PLANTING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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From the Chancellor

Coming back to the university is special particularly for alumni. Homecoming is both a tradition and a celebration of our past, present, and future. A few weeks ago, we welcomed our alumni back for a memorable homecoming weekend, and I enjoyed the reminiscing and enthusiasm generated by those who were able to attend. It also was a pleasure to have our alumni see firsthand how we have developed as a four-year institution and as a part of the University of Minnesota. It’s something of a homecoming too for our new president. As some of you know, President Eric Kaler earned his doctorate in chemical engineering from the U of M in 1982. In late August, we had the privilege of hosting a visit to the Crookston campus by the president and First Lady Karen Kaler, and I certainly enjoyed showing them around and sharing some of the wonderful people and places that make up the Crookston campus and community. In late September, we joined a system wide celebration during President Kaler’s inauguration. It was a remarkable day for the University of Minnesota and all who attended.

In September, I celebrated the sixth anniversary of my appointment as chancellor of the Crookston campus. The years have flown by and together with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends, we have documented four consecutive years of record enrollment starting in 2008; dedicated two new residence halls – Centennial and Evergreen; engaged in the work of strategic positioning; and continue to plan for the future. We are pleased with our progress, but continued success requires continued work. One thing for certain, we want to maintain our momentum and move this campus forward.

In the years ahead, we want alumni to come back to a campus that honors tradition and one that never settles for mediocrity. We welcomed the Class of 2015 to campus in August. I am sure many of you recall the excitement you felt as you started your college careers. We want this to be a place where dreams take shape, a place where students discover potential, and a place where they receive important preparation for the road ahead.

I believe a degree from the University of Minnesota rivals the best in public education. And, because of our size, we can offer students opportunities to engage one-on-one with faculty both inside and outside the classroom. We continue to place a high priority on technology, something we started in 1993 with our historic laptop initiative. These characteristics make us unique, and they give our students an edge. We continue to look at ways to offer the best academic experience possible; in fact, we focused exclusively on this goal during our Campus Executive Retreat this past summer.

We are determined to provide excellence in our classrooms, but we also want students to involve themselves in the clubs and organizations on campus. Those experiences make campus life more enjoyable and enhance learning. In other words, students take learning outside of the classroom to the athletic field; to competitions in horticulture, crops, and business; and to foster friendships with students who have interests and backgrounds different than their own.

As we begin our 19th year as a four-year institution, we remain dedicated to offering students an exceptional educational experience along with the prestige of the University of Minnesota—a legacy we are proud to pass on.

Sincerely,
Charles H. Casey, D.V.M.
Chancellor
Welcome, President Kaler

University of Minnesota President Eric Kaler visited the Crookston campus on Friday, August 26. He spent the day visiting with students, faculty, staff, and touring the campus along with First Lady Karen Kaler.

It was an exciting day for the U of M, Crookston and a great opportunity to welcome the new president to our campus and to the University of Minnesota. Enjoy these photos of the day.
From the Director of Development & Alumni Relations

In an era of budget uncertainty at both the state and national levels, the University of Minnesota, Crookston remains committed to critical initiatives: providing a great academic experience, encouraging excellence in teaching and research, and a continuing commitment to outreach. These are trying days for everyone, but time and again, our campus has witnessed the power of working together with a strong dedication to purpose.

It takes a team. I have said it before, I know, but alumni and donors are a big part of our team. Scholarship dollars have helped many students, and gifts from donors have provided benefits like the Alseth-NWSA Business Boardroom and the Centennial Park Project to name just two.

Unrestricted gifts, like the one used to design the business boardroom, offer our campus flexibility to work on strategic projects that advance our core mission and touch the lives of countless students. This type of gift can be directed where the campus needs it most to help meet the growing demands and expectations of a campus like ours.

A college education, while costly, is actually an investment in our communities, country, and the world. We need leaders tomorrow who are well prepared and stand as a testimony to the difference an education makes.

When you think about the future, consider how you might influence the next generation, and how you might change one life or many lives by giving. Since the campus was established more than a century ago, myriads of students have witnessed the life-changing power of education on this campus as high school students, technical college students, and now as students seeking four-year degrees.

As we have in the past, we continue to use the power of innovation to set our campus apart. It takes a team to engage in this kind of work, and we are deeply grateful to the donors who recognize the significance an investment in the U of M, Crookston can make today… and tomorrow.

If you are considering how you might influence the future, contact me, I would love to visit with you about the possibilities.

Sincerely,
Corby Kemmer, director
Development & Alumni Relations
Alumni association board member Linda Morgan graduated from the University of Minnesota, Crookston twice. The first time she graduated in 1985 with an associate degree in business, and the second time was in 2009 with a bachelor’s degree in sport and recreation management and marketing. She is passionate about the campus and what it has given her.

“I loved UMC and what it had to offer when I graduated from here in 1985,” Morgan says. “After it became a four-year college and I saw what the campus had to offer, I knew I could come here and feel comfortable as an older student. Plus, I could keep working and raising my family while I went to school to pursue my four-year degree.”

Serving in her third year as a board member, Morgan wants to help promote the U of M, Crookston in the community and help with projects that benefit the campus. “I want to support what the campus has to offer and also award alumni who have done well and are respected in their careers and communities,” she explains.

Morgan works as the youth services coordinator at the Crookston High School for the LEO Club, a youth organization of Lions Clubs International. Her responsibilities include organizing projects, contests, and helping raise awareness of students in the high school. Working in the schools and in the community, the LEO Club helps teach students about being a leader and helping others. Working wherever they are needed, the LEO Club has been involved in efforts at the area food bank, the local nursing home, the homeless shelter, and with the Meals on Wheels program.

Morgan is a Minnesota girl born and raised — growing up and graduating from Lake of the Woods High School in Baudette, Minn. She and her husband, Craig, have three children.

If Morgan could say one thing to U of M, Crookston alumni, she smiles, “I would say “hi” to the students that I graduated with in 1985 and 2009. I hope you all are doing great with your careers/jobs and your families. If you have a chance to come back to Crookston, give me a call!”
CAMPUS HEADLINES

Enrollment Surges
Enrollment for fall on the Crookston campus continues a six-year trend of increasing enrollment and marks a fourth straight year of record enrollment. According to the preliminary data, the number of degree-seeking students attending the Crookston campus is 1,600 reported for fall semester 2011. That number bests last year’s all-time record of 1,462 undergraduates.

U.S. News & World Report Recognizes Campus for 14th Consecutive Year
For a fourteenth consecutive year, the University of Minnesota, Crookston has been recognized as one of the top regional colleges in the Midwest in its category for the 2012 edition of Best Colleges by U.S. News Media Group. This year’s rankings place the Crookston campus in the top three public colleges in the category “Best Regional Colleges.” For more information, visit www.usnews.com/colleges.

Five time “Best in the Midwest” by The Princeton Review
The University of Minnesota, Crookston is one of the best colleges in the Midwest according to the nationally known education services company, The Princeton Review. The announcement marks the fifth consecutive year the Crookston campus has been recognized. It is one of 153 institutions The Princeton Review recommends in its “Best in the Midwest” section of its website feature, “2012 Best Colleges: Region by Region,” on PrincetonReview.com.
Online Learning Leads to Visit

It has been a more than a year since Senior Alisha Hillstrom, Maple Grove, Minn., began pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. But, it wasn’t until last July that she actually took her first step on the campus. The business management major is earning her degree entirely online. In fact, she is on track to graduate in May 2012 with a business degree that includes a minor in marketing.

Her trip to campus happened thanks to a bit of serendipity on a gorgeous day in July. “My husband and I were spending the weekend of July 4 in Detroit Lakes, Minn., and it worked for us to make a trip to Crookston to see where I was going to school,” she recalls.

Hillstrom holds an associate of arts degree from North Hennepin Community College and wanted to pursue a bachelor’s degree but was unsure about where to go. “I am from Minnesota, so naturally, I checked out the University of Minnesota’s Web site,” she says. “I found the degree I wanted entirely online through the Crookston campus, and I was immediately interested.”

Another factor influencing her decision to choose the U of M was the way she benefitted from the University of Minnesota Promise Scholarship (U Promise), which supports admitted eligible Minnesota residents who enroll at one of the University’s five campuses.

A busy mother of a 4-year-old son with a job working for Target, Hillstrom manages her schedule to include being a full-time college student. “I do homework at the dinner table or in a favorite spot in

Hillstrom enjoyed seeing the campus in person. As an online student, Hillstrom plans to return in the spring for commencement.
the living room where my laptop fits on the arm of the chair,” Hillstrom explains. “If I need serious peace and quiet, I head for the public library.”

She enjoys many facets of learning online, particularly posting on the message boards in Moodle, a software package for producing Internet-based courses and Web sites. “I found Moodle to be very helpful in the learning process, and I have the chance to interact with students from all over the world,” Hillstrom says. “I enjoy interacting with classmates who have such varied experiences and who share their thoughts and ideas in our online ‘classroom’ discussion.”

She finds most of her classmates are balancing work, life, and school just as she is.

In her online experience, she says she has found the professors both willing to help students and quick to respond. These two aspects are significant to students who are working independently and do not have the benefit of faculty onsite.

Commencement 2012 will mark Hillstrom’s second visit to campus, and she is looking forward to it already. “I recommend the U of M, Crookston’s online program when I can,” she reflects. “In fact, I had a friend who started the semester after I did because she knew how much I was enjoying my online learning experience.”

Hillstrom already has given graduate school consideration for the future. “I am thinking I might enjoy teaching as an online instructor some day,” she says. “However, I have to stay focused on earning my bachelor’s degree, and afterward, gaining more experience in the business world.” It is one step, and one degree, at a time for her.

No matter what she decides about the future, Hillstrom is finding the online classroom meets her needs today, and right now, that’s what matters.

Did you know?

Did you know? The University of Minnesota, Crookston’s online degree in business management was ranked among The Best Colleges list of “Top 10 Online Bachelor of Business Administration Degree Programs of 2011.” The U of M, Crookston’s bachelor of science degree in business management was ranked at number five. To find out more, visit www.umcrookston.edu/online.
“We came from small high schools so the transition to college was easy for us at Crookston,” Jennifer (Jacobs) Exner.

Marc and Jen (Jacobs) Exner both grew up in small towns and met when they were students at the U of M, Crookston.

An Artist and a Practitioner

She is the artist; he’s the practitioner. Together, Alumni Marc and Jennifer (Jacobs) Exner ’04 found the perfect medium for their work in the New England landscape. The Exners both grew up in the country, but farming was not the primary income source for their families. Neither one of them had an interest in agriculture, but each of them wanted a career working outdoors. Their interests led them to the University of Minnesota, Crookston where they would find not only the right degree program but each other.

Marc who is from LaMoure, N.D., originally enrolled at another institution, but after a tour of the Crookston campus made a switch to enroll in golf and turf management. “I worked at a golf course back home and enjoyed working outside so the major was a great fit for me,” he says.

The size of the campus was appealing to both Marc and Jennifer. “We came from small high schools so the transition to college was easy for us at Crookston,” she explains.

As a student, Marc had two internships, one at Minnesota Valley Country Club in Bloomington and the other at the Minikahda Golf Course in Minneapolis. An important part of Marc’s work experience, the internships along with the influence of two of his favorite instructors, Wendell Johnson and Roger Wagner, helped build confidence in his choice of major.

For Jennifer, a random opportunity to participate in a 4-H horse judging competition in high school took her to Crookston. “I wasn’t really into judging horses, but the trip turned out to be providential,” Jennifer says. “I liked the size of the Crookston campus and a degree in plant industries management combined my interest of plants and landscaping.”

Along with Wagner, Jennifer credits Associate Professor Ian MacRae, who teaches entomology, and Johnson for guiding her through the graduate school application process. “I pushed to finish my undergraduate degree in three years, taking classes in the summer and sometimes taking a credit overload,” she explains. “Half way through my three years, I knew I wanted to go to graduate school, and I started my preparation.

“I loved horticulture and I loved the art and design side of it, and that interest influenced my choice to attend the University of Minnesota for a master’s degree in landscape architecture,” she continues. “As a first generation college student, the help I received from both Ian
and Wendell was incredibly beneficial.”

Meanwhile, Marc went to work for The Jewel Golf Club in Lake City, Minn., while Jennifer went to graduate school. When she finished her degree, Jennifer took a job in Rochester, Minn., for an engineering and planning firm. They decided that in order for Jennifer, now engaged to Marc, to get the professional experience she was seeking, they would have to move.

The job market seemed most open in the south and east, and Marc’s experience with grasses in cooler climates, determined that a move east would be best. “I had seven interviews in five days,” Jennifer remembers. “It was exhausting, but it led to my first job as a landscape designer for Stephen Stimson Associates in Massachusetts.” The firm worked on a wide range of private, institutional, corporate, and civic projects and was a great match for Jennifer’s background.

She moved to the East Coast ahead of Marc, and after their wedding, Marc found a position as an assistant golf course manager for White Cliffs Country Club in Plymouth, Mass.

Recently, however, she was recruited by another firm to work as a senior restoration designer and her work has taken on a more ecological slant. “Ecology has become important to me,” Jennifer reflects. “I work with the Massachusetts Conservation Commissions and homeowners on projects involving the buffer zone around a resource area.”

While they miss their families in the Midwest, they are both enjoying their work and agree the U of M, Crookston was the right place for them to earn their undergraduate degrees.

“The Crookston campus might not be the right fit for everyone,” Jennifer says, “But, for Marc and I with our small town backgrounds, it was perfect. If students want a personal experience and one-on-one relationships with their instructors, Crookston is a wonderful place.”

Poinsettia planting featured on our cover!

Seniors Mitch Allore and Chad Harrer placed poinsettias in potting soil during their commercial floriculture class this fall. The class planted the poinsettias in September and will have them ready for the holiday season in December. The work and production of the poinsettia crop is entirely the responsibility of the class under the guidance of their instructor Sue Jacobson.

Learn more about the horticulture major at [www.umcrookston.edu/hort](http://www.umcrookston.edu/hort).

Photo by Senior Kristine Neu, a horticulture and communication major from Pelican Rapids, Minn.
Hospitality a Way of Life for ’82 Grad

He understands the business because hospitality is a way of life. Growing up in Ely, Minn., Alumnus Keith Kramar ’82 says he “always liked hotels.” Nearly 30 years since his graduation from the U of M, Crookston Technical College, he still likes hotels and the hospitality industry, and he’s never looked back.

“When I was ready to go to college, my cousin Tony Kuznik was the assistant provost for student affairs on the Crookston campus,” Kramar recalls. “A visit really sold me on the school. It was a great place to earn my associate degree in hotel management and get my start.” His degree included an internship experience in Duluth, Minn., which he considers a big part of the education he received at Crookston.

Knowing he wanted a four-year degree, Tom Kelly, hotel, restaurant, and institutional management division chair helped Kramar in his application to Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Following his graduation two and one-half years later, he went to work for Harvey Hotels located in Dallas, Texas, from 1985 to 1990. He started as the banquet manager eventually becoming the director of catering.

He moved to the West Coast and worked for seven years with Evans Hotels, starting as their banquet manager and moving up to director of food and beverage. He became the director of convention services for the Hilton San Diego Resort located right on the California beach. During that time, the hotel hosted guests attending the Super Bowl on two different occasions including a match-up between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Oakland Raiders. He remained at the Hilton San Diego until 2003.

“In 1982, Keith Kramar was named Man of the Year, the highest honor a student on the Crookston campus can receive.

“After 9/11, it was a bumpy time for the industry,” Kramar reflects. “I also knew I wanted to become a general manager, so I moved from California to take a position in northern Kentucky. I was only there a year, but I learned a great deal about management during that year.”

From there, he moved to the Cincinnati (Ohio) Airport Marriott, and in time took the position he currently holds as general manager of the Milwaukee (Wis.) Marriott West with its 281 rooms and 120 associates.

Kramar and his wife, Loree, have been married for 19 years. They met at one of the hotels where Kramar was working while she was the hotel’s concierge. They have four adopted children, one grandchild, and have been parents over the years to a number of foster children. “Loree and I believe strongly in keeping our foster and adoptive children connected to their birth families,” he says. “We want them to have a strong sense of identity and know who they are and where they came from.” In 2008, the couple was recognized with the Governor’s Adoptive Parent Award.
He and Loree are currently building a lake home near the Wisconsin Dells, but Kramar still finds time to serve in the community. Outside of work and family, Kramar is an active member of the local Convention and Visitors Bureau serving on both their board and their executive board. He also serves on the local tourism committee, a government appointed position. “The tourism committee approves funding requests in order to help the industry,” he explains. “We have been able to fund a transportation grant to help with the 2011 U.S. Amateur Golf Championship, and in 2017, we helped to secure a bid for the U.S. Open both at Erin Hills Golf Course located just west of Milwaukee.”

Even though it has been three decades since Kramar was a student at the U of M, Crookston, he credits the campus for some great memories, and for providing him with practical, real-world experiences. And over the years, it has influenced his business practice.

“When I came to the Marriot, I contacted the local technical college about students in their hospitality program,” he shares. “I wanted to offer internships for students. I have had a number of student interns and some of those interns are now in my regular employment.

“No matter where life takes you, you have to go out and work,” Kramar advises. “Learning the business is important, it prepares you for future roles in the industry, and it makes you a better leader. It takes work to succeed in business and in life.”

Read the Torch Online

You can read the Torch, the alumni magazine for the Northwest School of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota, Crookston online by visiting: http://issuu.com/umcrookston or on the U of M, Crookston Web site at www.umcrookston.edu/alumni/torch

If you would prefer to receive your Torch online only, contact Elizabeth Tollefson at 218-281-8432 (ltollefs@umn.edu)
The joys of teaching include those golden days when you know that you reached the students,” Traci Nathans-Kelly.

According to one historical account, the expression “turn of phrase” was first used by Benjamin Franklin. These distinctive spoken or written idioms can bring sweet satisfaction to those working in the field of Scientific and Technical Communication (S&TC), a major offered at the University of Minnesota, Crookston from 1997 through 2003. Today, the campus continues the legacy of the S&TC program by offering a degree in communication; both majors demonstrate the vital importance of astute communication skills.

Scientific and technical communication was a joint degree program offered with the U of M connecting students from the St. Paul campus to those at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, and in Crookston via interactive television. Students in S&TC learned to design information by studying the principles of audience analysis, writing and editing, along with visual and oral communication as they applied to technical communication.

For Traci Nathans-Kelly (back then, Traci Kelly), who taught in the program on the Crookston campus until 2000, technical communication is “fascinating because it is so concrete and always about getting something done, about making things better and improving people’s lives.” She was finishing a doctorate in English when she was hired at the U of M, Crookston as an assistant professor in communication. She taught literature, business writing, and technical communication classes, eventually becoming the S&TC program manager.

She has fond memories of teaching on the Crookston campus:
“The joys of teaching include those golden days when you know that you reached the students,” Nathans-Kelly says. “Several such days stick out when I think of UMC. One perfect day in literature class, Hamlet really started to mean something to the students in the class; we had a great debate about an obscure line, and the students were genuinely engaged.

“During another semester, literature students were reluctant to leave before we had finished our discussion about “Babette’s Feast”—another golden moment. In a later semester, literature students gathered stories from elders in the community and made web pages about their life stories,” she recalls. “This was a compelling project that eventually was published in the online journal Kairos. I was extremely proud of the students’ work and how they made every effort to be completely respectful of their informants, their historical/family pictures, and their life stories.”

“There were some amazing students in the S&TC degree, and from what I understand, they have all gone on to do great things with their professional lives,” she continues. “They are technical writers, but they are also lawyers, grad students, ranking officials in various organizations, grant writers, professional photographers, translators, health care professionals, teachers... the list goes on and on. Now and again, one of them contacts me, and it’s always wonderful to catch up with them. They are an impressive, elite group, as far as I’m concerned.”

She appreciated the support she received from faculty peers, including Barney Selzler and Lynne Mullins to name just two. And, she enjoyed her other colleagues as well, “I loved meeting after work with Vice Chancellor Rita Meyer and Sharon Neet,” she smiles. “Richard Nelson, then the chair of the agriculture department, would debate with me at length about passages in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. I relished the chance to spar a bit with Doug Knowlton, and Peg Sherven and I spent many a time laughing and sharing stories.
“I also miss being able to dress for graduation, like UMC still does. It was great fun to see all of my colleagues in their graduation finery,” she reminisces. “And it was even better to hear Cleon Melsa make wisecracks at all of us feeling so fancy in our robes.”

Nathans-Kelly left the Crookston campus in 2000 to teach technical communication to undergraduates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s College of Engineering. In the last six years, she has also taught engineering communication in the Masters of Engineering Professional Practice and the Masters of Engineering in Engine Systems degrees, which allows practicing engineers to obtain their masters while remaining on the job.

Along with her work in the classroom, Nathans-Kelly has kept up her writing about culinary history. For the 150th anniversary of Minnesota statehood, she participated in and then published with the Minnesota Historical Society about how compiled cookbooks were historical documents that can be mined for local history. It is a part of the compilation, *The State We’re In: Proceedings of the Minnesota at 150 Conference*. Another story she wrote, called “In Memory of The Little Lefse Maker,” was inspired by a gravestone near Fisher, Minn., along with stories from her friends in Crookston. It’s in a collection called *Cooking Lessons: The Politics and Gender of Food*.

“While at UMC, I think I wore my huge, heavy Sorel boots every day in winter,” Kelly muses. “Since leaving UMC, I have only worn them twice. But I keep them in my attic, just in case I need to be prepared. In general, I think back to my time at UMC in much the same way. There, I learned so many skills and tools that I still use, even if unexpectedly. Big, heavy boots help keep you grounded and warm.”

Sounds a lot like a turn of phrase describing how alumni feel about Nathans-Kelly and what they learned in her classroom.

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Top: Traci Nathans-Kelly married her husband Steve in 2001, and their son, Henry, was born in 2003.

Right: In high school, Nathans-Kelly took “Novels” and “British Literature” in her hometown of Twin Falls, Idaho. She hopes to pass on her passion for written words, their meanings, and their power to inspire to her son Henry.
Fall garden cleanup is an important part of successful gardening and is the reason Northwest School of Agriculture Alumna Irene (Pulkrobek) Larson ’44 will spend a month cutting down and cleaning her flower gardens. She is no ordinary gardener, however, and understands that caring for the garden in the fall makes it easier the following spring. Larson knows what she is talking about.

“I started serious flower gardening after my three children left home,” Larson says. “I didn’t start out with gardens this large, but over time, let’s just say the area has ‘grown.’”

Over the 59 years that Larson and her husband, Ray, have lived on their farm, they have planted and cared for almost every tree on their farmyard. “When we moved here, there were only three trees,” Larson recalls. Today, a beautiful grove of trees stands proudly on the prairie surrounding and protecting the beautiful flowers that are the work of this talented gardener.

In October 2010, Larson underwent back surgery, but in the spring, she returned to her gardens to tend and care for the yard she loves. In July 2011, her grandson, Brian Larson and his fiancé, Holly, were married in the gardens—the only wedding ever held on the spot. “I have had people ask about having a wedding here, but I haven’t said yes because of the work and also because of the liability,” she explains. But, for her grandson, she gave the gardens some extra tender-loving care, and they provided the perfect backdrop to the day.

A gazebo, built by Alumnus Tony Filipi ’57, graces the lawn and gives audience to the full spectrum of the gardens’ color. Two years ago, some 500 people visited the Larsons as part of a garden tour. The breathtaking beauty of Larson’s work cannot be captured in photographs, but they serve as a reminder that fall and winter give way to spring, and next summer, the flowers will bloom again.
“I had a tremendous growing up experience and a tremendous sense of acceptance on the campus,” Kathryn (Clementson) Mertz.

Along Family Lines

With an academic year designed to complement the growing season, students at the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) would be home through harvest in the fall and back home in time for spring planting. It was ideal for rural families who needed all hands involved in the farming operation.

The Krogstad and Clementson families sent generations of their children to the Northwest School, and later, its successor the University of Minnesota, Crookston.

In 1925, Elmer Krogstad, the first of seven of John and Tilda Krogstad’s children, would graduate from the Northwest School. Two years later, Clarence would graduate, followed in 1929 and 1930 by sisters Alma and Emma. Three more sisters would follow: Helen in 1934, Janet in 1937, and Louise in 1940.

A romance, sparked in the Class of 1934, resulted in the marriage of Helen Krogstad to classmate Clarence Clementson and eventually their eldest daughter, Kathryn (Clementson) Mertz ’56, would attend the NWSA. She became the 20th member of the Krogstad/Clementson clan to enroll at the NWSA.

“I grew up expecting to go to school there,” Mertz says with a grin. “My cousin, Lois (Krogstad) Hesse ’53 was already on campus, and my mother knew a few of the mothers of my future classmates so I had already been matched with a roommate.”

For Mertz, the NWSA proved to be a

Helen (Krogstad) Clementson and Clarence Clementson were both in the Class of 1934. They are the parents of Kathryn (Clementson) Mertz ’56.
great place for high school, “I had a tremendous growing up experience and a tremendous sense of acceptance on the campus,” she explains. “I really found myself as a student there.”

Part of the reason for her success was the way she engaged in campus life. She loved to sing and was a member of the mixed chorus, sextet, mixed octet, even making the “A” choir as a freshman, something unheard of for an underclassman.

She also was a cheerleader, or rather a Pepster; a member of the National Honor Society; in the class plays; and a class officer. “I was involved in activities, but I also was involved in the classroom and learned good writing and study skills,” Mertz says.

She worked a year after graduation to earn money for college and spent her freshman year at North Dakota State University in Fargo.

Transferring to Bemidji [Minn.] State University, Mertz completed a degree in elementary education and took a teaching position in the Anoka-Hennepin [Minn.] School District.

After earning her master’s degree in special education she worked as an early childhood specialist. She also met and married her husband, Don, who worked for Honeywell, Inc., and when he was transferred, the couple moved to Illinois, also spending time in the Netherlands and Germany.

When the Honeywell office in Illinois closed, the Mertzs moved back to the Twin Cities.

Their only child, a son, Jon, was diagnosed with melanoma in 2000 when he was in his early 30s and passed away a little more than a year later. “We buried Jon on what would have been his 34th birthday,” Mertz sadly recalls. Shortly after his death, she would return to campus for a Northwest School alumni reunion.

“People might wonder what on earth I was doing at a class reunion so soon after losing Jon, but it is not difficult to understand when you realize how close I am to my classmates,” she states. “They held me up during a very painful time and supported me. I needed them more then than ever before.”

Mertz was back on campus again this past summer to participate in the 55th reunion of the Class of 1956. She enjoyed reminiscing, but she is also ready to support her fellow classmates no matter what might be going on in their lives.

“I believe I learned character and skills and received an education on the Crookston campus that prepared me for life,” Mertz declares. “It really prepared me for the world.”
“Growing up in nature, I spent every day from morning till night outdoors. Working the farm continued to give me an opportunity to watch wildlife,” Don Larson.

The motto of the Class of 1943 at the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) was “Forward ever; backward never.” That motto might also serve as a descriptor for Alumnus Don Larson ’44.

Larson entered the Northwest School in October 1941, two months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. With a world at war, 64 students entered their freshman year at the NWSA and that war would define much about their lives as young adults. The 1943 Aggie yearbook was dedicated to all Northwest School alumni and faculty in the armed services, and there were 142 of them that year.

Growing up on what would become the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Minnesota, Larson was 10 when the land was set aside for waterfowl production and maintenance, and his father moved his mother, three brothers, and a sister to a farm near the small town of Holt, Minn.

With its six-month school year, the Northwest School was the perfect place for Larson to fit in school and still be around for spring planting and fall harvest. “My dad needed me at home during those busy seasons,” he explains. Like most farmers, his dad depended on the children to help with the farm work particularly in the spring and fall.

While Larson doesn’t claim a favorite class in school, he does recall being interested in animal husbandry. “Our farm began with livestock and gradually transitioned to more grain,” he says. “We raised registered seed barley, wheat, and sunflowers too.”

He credits his classes at the Northwest School with helping calculate seed, fertilizer, and the like without assistance. “I never needed a calculator,” Larson states.

Just before he graduated, he planned to enlist in the Air Force. He wanted to become a fighter pilot, but his father had other plans. “My dad told me he couldn’t haul manure and pitch hay, and he needed me at home to work,” he says. “I gave up the idea of enlisting and went home to farm, but I didn’t give up the idea of learning to fly.”

When he was 60, he earned his pilot’s license, purchased a plane, and enjoyed flying for years. He worked hard over his lifetime, not only on the farm, but he also had a heavy equipment business for some 30 years. Larson was married and has a son and three daughters, but as he says, “I was working and away from the farm an awful lot leaving my wife and family alone much of the time.” But, true to his nature, he looks forward rather than back and quickly reflects on what is keeping him busy now.

In the summer, he spends time working in his large garden, and in the fall, he brings pumpkins to the nursing homes in Thief River Falls and one in Warren, Minn. “I am sometimes known as the ‘pumpkin man’ by the residents,” he says.
His garden also produces an array of assorted vegetables he enjoys and freezes for future use.

One of his greatest pleasures is observing wildlife near his farm. “Growing up in nature, I spent every day from morning til night outdoors,” he reflects. “Working the farm continued to give me an opportunity to watch wildlife. I like to hunt too, but I do that elsewhere, I feed the wildlife around my place so I can enjoy them.”

Through the years, Larson has attended several NWSA alumni reunions and is looking forward to celebrating with classmates and friends on his 70th reunion in 2013. Until then, he will enjoy the life he has made for himself on the farm where he has lived for the last 74 years taking care of his garden and the wild creatures around him and relishing every moment.

NWSA/UMC Alumni Arizona Social

February 17, 2012
Viewpoint Resort  Mesa, Arizona
“After this internship, I should be prepared for the working world ahead,” Chris Awender.

Choosing the University of Minnesota, Crookston was an easy decision for Senior Chris Awender. Growing up in Crookston, he attended Crookston High School where he managed football, hockey, and track and also helped with other sports.

“I chose the U of M, Crookston because it was in my home town, and I could live at home and save money,” Awender explains. “I also could continue my volunteering with the Crookston Fire Department, the Knights of Columbus, and taking pictures during sporting events for KROX radio. Another reason I chose the U of M, Crookston is because it is a small campus and instructors are able to work with you one-on-one.”

While attending the U of M, Crookston, Awender, a sport and recreation management major, has worked in many different offices on campus including the admissions office; athletic offices; in the mail room; and the Eagles Nest, the campus convenience store.

A year ago Awender was trying to find an internship for summer 2011, when then classmate Derek Ricke ’11 recommended he talk to Corby Kemmer and Bill Tyrrell in the Office of Development & Alumni Relations.

“I spent the summer working in their office where I had a great time with the wonderful staff,” Awender says. “Everyone is energetic and loves their job. My responsibilities included preparing for and working at the summer golf tournaments, assisting with the Northwest School of Agriculture Reunion, working on some corporate proposals, and much more.

“I enjoyed the atmosphere in the office,” Awender says, “Because everyone seems to like what they do.”

Awender considers the most important thing he learned to be the variety of ways the alumni office works. “I have learned how organized you need to be so when someone has a question, you can pull the information out right away, and they do not have to wait for you to find it in a cluttered work space,” he explains.

Another thing I learned is that you should write things down so you don’t forget.

“After this internship,” he states, “I should be prepared for the working world ahead.”
Growing up in Crookston, Junior Jordan Melbye is no stranger to the University of Minnesota, Crookston. “My dad is an alumnus of UMC and has been a member of Teambackers and the alumni board so we attended many Golden Eagle athletic events while I was growing up,” Melbye explains.

She went on to enroll full time as a post-secondary enrollment option student during her senior year of high school but decided she wanted to attend a larger school after graduation. “I really enjoyed my time at UMC, but I wanted to experience life in a big city while attending a large university,” Melbye explains. “My first and only choice was the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and luckily for me, I was accepted into the Carlson School of Management.”

Melbye attended the U of M, Twin Cities campus for a year-and-

Continued on page 24
a-half and enjoyed many aspects of the school, especially the Gopher athletic events. However, much to her surprise, she found herself missing the ease of the small-town living she had been accustomed to all her life. When she decided to switch her major to communication at the end of fall semester her sophomore year, she decided it would be most beneficial to transfer back to the Crookston campus to save some money while she tried out the new major.

“The Carlson School of Management is a great school but it just wasn’t the right fit for me. After a few weeks into spring semester at UMC, I realized how much I preferred the smaller campus and the close, tight-knit atmosphere it provided.” Melbye made the decision to stay and finish her degree in Crookston, and couldn’t be happier.

Melbye’s internship with the Office of University Relations included a wide variety of responsibilities from researching campus history and designing flyers to writing and sending press releases. “This has been the perfect opportunity to put the skills I’ve learned in the classroom into practice while developing many new ones along the way,” she says.

When switching her major to communication, she wasn’t sure what to expect. “This internship has given me the chance to experience so many different aspects of the public relations field and reconfirmed my decision to switch majors,” she states. “It has been a fantastic learning experience and helped me discover the type of career I would like to pursue in the future.”

Jordan Melbye’s Family Ties to Crookston campus
Allen (uncle), ex. ’73
Vicki (aunt), ’73
Wayne (uncle), ’90
Douglas “Carl” (father), ’77
Mary Jo Eastes (aunt), ’79
Lori (aunt), ex. ’86
Chris (cousin), ex. ’92
Jacob (cousin), ’06
Sam (cousin), post-secondary enrollment option, ex. ’00

Junior Jordan Melbye with her dad, Alumnus Carl Melbye ’77, before the parade.
Homecoming: Time to Recognize Alumni

Homecoming is a time to pay tribute to some of our great alumni and we certainly have much to celebrate with this year’s Outstanding Alumni and Athletic Hall of Fame inductees.


Ann Bailey graduated in 1979, when the Crookston campus was a two-year technical college, with a degree in animal science. She went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of North Dakota (UND), Grand Forks, and has worked for 27 years for the news media. Bailey is currently a features writer and editor at the Grand Forks Herald. She lives in Larimore, N.D., with her husband, Brian Gregoire, and their three children.

Kevin Fee majored in rural communications graduating in 1980 from the U of M, Crookston when it was a two-year technical college. He went on to UND and for 12 years worked at the Grand Forks Herald as a sports writer. He is currently a communications supervisor for Minnkota Power Cooperative providing communications for 11 cooperatives and 12 municipals. He and his wife, Renee, live with their three children in Grand Forks.

Eric Klindt ex.’99 majored in agricultural aviation while he was a student on the Crookston campus. He is currently a pilot for Wilbur-Ellis, a marketer and distributor of agricultural products, animal feed, and specialty chemicals. He works out of Whapeton, N.D., where he is an aerial applicator of crop protection products and aerial seeding. Since 1999, he has owned and operated Luxury Limo Bus. He and his wife, Shana, live in Campbell, Minn., with their two children.

Inductees into the 2011 Athletic Hall of Fame include: Nathan Pitt ‘97, Morden, Manitoba, Canada; Luther Huggins ex. ‘84, Frisco, Texas; and Ed Odland, Crookston, Minn.

Nathan Pitt ‘97 played hockey for the Golden Eagles and was named an All-American in 1994 and most valuable...
player the following year. From 1995-97, he was a member of the All-Academic Team and in 1997, he was the Defensive Player of the Year and a nominee for Student-Athlete of the Year. Pitt is the manager of finance and administration for RANA Respiratory Care Group in Morden, Manitoba, Canada. He and his wife, Deana, are parents of a son.

**Luther Huggins** ex. ’84 played on the Trojan football team for the University of Minnesota, Crookston Technical College when the campus was a part of the National Junior College Athletic Association. He was named All-Conference, All-Region, and Offensive Player of the Year in 1984 when the Trojans finished their season 7-1 and ended the year second in the conference. He ran for more than 1,000 rushing yards as a freshman. He is the owner of L & L Huggins Real Estate Investments, Inc., in Frisco, Texas, where he resides with his wife, Lucy. They are the parents of two children.

**Ed Odland** is an avid supporter of Golden Eagle athletics. In 1993, he began serving on the board of directors for UMC Teambackers, an athletic promotion and fundraising organization for the campus. He was the organization’s president for more than a decade. In 1977, he received the Torch & Shield award, the highest honor awarded by the campus for his leadership in the development of the U of M, Crookston. He was named Teambacker of the Year in 1997 for his support of Golden Eagle student-athletes. Odland is a past chair of the UMC-Chamber College Liaison Committee, past chair and director of the Northwest Education Improvement Association, and member of the University of Minnesota Presidents Club. He is a partner in the law firm of Odland, Fitzgerald, Reynolds, and Harbott in Crookston.

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In photo, left to right: Brent Messner ’08, Theresa (Crance) Stangle ’09, Beth Jacobson ’07, Katie McCormick, and Jordan McCormick ’08.
A number of health science students gathered for breakfast on Saturday, October 1 prior to the homecoming parade. They were joined by several faculty members and after breakfast had an opportunity to see the renovations in the laboratories in Hill and Dowell halls.

Front row, left to right: Allison Warren ’08, Ashley Walton ’09; Brittany Novak ’11; Tracy Nyhus ’10; Back Row: Theresa (Crance) Stangle ’09; Amber Erdmann ’09, Bruce Felts ’09; Heather Foreman ’09, Kurt Proulx ’11; and Vanessa Armstrong ’08.
This alumni news reflects submissions received by September 19, 2011. News received after that date will appear in the next issue of the Torch. The deadline for alumni news for the next issue is February 1, 2012.

**E-mail forwarding:** If you are interested in reconnecting with a former classmate or acquaintance, the alumni office can help! Although we cannot release e-mail addresses due to privacy issues, we will be happy to forward a message to the person if he or she can be located in our database.

### 1980s

**Craig Hoiseth ex. ’84,** Crookston, Minn., recently accepted the position of executive director of the Crookston Housing & Economic Development Authority (CHEDA). Prior to holding the CHEDA position, Hoiseth was CEO of Phoenix Industries in Crookston and launched LM Glasfiber in Grand Forks, N.D., also serving as its CEO.

### 2000s

**Bill Anderson ’00,** Crookston, Minn., recently joined American Federal Bank in the Crookston sales office as an agriculture and business banker. Anderson has been with American Federal at its Hallock banking location since 2003 and as an agriculture lender in the Hallock market since 2000. He and his wife, Holly, who is the Kittson County Director of Emergency Management-Environmental Services and Zoning, have two sons; Jack, 6, and Thomas, 15.

**Kimberly Proulx ’03,** Grand Forks, N.D., and John Grahek, Jr. were married July 9, 2011, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in East Grand Forks, Minn., with a reception and dance following at the Clarion Inn in Grand Forks. Kim is currently employed with the Grand Forks Public Schools as a paraprofessional. John is employed with Sam’s Club in Grand Forks.

**Ryan Schultz ’03,** Crookston, Minn., and Amber Evans were married August 27, 2011. Ryan graduated with a master’s degree from the University of North Dakota in 2005 and is currently the Natural Resources Conservation Service tribal liaison with the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. He works with the White Earth Band and its conservation departments and tribal government on programs and conservation planning for the reservation.

### Get social with the U of M, Crookston!

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/umcrookston

Watch us on YouTube: www.youtube.com/uofmcrookston

Join us on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com and search for University of Minnesota, Crookston - Official group

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/umcrookston or use your smartphone to take you directly to our Facebook page by using this QR code:
employed by JR Simplot Company in Crookston. Amber is currently the Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management at the University of Minnesota, Crookston.

Eric Useldinger ’03, East Grand Forks, Minn., and his wife, Kelly, were blessed with their second child, a daughter, Aubrey Roberta Useldinger, on June 1, 2011. She weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz. and was 20 ¼ inches long. Everyone is doing great, including big brother Chase, 2 ½ years old.

Tina (Maher) ’07 and Thor Veteloson ’06, Wannaska, Minn., announce the birth of their little cowgirl, Tesa Rebecca Veteloson. Tesa was born August 18, 2011, and weighed 7 lbs., 4 ½ oz. and was 20 ½ inches long with a full head of dark hair. The Vetelosons live in Skime, Minn., where Thor manages the Skime Ranch. Tina works in Roseau, Minn., as a nurses’ assistant and is also pursuing a nursing degree.

Jesse Mastrian ’09, Minnewaukan, N.D., is a district technician with the North Central Soil Conservation District. He is pictured above at the Devils Lake, N.D., new boat landing next to the outlet south of Minnewaukan with, left to right, Karyn Neve, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist, Minnewaukan; Dave White, NRCS Chief, Washington D.C.; Jesse Mastrian, and Brandon Schwab ’10, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Minnewaukan. The group, along with representatives from Senator John Hoven’s office, the Spirit Lake Tribe, and the North Central Soil Conservation District met regarding the flooded Devils Lake area.

Cory Walker ’09, recently became a district conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Clarkfield, Minn.

REMEMBER THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, CROOKSTON

A will or living trust is a statement about what matters most in your life. It ensures that your intentions are clearly understood and will be followed by those administering your estate.

If you value your experience at the University of Minnesota, Crookston or the Northwest School of Agriculture, you can leave a legacy through a gift to the campus in your will. Your generosity will help further the mission of the University of Minnesota, Crookston to provide education, research and outreach. The following language can be used by you and your attorney in your will:

“I give, devise and bequeath to the University of Minnesota Foundation (percentage, sum or description of property) for the benefit of the University of Minnesota, Crookston.”

If you would like more information, contact Corby Kemmer, director of development & alumni relations toll free at 1-800-862-6466, ext. 8434 or 218-281-8434 (ckemmer@umn.edu).

For more information about giving or to give a gift online, visit www.umcrookston.edu/alumni/giving.html

Excerpted from The Importance of a Will published by the University of Minnesota Foundation.
We Want to Hear From You!

To submit an item for the Alumni News Section, complete this form and send it to:
UMC Alumni Relations
115 Kiehle Building
2900 University Avenue
Crookston, MN 56716
e-mail: rulseth@umn.edu or complete the form on line at:
www.umcrookston.edu/alumni/keepintouch.html.

Please include your name, address, phone number, e-mail, year of graduation/attendance and information or news you wish to share (new job, career, family, or achievements, etc.)

Lucas Walter ’09, Warwick, N.D., and Anna Bjornstad were married at Holy Family Catholic Church in Grand Forks, N.D., on August 6, 2011. A reception and dance followed at the Alerus Center. Lucas is currently working as the Nelson County Extension Agent in Lakota, N.D., and also farms around rural Warwick. Anna is a sales associate at the Alerus Center.

2010s

Jessica DeBoer ’10, is a marketing specialist for Fairview Hospital in Hibbing, Minn.

Stephanie Tyler ’10, Mapleton, N.D., and Casey Strand announce their engagement and upcoming marriage. Stephanie is currently employed as a fraud detector for US Bank in Fargo, N.D. Casey is employed as a process technician for Phoenix Industries in Fargo. An October 20, 2011 wedding is planned in Key West, Fla. The couple will reside in Mapleton.

Lindsey Fouts ’11, is employed by Edgewood Management Group in Grand Forks, N.D., as an accounting specialist.

Lynsey Gervais ’11, is working as an Internet marketing director for Boatcovers.com in Fergus Falls, Minn.

Lhakpa Gurung ’11, was recently hired at KinderCare in Eden Prairie, Minn., as a toddler teacher.

Anna Wagner ’11, interned with Wilbur-Ellis this past summer as the agribusiness marketing intern. On August 8, 2011, she started a new position as the North America market manager for BouMatic, a dairy equipment manufacturer with global headquarters in Madison, Wis. She works primarily on promotions, market analysis, and product placement for the U.S. and Canada, and the rest of her department, works out of the European headquarters in Belgium.

In Memory

Evelyn (Ramstad) Thomforde ex. ’36
Grand Forks, N.D.
June 10, 2011

Nelvin Thormodson ’44
Fergus Falls, Minn.
March 9, 2011

Adeline (McKibbin) Blomquist ’45 Adv.
Brooklyn Center, Minn.
June 6, 2011

Gerhard Ross ’45
Crookston, Minn.
August 26, 2011

Thomas Nisbet ’54
Copalis Beach, Wash.
April 24, 2011

David Wheeler ’56
Grand Forks, N.D.
August 18, 2011

Steve Koster ex. ’69
Round Lake, Minn.
July 24, 2011

Joseph Gagner ’75
Bismarck, N.D.
March 10, 2011

Duane Lyberg ’75
Hallock, Minn.
September 9, 2011
Upcoming Events

November 10 ................................................. Alumni Social, Ramada Plaza & Suites, Fargo, N.D.
January 9, 2012 .............................................. First day of classes for spring semester
February 17, 2012 ............................. NWSA/UMC Alumni Arizona Social, Viewpoint Resort, Mesa
May 5, 2012 ..................................................... Commencement Exercises for the Class of 2012
June 30, 2012 ..................................................... NWSA Alumni Reunion

Because  Health and nature are intertwined.

Nature-based play spaces, designed with the help of U of M. Crookston Assistant Professor Eric Castle, stimulate thinking about our children's health as well as our own. Nature-based play encourages the use of rocks, water, sand, and other materials found outdoors. Two nature-based play spaces in Crookston and Warren, Minn., are a part of the Children Discovering Nature in Northwest Minnesota Project.

To learn more, visit www.umn.org/childrenandnature