

THANK YOU, 72



- Speaker 1: [00:03](#) Welcome to the *Thank You, 72* podcast. Brought to you by the Wisconsin Alumni Association. This podcast celebrates the accomplishments of University of Wisconsin–Madison alumni from all 72 counties of the state. Here’s your host, Tod Pritchard.
- Tod Pritchard: [00:17](#) This podcast is just one of many ways the Wisconsin Alumni Association celebrates the university and its grads. For example, each summer we hit the road and talk to people over a delicious scoop of Babcock ice cream. We call it, “Get the Scoop.” We drive a 1957 International Harvester Metro Van across the state. We stop at various events, we hand out free ice cream, and at the same time ask folks to participate in a trivia challenge, which helps melt myths about the university. You can play the trivia challenge and get more information on the program by visiting [uwscoop.com](#).
- Tod Pritchard: [00:54](#) Now, you may not know this, but our truck has a name: Randall M. Scoops. He’s become quite the social media star. So, rolling into the Wisconsin Alumni Association garage right now is our own Randall M. Scoops. Randall, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast.
- Randall: [01:14](#) Well, the honor is all mine, Tod, let me assure you of that.
- Tod Pritchard: [01:18](#) Well, it’s so great having you here. Tell us a little bit more about yourself, Randall. You were born in 1957, right?
- Randall: [01:25](#) That’s right, yeah.
- Tod Pritchard: [01:26](#) And you are an International Harvester Metro Van.
- Randall: [01:29](#) I am!
- Tod Pritchard: [01:30](#) Well, tell me a little bit about your life.
- Randall: [01:32](#) Well, I’ve been around the block a time or two. I’ve enjoyed a long career. Spent the first couple of decades of my life on a dairy farm on the outskirts of Waunakee right here in

Wisconsin. Earned my mileage, as they say. I was running milk to the faithful customers of Dane County. I loved the dairy farm. Cows — they're funny creatures. Anyway, it taught me the value of our getting up before the sun comes up, all the stuff that you can get done, and can I share you a little secret, Tod?

- Tod Pritchard: [02:10](#) I'd love a little secret.
- Randall: [02:11](#) All right. Well, I'll tell you. For all the time I've spent on the dairy farm, I still like my coffee without cream. Is that okay to say that here in Wisconsin?
- Tod Pritchard: [02:22](#) Absolutely. That's fine.
- Randall: [02:23](#) "Give it to me black as my inevitable oil" is what I always say. Anyway, I hit 100K on the odometer, and then grocery stores start popping up everywhere you look. They have state-of-the-art refrigeration units and they were convenient, so the milkmen went the way of the Model T.
- Tod Pritchard: [02:45](#) Oh, sure.
- Randall: [02:46](#) Put me out of a job, which is fine. I was ready to move on. So what's a Metro Van to do? Well, I moved up to Saskatoon, that's what. Which is in Saskatchewan, Canada.
- Tod Pritchard: [02:58](#) Way up there.
- Randall: [03:00](#) Way up there. And once I got to Saskatoon, I found a job as a maintenance van for a moving company. That's what I did. I did that for a while, and then I did a couple of odd jobs here and there toward the end of my career, and I eventually a place on the shore of a nice lake up there in Saskatoon and retired. It's time to hang it up, give the old gears a rest.
- Tod Pritchard: [03:27](#) Absolutely.
- Randall: [03:28](#) I earned my rust. Oh, did I say *rust*, I meant *rest*. I was just joking there, Tod. Anyway, that's where the University of Wisconsin found me — the alumni association — up there in Saskatoon on the lake and on the shore of Patience Lake, of all places. They gave me an offer I couldn't refuse and pulled me out of retirement. Off the old blocks.
- Tod Pritchard: [03:56](#) Randall, tell us a little bit more about what you're doing now. So you're driving across Wisconsin.
- Randall: [04:01](#) I am.

Tod Pritchard: [04:01](#) You're giving away free ice cream.

Randall: [04:03](#) I am.

Tod Pritchard: [04:04](#) And you're helping the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Alumni Association really bust some pretty major myths about the university.

Randall: [04:12](#) I tell you what, for an old farm boy like me coming back to the dairy stage, it's a dream come true. And also, if I may say, with a name like *Scoops*, I was born to deliver ice cream. Of course, had to lose my spare tire first, of course, but it didn't take too long. I was ready to roll. Little rust remover, some oil, and now I'm an ice cream truck. Who knew? There are a lot of things that people don't know about the university, Tod.

Tod Pritchard: [04:44](#) That's true, there's a lot of misconceptions out there.

Randall: [04:46](#) A lot of misconceptions and myths, and what I do is drive all around the state and deliver ice cream to people. Babcock ice cream. Did I mention it was Babcock ice cream?

Tod Pritchard: [04:56](#) It's the best ice cream.

Randall: [04:57](#) The best! Anyway, while people are enjoying their Babcock ice cream, the lovely people of Wisconsin, they're learning a thing or two about the university. Stuff they didn't know was true like, for instance, did you know, Tod, that more than half of the University of Wisconsin's honor grads graduate with zero debt?

Tod Pritchard: [05:21](#) I know. Isn't that amazing? I think people just assume that every student that's graduating from college is carrying a ton of debt. That's just not true at the University of Wisconsin.

Randall: [05:30](#) Not at the University of Wisconsin, so that's what I do. I drive around and help dissolve some of these myths. Help tell people about their state university, and that'll bring a smile to their faces.

Tod Pritchard: [05:43](#) Absolutely. So Randall, you're driving around the state, delivering ice cream, busting myths, and you're also telling your story on social media.

Randall: [05:53](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tod Pritchard: [05:53](#) Tell us more about that. How are you doing that?

Randall: [05:56](#) Well, I'll be honest, Tod. As an old timer, I'm not too familiar with this whole social media thing.

Tod Pritchard: [06:02](#) But you seem to really have it down.

Randall: [06:04](#) Well, I'm a pretty quick learner. I pride myself on that, and I even started posting on the IG is what I understand the kids are calling it these days, Instagram.

Tod Pritchard: [06:15](#) That's pretty hip of you.

Randall: [06:16](#) Well, I appreciate that. Somebody who doesn't have hips. That's a pretty nice compliment there. But anyway, you can follow me at Randall Scoops, that's Randall with two L's. I'm on Instagram, I'm on Twitter, I'm on the Facebook, and there's also a website. Did I mention that?

Tod Pritchard: [06:38](#) No, not yet.

Randall: [06:39](#) There's a website. If you want, you can visit me there. It's on the world wide web, it's called uwscoop.com and there's all sorts of things you can do there. You can take a quiz and win some stuff like T-shirts, tickets to a Badger football game.

Tod Pritchard: [06:58](#) Wow.

Randall: [06:59](#) Pretty cool. And I've never seen one myself. They won't let me into the stadium. There's not a seat big enough for me, but I do what I can. I got a radio, so I listen to the games. Anyway, the biggest thing you can do on the website is you can track us throughout the summer and into October and figure out exactly where I'm going to be and when.

Tod Pritchard: [07:21](#) Right so we post all the dates, all the locations.

Randall: [07:24](#) Everything's on there. The whole schedule you can find out. And it'll be really nice if you came out to see me because I'd love nothing more than to give you some wonderful Babcock ice cream.

Tod Pritchard: [07:36](#) And going back to the social media, we can follow you because you actually have a hashtag now.

Randall: [07:42](#) I've got a hashtag or as I'd like to think of it as a pound sign. But they taught me that it's a hashtag now, and that's what they call it, and I came up with this hashtag all by myself.

Tod Pritchard: [07:54](#) Really, okay let's hear it.

Randall: [07:56](#) Ready?

Tod Pritchard: [07:56](#) Yeah.

Randall: [07:57](#) All right it's getthescoopwi with a hashtag or a pound sign right in front of it.

Tod Pritchard: [08:04](#) Randall, you must love to deliver ice cream.

Randall: [08:07](#) Almost as much as I love eating it. I tell you what, though. For all my career, probably the biggest thing that I've enjoyed is making people smile, and I'll tell you what, nothing quite makes people smile like delivering ice cream.

Tod Pritchard: [08:25](#) Oh, that's true all of ages right?

Randall: [08:26](#) Especially, all ages. It doesn't matter if you're young or old like me. But it's free! Did I mention that it's free?

Tod Pritchard: [08:36](#) That's important to mention, yes.

Randall: [08:38](#) We just give it out.

Tod Pritchard: [08:39](#) Absolutely free.

Randall: [08:39](#) We just give it out. We're doing this all summer long and into October. I'll tell you what, it brings me a lot of joy bringing other people a lot of joy. Bringing smiles to their faces, there's nothing better except maybe free ice cream.

Tod Pritchard: [08:57](#) Randall, you've been around, literally. What has your life on the road taught you?

Randall: [09:02](#) I'll tell you, what has life on the road taught me? I have to think about that one. I got it. Don't sweat the wrong turns. Back in my day, we didn't have GPS. Rerouting was just something we did for fun. But seriously, people get so uptight about taking a wrong turn every now and then, but I say embrace them, lean into them because we all end up where we're supposed to go anyway. So maybe a wrong turn is what you need in a moment. That's what I like to think. That's probably the biggest lesson that the road has taught me is embrace the wrong turns.

Tod Pritchard: [09:52](#) That's an awesome philosophy.

Randall: [09:55](#) Well, thank you.

Tod Pritchard: [09:55](#) I'm wondering if you can share some of your other things in life. Let's start with this: what's your favorite book?

Randall: [10:06](#) I've always been very fond of *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac. Yeah, I'd say *On the Road*. It teaches me to really be inspired to get out there and experience the world.

Tod Pritchard: [10:21](#) Totally makes sense. How about your favorite song?

Randall: [10:25](#) Tell you what, the one that I play most while I'm driving from place to place is "I Get Around" by the Beach Boys. It reminds me of my dear mother.

Tod Pritchard: [10:35](#) Okay. How about your favorite movie?

Randall: [10:40](#) Well, I'm no, but I've always been a big fan on the classic cinema. So I'd have to say *Back to the Future*. You know, with that line, "Where we're going, we don't need roads." That always gets me every time. Every time, Tod.

Tod Pritchard: [10:58](#) And how about your favorite pastime?

Randall: [11:01](#) Caravanning without a doubt. Caravanning.

Tod Pritchard: [11:04](#) Makes sense.

Randall: [11:06](#) Yeah, it does.

Tod Pritchard: [11:07](#) So, last word of wisdom before we go and before you hit the road.

Randall: [11:12](#) I don't know if I have any words of wisdom. I've been around in my career. I've enjoyed a long life. Really enjoyed bringing a lot of people smiles. But the one thing that I got to keep reminding myself, and maybe other people can learn from this as well, is you can never get lost if you don't know where you're going. Oh, boy!

Tod Pritchard: [11:37](#) That is awesome. Thank you, Randall, so much for being here. May your journey be safe and may your potholes be few.

Randall: [11:45](#) Oh, it's been a pleasure, and I tell you what, I avoid the potholes every chance I get. Thank you, Tod, and for the people of Wisconsin: I'll see you up there on the road.

Tod Pritchard: [12:05](#) This concept of traveling the state and thanking folks for supporting the University of Wisconsin and sending their best to Madison started about four years ago. Joining me now is Jim

Kennedy. He's the chief marketing and communications officer at the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association. Jim, thanks for joining us.

Jim Kennedy: [12:23](#) Thanks for having me, Tod. I really appreciate it, and you're absolutely right. It did start about four years ago. There's a small group of us talking about the university, it's alumni and the various partners and programs that happen across the state, not just here in Dane County. Pretty quickly, we're able to identify connections between UW Madison and all 72 counties in the state. We want to surface those stories and those connections and really thank the citizens of the state for all that they've given.

Jim Kennedy: [12:52](#) So we call it "Project 72" because, of course, we know there're 72 counties in the state, and it's our way to show gratitude for all the citizens of those 72 counties for that they've given us to become a great university. It started 170 years ago with the land that was given to the university. It's a land-grant university. That land was actually given by the state to UW-Madison. But we also want to thank folks of the state for the taxpayer support that they offer us, but maybe most importantly is for the students they send to UW-Madison because when you think about it, it's those young scholars who ultimately become researchers, teachers, farmers, engineers. Those are the folks that come here and make it a world-class university, and we want to say thanks.

Tod Pritchard: [13:39](#) There are some amazing stories of people from all around the state who came to Madison, and so now you're adding a new element to this campaign and it's Randall M. Scoops, our intrepid 1957 International Harvester Metro Van.

Jim Kennedy: [13:56](#) Right. Randall is a great story, but it really starts with Babcock Dairy ice cream.

Tod Pritchard: [14:06](#) Absolutely, all the time. Love it.

Jim Kennedy: [14:08](#) Yeah, and most alums do — and even visitors to the campus — because, really, it's a summertime favorite — anytime favorite — and folks remember fondly the experience of eating Babcock Dairy ice cream across campus. So what better way to thank people across the state than to deliver ice cream to them. Now, of course, you can't ship ice cream very efficiently, so we had to find a way to get it there, and that's where Randall comes in.

Tod Pritchard: [14:31](#) So having Randall be your representative and sharing this ice cream and these great feelings of being connected to the

university, is awesome and a lot of fun, but there's also some important information that we're trying to get out, as well, as part of this whole campaign.

- Jim Kennedy: [14:52](#) Yeah there is, and it's important to know that we want to speak to people who are alums, but not just alums. We wanted to speak to all residents of the state and because there's a misperception about UW–Madison, and the story typically goes something like this: It starts with in-state students and high school students can't even get into the UW–Madison. That's the first misperception. The next one is if they do, it's really expensive. It's cost prohibitive. They come out of school with all kinds of debt. That's another one, the third is that part of the reason that they come out with all this debt is it takes them forever to graduate, maybe five–six years, and ultimately when they do graduate, they flee the state.
- Jim Kennedy: [15:31](#) It's brain drain on the state of Wisconsin. And the reality is far, far from that and what we're trying to do with this myth-busting tour, we call it, is going around the state and talk about the facts. The facts are that two-thirds of in-state undergraduate applicants actually get into UW–Madison, and when they do come here, 53 percent graduate with zero debt. That's one that's hard for people to believe, but it's a fact, and it has been a fact for the years since I've been here that the majority of the students leave with no debt. Part of the reason they do is that the average time to graduation for an undergraduate is 4.01 years. That's four years and four days, so our students are very efficient. And finally, they don't flee the state. Seventy percent of our undergraduates that come from Wisconsin actually end up living and working in the state upon graduation, so it's these misperceptions that we're trying to offset with this year's tour.
- Tod Pritchard: [16:26](#) So how do you deliver that information? How do you get that myth-busting information to people who are stopping by at the truck?
- Jim Kennedy: [16:33](#) There's a couple of ways — obviously Randall and his stops. He goes across the state, and you can see where he's going at uwscoop.com. So that's one way because at those events, we ask folks to take a short quiz. It's six questions. It's pretty simple, but to take a quiz to test their knowledge about UW–Madison, and we asked them some of these questions, and you'd be surprised. People are shocked when they hear some of these answers. So, that's one way.
- Jim Kennedy: [16:58](#) The other way is to go to uwscoop.com. Not only will you find our events schedule, but you'll find an online version of our quiz

where you can test your own knowledge to see how much you know about UW–Madison.

- Tod Pritchard: [17:09](#) And online, and as well as the actual visits to the truck, you have a chance to sign up for great giveaway packages and prizes.
- Jim Kennedy: [17:18](#) Yeah, we do. This year, we've partnered with Discover Wisconsin. If you know the program, it's the longest running tourism show in the United States. This one's of course about Wisconsin so we've partnered with them, and we've put together a couple of prize packs for a few lucky winners, and one of the prize packs includes, as an example, a pair of tickets to a fall football game here in Madison's Camp Randall.
- Tod Pritchard: [17:39](#) And who wouldn't love to win a couple of tickets to a great football game in a stadium in a great university?
- Jim Kennedy: [17:44](#) And, who knows, maybe Randall will show up for that game too.
- Tod Pritchard: [17:46](#) That'll be pretty awesome, wouldn't it?
- Jim Kennedy: [17:49](#) We'll have to see.
- Tod Pritchard: [17:51](#) Thank you, Jim, for being on the podcast.
- Jim Kennedy: [17:52](#) Thanks, Tod. Thanks for having me.
- Speaker 1: [17:56](#) Thanks for listening to the *Thank You, 72* podcast. The Wisconsin Alumni Association brings you stories of amazing Badgers. For more podcasts, visit thankyou72.org. That's thankyou72.org