

# UW-Whitewater: Announces 2023 alumni award recipients

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Six individuals who have achieved exceptional professional success or have made significant contributions to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater are being honored as the university celebrates its 155th anniversary. The 2023 class of alumni award honorees include graduates with careers in illustration, entrepreneurship, education and commercial real estate development — including the co-founder of a company that produced the world's first crowd-sourced beer.

The awards will be presented at the [Founders Day Celebration](#), held at UW-Whitewater at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 22.

This year's recipient of the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award is **Henry Schwartz** (<https://www.uww.edu/alumni/awards/schwartz>). The award recognizes the professional accomplishments of Schwartz, who earned a BBA in entrepreneurship and a B.A. in Spanish in 2011 and co-founded MobCraft Beer that same year. Schwartz continues to lead that company, which is expanding to its fourth brick-and-mortar location and generates \$4.5 million in annual sales, with a team that includes several fellow Warhawks.

The recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Achievement is **Monica Kelsey-Brown** (<https://www.uww.edu/alumni/awards/kelsey-brown>). Kelsey-Brown, who earned a BSE in elementary education and an M.S. in curriculum and instruction, is the first superintendent of color in the School District of Brown Deer, a district of 1,600 students that is one of the most diverse in the state. Kelsey-Brown took the helm in July 2020, in the early days of COVID-19, after working in various roles at Milwaukee Public Schools since 2002.

Also receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Achievement is **Ed**

**Steckley** (<https://www.uww.edu/alumni/awards/steckley> ). Steckley, who earned B.A. in graphic design and a minor in art history in 2018 after an initial stint on campus in the early 1990s, is an award-winning freelance illustrator whose work has appeared on “Saturday Night Live,” in MAD Magazine, and in children’s books — including the “Rube Goldberg” series — as well as in magazines, newspapers and a range of advertising campaigns.

**Byron “Chris” Chrisman and Carlene**

**Chrisman** (<https://www.uww.edu/alumni/awards/chrisman> ) are this year’s recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award for Service to UW-Whitewater. After earning a B.S. in business administration with an emphasis on accounting, Chris Chrisman embarked on a career spanning tax law, commercial real estate development and diverse businesses. The Chrismans funded the Mary Poppe Chrisman Success Center with an initial gift of \$1.5 million in 2016, and a subsequent estate gift in 2019 of \$5 million — the largest gift to date in the university’s history — targeted four endowment funds: Student Success Fund, Warhawk Emergency Fund, Wheelchair Athletics and Rugby.

The recipient of the S.A. White for Contributions to UW-Whitewater is **Therese Kennedy** (<https://www.uww.edu/alumni/awards/kennedy> ). Kennedy has worked at the Office of Recreation Sports and Facilities for more than 30 years, serving as director since August 2020, and has left an indelible imprint on the campus and the community as a member of the Athletics Hall of Fame Board, a board member of the Tip Off Club and Quarterback Club, mentoring scores of students, and working on behalf of Wally and Rod’s Warhawk Raffle. She also serves as co-president of the Whitewater Community Foundation.

“All of these accomplished individuals speak to the breadth and the depth of the impacts that our graduates can have, both professionally and in their communities,” said Chancellor Corey A. King. “As evidenced by these individuals, our academic programs have a strong track record of producing talented, versatile graduates, and I couldn’t be more proud to recognize and celebrate the achievements of these Warhawks.”

“Our alumni and friends of the university bring a wealth of experiences to the Warhawk family,” said Amy Oeding ’90, director of alumni relations. “Like so many of our supporters, they not only give back to their communities, they continue to have a rich connection to the campus and to today’s students.”

Also being honored are the 2023 UW-Whitewater Outstanding Student Award winners, one from each of the university's five undergraduate colleges. Each student receives a \$1,000 scholarship in addition to their award:

- **Abdel Hamed**, liberal arts major from Beloit, College of Integrated Studies
- **Morgan Jensen**, music education from Sun Prairie, College of College of Arts and Communication
- **MacKenzie Lindow**, special education major from East Troy, College of Education and Professional Studies
- **Carson Neigum**, business major from Pewaukee, College of Business and Economics
- **Jaelyne White**, entrepreneurship major with a minor in Spanish, from Poynette, College of Letters and Sciences

For more information on UW-Whitewater's **Distinguished Alumni awards**, visit [uww.edu/alumni/awards](http://uww.edu/alumni/awards).

For any questions, contact Amy Oeding, director of alumni relations, at [odinga@uww.edu](mailto:odinga@uww.edu) or 262-472-7033.