

Northwestern College Magazine

the **Classic**

SPRING 2016

Living Toward Light

Brittany Vollmer reflects on loss
and her journey so far

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First-gen Student Stories

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Whether on the sidelines or in the stands, some of the best college memories are made while cheering on the Red Raiders.

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The *Classic* is published three times a year—in April, July and December—for alumni and friends of Northwestern College. So named because it served what was then known as the Northwestern Classical Academy, the *Classic* was the school's first student newspaper, begun in 1891. It has been an alumni publication since 1930.

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Opinions expressed in the *Classic* do not necessarily reflect the official position of Northwestern College.

On the cover:

Three years after a car accident took the lives of her mom, dad, sister and brother, Brittany Vollmer still struggles—and still finds reasons to smile.

PHOTO BY GEOFF JOHNSON



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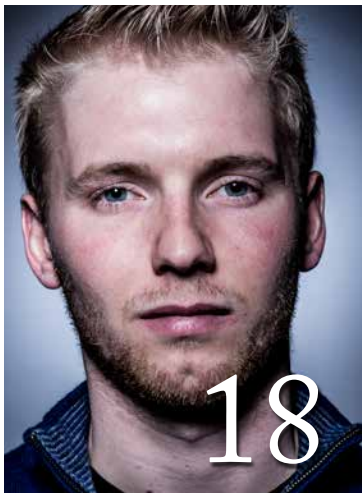
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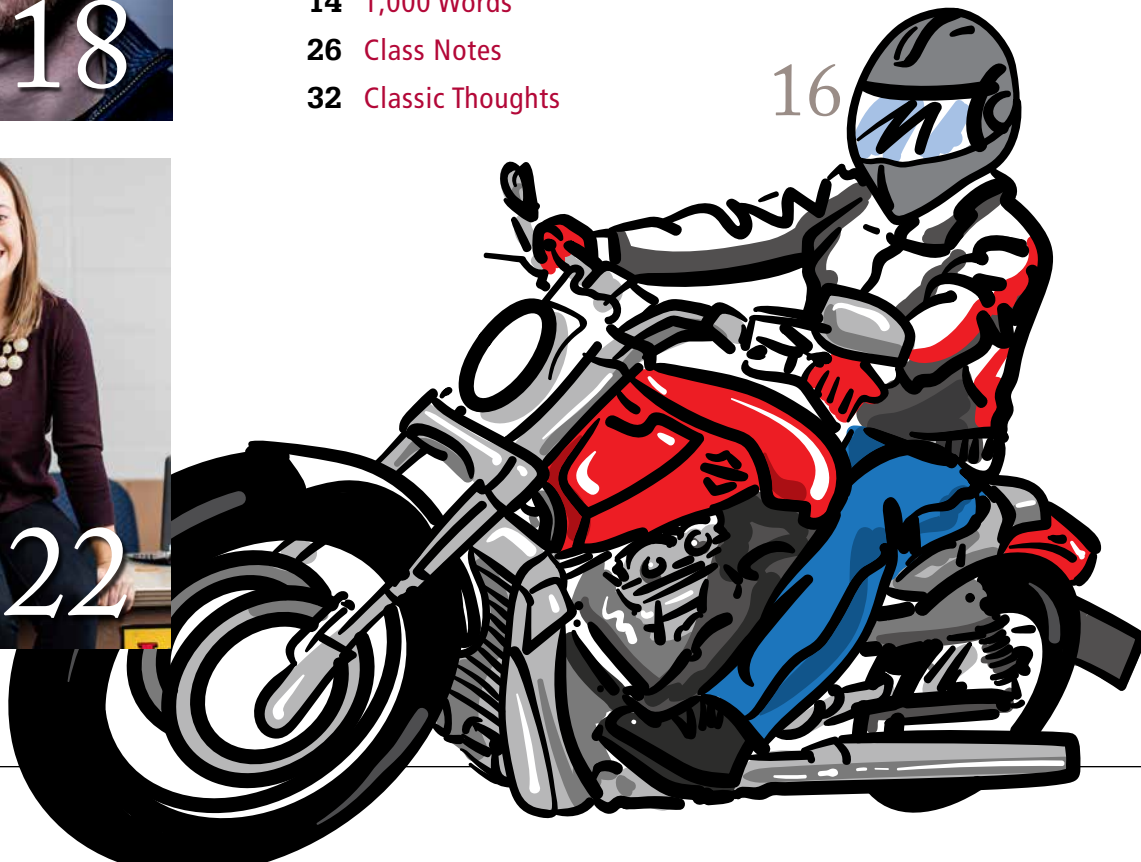
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Which professors' idiosyncrasies or quotes do you remember? What memories do you have of the ballroom dance? Share them and comments about any article in this issue.

visit classic.nwciowa.edu



Zwemer View



DOUG BURG

Reassessing Chapel

When Chaplain Harlan VanOort '82 resigned last summer following 12 years of faithful service, it was an opportune time to review our chapel program. As near as I can tell, the most recent significant changes occurred during Chaplain Jerry Sittser's leadership from 1979 to 1985.

Jerry revolutionized Northwestern's chapel program and also worked closely with student development to build a discipleship program in the residence halls. Spring and summer service projects were added as another way for students to develop spiritual maturity in settings outside their comfort zones. Those efforts led to spiritual revival and helped solidify our identity as an intentionally Christian liberal arts college.

Since then, each chaplain has contributed to the spiritual life of the campus based on their unique giftedness. God has been faithful in providing the right leader for the time, and we are praying he will do so again.

Before seeking a new leader, we held forums with faculty, staff and students, and about 700 campus community members responded to a survey. We learned much about what has been going well and what could be improved with our chapel programming, and we also had significant conversations about the chaplain position and what its responsibilities should be.

With that wealth of community wisdom in hand, we began a national search for a dean of Christian formation. The dean will report to me and provide oversight for all areas of campus ministry: worship, discipleship, missions and justice. This includes serving as campus pastor and leading the chapel program.

Among the feedback we received from the community were these consistent messages:

- An engaging and worshipful chapel program is essential to our mission and identity, so it's appropriate to require students to attend.
- The requirement should nonetheless be adjusted to enable worship leaders and students to focus more on excellence.
- Corporate worship should continue to be the heart of Christian formation, but chapel should integrate with and illuminate the ways in which students can also develop their faith through discipleship, mission and justice opportunities.

With these themes in mind, our campus ministry team and administrators crafted a proposal for new Christian formation credits that we are piloting this semester. Students still accumulate the majority of these credits by attending chapel, though we are offering chapel twice rather than four times per week. (Read more on page 4.)

Requiring students to invest in their Christian formation, beyond just attending chapel, fits our mission as a Christian college in the Reformed tradition. One of our highest values is for graduates to trust, love and worship God, as stated in our Vision for Learning. The goal of our Christian formation program is to help us best live out our mission of engaging students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God's redeeming work in the world. Thank you for your prayers as we work to fulfill this noble task.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Christy".

Greg Christy
President

around the Green

Grant to Fund Youth Theology Institute

Northwestern College has been awarded a \$440,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment to create a summer institute for high school students that will help them explore and deepen their Christian faith. Entitled "Living Your Faith," the Northwestern program is part of a Lilly Endowment initiative designed to establish high school youth theology institutes at colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

According to Dr. Jim Mead,

professor of religion and author of the grant proposal, Living Your Faith will be a one-week summer program for high school juniors and seniors that will include ongoing mentoring and ministry during the following academic year. While on campus, the high school students will study Scripture and theology through lectures, discussions and writing assignments led by the college's religion faculty. They will also participate in small groups

facilitated by Northwestern students who are religion majors or campus ministry leaders.

Each day will include time for worship, reflection and sharing; breakout sessions on specific topics; guest speakers; small-group meetings with mentors; and service and job-shadowing opportunities designed to introduce program participants to a variety of ministries and nonprofit agencies.

Northwestern will hire a half-time director and offer the first

Living Your Faith institute in the summer of 2017.

"We are incredibly blessed by the generosity of the Lilly Foundation," says Mead, "and extremely pleased to share in its rich tradition of strengthening Christian higher education for service to the church in the world. It will be exciting to see what God has in store for this program in the years to come."



The Scholarship Auction raised about \$34,500 for student scholarships.

Auction Action

Northwestern's 33rd annual Scholarship Auction, held in February, raised about \$34,500. Proceeds will help fund student scholarships.

Around 500 community members attended the event, and bids were submitted on nearly 400 items.

Items that secured generous bids included a vacation package to Keystone, Colo.; tickets to a Minnesota Twins game; a PGA golf tournament package; and a Florida vacation.

Safest School

Northwestern is ranked as the safest college in Iowa by niche.com.

The ranking, which includes both public and private four-year colleges and universities across the state, is based on the cumulative evaluation of key factors, including campus crime rate, local crime rate and student reviews.

"There are many things to consider when choosing a college, and campus safety is one factor that should be evaluated," says Mark Bloemendaal '81, Northwestern's dean of enrollment and marketing. "We are fortunate to partner with the local community in making safety a priority on campus so students can focus on enjoying all that college life has to offer."

The ranking lists Northwestern as having a crime rate of 0 out of 1,000 cases, with identical statistics for alcohol- and drug-related arrests. The local crime grade is listed as a B+, and student surveys rank the college as 4.1 out of 5.



A study by niche.com lists Northwestern as the safest college campus in Iowa.



Chapel Changes

The chapel requirement for students has been revised to emphasize quality over quantity.

When Northwestern students returned to campus for the spring semester, they experienced a schedule change that involved more than new classes. Instead of a 38-credit chapel requirement, they now must fulfill 28 Christian formation credits per semester.

This past fall, the chapel program was thoroughly assessed for the first time in many years. Approximately 500 students and 200 faculty and staff provided feedback through an online survey, and President Greg Christy and Dean of Students Julie Vermeer '97 Elliott held public forums with both groups.

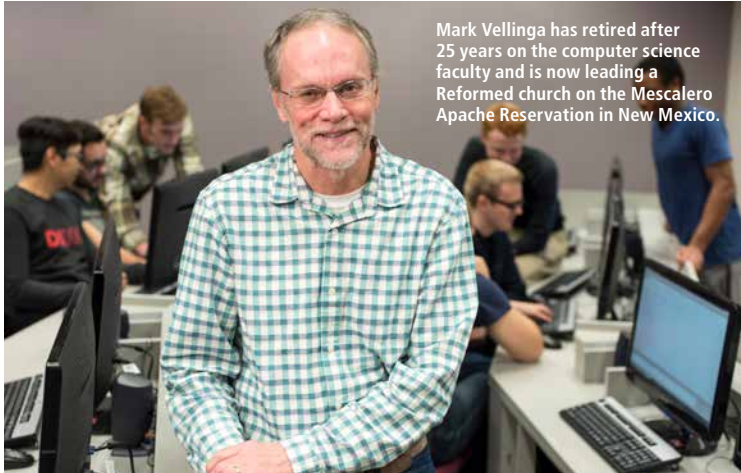
More faculty and staff than students favored continuing to require chapel, but even among students, only about half wanted to make chapel voluntary. There was more agreement on a desire to reduce the four-times-per-week schedule and number of required chapel credits.

Ultimately, college officials decided to continue the chapel requirement in a revised format that focused on quality rather than

quantity. "We felt it's really important for the faith development of the community to have a space where we regularly gather and share a common experience of worshiping God," says Elliott.

Chapel now is held for an hour on Tuesday mornings and a half hour on Friday mornings. Another difference is the way students can earn credits. In addition to corporate worship during chapel, they can attend additional special services that focus on prayer or music; participate in a discussion-based program that explores how to live as a Christian in the world; and take part in Northwestern's annual Day of Learning in Community.

Such changes, Elliott says, will enable students to experience diverse ways to be formed spiritually and grow as Jesus' disciples.



Mark Vellinga has retired after 25 years on the computer science faculty and is now leading a Reformed church on the Mescalero Apache Reservation in New Mexico.

DOUG BURR

An Educator at Heart

Mark Vellinga '77 spent 25 years at Northwestern teaching in a field that would have been much more lucrative doing anything else. That's because, says Vellinga's former student and colleague Mike Wallinga '01, he was an educator first and a computer scientist second.

For students intimidated by computer science, Vellinga was gifted at giving them the confidence they could do it—helping them succeed and comprehend the material while still maintaining high standards. At the same time, he could also bring out the best in stellar students like the three who in 2009 were the college's first to be chosen

for an international competition of the top 100 student computer programming teams. In their evaluations of his teaching, students consistently praised him for the way he challenged them in their courses and cared for them as people.

Vellinga retired at the end of the fall semester and is now providing that care in a different role: A recent graduate of Western Theological Seminary, he is pastoring a church in Mescalero, N.M.

"I can see the through line there," Wallinga says of his mentor and friend. "It's still about being compassionate and helping people in whatever way he can."

First Online B.S.N. Students Graduate

The first graduates of Northwestern's online R.N. to B.S.N. degree-completion program graduated this past December. The

four-member class was composed of three nurses from northwest Iowa, including Crystal (Sechler '07) Kiel, and a nurse from Gerry, N.Y.

Northwestern's online R.N. to B.S.N. costs less than similar programs and is designed to be completed by working nurses in two years or less. Visit online.nwciowa.edu/rn2bsn to learn more.



Star of Class and Court

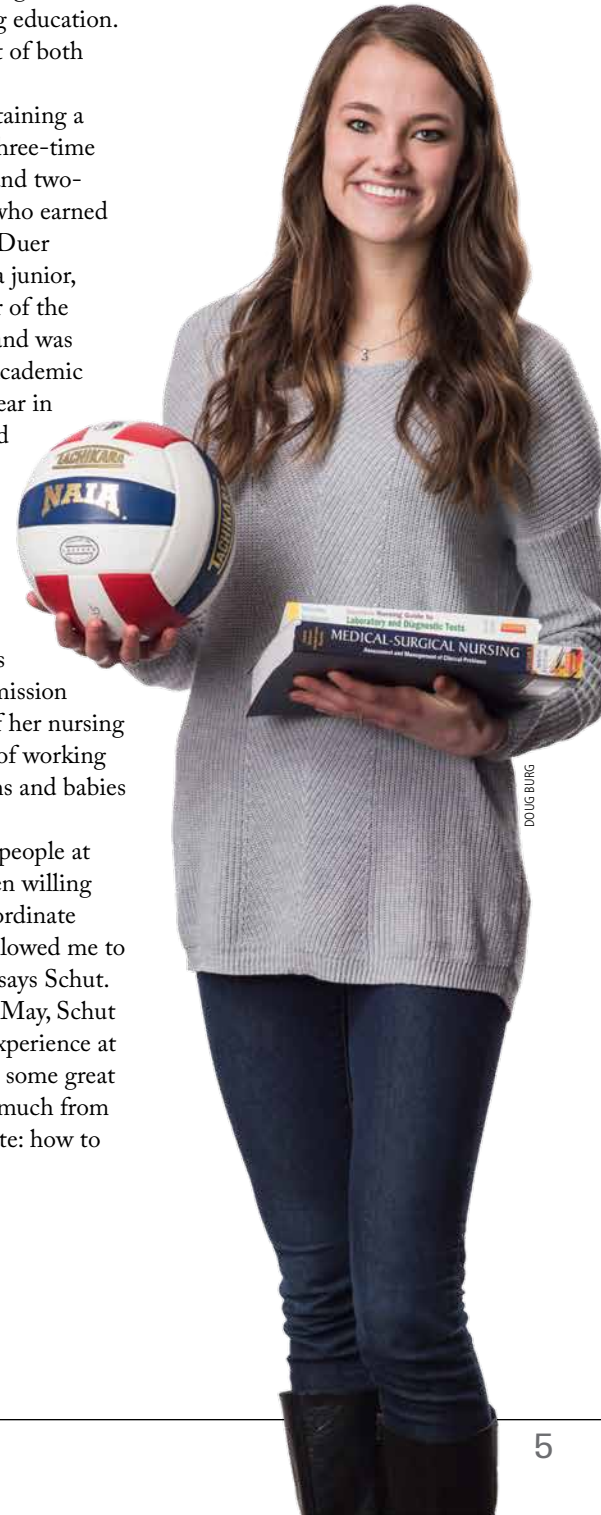
Karlie Schut, a senior from Des Moines, says she chose Northwestern because it's a college where she could play volleyball in a highly competitive program and get an excellent nursing education. She has made the most of both opportunities.

In addition to maintaining a 3.99 GPA, Schut is a three-time NAIA All-American and two-time Scholar-Athlete who earned the prestigious NAIA Duer Scholarship Award as a junior, garnered GPAC Player of the Year honors for 2015, and was named the CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year in December. She received the top athletic/academic honor after leading the Red Raiders to a 24-8 record and a ranking of 21st in the final national poll. Schut has also participated on a mission trip to Africa as part of her nursing education and dreams of working in a hospital with moms and babies after college.

"I am thankful that people at Northwestern have been willing to work with me to coordinate schedules, which has allowed me to pursue both passions," says Schut.

Set to graduate this May, Schut says she's had a great experience at Northwestern. "I made some great friends and learned so much from being a collegiate athlete: how to

manage my time, be a team player, sacrifice myself for the good of others, respond under pressure, and deal with both successes and failures."



DOUG BURR

Campus Life



Refresher

Break Every Chain by Jesus Culture plays over the speakers as students stream into Christ Chapel. The lights are low, except for the stage, and there's a sense of both relaxation and anticipation in the air.

It's Sunday night, and that means it's time for Praise and Worship (P&W). As Northwestern students have been doing for more than two decades, this group wraps up the weekend with a student-led time of worship. After standing through 20 minutes of singing, they listen to senior Savannah Clapper talk about how God used the manipulative prayers of both Hannah, who wanted

a son, and the Israelites, who wanted a king, to lead to Jesus Christ.

About half of Northwestern's students regularly attend the weekly service, according to a recent survey. Eli Dahl, a sophomore who is leading this year's P&W team, says that's because students want to be challenged and to worship God with their friends. "It's an hour to forget the outside world and feel close to God."

Josie Clark, a senior who has spoken twice at the event, says many come to learn from their peers. "It's a great opportunity to see how God is working in students' lives. It's a nice refresher to start the week."

The recent Quality of Life survey shows that Praise and Worship is meeting the goals set by its leaders. More than 90 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that P&W contributed to their sense of community, equipped them to live out their Christian faith, and encouraged them to draw closer to God.

After a final set of songs, the crowd moves toward the chapel's center aisle, holding hands as they sing the Doxology without accompaniment. Let the week begin.

Humble Beginnings

When P&W began in the early 1990s, it was a mid-week evening service in the choir rehearsal room. It was moved to the chapel in 1998, and the pews soon began filling up.

A high degree of student ownership and the contemporary style helped contribute to P&W's popularity, according to the Rev. Brian Keepers '99, who is now a pastor in Holland, Mich. "It was a venue for us to have an extended time of worship, embracing fresh expressions of worship music that seemed to connect deeply with so many students. It was one of the most Spirit-led movements I had the privilege of being a part of during my four years at Northwestern."



Dean Calsbeek

Chapter President

Dr. Dean Calsbeek '97, kinesiology, began his term as president of the Northland Regional Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (NACSM) in January. A member since 2004, he was nominated by the NACSM executive board after serving as the chapter's at-large representative.

His duties include presiding over business meetings and continuing the promotion of the chapter and its initiatives, including the improvement of student research opportunities through grants. The chapter also seeks to share scientific information, provide a forum for research, and foster professional peer interaction and career growth.

Electronic Journal

A wide variety of research done by NWC faculty members is now available on an electronic open-access journal, *Northwestern Review*.

The first issue of the journal, developed by DeWitt Library staff members, includes research done by professors and students in the art, biology, history, music, philosophy, political science and psychology departments.

The journal, at nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/northwesternreview, will be published annually.

Award-winning Marketing

Five Northwestern marketing projects have won awards in recent competitions.

Northwestern's case statement for the Discover: Faith and Science capital campaign received a silver award in the Case Statements/General Cultivation category of the 2016 Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District Six awards contest.

The campus life brochure produced for the admissions office also won a silver award in that competition, as well as an award of merit in the *Higher Education Marketing Report's* awards contest. Northwestern also garnered three other awards from *Higher Education Marketing Report*: golds for a series of four TV commercials and for website landing pages developed for Northwestern College Graduate School and Adult Learning, as well as a silver for the new admissions video, *Real Northwestern.3*.

The publications were coordinated by Tamara Fynaardt, associate director of public relations. Dave Malec of Stillwater, Okla., designed the case statement. Roy Trevino of Williamsburg, Iowa, designed the campus life brochure. Lem Maurer, Northwestern's audiovisual technician, produced the TV commercials and video. The webpages, for

the RN-to-BSN degree program and the Master of Education program, were developed by Stamats Communications of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The video and the TV ads can be viewed at nwciowa.edu/videos.



FI GAYLOR

Northwestern's inclusion in a Howard Hughes Medical Institute program will lead to more research opportunities for biology students.

More Research Opportunities

Northwestern biology students will have increased research opportunities through the college's participation in a Howard Hughes Medical Institute program.

Part of the institute's Science Education Alliance, the program involves the study of phages, which are viruses that infect bacteria. It provides training for faculty who will teach the SEA-PHAGE courses and will pay for the cost of sequencing the DNA genomes of those phages, as well as other necessary supplies. Just 20 colleges across the nation were selected to join the program in 2016–17.

"We're fairly unique among the schools that are part of this project," says Dr. Sara Sybesma

'84 Tolsma, the biology professor who led the application process for the program. "Rather than have a single SEA-PHAGE course, we're embedding it into three sequential courses—General Biology, Microbiology and Genetics—so our students will have this experience over the course of three semesters.

"The SEA-PHAGE courses will be taken by first- and second-year students, so by the time they get into upper-division courses where we already have opportunities for students to do research, they'll be better trained to do additional research."

Stagecraft Star

As murder was being committed offstage during Northwestern theatre's November production of *Macbeth*, audience members noticed something red and sticky trickling down the castle columns. The bloody symbolism was foreshadowed by projected images of seeping, swirling evil.

The projections were designed by junior Caroline Trewet, Atlantic, Iowa, and have earned her an exclusive opportunity to study at the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas in July. Trewet received the invitation at the Region Five Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in January.

Through her artist's statement and videos, Trewet explained how her films of ink leaking into water were projected onto the *Macbeth* stage to represent the sinister creep of evil into the characters' minds. Another video of mixing paint colors projected a vivid representation of churning chaos and violence.

Respondents to Trewet's design identified her as a professional-caliber theatre artist and also invited her to shadow the media designer at Minnesota's Guthrie Theatre.

Caroline Trewet's design for Northwestern's production of *Macbeth*, including this swirling paint projection on the floor, earned her an opportunity to study at the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas.



Online Learning Expert Leads M.Ed. Program

Dr. Sarah J. Huibregtse is the new Master of Education program director for Northwestern's Graduate School & Adult Learning.

In addition to serving as chief administrator for Northwestern's existing master's programs, Huibregtse will work with the college's education department to develop new M.Ed. tracks and continuing education opportunities for teachers. Currently Northwestern offers master's degrees in early childhood, master teacher and teacher leadership. The college also offers a graduate certificate in teacher leadership for educators who already have master's degrees.

Huibregtse previously worked as an instructional designer and consultant for universities and educational organizations including MIT, Lumen Learning, Southern New Hampshire University, Concordia University in Oregon, and Western Governor's University in Utah. She has taught Web-enhanced and online courses

at universities across the U.S. and has experience teaching in multiple subject areas, including computer science, at K-12 schools in Wisconsin.

Huibregtse earned a doctorate in education, specializing in instructional design for online learning, at Capella University. She also holds a master's degree in computer science education from Cardinal Stritch University and a bachelor's in elementary education from Lakeland College.



Sarah Huibregtse



Celled Phones

Well aware of students' tendencies to get distracted by their devices, staff in Northwestern's DeWitt Library now offer a phone lock-up service. The service was first introduced as a way to help students focus on fall semester final exams, but the lock-up cabinet is now available for use year-round.

Face Value



Kristin Rucks

Alumna Joins Advancement Office

Kristin (Breems '03) Rucks is Northwestern's new director of advancement. She joined the college's staff in January after spending five years as a community relations director for a Minnesota healthcare campus. She has also served as a marketing director for a university food service provider, director of admissions and marketing for a senior care facility, and admissions counselor for NWC.

"We're pleased to have Kristin back at Northwestern," says Jay Wielenga '82, vice president for advancement. "She has a successful history telling the Northwestern story, plus additional expertise in marketing and client relations. She brings a fresh perspective to our team, and we look forward to her development as a leader within the advancement office."

Jennifer and Jonathan Sabo

Perfectly Cast

How did you become interested in theatre?

Jonathan: As a preacher's kid, being in front of people was always part of my life: Christmas and Easter programs, special music and even preaching once or twice. I managed to get into the traveling drama troupe at college and toured throughout my undergraduate experience. Then I worked with Taproot Theatre in Seattle for two years. While there, I fell in love with scenic design and knew that working in theatre was going to be a career.

Jennifer: My interest is mostly a result of being married to a "theatre person." Jonathan has helped me learn so much and appreciate all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into a production.

What do you enjoy most about working in Northwestern's drama department?

Jonathan: I love those moments when light bulbs flash on in students' heads and they put into practice what they have learned in the classroom. I also very much appreciate the intentional integration of faith and learning that is so important to teaching here.

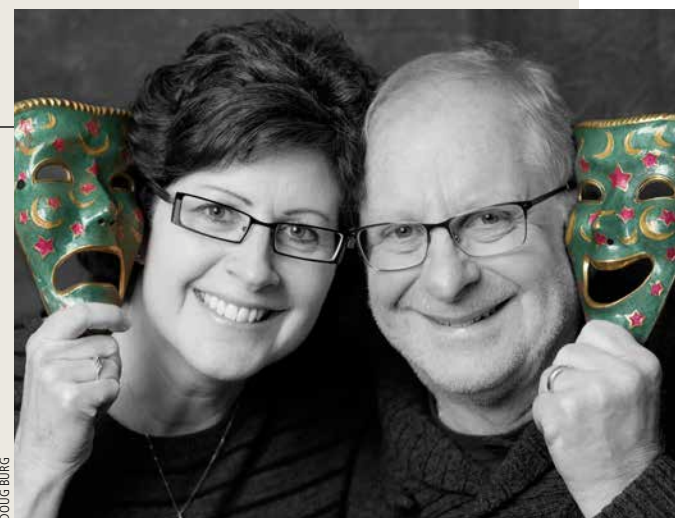
Jennifer: My prior job was in management and somewhat stressful. My position as theatre secretary is challenging, which I appreciate, but not overwhelming, which I love.

What is it like working with your spouse in the same department?

Jonathan: I always think of our working together as a rehearsal for retirement. I once heard this saying, "For better or worse, but not for lunch." Our working together now will prevent that from becoming a reality in our relationship.

What has been your favorite Northwestern theatre production so far?

Jonathan: That's really hard to say. All of them have provided great challenges and rewards.



DOUG BURK

Jennifer and Jonathan Sabo began serving in Northwestern's theatre department in 2008. Jonathan teaches design and technical directing courses and directs the department's scene studio, and Jennifer serves as the department's secretary and building manager.

Jennifer: The fall 2011 production of *Talley's Folly*. It was a beautiful, intimate story performed mostly by just two actors. And the set design [done by Jonathan] was amazing.

If you weren't in the field of theatre, what job would you like to have?

Jonathan: I'd want to work as a commercial or missionary pilot.

Jennifer: I'd enjoy being a professional organizer.

Do you spend time with Northwestern students outside of DeWitt Theatre?

Jennifer: Yes, we love having students in our home. They have stayed over during breaks or just come for a night to play games, watch Netflix or sing around a fire on the back porch. Lots of student laundry has been done at our house too!

If you could describe your relationship using only the title of a play, what would it be?

Jennifer: We both agree it would be the musical *Crazy for You*.

A Summer Abroad

Ecuador, Great Britain and Greece are the destinations of this year's summer study abroad programs.

Spanish professor Rick Clark will lead a trip to the South American country he grew up in as the son of missionaries. Students will learn about Ecuadorian society and culture, study Spanish and live with host families in Quito. They'll also visit museums and churches; experience the indigenous market of Otavalo; and serve with a Christian organization involved in hunger relief, education, healthcare and evangelization.

Students traveling to England will examine British culture—past and present—through theatre and art. Led by theatre professors Karen

Barker and Drew Schmidt '05, program participants will attend theatre productions; visit museums; and explore the country's many cathedrals and churches, markets, restaurants, parks and squares. The majority of the trip will be spent in London, with home stays in Gloucester.

Greece is the destination of an Honors Program summer study abroad trip led by Dr. John Vonder Bruegge, who teaches religion and Greek. Students will learn about the cultural and intellectual influences of ancient Greece and its impact on virtually every academic discipline. The program will take place primarily in Athens, with visits to such sites as the Acropolis, Corinth and the Oracle of Delphi.



Greece will be one of three destinations for study abroad courses this summer.



Drs. Tyrone Genade and Thomas Holm have received Endowed Research Fellowships to assist their research projects. In addition, Holm and Dr. Karissa Carlson have been awarded sabbaticals for next year.

Assistance for Faculty Research

Northwestern professors will spend part of the summer studying the choral techniques of Taiwanese musicians and the neurodegenerative processes found in diseases, thanks to Endowed Research Fellowships from NWC.

Drs. Thomas Holm and Tyrone Genade are the recipients of \$9,600 grants to support scholarship in their respective fields of music and biology.

Holm will travel to Taiwan to observe rehearsals, interview choral directors, and gain a fuller understanding of choral pronunciation techniques in a non-Western language. His

research supports a sabbatical he was awarded for 2016–17, during which he will teach courses at a university in Taiwan, direct various choral and instrumental ensembles, and offer workshops and master classes in choral methods and conducting techniques.

Genade will continue his study of the neurodegenerative processes in diseases such as Parkinson's, dementia and multiple system atrophy. His research uses a short-lived species of fish to model aging processes and test the molecular causes of death and whether interventions such as calorie restrictions and drugs can

improve their life span. Several Northwestern students will assist him.

Meanwhile, Dr. Karissa Carlson '03, chemistry, has been granted a sabbatical for spring 2017. She will develop curriculum for discussion groups around issues of faith and science, as well as tools that can be used for difficult conversations in the church. She plans to use those materials in her local church and to teach a related class for her denomination.

Taiwan Tour


The printed programs for this year's A cappella Choir tour included a song translated both into Mandarin characters and into English, *The Moon Represents My Heart*. The choir toured in Taiwan over spring break; the popular Chinese love song was performed with a Taiwanese children's choir during a joint concert in Taipei. The 42-member ensemble also performed concerts in Hualien.

Dr. Thomas Holm, the choir's director, selected pieces familiar to their audiences. The repertoire also included sacred music in both English and Latin, American spirituals and black gospel songs.

The tour took place in partnership with the National Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. It was arranged by Ming-Chen "Grace" Lo Rohrer, Northwestern's international student counselor and a native of Taiwan. Rohrer served as the choir's interpreter.

Band Tours in Iowa

The Symphonic Band took an abbreviated tour of Iowa communities in April, performing a joint concert with the Marshalltown High School bands, giving a concert at The Bridge in Johnston, and participating in worship at the First Presbyterian Church of Conrad.



Tyree Cox was among six Red Raiders to qualify for the NAIA national wrestling meet.

Red Zone

Wrestling **All-American**

Zach Fishman, 174, placed fifth at the NAIA national championships, earning All-American status. He and Tyree Cox, 184, earned first-team all-conference honors. Luis Rivera-Santiago, 184, and Austin Boles, 125, made the second team. The Raiders compiled an 8-4 dual record and tied for second in the Great Plains Athletic Conference with a 5-2 mark.

Indoor Track **Eight All-Americans**

Eight Raiders earned All-American honors at the national indoor track meet: Kyle Anderson, sixth in the 800; Rebekah Muilenburg, fifth in the 600; the sixth-place men's 4x800 team of Peter Hollinger, Ryan Weitgenant, Tim Rose and Anderson; and the eighth-place women's 4x400 team of Muilenburg, Emily Sorensen, Katie Landhuis and Lauren Spranger. First-place finishes at the GPAC meet were recorded by the men's 4x800 squad and Anderson in the 800. The men's team was fifth in the conference; the women placed seventh.

Women's Basketball **Freshman of the Year**

Kassidy De Jong was named the GPAC Freshman of the Year and an honorable mention All-American after leading the Raiders with 19 points and nearly seven rebounds per game. The Raiders beat several ranked teams, including a 72-65 victory at top-ranked Morningside that snapped the Mustangs' 33-game league winning streak. The Raiders finished the year 15-14 and were tied for seventh in the conference with a 10-12 record.

Men's Basketball **All-Conference** **Honorees**

Colton Kooima was named to the GPAC all-conference first team after averaging 19 points. Nathan Wedel, averaging 14 points, was a second-team selection. The team recorded a 15-15 record and tied for seventh in the league with a 9-11 mark.

Scholar-Athletes **Honored**

Eight Raiders in winter sports earned NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition. Among them were seven seniors honored for the second year in a row: Taylor Francis in men's basketball; wrestlers BJ Groskreutz and Preston Hoebelheinrich; and Arianne Gesell, Katy Kuiper, Whitney Vander Maten and Morgan VanDerSloot in women's basketball.

Football **New Head Coach**

Matt McCarty '03 was named the Raiders' head coach in December. He served as the team's defensive coordinator for 11 years and also was assistant head coach the last four seasons.

National Ranking **Among the Best**

Northwestern is ranked seventh in Christian Universities Online's 50 Best Christian Colleges and Universities Athletic Programs list for 2016.

For more on Raider sports, visit
nwcraiders.com

From 1986 to 2008, Northwestern students waltzed and foxtrotted during the ballroom dance in February.

Having a Ball

BY DUANE BEESON

In 1986, music professor Ron Toering was looking to challenge his Jazz Band to learn to play big band music. But he wanted them to have a purpose for it, so he asked local ballroom dance instructor Dick Miske to teach students how to dance to the ensemble's tunes.

The result was the start of Northwestern's ballroom dance, a traditional semi-formal event that continued until 2008. For each of those years, Miske taught students and any interested community members how to waltz, foxtrot, swing and polka in preparation for the big day.

"I gave them a structure so even the non-dancers could learn and look good while on the floor," remembers Miske. "I enjoyed seeing the students' enthusiasm as they realized they could do partner dancing and pick up the rhythm of the music."

Since the event was held around Valentine's Day, students often pulled out all of the romantic stops—with a fancy meal, flowers and their best threads—before dancing until midnight alongside couples like presidents Jim and Martie Bultman and Bruce and Di Murphy. As many as 400 people attended the event, which was originally held in the former chapel and then moved to the Rowenhorst Student Center Mini-Gym.

The music was usually provided by Northwestern's Jazz Band, playing standards such as *Georgia on My Mind*, *In the Mood* and *Little Brown Jug*.

Occasionally a professional ensemble, such as the Reggie Schive Jazz Orchestra, was hired.

Natalie (Trowbridge '89) Haverdink was on the leadership team for Winter Carnival, which included the dance, for a couple of years. She says the novelty of the ballroom dance, being so different from dances students had attended in high school, helped the event become a popular tradition.

"I had never been to a dance with that kind of music, so it was fun to do something different," says Haverdink, whose future husband, Mike '89, played in the Jazz Band. "I really enjoyed it because I took dance lessons growing up and learned some swing style. It was fun to do that again and teach some of my friends."

The ballroom dance was replaced on the Student Activities Council schedule in 2009 by another event that featured waltzes and polkas, "Dancing With the Profs." Today that style of dancing is one of many presented during the annual RUSH student dance concert.

On the Web

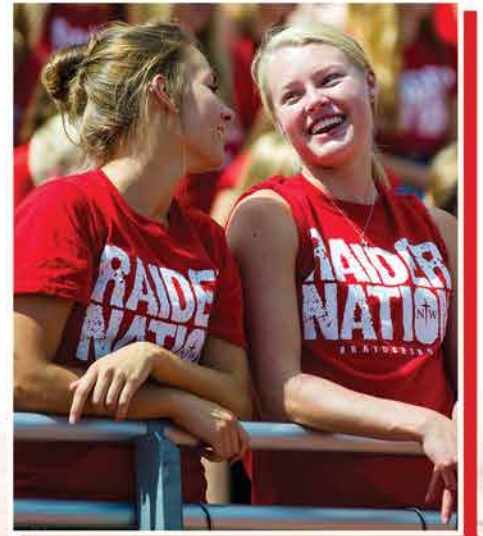
What memories do you have of the ballroom dance? Share them at classic.nwciowa.edu.



RAIDER

Grab some face paint and wear lots of red! Northwestern College students are great at showing their school spirit, whether they're cheering from the sidelines or up in the stands. And with a total of nine national NAIA team titles—and 16 conference championships in the last five years—the Red Raiders have given their fans plenty of reasons to celebrate.

Photos by Dan Ross



MANIA!!!



Test Your Faculty IQ

You spent hours in their classrooms, listening to their lectures, completing their assignments and taking their tests. You may even have been invited to their homes or found a listening ear when you stopped by their offices. But just how well do you know Northwestern professors, past and present? We challenge you to play this matching game to find out. Pair each professor to his or her distinctive trait by writing the letter for the correct response in the appropriate blank.

Professor

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Dave Arnett | M. Virg Muilenburg |
| B. Karen Barker | N. Dave Mulder |
| C. Ralph Davis | O. Vonda Post |
| D. Verna De Jong | P. Ray Weiss |
| E. Eric Elder | Q. Howard Schutter |
| F. Jennifer Feenstra | R. Lila Sybesma |
| G. Laurie Furlong | S. Todd Tracy |
| H. John Hubers | T. Kimberly Utke Svanoe |
| I. Kim Jongerius | U. Rein Vanderhill |
| J. Michael Kensak | V. Carl Vandermeulen |
| K. Tim Lubben | W. Lyle Vander Werff |
| L. Scott Monsma | X. Joel Westerholm |
| | Y. Mike Yoder |

Characteristic

- _____ 1. Kept a stash of corn to ensure campus squirrels were well-fed.
- _____ 2. Always began class by saying, "Good morning, class. Shall we pray? Dear Yahweh, we come to you this morning ..."
- _____ 3. Uses the acronym IMCTT (pronounced "imcat" and meaning "It's more complicated than that") when an abbreviated explanation doesn't quite do justice to the complexity of the issue at hand.
- _____ 4. Had a vanity license plate that said "PROF."



_____ 9. Enjoys sharing the story of a lifelong romance that started in grade school and led to marriage.

_____ 10. So squeamish about spiders that lab students are required to pull the spiders' legs off before this professor will look at them under a microscope.

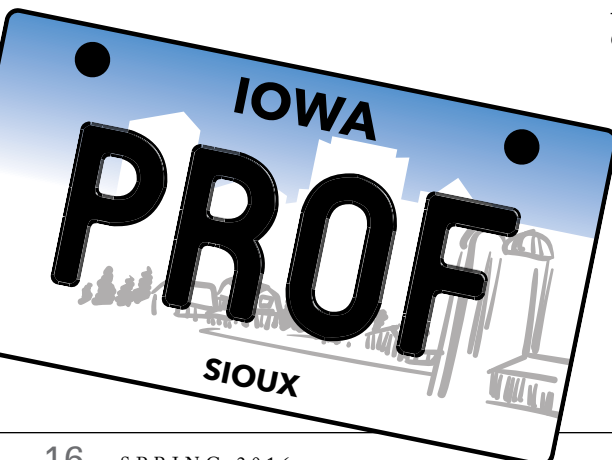
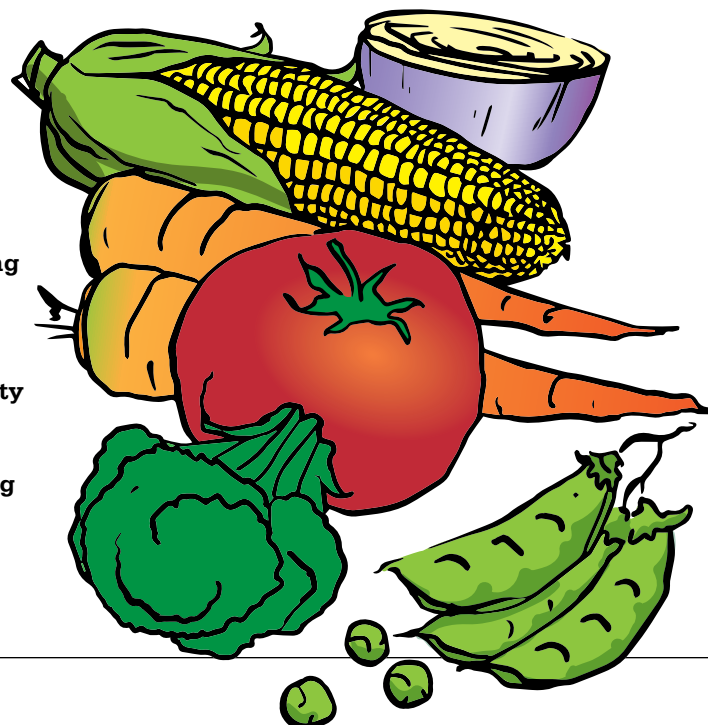
_____ 11. Cultivated a huge garden and shared its bounty by leaving fruit and vegetables outside Zwemer's south entrance.

_____ 5. Named pet cats Benzaldehyde's Brother and Isovaleraldehyde.

_____ 6. Bakes mouth-watering cookies and is known for bringing samples to class.

_____ 7. Has a standard for humor that focuses on quantity over quality.

_____ 8. Could be found during office hours reading an Arabic newspaper.

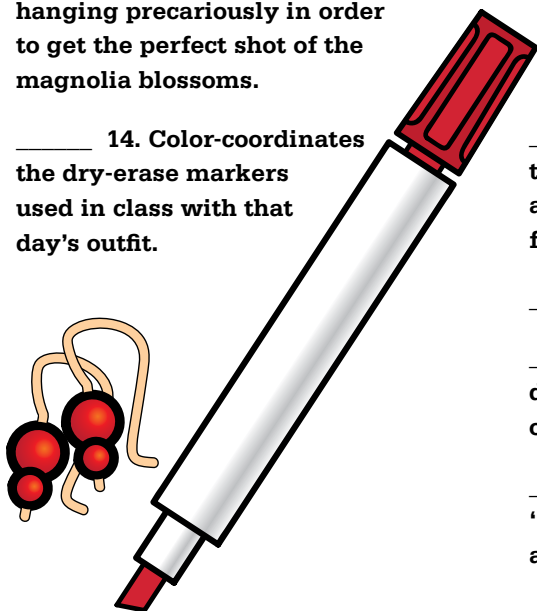




_____ 12. Known for wearing Hawaiian shirts and saying “smoother than a fresh jar of Skippy.”

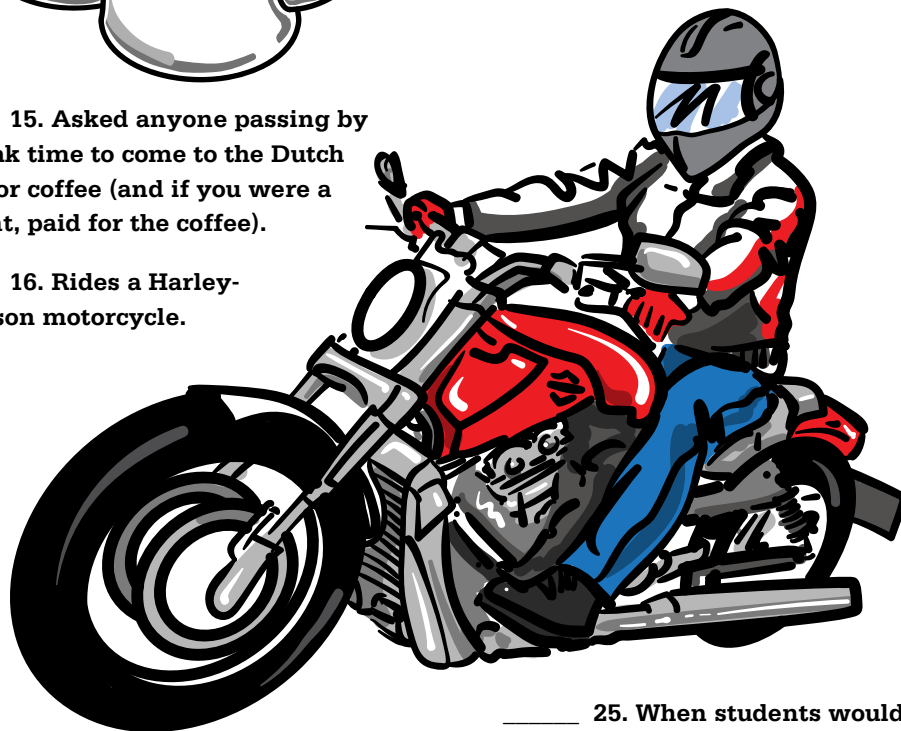
_____ 13. Climbed trees outside of Van Peurse Hall in the spring, toting a camera up to the tallest limb and hanging precariously in order to get the perfect shot of the magnolia blossoms.


_____ 14. Color-coordinates the dry-erase markers used in class with that day’s outfit.

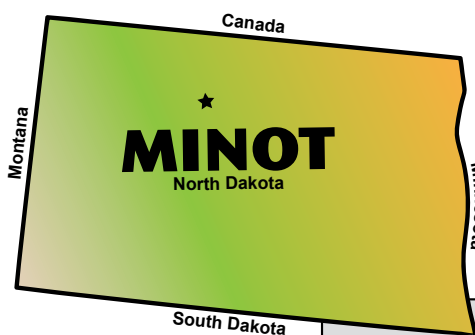


_____ 15. Asked anyone passing by at break time to come to the Dutch Mart for coffee (and if you were a student, paid for the coffee).

_____ 16. Rides a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.



_____ 25. When students would express surprise about this professor’s birthplace in North Dakota, they would get in response, “Why not Minot?” 



_____ 17. Has a voicemail message that tells callers they’ve reached a rational number—and if they’re feeling rational, to leave a message.

_____ 18. Reads dictionaries for fun.

_____ 19. Maintains that CDI (claim, data, interpretation) is *the* way to organize an academic paragraph.

_____ 20. Described the ideal life as “reading all winter and gardening all summer.”

_____ 21. Competes in inline-skating marathons.



KEY	
1. V	13. U
2. W	12. A
3. C	11. Y
4. M	10. G
5. K	9. H
6. F	8. P
7. L	7. I
8. X	6. J
9. B	5. K
10. S	4. M
11. Y	3. C
12. A	2. W
13. U	1. V



I CAN DO THIS

First-generation
students thrive at Northwestern

BY AMY SCHEER

Montserrat Figueroa '17 was born in Mexico. Her parents had met and married there, and when she was nine months old, her father took a job

in the border town of Eagle Pass, Texas, where metal detectors greet children at school and drug cartels offer four figures to kids who will smuggle cocaine.

When her father learned of work on an Iowa hog farm, he moved the family to Rock Valley. Figueroa was five. Her mother found a job on a poultry farm. Figueroa came along one day, and as her mother checked on the hens and put eggs on a conveyor belt, the young woman made a decision about her future.

"You feel like you're choking on feathers. You can't breathe. I don't know how someone could spend a half hour in there," says Figueroa, now a sport management and translation/interpretation major at NWC. "I want to make a better future for myself and for my future kids. What motivates me is that I'm Hispanic, and the odds are against me. I will show people: *I can do this.*"

Her mother quit the farm, and Figueroa went to college.

"First-generation college students" can share that label in common and little more. Defined as the first in their immediate family to attend a four-year college, first-gen students might be responsible for handling their own financial aid forms, as Figueroa did, because their parents don't speak English. They might breeze through high school, as Sarah Morren '16 did, only to find college a struggle and depression a constant cloud.

Like Isaiah Taylor '17, a first-gen might recognize the privilege and responsibility that comes with his status, and embrace the compromises that need to be made—such as not being able to afford regular visits back to California, two long time zones away.

"I can't talk to my family about feeling overwhelmed by a college schedule because they've never been through it," Taylor says. "I know it means a lot to them for me to come out here and finish school. I don't want to let them down."

Rahn Franklin, academic support and diversity specialist at Northwestern, sees that perspective as key to a first-gen's success, though the road ahead is not guaranteed to be smooth.

"If those coming in recognize what it means to be a first-generation

student, there's motivation to perform at a higher level," he says. "When this is not present, it's a different story. You haven't seen what's possible; you don't reach for what's beyond."

Reach for the stars so if you fall, you land on a cloud.

Franklin likes to point students to this lyric from rapper Kanye West, while recognizing that a first-generation student may need someone to tilt his chin upward. The first-gen student may be hunched over in survival mode, because no one she knows has gone before to lead the way.

"You are not here just to be in college," Franklin tells them. "You are here to reach your full potential, and it's not necessarily scripted by your background."

An infrastructure is in place at Northwestern to make that happen. Incoming freshmen are required to take the First-Year Seminar (FYS), a course designed to begin a discussion around three questions: *Who am I? Who are my neighbors? How will we live in the world?*

While not aimed solely at first-gen students, FYS helps identify anyone who might be struggling, and first-gens can often find the transition to college disorienting. Critical thinking skills may be underdeveloped, and access to resources misunderstood. Some students were labeled "the smart one" back home, only to find that in a larger educational setting, they're no longer head of the class.

"The hardest challenge is that of identity," says Dr. Tom Truesdell '01, director of academic support and the first in his family to earn a four-year degree. "Students may think, 'I'm not the same person I was. I don't fit in here; I don't fit in back home.' It's a time of transition and making your own way."

Morren, an education major, had never considered academics. Her brother tried a state university for a year, decided it wasn't for him, and eventually attended motorcycle technician school. Her mother had felt some pressure from her parents to attend college after high school and was offered a deal: Find well-paying work before class registration closes, or you're going to college. The week before the deadline, she landed a job in insurance.

Morren's own list of early goals precluded the need for college—ballerina, flight attendant, hairdresser—but because she did well in high school, further education was encouraged.

Morren had always admired her teachers and her mom, who worked at her preschool, so she pursued that field. Once the struggle with depression started, her mother told her, "I believe in you. You are going to be an amazing teacher."

Before she graduates in May, Morren is participating in Northwestern's Denver Urban Semester, where she teaches in a school system that provides

unique opportunities in science and technology to students from impoverished backgrounds.

"There were times when I wanted to quit college. It was really hard," she says. "I can see it pushed me to be a better teacher. If I hadn't struggled to learn, I don't think I would be able to connect as well with my students who don't get it."

Klint Knutson '17 grew up milking cows and operating machinery on his uncle's dairy farm in Magnolia, Minn., and now plans to become a surgeon.

His mother, a single parent and cosmetologist, raised Knutson and his siblings to understand that hard work leads to opportunities. His sister will also attend medical school. An older brother is a rocket scientist in Los Angeles, and another brother is a nuclear engineer for the Navy.

"That's in my blood; I'm going to do my best," Knutson says. "Money was something my mom worked hard for. She taught us to work as best as we can and never sell ourselves short."

Taylor's mom borrowed from the same playbook as Knutson's. A skilled high school athlete with a busy sports schedule, Taylor had to

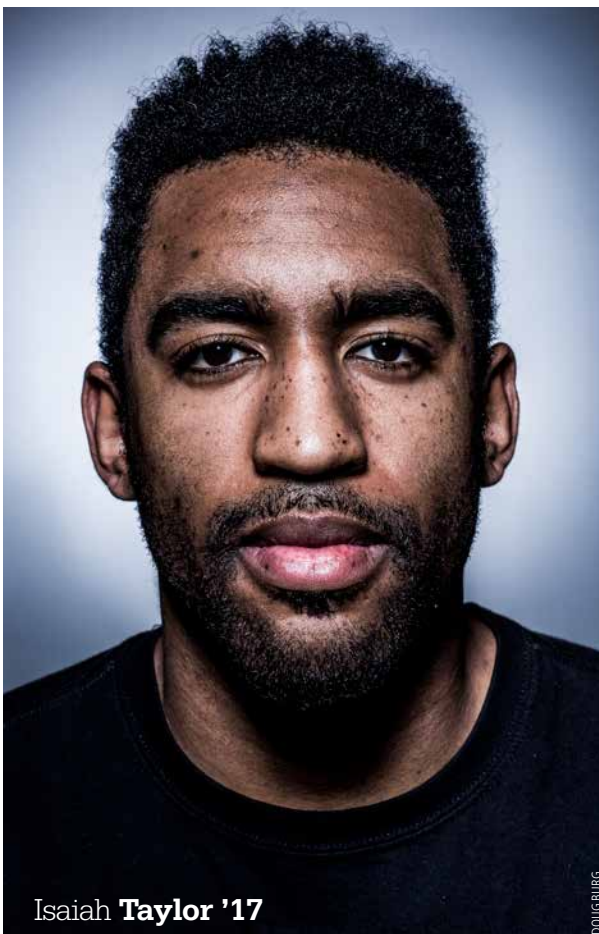
make time for the advanced placement classes his mom insisted on. When Taylor was in the seventh grade, she registered him for a research-based program that prepped students for success in higher education. Both of his parents had attended junior college but regretted never finishing.

Taylor, who is African-American, is now a sports management major with a journalism minor; he writes for the student newspaper and is proud to wear his Red Raider basketball jersey. Transitioning from the California sun to the Iowa cold was a struggle, and coming from diverse classrooms to being one of the few people of color in campus settings, a surprise. But he was taught to love his neighbor as himself, he says, and this Christian foundation directs him at every turn.

"God's intent for his creation is to reach its full potential," says Franklin, who is also African-American and was a first-generation student himself. "Spirituality is at the core of what we do. It's the idea that what you're doing is more than earning a degree: It's a higher calling."



Monserrat **Figueroa** '17



Isaiah **Taylor** '17



Sarah **Morren** '16

Franklin runs a program called Futures, which folds first-generation and low-income students as well as students of color into welcoming support structures. A host family coordinator connects students with local families for meals and visits, and clubs such as La Mosaic honor the music, dance and foods of other cultures through events and trips.

In the fall, Franklin takes Futures students on a retreat for team building and encouragement from upperclassmen who have walked in their shoes.


"In the end, we hope that all students—including those faced with more challenges—will not only survive but thrive at Northwestern," Franklin says.

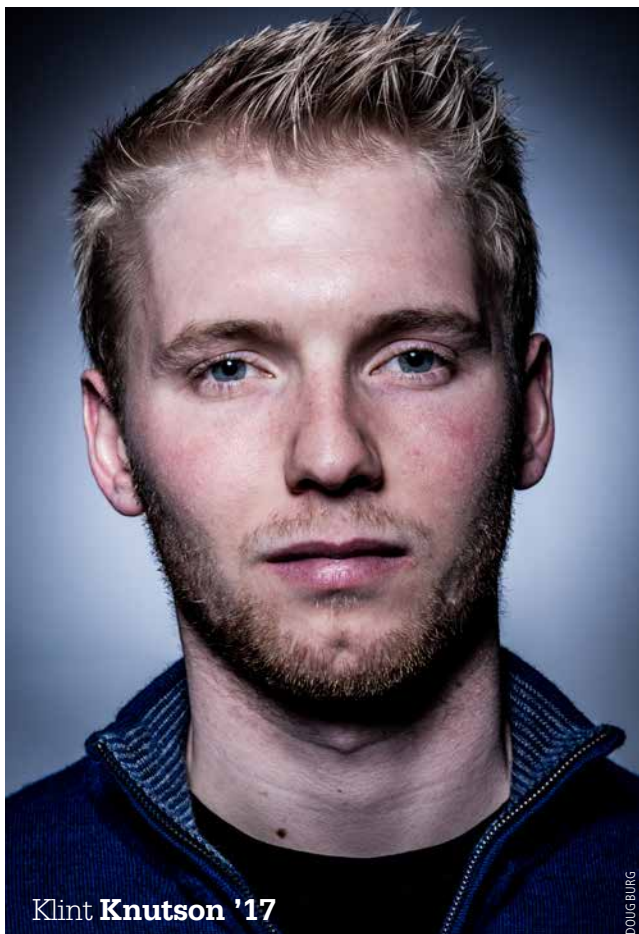
Like Morren, Deidra (Vande Woude) Taylor '16, who is married to Isaiah, considered cosmetology school. A social creature, she was eager to settle down, have kids and enjoy her friends, and four years of college didn't fit into this plan. Her older sisters, who had attended Northwestern, sat her down and reminded her she was a

natural-born teacher. Her dad expressed regrets that he hadn't furthered his own education; he loves his job but wished he could have done something more.

This May, Deidra Taylor will graduate with a degree in elementary education. Her dream is to run an in-home daycare, just like her mom did without ever having pursued a degree. Unlike her mom, she'll also have the option of following her kids to school, teaching in a classroom at some point if her career goals change.

"These four years have been irreplaceable," she says. "I have grown in so many ways beyond just academic. If I had gone to a state school, I don't think I would have grown as much spiritually, and my outlook on the world would be different. I've learned so much about myself.

"The degree is great, but it's not the only thing I got out of my college education." 



Klint **Knutson** '17



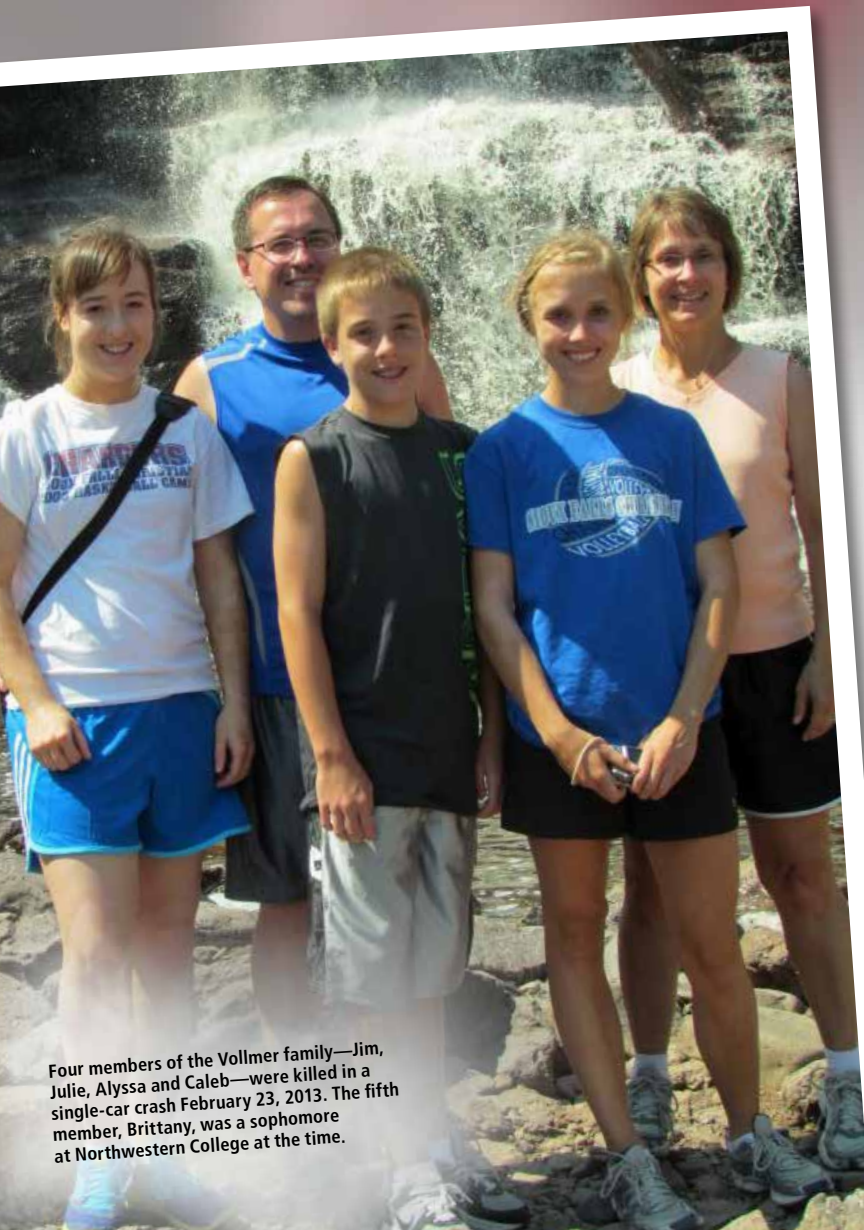
Deidra (Vande Woude) Taylor '16

Brittany Joy

Alum shares story of unimaginable loss and journeying toward light

BY TAMARA FYNAARDT

Geoff Johnson



Four members of the Vollmer family—Jim, Julie, Alyssa and Caleb—were killed in a single-car crash February 23, 2013. The fifth member, Brittany, was a sophomore at Northwestern College at the time.

“I can’t imagine.” It’s almost always what people say after Brittany Vollmer ’15 tells her story of losing her whole family when she was just 20.

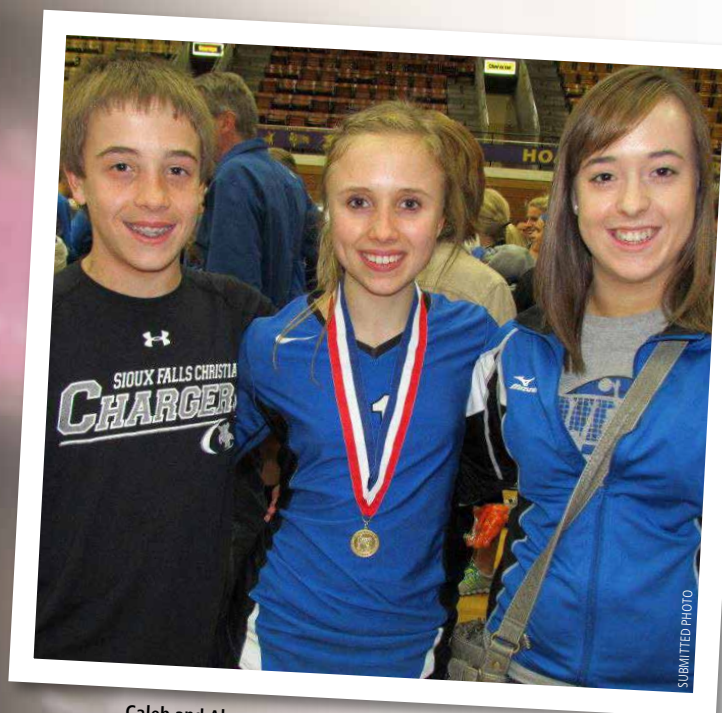
It was a Saturday, Feb. 23, 2013. The Northwestern sophomore was with a friend in DeWitt Theatre, watching a Shakespearian comedy. At intermission her resident director, Hannah McBride ’09, ushered her into a private room off the theatre lobby where President Greg Christy and a police officer told her that her family had been in a car accident near their hometown of Sioux Falls. Three members—her dad, her sister and her brother—had died on the scene. Her mom had been airlifted to a trauma center but also died. Hannah remembers Brittany asking, “So they’re all gone?”

All gone: Jim (52), a hospital social worker and soft-hearted dad; Julie (48), a nurse and devoted, attentive mom; Alyssa (16), a committed student-athlete and extroverted sister; and Caleb (13), a sports enthusiast and quick-witted, playful brother.

Losing one family member is devastating. Losing all of them? Unimaginable.

While other Northwestern students made spring break plans, Brittany and members of her extended family planned a funeral service, the first one she’d attend in her life. News of the Iowa college student who’d lost her whole family was picked up by media outlets across the country. Cards, tributes, stuffed animals, prayer

SUBMITTED PHOTO



Caleb and Alyssa Vollmer were students at Sioux Falls Christian School. Their funeral was held there, and stones with Caleb's and Alyssa's names are in the school's memorial garden. Like the Northwestern community, the SFCs community continues to be a source of support for Brittany.

shawls and other comfort-gifts poured in, as well as donations to a fund for Brittany's college tuition. After a few weeks, Brittany returned to Northwestern and began the arduous task of continuing to live, one day at a time.

Brittany likes talking about her family, describing their individual personalities and remembering moments, big and small, that make being part of a family so ordinary—and so precious. She says it's not hard telling people about her mom, dad, Alyssa or Caleb or even what happened to them. The hard part is afterward. "When I finish telling about the accident, then it hits me again: That really happened. It's not just a story. It's actually someone's life. Mine."

Brittany's friends describe her as funny and fun-loving, athletic with a competitive spirit to match. Outgoing and quick to laugh, Brittany Joy is well-named. She loved attending Northwestern and was both excited and apprehensive about graduating last spring. Finishing college was a goal she wasn't sure she'd achieve.

"Just getting through college after the accident was tough," she says, crediting members of the NWC community with sometimes pushing, often pulling her through. "The support I got at Northwestern blew me away," says Brittany. "Notes and letters from people I didn't even know." She kept them all. "They remind me of all the people who prayed for me. I like to imagine some of them are still praying for me."

Brittany describes Northwestern friends and friends' parents who were there for her around the clock, sticking close, making arrangements and meeting practical needs. She's grateful for professors who helped and cared for her in exceptional ways—both academically and personally—as she grieved and struggled to find her new normal.

Hannah became more than an RD to Brittany, and the two remain close friends. On the first- and second-year anniversaries of the accident, Hannah accompanied Brittany as she revisited the events, starting at the DeWitt Theatre and ending in Hannah's Stegenga Hall apartment where Brittany stayed that February night her world crashed down.

Where Brittany sees struggle during her years in college, others see

amazing strength: “She’d been picked as a resident assistant for her junior year,” Hannah explains. “After the accident, I told her not to worry about it; we’d find someone else. But she wanted to go ahead. And she was a great RA for her wing—very thoughtful and always there for her girls.”

During her last year at Northwestern, Brittany participated in the Chicago Semester, student-teaching in an urban classroom. It was the first time she shared her story with a new community, and she was overwhelmed by her students’ expressions of empathy. Even though none of them had experienced what she had, they understood her as someone who’s suffered but keeps going. When she started her first job as a sixth-grade math teacher this fall, Brittany shared her story again, knowing it would be a good connection to make with her students: to be vulnerable among middle schoolers who are dealing with their own tragedies. To model bravery—and resilience.

Today Brittany teaches at Lewis Central Middle School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and shares an apartment with Northwestern friend and fellow former RA Rachelle Cole ’14. She keeps a collection of photos, home movies and other reminders of her family close: her dad’s cologne, her mom’s Bible and two treasured letters, cozy sweatshirts from all four family members to sleep in. For warmth she also has a quilt made by her mom’s co-workers from Julie’s nurse’s scrubs.

Brittany is a big fan of sports and board games. She likes being 10 minutes from Omaha’s zoo and the shops and restaurants of the city’s rejuvenated Old Market. She visits Sioux Falls frequently, sometimes staying in the house where she grew up—which remains filled with her family’s things—but most often staying with friends who have become family.



Rachelle Cole and Brittany became friends when they both served as RAs at Northwestern. When Brittany accepted a teaching position in Rachelle’s hometown of Council Bluffs, Iowa, she got in touch and the two became roommates.

Darci Wassenaar was Brittany's high school volleyball coach at Sioux Falls Christian School. She learned of the Vollmers' accident during a school event that Saturday night and drove straight to Orange City. "She was the first person from home who came to be with me, and it hasn't stopped," says Brittany, who now has her own room in the Wassenaars' home and has added Darci, Brian and their four sons to the pictures she shares when she talks about her family.

"With the Wassenaars and my grandparents and aunts and uncles ... I have a lot of love in my life."

"I can't put into words how much they mean to me," she says. "If I'm having a hard time, which still happens a lot, Darci is the first person I call. She listens. She cries with me. She encourages me. She respects when I am sad, mad—even when I vent my frustration to her. Her support has been unconditional.

"With the Wassenaars and my grandparents and aunts and uncles—who've become more important to me—I have a lot of love in my life."

And the future? "I don't think that far ahead. I think about making it through the next month—sometimes the next week—sometimes just the day."

The number of days she's made it through feels like a real accomplishment. "It's still heavy. The focal point of my thoughts is my family, and it's hard not to think about how much more joyful everything would be if they were still here."

Brittany believes God is sustaining her, even though she wrestles with agonizing "Why?" questions it seems even God isn't answering. "Before the accident I felt God's presence in my life—his comfort, his strength—through my family. Now I don't experience it in the same way."


Often, she explains, it's hard to feel anything beyond just a deep longing to have her family back. In the aftermath of a tragedy that would shake anyone's faith, Brittany is grateful for close family members and friends who keep encouraging her to both remember and rediscover God's truth for her life now.

During the fall of Brittany's junior year, a friend arranged for her to have lunch with the Rev. Dr. Jerry Sittser, Northwestern's former chaplain who was on campus as a board member. He told her about an accident with a drunken driver that had killed his wife, his mother and his four-year-old daughter. He said he'd written a book, *A Grace Disguised*, about

deep grief and God's enduring grace. Brittany knew of it; she'd been given several copies.

"He cried when he talked about his family, but I don't think I did when I talked about mine," Brittany says. "It hadn't even been a year. I was still numb. The only thing I remember clearly from our conversation is a dream he told me about."

Sittser described a recurring dream in which he was running, frantic, trying to escape a cloud of creeping darkness. The faster he ran, the larger the shadow loomed. He shared his nightmare with a friend, and the friend said it reminded him of a metaphorical truth: If you run toward a setting sun, you'll never reach the light. Face the darkness and walk through it. Brighter light is on the other side.

Brighter light—greater joy. Brittany isn't there. But she keeps going. 



A former high school coach of Brittany's, Darci Wassenaar came to be with Brittany the night of the accident. Since then, she and her husband, Brian, have enfolded Brittany into their home and family.

class Notes

'61 The American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) honored **Dr. Leon Schimmel** with its 2015 Collaborating Physician Award in recognition of his support and advocacy for birth centers and the midwifery model of care. He was presented with the award at the AABC Birth Institute in Arizona. Schimmel resides in Davis, Calif.

'68 **Kella (Klinker) Simonin** played the role of Mrs. Mops in the Spencer (Iowa) Community Theatre's production of *A Christmas Carol, The Musical* last December.

'70 **The Rev. Terry Muller** has served Raritan Reformed Church in Raritan, Ill., and Bethel Lutheran Church in Stronghurst, Ill., since 2011. He and his wife, **Laura (Kreun)**, live in Stronghurst.

'77 A patient of **Dr. Jeff De Haan** dedicated a book to him. In *Choosing Joy After Falling*, Pastor Yan Venter tells about a construction accident in which

he fell four stories and broke 42 bones. He writes glowingly of the Texarkana, Texas, orthopedic surgeon's care.

Pamela (Leslie) Dettman is the new assistant county attorney for Iowa's Tama County. Her previous roles include practicing law with Robberts and Kirkman in Burlington and serving as senior assistant attorney for Des Moines County.

'83 **Jill (Smidt) Christensen** has been named a finalist for the national volleyball coach of the year by the National High School Athletic Coaches Association. A coach for the Parker (S.D.) Community School District, she is one of eight finalists for the honor, which is based on longevity, service to high school athletics, honors, championships and winning percentages. In 2015, her volleyball team finished third in the state's Class B tournament. Christensen ranks as the coach with the most wins in South Dakota prep volleyball history, with 758 victories.

Raider Days Homecoming & Parents Weekend Sept. 30–Oct. 1, 2016



Nooo!!! Don't miss Raider Days!

The celebration will include traditions like the Morning on the Green family carnival and Raider football—as well as reunions for the classes of '66, '76, '86, '91, '96, '06, '11 and '16.

Red Ties

CORKY KOERSELMAN '82

Alumni Relations

"Let me tell you a story ..."

Those are among the six sweetest words, especially when they're followed by students' stories about how or why they chose to come to Northwestern. Many of you have been key players in the college decision of your kids, their friends and other teens in your communities. The weight your recommendation carries is apparent in stories like these:

My parents were the strongest influence in my college decision. I also looked at the rankings for best Christian colleges and noticed Northwestern on the list. From the moment I visited campus, I could feel that it was more authentic than any other campus I visited. — Eric

Among the biggest influences on my college decision were my cousins. They were in Northwestern's A cappella Choir together and would tell stories about the music department, their choir friends, and concerts and tours. Then when I got here, I was already connected to people I'd never met because they knew my cousins. I immediately felt part of Northwestern's great community. — Amanda

I followed a long line of students from my hometown to Northwestern. One of those alums influenced his younger brother to attend; he influenced my sister to attend—and later married her! They're the reason I came to Northwestern. — Lincoln

Whoever influenced you to come to Northwestern—or whoever you've influenced in return—those connections are no coincidence. God uses the people around us to reveal his will for our lives.

If you love Northwestern, share your story. Support your alma mater with one of the best gifts you can give us: a student whose life might be transformed by Northwestern's courageous, faithful Christian education.

Refer students at nwciova.edu/refer.



Dr. Jeff Taylor, professor of political science at Dordt College, organized the Iowa Conference on Presidential Politics national academic meeting in October. His third book, *The Political World of Bob Dylan: Freedom and Justice, Power and Sin*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in July.

'84 Penny Karrer has been the owner/operator of Penny's Pampered Pet Care, a pet-sitting service in Sioux Falls, for 15 years.

Martha Shaver, Naperville, Ill., will graduate from Wheaton College Graduate School in May with a master's degree in intercultural communication and TESOL.

'89 Poetry by **Paula Wanken** was included in a traveling gallery, "100 Days of Summer: An International Photo Exhibit," curated by NEXT Gallery in Denver. From June through September 2014, a group of 17 photographers from around the world submitted their work to a shared Facebook page for 100 consecutive days. These photos were collected and organized into the gallery, which also featured eight of Wanken's poems, written in response to the submitted photos. She resides in San Antonio.

'92 Lisa (Burris) Ciccarelli, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S.

Air Force, completed 20 years of service in November. She plans to transition from the military in 2017. She is stationed at the Los Angeles Air Force Base, where she manages three space programs. She and her husband, Chris, live in Torrance, Calif., with their children, Ally (16) and Spencer (10).

'99 Kirk Johnson will become the associate superintendent of the Waukee (Iowa) Community School District in July. He taught in the classroom for six years before serving as the middle/high school principal for the Remsen-Union Community School District and high school principal for Vinton-Shellsburg. He is in his fifth year as principal for Waukee High School.

Monica Schaap Pierce is serving as the ecumenical associate for the Reformed Church in America. She is responsible for developing and sustaining ecumenical relationships between the RCA and other denominations, as well as representing the RCA in a variety of ecumenical settings. She lives in Manhasset, N.Y.

'00 James Hanse, Valley City, N.D., teaches science at Maple Valley High School. His wife, the **Rev. Jolene Knudson-Hanse**, pastors Faith Lutheran Church, which is constructing a new facility following an arson fire that destroyed the previous building in 2013.



After winning the opportunity for paid volunteerism from his employer, Minnesotan Rick Pals traveled to the Dominican Republic to personally distribute meals packaged by nonprofit Feed My Starving Children.

Winning Generosity

With a 40-pound box on one shoulder, Rick Pals '79 walked across a dirt field to deliver meals to the families of Batey 106, an impoverished village in the Dominican Republic.

Feeding the poor was a new part of his Minnesota day job.

Pals won an essay contest sponsored by his workplace, Deluxe Corporation, awarding pay to employees for 100 hours spent volunteering at a nonprofit. Pals, an IT administrator, chose Feed My Starving Children, which distributes nutrient-rich meals to malnourished children. A regular volunteer at their Twin Cities headquarters, Pals wanted to personally deliver food as part of his winning hours.

The adults of Batey 106 spend long days working on sugar plantations, so volunteers mostly saw the children. Snacks were devoured on the spot, which was why it surprised Pals to see that 14-year-old Armando still had his bag of peanuts when the two hiked a nearby hill.

They stopped to rest under a tree. The boy opened the bag and offered the snack to Pals.

"Here's this hungry kid who could have kept them to himself, but the first thing he does is hand it to me," Pals says, emotional at the memory. "Providing food consistently means these kids can stop worrying and think about other things. We're giving people hope."

BY AMY SCHEER



Watch a video of Rick Pals' Dominican Republic trip at tinyurl.com/rickpals.

SPOTLIGHT

our outstanding alumni

Nominate candidates for the Distinguished Professional Achievement, Distinguished Service to Humankind or Distinguished Service to Northwestern College award. Email your nominations to alumni@nwciowa.edu.



DAN ROSS

A banker by day, Greg Westra spends his evenings and weekends buying and selling antiques and running The Antique Locker in Rock Valley, Iowa.

Treasure Hunt

Greg Westra '89 recognized his first smart investment strategy in Okoboji's Treasure Village. Working high school and college summers there, he noticed the busy antique flea markets springing up on holiday weekends and decided to try his own hand with secondhand treasures.

As a college student, antiques provided both necessary income and community entertainment. Westra and his Colenbrander Hall wingmates would get excited when a new *Ad-Visor* arrived listing local garage sales. One summer Westra purchased the retired Spencer High School band uniforms at an auction, outfitting his entire wing for a year of events with their sister wing. "We even spent some money to get patches sewn on that said 'Third West Colenbrander, a bunch of neat guys,'" Westra recalls.

Now co-owner and executive vice president of Premier Bank in Rock Valley, Iowa, Westra continues to support his community with his hobby. He owns The Antique Locker, a former meat locker turned into an antique warehouse, and two summers ago he added the old Pember Drug store, which he transformed into the town's museum.

Westra eagerly purchases anything historically significant to Rock Valley from all over the country, including old signs from businesses, hotel furniture from the 19th century, and original bank equipment from Sioux County banks. "It's important to me not only to help other people but to save a piece of time and bring it back to where it belongs," he says.

BY BETH (NIKKEL '02) GAULKE

Chad and Lynnette (Van Gorp) Fikse, Sully, Iowa, are doing a great job instilling Red Raider pride in their children. During Red Ribbon Week in the fall, their fifth-grade son, Evan, wore his Northwestern sweatshirt for all four dress-up days. The first day was Pajama Day, so he wore the sweatshirt with pajama pants. It also worked for Wear Red Day. The third day was Western Day, so he wore it as a NorthWESTERN shirt. And the final day was Favorite Team Day.

'01 Meagan (Morrison) Liesveld, Lincoln, Neb., has been named the executive vice president of CEDARS, which provides care for children and youth in crisis. Her responsibilities include providing leadership to ensure quality in service delivery, strategic planning, development, operations and constituent relations. She has been with the agency for 11 years, most recently serving as the director of development.

'03 Ivy Faith, the eight-month-old daughter of **Steve and Anna (MacKay '04) Frieze**, New Ulm, Minn., died on Nov. 17. Steve says God has been ever present in the midst of unspeakable pain. They are extremely thankful for the love that has been poured out through countless prayers and other acts of kindness by family and friends, many of whom have ties to Northwestern. Mourning with them are Ivy's siblings Evelyn (10), Naomi (8) and Isaiah (6).

'04 John Ranney completed a doctorate in health/social psychology at North Dakota State University last May. He is an assistant professor at Gannon University in Erie, Pa.

'05 Megan Coe works in development and communications with For His Children in Ecuador. Her agency cares for more than 50 orphans.

'07 Matt Van Heuvelen has been made a partner at Davenport, Evans, Hurwitz & Smith in Sioux Falls. An attorney with the firm's business law and

estate planning departments, he is focused primarily on dynasty trusts and trust administration, business transactions, estate planning, probate, fiduciary litigation and tax planning. Van Heuvelen also teaches business law at NWC.

'08 Tim Ulibarri and 12 other members of the Denver United Church traveled to Lebanon last June, where they worked with local missionaries to host a vacation Bible school for 150 refugee children from Syria.

Jessica (Jenkins) Voelker teaches fourth grade at Adams Elementary School in Lincoln, Neb.

'09 After **Jonathan Manchester** stumbled across a spiteful 20-page breakup letter on the sidewalk in front of his home in Duluth, Minn., he turned it into a one-man show and presented it at last summer's Minnesota Fringe Festival. *Everything You've Done That Hurt Me* was picked as one of the top 10 must-see shows.

Carson Norine earned a master's degree in educational leadership from Doane College last year. He is the district high-ability learner coordinator for the Blair (Neb.) Community School District.

Elizabeth (Pedersen) Petersen is a counselor at the Storm Lake (Iowa) Middle School. Her husband, Kole, is a nurse at the Cherokee Regional Medical Center.

'10 Tyler and Stacey (Bernado '11) Granger live in Des Moines. He is regional field director for America's Renewable Future, and she serves

PREFER TO READ ONLINE?

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as a domestic violence victim advocate for Children and Families of Iowa.

'11 **Laura Erickson** has become licensed as a nursing home administrator for the state of Minnesota. She moved to Thief River Falls to serve as the administrator of Oakland Park Communities Nursing Home.

'13 **Amanda Hoklin** has been promoted from graphic designer to art director at the Omaha Community Playhouse.

'14 **Josh Horstman** will be moving to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to teach at Bingham Academy, an international Christian School. He is partnering with TeachBeyond, a mission organization that

seeks to transform societies and individuals through the power of the Holy Spirit working through education.

New Arrivals

Tony and **Patti (Dykstra '98) Betzer**, daughter, Erin

Mindy and **Tim Harskamp '99**, son, Nolan Michel, joins Kenna (8) and Greyson (5)

Josh and **Angela (Reimers '03) Turner**, son, Mark William

Kyle and **Joey (Weber '03) VanderHelm**, daughter, Morgan Lynn

Terrence and **Regina (Downing '05) Hassanally**, son, Solomon Thomas, joins Micah (6) and Jude (4)

Corey and **Elizabeth (Peterson '05) Lorenz**, son, Luke Joseph

Cody and **Teresa (Larson '05) Templin**, daughter, Nora Anne, joins Jack (4) and Halle (2)

Philip and **Rosalyn (De Haan '06) De Koster**, son, Joshua Gordon
Andrea (Collier '07) and Jason Helmus '07, daughter, Lindy Marie

Jonathan and **Crystal (Algood '08) Anzulewicz**, daughter, Adalia Jo

Jonathan and **Sarah (Korver '08) Dykstra**, son, Sam Jonathan, joins Olivia (1)

Kole and **Elizabeth (Pedersen '09) Petersen**, son, Davin Konrad

Micah and **Julia (Glendenning '09) Redfield**, son, Luke Robert

Lindsey (Haskins '10) and TJ Philips '09, son, Kuyper Jay

Mike and **Bobbie Jean (Lydick '11) Allen**, daughter, Ariella Jean

Michelle (Mether '11) and Christopher

Bergst '09, son, Kaleb Michael, joins Kelsey (2)

Brandon and **Holly (Bowers '11) Gustafson**, son, Abram Peter

Kristin (Neth '11) and Tyler Tigges '09, son, Elliott Joshua

Abbie (Goldschmid '15) and Brett Amiotte '13, daughter, Evelyn Grace

Trent and **Megan (Bruxvoort '15) Pingel**, daughter, Olivia Mae

Marriages

Krista Van Gorp '97 and David Clayton, Sioux Falls

Stacy Ann Tynan '05 and Adam Campbell, Charles City, Iowa

Jessica Jenkins '08 and Ryan Voelker, Lincoln, Neb.



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ERIC SCHROEDER

Becky Hille was named the 2015 Nurse of the Year by the National PACE Association in recognition of the exceptional care she provides her patients.

Critical Care

Becky (Swart '09) Hille was so busy managing her 65-patient caseload as a registered nurse for Milwaukee's Community Care that she didn't realize she was being watched. So she was shocked when she learned she had received the 2015 Nurse of the Year Award from the National PACE Association (NPA). Co-workers who had noticed her exceptional care of a patient in need nominated her and praised her work.

Hille, one of Northwestern's first Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates, was part of a core team of caregivers for the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a Medicare and Medicaid program that offers holistic care to senior citizens with ongoing physical needs who live at home.

Although it went far beyond her typical patient involvement, Hille jumped on the suggestion of her team's doctor to attend oncology appointments with an advanced cancer patient who lacked support from friends or family. Hille began accompanying the woman, helping her navigate medical information and offering a listening ear. In the process, the patient exceeded expectations for her response to treatments—and Hille discovered a sweet woman underneath a tough exterior.

Hille received the NPA's prestigious award at its national conference in Philadelphia in October. The award is given annually to one nurse selected from among those nurses serving in more than 100 PACE programs throughout the United States.

BY BETH (NIKKEL '02) GAULKE

Sherry Runia '12 and Cory De Wit, Hull, Iowa

Kelsey Martinez '14 and Papito Joseph, Sibley, Iowa

Valerie Heaton '15 and **Brandon Lenderink '12**, Ballwin, Mo.

The couples reside in the city listed.

In Memoriam

Mariann (Kraai '43) Utech, 92, died Dec. 28. She taught at Newkirk Elementary School and later worked at Harker's in Le Mars. Among her survivors are her husband, **Robert '43**, and two daughters.

Elizabeth (Van Gelder '48) Brown of Spencer, Iowa, died Jan. 8 at age 86. She earned a bachelor's degree from Buena Vista University and taught elementary school in Albert City for 40 years. Active at the Evangelical Covenant Church in Albert City, she sang in the choir. She is survived by a son, **Darrick '79**; a daughter, **Gretchen Hoffman '84**; and a brother, **Gerb '64**.

Henrietta (Kroeze '49) Brolsma, age 85, died Nov. 25 in Apple Valley, Calif. She taught kindergarten for 35 years at Hesperia Christian School and helped start Apple Valley Christian School. A member of Redeemer Church, she participated in Christian women's clubs, taught Sunday

school, served as a deaconess and played piano. Her survivors include six children and two siblings.

Mary Jane (Van Batavia '53) Rozeboom of Hull, Iowa, died Jan. 22 at age 81. A teacher in country schools for three years, she was also an active farm wife and a member of First Reformed Church, where she participated in the ladies' Bible study and taught Sunday school and vacation Bible school. A member of the Wegman-Koele American Legion Auxiliary, she helped organize a portion of the Hull Summerfest Parade for a number of years. Among her survivors are four sons: **Tim '82**, **Jay '84**, **David '88** and **Mike '95**.

Eleanor Blankers '60, '62 of Sheldon, Iowa, died Jan. 4 at age 75. For more than 37 years, she taught first and fourth grades, in addition to special reading classes, in the Sheldon Community School District. She was an active member of First Reformed Church, where she taught Sunday school. She was also a member of Business and Professional Women, holding offices as district director and president of the local chapter. In 2004 she was crowned Miss Prairie Queen.

Audrey (Boelkes '69) Hansen, 68, died Nov. 23. She taught in Decorah for one year before moving to Alton, Iowa, and teaching at Floyd Valley Elementary School, Sioux County Head Start and St. Patrick's School

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in Sheldon. She also served as a reading and early childhood consultant for Area 12 Education Agency. A member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, she is survived by her husband, Edward, and five children.

Catherine (Ahrendsen '69) Noteboom of Sheldon, Iowa, died Dec. 23 at age 87. She taught middle school in Archer and Sheldon. She was active at Archer Reformed Church, teaching Sunday school, participating in the Reformed Church Women's group and leading Bible study. She was also a member of the Foster Grandparent Program and a 4-H leader. Among her survivors are three children, including **Dan '73**.

Thomas Linn '82 died Jan. 30 at age 53. He owned and operated R&D Air Conditioning in Bellflower, Calif., for 22 years. He also coached youth baseball, softball, wrestling and football for the city of Norwalk and Calvary Chapel Downey Christian School.

He is survived by his wife, Amber; four daughters, including **Micayla '19**; and two sons, **Micah '14** and **Caleb '16**.

Doug Reuvers '89, age 49, died Dec. 25. He attended Nettleton Business School in Sioux Falls before taking over the family farm in Boyden, Iowa. He was a member of First Reformed Church and served as a deacon, youth sponsor, audiovisual technician and choir member. He was also a board member for the Boyden-Hull Community School District. He is survived by his wife, Melody; two sons; and four siblings, including **Tom '75** and **Jerry '78**.

Eric Schaap '11 of Chandler, Minn., died Jan. 30 at age 27. He was an ag loan officer at First State Bank Southwest in Edgerton and a member of the Chandler Volunteer Fire Department. Among his survivors are his wife, Jessamy; parents; and two brothers, including **Jeff '06**.

SPEAK UP

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PETER WILLIAMS

Hannah Cornthwaite leads a Beijing congregation that includes worshipers from Australia, Europe, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the U.S.

Leading Worship in China

The Rev. Hannah Cornthwaite '10 was raised Baptist, joined the Roman Catholic Church, learned about Reformed Christianity at Northwestern, and was ordained to the Episcopal priesthood.

Now she pastors a congregation in Beijing, China, where multiple denominations gather together under constant threat of government surveillance.

"I believe each denomination tells us something about the kingdom of God," she says. "What matters to this congregation is the community it has formed. I think this is the future of the church."

Because it is self-governing, Congregation of the Good Shepherd (COGS) is categorized as a "worshiping community." Only foreign passport holders are permitted to attend; welcoming Chinese nationals as a recognized "church" would require heavy monitoring, money beyond their means, and a loss of freedom.

"There is always a chance the government could send police to check in at any time," she says. "While we have to be careful not to say or do things that would trigger them, as long as we follow the rules, the government doesn't interfere."

Services at COGS have a Western feel, Cornthwaite says, though their liturgy blends the different Christian traditions. The music is purposefully multicultural, and the congregation affirms their faith weekly by reciting creeds from around the world.

BY AMY SCHEER

Classic Thoughts

If God Taught Spin Class

BY AMANDA KUEHN '09



At the start of Sunday's spin class, my path seems easy, almost effortless. There are a few changes in resistance and a challenge to up my RPMs, but for the

most part I feel strong. Confident as my legs cut the air with quick even circles, I forget why I was hesitant to hop up on the pedals.

It isn't long before I remember. Twenty minutes into the class, Qa-driyyah (the instructor, who goes by "Q") begins asking for more than I want to give. She doesn't demand, but firmly asks that I increase my resistance, making my legs work harder, pushing me past comfortable.

"In one minute I'm going to ask you to up your speed," Q says. "It doesn't have to be a lot, but I want you to try, just 3-5 RPMs."

I don't mind sweating in spin. It's a sort of achievement—a sign I'm really working. Real work, though, is anything but pleasant.

"You've gotta trust me," the instructor says, her voice perfectly calm as she asks me to up the resistance again. The pedals stick under my feet, like there's gum in my gears. I start to wonder if I'll make it up the hill and finish the seated climb that we've only been in for 60 seconds. "I've got you," she assures me. "You can do this."

Most of my spin instructors call out cues from the bike in the front of the room. Most of them ride with the class, showing us that all they ask is really possible. Usually Q is one of those instructors, but today she is out on the floor and teaching on her feet. She is gentle but firm, pushing me as far as my body can go.

Forty minutes in, my towel is damp and my quads burn. I flash to memories of chair squats in high school gym and reach to turn the resistance down.

"Now I need you to give me everything you've got," says Q, just as my fingers touch the magic red knob. "All that resistance we put on earlier, we didn't just do that to do it. You were building up for this. For now."

I retract my arm and place my hand back on the handlebars, my legs cutting circles that are slow and labored. I trust Q. I believe her when she says I can do this, that I can do anything. After all, what is 20 seconds, 30 seconds, a single minute in the grand scheme of my life?

As I force my feet against the pedals, I think 30 seconds is actually an awfully long time when you're in pain.

And yet, when it is over, it is all but forgotten.

At Q's order, I take off the resistance and glide through a cool down, my legs spinning freely on the flywheel. I grab my water and watch her as she weaves through the rows of bikes, bathing us in praise. I know I couldn't do this without her. I couldn't push myself this hard or make myself this strong.

Life is not so different. The hard spaces and struggles—the failed relationships and lost jobs, broken promises and aching loneliness—are the things that make us work, pushing us past limits we don't want to reach. They are painful and difficult while we are working through them, but seem small and short in retrospect. I know I could not face them without someone coaching me along, telling me I can do this, that I can do anything.

God's voice, like Q's, is gentle and controlled. God asks me to push a little harder as I press through each struggle. All that resistance he gives me, it isn't for nothing. It's for the strengthening of my spirit and the shaping of my heart. It is painful, but it is possible.

"You've gotta trust me," God says, as my life begins to feel sticky, as I start to wonder if I'll make it to the end of the trial. "I've got you," God tells me. "We can do this."

Amanda Kuehn (A.K. Carroll) is a Bay Area journalist and freelance writer who contributes regularly to *SF Weekly*, *Berkeleyside*, the *Lamorinda Weekly* and *San Francisco* magazine. She earned a master's degree in creative nonfiction writing at Saint Mary's College of California.



LEAVE A LEGACY

Leah (Boote '87) and Craig '85 Pennings' Northwestern connection is a storybook romance; that is, they met in the basement of the former Ramaker Library. "Craig says I'm the best thing he ever checked out there," says Leah. Leah followed her brothers to Northwestern. Craig followed his parents, Carl '48 and Marlys (Mouw '44, '46). And so far, two of the Pennings' three kids, Juliana '12 and Colin '17, have participated in the tradition of attending NWC.

Leah and Craig have a lot of affection for Northwestern. They support the Northwestern Fund, and they've ensured the Pennings family will always have a Red Raider relationship by adding to an endowed scholarship fund established by Craig's late father more than 20 years ago. Next year, for the first time, a deserving student will receive the Carl & Marlys Pennings Christian Service Scholarship. Another start of something lasting.

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Most Beautiful



Call it a campus beauty pageant. Northwestern is ranked 33rd among the country's 50 most beautiful college campuses by Christian Universities Online. "Visitors often mention the attractiveness of our campus," says Mark Bloemendaal '81, dean of enrollment and marketing. "The natural beauty mixed with well-maintained historic and new buildings makes a great impression."

The ranking, at christianuniversitiesonline.org/most-beautiful-christian-colleges-2016, includes only members or member-eligible institutions of the

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. It highlights Northwestern's picturesque grounds and proximity to residential neighborhoods, local parks and other inviting natural settings.

The website also mentions the attractive buildings that surround central campus, including the iconic Zwemer Hall, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the DeWitt Learning Commons, completed in 2013.

the Classic