

CARLSON

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

FALL 2024



The Ace

Harsh Mankad, '15 MBA, is teaching tennis players to win simply by loving the sport.



THE MAGAZINE
FOR ALUMNI
AND FRIENDS



PHOTO: PAT VASQUEZ-CUNNINGHAM

Congratulations, Class of 2024!

More than 1,400 Carlson School students officially became alumni on May 13, 2024, following two commencement ceremonies at 3M Arena at Mariucci.

The Class of 2024 included 950 undergraduates receiving Bachelor of Science in Business degrees, 517 graduate students from 14 master's degree programs, and 12 students receiving PhDs in business administration.

"You arrive here today having stayed the course during a time when our world continues to face unprecedented challenges," Carlson School Dean Jamie Prenkert said. "As a result, society needs leaders like you now more than ever before."

Each ceremony featured a student speaker: Joshua Hansen-Connell, '24 MBA, addressed the graduate students, and Callie Korth, '24 BSB, addressed the undergraduates.

Linh Peters, '05 MBA, was the keynote speaker at both ceremonies. She shared her story of coming to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam in 1979, earning her master's degree at the Carlson School, and working in several leadership roles, most recently as chief marketing officer at Walgreens.

"My hope is that you will far exceed any goals or expectations that you may be dreaming for yourself today," Peters told the graduates. "Worry less about the level of individual prominence that you will achieve, and care more about the individuals that you can help to become better people. This metric will serve you well, and you will almost certainly leave an enduring and lasting impact for generations to come."

Mya Tines, '24 BSB, blows a kiss to her loved ones after crossing the stage.

FOCUS

THE MEANING OF WORK



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Brigette Marty is helping Carlson School graduate students and alums steer their way to dream careers.

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Kevin Bubolz, '21 MBA, is leading a life of purpose with his wife and his world-famous golden retrievers, Ellie and Emma, by his side.

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Professor Theresa Glomb works to make work better—and she says you can, too.



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THE CARLSON SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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DISCOVER

START-UP NEWS



Carlson School Collaborates to Offer New Sustainability Certificate

BY CHARLY HALEY

The University of Minnesota's new Sustainable Environmental, Social, and Governance (SESG) Leadership Certificate begins classes this fall.

This new, innovative certificate is a collaboration of the Carlson School of Management, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and Institute on the Environment (IonE). It is the University of Minnesota's first graduate-level

program in this specialty, targeting the intersection of policy, business, and environmental stewardship.

The multidisciplinary program aims to address a growing need for business professionals with the skills to navigate today's climate, environmental, and social justice challenges.

"The changing business landscape requires greater attention to

"The changing business landscape requires greater attention to sustainability efforts."

DEAN JAMIE PRENKERT

sustainability efforts," says Carlson School Dean Jamie Prenkert. "This leadership certificate is a strategic joint effort to elevate our University's educational opportunities to give our students a competitive edge and provide them with tools to be agents of change across industries."

The 12-credit certificate is designed for working professionals: Classes are offered during evening and weekend hours, with both online and hybrid options. The curriculum explores a range of relevant areas, such as organizational change, supply chain management, financial reporting, and intergenerational justice.

"Sustainability is a long game—a lifelong pursuit—and this program offers a new path for working professionals to learn new tools and techniques, build their networks, and expand the impact of their work," says IonE Executive Director Jessica Hellmann. "As a catalyst for interdisciplinary environmental work, IonE is thrilled to be working with the Humphrey and Carlson Schools to build a program that crosses colleges, schools, and the public and private sectors."

The program is open to all University of Minnesota graduate students and non-degree-seeking students. **C**



Senior Lecturer Matt Ladhoff Takes On 2,500-Mile Summer Bike Ride

When Matt Ladhoff joined the Carlson School faculty as a senior lecturer last year, he realized he'd have summers off. He decided to use that time as an opportunity to bike across the country.

Ladhoff says he and his wife, Sara, had been talking about a cross-country bike ride ever since they first met. On May 5, after classes finished, the couple began the 2,500-mile trek up the East Coast Greenway, which stretches from Key West, Florida, to the Canadian border in Calais, Maine.

While preparing for the trip, Ladhoff discussed it with his students in the Carlson School's Impact Lab, where he teaches a class on problem-solving.

"It made for a fun topic in class this past semester to talk about disaggregating a problem and hypothesizing solutions," he says. "Students came up with a broad array of different possible issues related to the trip, and we're definitely better off for all their brainstorming. So, thank you to Carlson students."



Above: Matt Ladhoff, right, and his wife, Sara, started their journey in Key West, Florida.

Left: The Ladhoffs enjoyed taking in the sights, here in Miami, amid their trek.

Even with all that prep, the journey wasn't easy. "Those first few weeks in Florida, amid a heat wave, were the most challenging days of the trip," Ladhoff says. "The ride was certainly long and grueling at times, but we found the heat and the bugs to be the most challenging aspect. Specifically, trying to camp when it's still muggy and 80 degrees at night when you're trying to fall asleep was brutal."

Still, it was worth it. Ladhoff says he learned a lot and feels immense gratitude for his wife and the strangers who helped them along the way.

The couple bicycled for 67 days, completing the ride on July 10.

See Ladhoff's adventures @Biking.theeastcoast on Instagram.

PHOTOS: COURTESY MATT LADHOFF



Fall 2024 Research Roundup

Here's a snapshot of several recently published papers by Carlson School faculty:

How Mental Health Apps Can Reduce Inequities

The growing need for accessible, equitable mental health care is undeniable, and the challenges to provide it are steep. But a study by Professor KK Sinha, Associate Professor Necati Ertekin, Yi Tang, '24 PhD, and Adam Moen, '12 BSB, points to mental health mobile apps as a possible solution. Study participants from different backgrounds—including those from historically underserved populations—reported similar levels of app usage and health benefit from using a mental health mobile app. This suggests that the technology could reduce equity gaps across race-ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

Allyship Is Essential to Mothers Returning to Work

Research by Assistant Professor Nitya Chawla examines how colleagues can provide allyship that helps mothers overcome the many challenges of returning to work. The study identified four types of allyship: co-navigating HR infrastructure and policies, creating physical spaces (i.e., lactation rooms) and temporal spaces (i.e., work-from-home flexibility) for motherhood, validating the worker identity (i.e., celebrating a postpartum mother's return to work), and validating the mother identity (i.e., showing interest in the baby).

Public Donations Are Perceived as Egoistic and Altruistic

New research by Professor Kathleen Vohs shows public charitable donations are sometimes viewed as a sign of egoistic motives, such as wanting to impress people, which deters others from donating. However, the research also shows that public donations can be viewed as altruistic, such as wanting to encourage others to donate, which induces people to give. Vohs notes that organizations can aim to boost perceptions of altruism through messaging around public donations.

Brynn Nguyen Wins Tomato Can Loving Cup Award

Known for her dedication to mentorship, leadership, and community service, Brynn Nguyen, '24 BSB, is the winner of the 2024 Tomato Can Loving Cup Award, the most prestigious award the Carlson School bestows on an undergraduate student.

She received this honor as part of the undergraduate commencement ceremony on May 13.

As a Finance major and Leadership minor graduating with a 3.94 GPA, Nguyen exemplifies academic excellence. But beyond that, she stands out for her deep commitment to mentorship and community outreach. She's served as a Carlson School Emerging Leaders of Color mentor, a Carlson Outreach Ambassador, and a UMN First Year Leadership Institute mentor. In these roles, Nguyen helped high school and middle school students prepare for college and mentored first-year students across the University of Minnesota.

"While [a passion for learning] is evident through my examples of scholarship, I learn even more while engaging in service and leadership," Nguyen wrote in her nomination for the Tomato Can Loving Cup. "I started my roles by backing each interaction with a student with the intention of teaching or mentoring them, but it turns out that they're teaching me how to be a more empathetic, engaging, and fair-minded leader."

"While [a passion for learning] is evident through my examples of scholarship, I learn even more while engaging in service and leadership."

BRYNN NGUYEN, '24 BSB

As a Tomato Can Loving Cup Award winner, Nguyen is eligible for a half-tuition scholarship to the Carlson School Full-Time MBA program following two years of professional work experience.



PHOTO: PAT VASQUEZ-CUNNINGHAM

3 Thoughts from Dean Prenkert



MSBA turns 10!

The demand for analytics skills continues to grow. And we're positioned to continue leading in this

space, thanks to a decision made in 2014 to launch a Master of Science in Business Analytics degree. With expert faculty, unique experiential learning opportunities, and rigorous courses, our program is highly ranked, seeing successful outcomes for more than 800 graduates, and launching a new GenAI focus in the curriculum. Congratulations and thanks to all who have made this last decade a memorable one!

Alpha Phi Alpha partnership.

Our first effort of its kind, this agreement with a Divine Nine organization will allow us to reach a new population of diverse, talented people interested in graduate business degrees. Each year, we'll award up to three full-tuition fellowships to APA members. I'm eager to see how this two-year partnership enhances our student body.

Elevate, our strategic planning process. As I hope you know by now, we've launched a strategic planning process. Named **Elevate**, we want to bring in as many voices as possible to inform our future. Please be on the lookout for your opportunity to engage. Thank you in advance for your participation in this important effort!

Courses at the Carlson School cover a wide range of topics. Here's a 60-second breakdown of one of the many classes leaving an impact on students.

MSBA 6131 Intro to Business Analytics in R

R is a powerful programming language, but business analytics is more than just delivering lines of code. That's a lesson Associate Professor of Information and Decision Sciences Mochen Yang aims to impress upon his students. "This is a problem-solving course," says Yang. "We just *happen* to use R."

In the course, students learn how to leverage data to create business value. After learning the foundational framework of predictive machine learning and data analytic techniques, the students take on a live business case to make a real-world impact. The course challenges students to apply critical thinking to their new data skills to navigate business decisions.



Associate Professor Mochen Yang

5 TAKEAWAYS

1 Students take the course in their first semester of the Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA) program.

2 The course provides opportunities for students to develop their presentation skills so they can provide clear, solution-oriented insights to managers.

3 Once students learn the foundational principles, faculty encourage them to use artificial intelligence tools to support their growth.

4 In one live case, students helped Hennepin County and Second Harvest Heartland better connect vulnerable populations to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits.

5 "What makes a difference isn't how complicated your data model is, it's about how accurately you can identify the business problem and translate that into a data problem," says Yang. "Even simple techniques can deliver a lot of value."

3 PEOPLE, 3 QUESTIONS



Ibrahim Keita
Senior Lecturer, Marketing

1. What are you reading?

I have been going back and forth between two books: ***Civilization: The West and the Rest*** by Niall Ferguson because of my interest in the intersection of history and economics, and ***From Strength to Strength*** by Arthur C. Brooks because a former Cargill CEO suggested it during a talk that I attended.



Mia McGraw
Junior in the Undergraduate Program

I'm a pretty fast reader and reading is one of my favorite pastimes, so I love using Kindle Unlimited to read **clické romance novels!**



Robyn Wick
Director of Executive MBA & Academic Initiatives, MBA & MS Programs

I just finished ***Where Rivers Part: A Story of My Mother's Life*** by Kao Kalia Yang. This story begins with her mother as a young woman in Laos, her parents' meeting as they fled the country, and her family's eventual journey from a Hmong refugee camp to Minnesota. I've started ***Solito: A Memoir*** by Javier Zamora, which follows the author's life as a nine-year-old boy being smuggled to his parents in the U.S. by a coyote. Both are captivating and emotional reads.

2. What is your favorite website?

My favorite website is **ESPN.com** so I can follow the latest on all sports.

My favorite website to go on is **LinkedIn!** I like to see what my peers are doing and being able to connect with new people.

My daily visit, before tackling email, is to the **NYT Games** section to play Connections, Wordle, and Spelling Bee. I feel like it keeps my synapses firing and helps me start my day with a little bit of focus.

3. What is your dream job?

My dream job would be to **create and run a research institution**, like the RAND Corporation in Mali (West Africa) because I love solving public policy challenges.

My dream job is being a **chief human resources officer** or something related to HR and diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am passionate about creating an environment where people feel safe and supported, and are excited to come in every day!

I feel pretty fortunate to have the job I do. I get to work with intellectually curious and super-talented people every day. I would love to find a way to combine my love of animals, wine, music, and travel together in a job. Is **CEO of multiple boutique vineyards/animal refuges/live music venues** all around the world a job? If so, I'll take it.

“Kevin’s passion for Golden Retriever Life’s mission to spread smiles fuels his drive for everything he does.”

KATIE BUBOLZ



Opposite:
Exploring Lake
Eibsee in Garmish,
Germany.

A Golden Opportunity

Kevin Bubolz, '21 MBA, is leading a life of purpose with his wife, Katie, and his world-famous golden retrievers, Ellie and Emma, by his side.

BY AMY CARLSON GUSTAFSON

At the end of 2023, Kevin Bubolz posted a collection of the year’s “best selfies” on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, which all together garnered nearly 10 million likes. Even though Kevin is featured in the images, he isn’t the main draw: That honor would go to his charismatic eight-year-old golden retriever, Ellie, whose motto is, “You miss 100 percent of dogs you don’t pet.”

Ellie, a therapy dog, and her little sister, Emma, age two, are social media stars. Inspired by Ellie’s ability to connect with people, Kevin and his wife, Katie, who are based in Washington, D.C., created Golden Retriever Life as a driving force for their mission to spread smiles worldwide through education, philanthropy, and partnerships.

Ellie and Emma frequently visit military troops, children’s hospitals, and charity events, with the Bubolzes documenting their adventures. Last year involved an international tour to seven countries, where they visited deployed service members and fans.

“We never anticipated having this platform and the ability to reach so many people, and we’re beyond grateful for it,” says Kevin, who notes they’ve been featured on *The Tonight Show*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, and in *People* magazine. “With that comes responsibility, and we do our best to be a positive influence. We have people from the very young to the very old who are consuming our content.”

THE POWER OF CANINE CONNECTION

Kevin had always loved dogs, but it wasn’t until his time as a Chinook helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army that he realized how special they could truly be. Zac, a black lab, had come over with the chaplain when Kevin was deployed to Afghanistan in 2014. Kevin saw firsthand how Zac helped reduce anxiety, increase social connections, and change the moods of his fellow service members.

“One hot summer day, I was getting ready for a mission on the flight line,” recalls Kevin. “Right before takeoff, Zac showed up on a Gator to bring Popsicles to the crew. It may sound like a small thing, but I’ve never had a better Popsicle in my life.”

In 2016, the couple welcomed Ellie into their family. At the time, Kevin was an instructor pilot at the Chinook flight school and Katie worked as a speech-language pathologist focused on acute care in hospitals. They decided to train Ellie to be a therapy dog, volunteering in schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. Their goal was to help advance “the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of others.”

“She has the ability to sense the situation and adjust to what’s needed,” says Kevin. “She can go from playing with her sister and being crazy to being as calm as can be when we walk into a hospital. She lays in the bed with patients, knowing what they are going through. It’s one of those things where dogs can break down barriers that humans can’t.”

In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 lockdown, the couple branched out into social media,

which proved to be a smart move. Kevin says they didn’t start making money through social media right away and that actually wasn’t their intent at the beginning. It was solely to share fun, family-friendly videos.

According to the company’s website, the Golden Retriever Life accounts have amassed more than 14 million followers, who have racked up more than 6 billion accumulated post views. “Our goal when launching social media was to make at least one person smile with each video,” he says. “Once we started gaining followers, we realized it was a perfect opportunity to test out concepts from the classroom in real life.”

LOOKING FOR PURPOSE

As Kevin was transitioning out of the military, he was searching for a purpose. In the military, he says, that purpose was obvious: serving something greater than yourself. Post-military life wasn’t so clear, but he had long been interested in marketing and decided the Carlson School, a highly regarded military-friendly graduate school, would be the right place to figure out what was next.

“When you leave the military, one of the benefits with Carlson is that you aren’t completely giving up that community,” he says. “You’re not starting all over. It was nice to have a veteran support system, whether it be current students, alumni, or other people involved in the program.”

At the Carlson School, he was named a Tillman Scholar, which he calls a “humbling experience.”

“You have people at every level of education you can imagine doing

every type of thing, from cancer research to government work,” he says about the honor, which is conferred from the Pat Tillman Foundation and includes leadership development, a military scholarship, and access to a global community of peers, mentors, and industry leaders. “It’s neat to see all these different people passionate about what they’re doing. When I applied, my essay was about therapy dogs and how I want to integrate that into the world more.”

After earning his MBA, Kevin became a business program manager on the marketing team for Microsoft’s federal division, dealing with the Department of Defense, Intelligence Community, and other government agencies. He was there only seven months before pivoting to a full-time entrepreneurial route with Golden Retriever Life.

“I was leaving a wonderful job with a great salary—it was everything I wanted when I was getting the MBA,” he says. But ultimately he didn’t want to miss out on opportunities by only being committed to Golden Retriever Life part-time. “There were risks when I left that job. We established a company trying to be as agile as possible and knew that we had to take this next step to dive in full-time so we could be agile. Ultimately, it was betting on ourselves.”

Katie says her husband is resilient and willing to embrace uncertainty.

“Kevin’s passion for Golden Retriever Life’s mission to spread smiles fuels his drive for everything he does,” she says. “He thrives on learning through experience and firmly believes that the best way to excel at running a business is by starting one. He is creative, highly adaptable, and analytical, but more importantly, he has a passion for making the world a better place, and that shines through his role as a founder and owner.”

As a business partner, Katie describes Kevin as supportive and encouraging. She says he inspires

her to make the most of life and to be proactive about writing her own life story. But there are challenges, including maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

“When my husband also became my business partner, the lines between professional and personal life could easily blur,” she says. “We learned to find ways to ensure we had quality time together without work interruptions, such as scheduling recurring blocks of times without screens.”

MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE

While millions have fallen in love with their camera-ready pups, there’s more to the Bubolzes’ work than just cute videos.

“Social media is a big part of it,” Kevin says. But the top priority is figuring out ways to improve people’s lives. It can take a number of forms. Golden Retriever Life highlights nonprofits or other organizations doing great things, such as the Warrior Canine Connection, Give Kids the World Village, and the USO. And lately, Kevin says, the team has been making more appearances at in-person events. But instead of just hosting a traditional meet-and-greet with Ellie and Emma, they design the visit to contribute to the greater good. Often, that means they’ll make it a volunteer event, where attendees participate in activities that directly benefit their local community: creating care kits for those experiencing homelessness, packaging items for soldiers overseas, helping children with critical illnesses, or addressing other needs. “Yes, you get to meet Ellie and Emma, but the main focus is doing something in your local community,” he says.

The United Services Automobile Association (USAA) has worked with the Bubolzes on various occasions. Colleen McAdams, a USAA communications manager, says they loved the extra dose of energy and excitement that Ellie and Emma

“My experience is that Kevin continues to live a life of service. Even within branded content on his channels, he finds ways to give back to the community.”

COLLEEN MCADAMS

brought to a recent volunteer event where employees assembled care packages for veterans in VA hospitals.

“Kevin’s military service and continued focus on giving back to the military and their families, along with the highly engaging content he produces, made him a great fit for USAA’s influencer program,” McAdams says.

Kevin and Katie understand the unique challenges of military life because of their background, she adds.

“Because of that, he can help share USAA’s stories in authentic ways,” she says. “A great example was at the Army-Navy Game when a Chinook was part of the pregame flyover, and Kevin pointed out that was what he flew during his time in the Army. Or when they visited the USAA Poppy Wall of Honor in Washington, D.C., a temporary exhibit to honor fallen service members for Memorial Day, he was able to connect and engage with veterans and Gold Star families in a truly meaningful way.”

She adds: “My experience is that Kevin continues to live a life of service. Even within branded content on his channels, he finds ways to give back to the community.”

It’s not unusual for entrepreneurs to add additional ventures to their roster. Kevin’s not ruling that out as long as it is the right fit.

“The whole point of being agile as a company is that things transition and move,” he says. “So, will there be another company down the road? Probably. I couldn’t tell you what that’ll be at this point.”

What the Bubolzes can say for sure is there’s nothing like a dog’s love—especially one that knows how to take a good selfie. **C**



Clockwise, from top left:

Ellie and Emma start their day at sunrise with a hug.

Kevin demonstrating the kind of smile only a golden can bring.

Ellie hugs a service member who just had to say goodbye to their own dog at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

Kevin and Emma at the Children’s National Hospital in Washington, D.C.



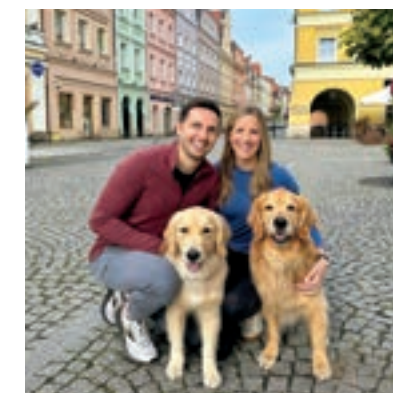
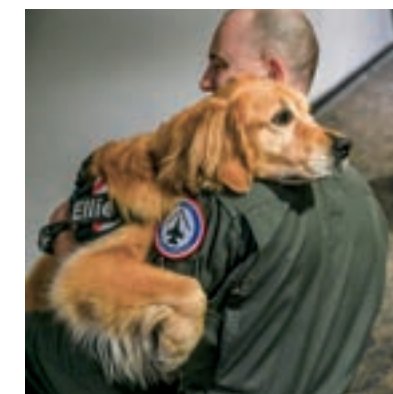
Golden Retriever Life goes global, earning Poland passport stamps.

MBA Day: Kevin earns his degree from the Carlson School. (Ellie already mastered in Cute.)

Kevin, a former Army helicopter pilot, visits medevac organization District Dustoff in D.C. with Ellie and Emma.

Ellie and Emma kicking off a very special patient family event at St. Jude Hospital.

Find more Golden Retriever Life photos at @elligoldenlife on Instagram.





THE ACE

Harsh Mankad, '15 MBA, is teaching tennis players to win simply by loving the sport.

BY BERIT THORKELSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN GUNDERSON

Even the abbreviated version of Harsh Mankad's tennis accomplishments requires a good amount of space. He was India's No. 1 player in the 2000s, and not only achieved his goal of playing Division I (DI) tennis in the U.S., but took home the National Indoor Singles Title for the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers in 2001, which boosted his ranking to No. 1 in the country. He reached a career-high No. 102 Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) doubles ranking, faced world No. 1-ranked players including Andy Roddick, and played on Wimbledon's hallowed courts.

For all that success, what has stuck with Mankad, '15 MBA, in his post-pro days has nothing to do with podium moments. As a coach, he often shares a story with his players that isn't about winning. Playing doubles with Brian Battistone on the ATP Tour, during a close match in France, Mankad hit a shot that tipped the match in their favor. Upon follow-through, his racket grazed

the net—a move the umpire missed. Without hesitation, Mankad called out his own mistake, which flipped the point to their opponents. Mankad and Battistone ended up losing the match.

“I think this message of ‘winning is everything’ misses the point. It’s not everything. In fact, it’s a very narrow view to look at sports from,” Mankad says. “We need a healthier, different perspective toward what sports are for us in our lives.”

That message sits, alongside deep personal experience, at the heart of Tenicity, the Twin Cities-based tennis program Mankad founded in 2016. The aim is to break down elitist associations with the sport and spark a

BORN TO PLAY

Mankad was born into professional sports in Mumbai, India. His grandfather is cricket legend Vinoo Mankad, and his father, Ashok, also played professionally. His mother, Nirupama Mankad (née Vasant), grew up with a pro tennis player and coach as a father. She ranked as India's top women's player and competed internationally, including at Wimbledon. Readily embracing the multigenerational drive to compete, by the age of eight Mankad locked into his dream of becoming the top tennis player in India.

That meant training for three hours daily, after school and before starting homework, commuting an hour-and-a-half each way to the court, and traveling around the country for matches. At 13, he played for the Indian team in Hong Kong and Japan. By 16, he was competing around Southeast Asia, Europe, and the U.S. “[Tennis] gave me direction and focus from a very young age, and I’m very grateful for that,” Mankad says. “It opened up my mind to the world.” He won national titles at each age group he graduated into, establishing himself as one of the country's top junior players.

In 1999, Mankad accepted a tennis scholarship at the University of Minnesota, ranked among the top 30 for the sport. Three years in, after winning the national title, he left to go pro, kicking off an eight-year career during which he played in all four Grand Slam events as an ATP player and ranked No. 1 on India's Davis Cup team—the realization of his childhood goal. An injury cut his singles career short. He played doubles until his pro career came to its natural conclusion, and with it, a solid 23 years of singular focus.

lifelong love of it in all the players who show up to Tenicity, whether they're dedicated hobbyists, committed to making varsity, or aiming to go pro.



“We need a healthier, different perspective toward what sports are for us in our lives.”

HARSH MANKAD, '15 MBA

“I needed to figure out what was next,” he says. “When you’ve given so much of your life, and it’s been the No. 1 focus, it’s like, ‘Where is my passion now? What do I want to do with the rest of my life?’”

IN SEARCH OF A NEW DREAM

The logical next steps waited back in Minnesota, where Mankad finished his undergrad, married his longtime girlfriend, took a job as the director of tennis at Golden Valley Country Club, and started the MBA program at the Carlson School. His studies allowed him to retroactively view his tennis career as the entrepreneurial business it was, and to consider how he might build on those accumulated skills to create something related, but new.

After so many years playing an individual sport, Mankad found value in

“I felt like a smoother path would be to focus on the coaching piece, which was more core to my expertise.”

HARSH MANKAD

the dozens of team projects required at the Carlson School, one of which connected him with classmate and fellow former DI tennis player Luke Wilcox, '15 MBA. Together, they dreamed up the initial Tenicity concept, an app that tennis programs around the world might rely on as a player development HQ of sorts, corralling videos, lesson planning, parent communication, and more. Wilcox's tech development specialty merged nicely with Mankad's market knowledge, and the two poured time and attention into the concept post-graduation, in addition to working full-time roles afforded by their newly minted MBAs.

Mankad values his brief stint in the business world for the way it further illuminated his path. “In that environment, it became clear to me that my future lies in tennis, in





“Tennis is for everybody. Everyone can enjoy it. Everyone can gain from it. And our job is to facilitate that.”

HARSH MANKAD

something entrepreneurial,” he says. He was at his job less than a year, and left in 2016 to focus on Tenicity solo.

As part of the process of determining what that should look like, Mankad entered the Minnesota Cup, the Carlson School’s annual startup competition supporting entrepreneurs. There, he connected with business leader and startup consultant Matt Geiser. “Harsh was really more interested in player

development—that presence with the players on the court and building programs—and having software doesn’t necessarily do that for you. In fact, it can be a distraction,” Geiser points out. His insight helped free Mankad to revise his approach to Tenicity.

“I felt like a smoother path would be to focus on the coaching piece, which was more core to my expertise. It’s still tennis player development, just not a technology focus,” he says. “It brings together my passion for the game, my experience with the game, and my business education. It’s a nice combination of the things that I enjoy.”

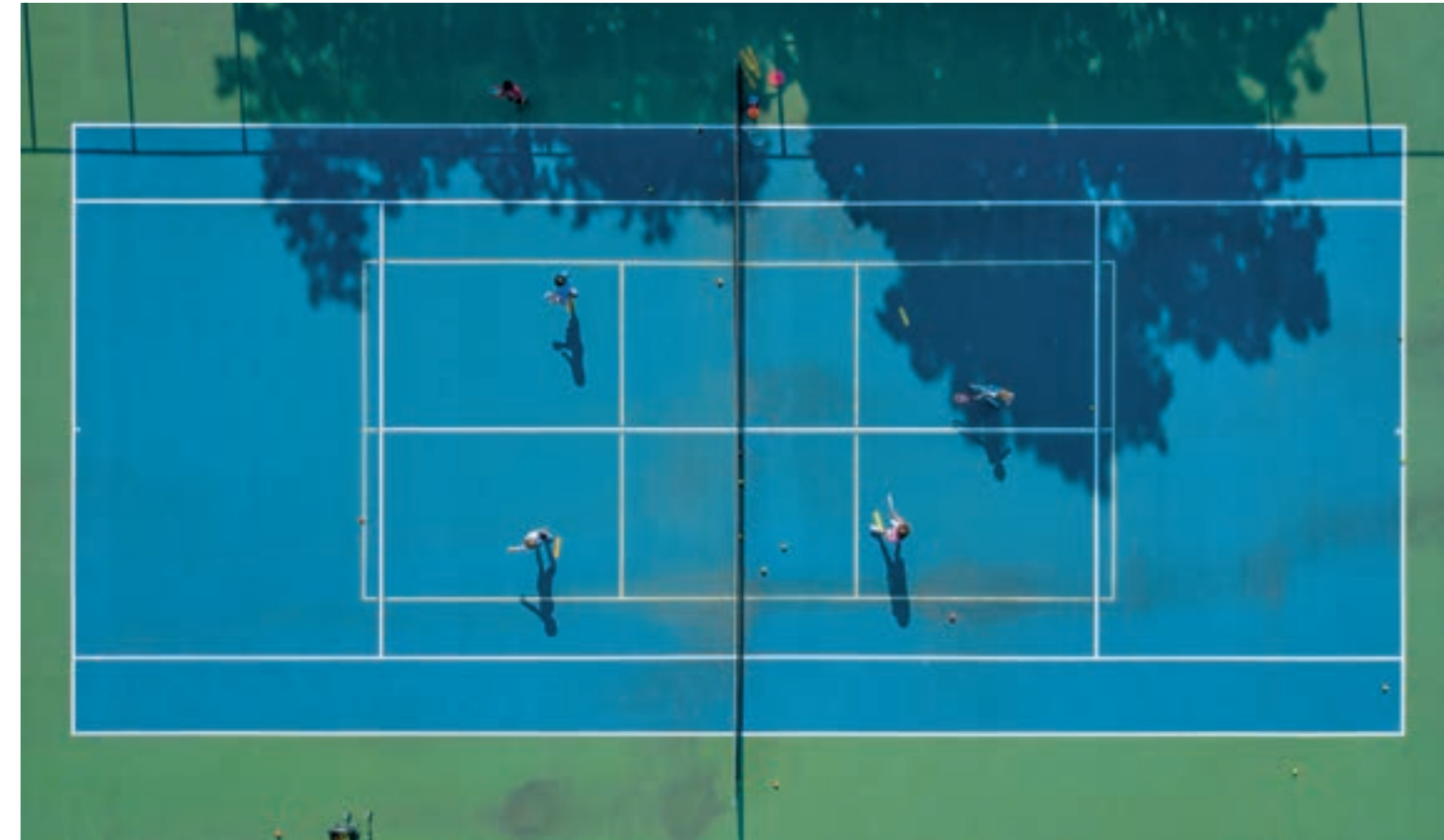
ON TRACK WITH TENICITY

Following his heart led him back to the court, and students began meeting him there. First among them was Lucky Kancherla, an Edina High School player with DI dreams who wasn’t getting varsity playing time. “I was steered away from [my goal] by other coaches who didn’t believe that I was capable of achieving it,” Kancherla says. Not Mankad. He met with Kancherla and her parents to explore her goal and develop a personalized attainment plan.

Training was intense, sometimes up to three hours a day in the heat of summer, but it was exactly what Kancherla wanted—though not what she’d expected. “I’d been used to hearing about results and focusing on numbers and things like that, but he just kind of set that aside and was super focused on the process,” she says.

More individual students joined Tenicity. Groups came next. Then came schools and communities looking for someone to lead their tennis programs. All got covered by the Tenicity umbrella.

Mankad found he especially appreciated fostering a pressure-free connection to the sport in beginners, such as the five-year-olds in parks-and-rec classes handling a racket for the first time. He’s committed to providing



“It’s almost like this bubble, or safe space, where players are shielded from outside noise or clutter and can focus on their tennis and developing their character skills as well.”

LUCKY KANCHERLA

them with a non-competitive path rooted in enjoyment. “Tennis is for everybody,” he says. “Everyone can enjoy it. Everyone can gain from it. And our job is to facilitate that.”

Of course, sometimes, organically, that enjoyment blossoms into deep-seated commitment. Tenicity supports that, too. Case in point: Kancherla,

who earned Most Improved Player on her team during that first year of training. She went on to play DI on scholarship with Western Illinois University. Now, she’s preparing for law school and coaching for Tenicity.


“The culture at Tenicity sets it apart from the other programs,” Kancherla says. “It’s almost like this bubble, or safe space, where players are shielded from outside noise or clutter and can focus on their tennis and developing their character skills as well.” She’s helping students grow as she did, as players and as people, working through frustrations, encouraging each other, and acting with positivity on and off the court.

The approach has paid off. Tenicity tennis programs within six Twin Cities metro-area communities and at the U of M’s Baseline Tennis Center

WATCH: Harsh Mankad talks business and plays singles with Dean Jamie Prenkert.



WORK HARD
Have fun
CHOOSE KIND
BE PRESENT



IMPROVING OUR WORK LIVES

Professor Theresa Glomb works to make work better—and she says you can, too.

BY CHARLY HALEY

ILLUSTRATION BY KATE FORRESTER

“Work hard. Have fun. Choose kind. Be present.”

This four-part motto seems simple. But it’s actually distilling a quarter-century of study by Carlson School Professor Theresa Glomb on worker well-being and the meaning of work in people’s everyday lives.

Glomb, chair of the Work & Organizations Department, says she’s been looking for the answers to these questions, among others: “How can we create positive experiences and mood states at work? How can we foster job satisfaction and work meaning?” What she’s found is that, sometimes, there are small changes people can put into practice to improve their work lives.

As the school’s Toro Company-David M. Lilly Chair in Organizational Behavior, Glomb has studied a variety of workplaces—manufacturing facilities, call centers, healthcare clinics, and more—to determine what makes employees feel happiest and

most productive. Her research has landed in local and international media, including Minnesota Public Radio, *The Economist*, and BBC, and she presented her ideas in a 2015 TEDxUMN Talk called “Let’s Make Work Better.” Through speaking engagements and in her classes, she continues to offer tips for improving work environments.

“I’ll often use this line: ‘Many of us focus on getting a good job, but we can also focus on making a job good,’” she says. “It’s this idea that we have the power to improve our work lives. We can become more intentional and direct our attention to the creation of more purposeful and more satisfying work.”

FINDING FOCUS

Glomb took time to hone her own sense of purpose in her career. In 1993, she earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology at DePaul University in her hometown of Chicago, where she became interested in mood and

emotional states, and how they impact work. Her senior thesis focused on anger in the workplace. That led to a PhD in social, organizational, and individual differences psychology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

In 1998, Glomb became an assistant professor at the Carlson School. She humorously remembers her first time in Minneapolis. “There were huge piles of snow in front of those gates that say ‘University of Minnesota,’ and you couldn’t even see the words,” she says. “You could see the U and the A, and that was it.”

Undeterred, she continued her research in an early 2000s study with “experience sampling,” which involved measuring the moods of employees in a variety of workplaces throughout the day. This led to a key finding: Employees are happiest when they’re making progress on work tasks.

“That set me on this journey to see how we can craft work environments where people can get their work done and be in fulfilling and positive mood states,” Glomb says.

Most workplaces are full of interruptions or organizational barriers that can slow employees’ progress on tasks. As a small step, Glomb recommends workers “park downhill” at the end of their workday, taking a few minutes to plan what they want to work on the next morning so that they can easily get going the next day and pick up momentum, which will improve their mood.

“Work with focused attention for 90 minutes, 60 minutes, even just 30 minutes, and you feel like you got a lot done,” she said in her TEDxUMN Talk. “You’ll feel that pleasure that comes from making meaningful progress on your work.”

TAKING HER OWN ADVICE

Glomb, who is also a mother of two college-aged children, works to implement these concepts into her own life, too. Admittedly, it isn’t always easy.



“Many of us focus on getting a good job, but we can also focus on making a job good.”

PROFESSOR THERESA GLOMB

“As an expert on work and well-being, I’d like to say I’ve got this nailed, but that is not true,” she says. “The struggle is real. What I do have, though, is a sense of when things are getting off track and what I need in those moments. So, I practice a lot of these tools and techniques. I’m not perfect, but there are simple practices we can all try.”

Her four-part motto became something she sent her children off to school with every day. And when her children went to college, these strategies helped her stay grounded as she transitioned to life as an empty nester.

Glomb’s research turned personal when she was diagnosed with cancer in 2011. In her TEDxUMN Talk, she shared that the diagnosis made her evaluate how she was spending her time and how she managed stress. “Since then, I’ve tried really hard to put into practice all the things I’ve learned in my research,” she says.

Glomb recalls being hesitant to mention her cancer diagnosis in her talk. But it made the cut because she wants to show that life outside of work affects people, too.

“I like to remind people that there’s always suffering in the room. It might be a serious illness, it might be having a child who’s struggling with mental health issues, it might be aging parents, or somebody going through a devastating divorce,” Glomb says. “There’s life going on while you are at work. And when we get into our work environments, it’s about showing up with empathy and being willing to give people a little bit of grace.”

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

While much of Glomb’s work centers on individual people’s power to improve their jobs, she says that doesn’t let companies off the hook. Many businesses have systemic problems, often at the leadership level, that individuals alone cannot fix.

“Some work environments are just not positive,” she says. “We have to ask: Are we overworking people? Do we have work that we can streamline in some ways? Do we have injustice at work? Do we have inequities? How can we make work more meaningful, fulfilling, and satisfying for all people?”

Glomb hopes her students will go on to create positive work environments.

“So much of an individual employee’s work life depends on the quality of the leaders,” Glomb says. “At the Carlson School, we’ve been working really hard on this, crafting experiences so that graduating students are leading with integrity and impact, navigating ambiguity, and being resilient. If we can elevate the caliber of leadership, then we will improve the work lives of employees.”

Andrew Lahn, ’24 MBA, took these lessons to heart in Glomb’s Leadership and Personal Development course.

“[The course content] allowed me to evaluate the topic of leadership and my own personal development through several perspectives,” he says. “My journey was nothing short of remarkable. In eight weeks, I went from ignorant to enlightened about who I am as an individual, professional, and colleague.”

Like Lahn, Elizabeth Doman, ’24 BSB, said Glomb’s teaching impacted her life both in and out of the classroom.

“She has inculcated a sense of curiosity in me to learn more about

intentionality and mindfulness,” Doman says. “One lesson that resonated with me was the importance of removing a phone from eyesight to increase productivity and focus. I have carried this lesson with me by not having phones in sight when out to dinner with friends and family, and especially when studying. I have noticed my focus increase and my conversations deepen by practicing her principles.”

NEW RESEARCH

To further her research on worker well-being, Glomb is now studying how work life relates to family life, and how people balance their work and family identities.

She says her work and family roles have always been integrated in her own life: Her children visited her at work—the evidence remains in a drawing on her whiteboard. They were the youngest attendees at her TEDxUMN Talk. They met her colleagues and doctoral students, and she talked about her work with them.

Along these lines, Glomb’s new research includes gathering data on how people talk about their jobs to

their children, which she says can be transformative for parents.

For example, a restaurant server who didn’t like her job would tell her young children that she never wanted them to have to work in a restaurant. But when she saw her kids’ enthusiasm when she served pancakes with faces and their admiration for her talking to an elderly customer eating alone, it helped the woman find more meaning in her work as she saw the impact she had on people.

These days, Glomb is far from the only one thinking about ways to

improve work as organizations and individuals consider remote work, integrating new technologies such as artificial intelligence, and navigating generational shifts in the workforce.

Glomb sees this moment as an opportunity to focus on facilitating happy, productive workplaces.

“Employees and organizations are reimagining work right now,” she says. “How can we be mindful, and take this time to be intentional about building better work environments and a more fulfilling work life?” **C**

FOUR TIPS FOR A BETTER WORKDAY

Based on her research, Professor Glomb offers these tips to help employees improve their work lives:

PARK DOWNHILL.

At the end of each workday, take a few minutes to plan the first thing to tackle the next morning and then start your day with that task (rather than email). This helps you start each day feeling productive, which builds momentum and puts you in a good mood.

NOTICE THREE GOOD THINGS.


Take time to reflect on three good things that happened each day. Remembering the positive parts of your day can improve your mood and reduce stress. For an extra boost, share the good things and tell friends and family about the experience.

GET READY TO RESUME.

When you’re interrupted while working—say someone pops into your office or you need to run to a meeting—take a minute to note where you are so you can easily resume your task. Being ready to resume reduces the negative impact of interruptions.

STAY MINDFUL.

Research shows practicing mindfulness can help you feel calmer and happier. Practice by bringing your full attention to conversations and to simple tasks like walking to a meeting, washing your hands, or drinking your coffee. Glomb also suggests the simple trick of 4-7-8 breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 7, and then breathe out for 8.



THE MEANING OF WORK

CAREER DRIVEN

Brigette Marty is helping Carlson School graduate students and alumni steer their way to dream jobs.

BY KATIE DOHMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAT VASQUEZ-CUNNINGHAM

The day Brigette Marty was born, her father bought a Ford Bronco. A sign from the universe: She was born to love cars. Throughout her childhood, she attended car shows, derbies, rallies, and even perused car lots for fun. “Some people like plants,” she explains. “Cars are my jam.” As it turns out, her personal hobby also fuels her professional pursuits: She teaches others how to navigate the hairpin turns and potholes that appear on everyone’s career journey.

And by all accounts, Brigette Marty operates in overdrive. As the senior associate director and one of seven career coaches in the Carlson Business Career Center (CBCC), she is responsible for coaching for Part-Time MBA (PTMBA), Master of Science in Supply Chain Management, and Carlson Executive MBA students and alums about their present and future career trajectories—from their first day of enrollment to whenever they’re ready to put it in park. By her estimation, she completes somewhere around 1,000 cases a year. Students average about eight visits, and alums around three, although each case is highly dependent on a variety of factors.

The repeat visits aren’t a sign of struggle, but rather thoroughness—and, one suspects, a sign Marty is a legitimately fun hang. She’s charming, vivacious, hilarious, confident, and real. She’s accessible and knowable, but whether by personality or training—probably both, as she holds a bachelor’s degree in public relations and a master’s degree in counseling and student development—she magically turns most topics back to her conversation partner for exploration. That is to say, when someone buckles into

her conversational passenger seat, they’re likely to zip from zero to 60 without ever checking the rearview.

On average, she navigates four to six of these coaching appointments daily, all in various career stages. In each, she says she’s “holding space” for people, affirming and normalizing the feelings that come with managing a career: Some are grieving a lost job while others are celebrating landing a new one. Some are refining cover letters and résumés while others are preparing final salary negotiation strategies. “The only place we don’t go is the interview,” she jokes, “but we’re there, too.”

“Brigette makes people feel seen, and that is a beautiful gift.”

MAGGIE TOMAS

Maggie Tomas, CBCC executive director, says even though Marty didn’t have direct job coaching experience when she applied more than seven years ago, her presentation sealed the deal. “It was clear she’d be an amazing fit,” Tomas says, noting Marty operates in a higher gear with her ability to listen, then understand and reframe what students and alumni need. “Brigette makes people feel seen, and that is a beautiful gift.”

THE RIGHT HORSEPOWER

Marty is a fan of using lots of analogies to make job hunting survivable. And, she says, that process is a lot like buying a car—researching makes and models, test driving, negotiating accessory packages and purchase prices, tune-ups and resales.

On another level, she uses cars to power her coaching and career. One of

the tools in her toolbox is the Clifton Strengthsfinder, a positive psychology tool that measures one’s personality, natural inclinations, and talents. Naming these strengths and exploring them helps people hone, sell, or complement them with other skills—and find jobs that suit them best.

Marty has, of course, taken the Strengthsfinder test herself—along with training. She coaches her students to make a mnemonic device of their own top five strengths so they can use them easily in interviews and networking conversations. Hers? CAARS. Yes, really. It stands for Communicator (telling stories, articulating ideas), Activator (why do it later when you can do it now?), Adaptability (flexibility and preparing for contingencies), Relator (wanting to know others and be known by others), and Strategic (both in building and implementing strategies).

Marty admits she’s “notorious” for her Activator role. Nicole Centanni, a CBCC alumni career coach who reports to Marty, says it explains why when Marty hears a candidate say something aloud that matches with a specific job or a career pathway, she wastes no time merging the two.

“When it comes to career, I want to help our candidates do the work that makes their heart sing and time fly—and that is the work that is aligned to their strengths,” explains Marty. “Helping candidates gain clarity on their strengths and then identify functions and environments where they can live out those strengths is rewarding.” And, she says, the Activator part of her shows up in coaching by bringing an energy and motivation to ignite action—like shifting out of neutral into first.

Sierra Williamson, ’24 MBA, is one such alum. She connected with Marty at an event early on in her PTMBA journey. “I just knew she would be a great confidante throughout the program,” Williamson



says. She already had a job and wasn’t necessarily looking to leave, but during many exploratory conversations with Marty, she broadened her perspective. “She really empowered me to go after something big, to the finish line, and get offered a dream.” In the end, the “dream job” Williamson landed was an opportunity at Target HQ that Marty brought forth to Williamson based on their specific conversations—a job Williamson says she may never have never considered otherwise.

KEEPING THE ODOMETER ROLLING

The CBCC offers coaching for Carlson School graduate students and all alumni, but when Marty came aboard,

“She really empowered me to go after something big, to the finish line, and get offered a dream.”

SIERRA WILLIAMSON, ’24 MBA

alumna coaching was limited—and she saw a huge opportunity. Because of her considerable relationship-building and advocacy skills, and a generous gift from the Carlson Family Foundation,

she was able to help expand services to include lifetime access for all Carlson School alums. The decision to do so came about just in time. Though unemployment numbers are touted as historically low at the moment, getting hired seems like it is getting harder, especially for many mid-career MBAs.

That’s due to a number of factors, Marty says. In 2021, there was a lot of job-market movement. The onset of the pandemic caused historic numbers of women to leave their jobs, and work culture shifted dramatically as workers transitioned into (and sometimes out of) remote and hybrid work setups. For a time, it was an employees’ market. But in short order, the power balance shifted to employers. “There

are a lot of quiet layoffs,” she says. “If you’re in an encore career or later-career chapter, it is very difficult.”

The CBCC appointment scheduling tool indicates a healthy appetite for guidance. In the last year, coaches have advised 1,182 alumni, a 189 percent increase year over year. That is in part due to being able to expand the number of coaches and the marketing of the service.

So Marty’s counseling background really shines with her roster—she is willing and able to sit in the fear and grief that can come with job or soul searches. “A lot of our identity is connected to our work,” she says. “I am so fortunate to get to help Carlson School alumni normalize those feelings ... then find their footing again and get glimmers of hope.” And, she says, before long, they find something that gets them back on the road. “Our alums always land better,” she says.

CREATING A NEW ROADMAP

Jen Estochen, '03 MBA, is exactly the kind of alum Marty was looking to reach.

After spending nearly 25 years at 3M, Estochen had earned her MBA and become a Lean Six Sigma global operations leader. She’d hoppedscotched over role changes internally and narrowly missed rounds of layoffs. Each move got her closer to the top. “I was redefining the strategy for the company ... I felt I was moving in the right direction in my career,” she says. But eventually, the ax fell. “I was definitely in the ‘What just happened?’ space,” she says.

Estochen says she was “mid-search” and meeting Marty immediately “changed how I was approaching things.” Marty reassured her through panicked moments, helped her prep for interviews, and even made sure Estochen was making time to exercise and take care of herself—no

easy task as a single mother of three in the midst of a career crisis.

“She is very candid but in a good way, because she figured out what made me tick,” Estochen says. “She said to me, ‘Your superpower is connecting with people and making relationships. Do you realize how many people struggle with that, and you don’t even think about it?’ She helped me identify the best things about me that I hadn’t seen about myself.”

It wasn’t a straight shot to the dream job—Estochen says Marty even talked her through withdrawing consideration from roles that weren’t really the right fit—but she felt confident upon accepting a role at Cargill when the offer came.

“When it comes to career, I want to help our candidates do the work that makes their heart sing and time fly.”

BRIGETTE MARTY

REVVING THE ENGINES

Marty’s successes deliver a dual-engine power, though it’s hard to tell which powers what: Does her job satisfaction and success fuel that of her students and alums, or does their achievement fuel her success?

Either way, it has propelled her forward. Marty’s ability to steer students and alumni through the varied road hazards that present themselves on every career journey was recently highlighted when she spoke with her team in Portland,

Oregon, at a coach-among-coaches conference. The title? “Denials, Delays, and Detours,” which focused on how to hold space for those struggling to find their place in today’s chaotic and increasingly opaque job market of outsourcing résumé screening to AI, LinkedIn’s Easy Apply button, and vague or ghost job postings. According to Tomas, it was met with “rave reviews.”

But the old adage still rings true: It’s often who you know. Marty is a natural connector.

“What I love to do—and I’m very good at—is connecting people,” she says. “I love leaning into that power of community.” Not only does she connect with her clients, but she connects her clients to other alumni to create a broader, more interconnected Carlson School network in the larger community.

“People in the office are constantly going to her,” says Centanni. “I actually can’t believe she knows *this many* people. She has a Rolodex in her head. It’s an amazing testimony to how she invests in other people. She’s memorable to them, and they’re memorable to her. That, to me, sets her apart.”

Brittany Cardinal, '22 MBA, who sought Marty’s advice when she was looking to transition out of agency work and subsequently landed at the National Marrow Donor Program (formerly Be the Match), agrees.

Cardinal’s advice to alums is to use the service anytime they need it. “You have lifetime access ... it’s a great resource for anybody who went to Carlson,” she enthuses. And, she adds, she’ll always treasure her connection to Marty. No matter the mileage she’s traveled in her own career, Marty will remain a top contact. “I really think she is the hidden gem of the Carlson experience.” **C**



Brigette Marty’s Favorite Phrases

Act your way into thinking, instead of thinking your way into action.

When in doubt, more data will help you figure it out.

Career is a team sport.

Acknowledge the assists.

Some conversations need to start with “thank you” and others with “my sincere apologies” before anything productive can happen.

Request an alumni career coaching appointment today:



An illustration showing a group of small human figures standing on a brown, earthen cliff. A large, bright yellow archway is cut into the cliff, opening up to a bright, glowing light. Below the cliff is a body of water, and the scene is set against a teal sky with soft, white clouds. The overall mood is one of hope and achievement.

‘We love entrepreneurship, and we love the state of Minnesota’

The story of how an idea in the middle of the night became the largest statewide entrepreneurship competition in the nation and a rite of passage for Minnesota’s entrepreneurial community.

BY ADAM OVERLAND

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVIDE BONAZZI

It's a sunny evening in early June and 90 hopeful entrepreneurs have gathered in the atrium of Hanson Hall with ideas and dreams for businesses as creative as they are varied. There are companies with ammonia-powered engines, aloe vera nutritional water, an app that turns kids' screen time into confidence-building creative time, and a proactive houseplant care system for the millions of us who can't seem to keep our houseplants alive, to name a few.

Over the next 90 minutes, each will have just 60 seconds to pitch to judges and others their vision, and why they—whittled from among the more than 3,100 Minnesotan entrants at the start of competition earlier this year—should advance from the semifinal stage of the largest statewide startup competition in the United States.

This is Minnesota Cup, or MN Cup, an event in its 20th year that has grown from around 600 entrants and cash prizes of \$30,000 to more than \$400,000 in prizes and thousands of entrants. With nine divisions, events throughout the year, and around 200 knowledgeable judges and 100 dedicated volunteer mentors, the MN Cup makes an often lonely and difficult journey a little bit easier.

Dan Mallin, '95 MBA, and Scott Litman, '90 BA, are here tonight, as they have been since MN Cup's beginning. The University of Minnesota alums are longtime entrepreneurs and highly successful business partners who co-founded MN Cup to much fanfare, and they've been critical to its success ever since. Also here is John Stavig, '86 BSB, who briefly retired more than 20 years ago at age 37 after his own successful entrepreneurship journey, only to return and dedicate himself to the success of others as the managing director of the Carlson School's Gary S. Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship, a position which includes his stewardship of MN Cup.

It's impossible to cover all 20 years in one story, but we asked Mallin, Litman, Stavig, and several participants about MN Cup at 20 for this oral history.



THE INITIAL IDEA

In 2005, business partners Mallin and Litman had sold a company and couldn't work for 18 months. Admittedly bored, and always thinking, Litman had the initial idea for the Cup.

Litman: I woke up in the middle of the night with the idea. I thought, 'If I wake up tomorrow morning and I remember this, I'm going to go talk to Dan, and we'll see what he thinks about it.'

Mallin: We had some successful opportunities and created companies inside Minnesota, but we thought life could be better, it could be easier for entrepreneurs. So how do we help everyone through that process?

Part of Litman's inspiration for MN Cup came his junior year. The challenge: Design the Computer of the Year 2000, sponsored by Apple. Intrigued, he wrote a paper that landed him third place, giving him the opportunity to pitch the idea in front of Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, author Ray Bradbury, futurist Alan Kay, and then-CEO of Apple, Jean-Louis Gassée. He realized the competition raised his credibility and made it easier to raise capital, too.

Mallin: So 20 years ago, as we showed up to the Carlson School with this idea, almost simultaneously John Stavig showed up at the University.



Stavig: My first week at the U of M was when it was kicking off, and nobody really knew what it was other than Scott and Dan, who had hijacked a umn.edu URL.

Litman: But very quickly, we became partners with John and he brought so much to the table.

Then Jim Campbell—who was previously CEO of Wells Fargo—was the interim dean of the Carlson School. Jim took an instant liking to this and got behind us. We ended up finding great support from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) that led us to the governor's office.

So really, within waking up in the middle of the night to a press conference with the governor of Minnesota, it was a span of just 90 days.

The winner of the first season was ArcSwitch, taking home \$25,000 in prize money. Starting in year two—after an idea from Brad Cleveland, whose parents established an endowment for student competitions at the U of M—Stavig implemented a mentorship program that has become a core part of the Cup. Over the next decade, the competition grew.

Litman: The mentorship program is a manifestation of our goal that we should find ways to connect the business community and people



Above, left to right:

A newspaper advertisement of a mousetrap with the words "You finally created a better one. Now what?" is used to entice sign-ups for the first MN Cup in 2005. Photo courtesy of The Statesman.

The co-founders of ArcSwitch (center and right) celebrate winning the inaugural MN Cup.

Attendees fill the McNamara Alumni Center for the 2023 Grand Finale of MN Cup.

Max Minakov, a third-year undergraduate student, presents his self-activating, snow-clearing robot for his company, Nivoso, in 2023. Minakov was only seven months old when MN Cup launched.

who are already experienced, with these people that are new entrepreneurs ... That is a massive reward ... Relationships make you better as an entrepreneur.

Since 2015, the Cup has grown to nine divisions, covering all types of businesses. That's by design.

Stavig: Early on, we added a student division in 2006. Then, the governor's office asked us to start a clean tech division in 2009. General Mills stepped up to lead a new food, agriculture and beverage division in 2014 and ECMC led a new education and training division in 2018. So I think there's an important thread in terms of how we've partnered with corporations and adapted to support some of the economic development needs and opportunities for the state. And we've made a big push, particularly in the last decade, toward Greater Minnesota and toward supporting women and entrepreneurs of color.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Stavig: Since 2005, we've helped over 25,000 entrepreneurs get started and get connected with the resources to move their ideas forward. And I think [then and now] it's because it's not just a beauty pageant, but something that provides real value and connections to people to help them move forward.

Mallin: So the whole ecosystem of entrepreneurship in Minnesota has matured over the 20 years. But all along, what the MN Cup set out to do and what still sets it apart is it's just to help the entrepreneurs. It's free to participate. There's no equity. There's nothing that's taken as part of the process. The purity of the Minnesota Cup—today it's established as almost a seal of approval going into all of the other types of activities that are happening in Minnesota.

Litman: So one of the coolest things in life is: Can you create something that has enduring value? Can you walk away from it, to a degree? And can it perpetuate? We're so proud of the program and the people that make it better every year. And that's super rewarding because the program is far better today than it was five years ago, 10 years ago, 15 years ago, and it just keeps getting better. I love it.

Mallin: Now it's how can we mature and continue to grow the Cup. We would love to see our great sponsors continue to endow money and capabilities so that we can spend less time on the raising funds side of this. The MN Cup competition runs from March to September, but it's a full-time thing. We're out educating, and we want to do more and more to help various communities bring things forward.

BY THE NUMBERS

MN Cup 2024

3,178
Record number of Minnesotans participating

8 to 88
Age range

~25%
Participants who are U of M alums (including current students)

43%
Participants who identify as female

39%
Participants who identify as non-white

31%
Applicants from Greater Minnesota

MN Cup Since Inception

\$5.8M+
Awarded in cash prizes

50,000+
Volunteer hours

\$1.1B+
Venture capital raised by finalists

26,000+
Minnesota participants



Six former participants recall their experiences with MN Cup.

Shawntera Hardy

**Co-founder
Plural [formerly Civic Eagle]
2015 Impact Division winner**



We provide policy intelligence tools to make public policy creation more transparent, responsive, and inclusive. We were

a scrappy team [in 2015] with this idea that really did not have the infrastructure around it. And I remember learning about MN Cup and talking to my co-founders and saying, ‘It’s not even about winning. If we can get in an environment where folks are there helping you to formulate your thesis, helping you to think about your customer, and helping you to think about the future ... we would be set.’

That list—names of just highly qualified folks, from finance, to communications, to marketing—is rich. We had the opportunity to pick [Carlson School Board of Advisors member] Mary Pat Blake, who literally became one of us. Being able to have her in our corner ... that introduction was priceless.



Beth Fynbo

**Founder
Busy Baby [formerly Busy Baby Mat]
2020 General Division winner**



I participated in MN Cup in 2018, 2019, and won the general division in 2020. When I started in MN Cup, I only had a prototype that was

not even presentable to put in front of people. And since MN Cup, I’ve been on *Shark Tank*. We’ve grown to a multimillion-dollar business [Busy Baby, a maker of multiple products that stop babies from dropping and throwing their things on the ground] and we continue to grow.

For me, the benefit—and especially doing it for three years—was that it was a way for people who knew what they were doing to hold my hand through the entrepreneurial process, which I did not know how to do ... Participating in MN Cup helped me create a business plan, learn how to talk about my business, and have confidence in what I was doing. And the mentorship was amazing. I still work with the same package developer that I worked with through a mentor at MN Cup.



Nick Beste, '09 BSB

**Founder
Mighty Spark [formerly ManCave]
2009 Student Division winner**



We were the first home party for men, so picture like Mary Kay or Avon, but with more male-centric products. Winning [the

division] and the prizes was great. But I think it’s so much more helpful than that. I think the networking and the process of putting together a business plan ... it’s tremendously helpful regardless of the outcome.

Many of [the judges] stayed in touch with me for years and continued to mentor me afterwards just on their own, out of the goodness of their heart, which is really cool.

And I don’t think there’s enough words I could possibly say about John Stavig. There’s nobody else who’s helped me even one percent as much as he has throughout my life as a person and in my career. He’s incredibly selfless. I remember so many times thinking, ‘All right, this is the time he’s not going to take my phone call or he’s going to tell me to go away.’ And he always took it. He was always there.



Deepinder Singh

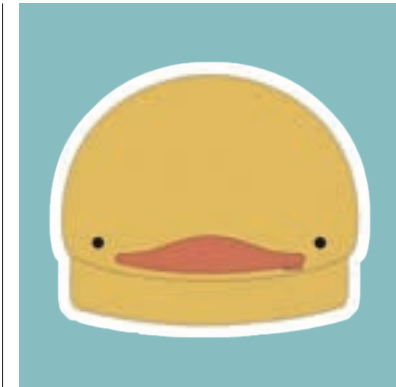
**Founder and CEO
75F
2014 Grand Prize winner**



A lot of people compete for the money, which is very helpful when you are a small company. But in my opinion, the biggest thing

was actually the PR. The recognition that [75F, a building management company that helps buildings be more energy efficient] got for having won and the number of doors that it opened was quite amazing. [It] led us to investments from Steve Case of AOL. And we have investments from people like Breakthrough Energy Ventures, founded by Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, and from one of the world’s largest climate-focused funds.

When we started, we were actually just a company of three people here in the U.S. We are well over 200 people now with offices in multiple countries. MN Cup was a turning point for 75F.



Deling Chen

**Founder
Sock Munch
2022 Youth Division winner**



One of the first lessons [in entrepreneurship] is to think about a problem that you face every day. And I realized that I lost

a lot of socks, and if you think about it, if you lose one sock, you lose both. I did some research and found that people can lose up to 15 socks a year. Sock Munch solves the issue while teaching kids organizational skills. [Winning at age 15] felt very surreal to me, and I was also really thankful for my parents and the mentors that I’ve had. I was paired with a mentor that especially helped me with marketing. And I’m especially thankful for the community that MN Cup helps to foster, especially among the youth competitors. A lot of us really supported each other and gave each other ideas on ways we could grow our business.



Jules Porter

**Founder
Seraph 7 Studios
4-time MN Cup participant**



We make video games for PlayStation, Xbox, and Nintendo ... And the whole reason for us doing this is that we are absolutely sick of the way Black people

and women are portrayed in games ... Instead of the Black character having to be a gangster, or mobster, or drug dealer ... I want characters who look like me and heroes who look like me. And [it matters] to kids in the Black community and to kids outside the Black community when it comes to how we see ourselves in this world. This is actually going to be the first video game ever that has more than one playable Black female character.

I wanted to be a part of the Minnesota Cup because I want access to expert people to help me. I really want this business idea to be vetted thoroughly because I really want it to be successful ... so that I can just move to the next level, not only of the competition, but for my business. **C**

MN Cup's 9 Divisions

- Education and Training
- Energy/Clean Tech/Water
- Food/Ag/Beverage
- General
- High Tech
- Impact Ventures
- Life Science/Health IT
- Student
- Youth

“I’m especially thankful for the community that MN Cup helps to foster, especially among the youth competitors. A lot of us really supported each other and gave each other ideas on ways we could grow our business.”

DELING CHEN

Purposeful Giving Fosters Success



This issue's theme of finding purpose is a powerful lens for our work in advancement, as we continually find inspiration from the incredible stories and achievements of our alumni and benefactor community. It is remarkable how deeply committed,

engaged, and motivated Carlson School alumni are, acting as forces for good in their careers, communities, and on behalf of the Carlson School.

I was honored to join Dean Jamie Prenkert in his first year of travels to meet with alumni across the country and around the world. We had the privilege of visiting you in six countries and 13 cities, making connections with more than 3,500 alumni and friends of the school, and learning more about the people who make this community so special.

Throughout those travels and visits, I was struck by the endless examples of alumni leading across disciplines and sectors, advancing solutions to sticky problems, and moving our communities, cities, and country forward—to raise up all corners of our society. It is clear that the education and mindset fostered by our school's faculty, and embraced by our students and alumni, has created a rich collective of individuals who have found purpose in their work, well beyond the bottom line.

We are thrilled to share that last year marked the second-best philanthropic year in the school's history. This is a further testament to the commitment of the community of Carlson School benefactors. Your generosity continues to make it possible for us to recruit the most promising students regardless of financial background, attract and retain brilliant faculty, and provide the real-world experiences that prepare students for success in their careers.

To all alumni, I thank you for being a part of this phenomenal community and serving as an inspiration as we continue to advance the Carlson School!

Sincerely,

Jess Kowal
Assistant Dean, Institutional Advancement



One Big Number

1,000+

Carlson School alumni
find purpose through
volunteer leadership
roles at the school or at
the University (or both!)

ENGAGE



Take What You Need Closet Provides Access to Essential Resources



Peter, '84 BSB,
and Lynn
Malling

Many college students—particularly those who are the first in their immediate family to obtain a four-year college degree—face financial constraints that make it difficult for them to afford basic necessities. As part of the Carlson School's initiatives to better support

these first-generation college students and the unique challenges they face, the Undergraduate Program Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Enrollment Team launched the Take What You Need Closet in the fall of 2023 and bolstered it with a Give to the Max Day campaign. Peter, '84 BSB, and Lynn Malling were among the first donors to the effort to get this initiative up and running, fully funding the original campaign goal.

"When the concept of the Take What You Need Closet was

introduced to us, my wife and I were eager to participate," Peter says. "Knowing that our gift could have an immediate and significant impact on current Carlson School students in need of basic necessities felt like the most worthy place to make our annual gift."

The closet is open to all students and provides access to essential resources, such as clothing, school supplies, toiletries, household essentials, and food. In the first six months of use, the closet has been accessed more than 4,000 times, with food and household supplies being the most popular items. The Take What You Need Closet and related initiatives help foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all, and help meet the needs of first-gen students and those with financial need so they can be successful at the Carlson School.

Alum Connects Students to Hunger Relief Initiative

Minnesotans accessed food shelf resources in record-setting numbers in 2023. Second Harvest Heartland (SHH), a Twin Cities-based leading hunger relief organization, is not only working hard to meet this rising need, but also aims to cut hunger in half for all Minnesotans by 2030 through the Make Hunger History initiative.



Trevor Nelson,
'18 BSB

Trevor Nelson, '18 BSB, senior business analyst for supply chain at SHH, connected his former teacher, Professor Susan Meyer Goldstein, with an opportunity for her students to help

SHH achieve this lofty goal. As a class project, Master of Science in Supply Chain Management students analyzed warehouse supply chain and operations questions to provide insight on what the organization was doing well and opportunities for improvement.

"To make hunger history, we need to be operating a more efficient and cost-effective supply chain. Any dollar saved gives us more funds to invest in the community," says Nelson.

Nelson was also eager to inspire the students to use their supply chain expertise to contribute to the nonprofit sector in the future.

"I think of this project as a win-win-win," shares Goldstein. "It's a win for our students to begin applying what they're learning in classes in a very real sense, in an industry that none of them are working in. It's a win for Second Harvest Heartland, for them to have an amazing set of supply chain talent. Our students brought a lot of expertise and a lot of energy. The third win is that nobody should be hungry in the state of Minnesota, so if we can contribute to improving the supply chain to feed more of our neighbors, that's a win."

Global Perspective on a Human Scale

Nicole Graves, '97 MHRIR, has had a globetrotting, star-studded human resources career working for big-name brands, including Boeing, Chevron, General Mills, and Pepsi. She lived abroad in Indonesia and Singapore before returning to the United States in 2016. Now, three years into her role at Apple as global people director for the Office of the CFO, Graves talks with the Carlson School about her experiences.



Nicole Graves
'97 MHRIR

JOB TITLE
Global People Director,
Office of the CFO, Apple

HOMETOWN
Chicago

HOBBIES
Yoga, Pilates,
pickleball, tennis,
travel, and reading

How did the Carlson School help shape your career?

The master's program in HR at the Carlson School was very comprehensive. The classes were all very specific to the HR field, which was hard to find in the '90s. Just a few institutions offered that. So, the Carlson School really helped shape me as an HR professional.

There were many opportunities to explore the HR field. You could volunteer to do HR work for nonprofits. And one of the more poignant experiences was traveling to France during the summer. We talked about labor in France and their people policies, which are very different from what you see in the U.S. It was eye-opening, and it really set the stage for the global career that I've had.

What leadership principles do you live by?

I am a collaborative leader, and I'd say common sense is my superpower. I really try to understand before I make decisions, and I'll seek out different viewpoints because it's important to understand all sides of an issue. I lead teams to be stronger as a group than as individuals, and I really try to understand what each individual brings to the table and bring out those strengths in them.

What advice would you give to current Carlson School students?

Somebody said this to me early on in my career, and it has landed true: Sometimes, some of the best experiences are ones that are not necessarily packaged the way you would expect. In any experience or opportunity, you can make it what you want. Every job, whether it's a lateral move or an advancement, has a lot of cool opportunities that may not look cool to everyone else. I have taken those opportunities several times, and they have really enriched my experience. **C**

Building a Legacy

Longtime educator "Dr. H" cements his impact with an everlasting gift following retirement.

BY CHARLY HALEY

In his 24 years teaching at the Carlson School of Management, retired Senior Lecturer Steven Huchendorf—warmly known as "Dr. H"—had an enormous impact on students and the curriculum.

But he wanted to leave behind even more than that. So, as he prepared for his retirement from the Supply Chain & Operations Department in Spring 2024, he planned to give to the Carlson School's *Connecting Carlson* building campaign.

Dr. H says the gift feels ideal to him, as he views himself as "a builder," from teaching the Carlson School's first-ever online course, to creating a mentoring program for PhD students, to founding and directing supply chain case competitions. The gift also ensures the Huchendorf family name will be permanently placed somewhere in the school's building—a symbol of his legacy as both a retired lecturer and the father of two alumni.

"This is a connection to the premier educational institution in this entire area," he says. "To be able to give back to that and help with the scholarships, the building, and creating learning experiences—it feels impactful. I really wanted to help out the next generation of people coming through the school."

24 YEARS OF IMPACT

Dr. H remembers the first class he taught at the Carlson School in 2000. It was MBA 6120: Data Analysis & Statistics for Managers, held in the 3M Auditorium.

"That was really the start of my journey over the last 24 years at the Carlson School. The faculty position was a perfect fit for me," he says. He estimates he's taught more than 240 courses and more than 13,000 students throughout his career, including creating learning experiences for three trips to China for the Tracing the Global Supply Chain course.

One of the highlights of his time as a senior lecturer was creating the Carlson School's first online course in 2006. Fitting, then, that it was the online version of that first Carlson School class he'd taught.

"It was a great way for me to learn and think about the students' learning experiences. You have to do things a little bit differently when you're in the online space ... and we've been doing it ever since," he says.

In 2002, Dr. H created the Program for the Advancement of Classroom Excellence (PACE Program) to help PhD students learn how to teach. He pursued it because he says he feels it is a faculty obligation to prepare PhD candidates in their teaching responsibilities.

He also served as undergraduate coordinator of the Supply Chain & Operations Department, and he was the founder and director of local and national undergraduate supply chain case competitions. He worked closely with undergraduate students for more than a decade as faculty advisor to the Supply Chain & Operations Club.

Professor KK Sinha, department chair, worked with Huchendorf throughout his 24 years at the Carlson School. "Steve's distinguished career was devoted to educating, exciting, and promoting the discipline and profession of supply chain management, and influencing generations of students to discover and pursue fulfilling and rewarding supply chain careers," Sinha says.

Dr. H earned numerous accolades at the Carlson School, including the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2003 and the Outstanding Teaching Award in 2014. Students voted him the Outstanding Honors Faculty of the Year in 2006, and the Outstanding Faculty of the Year in 2007. Students also nominated him for the Outstanding Faculty of the Year award in 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2017.



"I really wanted to help out the next generation of people coming through the school."

STEVEN HUCHENDORF, RETIRED SENIOR LECTURER

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Among Dr. H's dearest memories from his time at the Carlson School is when he was able to be onstage for both of his children's commencement ceremonies.

Dr. H smiles alongside his son, K.C. Huchendorf, at his graduation in 2010.

"Those were my two proud dad moments," he says. "Not many people get to be on the stage with their children as they come across and receive their degree."

He adds that his son, K.C. Huchendorf, '10 BSB, who double-majored in Supply Chain & Operations Management and Marketing, and his daughter, Lynnay (Huchendorf) Wanggaard, '12 MBA, both still see immense value in what they learned at the Carlson School.

"They're using the degree and, really, the expertise that they built here," Dr. H says, explaining that his son has worked at General Mills and Cargill, and his daughter works at Medtronic.

In his official retirement letter, Dr. H says he appreciates the opportunities that both he and his children received at the Carlson School. He also mentions his desire to continue supporting the school, which led to his gift to the *Connecting Carlson* building campaign.

"Students at the Carlson School are the best. I am very fortunate to have been a small part of the student learning experience." **C**

Finding Many Ways to Give Back

How an alum pays it forward through dedicated service.

BY CHARLY HALEY

As Nick Pilger, '10 BSB, has grown his career in philanthropy, he's always kept in mind that giving is not just a job—it's a strong personal value, too.

And when Pilger thinks about where to offer his support outside of work, his alma mater comes to mind.

"I absolutely loved my experience at the University of Minnesota and feel very fortunate to have been in the Carlson School," says Pilger, who co-majored in Public & Nonprofit Management and Human Resources & Industrial Relations. "It has been important to me to give back however I can. For a long time that meant giving my time, and then slowly starting to give more financially when I had the means."

Pilger has served as a volunteer board member on the Carlson School's GOLD (Gophers of the Last Decade) Board and the Alumni Board. He has also supported the Dean's Excellence Fund.

Giving back does not have to come in the form of large donations, Pilger says. He encourages all his fellow alumni to stay connected to the Carlson School and give when they can.

"For me, coming right out of school, the most natural way to give back was time, as you pay off student debt, get your first job, and do all those things. So, staying connected to the school by volunteering was really important. And over time, as I've had the opportunity, I've started giving financially," he says.

"If I can help create a good experience for students by giving a little bit financially when I can, then I'm happy to do it," he adds. "Carlson was a wonderful place to get my education, and I want it to stay that way for generations to come."

When Pilger reflects on his education, he feels gratitude for how the



Public & Nonprofit Management major has helped him throughout his career. He worked at the Sanneh Foundation, the American Cancer Society, and the UMN Foundation before landing his current role as director of development at Children's Wisconsin.

"I think there's a real advantage to having a business-minded education in the nonprofit sector," he says. "Having a good grounding in the principles of business has really helped me succeed and do well."

And Pilger says he continues to benefit from the Carlson School by giving back. Through his volunteer board work, he's become friends with alumni who he didn't even know while he was a student.

"There are lasting friendships that I've built in my time since graduating with others who've chosen to give back time, talent, and treasure to the Carlson School," he says. "I would encourage anyone who hasn't reached back out in that way to do so, because I think there's a lot to gain personally." **C**

"Carlson was a wonderful place to get my education, and I want it to stay that way for generations to come."

NICK PILGER, '10 BSB

After graduation, Pilger (center) served on the GOLD Board, giving back his time to the Carlson School.

PHOTO: COURTESY NICK PILGER

Building a Relationship

Tennant connects with Carlson School resources through event partnerships.

BY CHARLY HALEY



"We're trying to reach the next generations and build our brand with the new talent joining the workforce."

DAVE HUML



Dave Huml,
Tennant Company
president and CEO

Top: Employees from Tennant Company attended the Women's Leadership Conference.

Tennant Company was founded in the Twin Cities metro area more than 150 years ago. In that time, the company has become a global leader of industrial and commercial cleaning equipment, known for its large floor sweeping and scrubbing machines.

The longevity of the brand and the connection to the Twin Cities community are points of pride for Tennant and its employees. However, even company leaders admit that many people in the Twin Cities may not know Tennant by name.

"We're one of the hidden gems in the Twin Cities business community," says Dave Huml, Tennant Company president and CEO. "We've always been here, but because we're not a household brand name, we do tend to fly a bit under the radar locally, even though we're recognized worldwide as a leader in our industry."

That's one reason why the company recently decided to collaborate on two premier events at the Carlson School of Management—1st Tuesday and

the Women's Leadership Conference. With these sponsorships, Tennant aims to boost its visibility in the Twin Cities business community and to provide valuable networking opportunities for its employees.

"We recognize that the Carlson School is a major center of excellence within the Twin Cities and that Carlson School faculty are a huge resource," Huml says. "Partnering with the Carlson School has been a really good way to provide our people with opportunities to hear from thought leaders and to make connections outside of the company on topics that are important to them."

The partnership could also foster connections with the Carlson School's community of students and alumni. "We're trying to reach the next generations and build our brand with the new talent joining the workforce," Huml says. "We want them to know that Tennant Company is a great place to work; we're a leader in our industry with a strong track record of

innovation, and we're at the forefront of driving market disruption through robotics and connected machines."

Kate Hanna, a corporate communications manager at the company, attended the 2024 Women's Leadership Conference, where she and her colleagues connected with Carlson School faculty. "We took so much away from that, having access to cutting-edge academic research, the ability to network with peers, and discussions with faculty members about some of the trends in their academic work that tie into our business needs," she says.

She adds that the group from Tennant felt a sense of pride in seeing their company's name among the other sponsors of the event.

So far, Tennant's leaders and employees have responded very positively to the company's investment in the Carlson School. "It definitely aligns with our core values as a company and is a tangible example of our commitment to contributing to the communities where we operate," Huml says. **C**

Every event brings new insights, experiences, and connections for alumni and friends of the Carlson School. Here are some highlights:

Capacity Crowds at Women’s Leadership Conference 2024

For a video recap, scan here:



The 2024 Women’s Leadership Conference was our largest in history, with a sold-out crowd of more than 420 people coming together at McNamara Alumni Center in March. Dean Jamie Prenkert opened the conference, eager to be an active participant in his first Women’s Leadership Conference and committed to the work of inclusion and empowerment that is central to the event. The conference featured a lineup of more than 30 business leaders, executives, and experts—half of whom are Carlson School alumni—including the conference’s Honorary Chair Marcia Page, ’83 MBA, who joined Prenkert for the Inside the Boardroom Conversation. All are welcome to join us for next year’s Women’s Leadership Conference on March 7, 2025.

Senior Executive Women Series @ Target

Carlson Women Global Connect’s Senior Executive Women Series continued its panel events in April. Hosted at Target by Senior Vice President of Human

Resources Emily Hebert, ’04 MHRIR, and the Target Women’s Business Council, the panel also included Andrea Zimmerman, ’17 MBA, and Pam Tomczik, ’99 JD.



1st Tuesday with Prathibha Varkey

In June, the 1st Tuesday audience, both in-person and virtual, heard from Prathibha Varkey, ’13 MBA, president of Mayo Health System. In her presentation, “Leadership Perspectives: Transforming Healthcare,” she addressed how education—she has four degrees, each of which serves a different purpose—has been critical to her success as a leader, and how taking risks and setting tough but attainable goals leads to growth. At the event, Dean Prenkert also announced that the 1st Tuesday series would be taking a new format in the next year to better serve attendees. Check out z.umn.edu/1stTuesday for details and upcoming speakers.

A Conversation on Harnessing the Power of AI in the Bay Area

In March, the deans of the Carlson School and the College of Science and Engineering co-hosted an event in Palo Alto, California for alumni and prospective student families from both schools. Nicole Graves, ’97 MHRIR, global people director in the Office of the CFO at Apple, moderated a conversation with Jeff Dean, ’90 CSci, Google’s chief scientist, and Ryan Aytay, ’03 MBA, CEO at Tableau, on the future of AI, including benefits, risks, and ethical questions around the increasing use of AI technology.



MBT 45th Reunion and HOF Inductions

The Master of Business Taxation program hosted a double celebration this June, when it recognized the 45th anniversary of the program and its latest MBT Hall of Fame Inductees, as well as congratulated Paul Gutterman on his retirement after many years serving the department as its director. The new inductees are Phil Albert, ’01 MBT, retired VP of corporate tax at Medtronic; Jeff Bjuström, ’96

MBT, retired partner at PwC; Dawn Courier, ’89 MBT, retired partner at KPMG; Tom Gottwalt, ’93 MBT, retired director of tax at TCF Bank; Tyler Hess, ’10 MBT, principal at CliftonLarsonAllen; and Jerry Martin, ’99 MBT, partner of international tax services at RSM. In addition, David Horn, ’15 MBT, was introduced to attendees as the incoming new director of the MBT program.

Graduating Executive MBA Women’s Luncheon

The Carlson School hosted an Executive MBA Graduating Women’s Luncheon for the Carlson Executive and Vienna Executive MBA programs in May. Because of the unique challenges women face while rising the corporate ranks and pursuing graduate degrees, many leave their programs feeling especially connected with the fellow women in their cohort. The luncheon celebrated the graduates’ accomplishments and continued to build long-lasting community and alumni ties.



Scholarships help provide opportunities for students to pursue a world-class business education while engaging in meaningful activities outside the classroom, gaining leadership and management experiences that enhance and are strengthened by their classroom learning. Philanthropy from alumni and friends of the Carlson School makes a positive impact, extending far beyond the campus.



Maurice "Mo" Hicks, Jr.

Current MD-MBA student

I appreciate being able to pursue my MBA and become a better strategic leader while in medical school. The Carlson School will help me do that by honing my skills related to entrepreneurship, strategy, and leadership. The support I receive to pursue my education at the Carlson School allows me to better serve patients on a systemic level. Black students, especially Black men, in graduate programs rarely receive such support that is necessary to continue reaching new horizons. As I am working on a digital health startup, Vertex Medical Solutions, I am in need of becoming a better business leader and strategist—completing this MBA is crucial to my success in that venture. I am grateful for the benefactors who make that possible.

"The support I receive to pursue my education at the Carlson School allows me to better serve patients on a systemic level."

MAURICE "MO" HICKS, JR.



Brianna Garcia-Meyers

Current MBA student

Thanks to the kindness of benefactors, I have the chance to pursue higher education and transform the trajectory of my career and life. I am enjoying the opportunities at the Carlson School to network with fellow aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators, to connect with and empower fellow women in business, and to broaden my knowledge under the guidance of some of the brightest minds in higher education.

In addition to my studies, I'm involved in a startup venture, LÜN Beauty and Wellness, focused on crafting personal care products tailored to address the unique needs of individuals grappling with skin sensitivities who are looking for truly clean, gentle, and sustainable options. In addition, LÜN is committed to empowering the next generation by donating three percent of profits to nonprofit organizations that empower and educate young girls. Scholarship support profoundly impacts my journey toward achieving my future goals, and it motivates me to pay it forward and uplift those who will follow in my footsteps.

Let your classmates know what you've been up to since graduation. Submit a Class Note for publication in the alumni magazine: carlsonschool.umn.edu/share

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Note: While we welcome alumni news, the Carlson School does not verify Class Note submissions and is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in Class Notes.

1970s

Richard Katz, '71 MHRIR, started a new role as executive producer at Politics with a Party.

Douglas Lanner, '73 BSB, started a new role as manager at RSM.

David Meyer, '75 BSB, who is board chair, executive chairman, and founder of Titan Machinery, has been recognized as the Merit Award Winner for Dealer of the Year by the North American Equipment Dealers Association.

1980s

Garry Lowenthal, '80 BSB, '83 MBT, started a new role as chief financial officer at PetVivo Holdings, Inc.

Joel Ackerman, '83 MBA, was recognized in the *Star Tribune* for his online marketplace where people are able to "trade up" items they no longer need at increasing values. The platform, Red Ladder, then sells the final item and donates the proceeds to local nonprofits. The platform uses AI technology to assess when to close the trade ladder and sell the item.



David Warford, '69 BSB, was a volunteer mentor for the Ascend National Cohort hosted at the Carlson School. The six-month program supported entrepreneurs of color from across the country with access to market opportunities and business education. Warford (at left) coached a personal protective equipment business based in Arizona. The program culminated in a weekend of presentations and educational sessions in April. To learn more about Ascend, scan the QR code.



Kate Kelly, '86 MBA, was inducted to the Twin Cities Business Hall of Fame for 2024 for her excellence in business, leadership, philanthropy, and community building. She most recently worked as regional and executive vice president for the Minnesota market division at PNC, and served as a board member, founding president, and CEO at Minnesota Bank & Trust. She is also a volunteer for the Carlson School, both as a speaker and on the Carlson Women Global Connect Senior Advisory Board.

Todd Tillemans, '88 BSB, started a new role as chief commercial officer at Perdue Farms.

Lisa Knipping, '89 BSB, is now chief financial officer at Life Link III.

1990s

Jessica Schmiesing, '90 MHRIR, was appointed chief human resources officer and member of Riverwood Healthcare Center's senior management team.

Joe Wagner, '90 BSB, '95 MBA, started a new role as chief marketing officer at IWCO.

Sheri Worthly, '90 MBA, was appointed as director of the Mississippi State School of Human Sciences.

Brian Lee, '91 BSB, started a new role as data architect at Ecolab.

Jeff Spethmann, '94 MBA, was appointed chief executive officer at HydrogenPro, Inc.

Michael Favet, '95 MBA, was appointed chief executive officer at Revamp Medical, Inc.

Andrew Hulett, '96 BSB, was appointed to the board of directors at Dynatronics Corporation.

Kara Sime, '96 MHRIR, received the Small Business of the Year Award for 2023 from the Midway Chamber of Commerce for Your HR Navigator. She founded the consulting practice in 2016 to help small and mid-sized businesses navigate HR challenges.

Kurt Dirks, '97 PhD, was appointed dean at University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business.

Jim Sheets, '97 MBA, started a new role as president of health care operations in Colorado and Montana at Intermountain Health.

James (Jim) Moeller, '98 BSB, founded Moeller Law PLLC, which provides legal expertise in securities, business law, contract negotiation, and investment regulation.

Sean Murphy, '98 BSB, started a new role as founder and chief executive officer at Helix Decision Science.

Jim Elasky, '99 BSB, '08 MBA, was named senior vice president and chief merchandising officer at PetSmart Inc. Elasky, pictured here with his dog, Otis, has more than 20 years of experience in retail across categories, including toys, sporting goods, electronics, and entertainment, and previously held leadership roles at Target and Best Buy. Elasky credits his MBA for helping to take his career to the next level.



MSPBJ 2024 WOMEN IN BUSINESS HONOREES

Congratulations to these Carlson School alumni for earning recognition as honorees for the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal's* 27th Annual Women in Business Awards:

Jana Cinnamon, '14 MHRIR, COO at Abdo

Nicole Sever, '12 MBA, managing director & marketing executive at Abdo

Lisa Stark, '13 MBA, controller at U.S. Bancorp

2000s

Michael Krans, '00 BSB, started a new role as vice president of Macy's media network at Macy's, Inc.

Dawn Moen, '00 BSB, was appointed executive director development, marketing and communications at World Bicycle Relief.

Derek Schmidt, '00 MBA, was appointed president and chief executive officer at Flexsteel.

Dr. Alina Chircu, '01 PhD, was appointed dean of University of New Mexico's Anderson School of Management.

Dennis Goetz, '02 MBA, was appointed to the board of directors at SkyWater Technology.

Scott Holstine, '02 MBA, was named chief commercial officer of Belgian medical technology company Nyxoah, to help it prepare for a U.S. commercial launch.

Adam Rowan, '02 BSB, is now business solutions director at Medica, a promotion from principal business architect.

Terrence Delahunt, '03 BSB, is now director of IT audit and data analytics at Boston Scientific, a promotion from senior manager of business strategy and system development.

Mohamed Turay, '04 BSB, '08 MBA, is now senior marketing manager of global management, inclusive experiences and technology at Amazon, a promotion from senior marketing manager.



Brian Slipka, '00 BSB, published the book *Win Some: 51 Proven Life Strategies to Win in Relationships*. The story follows an aging professional baseball player struggling to connect with those around him who, with some help, learns how to set aside selfish ambition in order to build meaningful positive relationships.

Brian Durmaskin, '05 BSB, was appointed to the board of directors at Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.

Renee Konzelman, '05 MHRIR, started a new role as chief people officer at Pampered Chef.

Matthew Dmytryszyn, '06 BSB, started a new role as chief investment officer at Miracle Mile Advisors.

Mark Coffey, '06 MEP, retired from their role as group vice president of supply chain at Hormel Foods.

Robert Houghton, '06 MBA, was appointed chief financial officer at Pivot Bio.

Elda Macias, '06 MBA, started a new role as chief marketing officer at MidWestOne Bank.

Enrique Espin Salazar, '06 MBA, is now senior director of finance at Microsoft.

Alia Allison, '07 BSB, started a new role as vice president of talent and organizational development at Lovesac.

Adam Hanson, '07 BSB, started a new role as senior vice president – agile and product practices lead for digital platforms at U.S. Bank.

Radha Chavali, '08 MBA, started a new role as chief information officer at Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union.

Jennifer Melin Miller, '08 MBA, and her production company Stone Arch Theatricals, was nominated for several Tony Awards for her work bringing the musical *Suffs* to the stage and the revival of The Who's *Tommy*.

Holly Bocchi, '09 BSB, '18 MAcc, started a new role as manager of internal audits at Tennant Company.

Simon Hu, '09 MBA, was appointed as the CEO of HEYFOCUS.

Ashutosh Jaiswal, '09 MBA, started a new role as principal at Amazon.

Steve Shepherd, '09 MBA, was named Minnesota Commercial Association of Real Estate's (MNCAR) Broker of the Year for 2023.



Jessica Phillips, '03 MBA, vice president of brand development and strategic initiatives at Ulta Beauty, was honored with the prestigious Spirit of Life Award by City of Hope, a cancer research organization for which she helped raise more than \$800,000 this year. The award recognizes her dedication to amplifying voices, fostering inclusivity, and driving positive change within the beauty industry and beyond. Phillips has also dedicated her time to the Carlson School as a speaker, volunteer, and member of the Alumni Board.

2010s

Mia Adams, '10 MBA, started a new role as market director for the renewables lifeline sector at Ulteig.

Ashley Feiock, '10 BSB, is now accounting manager at Perforce Software, a promotion from accounting supervisor.

Lara Koza, '10 BSB, was appointed to the board of directors at Habitat for Humanity.

Jessica Schroeder, '10 MBA, is now director of consumer and market insights at General Mills.

Corey Smith, '10 BSB, started a new role as senior financial analyst at Nelson Wood Shims.

Adam Triplett, '10 MBA, started a new role as senior vice president, director of commercial banking operations at Security National Bank.

William Houston, '11 MBA, is now senior FP&A manager at Nature's Touch Frozen Foods.

Nathan Panning, '11 MBT, is now head of tax group and principal at BGM.

Michael Prince, '11 BSB, is now global investor relations lead at Unilever.

Peter Reinhardt, '11 MBA, started a new role as lead cloud delivery engineer at U.S. Bank.

Heidi Aherns, '12 MBA, started a new role as mergers and acquisitions IT manager at Solventum.

Bradford Brennan, '12 BSB, is now associate director of finance at Optum.

Kristen Kranzler Steigauf, '12 BSB, '18 MS SCM, started a new position as lead director of distribution inventory, quality, & control at CVS Health.

Madeleine Essman, '13 MBA, is now director at Schwan's Company, a promotion from senior marketing manager.

Margaret Behrens, '14 BSB, started a new role as senior merchandise planner at Target.

Andrew Jison, '14 BSB, started a new role as consulting account lead at Google.

Erin Dady, '15 MBA, won the individual HERBIE award from the St. Paul Area Chamber for her dedication to the community.

David Horn, '15 MBT, was named the new director of the Carlson School's Master of Business Taxation Program.

Andrew Rogers, '15 MBA, was appointed general manager at the Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park.

Niandra Theiss, '15 BSB, is now associate director and senior manager at Sogeti, a promotion from manager consultant.

Chelsea Crosby, '16 MBT, started a new role as income tax compliance specialist at Solventum.

César Carmon, '16 MBA, started a new position as senior technical consultant at C3 Space.

Sara Moret, '16 MBA, is now senior director of generative AI strategy at Target, a promotion from director of strategic planning and chief of staff.

Hannah Poss, '17 BSB, started a new position as deals advisory manager at PwC.

Alise Gray, '18 BSB, is now senior sales director at Swoop, a promotion from sales director.

Elizabeth Hadala, '18 MBA, is now cardiology group marketing manager at Boston Scientific, a promotion from principal marketing transformation manager.

Brian Thompson, '18 MBA, is now director of product sales at Schwan's Company, a promotion from senior product sales manager.

Brian Wilde, '18 BSB, started a new role as senior financial analyst at Donaldson.

Jared Woodford, '18 MBA, started a new role as human resources business partner at the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Maryam Becker, '19 MBA, is now senior human resources manager, headquarters human resources at Target.

2020s

Kyle Burkhardt, '20 MBA, earned a Tony Award nomination for Best Musical as a co-producer on *Suffs*.

Thomson Thamsir, '20 BSB, '22 MSF, started a new role as Carlson Impact Lab mentor at the Carlson School of Management.

Crystal Osman, '22 MBA, started a new role as regional development officer at Yellowstone Forever.

Corey Scott, '23 MBA, started a new role as chief executive officer at Midwest Dairy.

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Dan Mallin, '95 MBA
Nick Beste, '09 BSB

2024 POETS & QUANTS BEST & BRIGHTEST MBAS



Pakakun (Ernie) Srimaneekulroj, and **Alycia Michels**, both '24 MBA, have been named to *Poets & Quants Best & Brightest MBAs Class of 2024*. After graduating, Srimaneekulroj joined Johnson & Johnson in their MedTech Marketing Leadership Development Program. Michels, who completed the online program, is continuing on at Cargill, where she is a digital technology & data growth business relationship manager.

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1. Harry Barrett, '24 MBA, celebrated the birth of his daughter, Mary, on February 12, 2024.

2. Jason Killey, '19 MBA, welcomed his son, Isaac, on September 27, 2023.

3. Shannon (Leach) McNamara, '20 MBA, celebrated the birth of her son, Declan, on October 11, 2023.

4. Sydney Fellabaum, '17 BSB, '23 MBA, welcomed her daughter, Etta, on May 18, 2024.

5. Tara Pierce, '20 MBA, welcomed her son, Theo, on May 17, 2024.

6. Matthew Warmuth, a current MBA student, welcomed his daughter, Ruthie, on March 29, 2024.

7. Helen (Muller) Simonett, '10 BSB, and **Adam Simonett**, '07 BSB, welcomed their second child, John Robert Simonett, in October 2023.

8. John Atkins, '15 BSB, '21 MBA, celebrated the birth of his daughter, Riley, on April 9, 2024.

Recent baby or wedding news? Tell us about it at carlsonschool.umn.edu/Share



Norb Berg, '57 MHRIR, died in July 2024. Berg was a pioneer in the field of human resources. As an executive at Control Data Corporation, he developed the Employee Advisory Resource, which became a template for employee assistance programs worldwide. He received many accolades, including the University's Outstanding Achievement Award for his impactful work.



Cynthia "Thia" Breen, '72 BSB, died in May 2024. Breen was a significant figure in the beauty and retail industries, including 40 years at The Estée Lauder Companies, culminating in the C-Suite role from which she retired in 2017. One of the Carlson School's biggest supporters, she spent a decade on the Board of Advisors, hosted several cohorts of students at Estée Lauder, and provided the school's 2012 commencement address. The University of Minnesota honored her with its Outstanding Achievement Award in 2011.



Pierson "Sandy" Grieve died in February 2024. Grieve, a prominent Twin Cities business leader, retired as CEO of Ecolab in 1995 after helping transform it into a multibillion-dollar global corporation. At the Carlson School, Grieve played an active role on numerous boards and committees, including as chair of the Board of Overseers. In recognition of his service, Grieve received the University of Minnesota Regents Award in 2000.

1950s

Morton Weisberg, '52 BSB, died in March 2024.

James Eddy, '57 BSB, died in February 2024.

William Martin, '57 BSB, died in January 2024.

1960s

Willis Cook, '60 BSB, died in January 2024.

Dr. Stanley Edin, '61 BSB, died in March 2024.

Jack Ellis, '63 BSB, died in January 2024.

James Gulenchyn, '66 BSB, died in April 2024.

Kent Swanson, '67 BSB, died in March 2024.

1970s

George Weimer, '70 BSB, died in June 2024.

Kenneth Richard Jr., '71 BSB, died in January 2024.

Curtis H. Miller, '72 BSB, died in June 2024.

Nancy Broz, '78 BSB, died in January 2024.

Michael Prijatelj, '78 MBA, died in February 2024.

1980s

Lorrie Iverson, '87 BSB, '89 MBA, died in February 2024.

Patricia Hegstrom, '88 MHRIR, died in March 2024.

1990s

Ryan Pfeil Darling, '91 BSB, died in June 2024.

Jan Mina Parker, '93 MBA, died in March 2024.

Christine Spresser, '95 MBA, died in June 2024.

2000s

David W. Burns, '02 MBA, died in April 2024.

2010s

Rebecca Weber, '13 BSB, died in April 2024.

Melinda Pavek

Melinda Pavek, '05 MBA, is a person of the world. Her role as a U.S. State Department foreign service officer has taken her from Japan to Pakistan, Brunei to Iraq, Nepal to Jamaica—and that's not all, and not necessarily in that order. This year, she is finishing her term as the U.S. consul general to Kolkata, India, which began in 2021. Prior to joining the foreign service, she worked as supply chain senior analyst at Johnson & Johnson.



1. There is inherent goodness and a shared motivation in most people.

The majority of people are inherently good and motivated by the same things—meeting the basic needs of their family and self and being treated fairly and with respect by the people around them, as well as feeling supported by the social and community norms within which they exist. Even as an introvert, it is personally and professionally rewarding to make the effort to get to know new people and cultures.

2. We all carry trauma from different sources, but some carry more.

While we have all experienced some level of trauma in our lives and must learn positive coping and healing behaviors, some people are crying out for help because they have been deeply injured in some way, often through no fault of their own. I may not be the person who is able to help them, but I should try not to make things worse for them and those around them.

“A compassionate world flowers from self-compassion. Societal awareness grows from self-awareness. Community resilience is built on a foundation of self-resilience.”

MELINDA PAVEK, '05 MBA

3. Self comes first.

Like oxygen masks on airplanes, it is much harder to build esteem in others if you do not have self-esteem. A compassionate world flowers from self-compassion. Societal awareness grows from self-awareness. Community resilience is built on a foundation of self-resilience. This is not a message of selfishness, but rather one of recognizing the vital role of healing and empowering individuals to build a better world for all.

4. Other people can't read your mind... and, sometimes you can't either.

Communication, communication, communication. While there are similarities, no two human brains, with their individual systems, behave exactly the same. Getting curious about why people think about things in a certain way can help to uncover hidden assumptions that get in the way of reaching shared goals or living in harmony. Applying curiosity to our own motivations and thought processes is also valuable.

5. Giving feedback is a superpower.

Learning how to give positive and constructive feedback in a clear, timely, specific, respectful way is a superpower available to every person. It starts with being open to receiving feedback.

Reunions allow alumni to reconnect and engage with their classmates and alma mater, making new memorable moments.



Above: In 1977, Curtis L. Carlson (left), the namesake of the Carlson School, attended his 40th anniversary reunion alongside notable fellow alumni political scientist and UMN President Emeritus Malcolm Moos (center) and Nobel Prize-winning agronomist Norman Borlaug (right). Carlson received his bachelor's degree in economics in 1937 and went on to found Carlson Companies, an \$8 billion travel, hospitality, and marketing conglomerate.

The Carlson School held its first all-alumni reunion this September. See the highlights from the event on Instagram:



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