



WOMEN TO WATCH 2014

MEET 28 INSPIRING, INNOVATIVE AND EMPOWERED WOMEN WHO ENRICH MADISON

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We asked former Women
to Watch why they find
these women inspiring.
Find out what they had to
say in RELATE, p. 10.

ANALIESE EICHER

PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,
ONE WISCONSIN NOW

"My name is Analiese and I have student loan debt"

A member of One Wisconsin Now, a communication network for Wisconsin progressives, Analiese Eicher is comfortable stating this publicly, and thinks you should be, too.

A large debt with no relief can be crushing, she says. "You can't refinance it, you can't file bankruptcy with it and it typically takes about two decades to pay off," she says.

Having represented UW-Madison students as the District 5 Dane County Supervisor and as the chief lobbyist for the United Council of UW Students, Eicher's aim is to give students a voice—and voice concern. Groundbreaking research on the student loan debt problem at One Wisconsin Institute shows graduates with debt are less likely to purchase a new car or buy a house, thus reducing their potential contributions to their communities.

Eicher's next step this election year? Help solve the problem. —E.L.



BRIDGET MANIACI

FORMER MADISON ALDER, POTENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR
MAYOR OF MADISON IN 2015

Though Bridget Maniaci hasn't officially declared a run for mayor in 2015, she's carefully keeping her options open. She maintains a Madison residence, returning frequently to meet with former colleagues while pursuing a master's degree in public policy and management at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh to gather key analytical skills and new perspectives on Madison.

If she were to declare a campaign this year, tackling poverty would be a key aspect. "We have clear poverty issues that we cannot afford to pocket away into specific corners of the city," she says.

As a young alder, she's remembered for her strong resolve and support of The Edgewater project. For her, local politics is personally fulfilling. "It's really important to me to be able to walk around my neighborhood and see the improvements," she says. Once a dedicated city council member and district advocate, we'll soon see where her feisty spirit takes her. —A.M.

CHRIS TAYLOR

STATE ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE 76TH DISTRICT

"I never thought I'd be in elected office—my goal was always just to do good work that helps improve people's lives," explains Chris Taylor. But not only did the political newcomer win her assembly seat in 2011, there's already talk she could one day be a contender for governor.

Why all the attention? Her brazen voice.

A lawyer and former public policy director for Planned Parenthood, Taylor hasn't kept a low profile as many freshman Assembly members would. Instead, she's often put herself into leadership roles, not only authoring legislation, but taking the floor during debates to offer rousing speeches on the state's thorniest issues.

She recently introduced a bipartisan bill mandating investigations of officer-related deaths and promises to deliver others that address children's rights, environmental policy and more. And though her outspoken approach may win her admirers and skeptics alike, don't expect Taylor to slow down any time soon. —M.P.





ATHLETE & ACTIVIST IN THE GAME: PROVING IT TO THE WORLD & IMPROVING KIDS' HEALTH

TERI LARSON JONES

PROFESSIONAL BAREFOOT WATER SKIER,
UW CHEMISTRY LECTURER

A challenge is just part of the daily agenda for Teri Larson Jones, whether it's getting UW-Madison students excited about chemistry, or earning a spot on the U.S. Barefoot Ski Team.

Jones spent her youth on Madison's lakes, but it wasn't until her early 30s that she had the chance to learn ski-less from professional coaches.

"I knew barefoot was challenging and that made it even more appealing," she says.

After recovering from a spinal disc injury in 2010, as well as several shoulder surgeries, Jones pushed through into the 2012 U.S. Nationals Open division, competing against athletes half her age and medaling many times over. She's earned a spot on the team headed to the World Championships in Australia this March in the senior division (for the 35-years-plus crowd). In early 2014 she'll train full time—then show the world that this "senior" has still got it. —E.L.

KATIE HENSEL

TRI 4 SCHOOLS FOUNDER

Alarm bells sounded for Katie Hensel when reports of rising childhood obesity rates became more frequent, paralleled by cuts to physical education, sports and recess time in schools. Her corporate job was just that—a job—so in 2011 she left it to launch a nonprofit that could make a healthy difference.

Now, as Tri 4 Schools' sole employee, Hensel relies on volunteers and sponsors to help organize four annual events. One hundred percent of race entry fees are donated to area schools for nutrition and fitness programs.

The response has been unexpected. Over three years, 3,500 kids have participated in Tri 4 Schools events and have raised almost \$80,000 for their mission.

This spring Hensel's piloting another initiative, Exercise to Achievement. For eight weeks, kids at six Madison public schools will learn the benefits of exercise and train for a triathlon or mud run. Long may *she* run, for Madison kids' sakes. —E.L.

LISA PEYTON CAIRE

FOUNDER, BLACK WOMEN'S WELLNESS DAY AND FOUNDATION FOR BLACK WOMEN'S WELLNESS

Lisa Peyton Caire's eyes opened when her mother died at age 64. When Caire listed all of the women she knew who were taken before age 65 by conditions like heart disease, stroke and diabetes, she was in disbelief: 40 names.

So Caire leaned on her passion for generating opportunity and in 2008 founded the annual Black Women's Wellness Day to empower women to improve their health through personal choice, education and behavior change. To continue that movement through grassroots efforts and community partnerships, just last year she launched the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness.

"I truly believe that if you change a woman's life, you change her children's life, her family's life and that spills over into the community and becomes a ripple effect to make all of our lives better." No doubt Caire will find new ways to keep paying it forward. -E.L.



REBECCA BLANK

CHANCELLOR OF UW-MADISON, FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Since becoming chancellor of the UW-Madison last July—a complex job of steering the UW and navigating a variable political climate—Blank has prioritized economic issues affecting the university, including making it more competitive for federal grant funding. Her Ph.D. in economics and experiences working in the Department of Commerce are easily translatable to the position.

Blank says she loves all the aspects of the job: the collaboration, the challenge—and the opportunity—of being at a crossroads. "We're in a time of a real opening-up of new technologies for the delivery of education...There's some new tools that can help add to [the classroom] environment and help this university reach out around the world," she says.

"I have a very deep sense that big research universities are absolutely vital...the education, invention and community outreach makes these research institutions unique and critical for this nation's future." On Wisconsin, Chancellor Blank. -A.M.

JENNIFER CHEATHAM

SUPERINTENDENT OF MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

As Madison Metropolitan School District's superintendent, Jennifer Cheatham oversees the education of 27,000 students. Her mission is bold: Create a thriving urban school district that prepares every single student to not only graduate high school but be college-, career- and community-ready. And, in all that, she says, "We are going to raise up the teaching profession and put it back where it belongs."

Madison has high expectations of her. Hired essentially to propel MMSD to a higher level of learning, Cheatham has the enthusiasm and proven track record to build an educational model that's collaborative, inclusive and respects knowledge—an uplifting environment for teachers and learners.

In her nine months in office she's introduced the Strategic Framework—a school improvement plan to ensure every student and teacher is challenged to do their best work within a joyful learning environment. "We are fiercely focused on executing that plan." That is Cheatham's promise. -K.B.

