Love Stories
Alumni tell of initial impressions, auction offers and imperfect proposals

Also
Differently Abled
Dorm Décor
First Dance
Running with her father, Jason Olson ’92, Gracie Olson was the fastest female under 20 in the Raider Road Race at Homecoming. The seven-year-old finished the 5K race with a time of 26:47.
A Mission to Live By

There is perhaps nothing more important for an organization than to know and accomplish its mission. Northwestern’s founders envisioned a place dedicated to academic rigor combined with Reformed and Christian principles. While much has changed in how we accomplish this mission, our purpose has remained constant.

On occasion, however, an organization should revisit how it articulates its mission to ensure it is clear, concise and compelling. We recently concluded this process with input from all our constituencies, and the Board of Trustees approved a new mission statement, shown to the left.

Northwestern’s new mission statement is shorter than the previous version—and we believe it more memorably expresses who we are. The phrases and language in the statement are informed by the following truths about Northwestern College:

Christian academic community
We care about serving and loving God and each other. Students are accepted as unique individuals and equipped to become a better people in God’s image. A Northwestern education is a 24/7 experience as students learn, live and worship with friends and mentors.

Courageous and faithful learning and living
We don’t shy away from tough issues or questions. Students might be challenged by new ideas. Through that, their beliefs will become clearer to them—and more important. This is a safe place to explore, and students can trust that their professors are seeking God’s truth.

Pursuing God’s redeeming work
At Northwestern, students learn about God’s world and their call to help redeem it. We’ll prepare them for a successful career, but more importantly, we’ll get them ready to lead a faithful life.

This is indeed a noble mission. Our world is desperate for servant leaders who will use their gifts and talents in serving Christ and others. We cannot accomplish this alone but rely on the Holy Spirit, as well as the prayers and support of alumni, churches and friends.

The death of our son convinced me it wasn’t up to us to determine the number of children we should have or could afford,” says Donna. Left with two girls, the Hardersens went on to have five more children. Of the seven surviving Hardersens siblings, five attended Northwestern and four met their spouses at NWC: Kelana ’99 and Larry Hardersen, who have had five children attend Northwestern, were honored as Parents of the Year during Fall Family Weekend.

Larry and Donna Hardersen of Houston, Iowa, didn’t plan to have eight kids. But after the sudden death of 2-year-old Kierian in 1977, the Hardersens—Northwestern’s Parents of the Year for 2009—found their perspective changing.

“The death of our son convinced me it wasn’t up to us to determine the number of children we should have or could afford,” says Donna. Left with two girls, the Hardersens went on to have five more children. Of the seven surviving Hardersens siblings, five attended Northwestern and four met their spouses at NWC: Kelana ’99 and Jason Kanz ’95, Jason’s InterVarsity Christian Fellowship’s student missions conference, in St. Louis. Senior Kendra Dahlbacka says the highlights was praying with God with 16,000 other young people. “We brought in the new year worshiping God as one large community.”

The conference had a special emphasis on international and domestic poverty. “I was challenged by the call to live simply and give generously,” says Dahlbacka. “It’s one thing to say I support missions; it’s another thing to back it up with my checkbook.”

Eight Is Enough

Larry and Donna Hardersen, who have had five children attend Northwestern, were honored as Parents of the Year during Fall Family Weekend.

The Hardersens’ willingness to have a large family meant doing without at times. With their children involved in high school sports all four seasons of the year, Larry and Donna took on extra jobs to pay for admission and travel to games.

Donna jokes their main occupation has been sitting on the bleachers at their kids’ athletic contests, but adds, “If I’m not their biggest cheerleader, who else will be? I know I’m partial, but I think they’re the greatest and want them to know it.”

Dahlbacka, a senior at Northwestern and NAIA Scholar-Athlete in volleyball and track and field, nominated her parents for the award. “They’re just so self-sacrificing,” she says. “All of us have the gift from our parents of being able to listen and be there for people.”

Adoption Roller Coaster

Thank you for publishing the “Family Tree” story. My wife and I have adopted a girl from Ethiopia (she is presently 8 months old, Tesfay), who should be home with us within the next few weeks. The adoption process has been a whirlwind for us, particularly given that near the end of the process, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoing both mastectomy and chemotherapy.

We have had many friends and family members pray for our adoption and for my wife’s health. The church has been a great help, and we have encouraged others to find ways they can support us as well.

As we await Tessa’s homecoming, she is our reminder that apparent setbacks such as cancer cannot dampen the hope in a God who loves us and promises he will not leave us as orphans, but will come for us (John 14:18). Throughout this whole process, I have been consistently reminded of Christ’s amazing sacrifice for me. This roller coaster also has reinforced that I want to live in such a way that no matter the circumstances of my life—good or bad—I proclaim at the top of my lungs, “To God be the glory!”

Jason Kanz ’09
Kauai Classic, Wa.
Winning Hymn

A song written by Dr. Heather Josselyn-Cranson, associate professor of music and director of music ministries, has won second prize in a songwriting contest. The Justice Congregational Song Contest was sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church’s Office of Social Justice, Reformed Worship magazine, and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Josselyn-Cranson’s hymn, We Cannot Know What Worship Is, has been copyrighted by Faith Alive Christian Resources and will be printed in a future issue of Reformed Worship. She received a $300 cash prize for her effort. Josselyn-Cranson says as she wrote the hymn she was struck by the fact that thinking about justice tends to happen more often outside Sunday worship than in it. Her text includes the following first verse: “We cannot know what worship is, unless we recognize that Christ consorts with least and lost and sees through homeless eyes.”

Other verses bring a justice perspective to the acts of praying, singing and studying Scripture. The hymn concludes with “God longs for us to act our faith, ‘til we can truly claim our Sunday worship and our search for justice are the same.”

The Rev. David Landegent ’78 won first prize. The pastor of Central Park Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., he penned Let Justice Roll Down.

Wrapped in Warmth

When junior Lanet Hane became leader of Northwestern’s Hunger/Homeless Ministry, she met with area nonprofit organizations to see how students could help them fight poverty. What she discovered was a huge demand for blankets during the winter months, as many families have to choose between buying food and keeping their homes warm. Hane responded by organizing a “Fleece and Film” event in which students made tie blankets out of fleece while watching The Pursuit of Happyness, a movie that tells the true story of a family’s homelessness. Students made about 20 blankets, which have been donated to Love INC for distribution to low-income families.

“Making blankets is something that’s simple and easy for students to make a difference,” says Hane.

As temperatures in northwest Iowa plummeted to record lows prior to the start of the spring semester, Hane was planning more blanket-making sessions. Her group aims to tie another 75 to 100 blankets, with fleece funded through a grant from the Walmart Foundation.
Friends don’t exist in isolation. They can only be understood in the context of a person’s other relationships—one in particular: “A true attachment theorist would say that your attachment with your primary caregiver is a blueprint for all other attachments in your life,” says Dr. Daniela Cambrats Syed.

Syed and 13 seniors explored those attachments in a special topics psychology seminar entitled Intimate Relationships. The course examined relationships and friendships from birth through old age.

The Northwestern psychology professor was especially qualified to teach the course since her research background is in social relationships and friendships. Her studies have found that people with strong parental bonds are less likely to participate in risky behavior in romantic relationships.

“Of all our courses, I thought this was one of the easiest to integrate faith with learning,” Syed says. “God created us to be relational beings.”

Psychology major Destiny Kortman found the seminar especially applicable to everyday life. Engaged and planning a May wedding, she appreciated the seminar’s content regarding marriage. Especially applicable to everyday life. Engaged and planning a May wedding, she appreciated the seminar’s content regarding marriage.

While learning about relationships, Kortman and her fellow classmates formed attachments—even friendships—with one another. Roommates is someone she got to know in class, and she still stays in touch with other students who took the course, including those who have since graduated.

Each campus holds its own auditions and chooses five acts for a joint semi-final competition held at either NWC or Dordt. Students from each college then vote online for their top two contestants, who are revealed at the finals in front of a crowd of 1,500. Following performances by all four finalists, a live vote is held and the winner is announced and awarded $500.

Northwestern students won the competition the last two years, but a male a capella quartet from Dordt captured the latest title in November.
On the Road

3rd annual Day of Learning in Community March 24, 2010
CHRISTIANITY POP CULTURE
featuring Dr. Jeffrey Keuss cultural theory scholar
www.mwc.edu/dc

The choir’s repertoire includes Czech folk music and works by Czech composer Antonín Dvořák, as well as other well-known European composers. The ensemble also will perform a large selection of American music, including sacred and secular pieces.

Also during spring break, the Drama Ministries Ensemble will perform enacted prayers and “Great Stories” from the Old Testament in Chicago, western Indiana and southern Wisconsin.

The Symphonic Band will perform at churches in the Omaha and Lincoln, Neb., area April 15–18.

Complete tour schedules can be viewed at www.mwc.edu/dme and www.mwc.edu/bandtour.

The A cappella Choir will tour in the Czech Republic, Austria and Poland during spring break, March 6–14.

The 70-member ensemble will present several public concerts and minister through music, testimony and drama at children’s and senior citizens’ homes. The tour is being coordinated through Youth for Christ.

“This is a great opportunity to work alongside, sing for and share with people who are in many ways like us, but in many ways have very little hope,” says Dr. Thomas Holm, the choir’s conductor. “I think it will expand our understanding of God and the world in which we live.”

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To New Orleans

With Love

Ten Northwestern students, faculty and staff spent the first week of January on a service project in New Orleans.

Partnering with Trinity Christian Community, the team renovated houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in the Hollygrove neighborhood. They also assisted in an after-school program.

Northwestern has sent hurricane relief teams to the Gulf Coast every semester break since 2005.

Alumni Director Search

A search for a new director of alumni relations is under way. Jerry Neuhouser ’60 left the position in November to move to South Dakota in preparation for her June wedding.

Vocation Connection

A campus-wide emphasis on helping students discover and then commit to their calling has been nurtured through a variety of initiatives funded by $2.5 million in grants from the Lilly Endowment since 2003.

At the last grant period is coming to an end, Northwestern hopes its involvement in the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) will help to keep the topic at the forefront of campus conversation.

NetVUE is one of 61 founding members of the new network. “Through NetVUE, we will be able to learn from other colleges about best practices and successful programs,” says Dr. Jasper Leisgang, provost.

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Face Value

Sara Sybesma Tolsma

Teaching learner

What do you love about your job?

I love learning—and to be a good teacher I have to keep learning. I love undergraduate students. I love my colleagues. Also, Friday afternoons in the biology suite can be very fun.

We often gather there to unwind and dream. It’s wonderful when students wander in and join us.

Name one of Northwestern’s strengths.

Its people. My colleagues are committed to Christian liberal arts education. When I have the opportunity to observe their classes, I’m always humbled. I’m part of a faculty full of excellent teachers and scholars.

What is one of the biggest challenges in working with students?

Time. There seems to be enough time to do all the good things there are to do—for my students and for me. Helping students learn to choose wisely from among many good ways to spend their time is a challenge.

Describe a favorite NWC memory.

Several years ago I was teaching a molecular biology course with about 15 students. I remember looking at them and realizing all but one was heading off to graduate or professional school. It was such a talented group, and they were really fun to teach.

How has your perspective changed now that you are a professor rather than a student?

When I was a student, I didn’t realize being a faculty member is hard work and very time consuming. I rarely take an evening or weekend completely off. As a professor, I have to remember how many life changes are happening to college students—being away from home, developing new social lives, learning to manage time, making choices—and how these issues affect their performance in the classroom.

What are your hobbies?

I read. My husband and I have been in a book club for 15 years. I garden, and I enjoy cooking.

Who inspires you?

My husband, my kids, my students, my colleagues, my parents. I am also inspired by people who take risks to make the world a better place.

If you’d like to see a particular Northwestern faculty or staff member featured in Face Value, e-mail classic@mwc.edu.

Dr. Sara Sybesma Tolsma ’04 has been a biology professor since 1996. She holds a doctorate in microbiology/immunology from Northwestern University. Her research in cancer genetics and cell biology has been widely published in scientific journals.

My husband, my kids, my students, my colleagues, my parents. I am also inspired by people who take risks to make the world a better place.

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Red Zone

Women's Basketball
Near the Top
Northwestern started the season as the top-ranked team in the NAIA Div. II. Ranked third at press time, the Raiders were 17-3 and second in the conference, behind only Hastings.

Men's Basketball
Youth Team
With eight freshmen on the roster, including three starters, Northwestern was 10-10 at press time. The Raiders set a record for the longest game in school history after losing a quadruple-overtime thriller at Concordia, 137-111.

Wrestling
Ranked
Seven Raiders had qualified for nationals at press time. The team was ranked 19th, with 197-pounder Nic Leither ranked as high as 12th nationally before conference. The team was ranked second in the conference. The team was ranked second in the conference.

Volleyball
Elite Right Again
For the third consecutive year, the Raiders' season ended in the quarterfinal round of the NAIA national tournament. Ranked as high as second, NWC finished with a 36-3 record. The squad went undefeated in the GPAC league, placing 11th in the conference.

Football
Fourth in GPAC
Northwestern finished the season at 7-3, fourth in the conference. The team was ranked as high as 12th nationally before losing the last two games of the season and finishing with a 26th-place ranking.

Golf
Preparing for Spring
Lake Verners is in second place individually after two rounds of the GPAC championship, held last fall. The team is fourth with two rounds left to play this spring. The women's squad is seventh after the first two rounds.

Cross Country
More Miles
Junior Charity Miles placed 55th out of 320 runners in her third year of competition at the NAIA national meet. She qualified for nationals and earned All-conference honors after placing 10th at the GPAC meet.

The auditorium was decorated like an oriental garden, featuring a real pool with a bridge and homemade boats. A live band played. It was the Saturday night of May Day Weekend in 1968, and Northwestern College was hosting a monumental event: its first on-campus dance.

Although the process that led to Northwestern's first on-campus dance was somewhat controversial, the event itself, during May Day Weekend of 1968, was well attended.

by Gretta Hayes '11

The auditorium was decorated like an oriental garden, featuring a real pool with a bridge and homemade boats. A live band played. It was the Saturday night of May Day Weekend in 1968, and Northwestern College was hosting a monumental event: its first on-campus dance.

The previous fall, the Student Senate approached the Board of Trustees to ask for permission to allow dancing on campus. The students kept their request simple: The number of dances per year would be limited to three—during Homecoming, Winter Carnival and May Day—and plenty of faculty chaperones would be present. The Senate even surveyed parents about the issue, with 64 percent of them approving.

By the time students could get out on the dance floor, they could do the bunny hop,” he says. “That was as close to dancing as we could get.” Before the famous “first dance” on campus, Muilenburg recalls his dancing experience, or lack thereof, as a student just a few years earlier.

“We were not allowed to have dances at school functions, but we could do the bunny hop,” he says. “That was as close to dancing as we could get.” Before the famous “first dance” on campus, Muilenburg remembers student-organized dances being held at the quad house in Veterans Park.

Northwestern Classic
1110

LOOKING BACK
Every dorm room starts with the basics: bed, desk, dresser, closet. It’s what students bring to campus that makes each room unique. From lava lamps to piñatas, a coffee bar to curtains made of neckties, students find creative, whimsical—and unusual—ways to make a residence hall home.

Photos by Dan Ross and Stephen Allen
On June 19, 1989, Kory Jensen was born, and doctors told his parents he wouldn’t live. Two years later, when Jensen was a toddler, he was diagnosed with apraxia, a neurological disorder. The doctor said he’d never walk or speak clearly. Jensen’s elementary years were rough—kids taunted him as he struggled to communicate or hold a pencil correctly—so when he enrolled at Northwestern in 2007, he avoided drawing attention to himself. Years of speech, eye and physical therapy had resulted in significant improvement, and he knew if he didn’t point it out, few people would realize he has a disability.

“I wanted to be a normal kid and not have people treat me differently,” Jensen says. “I was trying to be independent. I came in and took the first test, and I failed it. I had no idea what to do.”

Tom Truesdell ’01, director of academic support, tutored Jensen and picked up on clues: “I was surprised at how many spelling errors he had, because as I was speaking with him, I saw he was very articulate and bright.”

Jensen eventually disclosed his disability—and his fears. Truesdell reassured him that staff would respect his privacy, and soon Jensen was making regular use of the department’s computers for test-taking. His confidence building, he began to take the initiative to contact professors when needing extra help.

“The students we’re working with are usually very intelligent,” says Truesdell. “They have the skill set to succeed at Northwestern. We provide the accommodations, and they can thrive.”

Transition

This school year, 23 NWC students report some type of disability. Most have learning disabilities, like dyslexia; a few report physical conditions, such as cerebral palsy, narcolepsy and severe allergies; and some students have developmental disorders, such as autism. Many experience related complications—distractibility, test anxiety and disorganization are the most common.

Northwestern’s academic support department offers assistance to all students with documented disabilities. Services include reading tests orally, securing a quiet location for testing, and reviewing papers. The department also offers assistive technology, such as software able to type the spoken word and read scanned books aloud. Accessibility on campus meets legal standards.

For Laura Demekas ’11, who has cerebral palsy (CP), college life offered new, welcomed opportunities.

“In high school, I was never ostracized because of my disability, but I didn’t feel like I was accepted either. I didn’t feel fully myself, including my desire to fully accept my disability,” she says.

Demekas was born 10 weeks early. At six months she was adopted; at age five, surgeons broke her hips and inserted metal plates. When she was 11, nerves in her spinal cord were cut in a procedure called a rhizotomy, and she stayed at Shriners Hospital for Children in Minneapolis for six weeks. Her pelvis was broken in three places and reconstructed at age 14.

She’s in maintenance mode right now, she says, and does not anticipate further surgeries. Staying in shape, visiting physical therapy as much as insurance will allow, using a single-arm crutch and grabbing an arm on an icy winter day keep Demekas right where she needs to be. And
Focus on a man in wheelchair asking, "When did you first realize[ ] you were—um—incomplete?" The man replies, "It took someone of your stature to point it out."

Part of Menning’s job is coaching students toward suitable fields of study and workforce options. He practices tough love with the steady stream of regulars in his office, stressing the skills necessary for moving on: "If you’re going to e-mail professors, check your spelling. Be professional." And, "You have your first job. You think your employer will let you come late [because of your disability]? You’ll be fired after the first week."

Many people with disabilities are underemployed as adults; studies show Denekas finds herself wondering if her great experience at college will be shattered by workforce discrimination. Not everyone recognizes what she likes to point out: "We’re all human beings with beating hearts. Inside, we’re all the same."
A lot happens during your college years that affects the rest of your life. You make an initial career choice, figure out how to handle your own money, and learn to avoid laundering reds with whites. For some, college is where you meet your other half—the one you’ll marry and raise kids with—the person who, more than any other, may encourage you, aggravate you, and teach you what commitment truly means.

Most Northwestern alumni didn’t meet their spouse on campus. But hopefully what they learned in this community prepared them to be a faithful, thoughtful partner, friend and family member. Some—just over 3,000—did connect here. Several of their heartwarming stories follow.
Send in the Clown

In hindsight, I shouldn’t have involved my mother [Karen (De Boer ’79) Woudstra] in my proposal plans. With her flair for drama, she convinced me I should scheme to surprise my future bride. So at her suggestion, I arranged for friends to hide Kyndara [Hardersen ’03] from her job as parking attendant at Christ Chapel. This guy was so easy to talk to, so funny, so charming. While he sapped any bugs that entered the no-fly zone around us with my Dust Buster, he shared bits of his values and faith journey with me. I had to tear myself away, and when I did, I left with that feeling—that oh-my-goodness-this-must-be-how-it-feels-to-meet-THE-ONE feeling.

Kyle [Hutchinson ’01] later confessed he’d had his eye on me since I’d critiqued his landscape in front of our entire art class. When he saw me in Coly with my Dust Buster, he took off on a dead run around the north side of the chapel to “bump” into me on my way back to my dorm.

Amy Wacker-Hutchinson ’02
JOWA FALLS, IOWA

Compatibility

Jonathan and I met through the Compatibility Quest student activity at Northwestern does every January. I opened my results, looked at the name on top of the list and asked rather loudly, “Who on earth is this person?”

Bethany (Harms ’06) Handaker
MICHIGAN

Loved Her Laugh

My wife and I met the first day of my senior and her freshman year. I was walking from West Hall to DeBoer House when I noticed friends talking with a guy in the parking lot that used to be between West and Hemostra. The guy was David Wynn [’96], and from the back I thought he looked like a very skinny guy with an afro. I strode over, started yacking, and he thought I was a mouthy little punk who was going to be trouble. But by the end of the week we were arguing like cats and dogs—and dating. We’ve been keeping each other on our toes ever since.

Brandon Woudstra ’03
ORANGE CITY, IOWA

Sucking Up

“Hey, Wacker!” (I prefer “Amy,” but guys love to use your last name when you’re fortunate enough to be a Wacker.) “Wondarya bring your Dust Buster over? We need some serious help here.”

My high-school classmates—hiring in Coly without their mothers’ vacuuming skills for the first time in their lives—knew they could count on me.

As I was walking back to North Hall [now Stengren] swinging my Dust Buster at my side, an athletic guy I recognized from Intro to Studio jogged by and quipped, “Nice Dust Buster.”

Two hours later we were still standing in front of Christ Chapel. This guy was so easy to talk to, so funny, so charming. While he sapped any bugs that entered the no-fly zone around us with my Dust Buster, he shared bits of his values and faith journey with me. I had to tear myself away, and when I did, I left with that feeling—that oh-my-goodness-this-must-be-how-it-feels-to-meet-THE-ONE feeling.

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Amy Wacker-Hutchinson ’02
JOWA FALLS, IOWA

Spirited Courtship

I met [Niay [Myoo] Yoo] and I had been friends until our senior year. Then I received an impression from God that I should choose Mari for my lifetime partner.

We were chatting online one evening when, with the power of the Holy Spirit, I asked Mari out. She thought I was joking, so I messaged again, asking her to accompany me on a walk to Veterans Park. During the walk we enjoyed chitchat about our campus life, and at the end, I asked Mari if we could go steady. She said no.

It was shocking to me that she rejected my request. I believed she would not reject me if she came to know the truth that I wanted to share with her life.

Awhile later, I called her and asked her to take a walk with me again. During this walk, I told her I wanted to marry her. So finally the moment came for me to ask, “Will you marry me?” She replied, “Yes.” It was a most exciting and joy-filled moment. Lord have mercy, we were able to skip going steady and become engaged!

Taku Nakajima ’02
HYOGO, JAPAN

Love-All

Dad [Steve Bolda ’81] was playing tennis behind the Union [now Hoopers Hall], where mom [Jodi Bosma ’82] lived on the second floor. From her window she heckled the cute tennis player. Sometime later they were both in Union’s basement game room, and he asked her if she was the heckler. She admitted she was. A week later he asked her out, and it’s been love ever since.

Rebecca Bolda ’10
WAKEFIELD, WIS.

Winning Bid

From the time Abby [Stevens ’01] met me, I wanted it; I had two weeks to decide.

When Abby [Stevens ’01] and I met, I had the means to pursue an open service job at another college. The job was mine if I wanted it; I had two weeks to decide.

That weekend I attended a Student Christian Fellowship retreat, and at the opening night mixer, I had to find someone with the same number of siblings as me. I came from a family of seven kids. I had little hope of locating anyone from a family as large as mine, until I heard someone calling, “Seven, seven!” “Seven” was a viracious, dark-haired beauty from North Dakota, Evy Van Bruggen [’78]. I lost track of her as the game continued, but later that night, while I was walking by myself and

Auction night I hid behind a post and communicated my bids to Abby. I was embarrassed—but also competitive. Apparently someone else also wanted a date with Noah. I whispered higher and higher bids to Abby: $35 … $45 … $55 … $75! So I ran off to finish my homework before he even had a chance to meet me.

By date night, I was so nervous I backed into another car before we even left campus. (We still joke things started out with a bang.) After dinner and a movie, Noah and I stayed up until the wee hours of the morning just talking, and for the next several days we were nearly inescapable.

Not long after, when I told my mom about the auction and its aftermath, she asked, jokingly, if I was going to marry this guy. When I answered, I was serious: “Yes.”

Sarah (Anderson ’03) Metz
MARTINEZ, CALIF.

Finding Direction

A month into my junior year, I was unsure what I wanted to do with my life and was ready to quit college. My cafeteria supervisor knew I was floundering and encouraged me to pursue an open food service job at another college. The job was mine if I wanted it, I had two weeks to decide.

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contemplating my future, someone came up behind me and asked, “Can I walk with you?” That beginning led to a journey that lasted 38 years. For the next three years, Matt came to my high school cross country meets, and I cheered at his games in the bleachers. I thought it was so cool to be dating a college guy. For the next three years, Matt and I dated, but I had a reason to stay at Northwestern.

The Rev. Phil Somsen ’73
FORT DODGE, IOWA

Cradle Raider
I didn’t attend Northwestern, but my husband, Matt [Trost ’99], did. We met the summer after my freshman year of high school, and I thought it was so cool to be dating a college guy. For the next three years, Matt came to my high school cross country meets, and I cheered at his games in the bleachers. I thought it was so cool to be dating a college guy. For the next three years, Matt and I dated, but I had a reason to stay at Northwestern.

I was working in Northwestern’s admissions office and hadn’t been to a basketball game in years. So Northwestern’s name caught my eye in a Sioux Falls Argus Leader article about singletons in Sioux Falls. The article featured a woman who met her future husband at a basketball game.

The following year, Blayne wandered into Northwestern’s Gala Auction after a basketball game and recognized me as the woman from the article. We talked briefly and even met for dinner. Life and responsibilities intervened, and we didn’t meet again until six months later when I invited him to a New Year’s Eve gathering at my house. Despite our differences—he likes basketball and watching his crops grow; I like shopping and traveling—there was a connection, and I texted him a few days later. Blayne had never received—or sent—a text message, but he eventually figured out how to send a message back. Over time we realized we had much more in common than we thought, including our core values. Three years from the article’s publication date, we became engaged, and now we’re married.

So I did find love at Northwestern. How crazy is that?!
Darlene (De Beer ’52) Vander Aarde
Service to Humankind

While her husband, Stan ’51, practiced medicine at a hospital in India from 1961 to 1987, Darlene Vander Aarde pursued her own ministries. Trained as an educator, she taught English and Bible classes for nursing students and supervised a community nursery school. She organized a model feeding program for undernourished children and ran an institute that taught individuals how to make and market handcrafted items. Eventually Vander Aarde became administrator of the American Arcott Mission Elementary and Middle School and the C.S.I. (Church of South India) High School for girls. In that capacity, she developed a scholarship program that enabled 100 girls from outlying villages to board at the schools.

Now retired, Vander Aarde continues to serve by volunteering at Orange City’s Bibles for Missions thrift store and participating in a quilting group at her church.

Jean (Tallman ’75) and Drew Vogel ’72
Service to Northwestern

Drew and Jean Vogel have served as volunteers for numerous community organizations, including NWC. President and CEO of Diamond Vogel Paints, Drew is in his 17th year as a member of Northwestern’s Board of Trustees and has been the board chair since 2003. He chaired the committee that led fundraising for the renovation of the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center, completed in 2004. He also chaired the search committee for President Bruce Murphy and was a member of the search committee that recruited President Greg Chisyov.

Jean served on the planning committee for Christy’s inauguration in fall 2008. She was a member of Northwestern’s visual identity task force, which unveiled a new college word mark and logo in 2005. Jean also has served as a consultant for campus aesthetics, including the hanging of lights and wreaths and decorating of trees at Christmas.

Randy Oostra ’77
Professional Achievement

Dr. Randy Oostra is president and CEO of ProMedica Health System, based in Toledo, Ohio. While he oversees an organization that generates $2 billion in annual revenue, employs 15,000, and serves 2.5 million patients in a two-state area, he says his job comes down to approaching every task from this perspective: How would I want my family to be treated?

Oostra served hospitals and health organizations in Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota before becoming vice president of ProMedica’s Toledo Hospital in 1997. He served as ProMedica’s president and chief operating officer from 2006 until last year, when he was named chief executive of the most integrated health system in the country, according to Modern Healthcare magazine.

A biology major at Northwestern, Oostra has also earned master’s degrees in science and healthcare administration and a doctorate in management.

Honored
Four receive distinguished alumni awards

Four received Northwestern’s 2009 alumni of the year at Homecoming were, left to right: Darlene Vander Aarde, Drew Vogel, Jean Vogel and Randy Oostra.

To nominate someone for a distinguished alumni award, visit www.nwciowa.edu/alumniawards

Red Weekend

With a Homecoming theme of “Gratefully Red,” Northwestern’s campus was awash in the color Oct. 2–3. Despite cool, wet weather, spirits were warm as alumni reconnected with each other, faculty and staff.

About 100 people attended reunions for the classes of 1979, ’89 and 2004. The traditional Homecoming activities of Morning on the Green and Raider Road Race were joined by a new event, Battle of the Bands, which featured bands from the campus and community.

The weekend was capped off with a 35-6 football victory over Concordia and back-to-back volleyball wins over Dana and Midland.

Cold and wet weather wouldn’t dampen the enthusiasm of alumni who returned to campus for Homecoming in October.
\textbf{class Notes}

\textbf{'64} Dr. Reilla Klinker-Simonin, Spencerville, Iowa, is a facilitator for Third Age College, an educational program for senior citizens at Iowa Lakes Community College. She has taught courses on the American musical, detective fiction, and the development of human language.

\textbf{'68} Dr. Corwin Smoot of Park, Mich., is co-editor and co-author of two recent books by Oxford University Press: The Oxford Handbook of Religious and Political Anxiety and The Dominating God: Anxiety in the 2008 Presidential Election. He is directing a semester-long program in Washington, D.C., for Calvin College this spring.

\textbf{'69} From Reza, Apple Valley, Minn., retired from Zachry Engineering last summer. He reports enjoying more time with his children and grandchildren and working on his house.

\textbf{'70} The Rev. Dave Schutt serves as senior pastor of Calvary Reformed Church in Ripon, Calif.

\textbf{'76} The Rev John Stubbes and his wife, Lynne (Lendemans), have moved to Texas, where John is the senior pastor of Gumligen, Switzerland.

\textbf{'77} Jane (Van Beek) Zupp, husband, Shawn, are renovating his family home in Washta, Iowa, and hope to move in soon.

\textbf{'78} Lisa (Rosenthal) Burt, her husband, Doug, and daughter Tessa (8), traveled to Ethiopia in September to support some of the early awareness of God’s presence.

\textbf{'83} Ron (Brink) Kinney, his wife, Carol, have enjoyed reconnecting with former classmates at Washta, Iowa, and hope to move in soon.

\textbf{The Contemplative Activist}

The Rev. Dr. J. David Muyskens’ Forty Days for a Closer Walk With God introduces readers to the centering prayer that helped him realize God continues to be at work even though we don’t understand what’s happened.

The recent, sudden deaths of both a son-in-law and daughter-in-law have slowed down, and in doing so discovered the early Christian practice of centering prayer. Forty Days to a Closer Walk With God is a special educational consultant for the Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency in Algona, Iowa.

Lindell Nichols is a teaching assistant in public speaking at Harvard University. He is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in public speaking.

\textbf{'89} Tert (Van Wechel) Anderson teaches special education at Orange City Elementary.

\textbf{'91} Kerin Poonaoon is a resource room teacher and coach at Okaloa Middle School in Arenal Park, Iowa.

\textbf{Picker-Upper Person}

A conversation Glen Van Ekeren 74 had 30 years ago is still making a difference in his life—and in the lives of those he influences.

Van Ekeren was driving with Bob Hoogeveen ’57, his supervisor at Village Northwest Unlimited in Sheldon, Iowa, and lamenting the characteristics and talents he didn’t possess.

“Bob asked me, ‘When do you plan to start using what you have? God has given you some gifts, why aren’t you focused on them?’”

Hoogeveen was what Van Ekeren refers to as a “picker-upper person,” someone who “accepts people for who they are, tries desperately to understand their world, and then encourages them to be all they were created to be.”

Van Ekeren wrote about “picker-upper people” in 12 Simple Secrets to Experiencing Joy in Everyday Relationships, one of three books he published last year.

And spurred on by his mentor’s counsel, Van Ekeren has adopted a life mission of positively impacting those around him. His other books, 12 Simple Secrets to Finding Fulfillment at Work and 12 Simple Secrets to Staying Calm in a Crazy World, continue that theme.

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All in the Family

Melissa (Loevre'96), Wendy (Hensley '96) and Danyale (Temple '96) Tamminga found a new way to keep in touch with college friends—add them to your family. Today the three are not only still best friends, but also sisters-in-law. "We used to say, ‘I hope we marry guys who get along’ and here we married brothers," Wendy says with a laugh. Their friendships started long before they met their future husbands. Danyale and Wendy were elementary classmates in Iowa, but lost touch when Wendy's family moved to Washington. Wendy met Melissa in high school, and they decided to room together at Northern. When they moved into West Hall, Danyale lived a floor above them.

During college, Wendy started dating Micah Tamminga, who was a family friend. But Micah lived in Washington and Wendy's family had moved back to Iowa.

"So Wendy came home with me one summer to be closer to Micah," says Melissa. "He would come over to hang out and bring his brother, Micah." During their senior year, the friends took a road trip to Washington, where Danyale met Jesse, the youngest Tamminga brother.

"We're all very close. I never imagined our lives would intertwine the way they have—that my college friends would be my kids' aunts," says Melissa. "We're all very close. I never imagined our lives would intertwine the way they have—that my college friends would be my kids' aunts," says Melissa.

by Emily Henneweg '06
Melissa Ingham is a professional photographer for the city of Palm Springs, Calif. "She is also a manager at JP's Coffee and Tea and a theological seminary in Holland, Mich. She is a law student at the University of St. Thomas, where she is a long-time secretary at Northwestern Alumni. She has been a member of First Christian Reformed Church, where she taught Sunday school and served as church librarian. Phyllis Zoutendyk, who served as comptroller at Northwestern from 1985 to 1990, died Oct. 14 in Orange City at age 81. She was a member of First Reformed Church. She was married by her husband, John, a Northwestern law care assistant, and two children, including Tim '82.

In Memoriam

Margaret Tiemersma '40, age 86, died Oct. 26 in Orange City. She was a long-time secretary at Northwestern Alumni. She was a member of First Christian Reformed Church, where she taught Sunday school and served as church librarian. Phyllis Zoutendyk, who served as comptroller at Northwestern from 1985 to 1990, died Oct. 14 in Orange City at age 81. She was a member of First Reformed Church. She was married by her husband, John, a Northwestern law care assistant, and two children, including Tim '82.

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Love That Lasts

by Todd Thompson ’85

Pulling into the parking lot, I ask my 9-year-old twin daughters the same question I ask every week.
“Girls, what are we here to do?”
“Serve each other with love!”
“And where do we find that?”
“Galatians 5:13b.” (We’re still working on the reference part.)

For the past two years, Annie, Emma and I have been bringing flowers and hugs to the residents of Carillon House and Vista Care, a skilled-care center and in-patient hospice. God uses our simple act of service to teach us many life lessons, like the power of encouragement and the frailty and brevity of life. It’s also allowed us the privilege of witnessing the final chapters of beautiful love stories.

Say to any couple, “Tell me how you met,” and you’re guaranteed a fun and fascinating story. Beginnings are full of romance and anticipation. Sadly, romantic beginnings do not guarantee happy endings. If only couples could be glued together like the souvenirs in a wedding album. Some thrive during seasons of “better”—times of health and wealth. Yet when the “worse”—sickness and poverty—happens, their commitment wanes.

“How we met” stories are many. “How we stayed together” stories are much rarer.

There are many love stories among our Carillon friends. Ray and Margaret had been married 65 years when she died last month. Mr. Williams is a steady presence at the side of his bride of over 50 years. Dub and Shirley were married 50 years when she died last month. Mr. Williams is a steady presence at the side of his bride of over 50 years.

“Serve each other with love!”

Sometimes it takes the worst to teach us what is the best.

Ecclesiastes 7:8 tells us, “The end of something is better than the beginning.” Maybe Solomon was saying that however something starts, finishing well is more important. Better a beautiful final chapter than a good first paragraph. My daughters know the reason we come to Carillon is to “serve each other with love.” I hope someday they realize the Dubbs and Codys they met here succeeded in marriage for the very same reason.

Todd Thompson resides in Lubbock, Texas, with daughters Annie and Emma. Among other pursuits, he is a contributing writer for In Touch Mission International and Sixth Day Magazine. He can be reached through his blog, AllSiceOfLifeToGo.com.

Be Counted

We’ve been giving to Northwestern since before we graduated. The college challenged Ryan during his senior year to support NWC financially, and we’ve been contributing regularly since then. As our means have grown, we’ve increased our donations, but we still give monthly—even while paying off college loans. We think of it this way: The loans were for us to attend Northwestern. Our giving helps ensure future generations—including our kids—have the same opportunity.

Ryan Ten Pas ’99 and his wife, Melissa (Fox ’01), live in Wisconsin, where Ryan is a certified public accountant with Schenck SC and Melissa teaches sixth grade at Cedar Grove-Belgium Schools. They have been faithful supporters of Northwestern for 10 years and return to their alma mater annually for Homecoming, the alumni soccer game or family gatherings.

It all adds up.

Ryan isn’t a fan of writing checks, so he and Melissa have arranged for their monthly gift to Northwestern to be automatically deducted from their checking account. Make it easy to give—and make your gift count more.
The new year started with temperatures of 20 below and the campus blanketed with more than two feet of snow. Classes are rarely canceled at a residential college, so students brave icy wind chills and snow-packed sidewalks for heated class discussions about molecular genetics, game theory, 1968, Congress, living shalom, and the art and culture of more temperate places like Ethiopia. Afterward, students bundle up and hurry back to their residence hall rooms to heat soup in hot pots and plan frostbitten fun—like making snow sculptures and sledding on scraps of cardboard.