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2>A Year Of Turmoil, Success

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State Journal staff

Last year, The State Journal predicted 2007 would be a pivotal year for the following seven people. Here's how their years went:

DAVID DENIG-CHAKROFF

Controversy at the Madison Water Utility finally caught up to former general manager David Denig-Chakroff in 2007.

Culminating more than two years of turmoil and problems ranging from manganese in the city's water to employee morale problems, Denig-Chakroff, 56, left his post in September after the city offered to buy out the remaining four years of his contract for \$130,596.

Hired to head the utility in 1996, Denig-Chakroff called his resignation "the best course for the utility and the community."

ALANDO TUCKER

Alando Tucker's career with the University of Wisconsin men's basketball team came to a close in 2007, but not before he led the Badgers to their first Associated Press No. 1 ranking and a school-record 30 victories. On the way, he became the leading scorer in school history, was recognized as Big Ten Conference player of the year and was named a consensus first-team All-American.

After earning his degree in May, Tucker was selected 29th overall in the NBA draft by the Phoenix Suns. After being allocated to the Albuquerque Thunderbirds of the NBA Development League, Tucker, 23, rejoined the Suns on Dec. 18.

MELISSA NIGH

Melissa Nigh, the former teacher who became principal of Weston Schools in late 2006, says her first 12 months in the post were challenging, especially trying to help students with post-traumatic stress issues. "The other things are just day-to-day principalship duties," says Nigh, 43, who took over the position after the shooting death of Principal John Klang by a student in a school hallway.

Nigh plans to continue in the job.

"She has really grown as an administrator," says Superintendent Tom Andres. "She can confront things, she can deal with things, she's on top of the whole picture."

FRED ROBERTSON

Fred Robertson led TomoTherapy through a highly successful initial public stock offering in 2007. The Madison company, which makes a unique type of cancer radiation treatment machine, netted \$185 million from the share sale, the fourth largest medical device/technology IPO since 1997.

That has helped TomoTherapy grow, installing its machines in China and signing with distributors in Russia, Israel and United Arab Emirates. CEO Robertson, 52, says the company expects more than \$200 million in 2007 sales.

JON ODORICO

Though UW-Madison stem cell researcher Jon Odorico, 46, did not make any major advances in his research on using embryonic stem cells to treat diabetes, he did benefit from another major accomplishment at the university.

Fellow stem cell scientist James Thomson found a way to reprogram human stem cells to become embryonic stem cells and avoid the controversial first step of destroying an embryo to obtain the valuable cells.

MICHAEL MORGAN

A former running back for the UW-Madison football team, Michael Morgan took some hits for Gov. Jim Doyle this year as Morgan worked to drive forward delayed state budget negotiations.

The secretary of the state Department of Administration, Morgan, 51, acknowledged the delays in reaching a budget deal nearly four months late, but says the final bill funded crucial priorities such as education and health care.

MEG HAMEL

In 2007, Meg Hamel completed her first full year as director of the Wisconsin Film Festival, overseeing a four-day event in April that filled nearly 29,000 seats, up 3,000 tickets from 2006. "The 2007 festival was absolutely fantastic," she says.

The film fest celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2008, but don't expect any major changes, says Hamel. "It's still going to feel compact, intimate - all the good parts of the festival will still be there."

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