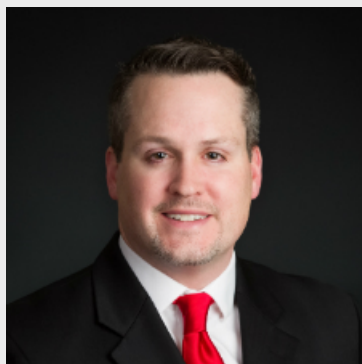




# Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



## Message from the Director

When the Legislature and Governor created the Thompson Center three years ago, they entrusted the Center to engage in: "...the facilitation of research, teaching, outreach, and needed policy reforms regarding effective public leadership that improves the practice of American government." Our charge was to carry out our mission throughout all of the universities of the system. With that mission in mind, I share with you an overview of the Thompson Center's activities this past year.

The Thompson Center hosted a variety of policy and public leadership events, including conferences on America's Founding Fathers, how to prevent democracy from sliding into authoritarianism, improving independence for Wisconsin's disabled population, and preparing Wisconsin for its energy future. Almost eight dozen invited speakers participated, representing higher education, national laboratories, government, military, advocacy groups, think tanks, consultancies, and the private sector. And despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we were still able to work with almost every campus in the UW System.

We identified potential policies for Wisconsin. With respect to renewable energy and disability, we learned that Wisconsin should: seek a technology-first policy for family supports; optimize access to medicine through telehealth; maximize enrollment in tax-exempt "Achieving a Better Life Experience" (ABLE) accounts; explore ways to monetize positive externalities of renewable energy; and identify public-private partnerships with UW System campuses to grow Wisconsin's renewables workforce in strategic areas (e.g. manure digester development).

The Thompson Center also funded over \$500,000 in faculty research across the UW System. This year's study teams explored the topics of disability, renewable energy, and biotechnology. Researchers from a variety of campuses and disciplines participated (*including UW-Milwaukee College of*

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*Engineering, UW-River Falls School of Education & Professional Studies, UW-Madison Computer Sciences, UW-Madison School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison Institute for Clinical & Translational Research composed of our School of Medicine & Public Health, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, and the College of Engineering). Research findings, most of which are on-schedule despite COVID-19, will be available at the conclusion of the fiscal year.*

The Thompson Center also partnered with the UW-Madison Survey Center to conduct a survey on undergraduates' knowledge of American civics. Those results were highlighted recently in the UW-Madison College of Letters & Science's *Sift & Winnow*.

I am also happy to share that the Thompson Center invested time this year expanding its portfolio of activities, which now include:

- A bimonthly podcast with speakers from a range of disciplines on public policy and leadership topics;
- A research affiliate program;
- An inaugural award of \$30,000 in undergraduate leadership scholarships to thirteen UW System students; and
- A statewide public leadership award

I would like to thank the Thompson Center's Public Leadership Board and our Faculty Advisory Committee for their guidance and direction over the past year. I would also like to extend my hearty thanks to our Administrative Assistant, Michael Knaak, who will be departing the Thompson Center this summer to begin graduate studies in Washington DC. We know he will go on to do great things.

Keep up Tommy's fighting spirit and his commitment to moving Wisconsin Forward with common sense and principle.

Yours very truly,

Ryan J. Owens, J.D., Ph.D.

George C. and Carmella P. Edwards Professor of American Politics  
Director, Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership

## **Spring 2020 Events**

### **Improving Integration of Services & Outcomes for Children Affected by Disabilities**

The Thompson Center held a disability conference in partnership with co-host UW-Whitewater Center for Inclusive Transition, Education & Employment on February 7, 2020 on improving integration of services and outcomes for children affected by disabilities. The first panel addressed ways to prepare children for independence and the workforce with experts from the healthcare, education, nonprofit and government sectors. The second panel addressed how telehealth is improving levels of access to and the quality of healthcare for persons facing disabilities with experts from healthcare and academic medical centers. Laura Nagel of Communication Innovation Therapies provided the keynote address where she shared the role occupational therapists play in helping children develop skills needed to succeed at home, in their education, and on their chosen career path.



### **The Future of Manure Digesters in Wisconsin**

On February 25, 2020, the UW-Green Bay Environmental & Business Institute hosted a conference in partnership with the Thompson Center relating to the future of manure digesters in Wisconsin. The first panel addressed the challenges facing Wisconsin as a leading state in the number of digester operations, including the dairy crisis and the shifting landscape developers face in monetizing digester developments. The second panel and keynote speaker highlighted how developers and regulators can optimize the economic, environmental and energy benefits of digesters. The panels included experts from a cross-section of states leading digester development nationally (Wisconsin, New York and California) and representatives of major national research universities, a federal laboratory and the Federal Reserve. A group of La Follette School of Public Affairs students closed the panel portion of the conference with a presentation on their cost-benefit analysis research relating to digester development in northeast Wisconsin.



### **Renewable Energy Development, Grid Modernization, & Distributed Generation in Wisconsin**

To close out its renewable energy series, the Thompson Center partnered with its host, the UW-Milwaukee Center for Sustainable Electric Energy Systems, on a conference exploring renewable energy development, grid modernization and distributed generation in Wisconsin on March 6, 2020. (Continued next page...)



The first panel discussed what role innovation and grid modernization play in renewable energy development nationally, while the second panel identified economic and regulatory questions that distributed generation raises in regulated states like Wisconsin. Speakers included the perspectives of a former regulator, a utility executive, national utility association, university researchers, and a federal laboratory. Former U.S. Air Force General Donald Hoffman, who is an energy prosumer in the Black River Falls area and member of the Military Advisory Board of the Center for Naval Analysis, gave the keynote address on the important role renewable energy will play in Wisconsin and America's future.

### **Achieving Greater Independence for Adults with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**

The Thompson Center converted the final conference in its disability series from an in-person event at UW-Stevens Point to a video-conference on April 3, 2020 due to COVID-19 advisories restricting in-person events. The first panel discussed ways to improve the transition to living and working independently for persons with disabilities. The second panel shared perspectives on the ways technology is leveling the playing field for persons with disabilities, whether at home, at school, or in the workplace, and how the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating the acceptance of leading edge technology solutions. Speakers included representatives of families, university researchers, service providers, and disability advocates. Executive Director Michael Morris of the National Disability Institute & The ABLE National Resource Center provided a keynote address in which he shared a financial planning and decision-making roadmap for persons with disabilities.

### **Protecting Democratic Institutions from Threats to Liberty**

The Thompson Center converted its democracy conference on March 27, 2020 in the UW-Milwaukee at Waukesha community to a video-conference due to COVID-19 advisories restricting in-person events. Notre Dame Professor Michael Coppedge provided an overview of levels of democracy and authoritarianism in nations throughout the world from the long-standing Varieties of Democracy Project. The following panels included panelists exploring what some observers call hybrid democracy or soft authoritarianism in places such as Venezuela and Russia. Princeton University Professor Dan Rogers concluded by sharing the American concept of "A City on a Hill" and how it impacts viewpoints on the United States' role in the world with respect to democracy. Former CNN White House and State Department Correspondent Jill Dougherty, who served as the network's Moscow Bureau Chief in the 1990's, shared remarks and moderated each segment of the conference.

## **Thanks To Our Spring 2020 Speakers**

**Brian Devore**

Agriculture Journalist  
UW-Eau Claire on January 30, 2020

**David Gergen**

Political Commentator & Former Presidential Advisor  
UW-La Crosse on February 27, 2020

**Doris Kearns Goodwin**

Presidential Historian  
UW-Green Bay on March 9, 2020

**Joseph Stoltz**

Director of the Mount Vernon George Washington Leadership Institute  
UW-Stout on March 9, 2020

**Bryan Caplan and Brian Leiter**

Professor of Economics at George Mason University;  
Professor of Jurisprudence at University of Chicago Law School  
UW-Madison on March 11, 2020

**Mia Love**

Former Congresswoman (Utah)  
UW-Parkside on March 12, 2020

**Michelle Reynolds**

University of Missouri-Kansas City Disability Advocate  
April 7, 2020 via webinar with UW-Whitewater

**KT McFarland**

Former Deputy National Security Advisor & Political Commentator  
April 9, 2020 via webinar with UW-Milwaukee

**Paul Clement**

Former United States Solicitor General  
April 21, 2020 via webinar

**Michael Beschloss**

Presidential Historian  
April 23, 2020 via webinar with UW-Green Bay

**Kenneth T. Walsh**

White House Journalist & Author  
April 23, 2020 via webinar with UW-La Crosse

## **Scholarships**

The Thompson Center embarked upon its inaugural year of awarding competitive Tommy G. Thompson Leadership Scholarships to thirteen students across the University of Wisconsin System campuses. Scholarship and financial aid representatives at the campuses were instrumental in developing the scholarship criteria and award process over the summer months. The scholarships, each \$2,300 in value, were given to undergraduate students who exemplify Tommy Thompson's spirit of tackling big problems through teamwork and unending zeal to make Wisconsin a better place.

The Center was pleased at the competitiveness of the over 350 undergraduates who applied for this award. Moreover, it was deeply impressed by the dedication, inventiveness, and passion demonstrated by these students. The applicants' backgrounds and areas of study are truly diverse, and we look forward to seeing their continued accomplishments as undergraduates. It is a certainty that these young leaders will go on to do many amazing things for both themselves and their communities.

### **Scholarship Award Winners for Spring 2020**

#### **Lauren Becker**

Geography, Transnational Geographies Comprehensive Major  
UW-Eau Claire

#### **Tory Clearwater**

Psychology and Pre-Medicine Major  
UW-Milwaukee

#### **Halee Fritsch**

Elementary Education; and Spanish Education Major  
UW-Stevens Point

#### **Guillermo Gomez**

Communication; and Democracy and Justice Studies Major  
UW-Green Bay

**Tierney Hall**

International Studies; and Political Science Major  
UW-Madison

**Mattie Krause**

Biology; and Pre-Medicine Major  
UW-La Crosse

**Noah Langenfeld**

Biochemistry; and Biology Major  
UW-Stevens Point

**Madalaine McConville**

Applied Social Science Major  
UW-Stout

**Olivia Patrizzi**

Business Management Major  
UW-Parkside

**Michael Sauer**

Political Science; and Economics Major  
UW-Madison

**Tyniqua Smith**

Criminal Justice Major  
UW-Eau Claire

**Rachael Tuve**

Psychology Major  
UW-Superior

**Collin Weltzien**

Agricultural Business Major  
UW-River Falls

## **The Badgercast**

The Badgercast is another way the Thompson Center is reaching out to do good work for the people of Wisconsin. Each week a new podcast is made available to listeners around the state, examining and receiving expert opinion on numerous matters of social and political debate. The Badgercast is available on Soundcloud, Spotify, and iTunes. Links are available on the Thompson Center website.

### **Featured Guests in Spring 2020**

#### **Rebecca Bradley and Rebecca Dallet**

Justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court

#### **Mike Lee**

U.S. Senator (Utah)

#### **Charles Franklin**

Director of the Marquette Law School Poll

#### **David Robson**

Author of *The Intelligence Trap*

#### **Ryan Walsh**

Attorney and Former Chief Deputy Solicitor General of Wisconsin

#### **Fred Risser and Tommy G. Thompson**

Wisconsin State Senator; and Former Wisconsin Governor

#### **Lisa Pugh and Beth Swedeen**

Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin; and Executive Director of The Wisconsin Board for People with Development Disabilities



## **Thompson Center Research Affiliates**

**Lindsay Jacobs**

Assistant Professor, Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**John Kaminski**

Founder & Director of The Center for the Study of the American Constitution and Director & Co-Editor of *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Michael Light**

Associate Professor of Sociology & Chicano/Latino Studies, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Gregory Nemet**

Professor, Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Research Fellow, German Institute for Economic Research

**Marietou Ouayogode**

Assistant Professor of Population Health Sciences, School of Medicine & Public Health, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Karl Shoemaker**

Professor, Department of History & Law, University of Wisconsin-Madison

## **Contact The Thompson Center**

Follow us on Twitter at **@thompson\_center**, on Facebook at **@TThompsonCenter**, and on Instagram at **@thompson\_center**. And check out our website for current **podcasts** and an updated list of events and speakers: <https://thompsoncenter.wisc.edu/>.

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