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Lifting voices in choir

‘It’s really a collaborative art form’

KELLY FENG
Managing Editor

On any Thursday evening, if you find yourself lingering near the Music Department, you will hear some enthusiastic singing from the practice room. Once called the Adult Show Choir, the Madison College Choral Collective was formed in the ‘90s. However, only some know of this opportunity. Enter Melissa Richardson. Richardson is the third choir director in its history, a role she started last August. She’s determined to get the word out about singing.

She wants more people to see her group’s performances and eagerly welcomes new members through the end of February.

There are no requirements to be a member of the Choral Collective. Richardson said they are looking for people who “like to have fun and have good attendance.”

Although anybody can join, Richardson said attendance was key.

“It’s not an activity you can do online at your house by yourself – it’s really a collaborative art form,” she said.

The choir is open to all students and community members. Students or faculty members can join for free, and community members pay a nominal fee.

Jessie Soto Garcia, who has been both a student and a



EMILY FAUST / CLARION

Director Melissa Richardson leads a recent rehearsal of the Choral Collective at the Truax Campus.

Spring primary elections coming up

CISCO GARCIA
Staff Writer

Did you know that there are spring elections coming up? If you didn’t, that’s OK! You still have time to get caught up on everything that will be on the ballot.

The 2023 spring primaries are going to be held on Feb. 21 and the spring general election will be held on April 14. Primaries are elections that political parties use to select candidates for a general election. Then each party’s candidates run against each other in the general election.

The primary election will have two major races on the ballot for the mayoral race and it is between incumbent Satya Rhodes-Conway, Scott Kerr, and Gloria Reyes.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court race is a nonpartisan primary for an open seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The primary election is between Waukesha County Court Judge Jennifer Dorow, former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Daniel Kelly, Dane County Court Judge Everett Mitchell and Milwaukee County Court Judge Janet Protasiewicz. The top two vote-getters will advance to the nonpartisan general election on April 4, 2023.

These elections are important because the positions that are up for election affect our local laws and

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Title IX 50th Anniversary Celebration

TALEISE LAWRENCE
Assistant Editor

Title IX was established in 1972 and Madison College recognized its 50th anniversary on Jan. 24. In addition to the double-header basketball game that night, there was also a luncheon for current female student-athletes, coaches and staff. Hall of Famers JoAnn Walker and Ellen Becker attended the luncheon and featured as honorary captains for the women’s basketball game.

During halftime, the WolfPack showed a video that

was “dedicated to every advocate and proponent of female involvement in athletics.”

In a conversation moderated by Athletic Communications Director Adam Eichstedt, Associate Athletic Director Lois Heeren was joined by Administrative Coordinator for the Athletics Department Kris Mills and Administrative Coordinator in the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, Fitness, Health and Recreation Denise Stenklyft to discuss their experiences in sports and how things have progressed since

they played.

Heeren talked about not having the same opportunities and not even being aware of it.

She played six on six basketball, which was common for her in Iowa, while the boys were playing five on five.

“That’s all I grew up on and people, you know, in later years would always say, ‘well didn’t you miss five on five.’ Well, I never knew any different,” Heeren stated.

In 2013, Madison College received a complaint that

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MORGAN WITTHUN / CLARION

A display in the Redsten Gymnasium lobby showcased women’s athletics at Madison College for the Title IX anniversary event.



EMILY FAUST / CLARION

Director Melissa Richardson sings with her students at a recent Choral Collective rehearsal.



EMILY FAUST / CLARION

Members of the Choral Collective sing during a recent rehearsal at the Truax Campus.

CHOIR

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community member, has been involved with the choir for four years.

“It’s a great community. We’ve definitely changed and grown with the years,” said Soto Garcia, a choir member during the COVID-19 shutdown. “We practiced online — that was really interesting! But as time went on, the choir evolved. You can always meet new people, and we build relationships. I think it’s great.”

The choir comprises people of all ages, from high school students to retirees. The members have day jobs in different aspects of the economy, from finance, healthcare, education, culinary and sales.

“The thing we all have in common is that we love singing,” said Richardson, who is also a member of the Madison Choral Project.

“It’s also a social club, honestly. It’s intergenerational, which can be hard to find in the social club. We have had some members in this group for 20 years.”

The love of music and singing brings the choir together, which has been fundamental in Richardson’s life.

Raised on a farm in Belleville, Wisconsin, Richardson became her church’s only organist when she was still in middle school. Along with learning sight reading and practicing daily singing, Richardson’s position was paid, allowing her to save money for college.

The church years, combined with summer music camps and inspiring teachers, fueled her passion for performing.

Richardson’s educational trajectory brought her to Iowa’s Luther College and later to New Jersey to earn a masters at Westminster Choir College (not to mention a decade of international teaching and performance in between).

Although she’s proud of her formal education, she’s drawn to performance opportunities, like the choir’s efforts in community outreach.

In April, they are performing at the Porchlight Men’s Emergency Shelter. In May, they will perform for a Mother’s Day banquet at the downtown Madison YWCA.

When choosing music repertoire, it’s a democracy between the 35-member group

and its director. Richardson takes suggestions, creating a program based on what members like and their audience. They choose a wide selection of pieces, with genres coming from world, musical theater, pop, classical, jazz and movie themes.

Wade Troyer, the choir’s piano accompanist who started at the same time as Richardson, enjoys the many different music genres.

“She has chosen a wide variety of music, so it’s not just classical,” said Troyer, who’s particularly excited about upcoming selections. “We have the James Bond theme song!”

Along with the choir’s outreach efforts, Richardson appreciates the college for its many qualities.

“The flexibility of everyone from the students to the music faculty to the community members to the supporting staff here — everyone makes you feel welcome.”

Along with feeling embraced, Richardson appreciates the opportunity to collaborate. The choir and the Culinary department are teaming up for the spring Porchlight event, with the baking side providing 200 cookies for the residents.

“People are very open to collaboration and flexible, which makes it a very fun place to work.”

Asked what the best part of her job is, Richardson takes a moment to reflect.

“It’s a great way to connect with people and lead you to things you never expected.”

Events and Info

The Chorale Collective’s next concert: World Drumming Ensemble and Choral Collective, on Saturday, April 22, 7 p.m., Mitby Theater.

The Choral Collective will perform two combine samba pieces with Music Department Chair Dr. Timothy Patterson’s drumming ensemble.

For more information on the performance ensemble, like the orchestra conducted by Blake Walter. Or the big band and jazz ensemble, directed by Jamie Kember visit <https://madisoncollege.edu/academics/professional-continuing-education/music>

For more information on the Choral Collective’s outreach events, please visit:

<https://sites.google.com/view/matcchoralcollectivespr23/home?pli=1>

TITLE IX

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included the disparity in the number of men’s teams versus women’s teams. Now in 2023, there are an even number of sports, including softball, volleyball, basketball, soccer and esports for women.

“Here the men have opportunities to go on for scholarships. The women, right, were somewhat, not discriminated, but were kind of left behind,” Heeren added. “[The women] had vans, the guys had a chartered bus.”

Mills remembers having very few female coaches.

“I look at my past years, I had one female coach ... through all my sports that I played. One female coach and now, there are so many. I mean, there’s female coaches coaching male sports ... and even females in administrative roles in athletic departments ... That’s something that I’m happy has progressed,” said Mills.

Madison College currently has one female head coach and nine women in assistant coach positions. Disparities can be seen in the NCAA as well. In 2021, the

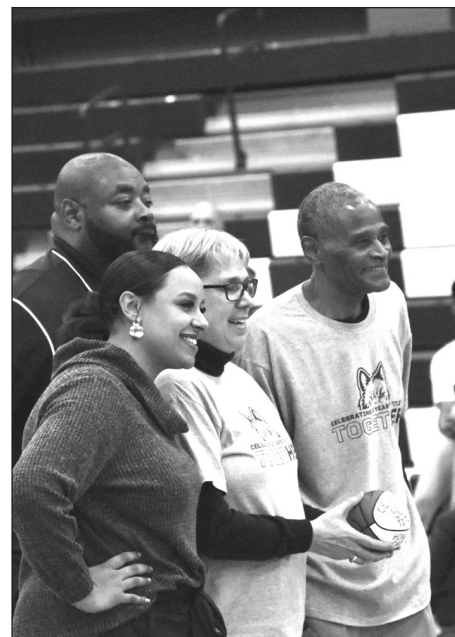
male basketball coaches of the Final Four made \$1 million more than the female coaches did, according to Insider.

“As a former coach, I have struggled mightily with the salaries of female coaches... you see these big salaries, you see these big incentives and you don’t see these for the women, the women coaches,” Heeren said.

She added, “I hope it’s not another 50 years that women’s salaries can be the same as the men’s salaries, that women can be in a leadership role just like the men, that women have an equal opportunity when it comes to a resume, that they’re given that opportunity ... We’re definitely on the right track, we have a long ways to go, but, you know, excited for our progress and we’ll continue to grow.”

And how can Madison College continue to grow? Stenklyft said that, “(Female athletes) need to get uncomfortable. And if they don’t advocate for themselves, no one else will.”

Heeren said, “For the female athletes, find your passion. Pursue your passion. Whatever you need to do on that, but you need to have a passion.”



JACKSON CROSSEN / CLARION

Hall of Famers JoAnn Walker and Ellen Becker were honorary captains for the women’s basketball game. One of them joined the women’s basketball coaches on the court for a pre-game recognition.

PRIMARY

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state laws. In some cases, state and local laws have more of an effect on us than laws made at the federal level.

If you aren’t registered to vote, you still have time to register!

Even though the deadline for registering to vote online has passed, you are still able to register in person on election day. If you think you are registered, make sure that you have not been purged from the registration list by checking your registration status. This ensures that you are all set for election day.

To check your status, go to myvote.wi.gov/en-us/My-Voter-Info. For more voting information, go to myvote.wi.gov.