Choosing Family
Alumni share the challenges, heartaches and joys of adoption

Also
Music Maker Retires
Clash of the Classes
Raider Rivalries
Class People
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Contents
11 Music Maker
Kimberly Ulke Sevacec logged more than 50,000 miles and traveled to 24 states and four countries while serving as the conductor of Northwestern's touring A cappella Choir. This spring she retired after teaching music at Northwestern for 33 years.

12 Class Pride
A weeklong competition gives Northwestern's freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors a chance to bond with classmates while battling for class bragging rights.

16 Family Tree
Welcoming children into their homes from China, Ethiopia, India and across the U.S., Northwestern alumni are experiencing the joys and struggles of adoption.

On the Web
Your Turn
Add your comments to any article in this issue and share your adoption stories.

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Departments
2 Zwemer View
3 In Box
4 Around the Green
6 Of Course
9 Face Value
12 1,000 Words
14 Looking Back
24 Class Notes
32 Classic Thoughts

An anonymous $250,000 gift led to record fundraising for the Northwestern Fund in 2008–09. Without those annual gifts, tuition would be $1,255 higher per student.

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PHOTO BY VANESSA BARTELS

15

11

12

16

On the cover:
Jon Moss ’99 has fun outside with adopted son David. Jon and his wife, Liz (Calvaska ’99), are among the hundreds of Northwestern alumni who have grown their families through adoption.

PHOTO BY VANESSA BARTELS
A year ago the stock market took the largest one-week dive since the Great Depression and a major financial crisis began rocking the country. Colleges and universities were affected too and wondered what impact the economic downturn would have on efforts to recruit and retain students.

We got our answer this fall when we welcomed a strong class of new students: 370 freshmen and transfers, up from 328 a year ago. That brings our total enrollment to 1,206, which is higher than we were expecting six months ago. We praise God for his provision for Northwesterners and in the lives of our students. We’re thankful that in spite of the financial strain many families are experiencing, a Northwestern College education is still highly valued.

In response to economic challenges, we implemented several new initiatives last year to maximize our enrollment. One program was the Red Recruiter Scholarship, which enabled alumni and friends to provide a $500 scholarship for any prospective students who enroll. Last year the names of over 300 students were referred to our admissions office. Thank you for making this program successful. See the inside back cover of this Classic for details on how you can participate again this year.

What students in your schools, church or neighborhood might benefit from the Christ-centered education Northwestern offers? Are there other ways you can encourage students to consider Northwesterns? In the past, alumni have offered to pay students’ flights to visit their alma mater. Others drive them to campus themselves. Some simply use a phone call, personal note or e-mail to share how their Northwestern experience prepared them for the life they are now living.

A new initiative for this year is our Legacy Grant, which offers financial aid to students with a family or church connection to Northwesterns.

Students are eligible for a Legacy Grant if:
• A parent or grandparent attended Northwestern for at least three semesters in her or his senior year.
• A sibling is currently enrolled or has graduated from NWC.
• The student attends a Reformed Church in America congregation.

Students receive a $1,500 Legacy Grant if they meet one of the above criteria, $2,000 if they meet two, or $2,500 for meeting all three.

Several people from across the country who have recently visited Northwestern for the first time commented to me that our college is “the best-kept secret around.” Rest is good. Secret is not. Together let’s change that.

Greg Christy
President
Executive Decisions

The Northwestern College Board of Trustees approved building a suite-style residence hall and endorsed new mission and identity statements at its fall meeting in October.

The board voted to move forward with constructing a residential facility to house about 60 students. Rooms will be arranged in suites, with a bathroom in each suite. The hall will include common areas.

“This style of residence is something between a traditional residence hall and an apartment building,” says President Greg Christy. “Suite-style halls are becoming very popular, so we’re excited to be able to provide this new option for our students.”

Officials hope to begin construction next spring and have it completed by the end of 2010. The residence hall, to be located in what is now a parking lot north of Sprängers Hall, will provide needed housing for students following the closure of 60-year-old Hemenway Hall after this school year. Hemenway will remain on campus temporarily and will be available for other uses.

The new mission and identity statements were approved after much input from faculty and staff over the past year.

Mission Statement
Northwestern College is a Christian academic community engaging students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God’s redeeming work in the world.

Identity Statement
Northwestern College is a Christian college in the Reformed tradition, founded in 1882 by the Reformed Church in America. We are committed to providing a Christian liberal arts education in an undergraduate, intercultural and residential environment. We offer bachelor’s degrees in a variety of traditional and professional programs.

Christy says the new mission statement is a fresh way of stating what Northwestern’s mission has been throughout its history. “This isn’t a change in our mission, but a new way of articulating it,” he says.

“The new mission statement and the Vision for Learning that was adopted in 2006 make a very strong statement about who we are and what we desire to have happen in the lives of our students,” says Christy. “The most important thing is that we’re living out the mission each day to the best of our ability, with God’s grace, and that the mission is the basis for all decisions we make.”

Campus Enhancements

Improvements completed this summer made a difference in student classrooms as well as in the center of the college’s campus green.

A new chemistry lab was added to Van Peursem Hall when a classroom was gutted and given new cabinetry, work stations and vacuum pumps. Workers also renovated the chemistry storage room—installing new vented cabinetry—and added a faculty office.

Remodeling also took place in the nursing department facilities in Orange City’s former hospital building. Four patient rooms were converted to a classroom, conference room and human patient simulator lab.

A gift from Leonard and Marjorie Maas of Holland, Mich., paid for a new campus directory sign that was placed south of Zwemer Hall between the visitor parking lot and Highway 10. A patio and sitting area north of Zwemer Hall that features pavers inset with the college’s word mark. The Maas’ donation also paid for a new campus directory sign that was placed south of Zwemer Hall between the visitor parking lot and Highway 10.

A team mission trip to Mexico in June gave Northwestern basketball players Randa Hulstein (right) and Becca Hurley the opportunity to teach proper shooting technique to schoolchildren in Mazatlan.

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Coach Earl Woudstra discovered this summer how hard it is to conduct a basketball clinic when you don’t speak the language. In June he and 11 members of Northwestern’s women’s basketball team spent a week in Mexico on a missions trip.

It was fun to see our kids with the Mexican girls. Our players were trying to learn Spanish, and they wanted to learn English.”

Former missionaries James and Robin Schofield met the team, made arrangements for the week, and served as interpreters. The Schofields spent seven years in Mexico with Mazatlan Missions and in 2007 brought 13 Mexican girls to Northwestern for a basketball camp. Robin is related to a Northwestern professor, and the Schofields also hosted a Spring Service Project team while in Mazatlan.

In addition to the basketball clinics, the Northwestern players and their coaches spent time at a school, where they painted, interacted with kids, and taught English. They also visited a home for teenage girls, conducted a neighborhood Bible school, dug the footings for a Sunday school room, and helped lead worship at a local church.
You in Context

Class
Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Instructor
Mark De Ruyter
Assistant Professor of Social Work

You in Context

“Take no name; take no blame,” says social work professor Mark De Ruyter, quoting advice he once heard. “It’s advice he shares with students so they remember they are not responsible for future clients’ successes—or failures. Potential areas for failure are explored in Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE).

“Social workers don’t work just with individuals,” says De Ruyter, “nor just with groups. We work within the dysfunction that sometimes arises between those two.”

HBSE focuses on families as a central influence on behavior and development. De Ruyter calls at his “frying pan course” because it covers crisis at every life stage, from child abuse and teen pregnancy to infertility and divorce.

In this class, as in nearly every one he teaches, De Ruyter tells students, “It may not be fun, but it is interesting.”

Texts and Assignments
Exploring Human Behavior and the Social Environment, by L. Allen Furr
A Child Called It, by Dave Pelzer

In addition to reflecting on Pelzer’s child-abuse autobiography, students write two other papers:

• A “Self as a System” paper that answers “Who are you and why?” from the perspectives of biology, sociology, psychology and spirituality.

• A family research project that explores generational changes within the context of social changes

Mission Minor

Northwestern is now offering a minor in Christian mission. The program replaces the career concentration in mission service.

“The minor requires 24 credit hours of courses in such areas as theology, intercultural communication, missiology and world religions, as well as an experiential component.”

“Mission is about both knowledge and the application of that knowledge,” says Dr. Red Spidahl, associate professor of religion and a former missionary in Cameroon. “You’ve got to be able to apply it—to learn how to engage people where they live. This program will enable students to translate what God has done through Jesus Christ into whatever culture they’re in.”

Spidahl says the minor is pertinent for students no matter what their major. “The phenomenal rise of short-term mission participants and the increasing interaction of congregations with other religions and cultures make the program very relevant in helping to prepare students who will bring clarity, depth and informed passion to the mission of Christ’s church.”

Teaching Leader

Just a year after receiving the highest honor given by the Iowa Writing Project, Barbara Turnwall has again garnered statewide recognition from her peers. The assistant professor of English received the Distinguished Service Award from the Iowa Council of Teachers of English (ICTE) in October for being an instructional leader, an advocate for English language arts teaching and learning, and active in professional development and service.

A member of Northwestern’s faculty since 1996, Turnwall has served as an advisory board and steering committee member for the Iowa Writing Project (IWP). She has also directed numerous IWP workshops and given presentations at meetings of the ICTE, National Council of Teachers of English, and Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

In collaboration with the Iowa Writing Project, Turnwall began Northwestern’s Pedagogy Project in 2000. Through the program, more than 70 NWI professors have come together for a year of focused study to reflect on and discuss their teaching practice and to experiment with new strategies in their classrooms. The program has spawned Pedagogy Project II, which engages faculty members in a yearlong focus on integrating writing more effectively into the learning process.

One of Turnwall’s latest ventures has been directing the Hispanic Story Project, which has gathered, translated and published stories of northwest Iowa’s Hispanic immigrants. Some of the stories have been published bilingually by IWP and provided to area teachers for a variety of uses, including curriculum materials and sensitivity training.

Donna Niday, executive director of ICTE, nominated Turnwall for the award. “Perhaps greater than all of her named accomplishments,” says Niday, “is Barb’s enthusiasm for teaching and learning. She embraces the challenges of the classroom energetically and joyfully and goes beyond talking by acting upon her beliefs to provide faculty professional development.”
Courses Online

Northwestern made its first official foray into offering online courses this summer. Dr. Michael Kenkau, English, and Dr. Lisa Symbena, education, were the professors for the pioneering effort. Kenkau previously offered an online course on a one-on-one basis. Kenkau and Symbena see the online courses as a service Northwestern needs to provide for students and other constituents. Symbena taught two courses that lead to the unified early childhood endorsement, a program that is in demand by experienced teachers. One of Kenkau’s three courses is only offered every other year in the class-room. In addition, one of this summer’s students was a Northwestern senior who was deployed in Afghanistan at the time.

The two professors plan to offer online courses again next summer, and they may be joined by others. Kenkau is preparing a distance education manual for NWIC and will give a presentation to faculty next spring about how to provide a distinctly Christian approach to online education that builds community.

“From my experiences, I think online courses can improve learning outcomes if they are taught in a thoughtful manner,” says Kenkau. “In a typical classroom you can have threestruggles answering most of the questions and 75 percent of the students not talking during the discussions. In online courses, everyone answers every question. In my Facebook studies course, I asked every student for an original contribution and a response to someone else’s comments. Everyone was involved in doing literary analysis.”

By lecturing less and involving students in more problem-solving and discussion, Kenkau says he saw the students become more confident and engaged. “They were talking during the discussion. In online courses, everyone answers every question. In my Facebook studies course, I asked every student for an original contribution and a response to someone else’s comments. Everyone was involved in doing literary analysis.”

As the 2008–10 academic year began, Northwestern received impressive recognition from a number of publications and organizations.

• U.S. News & World Report again ranked Northwestern in a tie for fourth among 100Midwest colleges.

• In recognition of its environmental stewardship efforts, NWC was named a Guardian Green Site by The Grounds for the second year in a row.

• Northwestern was named to the 2010 list of Military-Friendly Schools by G.I. Joe magazine.

Northwestern participates in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Yellow Ribbon Program, contributing $7,500 per year in tuition expenses for up to three eligible veterans.

Forbes.com ranked NWIC among the top 15 percent of the nation’s colleges and universities. Only 14 Iowa colleges were selected for the Forbes.com ranking, and NWIC ranked sixth among them.

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Compiling Kudos

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On Board

Six new members have joined Northwestern’s Board of Trustees. Appointed to four-year terms and attending their first meeting in October were the Rev. Carl Bomgaars ’75 of Sioux Center; Anita (Plattenga) ’77 Bomgaars of Orange City; Dr. Bryan Den Hartog ’81 of Rapid City, S.D.; Marty De Vries ’88 of Edmonton, Alta., Marty Guttmiller ’92 of Orange City, and Lori Scott of Grand Rapids.

Bomgaars, a longtime substitute teacher for MOC-Floyd Valley, served as a trustee from 1995 to ’97 when she was president of the National Alumni Board. She has been a community leader and co-producer of the forthcoming Winning Favor movie.

Den Hartog has been an orthopedic surgeon at the Black Hills Orthopedic and Spine Center since 1995. He earned a medical degree at the University of Iowa and completed a residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Kansas. He served on Northwestern’s board from 1999 to 2007.

De Vries has been the senior vice president of finance and chief financial officer of Maximus International Corp. since 1985. Recipient of Northwestern’s Distinguished Professional Achievement Award in 2006, he earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Northern Iowa.

Guttmiller, CEO of Orange City Area Health System since 1994, received Northwestern’s Distinguished Professional Achievement Award in 2007. He earned a master’s degree in health administration from the University of Colorado.

Scott has spent more than 25 years as a leader for local community service organizations. She earned a master’s degree in public administration from Eastern Michigan University and a bachelor’s degree at the University of Northern Iowa.

Kimberly Utke Svanoe was just 22 when she signed her first teaching contract with Northwestern College. Fresh from graduate school on the East Coast, where she’d earned a master’s degree in choral conducting, she was hired to direct the A cappella Choir after Professor Lawrence Van Wyk retired.

“It’s uncommon to have a female conduct a touring Christian college choir in the Midwest. They’re predominantly conducted by men,” says Svanoe, who retired in May after 33 years at NWC. “I think it’s a distinctive of Northwestern College that they weren’t afraid to put a woman in that capacity.”

Svanoe wasn’t afraid to accept the job either. Born into a Norwegian-German family in Maddock, N.D., she credits her piano girl background with her forthright way of getting to the heart of the matter. That background also helped her win the choral position at Northwestern. The dean who hired her told her that, although she had concert experience in Boston, she could understand the rural student who has talent because she herself was from North Dakota.

Svanoe’s own musical talent was evident at an early age. She started piano at age 5 and cello when she was 9, adding voice lessons in high school. Originally interested in becoming a concert pianist, she switched her emphasis to choral conducting after her first year of graduate school.

“If I realized I wanted to make music with people,” she says of the hours alone in a practice room that a career as a pianist would require. Svanoe credits God’s call with bringing her to Northwestern—and keeping her at a place she deeply loves. “Next to raising my son, Will, Northwestern has been my life,” she says.

During Svanoe’s years at the college, she helped coordinate music for chapel services; supervised more than 50 vocal music student teachers; gave voice, violin and cello lessons; and taught conducting, music methods and music survey courses. She also directed the Symphonette and Women’s Choir for more than three decades and the A cappella Choir from 1977 to 2000, visiting 24 states and four countries during national and international tours.

Now retired from Northwestern, Svanoe is embarking on a new phase in her career: teaching music at Sioux Falls Christian School, where she will continue discovering and developing musical talent—this time in what will, in some instances, be the children of her former students
It’s a tradition as old as Northwestern: Students battling each other for class bragging rights. Since 2004 those battles have taken the form of Clash of the Classes, an elaborate competition held at the start of each school year. Beginning with the Slime Fight and including everything from human foosball to tricycle races to synchronized swimming on land, the weeklong event allows students to test their physical and mental prowess, practice teamwork and bond with classmates.
Class Warfare

By Dianne Beeson

Across doughnuts, dinners, fences and alfalfa fields they ran, young men and women leaving a trail of chalk and paper—and sometimes blood—behind them on a dark October night. They were the seniors of Northwestern Classical Academy, and they were looking to prove their supremacy over the junior class.

During the 1920s and ’30s, the juniors gave up, or the end—when the seniors were their path and capture them. At would take off on an adventure, a 30-minute head start, the geese younger counterparts—foxes. With the seniors—geese—against their annual fox-and-goose chase pitted During the 1920s and ’30s, the junior class.

To prove their supremacy over the Academy, and they were looking to hoist their class flags on the Northwestern flagpole. A 1906 newspaper reported on a back-and-forth five-day “scrap” that resulted in several injured foxes, bruises but no serious injuries, and the senior class flag ultimately waving proudly in triumph.

During the 1960s and 1970s, men from the freshman and sophomore classes battled in the annual rope pull over the Floyd River as part of May Day festivities. Gary Hofmeyer 71 remembers practicing pulling technique and digging holes to stand in, yet still losing badly to the freshmen in 1969.

Women took part in class competition of a different sort in the same era, as the freshmen and sophomores sang and performed skits in the Stengena Festival. In 1967, the winning sophomores theme was a trip around the world, while the freshmen presented a “Berkeley girls” protest march. A story in that year’s "Berkeley girls” protest march. A story in that year’s

We cheated and we still lost!”

Funding Northwestern’s Mission

2008–09 giving spurred by $250,000 gift

Fundraising Report

July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009

- Total giving was $3,447,072.
- Northwestern Fund giving was $1,955,960, compared to $1,392,149 the previous year. A challenge gift of $250,000 from an anonymous donor led to $338,863 in new and increased gifts.
- The average alumni gift to the Northwestern Fund jumped $45, from $190 in 2007–08 to $235 in 2008–09. Alumni giving to the NW Fund totaled $485,881, which was $45,000 more than the previous year.
- The percentage of alumni giving to Northwestern was 23%. Twenty-six classes increased their participation percentage, compared with only 13 classes that increased their participation the previous year.
- The Tower Society ($1,000+) totaled 231 members; 41 gave at the silver level ($2,500+), and 24 gave at the gold level ($5,000+). (In 2007–08, only two Tower Society members gave at the gold level.)
- The Heritage Society (donors making planned gifts) grew by 16 members to 630.

Imagine Campaign

- Learning Commons $20 million $6,982,727
- Academic Innovation (new and improved programs) $5 million $1,454,365
- Rowesheer Student Center renovation $1 million $533,587
- Scholarships $2 million $3,977,859
- Underdog gifts $277,228

Total $30 million $13,211,766

Alumni Giving

- Best giving percentage
  - Class of 1944 63%
  - Class of 1945 60%
  - Class of 1946 60%
  - Class of 1955 56%
  - Class of 1952 52%

- Best giving overall
  - Class of 1975 $116,219
  - Class of 1972 $112,990
  - Class of 1992 $81,928
  - Class of 1981 $64,083
  - Class of 1965 $61,840

- Best giving to the Northwestern Fund
  - Class of 1965 $46,202
  - Class of 1972 $41,620
  - Class of 1975 $33,704
  - Class of 1968 $26,108
  - Class of 1995 $21,970

- Capital and Endowed Gifts
  - Gifts for endowed scholarships $455,318
  - Bequests received $560,987

- Northwester Fund
  - $420,653 $485,881
  - $506,916 $812,947
  - $112,878 $150,168
  - $130,216 $131,299
  - $371,815 $350,365
  - $49,671 $25,300
  - $1,392,149 $1,955,960

- Other
  - $49,671 $25,300

- Estates $683,379 $289,006
  - $95,000 $50,500

- Corporations $62,745 $81,179
  - $262,300 $259,750

- Foundations/grants $262,300 $259,750
  - $306,916 $812,947

- Churches $736,260 $529,019
  - $1,101 $2,225

- Friends $736,260 $529,019
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On Saturday, April 21, 2007, Stephanie (Ells ’03) and Nathan Huisman ’02 were standing in the parking lot of the Bismarck, N.D., Hobby Lobby when Stephanie’s cell phone rang. They had been shopping for supplies for a baby book, where Stephanie was recording their process of adopting from Vietnam.

The Huismans were 150th on a waiting list, which would likely mean another 12 to 18 months until a referral came, and then another four to six weeks before they’d travel. After years of dealing with infertility, this would be one more test of patience for the Huismans, but they stayed positive and had even purchased nursery bedding they’d been eyeing—a brown, green and white fleece blanket with a smiling elephant motif.

A friend from church was calling. Someone she knew in Ohio had given birth to a baby boy the day before and planned to abandon him at the hospital under the state’s Safe Haven laws. Would the Huismans consider adopting him?

By the next afternoon they were driving to Ohio, an infant car seat installed securely in back.
Adoption Facts

- Over 500,000 children are in foster care in the United States.
- There are at least 130 million orphans worldwide.
- More than 15 million children in Africa have become orphaned due to AIDS.
- A study by the Dave Thomas Foundation showed that 48% of people seriously considering adoption look first to their church to find information.

“If one out of three churches in the U.S. would find just one family to adopt, the domestic orphan problem would be solved.”

Source: Marc Andreas, vice president of marketing and communications, Bethany Christian Services

“With the Internet, people just find each other. The screening process has been removed from adoption as a whole,” says De Jong. “When you forego that front part, a lot can go wrong. There’s a huge emotional piece of this that needs addressing before, not after.”

Some agencies, like Bethany, post prospective adoptive family profiles online to be browsed by birthparents before they begin the standard process. But when families and birthparents make their own matches and pay agencies for limited legal services, organizations like Bethany obligate but often do so without their stamp of approval, recognizing that perhaps there is still grief to be lived through and choices to be made.

“One such choice is open adoption, in which contact between the adoptive and biological parents is maintained at some level.”

In 1974, research indicated that psychological problems experienced by adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents were a direct consequence of the secrecy maintained in adoptions up to that point. Open adoptions became more common in the following decades, but...
Jong. Some birthmothers desire, for complicated reasons, to remain reunions, but sometimes they aren’t happy ones, says Bonnie De De
the consent of another party.” The media likes to sensationalize these “policy and practice should not empower one party to adoption to
accumulated sick leave, vacation and personal leave. Since its start in July 2007, the policy has benefited several employee families, including Sherri (De Zeeuw ’95) and Ben Langton; Dave and Jodi Nonnemacher; and Laura (Dykstra ’84) and Steve Heitritter ’87, whom. The Wall Street Journal mentioned in a July story on employee benefits. The Langtons and Heitritters each have two children from Ethiopia; the Nonnemachers’ two daughters are from Liberia.

many adult adopters still find themselves lobbying policymakers just to learn where they came from. Only eight states currently allow access to birth records, with legislation being considered in 10 other states to remove the need for a court order to open sealed records.

Linda (Vanderhorst ’68) Van Beek can point to only a handful of times when she considered finding her birthparents. She always knew she was adopted—“picked,” not “had,” her parents told her—but it wasn’t until her own daughter was pregnant and asking about the family’s medical history that she began sleuthing out her past.

With the help of a private detective, Van Beek learned her birthfather had died of cancer and her birthmother was living just 25 miles away from her California home.

On Sept. 9, 1995, her 49th birthday, Van Beek decided to make the call.

“I weighed my words very carefully; I wrote them down,” she says. She used her birthmother’s maiden name to arouse curiosity and to be sure she wasn’t mistaken for a telemarketer.

“Do I know you from a long time ago?” the woman asked.

Van Beek replied, “I believe you are my mother.”

The National Council For Adoption maintains on its website that “policy and practice should not empower one party to adoption to receive identifying information or unilaterally impose contacts without the consent of another party.” The media likes to sensationalize these reunions, but sometimes they aren’t happy ones, says Bonnie De Jong. Some birthmothers desire, for complicated reasons, to remain anonymous. The birthmother is not necessarily a hero or a villain, she says, “just a regular human being trying to make the best choice.”

Van Beek was fortunate—her birthmother was thrilled to hear from her. They kept up a correspondence by mail and eventually met in person. “We became best friends.”

Making the call was worth the risk of being hung up on, she says. “It was like a nagging feeling of having no connection. You finally know your roots—it makes you feel complete.”

These issues of identity arise often in discussions of transracial adoptions. In 1985, William Merritt, then president of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), told a Senate committee, “Black children who grow up in white families suffer severe identity problems.”

Just 10 years before, the NABSW had helped reverse the position of most state agencies on transracial adoptions, stating that minority children should, when at all possible, be placed in homes that share their racial origins in order to preserve their culture and sense of themselves.

Around that time, the parents of Mary Ann (Anker ’77) Pals were welcoming home their 26th foster baby: Rachel, an African-American girl, had osteomyelitis, an inflammation that settled in just after birth in the bone and marrow of her hip.

The agency asked the Ankers to keep Rachel through her first surgery at 15 months, during her six weeks in a body cast, and while she learned to walk. By then, the Ankers thought of Rachel as their own, and when they began the process to adopt her, they had to stop and ask themselves if this was best for the girl.

Their hometown of South Holland, Ill., was, at that time, occupied primarily by white families with roots tracing back to the Dutch immigrants who settled there in the early 1800s; black faces were rarely seen. When Rachel was two, the family was at a restaurant with their five girls, including Kim, who is also adopted and is deaf. As they began eating, Kim, aged 12, grew increasingly angry. She stuck out her tongue at a family sitting at another table.

“Kim!” her mother exclaimed, horrified. “What are you doing?”

Kim had been reading the lips of the other family. “They’re saying mean things about us because we have a black baby.”

Pals, who was in her early 20s at the time, says her parents had to carefully weigh the reality of racism against their own desires to adopt Rachel, in order to best serve Rachel’s needs growing up as a woman of color.

“They asked themselves, ‘Is this selfish of us? What’s the most loving thing to do?’” says Pals. “They decided to risk it and trust that love would get them through.”

Their agency, which had placed dozens of diverse foster children with them, wouldn’t process a transracial adoption. A friend who was a social worker advocated for them, and the Ankers became, to their knowledge, the only white family in their region at that time to adopt a black child.

Rachel was four, and life went on as it had before the papers made it official—she had been part of the family since she was two days old.

Pals, Rachel, their mother and two other sisters were featured in a series of books by Rita Simon and Rhonda Rooda on transracial adoptions into white families.

“Sometimes transracial adoption is a good thing,” says Rachel in the first book, In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories (Columbia University Press). “A lot of children of different ethnic backgrounds are in the foster care system without any possible adoptive
adoptive families.

essentially removed race as a barrier for agencies placing children into Placement Act and the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, which stay realistic about racism and open to the individual needs of the she comes from and the one she calls home.

but she appears to have found a balance in her life between the culture and said, ‘Mom, Dad, thank you! They led totally different lives without the values our family has.’

Since that 1997 interview, Rachel has married an African-American man, had a son and secured a teaching job in a Christian school. She met with her birthmother a few years back, and, according to her sister Lynn in the third book, In Their Siblings’ Voices, she came home the same day and said, “Mom, Dad, thank you! They led totally different lives without

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The challenges for these families remain numerous, but success rates of transracial adoptions are quite comparable to those of inracial adoptions, according to the books by Simon and Roorda.

International adoptions carry their own set of similar trials as well, say the families interviewed for this article, but the joys and trials are uniquely situated within the dynamics of a given family, and not necessarily a product of race or culture. “Love cuts across all racial boundaries,” says Pals.

Perhaps Rachel is still a “Black Dutchman,” as she once called herself, but she appears to have found a balance in her life between the culture she comes from and the one she calls home.

Studies conducted since the 1970s movement against transracial adoptions have concluded that white families are indeed able to raise children of other races in a psychologically healthy way, provided they stay realistic about racism and open to the individual needs of the child. The federal government stepped into the 1994 Multiracial Placement Act and the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, which essentially removed race as a barrier for agencies placing children into adoptive families.

The De Jonge traveled in October 2005 to bring home Elizabeth, now four, who is as bouncy and exuberant as her curly black hair. The experience birthed Katelyn’s Fund, a ministry that provides emotional and financial support for Christian families looking to adopt. Over the past three years, they’ve awarded 82 grants of $3,000 each.

“It’s taught our family lots about trust and not holding things so tightly,” says Sheila. “Knowing all things are God’s. God is beyond us.”

On March 22, 1996, Leanne De Vos walked into a modest orphanage in the southern province of China. A uniformed worker brought out a thin, five-month-old girl dressed in traditional Chinese garb and handed her to De Vos. The two stared at each other. In that moment, an act that once seemed impulsive and irrational made all the sense in the world.

T

he concept of adoption evokes the word “grafting” for Lindsey Eshcol, a baby born half a world away becomes family, just as a young, severed branch can, after a period of time, grow from a new tree.

At little Adrian Huisman’s two-year checkup, a new doctor inquired about his family medical history. His parents went on and on about grandpa’s heart condition, grandma’s glaucoma, until it occurred to them that they had forgotten, briefly, that their son was not related by blood.

“We’re just a normal family,” Stephanie says. “Just like with biological children, Adrian was meant to be in our family, and we were meant to be his parents.”

Horticulturalists say the formation of a successful union—the juncture where grafting takes place—depends on a complex series of events; the parent tree must be bound to the young shoot, which is working to draw nutrients from a foreign root system. Eventually the two will grow as one and, as on these Northwestern family trees grafted through adoption, the union’s faint scar disappears in the shade of strong, healthy branches.

The winter Classic will feature Northwestern love stories. If you’d like to share yours, e-mail classic@nwciowa.edu or call 712-707-7116.
The Rev. Henry Schoom has recently become a member of Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Marnette (Roe) Utech, born on Aug. 28, celebrated her 90th birthday. On Aug. 19, she worked at the Nebraska Sertoma (Syracuse) Art Festival. She is an associate professor of history and chair of the department of social sciences at Park University in Parkville, Mo.

Debbie Hitchcock, Wingate, N.C., teaches Debbie (Hitchcock) Layman, New Orleans, La., teaches

Phillip Sand, St. Louis, retired in June. He plans to do more writing, play more golf and spend more time with his children and grandchildren.

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FALL 2009

David Wynes is a computer programa-

tor at Hasbro Studios in Rhode Island. He and his wife, Jenny, have two sons, Alex and Derek.

‘97

Craig Madisen is the branch man-

ager at Security Savings Bank in Grand Forks, N.D. He and his wife, Jana (Meyer ‘98), are a stay-at-home couple with two sons, Alex and Derek.

Lina (Drouenier) Perry and her husband, Greg, have moved to Iowa, where he teaches creative writing at Iowa State University. She is a stay-at-home mom.

John Persico is the new dean of students at Edmunds Elementary School in Des Moines.

Boyard Van Pernis is the new executive director of the Woodbridge Historical Society in Des Moines.

viRGILO Moore serves as a one-year graduate program at Jerusalem University, where he is studying the history, culture and geography of the Bible.

Tim Hielkema’s involvement in neighborhood revitalization in Des Moines has earned him recognition from the American Institute of Architects.

Cities by Design

As a kid, Tim Hielkema’s interest in architecture started from looking at house plans in the newspaper and redesigning them with his brothers. Years later, Hielkema’s own designs are featured in magazines like Better Homes and Gardens. Now a commercial and residential architect based in Des Moines, the 1987 NWU alumnus designs projects across the country, including a significant portion of an $870 million complex in Las Vegas. But his work goes beyond individual buildings.

As a board member for three greater Des Moines organizations, Hielkema advises the city council on neighborhood planning and revitalization programs, as well as economic development. He was recently designated as a national and state participant in the American Institute of Architects’ Citizen Architect Program, which recognizes architects for service to their community. “Architects are uniquely qualified for city government because of the way they view society,” Hielkema says. “They realize the context in which they’re building. Each structure is a piece in the fabric of the town.”

Hielkema earned master’s degrees from Iowa State University in architecture and community and regional planning. His civic involvement, however, was inspired by his parents—particularly his father, Art, a longtime member of the Iowa State University Board of Regents. “I got to see firsthand the impact that visionaries can have,” he says.

by Emily Hendrner ‘06

ViRGILO Moore serves as the summer artist-in-residence in Paignton, England. He was recently named a senior faculty member at Metropolitan College.

Jameen Clutter, Cupertino, Calif., is recovering from a hit-and-run accident that killed her best friend on Feb. 11. She spent a month in the hospital recovering from severe trauma to her face, leg and arm. She is adapting to a very limited but expressive life thanks to the cell being able to walk, talk, smell, taste and use.

Kelly Zager completed a degree in early childhood education last December after working in human resources for several years. She is a preschool teacher at Governors State University in University Park, Ill.

Andrew Moore, St. Paul, Minn., works for Apex Systems as a server administrator at 3M.

Laurel Hetner, Minneapolis, Minn., enjoy in advertising and writing/editing for three lo-

i ng.

Leigh Ann (Hicks) Keyeskey, Phoe-

Antoon (Van Pernis) Wing, a fine arts director for the Hillcrest campus of Rancho Solano Private Schools.

Claire Bost is in the orthopedic surgery residency program at Metro Health Hospital in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Ben Petty, Cumming, Iowa, recently earned a M.B.A. from Georgia State University. He is a senior network engineer for Infor Global Solutions in Atlanta. His wife, Marianne (Killough ‘03), is an account manager for Equifax.

Troye (Kulman) Brandenhorst, Long Beach, Calif., teaches eighth-grade science for Valley Christian Schools.

Malinda Burr, Lincoln, Neb., recently spent two weeks on the SINDOS Yokohama, an ocean research vessel. She joined 15 other educators in learning about ocean floor sediments, rocks and nannofossils.

Dr. Brooke (Plaster) Conner is a chim-

ist at Blackstone Family Chiropractic in Roscoe, Ill. She has a daughter: Harley (10).

Andrew Delhary teaches junior high math in Kirksville, Neb. He is also head coach for the high school boys’ and girls’ golf teams and the junior high MathCounts sponsor.

Matt Stalzer lives in Vancouver, Wash., and plans to return to the Czech Republic for mission work in two years.

Anna Van Persio’s Wing teaches history at Alexander Branson School in Lafayette, Colo. Her husband, Robert, is anowner of a law firm in Denver.

Kay (Hekter ‘97) ’97

served as the summer artist-in-residence at the town. “For me, this is where I can use my skills and talents to help better my community,” Hielkema says.

by Emily Hendrner ‘06
Kelli Anderson teaches kindergarten at Elks Elementary School in Lincoln. Neb. She is pursuing a master’s degree in education at the University of Nebraska.

Marie Christianson moved to Tanzania in July to teach special education at Haven Elementary School in Des Moines.

Solomon Davies, Seattle, is an actor in Inugar Theatre's new play, "The Boys." His ensemble performed Camp SuperFriend at the New York International Fringe Festival in August.

Caroline (Ekker) Niessley has begun a master's degree in English at the University of Westminster in England.

Sarah (Jensen) Blyaney works as a charge nurse at Vanderbilt Medical Center. Her husband, Jonathan, now recently deployed to Iraq as a member of the Tennessee National Guard.

Dana (Jennay) Blayney works as an events manager for YWCA of Greater Des Moines. She is working as a school psychology intern in the University of Chicago.

Danae (De Haas) is a site supervisor for YMCA of Greater Des Moines.

Three years ago, God called Ferguson to open her home to these girls, "It was something God had given me to do," says Ferguson. "It was not my house, my house was God's."

Jeremy Van Soelen teaches math from the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Elizabeth Zinkula is an office manager at Miceli, S.D. Her husband, Jon '09, is a software developer for the Martin Group.

Elizabeth Zinkula is a family counselor in Des Moines.

Rachel Kramer is pursuing a master's degree in education at Highland Middle School in Sioux City.

Elizabeth Christiansen earned a Master of Science in education at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa.

"This is not my house, that means it's not just for my pleasure," Ferguson says. "It's for the girls."
Marriages

Tonya Von Prouse '94 and Blake Breder, Sioux Falls
Jennifer Martin '97 and Jordan Chapman, Fort Collins, Colo.
Anna Von Perkins '99 and Robert Wing, Fort Worth, Texas
Amber Smith '01 and Michael Putt, Armonk, N.Y.
Tara Bonnefois '03 and Kevin Vork, Sioux Falls
Matt Ertman '03 and Louise Mahdon, Vivoosko, Wash.
John Wilborg '03 and Helen Vie, Barretele, Minn.
Sandra Yoder '00 and Dylan Yoster, Wapello, Iowa
Jeanette Lewis '04 and Todd Bryant, Tex.
Emily Martin '04 and Scott Barredo, Yankton, S.D.
Carissa Meyers '04 and Loni Judge, Waxua, Wis.
Marc Allgord '05 and Robert Sepe, Sioux Falls
Jessicka Duggan '05 and Tyrone Taylor, Pauline, S.D.
Sarah Hill '05 and Chris Caughman, Vermillion, S.D.
Sarah Hoops '06 and Ty Jackson, Omaha
Dana Jensen '06 and Jonathan Bylans, Antioch, Texas

Lacey Fall '04 and Henry Hall, twin daughters, Haed Genoveaux and Zeka Ebyhun
Amy (Hayes) '04 and Nick Northwood '04, brother, Broken Hensemke, join Kate (2)
Abby (Michael) '04 and Mark Millbrodt '04, Anna Kate
Sarah and Jennifer (Palenske) '04, Spiegel, zen, William Hudson, join Jonas (2)
John and April (Johnson) '04, Weber, Daupy Victoria, join Sofia (4) and Natalie (3)
Brad and Tracy Smit '05, Cleveringa, daughter, Morgan Ray.
Carol and John (Abel) '05, and Ryan Mosi '05, daughter, Sophia Mars, join Riley (5)
Kali (Carroll) '06 and Dan Johnston '05, daughter, Caroline Harper

Roses are red
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If you met the love of your life at Northwestern, let us know. Your romance might warm our winter Classic.
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Jason and Kathleen (McLaws '90) Biggs, son, Stuart David (3), Jacob (2), "Mr. and Mrs. (6) and Anakel (4)
Brian and Erica (McLaughlin '99) Walker, daughter, Haed
Rob and Erin (Peters '99) Williams, son, Cameron (3) (2)
Jamie (Aguilara '00) and Jason Boreen '02, daughter, Amelie Jane
Kari and Nate Johnson '00, son, Roman
Kate and Ben Lear '10, daughter, Eurydixie (Eva) Rose
Tom and Jennifer '02, son, Kaden (5), son, John (4)
Carm and Ryan Bighttallan '01, son, Kieran Lee, join Kellen (2)
Peter and Liz (Hoeligen '01) Brooker, son, Samuel Eugene, join Emma (2)
Kasa and Mormon '01, son, Eamon (4)
Eleny '00, daughter from adoption by Russia, Maxelle Sweden, join Ethan (8) and Owen (4)
Ron and Abby (Thompson '01) Kastenmier, twins, Eram Tan Chud and T.J. (Stefylin) '01 Simington, daughter, Olivia Chan, join Cali (3) and Anvy (2)
Beverl and Steve (Bromberg) '02, twins, Lily Lore, join Drena (3) and Anvy (2)
Lisa (Ludenberg '02) and Aaron Delhoury '10, daughter, Galina, join Robyn (4)
Melody and Laura (Fryman '02) Jackson, daughter, Haley Grace
Alice and George Kichler '02, son, Kolaben Scott
Julie (Van Der Maaten '03) and Kevin Lee '03, son, Oliver Michael and Ian, Samuel, join Hannah (2)
Emily (Darr '04) and McCallough '04, daughter, Elia Jean
Josie and Dave Perrigo '11, son, Roheal
Morgan (Bogar '09) and Ben Roso '00, son, Beckett Benjamin
Joseph and Sarah (Hodson '11) Barbee, son, Jonathan
Matthew and Erica (Smith '12) Johnson, son, Samuel, join Jacob (2)
Dan and Sarah (Taylor '13) Wright, son, Andrew
Lyndrie (Negbue '04) and Grant Baker '04, daughter, Alyce Lynn, join Judin (2)
Kevin Ulmer '06 and Kate Hampton, Lexington, Ky.
Rhaen Vander Hei '06 and Michael Holmes, Lincoln, Neb.
Kristin Woudenberg '05 and Ryan Christianson, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Candace Gross '05 and Daryn Dockter, Upcland, Ind.
Kat Solls '06 and Basil Brand, Brentwood, S.D.
Beverly Harmes '07 and Jed Hanulaker, Mitchell, S.D.
Amberlitch (Sokk) Agnes '08 and Kyle Osborne '09, Lincoln, Neb.
Becky Laimer '09 and Matthew Eaton, Rochester, Minn.
Audrey Christopherson '79 Bozeman died of cancer on Aug. 15 in Devils Lake, S.D., at the age of 61. She taught elementary music for more than 10 years. A member of Shining Mountains Lutheran Church, she taught piano in Bozeman, Mont., and was pursuing a master’s degree in music education in Bozeman. She leaves her husband, Mike; two daughters, Peta and Morgan; and two granddaughters, Abigail and Amelia.

In Memoriam

Ralph Monroe '36, 78, professor emeritus of mathematics, died Aug. 14 at the age of 105. After graduating from Northwestern, he earned a bachelor’s degree at Hope College and a master’s degree at the University of Iowa. A captain in the Army during World War II, he served as a Northwestem mathematician professor from 1947 to 1973. He was a professor for more than 50 years as a professor for Red Raider games. A Sunday school teacher at Tri-Fest Reformed Church, he served as an elder and deacon. Active in the United Methodist Church, he was a member of the General Program Council of the Reformed Church in America. Among his survivors are his wife, Barb; Michael; two sons, John and Robert; and four grandchildren.

David Schon '73 died June 27 in Grand Rapids, Mich., at the age of 78. He was the son of seminars on ‘Bible in the Classroom’;
Barbara, Calif.
Jana Scott, NWC director of maintenance and operations; Ross '03 and Randy '02; two sisters; and a brother.

Daniel Schoon '73 died June 27 in Grand Rapids, Mich., at the age of 78. He was the son of and a brother of monastery in Rome.

Rolland Simlinski, a Northwestern staff member from 1969 to 1980, died of cancer July 7 in Orange City at the age of 81. He was hired as director of admissions and later served as director of financial aid and Christian education instructor. A graduate of Hope College, he earned master’s degrees at George Peabody Teacher’s College and North American Baptist Seminary. Before coming to NWC, he taught and served as a principal and direct

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We live in different worlds. Most likely she lives in a small dirt hut in southern Ethiopia. I live in a four-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath house in a northwest Iowa town. Her education is basic, at most. I’ve earned a master’s degree. Her employment is petty trade. Until recently, I served as a pastor in a local congregation. We are different.

I don’t know much of her story—what her upbringing was like, what hopes and dreams she holds. But I do know on a spring day she gave birth to a baby boy in her parents’ home. She named him Dawit, which means beloved and translates to David. His second name was Desalegn, which means I am happy, I am proud. I can guess she was proud of this boy of hers. I can guess she was delighted with her beloved son.

Dawit was nurtured by his mother for a few months as they lived with his grandpa and grandma. But with circumstances too difficult to bear and an abundance of love, she placed him into the care of others. I can guess her love for him must run deep.

On another spring day, my husband and I stood over the boy’s crib in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. With his arms stretched above his head, he slept peacefully, as though he didn’t have a care in the world. The nannies said he had fallen asleep while lying in the sun, part of the morning routine to boost the children’s vitamin D.

We had traveled more than 24 hours, halfway around the world, to hold this child in our arms. We had endured adoption’s paperwork, waiting and unknowns. We were forced to give up control and patiently discover the wonder of God’s plan. At that moment, when the nanny handed this droopy-eyed little guy into my outstretched arms, the differences I once had with the woman vanished. We are both deeply in love with this same beloved boy.

When I rock David to sleep, I often look into his big brown eyes and wonder: What other world has he seen? What other eyes has he looked deeply into? What other kisses has he felt? What Tunnel babies did she have? What stories did she tell her son? What hopes and dreams does she hold for the one she gave in love?

I can’t help but recall what the psalmist wrote: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14). Now, as David’s mom, I sing, tell stories, and hope and dream for his future too.

In the Reformed tradition, baptism is the sign and seal of God’s promises to God’s people. It is God saying yes to us before we say yes to God. Sometimes, when I’ve struggled to hold a kicking and screaming infant while trying to sprinkle water on the little head, I’ve thought about the poignant symbolism when a child kicks and screams into the kingdom of God. As much as we don’t always want to follow, God continues to say yes, yes, yes.

I wonder if, in adoption, baptism is also something more. When I baptized him, I uttered these words to my child: “David Jacob, it was for you that Jesus Christ came into the world, for you he died and for you he conquered death; yes, for you, little one, you who know nothing of it yet. We love because God first loved us.”

I wonder if God has whispered into his little ear: “Dawit Desalegn—David Jacob, even while you were in your mother’s womb, I loved you and I loved your mother. Even before your mother called you beloved, you were mine. Whomever you are with, you are mine. You are adopted into my family and you are marked as Christ’s own forever.”

Perhaps we don’t have so many differences after all. In fact, we’re pretty much the same—both adopted children of God. Yes, we may live worlds apart. I could never imagine what her life is like, and I suppose she could never imagine mine. But we both love. And we are both God’s beloved.

Liz Moss and her husband, Jon ’99, adopted David Jacob from Ethiopia this past March with assistance and support from Holt International. As an ordained pastor in the Reformed Church in America, Liz was blessed to baptize her own son.
Northwestern welcomed 331 freshmen and 39 transfers to campus this August—the largest numbers for each group since 2006. Freshman-to-sophomore retention also improved. At 77.5%, it is the highest since 2005.

Total enrollment stands at 1,206 students, down 20 from last fall. College officials, however, are encouraged that a three-year drop in the number of new students was reversed. This year’s freshman class includes more men and has the highest average ACT score of any class in NWC’s history: 24.6.

Mark Bloemendaal, director of admissions, attributes this year’s success to a campus-wide prioritizing of recruitment. Even President Greg Christy contacted prospective students.

“Recruitment is led by the admissions staff,” Bloemendaal says, “but it takes significant buy-in. Everyone—including alumni—can make a difference.”