



For Students

February 25, 2026



## Richard D. and Marni Waterfield Recognized for Transformative Support of Environmental Resources Center at PFW

Purdue University Fort Wayne is honoring major benefactors Richard D. and Marni Waterfield for their considerable efforts to help staff at PFW's Environmental Resources Center mitigate damage to the planet and educate students to be advocates for a more sustainable environment. In honor of their multifaceted contributions, the ERC building and program will now be known as the Waterfield Environmental Resources Center.

At PFW, the Waterfield name is synonymous with altruistic initiatives and the support of student success. In addition to funding scholarships and creating the Young Scholars Academy, which Dick Waterfield continues to sponsor in collaboration with PFW and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fort Wayne, the family subsidized in the early 2000s the construction of the university's first student housing complex on what is now known as the Waterfield Campus.

With his legacy as a business leader and community benefactor firmly established at PFW and across the state, Waterfield recently chose to provide vital financial support to the ERC. This backing will primarily underwrite positions within the center's staff structure and student internships and funds for the projects they take on. It will also support other programming or projects dedicated to developing a more sustainable environment.

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## Student-Professor Connection Shaped through Mutual Admiration

A few years ago, Ben Dattilo, veteran professor of geology at Purdue University Fort Wayne, walked into a new class and informed his students that the Disability Access Center was available if needed. Taking things into her own hands, Jacqueline Miller had already signed up and organized through the DAC accommodations, which are applications students dealing with disabilities are allowed and encouraged to use.

When Miller introduced herself after class as a deaf student, Dattilo said with a grin, "Oh, you're

going to be trouble, aren't you?"

As is his nature, Dattilo was kidding, having no idea how much Miller and he would positively affect each other. Over time, they have built a partnership transcending most professors and students, becoming each other's biggest fans.

Miller could have packed up her books and run from academia decades ago to find an easier life. Since grade school, she's been dealing with dyscalculia—a form of dyslexia but with numbers—mixing digits so much they are incomprehensible.

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## PFW Graduates Open Dental Practice Near Campus

For Jason and Claire Hemphill, opening their dental practice at 4207 Hobson Court was a bit of a full-circle moment.

The office is located across the street from the Purdue University Fort Wayne campus where they met, both played volleyball, and decided to pursue careers as dentists. Jason majored in

chemistry and Claire in biology. They graduated in 2007, marrying two weeks later. They were the only dental school students in their class who entered as a married couple, though a few others left four years later as spouses.

Because they always had to balance maintaining high grades in challenging majors and their volleyball careers, the Hemphills were better prepared for dental school at Indiana University in Indianapolis. As they said, they were already used to working hard and efficiently, finding time to build and maintain their relationship. They shared the No. 1 ranking in their graduating class.

After serving as associates in local practices for 11 years, the Hemphills purchased their own shingle on Feb. 22, 2022, and have spent four years updating and refurbishing, with new equipment, carpeting, and paint. With more building plans, the business is growing, mostly through positive word of mouth, and partly through their hobby as both continue to play volleyball. They never stopped playing or making friends, and Claire also coaches the 8th grade girls at Woodside Middle School.

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## Secure Your Spot: 2026–27 Housing Applications Now Open

Opportunities to secure on-campus housing for the fall 2026 and spring 2027 semesters are now open. Current students can log in to **GoPFW** to submit their application via the housing portal. To

guarantee a space, be sure to apply by the end of March.

**Trace**, a brand-new 600-bed, North Campus apartment complex, opens this fall. Offering studio, 2, and 4-bedroom units, the facility features a fitness center, C-Store, and on-site laundry, along with outdoor basketball/volleyball courts, firepits, grilling areas, and hammock farms.

Everyone who signs a PFW housing 2026–27 contract at Trace during this promotion will be entered to win a \$500 gift bundle. Those who successfully refer a friend to live in Trace will receive a \$50 Visa gift card.

Get the details in the Feb. 17 **special edition of *Don Life***.

## Eventful

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*There's always plenty to do at Purdue Fort Wayne. To find your favorites—or discover new activities—check the full [events calendar](#) often to see what's happening on campus.*

MARCH

1

Sun., 5–7 p.m.

### Faculty Artist Recital: Hamilton Tescarollo, Piano

Hamilton Tescarollo, professor of music and director of keyboard studies, will present a solo piano recital featuring Chopin's Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49, sonatas by Scarlatti and Mozart, and additional works by Bach/Busoni, Ravel, Guarnieri, and Lacerda...

MARCH

4

Wed., noon–3 p.m.

### Mastodon Career Expo

Looking to start your career, get an internship, or just network? Be sure to attend the Mastodon Career Expo and meet with 70+ employers looking to hire skilled PFW and IUFW students and alumni like you! You'll find the list of employers attending where you'll register on Handshake...

MARCH

4

Wed., 7:30–9 p.m.

### PFW Bands Concert III

This evening will feature the bands in collaboration with the Fort Wayne Children's Choir performing "A Silence Haunts Me," a setting by Jake

Runestad of Beethoven's "Heiligenstadt Testament." The concert will include works by Giroux, Turina, and Percy Grainger...

## Mastodon Moments

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*Seen and noted around campus. Monitor our university social feeds for more great moments of Mastodon life.*



The Classic Ballroom at Walb Student Union transformed into a breakfast battleground on Feb. 18 for National Pancake Day. Wendy Maxwell, representing the Student Activities Board, stayed busy flipping flapjacks while issuing friendly challenges to students.

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