

Fund for Wisconsin Scholars (FFWS) Leadership Announcement

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Fund for Wisconsin Scholars (FFWS) announces Kelly Ruppel as new Executive Director

An unwavering commitment to Wisconsin public school students' access to and graduation from one of the University of Wisconsin Universities or Colleges.

John and Tashia Morgridge, the founding members of the Fund for Wisconsin Scholars (FFWS), and the Fund's board of directors are excited and pleased to announce Kelly Ruppel, the former chief financial officer of the Madison Metropolitan School District, will become the Fund's executive director beginning in January 2023. She takes the position as the current executive director, Mary Gulbrandsen retires after serving as the Executive Director for the last 15 years.

The Fund for Wisconsin Scholars was established in 2007 by a gift of \$175 million from the Morgridges to provide need-based grants to Wisconsin public high school students attending University of Wisconsin four-year colleges and universities. Its goal is to support access to and completion of college. Since its inception, the FFWS has provided more than **\$112 million** in need-based grants to over 10,000 randomly selected, recent graduates of Wisconsin public high schools who are attending one of the University of Wisconsin universities or colleges or one of the Wisconsin Technical College System schools.

"Kelly's background in finance and accounting, coupled with her lifelong commitment to the success of public education students and increasing learning opportunities for children, makes her a very exciting leader for the future of the foundation," said John Morgridge, the Board President and co-founder of FFWS. "We are honored to welcome Kelly."

Kelly brings nearly 20 years of experience in community leadership and successful implementation of efforts to close access and opportunity gaps through strategic planning, investing for social outcomes, and listening to students and families. She is joining FFWS from Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southeastern Wisconsin, where she served as executive director. Prior to that, she was the chief financial officer and chief of staff to the Superintendent of the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). She also worked at the Civic Consulting Alliance, managing projects between Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago City Colleges aiming to improve access to and graduation from the City College system.

Kelly brings a finance and accounting background to FFWS, having completed her MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. She implemented large-scale change efforts at MMSD and managed numerous nonprofit and government organizational efforts at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

"The mission of the Fund For Wisconsin Scholars speaks directly to the long-term economic success of this great state of Wisconsin through investment in educational advancement of students," said Kelly

Ruppel. “Wisconsin’s successful high school students should have unhindered access to our premier UW System. No qualified student should ever have to choose between investing in their future and balancing the financial burden of attending the university today. I have seen the systemic barriers our students face every day and the lack of resources available for them to thrive. Together, we have the opportunity to impact students’ lives and work to increase access and opportunity.”

Kelly is a proud Wisconsin native and Wisconsin public-school graduate. She currently lives in Madison with her husband and three young children. Kelly’s mom was the first woman in her family to attend college and had to drop out to support her family when her father had a health crisis. Kelly’s hope is that FFWS can prove to be a research-based support for low-income students to close generational poverty cycles and improve the overall economic condition of the state of Wisconsin.

About the Fund for Wisconsin Scholars

The Fund for Wisconsin Scholars is a private, not for profit charitable foundation endowed in 2007 by John and Tashia Morgridge. The foundation is built on the belief that every person has equal value and the potential to create one’s own future and the future of our society; and that the attainment of higher education leads to improved physical and emotional health, increased moral and ethical thinking, and increased civic involvement. FFWS also believes that increasing the number of Wisconsin adults who hold a bachelor’s degree will improve the quality of life for all Wisconsin residents by creating more well-paying jobs, increasing learning opportunities and providing greater education options for future students. By helping to assure a highly educated workforce, FFWS helps create the economic viability necessary for meeting the challenges that face us today and tomorrow.

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Kelly Ruppel