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FAQs: Everything You'd Ever Want to Know About Alumni Park and Then Some

THE EXHIBITS

How difficult was it narrowing down the alumni to feature? In a word, extremely. There are 123 alumni honored in the Park, determined by an extensive review process that included input from UW, University archives, the Wisconsin Union, City of Madison Parks, the Alumni Association, the Wisconsin Foundation, and UW alumni.

What were the criteria for inclusion? Alumni featured in the park represent the breadth and diversity of alumni achievement and the positive influence they've had across Wisconsin, the nation, and the world. We focused on significant alumni achievements that represent the Wisconsin Idea in action rather than specific academic disciplines.

Is there space to add more alumni? Yes, on the Alumni Way exhibit. The full-color porcelain enamel panels can be changed in future years, allowing us to update the park's content and feature different alumni. Additional alumni will also be featured in park programming and on the website www.AlumniPark.com where user-contributed content is encouraged.

Was diversity a consideration in selecting alumni to include? Yes, the park honors a diverse range of scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, poets, engineers, change agents, and more, from iconic and well-known alumni to the lesser known, and from every generation of graduates. The featured alumni include alumni of color, immigrants and children of immigrants, international alumni, LGBT alumni, pioneers of women's history, and more.

Why are no athletes recognized in the Park? We didn't want to duplicate the UW Athletic Hall of Fame at Camp Randall. That said, the park does recognize former student-athletes and includes traditions associated with athletics - think mascot Bucky Badger and the Grateful Red cheering section, among others.

Is there space to add any new elements to the park in the future? Yes, near the outdoor classroom, and a few granite benches without exhibits. We're calling those "frontier spaces" and they are earmarked for future exhibits, installations or multimedia projects.

What exactly is the Wisconsin Idea? It is the University's guiding principle that education should have a positive influence on people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The Wisconsin Idea was first introduced by UW President Charles Van Hise during an address in 1903 in which he stated: "I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every home in the state."

What's the meaning behind the Numen Lumen symbol in Alumni Park? This historic University seal of upturned eye surrounded by converging rays was the work of Chancellor J.H. Lathrop in 1849. As for translation, the "lumen" part is easy – it's lamp or light. Things get fuzzy with the word "numen" as it's one of those Latin words with many meanings. While some translations interpret it as "God is our light," there's no record of that being Lathrop's intent. The more accepted translation is "our spirit is light" or "our spirit is knowledge."

Who designed the exhibits? Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA), headquartered in New York and widely recognized for their exhibit design and storytelling work for: the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, both in Washington, D.C.; the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn.; and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. Additionally, one exhibit features the work of Madison artist Nate Koehler, and the park also features a work by renowned sculptor Douwe Blumberg, creator of "America's Response Monument" in Liberty Park at the World Trade Center in New York.

Are the steel panels with quotes and the Badger Pride Wall rusting? No, they are supposed to look like that. These exhibits are fabricated from COR-TEN steel, a self-weathering alloy which eliminates the need for painting and forms a stable rust-like appearance when exposed to the elements. Eventually, the steel will weather to become a warm, rich brown.

VISITING

Is there an admission fee to the Park? It's free to visit.

Can anyone visit the Park and One Alumni Place, or do you need to be a member of the Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA)? The Park welcomes all – alumni, students, University staff, the community, and visitors to Madison. One Alumni Place welcomes UW-Madison alumni, WAA members, and park visitors, and offers park and campus information, maps and guides.

Is the Park accessible? Alumni Park and One Alumni Place are fully accessible to all and ADA compliant.

Can One Alumni Place be reserved for an event or gathering? The plan is to begin offering the space for campus partners at some point in 2018. Details on those opportunities to come.

Who can use the Goodspeed Family Pier? The Goodspeed Family Pier, built in 2013, offers public boat access with dock space for 17 boats.

Where's the best place to park a car? A bike? Alumni Park replaces the parking lot that was sandwiched between Memorial Union and the Red Gym which often offered more bottlenecks than parking spots. There are several public and visitor parking garages nearby, bus stops on Langdon Street, and 470 bike parking spaces nearby. Detailed parking suggestions are at www.AlumniPark.com and in the Alumni Park brochure.

Is the Park open 24 hours a day? The Park is open year-round, with the seasonal hours mirroring those of the Memorial Union Terrace. Following best practices, the park has daily hours just as the Terrace, UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Arboretum, and city parks do.

Can you take alcohol purchased at Memorial Union into Alumni Park? During the days and hours the Memorial Union Terrace is open, alcohol purchased at Memorial Union may be possessed and consumed in designated areas of Alumni Park during park open hours (which mirror the Terrace hours). No carry-in alcohol (alcohol not purchased through the Wisconsin Union) is allowed in Alumni Park. See the Alumni Park Alcohol Policy for details.

Isn't noise from the Memorial Union Terrace a distraction? One of the benefits of the Alumni Park location is that it is next door to the Memorial Union and Terrace and all their events, activities, music, and food and drink offerings. We work with our colleagues at the Union to coordinate our programming and to partner on events such as the Hoofers Winter Carnival— we like to think of it as a “good neighbor” strategy - to create an amazing shared lakefront destination.

LAND, LAKE AND TREES

What green space and trees are in the Park? The 1.3-acre Alumni Park adds 75 total trees and just over 34,000 square feet of green space to the lakefront area between Memorial Union and the Red Gym, replacing the area's most recent use as a surface parking lot. While trees (including Ash trees) were removed as part of construction, the numbers were replaced and then some – resulting in a net gain of 33 trees for the area. The park's nearly 50 shade trees include Maple, Birch, Locust, native Oaks such as Red Oak, Swamp White Oak, and Chinkapin Oak, plus ornamentals such as Serviceberry and Crabapple (which will provide food for birds), and evergreens including Canadian Hemlock (a native species despite the name) and Norway Spruce. Birch trees were planted along the central walkway known as Alumni Way so as to frame (and not block) the view to Lake Mendota. All told, more than three-quarters of the park area consists of green space (lawns and gardens). The park's Lakefront Green provides roughly 3,500 square feet of lawn next to the lakeshore path. The park's extensive gardens include more than 7,000 individual plants, including grasses, deciduous and coniferous shrubs, ferns, flowering perennials, and groundcovers, including native species such as Lady Fern, Easton Woodfern, Little Bluestem, and Mayapple. The University's Design Review Board offered valuable input into the design of this new green space, including full review of the landscape planting plan at four different points in the process.

Does Alumni Park obstruct the view to Lake Mendota? The space was raised three feet to accommodate an underground loading dock and provide access to the first floor of Memorial Union directly from the park. It actually matches the grade of the State Street Mall and provides full views to the lake. Plus the landscaping was designed to frame and not block the view.

How is the water quality of the lake? The state and university contributed \$4.2 million to restore the 787-foot lakeshore stretch along the Memorial Union and Alumni Park, which improved the shoreline water quality by eliminating the large “backwater bay” left over from the former boathouse.

Was this land ever home to Ho-Chunk? Scholars have written that the shores of Lake Mendota were once dotted with villages and camps of the Ho-Chunk people, and we honor the history of the Ho-Chunk as the first to inhabit the land.

Is the Park eco-friendly? Virtually every light in the park is energy-efficient. The water for irrigation will be supplied by storm water runoff from the roof of the Red Gym, captured in a 10,000 gallon tank. The park adds 1.3 acres of green space with trees, plants and shrubs to the campus and lakefront.

FUNDING AND MAINTENANCE

How much did the Park cost? The Alumni Park development cost \$8 million, and the project came in on budget.

Where did the dollars come from to fund Alumni Park? It was funded entirely by private donors.

How can I support the park? Can I buy a brick or paver?

Donations are welcome to keep the park growing, to support park programming and events, and to build an endowment to help pay for park exhibit improvements and updates over time. Those who wish to contribute can do so at AlumniPark.com, by stopping in One Alumni Place to pick up a donation form, or by calling the Wisconsin Alumni Association at 888-WIS-ALUM or Alumni Park at 608-308-5151. Alumni Park does not have an inscribed brick or paver gift opportunity, although the neighboring Memorial Union does. Donations to support Alumni Park are made through the UW Foundation, an independent, nonprofit, tax exempt charitable corporation that encourages individuals and organizations to make gifts and grants to the University of Wisconsin (www.supportuw.org).

Who manages and maintains the park? The park is managed by the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association in close working partnership with UW Facilities Planning and Management, the Wisconsin Union, and UW Police. The park is well-monitored, with staff from both Alumni Park and Memorial Union circulating through the area on a regular basis to offer patron support and address any concerns. The park and environs are covered by security cameras managed by UW Police. We know the park will be well used and well loved, and active spaces like this one, with many people using it, are also safe spaces. The exhibit materials were selected for durability as well as beauty.

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