



Joe Mazurek hugs his oldest son, Tom Mazurek, after he accepted the University of Montana Distinguished Alumni Award in 2010 on Joe's behalf. TODD GOODRICH PHOTO

## Mazurek: 'Our own clocks are ticking'

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Steve Bullock, was shaped by Mazurek's strong values of public service. Bullock managed Mazurek's campaign for attorney general in 1992 and was his chief lawyer at the Department of Justice during his second term.

"He taught us that we were all public servants and that that was a high calling," he said. "Joe was not trying to make himself look good publicly, but just trying to get the job done in the best way for those he represented," Bullock said. "He got along with everyone — there was no stridency — and that was a good lesson for us all. He's had a profound, positive impact on me and on many others."

Bullock said Mazurek also showed him "how to lead a life well lived. He was a mentor, a surrogate parent and, always, a source of inspiration. Alzheimer's robbed all of us, because he still had so much to give."

During his career, Mazurek worked at two of the state's largest law firms: Gough, Shanahan, Johnson & Waterman for nearly 20 years starting after law school until he became attorney general in 1993 and Crowley Fleck, after his second term ended. Crowley Fleck attorney Jason Loble worked closely with Mazurek and was one of the first to notice Mazurek's difficulty with language in 2007.

"There was a gradual loss of capacity and a corresponding set of conditions we arrived at together — from the leadership role he had at



Joe Mazurek shares a happy moment after the University of Montana Distinguished Alumni Award ceremony with his longtime close friend University of Montana law professor, Greg Munro, in 2010. TODD GOODRICH PHOTO

the firm, to being supervised, to just being a member of the 'family' in his presence at the office."

By 2008, Mazurek had lost his driver's license and could no longer go to the office, where he'd continued to spend time after he was no longer practicing.

"It was crushing for everyone here," Loble said. "We all love him."

### Family fears

"Alzheimer's is everybody's worst nightmare," Greg Munro said. "We can put up with cancer and heart disease, but this is horrifying to me and my colleagues. I watched Joe in the agonizing position — when he was still fully cognizant of his situation — of going from being the exceptionally well-known, competent public servant to suddenly being the guy with

Alzheimer's."

In addition to Mazurek's father, three of his uncles and an aunt died from Alzheimer's, so Mazurek knew what his future could hold. Once he began to exhibit symptoms "he knew what was coming, so he made sure all his paperwork was in order," Patty said.

Now his three sons wonder if they'll be spared their father's fate.

Tom Mazurek is Joe's oldest son.

"It's already happening to my dad. It's not something we can turn the clock back on," he said. "My brothers and I feel a little like our own clocks are ticking, so we want to help any way we can. If there's any way possible we can be part of a solution or part of a cure, we want to do that. It's important to us to try to find a way to treat this."

## The story behind Joe's story

By JANET HENDERSON  
For the Tribune

The opportunity for the Mazurek family to play a role in the search for a cure arose last year when Joe Mazurek's old friend Randy Gray invited Patty and Joe to Great Falls to tour the McLaughlin Research Institute.

The Institute focuses on Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other degenerative brain diseases. Its nationally known, genetically engineered mouse models for human disease are widely used for testing and developing new therapies. The Institute's long-time collaborators include Nobel laureates and other leaders in the scientific world.

Former mayor of Great Falls and a member of the Institute's board of directors, Gray wanted to make a connection between Mazurek's illness and McLaughlin's work. The Mazurek family later agreed to tell Joe's story as a way to help raise awareness about the effects of Alzheimer's and about McLaughlin Research Institute's work to find a cure.

"I think people would be proud to know this research is taking place right here in Montana," said Patty Mazurek.

As the number of Americans with Alzheimer's threatens to triple from 5 million to 15 million over the next several decades, Montana's own aging population makes it one of the top states anticipated to carry a large burden of the epidemic.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Montana is among nine



ABOVE: McLaughlin Research Institute mice. BELOW: Current mice containment units are housed on racks that provide ventilation to each unit. TRIBUNE PHOTO/ION SANDERS

states expected to experience increases as high as 81 percent to 127 percent in the numbers of people with Alzheimer's between 2000 and 2025, due to increases in the proportion of the population over age 65.

According to the Association's report, 2012 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, this "will have a marked impact on states' health care systems, not to mention families and caregivers."

The yearly cost of caring for the entire nation's Alzheimer's patients is projected to be \$1.1 trillion by 2050.

McLaughlin Research Institute's mouse models for Alzheimer's are playing a critical role in developing solutions to this and other forms of dementia. Its research has moved medicine closer to the day when a simple blood test will reveal a person's predisposition to Alzheimer's and enable very early intervention to slow or

stop the progression of the disease before symptoms appear.

Work at McLaughlin has also been instrumental in advancing a promising therapy for Alzheimer's using brain stem cell transplants.

In addition, McLaughlin's recent research, in collaboration with Harvard University, shows that Alzheimer's spreads from brain cell to brain cell, much like an infection spreads. Finding a way to stop this cell-to-cell transfer would make it possible to stop or slow the spread of the disease.

"I have an extremely large amount of respect and enormous gratitude for the work McLaughlin Research Institute does," said former Montana Governor Marc Racicot.

For the Mazureks and the many families like them, facing the prospect of another generation's affliction with Alzheimer's lends a sense of urgency to the search for a cure.



## Manifest destiny: 'A whole set of frontiers we don't even know about yet'

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manded by entrepreneurial Americans.

As the manufacturing economy reconfigures, you often hear the lament that "America doesn't make anything anymore." But then there's this: Most of the world's digital centers of gravity have been, and remain, American. Apple and Microsoft. Google and Yahoo. YouTube and Amazon and eBay. Facebook and Twitter and Instagram. Kickstarter. Netflix. PayPal. Akamai, the content-delivery behemoth. Intel, the internal combustion engine of the whole shebang. And for that matter, the Internet itself and the organization that regulates its domain names were both born and raised in (you guessed it) America.

A digital manifest destiny is playing out, built upon the notion that the United States' outward expansion continues apace on the virtual frontier.

What the self-defined sense of American exceptionalism built in the physical world, it now is building in the digital one.

"It's a projection of American values — what international experts would call soft power," said Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project.

Look at what the digital space disseminates, he said: freedom of the press, of information and of assembly; knowledge and scientific advancement; free-market mechanisms and entrepreneurialism. "It's hard to think of a cluster of ideas and architectures that would more allow basic American cultural values to propagate," said Rainie, co-author of the new book, "Networked: The New Social Operating System."

Technological progress has always walked hand in hand with American expansion. Where would the settlement of the West have been without Robert Fulton's steamboat, Samuel F.B. Morse's work in



Artwork shows the Oregon trail in 1844. AP PHOTO, FILE

telegraphy and, later, the inventions of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford? Not to mention the old-time data pipelines themselves — the postal system, the railroads and eventually the interstate highways?

In those cases, innovation helped drive development and physically shape the frontier; now innovation itself is the frontier. And the American tendency to glorify the inventor's spirit remains a key engine. As Alexander Graham Bell went, so goes Zuckerberg.

"In this country, you're a hero if you invent something. To be an inventor in America, that's as good as being an explorer," said Julie Fenster, author of "The Spirit of Invention: The Story of the Thinkers, Creators and Dreamers who Formed Our Nation."

"The notion that 'I can invent my way out of problems' — that always fueled a sense of hope and expansion in this country," she said.

That parallel between the

frontiers of the road and the mind has not gone unnoticed by politicians and leaders looking to cast America's newest progress in the context of the old. President Barack Obama, speaking to Carnegie Mellon University's National Robotics Engineering Center last year, called for tech innovation this way: "That's the kind of adventurous, pioneering spirit that we need right now. That's the spirit that's given us the tools and toughness to overcome every obstacle and adapt to every circumstance."

The nation's digital innovators have been placing virtual progress into the context of American expansionism for years. Sometimes they're oblique about it, sometimes they're explicit.

"There is never a reliable map for unexplored territory," wrote Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, who in 1995 likened the early Internet to the Oregon Trail. Apple co-founder Steve Jobs put it this way in 1985: "In a society where information and inno-

vation are going to be pivotal, there really is the possibility that America can become a second-rate industrial nation if we lose the technical momentum and leadership we have now."

Manifest destiny and its first cousin, American exceptionalism, aren't popular notions everywhere. The idea of U.S. domination in everything from cultural frontiers (Hollywood) to geographic ones (outer space) can set the world on edge. Just as irritatingly to some, America's ability to occupy these spaces rests upon not only actual innovation but the oomph to amplify it on a global level — in effect, to shout the loudest in a crowded, if now virtual, room.

"Manifest destiny justifies a certain behavior. One could call it rapaciousness on one end, but someone else could call it being an entrepreneur, being a founder," said John Baick, a historian at Western New England University in Massachusetts. That reflects back upon the original mani-

fest destiny imperative to push outward at all costs; expansion, on any frontier, also can mean overrunning the people who are already there.

What has helped this dominance along? Is it the American penchant for R&D, which fuels innovation? The rise of venture capital over the past half-century, particularly in places like Silicon Valley? Is it the combination of creativity and Barnum-style snake oil that matured into the marketing culture that helps define America today? Is it the nation's higher-education system, which has vigorously pushed the relationship between technological innovation and entrepreneurialism?

Or — and this is where it really gets interesting — is it the ability and willingness of an increasingly connected planet to adopt American innovation and take it to a global level, encouraging U.S. digital expansion in the process?

"We might look at our contributions and fail to see that what really helped them to take off in many cases was the participation of other people globally," said Joel Kline, an Internet developer and digital strategist who teaches business technology at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania.

Last year in southwestern China, along a hotbed of brand-name electronics knockoffs, a fake Apple Store turned up — an entire store. A blogger's photos depicted an elaborate lookalike operation complete with Genius Bar, hardwood floors, Helvetica-typefaced signage and sales associates in blue T-shirts who apparently actually thought they were working at the real thing.

Think about that. It wasn't enough to fake the gadgets. The counterfeiters wanted to fake the FEEL of innovation that Apple markets so adeptly. The entire process, exported by an American digital company, had been swallowed whole. It was the idea that was being sold. Something intangible, but

very real — the foundation of the virtual economy.

"People say, 'Oh, you've got to invest in the tangible things — land, gold and silver, other precious metals.' They're solid," said Rich Cooper, vice president for research and emerging issues at the National Chamber Foundation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's think tank.

But, he said, "In this new era of exceptionalism, you're now on an entirely different plane. You're not holding dirt. You're not holding a piece of real estate in your hands. You can't touch it and taste it. It's an entirely different medium and that's hard for people to understand and accept."

The American frontier's most renowned historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, made his name writing about the end of it. In 1893, he proclaimed the frontier closed, finished, conquered, settled. But he hardly thought that meant the end of manifest destiny.

"He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of American life has now entirely ceased," Turner wrote. "Movement has been its dominant fact, and, unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise."

That remains the case, even if that field is now composed of an endless stream of ones and zeroes and Zuckerbergs who, to Americans, represent the latest evidence of the old story of exceptionalism — the desire to lead the world, now from a shining SimCity upon a hill.

"People seem to think there are no other frontiers for America to explore and that America's sitting on the bench now," Cooper said. "But there are a whole set of frontiers we don't even know about yet."

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