

Pair of 50-year milestones celebrated at UW-Stevens Point

Bernie Patterson, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

[Stevens Point Journal](#) - June 24, 2017

We honor tradition at UW-Stevens Point, and two 50-year milestones this month were definitely worth celebrating.

Next week, we say good-bye to Greg Diemer, our vice chancellor of business affairs for the past 30 years. He has been in higher education for 50 years.



Many in the community will know Greg as the university's representative at Plan Commission, Common Council and other government meetings. He was our spokesperson, with Campus Planner Carl Rasmussen, when buildings, parking lots and other projects were proposed. He was a calming voice of reason on campus and in the community.

During his tenure, projects totaling \$300 million were completed. The Noel Fine Arts Center, Trainer Natural Resources building, Dreyfus University Center, Health Enhancement Center, DeBot Center and several residence halls underwent significant additions or upgrades. The Suites @ 201 Reserve, an apartment-style residence hall, and Waste Education Center were built. Greg worked with faculty and paper industry leaders to make the paper machine operable with minimal state investment. He was instrumental in securing approvals for the Chemistry Biology Building, now under construction. The credit does not belong with him, Greg is quick to point out; these were team efforts.

Ask Greg about highlights of his career, and he will cite the quality of employees and their dedication to serving the needs of students, staff and others on and near campus. The 150 employees in his business affairs area include many support functions on campus, from budget and financial operations to human resources, university police, facility services, risk management, campus planning and sustainability. These functions are critical to smooth operations and largely unnoticed when all is going well. His philosophy was to hire capable leaders and let them do their jobs. He was there to help as needed.

Others in the community may know Greg from the Portage County Business Council, Centergy Board or St. Michael's Foundation Board. He brought business acumen to the table. His clear thinking and constructive input helped make things happen.

On my leadership team, Greg brought a sense of calm, reassurance that we'd work our way through challenges and wisdom in helping us do so. He served UW-Stevens Point well.

Last weekend, the 50th anniversary of the Aber Suzuki Center was marked. Because the center is in our backyard — housed in the Noel Fine Arts Center — it may be easy to overlook this gem. Yet, more than 12,000 students from northcentral Wisconsin have learned the Suzuki method in the past five decades. Among its 14 accomplished music faculty with advanced degrees, Mary Hofer is the only Suzuki voice teacher trainer in the nation.

The weekend was a special homecoming for former Suzuki students and teachers, who came from around the country to celebrate the Aber Center. One violist traveled from Columbia, where he teaches the Suzuki method. Two and three generations of families who have participated in the Aber Center or American Suzuki Center programs returned.

Margery Aber founded the center, one of the first outside of Japan to teach Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's philosophy and method. First, violin was taught. Over the years, cello, piano, viola, voice, harp, guitar, bass and flute instruction were added. Students are taught in the same way they learn a language: through listening, imitation and repetition.

Many start at age 4 — or younger in the Suzuki Early Childhood Program — and continue until graduating from high school. Some have gone on to professional music careers. Others perform right here with the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra or music groups in other communities where they pursue a variety of careers. By living the Suzuki philosophy, they lead with character, discipline, perseverance, problem-solving, analytical and listening skills and an openness to suggestions. As Center Director Pat D'Ercole said, they make their corner of the world twinkle.

Our 36 Young Stars performed Friday night. On Saturday, 11 professional musicians returned to provide one of the most artistic, beautiful performances any audience could expect anywhere. To know these performers either started or advanced through Suzuki programs at UW-Stevens Point is both gratifying and humbling.

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<http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/news/local/2017/06/23/chancellor-pair-50-year-milestones-celebrated-uw-stevens-point/424010001/>