



## Super Bisono Bros.

It was always a goal of brothers **John '20, M'23** and **Matt '21, M'23 Bisono** to attend college together. That dream was fulfilled when the two transferred to the University of Mount Union during their undergraduate careers. As they near completion of graduate degrees from their alma mater, their care and drive for their fields of study and each other is propelling them to achieve their ambitions.

Originally from Long Island, New York, the Bisonos' journey to Mount Union was not linear. After moving to Cincinnati, Ohio and graduating from Deer Park High School, John played football at Fairmont State University in West Virginia and Matt played lacrosse at Tompkins Cortland Community College in Dryden, New York. When Mount Union came up on John's radar for football, he noticed that the lacrosse program could be a great fit for Matt, reuniting the brothers and driving their success.

"I always strive for greatness when I'm with my brother," John said. "I knew we would keep that up if we were

able to attend college together, and Mount Union just made sense for us."

After transferring to Mount Union, the Bisonos began to make their marks on the field. John earned All-OAC honorable mention honors in 2021 as an offensive lineman, and Matt scored 33 goals and was a three-time letter winner on the lacrosse team. While successful on the field, the brothers also continued to excel in the classroom.

After John earned a bachelor's degree in sport business and Matt one in integrated media, the brothers wanted to pursue their master's degrees. With their undergraduate experiences lining up with Mount Union's graduate offerings, it made sense for their Purple Raider careers to continue.

An area manager at Amazon, John wrapped up the Master of Business Administration degree program in leadership and innovation. Though the program is fully-online, he appreciated the interactions with faculty and the application of classroom knowledge to his daily work.

"There has not been a time during undergrad or my time in the MBA where I was not able to reach out to my professors with questions at any time," John said. "Plus, every assignment I have had can directly apply to my work at Amazon. The MBA program has primed my leadership style and made me more grounded and aware as a mentor and leader."

"John has been an outstanding student in the MBA program. He has transferred his experience from the football field and demonstrated teamwork and work ethic that will continue to build his leadership skills in the future," said Dr. Wendy Ziems-Mueller, director of Mount Union's MBA program.

Matt is also immediately employing techniques from his program into his day-to-day work. As he completed his Master of Education degree in athletic coaching, he spent two years as an assistant coach for Mount Union's men's lacrosse team.

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"During Matt's time in our athletic coaching program, he stood out as a truly impactful student and coach," said Dr. Mandy (Geddis '98) Capel, director of Mount Union's Master of Education program. "Matt demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment to both his personal growth and the development of his team. His dedication to learning and improvement is a testament to his success not only in the classroom, but also as an assistant lacrosse coach at Mount Union."

With the brothers earning their second degrees from Mount Union, their career paths are in sight. Though John is currently making his way through the ranks at Amazon, he hopes to one day be his own boss as a consultant for small businesses to aid in their logistics and processing. Matt has made an impact in the collegiate world but hopes his career will reflect his M.Ed. capstone project in helping youth athletes in their academic development, while pursuing a career in coaching.

Not all siblings get to achieve their dreams while sharing a college experience, and the Bisonos are grateful for their collective Mount Union journey and the individuals who have helped along the way.

"There are so many people – friends, family, professors – who have been part of our success, and they deserve a big thank you," John said.

Matt has always considered his older brother a role model who keeps him grounded. John appreciates the resilient creativity of Matt, pushing him to think differently while leading. While both are ready to make an impact in important careers, their academic and athletic achievements remain impressive. Yet most notable to the Bisonos is that they have been able to reach their goals and realize their dreams at Mount Union, together.



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# Legacy in *WAYT*-ing



*Success runs in the family  
for Mount Union champions  
Heather (O'Shea '96) and  
Kenadee Wayt '23*



## Kenadee Wayt '23 loves her mom. She also can't wait to knock her mom, Heather (O'Shea '96) Wayt, out of the Mount Union history books.

In fact, Kenadee could not help but smile when she said that she wanted to "have someone take a video pulling my mom's name off the wall" if she broke her mother's nearly 30-year-old 800-meter record. If that happens, it would be another recognition added to one of the most decorated track careers in Mount Union history.

### Making It to Mount

Kenadee's collegiate track success almost did not happen, and she almost didn't come to Mount Union. With her mother being a three-time national champion athlete and member of the M Club Hall of Fame, it would be tough to fault her reasoning in initially avoiding the University.

"I was against Mount Union at first because I didn't want to go where my mom went, and I wasn't sure if I even wanted to run in college at all," Kenadee said.

Heather obviously had her own hopes about Kenadee's college endeavors but wanted to make sure Kenadee found the correct fit for her future, resigning herself to the idea that Mount Union was not in the cards.

Enter Eric Belancic '07, head track coach of Wheeling Central Catholic High School. His presence in the Wayt family's athletic story brings everything "full circle," according to Heather. Belancic was coached by Heather at Wheeling CC, where his high jump success led him to an All-American career at Mount Union. As fate would have it, Belancic returned to Wheeling CC, where he coached Kenadee, nudging her to at least visit Mount Union. That was all it took for the younger Wayt to build her own Purple Raider legacy.

### An Illustrious Career

Calling Kenadee's track accomplishments impressive would almost feel like a disservice. She is a 15-time All-American, 16-time OAC Champion and 21-time All-OAC recipient, and she holds 10 Mount Union track records. Despite that acclaim, a national championship remained elusive. That is, until March 11, 2023, when she took home the title in the 200-meter with a time of 24.31 seconds, besting her own school record in the process. After the win, she shared an emotional moment with her mom, still in disbelief of her victory.

"I just remember hugging her, crying and saying things like 'I can't believe I won' and 'Did that really just happen?'" Kenadee said.



*Eric Belancic '07 (left) stands with Kenadee after coaching her at a high school meet.*

With a delay between Kenadee's heat and the final heat to determine the champion, Heather also struggled with impatient composure like many parents of athletes. "I was kind of sick to my stomach while we waited," she said. "I actually turned around to the wall and had Kenadee's boyfriend tell me what was happening because I just couldn't watch, but I was so happy when we found out that she had won."

It did not take long for Kenadee to have an encore on the track. During the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in May, she became the first Mount Union woman in history to win multiple individual national championships in the same meet in taking home the 200-meter and 400-meter titles. As

a result, she was named the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Athlete of the Year for 2023. With a few more seasons of post-pandemic eligibility available to her, Wayt's passion and competitive spirit will not let her rest on her laurels. She has more accolades in sight, namely her mother's 800-meter record, something she has already been within seconds of beating.

### Post-Track Goals

Track is not the only family business for the Wayts. Heather is currently a family physician in their hometown of Wheeling, West Virginia, with her daughters following closely behind in the allied health field.

Kenadee, a biology graduate, became only the second Mount Union woman in history to earn the prestigious NCAA Elite 90 award, which is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative GPA participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships. Her next step is to earn her Master of Science degree in physician assistant studies from Mount Union. Her twin sister, Ireland, will attend medical school after graduating from High Point University in North Carolina this spring. Heather takes pride in Kenadee's dedication on the track and in the classroom, while Kenadee remains grateful for her mom's support.

"She's loving, stern, and can be a little intense," Kenadee said through a laugh about her mom. "But whether we're training or just talking, it's nice to have her by my side through everything."

It is safe to say that the Wayt family is fast. While they have, and continue to sprint past everyone on the track, they are making sure to slow down and recognize the elite success they have achieved one step at a time.