

## GUEST COLUMN

# Mitch Henck: State should stretch to beat Minnesota

*June 3, 2018*

Why not Wisconsin? That's what offensive lineman Joe Panos said when the Wisconsin Badgers were rebuilding their dismal football program in the early 1990s.

Retired international businessman Dave Baskerville of Madison is waging a much bigger battle to get Wisconsin to catch Minnesota, of all places, in incomes and educational achievement.

Speaking at a recent Downtown Rotary lunch, the 81-year-old West High graduate laid out the painful truth. He pointed out Wisconsin was 18th in per-capita income in 1980, while Minnesota was 19th.

"Today," he said, "Minnesota's per-capita income is \$5,100 higher than Wisconsin's."

Baskerville said Minnesota spends 10 percent to 12 percent more on venture capital than Wisconsin. He conceded the economies have changed since 1980, but the winters and demographics are the same, and we should do better. Baskerville lamented the Super Bowl was held in US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

"US Bank moved to Minneapolis from Milwaukee in 1999," he said. "Milwaukee Insurance is now in Chicago. Wisconsin Life Insurance is in Carolina, and Wausau Mutual is now in Boston."

It's not just Minnesota. Baskerville said Colorado is growing three times faster than Wisconsin since 2007, and Utah has grown five times faster. And as painful as it is to hear, Baskerville said in 2015 and 2016, Wisconsin was 50th in new job creation, according to the Pyle Research Center and the Kauffman Foundation.

That's why Baskerville, who spent eight years as a Lutheran missionary in Japan before spending many years in business in the Far East, is pushing [Stretchtargets.org](http://Stretchtargets.org). The purpose of stretch targets is to think long term.

Baskerville and his followers want Wisconsin to be 10 percent ahead of Minnesota in per-capita income by 2038. In education, Baskerville said Wisconsin is 8th in reading

among the states, while the U.S. is 24th around the world. The target by 2038 is to catch No. 3 Canada.

Using the same ratings, Wisconsin is eighth in math, while the U.S. is 36th worldwide. The 2038 target is catching No. 1 Singapore. In science, Wisconsin ranks 15th, while the U.S. ranks 24th. His stretch target is No. 2 Japan.

Baskerville doesn't buy excuses. He points to public charter schools in Milwaukee, Milwaukee College Prep and Carmen South High School, that yield world-class results from mostly black and Latino students. In fact, U.S. News and World Report in 2017 named Carmen South — whose students are 95 percent Latino and 90 percent low-income — the best high school in America.

Baskerville said it is crucial to keep scorecards and measure progress.

A big Packers fan, Baskerville points out the 1958 Packers were 1-10-1. But that team had Bart Starr, Paul Hornung, Ray Nitschke and other Hall of Famers. The next year coach Vince Lombardi showed up, and the rest is history.

His speech was the best I've heard in Wisconsin in years. His message is nonpartisan and right on the bulls-eye. Candidates for governor should log on to [Stetchtargets.org](http://Stetchtargets.org) and learn something.

*Mitch Henck is a Madison, Wisconsin based commentator, broadcaster and standup comic. The Mitch Henck Show streams at [www.madisontalks.com](http://www.madisontalks.com) and you can find Mitch's podcasts there. Watch Mitch's Daily Video Blog, "Two Minutes with Mitch," weekdays at [madison.com](http://madison.com).*

*Contact Mitch at: [mhenck61@gmail.com](mailto:mhenck61@gmail.com)*