



LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1976 50TH REUNION NEWSLETTER

May 2026

Reminisce. Renew. *Reunion.*

REUNION REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!!

Now is the time! Register and book your accommodations for the best party of the year!

Dorm accommodations in Hiett Hall (yes, it is air-conditioned) will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. [Visit our Q&A](#) for more information about hotel options and answers to other frequently asked questions.

We look forward to celebrating 50 years with you in June.

— David, Pat, Jack, Sue, Jim, Jane, John, Craig, Susan, Denise, David, Lynne, Margi, Michael, Susan, Joe, and Mary Ellyn

Class of 1976 50th Reunion Committee

David Hines (Co-Chair) – Oak Park, IL

Pat Miller (Co-Chair) – Chicago, IL

Jack Anderson – Appleton, WI

Sue Cook – Los Altos Hill, CA

Jim Cowen – Larchmont, NY

Jane Hansen Danowitz – Hobart, WI

John Davis – Neenah, WI

Craig Gagnon – Appleton, WI

Susan Hall – Glenview, IL

Denise Janosik – St. Louis, MO

David Kirchman – Lewes, DE

Lynne LaJone – Park Ridge, IL

Margi Briggs Lofton – Montpelier, France

Michael Meuli – Appleton, WI

Susan Reeves – Houston, TX

Joe Troy – Appleton, WI

Mary Ellyn Vicksta – Appleton, WI

[Register for Reunion 2026](#) ➔



Join us at Reunion! June 18-21, 2026 | Update your contact information in the [Alumni Directory](#)

DON'T MISS IT! WHY I'M COMING TO OUR REUNION



Sue
Cook

It's hard to believe it's been 50 years since our graduation and 54 years since we entered Lawrence. Eager, more than a bit anxious, I'd come to Appleton excited about the future but unsure what it would bring. It seems like a long time ago, yet images and memories are as bright and evocative today as ever. When I'm not looking in the mirror, I see my young college self, building new friendships and exploring new freedoms.

As a Physics major, I was thrown into science and math classes in Youngchild Hall, making new friends and lab teammates. *Freshman Studies* opened the door to the humanities and rest of the college. I remember most: Colman Hall and pastel cement blocks, making friends on my floor, parties at Brokaw dancing to Motown, pizza at The Spot, late nights studying, checking on the rats in the basement Psych lab and so much more.

Lawrence is the place where I learned academics like critical thinking and imaginary numbers. And where I had experiences like taking ski trips to the UP and joining a Trivia team. It was a place where you didn't need to be a music major to play an instrument or be an English major to write for the newspaper. We could experiment with new hobbies and try on leadership opportunities in new areas because someone needed to step up.

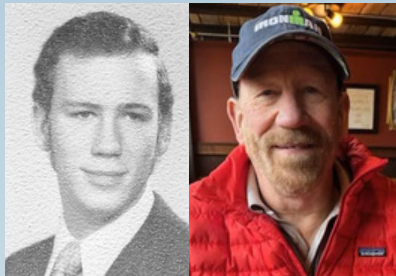
As you all know, Lawrence is about the people we met. Students, faculty, staff, who became friends, mentors, role models, inspiration. Close friends that are like family, godparents to my kids, and friends I've lost touch with over the years. Some that we've lost too early, like Gene Peterson or my brother, Rick, class of '75. So, when the message came out about our 50th, I realized that this is a reunion that I didn't want to miss.

I signed up for the reunion committee and already have reconnected with classmates from my major and beyond. It's wonderful to hear what everyone is doing, and all the interesting paths taken. I'm looking forward to seeing even more of you at the reunion in June.

I recently had the opportunity to be on campus for a few days meeting faculty and students and sharing my work and experiences. I saw old haunts and new buildings, and the rebirth of the Fox River running next to campus. The same things that made Lawrence special for us are still there, part of the Lawrence 'secret sauce' of success. A diverse student body, small classes and opportunities for student/professor interaction and study, and a commitment to a current and relevant "liberal arts" curriculum preparing students for their future. See you in June!



DON'T MISS IT! WHY I'M COMING TO OUR REUNION



Michael
Meuli

As I think about our upcoming Reunion in June, I reflect on the fabulous diversity of classes and classmates that helped shape my journey into adulthood.

I am coming to the Reunion to reconnect with my classmates—many that I have not connected with for decades. It is that connection that we had every day or week with our classmates at Lawrence that has me coming to the Reunion.

I had the advantage of attending the Institute of Paper Chemistry after I graduated from Lawrence and being able to be on campus 5 days per week while still having meal service at Downer Commons. While most of my undergraduate classmates graduated, I still had the benefit of being on campus and feeling a part of Lawrence.

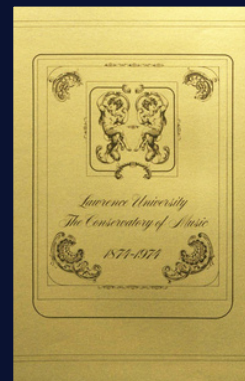
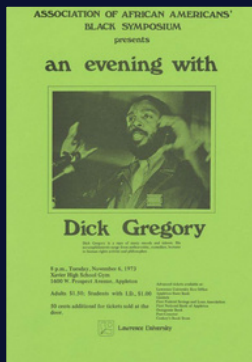
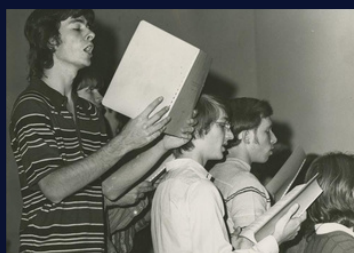
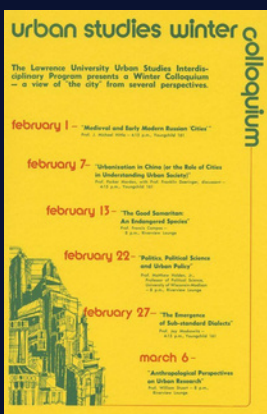
Funny the things that you take for granted—but I never felt that I completely left Lawrence until after graduating from the Institute of Paper Chemistry. Seeing the many students during my time at the Institute's graduate program still gave me a sense of belonging. Now that this is behind me, I look forward to reconnecting with the many classmates of my graduating class.

While the bulk of my classes were at Science Hall through the many chemistry and biology classes, I also took many classes in Main Hall. Certainly, the Freshman Studies program allowed me to expand both my education and allowed me to take courses and meet classmates that I normally would not see taking just science classes. I also spent time in the Conservatory by being in the Jazz Band. What a wonderful experience. While the physical stance of Lawrence has certainly grown, I am looking forward to seeing the progress in housing and classrooms on campus and how they all fit into Lawrence's Strategic Plan.

The LAWRENTIAN

Want to relive some Lawrence memories before coming back to campus?
The Lawrentian has been archived online.

<https://lux.lawrence.edu/lawrentian/>



Reunion Registration Highlights

Thursday, June 18

4:00 p.m. Headquarters and Residence Halls Open
6:00 p.m. Early Arrival Reception and Dinner

Friday, June 19

9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Alumni College Sessions
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Open Houses
6:00 p.m. All Reunion Dinner

Saturday, June 20

8:00 a.m. Gene Davis Memorial 5K Fun Run/Walk
9:00 a.m. Alumni Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Morning Parade of Classes
11:00 a.m. Reunion Convocation
Noon All-Reunion Cookout
1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Class-Specific Programming
3:30 p.m. Founders Club/Legacy Circle Reception
5:30 p.m. Class Photos (*time to get spruced up!*)
6:00 p.m. Class Receptions and Dinners
(ours will be with President Carter)

Sunday, June 21

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Day Trip to Björklunden
9:30 a.m. Multifaith Prayer Service & In Memoriam

Club 76

It's almost time for Club '76 to open its doors. Our groovy social headquarters will be located in Hiatt Hall. Let us transport you back to 1970s Appleton for an outta sight time! Liquid refreshments (varying types) and snacks will be available. Catch you on the flip side!

**Register for
Reunion 2026**



Gene Davis

Hello classmates! Please join me Saturday June 20 at 8 a.m. for the Gene Davis Memorial Fun Run/ Walk.

Sincerely John Davis '76,
your official race starter.

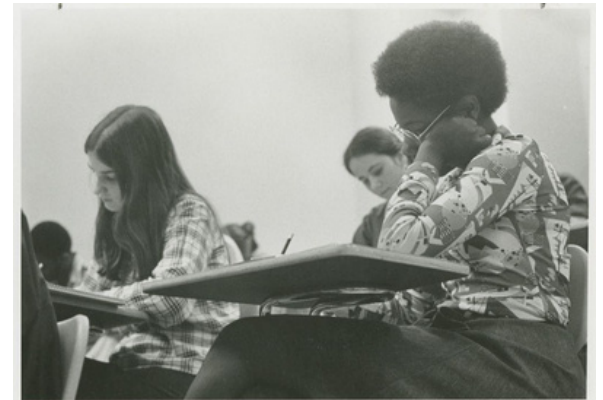
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

In our 50th year, let's give back to our alma mater that gave us so much! There are a number of options for contributing to the Class Gift for our 50th Reunion. Please know that any gift you give will impact the future for Lawrence students.

Supporting the Lawrence Fund helps to shine light on the entire campus. Please join us in supporting the Lawrence Fund today!

All gifts given or pledged from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 count!

- Make a one-year pledge or, even better to have more impact, a multi-year pledge (three, four, or five years). Example, a five-year pledge of \$2,000/year would count as a \$10,000 gift towards our 50th Reunion Class Gift. Visit Lawrence's How to Give page to learn more about how you can give your gift.
- Include Lawrence in your estate plans and join the Lawrence-Downer Legacy Circle. Please provide an estimate of your gift (the estimate is not legally binding and can be adjusted at any time.) If you already included Lawrence in your plans and have not let Lawrence know, please do! Now is the time as your estimate counts toward the Class Gift.
- Make a gift online now at lawrence.edu/give-online
- Make a gift through your IRA as a Qualified Charitable Distribution.
- To make a multi-year pledge or to join Lawrence-Downer Legacy Circle, please contact our Reunion Liaisons from the Advancement Office. They are here to answer your questions:
 - Chuck Demler, Director of Leadership and Planned Giving, chuck.demler@lawrence.edu, 920-832-6937
 - Laurie Yingling, Associate Director of Gift Planning, laurie.l.yingling@lawrence.edu, 920-832-6843

**Progress Update for Class Goals**

- “50 for 50” – 50% class giving participation for our 50th Reunion
We are at 36.5%
- 20 Multi-year pledges
We have exceeded the goal with 23!
- 25 Legacy Circle Members
We have 21 classmates in the Legacy Circle
- 100 classmates attend Reunion
61 of us are registered



ALUMNI AWARDS

The Lawrence University Alumni Association presents six prestigious annual awards to recognize alumni for distinguished achievement in a career field, service to society, and service to the college. We are proud to share that two of our classmates won awards!



Kim Sherman

Lucia Russell Briggs Distinguished Achievement Award

Kim Sherman's music recently earned a Grammy nomination, but her path began with a college pamphlet.

"I saw the pictures on it, and I'm like, 'That's where I'm going,'" she says of Lawrence. Receiving this alumni award, she adds, is "a surprise... to be seen is very nice."

At Lawrence, she studied piano, theory, and composition, experiences she credits with helping her find her creative voice. But it was the theater department that changed everything. A guest director from the Guthrie Theater came to campus to direct a play, and Kim composed the music.

After graduation and a year studying with composer Thea Musgrave, that same director helped her land her first job. A Lawrence connection resurfaced years later when Rick Davis '80 brought her to Baltimore Center Stage to compose for Hamlet. "That put me on a new level in the theater world. That's a direct relationship from Lawrence."

Her work includes recordings, choral pieces, song cycles, and stage works such as *O Pioneers!*, *Heartland*, and *Bluestem*. She is artistic director of the Composers Institute, which runs a summer program at UW-River Falls for young composers, songwriters, and film and game music creators.

[Read her full story here.](#)



Susan Medak

George B. Walter '36 Service to Society Award

Susie Medak never planned this path. She arrived at Lawrence thinking she would become a dentist. Three months later, she changed course.

She tried acting, then realized it was not going to be her career. A classmate, David Haugland '73, introduced her to theater management. "It had never crossed my mind that there was a career like that."

She met two of the most important people in her life at Lawrence: her lifelong friend Sue Cook '76, and David Hawkanson '69, a mentor who became her greatest sponsor.

During her sophomore year, Hawkanson offered her a job at the Guthrie Theatre. "You idiot," he said. "Quit school and come up here." She did.

Lawrence faculty supported her, and she finished her degree later, graduating with eight job offers.

She went on to a 32-year run as Managing Director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre, helping build major facilities and programs, including the Roda Theatre, the Nevo Education Center, and the Medak Center, a 45-unit artist housing complex named in her honor.

[Read her full story here.](#)

IMPACT LAWRENTIANS FOR GENERATIONS

Your passion for making a difference can have a profound impact on Lawrence's future. By including Lawrence in your estate plans through a [legacy gift](#), you create meaningful opportunities for students and faculty to thrive for generations to come. These thoughtful gifts may also offer meaningful tax benefits, allowing you to care for your loved ones while supporting the community you cherish.

"Lawrence University offers the perfect balance of academics, athletics, extracurriculars, and community. Its tight-knit learning environment fosters meaningful relationships between professors and students, creating a more engaging and personalized experience that supports growth both in the classroom and through competition."



Leigham Alexander '29



LAWRENCE AND ME: A JOURNEY OF GRIT, GROWTH, AND MANY SNOWSTORMS



Lauren
Brown

I arrived on the Lawrence campus in 1972, suitcase in hand and optimism in overdrive. I'd joined a pre-college program with a few long-time friends, all of us eager (and slightly nervous) to begin this new chapter.

Our class of Black students was the largest Lawrence has ever seen—a milestone that came with both pride and pressure.

We carried the hopes of those who came before us and the responsibility to prove that change wasn't just possible, it was inevitable.

No small task for a bunch of teenagers from an urban environment who had to adjust to school and life in a small city.

The road wasn't always smooth. There were moments when the social climate felt colder than a Wisconsin winter, and times when the academic grind tested every ounce of determination. But we stuck together—a band of brothers and sisters who learned that survival sometimes meant laughter, late-night talks, study groups, and a shared plate of cafeteria fries. I decided to stay and tough it out, graduating in 1976 with degrees in Psychology and Economics and a minor in French (because why not add a little *je ne sais quoi* to the résumé?).

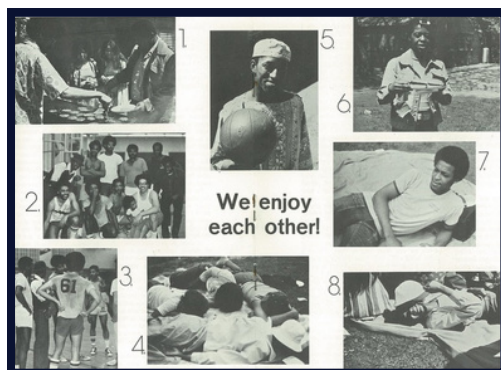
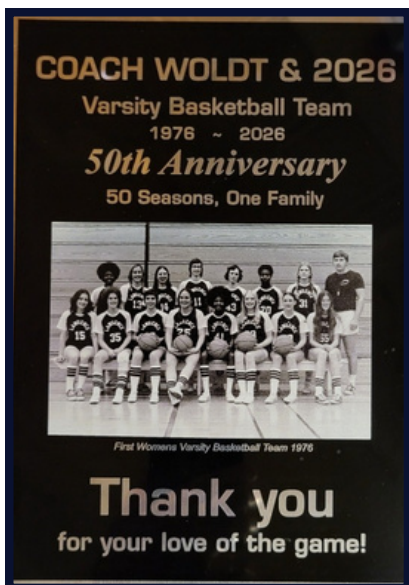
Lawrence gave me more than an education; it gave me stories. I played basketball, spent a semester in Chicago studying urban life, and another in Paris studying everything else...including how to stretch a student budget in the land of croissants. Those experiences, along with growing up in Chicago, shaped my worldview and sparked a lifelong love of travel.



To this day, I still keep in touch with friends from those years—proof that shared struggle and shared laughter make the strongest bonds.

I'm grateful for the challenges and triumphs. Lawrence prepared me not just for law school and business school, but for life itself. And yes, when people around the world hear "Lawrence University," they nod knowingly and say, "You must've gotten a first-class education." One of my business school professors once told me, "I know two things about you—you can think, and you can write." I've carried that compliment ever since.

As we celebrate our 50th reunion, I'm proud of how far we've come—and hopeful for how much further we'll go. My experiences at Lawrence added to my resilience, curiosity, and the art of laughing through the hard parts. Not bad lessons for four unforgettable years in Appleton!



This is our year
to make a
Big
Difference
for the Lawrence
student experience
through our collective
50th Reunion
Class Gift!



[Register for Reunion 2026](#) ➔



Class of 1976

We hope you have enjoyed our Class of 1976 50th Reunion newsletters, and hopefully they have inspired you to return to campus. Come back, relive the memories that made Lawrence special, and see how the campus has grown while still holding onto the heart of what we loved.

We look forward to seeing you in June!

To update your contact information, please send an email to dev_operations@lawrence.edu. Or update the information directly in your profile in the [Alumni Directory](#).