2021
HONORARY RECOGNITION
BANQUET & CEREMONY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21
VARSITY HALL, UNION SOUTH

5:30 p.m. Reception
6:30 p.m. Dinner

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
Larry Meiller
Professor Emeritus
Life Sciences Communication

AWARD PRESENTATIONS
Kate VandenBosch
Dean and Director
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Since receiving her academic grounding as a student in Life Sciences Communication at UW–Madison, Claire Huschka Sink (BS’65) has gone on to make many contributions to society. Her dedication to public service began in CALS with her involvement in organizations such as the Livestock Judging Team and the Saddle and Sirloin Club. She spent several years working in Cooperative Extension at Pennsylvania State University before working in the private sector. In 1983, Sink began at the U.S. Department of Energy, where she held leadership positions for over 20 years. While Sink has received several awards and honors in her career, she has maintained her ties to the university, specifically through the life sciences communication department, by establishing a scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students in technology management and sustainability.

As an animal geneticist, Max Rothschild (MS’75) has an impressive research portfolio focusing on identifying, mapping, and sequencing genes in pigs and other animals. Rothschild received his master’s degree in animal sciences at UW–Madison and recently retired from the Department of Animal Science at Iowa State University. A prolific author, he has over 425 published journal articles and over 700 abstracts, invited papers, popular press and extension articles, proceedings, and book chapters. As a supportive alumnus of UW–Madison, Rothschild and his wife established a fund that brings a world-renowned animal geneticist to the UW–Madison campus each spring to give a lecture on livestock genetics to students in the undergraduate animal genetics courses and to interact with faculty, staff, and graduate students.
When Elton Aberle was selected as dean of CALS in 1998, the college gained a highly qualified administrator, teacher, and leader. As dean, Aberle emphasized strong linkages to Wisconsin’s agricultural organizations and businesses, which helped establish stronger communication and trust. After retiring in 2005, Aberle continued to engage with the college, finding time to give classroom lectures and participate in undergraduate mentorship. Always committed to supporting promising young faculty members, Aberle established the Aberle Faculty Fellow Fund to support the first critical years of a faculty member’s career. In addition to the faculty award, Aberle and his wife established the Carrie Aberle Demeter Scholarship Fund, which not only recognizes Carrie’s participation in the Demeter organization but also their joint commitment to undergraduate education at UW–Madison.

A tireless advocate for dairy research and education, Mitch Breunig (BS’92) stays connected to CALS by participating in numerous research trials on his farm, Mystic Valley Dairy. He has also hosted tours and events for student and alumni groups. Over the past five years, Breunig has been involved in discussions to ensure that Wisconsin remains a world leader in the dairy industry. These discussions led to the creation of the Dairy Innovation Hub, which is now a joint venture, supported by the Wisconsin State Legislature, that provides annual funding for dairy research, teaching, and outreach at three UW campuses. Breunig is the inaugural chair of the Hub’s advisory council and has provided invaluable insight and leadership during the Hub’s formative years.

As a proud animal sciences alumnus, Alan Gunderson (MS’79) gives back to the university by serving as a link between CALS and industry partners. While a leader at Vita Plus, an animal feed and nutrition management company, Gunderson invited faculty and students to their corporate headquarters in Madison for discussions, tours, and instruction. Many undergraduates from CALS have completed internships with Vita Plus, opportunities that Gunderson helped develop. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gunderson saw an opportunity to partner with the UW through the Vita Plus Serving Customers and Rural Communities Project. Through the project, Vita Plus provided funding and Gunderson provided leadership to develop a system to safely harvest surplus hogs from the Arlington Agricultural Research Station to send to area food pantries.
THE HONORARY RECOGNITION AWARD
Since 1909, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has recognized more than 500 individuals with this award for contributions in the areas of agriculture, social science, life science, and natural resources.

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Established in 1994, this award honors meritorious service by university faculty and staff to the college and university, to the citizens of Wisconsin, and to people around the nation and the world.

THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
Introduced in 2009, this award recognizes a career of outstanding achievement through extraordinary contributions to one’s chosen field or an exemplary record of public service.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES
Founded in 1889, CALS grew out of the state and national belief that universities can solve practical problems alongside the farmer, that scientific research and education are an investment in our nation’s future, and that education prepares citizens for our democracy.

More than 125 years later, there is evidence of those roots in every activity of the college. We have grown from 19 short course students to more than 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students in the college, but we still believe that we can solve practical problems through collaboration and that education contributes to our democracy.