend into the forestry of the campus. The area currently includes a natural rope swing, a wooden platform, stump jumps, grips for tree climbing, a slackline, and fallen trees. The rope swing, a student favorite, was initially just a vine hanging from a branch in the forest but was kept during the clearing process to be used as a swing off the new platform. Students also love the stump jumps, which were constructed using old trees cleared from the area.

This area has had numerous positive impacts on the students, from body development to understanding the consequences of risks, and collaborating with different grades. Students have learned to trust one another as they spot and help each other play. Presenting students with potential danger in a controlled environment has allowed them to discover their personal limits, as well as encouraged them to take chances and step out of their comfort zones.

At ULS, learning leadership skills and building trust is at the forefront of our community’s goals, and they have been accomplished in large part due to outdoor activities at leadership trips like Camp Manito-wish and Camp Edwards. Be Brave offers a new opportunity for this important aspect of the community to be cultivated right here on campus.



# CLIMBING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Written by Callow Soto and Kaine Pfeifer

*The ULS rock wall has been attracting kids since the early 2000s*

The rock climbing wall at University Lake School sits in the Brumder Gym, waiting for kids from all divisions to come and give it a try.

The room features two walls, one with three separate paths that require a belay system, and another bouldering wall for free-climbing. The floor is covered in blue mats to break a fall, if needed.

When asked about his favorite aspect of the rock wall, P.E. teacher John Doherty stated, "...to see kids think and then succeed. Especially the little kids, their faces light up."

Aside from being fun for kids of all ages, the rock wall also has an intriguing backstory. Before moving to ULS, the wall belonged to the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee. It was removed from one of their branches and sat in a basement storage room. David Fritzke, uncle of alumni and faculty member John Fritzke '99, was working in the IT department of the YMCA at the time and was tasked with rehoming it.

Having family connections to the school, he reached out to his nephew and asked if ULS would be interested.

John Fritzke shared, "I liked that the rock wall gave kids a different way to be active, and a chance to test their courage and build self-esteem."

The rock wall was donated to the School at no cost shortly thereafter. However, the cost of installation, namely engineering support structures behind the wall panels, and training teachers not only how to safely belay but also how to teach others, was



significant. In 2007, administration dedicated the school's Fund-A auction proceeds to finance the project.

The rock wall was transported to the Brumder Gym and Eric Olson '91, ULS alumni and manager at Brookfield's Adventure Rock, supervised the installation and set the initial holds and routes. Olson also trained and certified various staff on how to belay students.

Once installed, the Business Manager was asked if the school would consider adding a plaque next to the wall in honor of Fritzke's mother, Cheryll Fritzke.

Cheryll worked countless hours for the ULS Booster Club, including the concessions window right next to the rock wall. She passed away of lung cancer a few years before the wall became available. The time she spent supporting the school would be commemorated with her family's rock wall project. The plaque can be seen today next to the rock climbing wall.

From problem-solving to pushing boundaries, it's clear that the rock climbing wall has significantly benefited the entire ULS community and will continue to do so as long as it stands.

# ULS TRADITION:

## SENIOR VS. FACULTY BASKETBALL GAME

Written by Ashleigh McCarthy, Victoria Dallen, and Emmanuel Ejakita

With three seconds left on the clock, the home team was down by one. The crowd was roaring, bleachers shaking with excitement. The veteran basketball player went in for a layup. Time seemed to stop as the ball hit the backboard and wobbled on the rim. Coach held his breath as the ball tipped over the edge. The deafening buzzer rang as players flooded the court and another ULS senior vs. faculty basketball game was in the books.

For over 30 years, ULS has been hosting an annual Senior vs. Faculty basketball game for camaraderie, school spirit, and some friendly competition. The senior class creates a roster, makes plays, and strategizes to try and pull together a win against their teachers. Selected juniors referee and run the scoreboard while the rest of the school fills the bleachers. The faculty spend their prep time taking extra precautions before lacing up the dusty old high tops. The days prior, the hallways are filled with teasing banter between the seniors and the teachers.



2010. John Fritzke blocks a shot from Tommy Hiller.

Over the years, there have been a few highlights for the faculty. P.E. teacher and coach John Doherty's favorite year was "when I played against my son in 2015. We won." For teacher and alumni John Fritzke '99, his favorite memory was when the faculty was down by one and Doherty chucked the ball down the court. As he "went in for the layup, [he] got fouled and then made both shots" to win the game.

Some of the teachers here at ULS have even been able to experience the opportunity of playing as both a student and a faculty member. Alexis Daley '12 shares, "When we played my senior year, we tied... the thing that is so heartbreaking for me now as a teacher, is that even compared to last year I feel more

out of breath!" Once a former all-conference basketball player, Fritzke added, "it is less and less fun each year. It's harder to keep up."

For years, the faculty maintained a winning streak. Doherty explains, "The teachers were - and are - good. And experience plays a big part. Some of us played college basketball. Most of the teachers played in high school and many of the women played a college sport as well."

Meanwhile, the Class of 2023 was stacked with varsity basketball players. After a 15-year faculty winning streak, this year's senior class was more than ready to take home the big W. Senior Joe Brand shared, "I have no doubt that we can come together as a class and take the win, especially considering seven of the seniors started on Varsity this year."

This year's game was definitely one to remember. "I couldn't wait to wipe the confident smirk off the teachers' faces," says senior Ashleigh McCarthy. After an intense first half, the seniors pulled ahead as the faculty unwillingly slowed their pace and watched as the scoreboard climbed higher for the seniors. In the end, the senior class beat the faculty with a final score of 50-40. As the buzzer rang, the entire class rushed the gym floor, celebrating the end of the faculty reign.

# The Intersession Experience

Written by Sawyer Van Ooyen and Liam Yauchler

Intersession is the Upper School's unique experiential learning program. A year-long course that defies traditional curriculum, intersession offers opportunities for students to delve deep into a topic of interest, like sewing costumes or Latino art and culture. Time is allotted for off-campus travel both near and far, from studying wildlife in the Galápagos Islands to touring Illinois and Wisconsin colleges. Innovative ideas stem from student interest and change annually, including woodworking, music production, and architecture. Intersession brings our students and our classrooms out into the world for once-in-a-lifetime learning.



The students of the Galapagos intersession

The Galapagos intersession used their time at school to learn more about the local culture of Ecuador in preparation for their trip in the spring. Once they arrived to Ecuador, they enjoyed the natural beauty, local food, and unique experiences such as snorkeling with sea turtles. Students went hiking and biking, visited volcanoes and old architecture, and enjoyed time on the beach boogie boarding and swimming with exotic fish. Macey Smith, a teacher in the Galapagos intersession, said she gained "closer connections with students and faculty members... and a greater appreciation for cultures around the world."

In sound production, students learned about different aspects of writing, producing, and recording music. Some of the activities included producing an original song and learning about "foley art," or adding background sounds to make a scene or video feel real. In addition, students visited two recording studios – one in Chicago and one in Madison – to see what professionals use to create their sounds. Intersession advisor Ken Williams said his favorite part was "seeing the kids create and grow in a medium in which they are truly interested, working with programs and technology to create sounds." Will Fair said he enjoyed exploring more about interests that students have outside of school while still learning.

A variety of students who wanted to do more hands-on activities had the chance to participate in the woodworking intersession. Students learned how to use specific tools like a

CNC router and a bandsaw to build items they wanted, like a chessboard and a speaker set. The entire group worked on a collaborative project building a new podium for speakers to use on stage during assemblies.

Similarly, the Architecture Intersession learned about famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Students visited buildings all around the area and learned how they were made. Afterwards, they used their new knowledge to make buildings with raw spaghetti and marshmallows, symbolizing the architecture of a real building.

An intersession that allowed students to get a glimpse of what waits for them beyond ULS is the college tours intersession. This intersession shows students the campuses of universities in the Midwest. In addition to visiting college campuses, this intersession also lets students learn about the admissions process, such as applications and essays. Alex Pavlov, a student in the college tours intersession, said he loved getting to visit campuses in Chicago with his friends.



Students in the sewing intersession learned how to preserve and make new clothes out of old fabrics. To start off this intersession, each student was given their own sewing machines to learn how to use. Next, they created their own pieces of clothing with what they brought in and what they found within the classroom. Sewing is a useful skill that gives life back to once loved and now destroyed clothing.



This year students also had the option to learn about Latino culture and expression in the United States. Students had guest speakers come in, practiced Latino dances, and cooked delicious food. Alexis Daley, a teacher who helped run this intersession, said it helped her gain "knowledge of different food and cultural aspects that we studied, and maybe a couple of pounds." This intersession also traveled to Chicago to see the influence of Latino culture in the city.

When asked if they believed intersession will leave a lasting impact, many students said they gained skills they wouldn't have if it weren't for intersession.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS REVIVE TRADITION OF TAGGING HERON NESTS

Written by John Newman and Ava Lewin

With winter coming to a close, students at University Lake School observed an increase in the number of herons on campus. Herons have been calling these woods home since before the school was established in 1956. Now they can be found a short walk behind the Manegold Lower School building.

The herons have been classified as Great Blue Herons, the most common species in North America and one of eight that live in Wisconsin. Found near rivers and lakes, they can be identified by their distinctive gray-blue color, long feathers on their neck and back, and the "S" shape their neck makes when they fly.

Great Blue Herons are well-known for their hunting habits: these birds are often spotted standing motionlessly in shallow water, striking rapidly with their bills at unsuspecting fish. Their necks contain special vertebrae that allow them to better hunt for prey.

Although the exact number of herons on campus is unknown, members of the ULS community have noticed the rookery expanding in size. Joe Hardgrove, whose 5th-grade class started counting the nests earlier this year, estimated there to be roughly 150 to 200 nests.

However, "...because of the acidity of the heron droppings, the rookery trees have been dying... Many trees with tags from years ago are now lying on the forest floor," Hardgrove said. Despite this, the herons seem to be thriving, building new nests near the railroad tracks and fairy fields.

"There is a whole 'neighborhood' of nested trees that have developed away from the original rookery," Hardgrove explained.



A Great Blue Heron returns to its nest. Photo by Jennifer Bennett.

The 5th graders' project has been put on hold due to the herons' mating season. The rookery should not be disturbed during this time or it could scare the herons away for good, Hardgrove shared. Since young herons typically leave their nests 65 to 90 days after birth, they plan to continue tagging the trees in late spring.



John Dewis, Head of School, lands in the tug-of-war pit, courtesy of the Class of 2023.

Young alumni/parents: if you/your child attended University Lake School and no longer lives at home, please share their current address with us so we can add them to our Laker mailing list.

Visit [universitylake.org/for-alumni](https://universitylake.org/for-alumni) and click "Update" under the Connect section. Thank you!