

Northwestern College Magazine *the* **Classic** WINTER 2023-24



Engineering at NWC

A story of God's call

Also

Celebrating 100 Years of Theatre
Two National Runners-up Teams
Finding Home at Northwestern



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A fervent student section helped cheer Northwestern's volleyball and football teams to national runners-up seasons.

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Classic People

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The *Classic* is published 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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On the Cover:

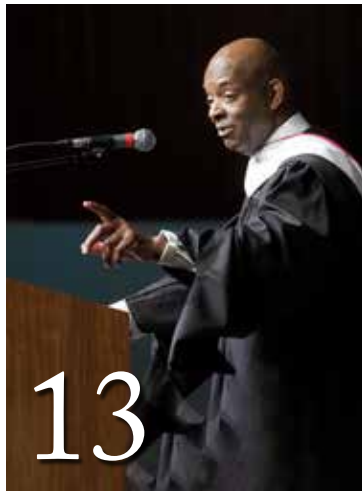
Northwestern hired Dr. Young-Ji Byon to serve as the founding director of an engineering program the college plans to start following approval by accreditors.

PHOTO BY LEM MAURER

Online-Only Option

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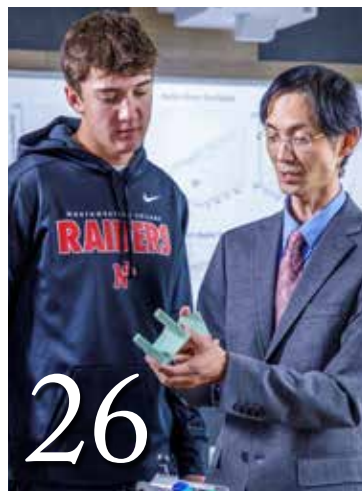
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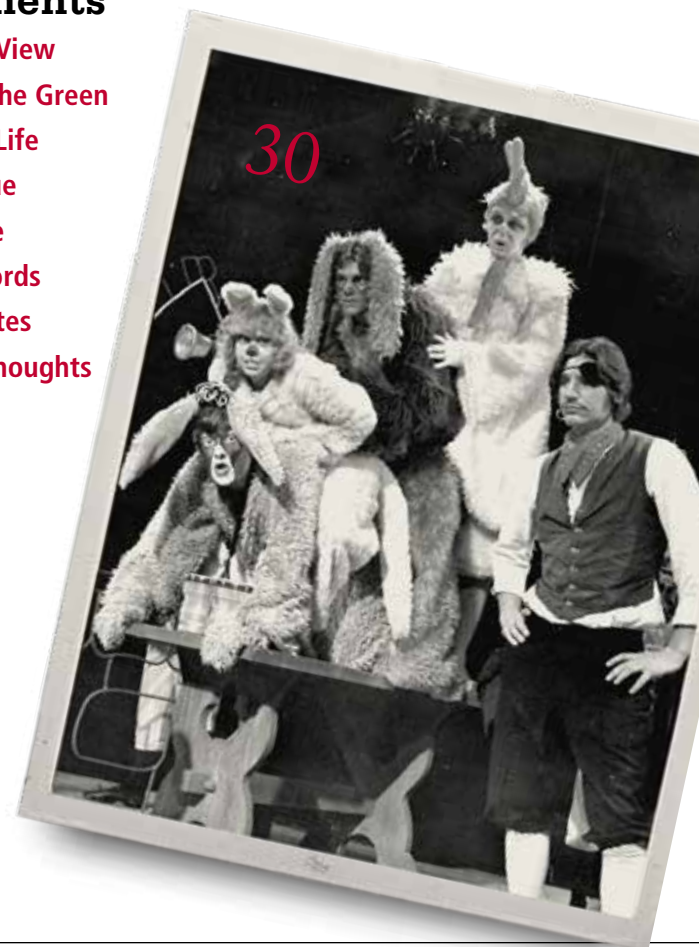
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Zwemer View



Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future

The 2022–23 academic year concluded our five-year strategic plan and 10-year campus master plan. We accomplished much as a college during this time. The master’s in physician assistant studies program began, and we have graduated two cohorts of PAs. Thanks to the leadership of our standout faculty, our 2023 graduates achieved a 100% first-time pass rate on their national certification exam, a remarkable accomplishment for a new program. We have also launched a new master’s in counseling program with tracks in clinical and school counseling.

One of the goals of our last strategic plan was to raise the reputation of Northwestern as a leader in Christian thought, scholarship, practice and artistic expression. One example of this is the work of our biology faculty, who have greatly increased our faculty and student research through the SEA-GENES and SEA-PHAGES projects.

Dr. Elizabeth Pitts was hired as director of the Compass Center for Career & Calling. She and her team have greatly increased the number of internship opportunities for students and transformed how we help students learn about their gifts and prepare for the world of work and graduate school.

This and more has led to our fifth consecutive year of record enrollment, with 1,715 students this fall—including a record 543 graduate students. The Northwestern Fund has also seen all-time highs for five years in a row, including \$1.425 million in gifts this past year. Due to the amazing generosity of alumni, parents and friends, we have been blessed to be able to invest more than \$60 million in new and renovated campus facilities during the last decade. In addition to that, the \$14 million Christy Suites is under construction, with a July completion date. Praise the Lord!

As for our new plans, we gathered all faculty and staff for an afternoon of conversation in mid-August to help us define our current reality. We are identifying areas to improve in academics, campus ministry and student life in the next five years. And we are working with a firm that has conducted an audit of our campus to see what facilities need attention over the next 10 years, and what new facilities we may need to build in order to support new initiatives like engineering or other programs that may emerge out of the new strategic plan. We are blessed to make plans for the future from a position of strength as a Christian academic community.

As we bathe these plans in prayer, may Proverbs 16:9 be our guide: “The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.” May we be faithful to what and where God calls us to go in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Christy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Greg Christy
President



Follow President Christy at [Twitter.com/NWC_PGC](https://twitter.com/NWC_PGC)

around the Green

A Listening Ear

Dr. James Ruby, the new director of Northwestern's master's degree programs in counseling, was listening to people's stories long before he became a licensed counselor. At the start of his career, he lent support as a youth minister, an associate pastor and a hospital chaplain.

"As much as I loved ministry work, I was interested in how our mental health impacts our ability to live out what God wants for us. So I went back to school and began working in the mental health field," he says.

Since joining the counseling profession full time, Ruby has served as a school counselor, coordinator of youth services for a mental health center, private practice clinician, and most recently, as department chair and professor of human services at California State University, Fullerton.

Although Ruby's Christian beliefs have always informed his work, Northwestern is the first higher education institution he has worked for that has been intentional about integrating faith with learning.

"At Northwestern, my faith is not only acknowledged, but it is accepted, celebrated and valued as a key component to student learning outcomes."

A graduate of Western Kentucky University, Ruby earned a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a master's degree in community and family counseling from Northeastern Illinois University, and a doctorate in research methods and human development from Loyola University Chicago.



Dr. James Ruby

LEI MAURER

Christy Suites

Last spring Northwestern broke ground on a new residence hall for women, which will be named Christy Suites in honor of President Greg Christy and his wife, Michelle.

The three-story building will house 157 women in suite-style rooms and is expected to be ready for occupancy by August 2024. Each floor of the \$14 million facility will consist of two wings, along with a large number and variety of common spaces to encourage the development of community among students.

Northwestern's board of trustees made the naming decision in response to a request from the lead donors for the project: Mary DeWitt of Holland, Michigan, her sons and daughters—Jim, Steve, Jackie, Laurie and Linda—and their spouses.

Construction is underway on Christy Suites, a new residence hall for women named in honor of President Greg Christy and his wife, Michelle, that will open in the fall of 2024.

Members of the DeWitt family have been generous supporters of Northwestern through the years, and many buildings on campus bear their name. This time, however, when the DeWitts gave \$5 million for the college's latest construction project, they had a special request.

"Their desire instead was to honor the Christys for their strong leadership, humility, work ethic, integrity and commitment to Christ," says Tricia (Vander Waal '94) Vermeer, chair of the trustees. "The DeWitt family appreciates the heart, as well as the leadership, of the Christys. They continue to help Northwestern shine as a faithful Christian college of the highest excellence."

BVH Architecture designed the building, and Hoogendoorn Construction is the general contractor.



BVH ARCHITECTURE



Northwestern's master's program in physician assistant studies has prepared two cohorts for the medical field. The first graduates, who completed the program in August 2022, achieved a 100% all-time pass rate on the certification exam.

Perfect Pass Rate

Northwestern's physician assistant graduates won't settle for less than perfection. All 29 students who graduated from the program last August passed the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination on their first attempt.

"An accomplishment like this is a goal that the program sets out to achieve with each cohort and is what our students dedicate their time preparing for," says Jill Van Otterloo, director of Northwestern's physician assistant program. "Our faculty go above and beyond to support students academically, professionally and personally. We truly want each student to be successful."

Van Otterloo credits Northwestern's standout facilities and hands-on

clinical opportunities as positive contributors to students' learning experience.

"Our students learn in top-notch classrooms and skills labs, have access to medical resource subscriptions, and receive great clinical rotation placements—all of which enable our program to prepare students well."

Northwestern's 2023 physician assistant graduates have been hired by Gunderson Health System in La Crosse, Wisconsin; Johnson County Dermatology in Olathe, Kansas; and Orange City Area Health System, among others. The alumni are working in family practice, trauma surgery, psychiatry, dermatology, otolaryngology, neurosurgery, gastroenterology and emergency medicine.

Five-Star Enrollment

Since fall 2019, Northwestern College has experienced sustained and significant enrollment growth, with a 51% overall enrollment increase in the Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) division and a 6% increase in traditional undergraduate enrollment.

Fall 2023 saw Northwestern's highest enrollment number to date: a total of 1,715 students, up three from last year.

"We were blessed to begin the academic year with our fifth straight fall enrollment record, especially at a time in which many other schools are seeing declines," says Tamara Fynaardt, Northwestern's vice president for enrollment and marketing.

Northwestern's GPS division also saw record numbers, with 543 graduate students enrolled in the

college's master's degree programs in education, physician assistant studies and counseling—up from 531 last year. The division has a total of 670 students, which includes 127 in its undergraduate degree-completion programs in early childhood education and nursing (RN-BSN).

International student enrollment is the highest it's been in a decade, with a total of 48 residential undergraduates. A high freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 79.9% also contributed to this year's enrollment record.

In the last five years, Northwestern's enrollment has increased 22%, due in large part to growth in Northwestern's Graduate & Professional Studies division, as well as to high undergraduate retention rates and growing numbers of international and Latino students.



Geoff Johnson

MAJOR CHANGES



1973 MAJORS

Fifty years ago, Northwestern's majors included:

- City Management
- Home Economics
- Journalism
- Library Science

2023 MAJORS

Some of Northwestern's newer majors include:

- Actuarial Science
- Data Science
- Nursing
- Software Engineering



Social Sciences

Natural & Applied Sciences

Arts & Humanities

Undecided/Other



MOST POPULAR MAJORS

1973 MAJORS

Elementary Education
Physical Education
Business
Math
Sociology

1998 MAJORS

Elementary Education
Business Administration
Biology–Health Professions
Accounting
Psychology

2023 MAJORS

Business
Elementary & Secondary Education
Nursing
Exercise Science
Biology–Health Professions

14



Number of students enrolled in one- and two-year secretarial programs offered in 1973–74

1984

Year that Northwestern first offered a major in computer science



Campus Life

Bringing TED to NWC

BY DUANE BEESON

Clara Pahl, an Honors Program student from Ames, Iowa, with majors in English and psychology, has long been a fan of TED Talks. Her suggestion to other student leaders in the Honors Program that they try to put on something similar eventually led to a licensed event, TEDxNWC, last March.

Using the theme of chiaroscuro, an art technique in which the main subject of a painting is revealed in lighter colors with darkness and shadows around it, TEDxNWC sought to inspire Northwestern students to think critically about how to be a light in life's darkest moments, according to Pahl.

The seven presentations, ranging from 15 to 18 minutes in length, featured current and former faculty and staff. Topics ranged from how cancer metastasizes and the complicated balance between state and federal power to the need for respectful conversations and acts of service to help unite polarized communities. All of the presentations have been added to the TED library and can be viewed on YouTube.

Pahl said she heard very positive comments from attendees. "It was great to see professors and peers share useful lessons that are very pertinent to issues happening in our community and on our campus."

Elena Lee, a history major from Sioux Falls, helped put on last year's event and felt it was needed by the campus again. She's coordinating the next TEDxNWC, scheduled for March 23 with the theme of allegory.

"I watched hundreds of TED Talks last summer, and I realized it wasn't necessarily stats or charts and graphs that stood out to me but the stories I heard," she says. "We connect best with stories because we have our own stories to tell. This year's event will focus on stories that reveal something previously hidden about the human experience."

Limited by license to no more than 100 attendees, TEDxNWC is intended for an audience of Northwestern students, faculty and staff. Videos will later be added to YouTube.

Kinesiology professor Rajat Emanuel Singh's TEDxNWC video, "The Secret Behind Walking," has received more than 4,700 views on YouTube.



AARON ECKMANN

Business Savvy

This past spring, five Northwestern College seniors recorded a top score in the international Business Strategy Game, a dynamic online simulation in which participants are assigned the task of running an athletic footwear company.

Northwestern students competing in the Business Strategy Game consistently record high scores, often in the top 5% of all teams. One Northwestern team, named "Bigger Baller Brand," recorded a perfect score of 110 points and tied for the best overall score for April 17–23. During that week, there were more than 3,800 teams competing worldwide.

The students competed in the simulation as part of their business capstone course, Strategic and Ethical Management. Each week, their team was evaluated on a balanced scorecard that included brand image, earnings per share, return on equity investment, stock price appreciation, and credit rating.

"The simulation helps students develop their strategic planning, problem-solving, decision-making, communication and teamwork skills," says Dr. Han-Yen Kao, business department chair. "As a senior seminar class, they also apply what they have learned over the past four years to demonstrate an understanding of financial management, marketing, risk management, leadership and analyzing economic environments. These skills are essential in virtually every industry—from entry-level positions to executive leadership roles."

Graduate Education Leader



LEM MAURER

As newly appointed dean of Northwestern's Graduate & Professional Studies (GPS) division, Dr. Jill Swisher is committed to being a good steward—not just of college resources and personnel, but of NWC's Christ-centered mission and vision.

"The primary goal for GPS is to serve our students by stewarding our gifts to

Dr. Jill Swisher started her position as dean of Northwestern's Graduate & Professional Studies division in July. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Concordia University, Irvine, as well as a master's degree in organizational leadership from Chapman University.

fulfill their needs, whether that need is a faith-based education, relevant and rigorous curriculum, flexible course delivery, or just genuine encouragement from people who care," says Swisher.

In her role as dean, Swisher will lead GPS staff and faculty in the continued growth of programs, meeting the needs of students in both face-to-face and online environments.

Swisher joined Northwestern's administrative staff after 18 years at Concordia University in Irvine, California, where she served in roles such as senior director of the Master of Arts in Education programs,

director of graduate advising, assistant professor, and director of the school counseling program.

As the realm of graduate education expands and becomes increasingly job-oriented, Swisher is confident that Northwestern is well prepared for the future.

"Our programs provide direct professional outcomes and include value-added quality that is authenticated through external accreditation," she says. "We also have a willing and capable team who really take initiative as servant leaders. My personal goal is to empower them to continue serving our students well."

Northwestern Named Among Best Christian Workplaces

Northwestern College is not just an excellent place to learn; it's an excellent place to work.

Data from this fall's Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI) survey—which measures the health of workplace culture in Christian organizations—qualified Northwestern for certification as a Best Christian Workplace. The college scored an all-time high of 4.03 on a five-point scale with 88% of employees participating. This is the first year NWC has placed among the top Christian workplaces in the nation.

The BCWI survey addresses several key drivers that can contribute to employees' flourishing in the work environment: teamwork within departments and across campus, ability of employees to find purpose in their work and utilize their spiritual gifts, promotion and retention of highly capable employees, supportive supervisors, rewarding compensation and benefits, quality administrative leadership, sustainable strategy and goal-setting, and healthy communication.

"Employees' comments about what makes Northwestern a great workplace can be summed up in three phrases: our Christian mission, our campuswide commitment to excellence, and our caring, faith-filled people," says President Greg Christy. "As a leadership team, we are grateful these results indicate that Northwestern is a place



GEOFF JOHNSON

Dr. Rebecca (Vander Molen '03) Koerselman, associate professor of history education, meets with Alejandro Ruiz Garcia in her office. Results of the Best Christian Workplace Institute survey indicate that intentional relationships across campus contribute to Northwestern employees' overall thriving.

where employees can flourish, because one of our highest priorities is to care for our employees and their needs both professionally, personally and spiritually."

In addition to praising Northwestern's leadership, most employees noted that they feel involved in campus decision-making and that Northwestern reflects Christ to the world.

"I feel vocationally fulfilled because the mission of the college aligns so closely to my personal mission," wrote one respondent. "I love the people I work with, and we get to pursue God's work in the world together as we serve our students."

Business department meets international standards

The Northwestern College business department has been granted formal reaffirmation of accreditation by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). The IACBE is nationally recognized by the Council for Higher Education as the leader in mission-driven and outcomes-based programmatic accreditation in business and management education.

After making a site visit to campus in fall 2022, the IACBE applauded Northwestern's exceptional facilities, the introduction of micro-credentials to aid in experiential learning, and the business

department's exemplary approach to assessment and continuous improvement.

"The key phrases associated with this reaffirmation of accreditation are excellence, best practices and accountability," says Dr. Jiying (Jenny) Song, assistant professor of business. "Current and future Northwestern business students can be confident they are receiving a standout education that is aligned with the most cutting-edge business practices worldwide."

Song also noted that Northwestern is the only Christian college in Iowa to receive IACBE accreditation.

During the 2021–22 academic year, 266 Northwestern students majored in at least one of the department's programs, an increase of more than 18 percent from 2015–16, the time of the last reaccreditation.

Dr. Han-Yen Kao, associate professor of business and economics, is one of five full-time business professors with international ties. Northwestern business faculty have studied or worked in China, England, Scotland, South Africa, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates and Zambia.



GEORGE JOHNSON



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Samantha (Vander Velde '23) Olson is already using her education to make a difference in the lives of women across the globe.

This past spring, the recent dual-degree engineering graduate of Northwestern and Washington University in St. Louis was one of three

Washington students to win first place in Rice University's 360 Global Health Technologies Design Competition. The competition features low-cost technology designs created to address global health challenges in resource-limited settings.

Olson's team, named Fistula Fighters, competed against 27 teams from universities in eight countries: Bangladesh, Canada, Columbia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and the U.S. They were awarded a \$500 prize for designing a pair of bike shorts that functions as a discrete urine collection system. The device is intended for women who develop vesicovaginal fistulas and experience incontinence due to limited maternal health care.

"Wearing the device, women can perform everyday tasks again and reintegrate into their communities," Olson says.

The device is being tested in clinical trials at Terrowde Women's Community Hospital in Uganda. Once trials are complete, the Fistula Fighters will work with Terrowde to distribute the bike shorts to women in need.

Samantha Olson and her two teammates took first place in Rice University's 360 Global Health Technologies Design Competition for developing a discrete urine collection system for women suffering from obstetric fistulas. Olson now works as an associate clinical account specialist at Biosense Webster, a Johnson & Johnson company, in Sioux Falls.

Face Value

Honored English Teacher

Kim Van Es, a 21-year faculty member who has taught first-year writing and English education courses and supervised student teachers, is the 2023 recipient of the Iowa Council of Teachers of English (ICTE) Distinguished Service Award.

ICTE presented Van Es with the award at its annual conference in October. She was nominated for the honor by Dr. Chris Nonhof, associate professor of English and education at NWC, and former students Victor '18 and Nicole (Montgomery '17) Mena, now both English teachers in Le Mars, Iowa.

In choosing Van Es for the award, ICTE cited the way she brought many of Northwestern's teacher education students to the organization's conferences and—as the ICTE's college liaison—encouraged other English teaching professors across the state to do the same.

"Kim is honest, encouraging and supportive of her student teachers," Nonhof and the Menas wrote in their nomination. "Her mentorship, numerous professional contributions and caring spirit make her deserving of the Distinguished Service Award."



Kim Van Es

LEW MAURER

Julie Dragstra

Preparing Nurses Who Care

You have training in both nursing and education—in what ways are the two fields similar, and in what ways are they different?

Part of a nurse's job is educating patients and families. I also worked with student nurses as they rotated through the hospital and with new employees, helping to orientate them. It's very different when you teach in the classroom. Education is very skills-based in the hospital setting—you're showing other nurses or the patient how to perform a particular aspect of the patient's care. In the classroom, it's more about relaying content. While there is still a skills component, you're also teaching students to think critically and make decisions about the right course of treatment.

What brings you the most satisfaction in your job?

In teaching, it's the relationships I've built with my students. I love seeing when a student who has been struggling becomes successful. It's also very rewarding to see students in the field, doing what they've worked so hard for and doing it well. In nursing, I enjoy being there for patients and giving them the support they need. It's gratifying when the small things you do for a patient end up having a significant impact. I may not be able to change a patient's circumstances, but I can change the experience they have.

How would you describe Northwestern nursing students?

I think they're amazing. They're very committed and focused, and they care about the whole person—including the spiritual aspect. It's remarkable how their stories and experiences shape who they are, and then those same experiences go on to shape the caring and compassion they provide for others.

How does your personal faith commitment inform your work as a nursing professional?



LEW MAURER

Dr. Julie Dragstra is an associate professor of nursing and department chair. Prior to joining Northwestern's faculty in 2008, she worked as an orthopedics and hospice care nurse for Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and also provided in-home services for Sioux Center Hospital and the South Dakota Department of Public Health. Julie continues to practice nursing during the summer at Dougherty Hospice House in Sioux Falls.

I couldn't teach nursing if I couldn't incorporate my faith with it: nursing and spirituality are very much hand-in-hand. Even in secular health care settings, it's important to find out patients' priorities and figure out how their physical, emotional and spiritual needs can be addressed in their plan of care.

What is one thing you wish you would have known at the start of your nursing career?

I wish I would have known to just enjoy the journey. Give yourself grace—you are not expected to know everything nor what your career path will look like, but God will provide what you need when you need it. I also encourage our graduates to keep a journal of all the funny, memorable and heart-warming experiences they will have to help remind them why they became nurses.

Social work program renews accreditation

Northwestern's social work program has received reaffirmation of accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE's Commission on Accreditation is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States.

In a review of the program following a site visit in April, the CSWE site visitor highlighted the positive engagement between students and community organizations and noted that the assessment process was a prominent strength of the program.

"Receiving reaffirmation of accreditation demonstrates the quality of our social work program," says Dr. Valerie (Roman '93) Stokes, department chair and professor of social work. "It also recognizes that we adhere to the social work profession's high standards and our students are well prepared for their future employment."

The nine educational standards or competencies required for CSWE accreditation include: ethical and professional behavior; comprehension of diversity's role in shaping the human experience; advancement of human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; practice-informed research and research-informed practice; social policy practice at the local, state and federal level; engagement and intervention with—



Meridith Hochstetler, a 2023 graduate of Northwestern's CSWE-accredited social work program, meets with a client during her internship at Hope House, a resource center for teen moms in Denver.

as well as assessment of—individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities; and evaluation of practice outcomes.

Accreditation by the CSWE ensures that Northwestern's social work program is aligned with competencies that prepare students to practice safely, competently and ethically. The NWC social work department completed its first self-study for accreditation in 1981.

New Vision for Youth Ministry

A book co-authored by a Northwestern professor combines practical theology, Christian min-

istry and social entrepreneurship to offer a new approach to working with youth.

Dr. Jason Lief '96, professor of biblical and theological studies, wrote *To Mend the World: A New Vision for Youth Ministry*, with Kurt Rietema, senior director of Youthfront's YF Neighborhood, a program that helps young people form friendships across social and economic divisions.

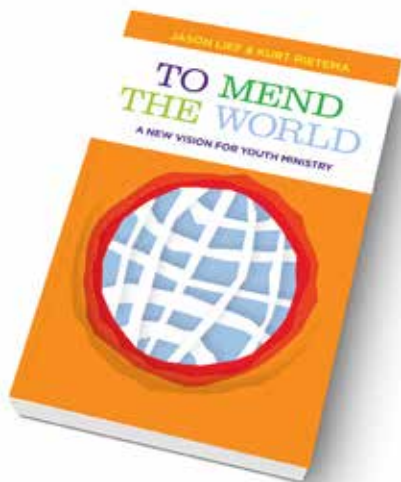
"Too often, Christian formation doesn't address the social forces that impact how young people form identity," Lief says. "Our book explores what Christian faith

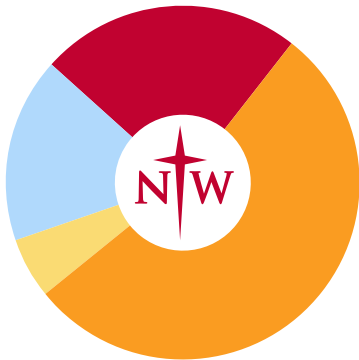
means for economic life and how young people might use social enterprise to bring transformation." Social enterprise uses the principles of entrepreneurship to change culture by focusing on social issues like poverty or climate change.

"A Christian approach challenges the destructive impulses of economic systems and uses economics to bring about the flourishing of creation," Lief says. "The gospel addresses all of life, including economics, and we believe youth ministry can invite young people to participate in God's transformation of this world."

Lief and Rietema are especially suited to address this unique approach to ministry. Rietema holds a master's degree in global development and social justice and lives with his family in an under-resourced neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas. Lief has a doctorate in practical theology and teaches Christian education and ministry courses at NWC.

To Mend the World: A New Vision for Youth Ministry is available on Kindle or paperback through Amazon and via the website of the publisher, Fortress Press.





CAPITAL
\$4.5 MILLION

RESTRICTED
\$1.92 MILLION

UNRESTRICTED
\$1.4 MILLION

ENDOWMENT
\$475,000

TOTAL
\$8.32 MILLION



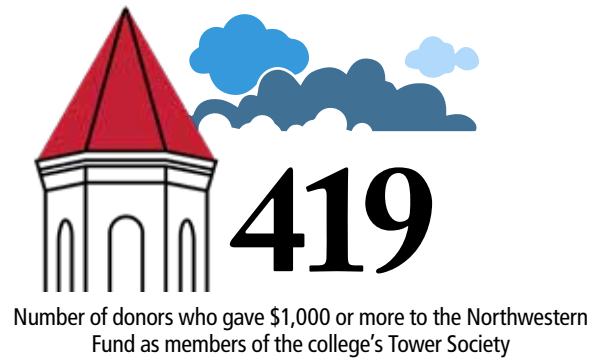
GIVING TO **NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE** IN 2022–23



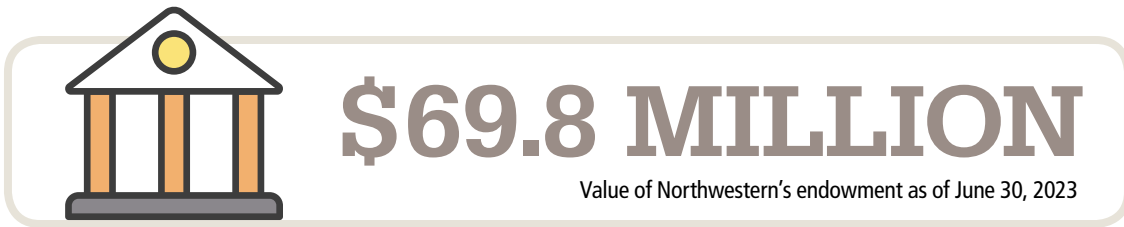
Number of donors who gave \$1,000 or more in any giving category



Amount per student underwritten by unrestricted gifts



Number of donors who gave \$1,000 or more to the Northwestern Fund as members of the college's Tower Society



302 Total number of endowed scholarships at NWC



In High Demand

For the fourth consecutive year, Northwestern College graduates achieved a 99% placement rate, with 83% employed and 16% in grad school within six months of graduation.

“While employers adjust to the Great Resignation, they are actively seeking our graduates,” says Dr. Elizabeth Pitts, director of the Compass Center for Career & Calling. “Northwestern students come to the workforce ready to engage ideas, connect knowledge and experience, and respond to God’s call. It’s a pleasure to watch our recent grads launch from college to career with confidence and purpose.”

Amazon, the San Diego Padres, Avera Health, Sioux Falls Christian High School, Sight & Sound Theatres, and Interstates are just a few of the more than 125 companies and organizations



Steven Van Meeteren, a class of 2022 graduate, is now a medical student at the University of Iowa.

that hired Northwestern’s 2022 graduates.

Grads are working in roles such as digital marketing specialist,

emergency room nurse, staff accountant, associate chemist, social worker, interpreter, lighting technician, federal grain inspector

and social studies teacher.

The average reported salary of those who are employed full time is \$44,575. The maximum salary reported is \$71,500.

Members of the class of 2022 are also pursuing graduate degrees in fields ranging from medicine to industrial and organizational psychology. They are studying at schools that include Duke University, Michigan College of Optometry, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Iowa and the University of Nebraska.

Northwestern’s 2022 graduates are now living and working in 22 states, two other countries and Washington, D.C., with 54% continuing to live and work in Iowa. For more information, visit nwciowa.edu/2022-outcomes.

Standout Scores

Northwestern’s 2023 nursing graduates recorded a 100% pass rate on the NCLEX-RN board exam. All 14 of the recent nursing alumni who took the exam passed it.

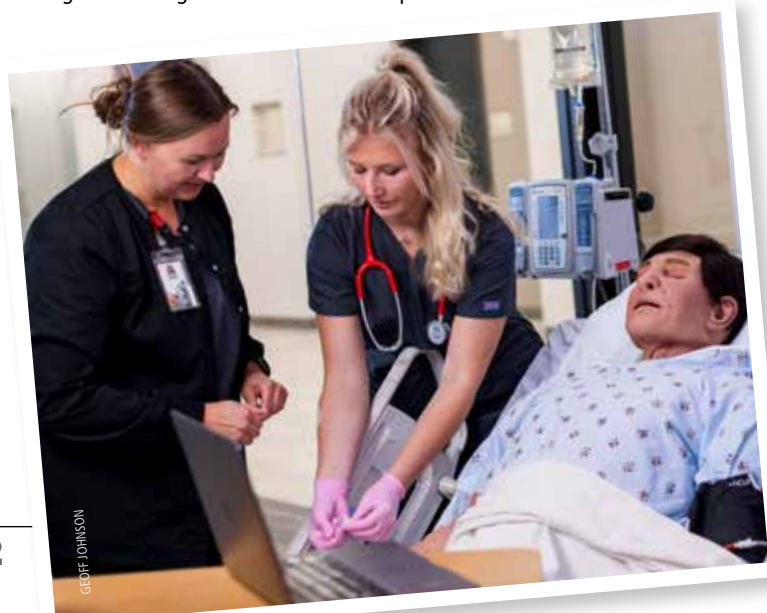
“The pass rate is the benchmark for analyzing a nursing program’s quality,” says Dr. Julie Dragstra, associate professor and nursing department chair. “It’s a result of students’ commitment to their education, showing perseverance in health care settings both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Dragstra cites several factors for the nursing students’ success.

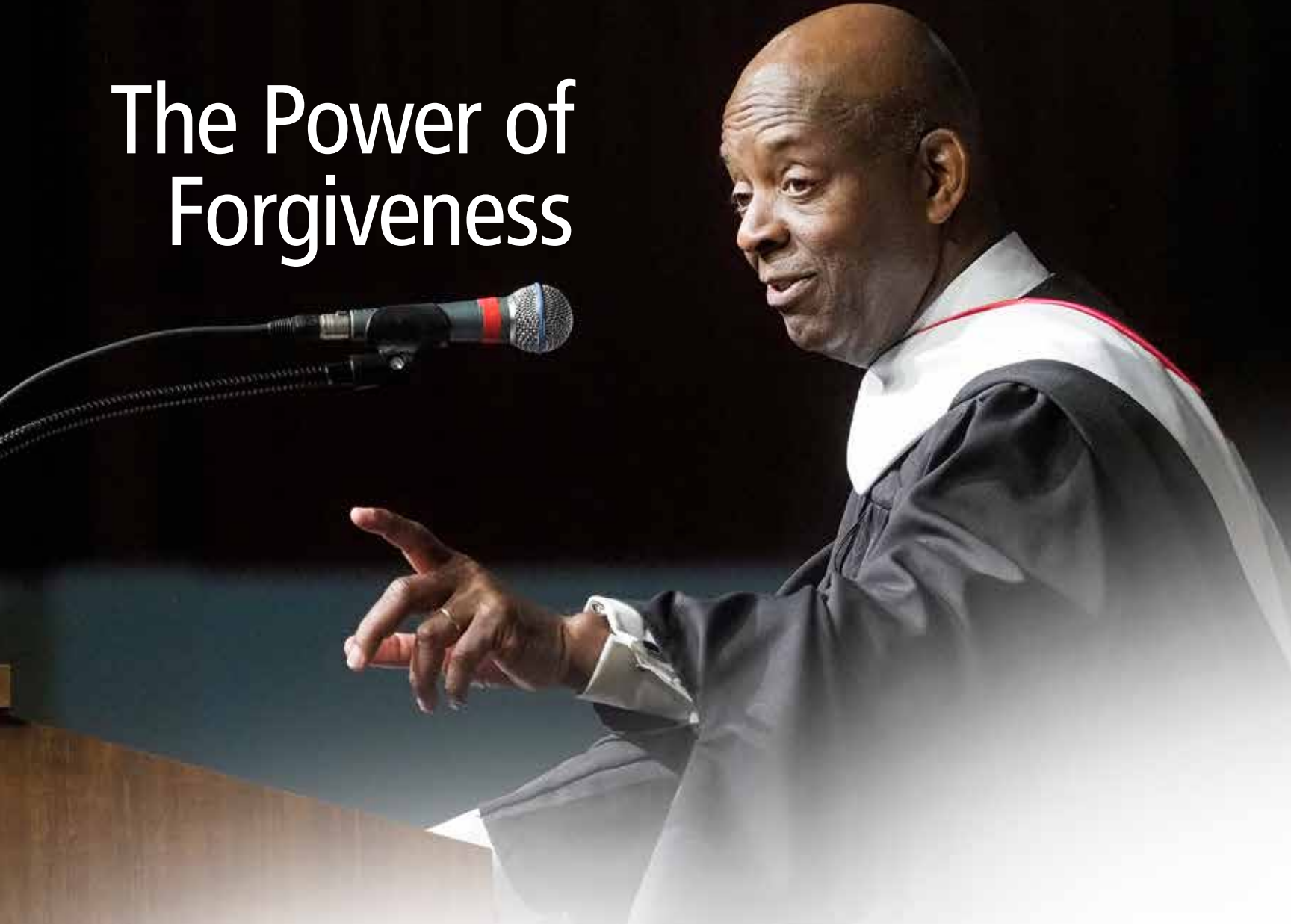
“Our faculty are really knowledgeable, and they challenge students to think critically rather than to just memorize content,” she says. “They create a very positive learning environment and do a great job of helping students make connections between theory and actual practice. Students benefit from our outstanding facility—but also from a lot of hands-on opportunities through clinical experiences and community service.”

Northwestern’s 2023 nursing graduates are working at the University of Iowa Hospital in Iowa City; Sanford Hospital and Sanford Children’s Hospital in Sioux Falls; St. Nicholas Hospital in Sheboygan, Wisconsin; Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee; and Sioux Center Health in Sioux Center, among others. Their specializations include emergency care, neonatal ICU, cardiovascular ICU, medical-surgical, and labor and delivery units.

Northwestern nursing students receive hands-on training in the college’s nursing arts laboratory, which includes high-fidelity human patient simulators, patient rooms, IV training arms, and an electronic health record simulation program.



The Power of Forgiveness



Ronald Langston gave a different kind of commencement speech at Northwestern in May. He shared a very personal story.

In 1970 Langston came to NWC as a freshman from New Jersey. On the way back to campus from an indoor track meet, he was refused service at a diner in western Iowa because he was Black. A coach told him to return to his car while his teammates ate. He left Northwestern after the semester concluded without saying goodbye to anyone and transferred

to the University of Iowa.

Langston thought he had put the incident in his past as he pursued a successful career as a public servant, entrepreneur and business leader. But the memory haunted him for decades.

Establishing a relationship with President Greg Christy over the last few years, Langston returned to Northwestern and found a warm, inviting spirit paralleling the transformation he witnessed of the physical campus.

“I see Northwestern much

different today,” he told the commencement crowd. “I now see with a forgiving heart. Returning to Northwestern College has been the emotional and spiritual lifeline I needed. I finally faced my deeply hidden anger, and I felt renewed.”

Langston ended his speech by telling the graduates someone will fail them in the future—and they will have their own failures. He encouraged them to follow his father’s admonition: “Leave room in your heart to forgive those who have disappointed you. As Christ

forgives us our sins, you must find the power to forgive.”

Following Langston’s commencement address, Northwestern awarded degrees to 363 students: 234 bachelor’s degrees and 129 Master of Education degrees.

Ronald Langston '74, president and CEO of FUEL Iowa and a former eight-year director of the U.S. Minority Business Development Agency, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters prior to his speech at Northwestern’s 2023 commencement.



Greta Grond's outstanding service as director of the DeWitt Library made her the recipient of Northwestern's 2023 Staff Inspirational Service Award.

LEM MAURER

Point of Reference

If a student or faculty member has a question about academic research, DeWitt Library Director Greta Grond is a good starting point.

"Greta works diligently to help faculty help students learn how to do academic research, cite sources and evaluate sources," says Dr. Sara Sybesma Tolsma '84, professor of biology.

Grond coordinates Northwestern's annual Celebration of Research, an event that highlights the scholarly work of students, and keeps the library's collection up-to-date and relevant to the researchers on campus. Both tasks require an astute attention to detail.

"Greta pulls off an amazing Celebration of Research year after year," says Tolsma. "This event requires an enormous amount of planning and coordination. She executes the event without a wrinkle. And she always does everything with a smile."

Grond's commitment to serving both students and faculty made her the top candidate for Northwestern's 2023 Staff Inspirational Service Award, which she received in May. The award recognizes employees who go beyond excellence in their performance and whose dedication to Christ is apparent in their daily work and interactions.

"Greta is fearless in taking on multiple projects, but even more than that is her character while doing it all," several members of the library staff wrote in a nomination letter. "She has the best sense of humor, a high level of humbleness, and a great deal of compassion toward others. Greta is a great leader."

Community Builder

Students and faculty in Northwestern's physician assistant studies program have come to depend on two things from Brett Bastian, professor of practice: his commitment to their success and his colorful wardrobe of Hawaiian shirts.

"Brett is the most upbeat and positive person I've ever met," says Jill Van Otterloo, director of Northwestern's physician assistant studies program. "He is selfless and is always there to lend encouragement and a helping hand to fellow faculty and staff."

Now in his third year of teaching at Northwestern, Bastian was selected as the recipient of the 2023 Faculty Inspirational Service Award, an honor that recognizes faculty excellence, dedication to Christ and a heart for service.

Bastian is intentional about building community. He started a Tuesday night gathering for students, faculty, staff and their families to watch *The Chosen* series, seeking to encourage fellowship and spiritual growth. He has also spearheaded projects with Orange City's EMTs and worked with Northwestern's translation

and interpretation students on an interpreting mock office visit.

"Brett is truly an inspiration to us in the PA program," says Jaclyn (Van Engen '00) Freese, professor of practice. "This year he worked incredibly hard meeting with a student regularly to make sure the student passed their boards, and they were very successful in this. His energy and his drive are impressive."

Brett Bastian, professor of practice in physician assistant studies, seeks to build community among students, faculty and staff—a trait that garnered him recognition as the recipient of Northwestern's 2023 Faculty Inspirational Service Award. He will retire after the spring semester.



LEM MAURER



Biblical and theological studies professor Jim Mead, shown greeting students following the Opening Convocation, was honored as the 2023 recipient of the Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award.

ANITA CIRIUS

Top Teacher

When Dr. Jim Mead couldn't find a current, comprehensive textbook for his Biblical Interpretation and Theology course, he wrote his own. That's just one example of his commitment to do whatever it takes to help students learn.

"He really embodies what it means to be 'teacher as servant,'" wrote one of the many students who successfully nominated him for the 2023 Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award. "He shows through his actions what it means to live a life of faith."

Nominators praised Mead for his knowledge and his effective way of presenting it in the classroom—liberally sprinkled with stories, humor and movie clips.

"Dr. Mead is an amazing professor!" wrote one student.

"He teaches in a way that makes the material exciting." Another student said, "Dr. Mead is the best professor I've ever had. He makes class fun and meaningful."

Students also expressed their appreciation for Mead's caring demeanor.

"He is willing to put extra time in to help you understand the material," wrote one. Another added, "There's never a day in class where he doesn't make me smile. He genuinely cares about me and the rest of his students."

A member of Northwestern's faculty since 2000, Mead previously received the Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award in 2004. An Old Testament scholar, he served as a Presbyterian pastor in the South for 11 years before earning a doctorate at Princeton Theological Seminary.

GAME ON

Now in its fourth year, Northwestern's varsity esports program has grown to accommodate teams in *Overwatch*, *Rocket League*—and most recently—*Super Smash Brothers Ultimate* (*Smash Bros.*).

A fast-paced fighting game, *Smash Bros.* is played on a Nintendo Switch console and features characters from franchises like *Super Mario*, *Legend of Zelda*, and *Pokemon*, among others.

Director of Esports Cole Prescott '19 hopes that expanding program offerings will build upon the success Northwestern esports saw last fall with two second-place finishes by the *Rocket League* varsity team.

"No matter what games we add, the pillars of our program remain the same: selfless positivity, excellence, ownership and empathy," says Prescott. "We've built a great culture and environment where students can thrive academically, build authentic relationships, and be challenged to grow personally, professionally and competitively."

JOBS WELL DONE

Three contribute 66 years to NWC



After 24 years on Northwestern's chemistry faculty, Dr. Dave Arnett retired in May. He and his wife have moved to Maryland, where he is working as a field service engineer for Evident Scientific.



Dr. Lila Sybesma retired in May after 22 years of teaching in Northwestern's education department. Her creativity in the classroom helped spark the imaginations of hundreds of education majors who are now teaching across the country.

Developing Bonds

With a Ph.D. in chemistry from an Ivy League institution and research that garnered grants from the National Science Foundation, Dave Arnett knows his way around the Periodic Table of Elements. But he was recognized at Northwestern for his ability to break down difficult chemistry concepts and build up students who might be struggling.

A member of Northwestern's faculty from 1999 until he retired in May, Arnett had the ability to relate well with both the student destined for medical school and the one just trying to pass General Chemistry.

"For many of our students, chemistry was very hard, not very pleasant, or both," says Arnett. "Within that context, I hope students remember me as being gentle."

They also remember his Hawaiian shirts, dad jokes, and antics like competing in lemon-eating contests and racing

a student down the hallway while doing burpees—all of which helped make his classroom a non-threatening environment.

"Dr. Arnett is the reason I started loving chemistry," says Alex Yoerger '18, a small-animal intern at Texas A&M University. "He taught me so much, both about chemistry and about life. I will forever be thankful that NWC gave me the opportunity to learn from him and become friends with him."

"Dr. Arnett had a tremendous impact on me as a student and a Christian," adds Noah Gritters '21, a med student at the University of Iowa. "He is brilliant, and I learned so much from him about how to do science well. However, I learned even more about how to live your faith and love people as Jesus did."

Beloved Professor

In her 40 years of teaching, Dr. Lila (Elliott '81) Sybesma discovered that students—no matter their age—will always want to learn.

It's what made her transition from third grade teacher to college professor so seamless: "College really isn't that different from third grade," Sybesma says. "There is more rigor, of course, but all students want a quality learning experience."

Before her retirement in May, Sybesma taught in Northwestern's education department for 22 years. She held the Blekkink Endowed Education Professorship from 2014 to 2019, during which time she wrote a historical fiction novel titled *Yours: The Civil War, a Love Triangle and The Steamboat Sultana*. Upon publication, Sybesma shared her writing with several departments on campus, telling the tragic story of a steamboat that sank with thousands of Union soldiers aboard.

Sybesma also helped launch Northwestern's online program in early childhood education, the first adult learning option to be offered by the college.

"Lila was a driving force in putting our early childhood curriculum online," says Gary Richardson, former dean of Graduate & Professional Studies. "Her vision for what was needed in this field had an effect on hundreds of students over the years."

Students and colleagues praised Sybesma for her ingenuity, caring heart and deep faith commitment. Lessons were occasionally enlivened by her unique talents—including ventriloquism and playing the washtub bass.

"Dr. Sybesma was one of the most beloved professors in the education department," says Jamie Young, a sophomore Spanish major. "She emulated servitude in all aspects of her life, showing that it is Christ living within her."

Idyllic Italy

This past summer, six Northwestern students traveled to Italy to experience the Mediterranean country's rich culture and religious history. The trip was led by Dr. Jason Lief '96, professor of biblical and theological studies.

The group participated in a two-week spiritual pilgrimage that followed the journey of St. Francis from Assisi to Rome. While traveling, students were encouraged to examine their faith in light of God's creation in rural Italy.

"We visited everything from large ornate cathedrals to small monasteries in the mountains," says sophomore Noah Luna. "These experiences impacted my understanding of how Christianity has been lived out over the years and grew my appreciation for the broader world."

Northwestern students visited several religious landmarks on their pilgrimage across Italy, including the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi.



SUBMITTED PHOTO



LEMM MAURER

As director of the Wellness Center, Dr. Sally Oakes Edman provided professional counseling care for students while also holding leadership roles in state and national psychological associations. She retired in May after 20 years of service.

Wise Counsel

During the years that Dr. Sally Oakes Edman served as director of Northwestern's Wellness Center, she helped students navigate family upheavals, interpersonal conflicts, trauma, abuse and heartbreaking bouts with depression and anxiety.

"I can't count the number of calls she received in the middle of the night from an RD sitting with a student in a very hard place," says Julie Vermeer Elliott '97, vice president for student life. "In each instance, Sally engaged the student with care and steadiness."

Edman was hired as a therapist by Northwestern in 2003, appointed the Wellness Center's director in 2004, and retired last May. A licensed clinical psychologist, she earned master's and doctoral degrees in counseling psychology from the University of Notre Dame. Prior to joining Northwestern's staff, she had her own private counseling practice, taught psychology at two Iowa colleges,

and co-founded the behavioral medicine department at the Mayo Clinic in Decatur, Iowa.

Edman's expertise made her a frequent panelist for student life programming, as well as a facilitator of professional development sessions for staff and student leaders. She was elected to represent Iowa on the Council of Representatives for the American Psychological Association and served as chair of the APA's Continuing Education Committee. She also served as president of the Iowa Psychological Association, chaired its Ethics Committee, and in 2023 was presented with the IPA's Meritorious Achievement Award.

Elliott describes her former colleague as smart, well-trained, experienced and unflinching in her commitment to good scholarship and research: "Sally left a legacy that will be felt for many years to come."

Northwestern's 2023 alumni of the year are (from left): Dawn (Te Brink '80) Wieking, John Swart '90, Janelle (de Waard '11) Silva, Curtis Weerheim '76, and Felipe Silva '12.

LEM MAURER

Honored Alums

This year's Distinguished Alumni Awards went to a husband-and-wife missionary team, an entrepreneurial scientist, an international sports ministry director, and a Northwestern advocate and volunteer. Meet the five award recipients recognized during Raider Nation Celebration in October.

Felipe '12 and Janelle (de Waard '11) Silva

Standout Young Alumni

Janelle and Felipe Silva are missionaries in the economically depressed Jiu Valley of Romania, where they opened a rock-climbing gym and started an education program for at-risk children and teens. They also planted a church that—along with the gym and education program—is part of their ministry known as The Anchor Jiu Valley. Janelle graduated from Northwestern with a degree in social work and was involved in campus ministry at NWC. Felipe, a native of Brazil and religion major graduate, was the 2017 recipient of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities' Young Alumni Award.

Dr. John Swart '90

Distinguished Professional Achievement

Dr. John Swart is a scientist, businessman and entrepreneur. Among the companies he co-founded are Exemplar Genetics, which plays a role in developing treatments for rare genetic diseases, and Novavita Thera, a preclinical gene therapy company. Swart is currently the co-founder and CEO of Cytotheryx, a platform technology company; Ponte BioSciences, which is developing a liver assist device; and Axothera, a cell therapy company utilizing genetically engineered liver cells to treat rare pediatric metabolic disease. Swart earned a doctorate in biochemistry from the University of Nebraska. He's the 2017 recipient of the Iowa Biotech Leader of the Year Award from the Iowa Biotechnology Association.

Curtis Weerheim '76

Distinguished Service to Humankind

Apart from seven years as an admissions counselor and resident director for Northwestern, Curt Weerheim has spent his entire career serving with Athletes in Action (AIA), the sports ministry of Cru Ministries, formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ. For two decades, he was the AIA basketball international teams director. That was followed by 16 years as the AIA area coordinator for Southeast Asia. He was also AIA's Olympics project coordinator in Beijing, Rio de Janeiro and Seoul. Weerheim currently serves as AIA's global special projects coordinator and staff stewardship specialist. His interest in sports ministry and world missions began at NWC, where he majored in sociology and recreation.

Dawn (Te Brink '80) Wieking

Distinguished Service to Northwestern

Dawn Wieking's love for Northwestern runs deep and wide. She graduated from NWC with majors in English and library science, and her family members who have attended Northwestern include her husband, sons, daughters-in-law, siblings, cousins and mother. She is an active recruiter for her alma mater, encouraging countless students—including those at Sioux Falls Christian, where she teaches high school English—to consider Northwestern. She also served on the college's National Alumni Board for six years, including three years as the board's president. In addition to her bachelor's degree from NWC, Wieking has a master's degree in reading development from the University of Sioux Falls.

Much to Celebrate

A 45-7 victory over Hasting's football team was among the highlights of Raider Nation Celebration Oct. 6 and 7. The weekend also included a concert by Irish worship band Rend Collective, class reunions, the Morning on the Green carnival, the music department's Fall Showcase concert, a banquet for donors, and more.

Mark your calendars for next fall's Homecoming and Family Weekend, which is scheduled for Oct. 4-5.



Greta Greller demonstrates her limboing skills for her dad, Michael '00, at Morning on the Green.

JERRY MEMENGA



Dr. Laird Edman retired from the classroom in May after 20 years at NWC, but he continues as a research professor studying the impact of religious ritual in faith communities. The 2023 recipient of the college's Faculty Excellence in Faith and Learning Award also won the Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award twice.

Templeton Grant Winner

A Northwestern professor is the recipient of a \$234,000 grant from the Templeton Religion Trust. With funding from the grant, Dr. Laird Edman, professor emeritus of psychology, will spend the next two years studying the impact of religious ritual in faith communities.

"What if people of faith—in particular, church leaders—could leverage the way human minds work to better support faith development?" asks Edman. "What if understanding the power of ritual within faith contexts could be harnessed to better strengthen these communities while increasing their openness to others?"

Edman's goal for his project team is to study which rituals achieve those results, test the team's hypotheses, and then share their findings through articles, podcasts,

blogs, presentations and a book. Their research will draw on the cognitive science of religion (CSR), an academic discipline that studies the mental processes that underlie recurrent patterns of religious thought and behavior.

"What we have discovered about how the religious mind functions has an important practical side," he says. "It can help us to better understand how the human psyche is designed for worship, what psychological needs are fulfilled in worship, and what approaches to worship and discipleship will make the most profound and lasting impact."

Edman's previous research has been published in *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*; *Religion, Brain and Behavior*; *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*; and the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*.

Red Zone

New Raider Leader

BY DUANE BEESON

Long before Tony Hoops came to Northwestern to interview for the vice president for athletics position in July, he was well aware of the Red Raiders' successful athletics program. Hoops was a member of the Bethel College (Kansas) basketball team that lost to NWC in the Bultman Center in 2001.

"My impression was that Northwestern was always excellent in what they did," he says. That perception was confirmed when Hoops worked on national NAIA committees while he was athletics director for his alma mater from 2017 to 2023.

Hoops, who earlier coached Bethel's men's basketball team for four seasons, was very happy in his Kansas job.

"It was going to take a dream position to pull me and our family away from Bethel," he says. "We found that at Northwestern. The commitment to Christian education, the leadership exemplified by President Christy and his cabinet, and the experienced coaching staff, great facilities, tremendous support for Raider athletics, and beautiful community of Orange City all made this a position our family could not pass up."

Hoops, the 2020–21 Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Athletic Director of the Year, took the helm of Northwestern athletics in August. Enthused by the welcome he's received, he says his goals are to continue to enhance the entirety of the athletics department.

"Our athletes had a 3.3 cumulative GPA last year, and maintaining academic excellence is important to me," he says. "We also want to continue to be an NAIA Champions of Character Gold Standard school. We can grow in the ability of all our programs to be successful at the national level. And I want to build on the Raider Athletics Association. It can really take off as more people understand what it accomplishes."

One of Hoops' major responsibilities this fall has been to work with architects and others on campus to finalize plans for the second phase of renovations for the building that was his first introduction to Northwestern some 20 years ago: the Bultman Center. An addition will house football locker rooms, coaches' offices and a team meeting room. The expansion will allow vacated space to be repurposed so all Red Raider teams will have their own locker rooms. "The project will enhance all of our programs," he says.

For more on Raider sports,
visit nwcraiders.com



Tony Hoops became Northwestern's vice president for athletics in August following six years as athletics director at Bethel College in Kansas.

SEASONS TO REMEMBER

BY DUANE BEESON

TWO OUTSTANDING RAIDER seasons full of record-setting feats ended in heartbreak as the volleyball and football teams finished as NAIA national runners-up in December. Both teams had been ranked No. 1 in the nation since late October and received the top seed in their tournament.



TIM TUSHIA



ZAC LUCY

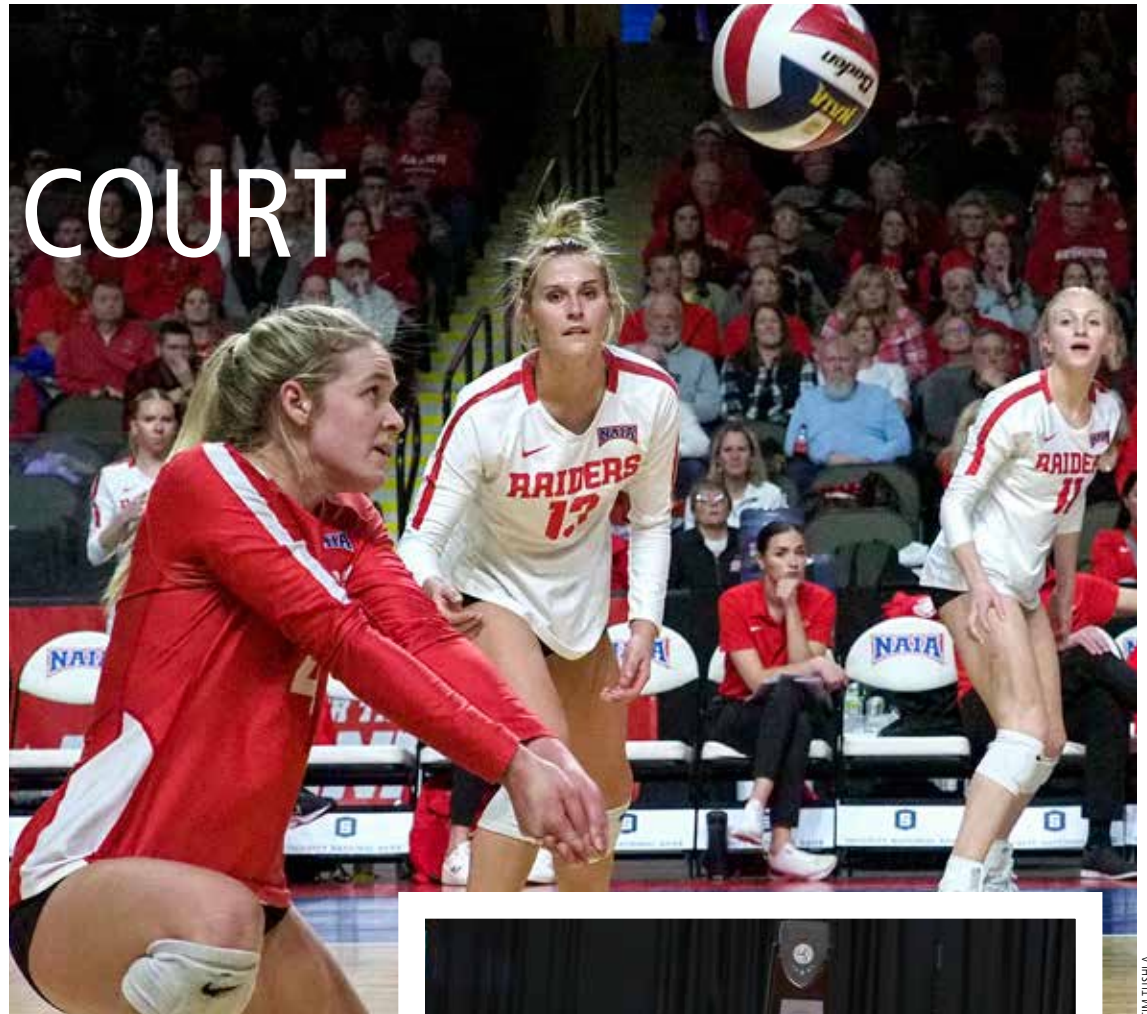
ON THE COURT

With All-American outside hitters Jazlin De Haan and Alysén Dexter returning, it was no surprise that Northwestern's volleyball team garnered a No. 5 ranking in the NAIA preseason poll. A 3-0 victory over two-time national champion Park in the third weekend of the season and a five-set victory at No. 6 Viterbo in late September gave head coach Kyle Van Den Bosch's team confidence that they could compete at a high level.

A straight-set upset of No. 1 Concordia two weeks later and a 3-1 road win over defending national champion Jamestown at the end of October provided further momentum for the Raiders as they tied for the GPAC regular-season title and won the conference tournament.

Northwestern advanced beyond the quarterfinal round of the national tournament for the first time in school history and had a 17-match win streak heading into the championship game on Dec. 5 in Sioux City. Playing undefeated Indiana Wesleyan in front of what felt like a home crowd, the Raiders won the first and third sets but fell in five, finishing the year with a 31-3 record.

Van Den Bosch says the players' bonds were among the keys to the Raiders' success. "They really



All-Americans (left to right) Olivia Granstra, Jazlin De Haan and Alysén Dexter helped the Raiders advance to their first-ever national championship game.

enjoyed each other from the beginning and were very close-knit. Each member of the team accepted her role, and their strengths really complemented each other well. I'm just so proud of the gals; they represented their families and Northwestern College incredibly well."



TIM TUSHLA

TIM TUSHLA



The Raiders won their first outright conference title since 1996 and competed in their third national championship contest in four years.

ZAC LUCY



ZAC LUCY

ON THE FIELD

Less than two weeks after the volleyball national championship, the Raider football team played in the title game in Durham, North Carolina, for the second year in a row. Northwestern again faced Keiser University of Florida, which the Raiders had beaten 35-25 last year.

The Raiders had amassed 27 straight wins and completed the program's first undefeated regular season since 1988. Highlights included a 27-24 overtime victory at NCAA Div. 1 Drake and a 34-20 October win over Morningside in blizzard-like conditions. Junior quarterback Jalyn Gramstad was

named the NAIA Player of the Year after throwing for 3,381 yards and 33 touchdowns with a 70.7% completion percentage heading into the title game.

The Keiser Seahawks scored on their first play from scrimmage and built a 17-0 second-quarter lead, but the Raiders came back. NWC scored two TDs in the fourth quarter to come within three but eventually fell 31-21 to finish the year at 14-1.

"They embodied everything it means to be a team," Raider head coach Matt McCarty '03 posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, the day after the game. "Together they

were special, and they embraced that. The outcome of that game doesn't change who they are. They are winners because of how they carry themselves and because of who they are as young men. I couldn't be more proud of how they competed and the legacy they leave with Raider football."

On the Web

nwciowa.edu/vb-highlights-video
nwciowa.edu/fb-highlights-video
nwcraiders.com



TIM TOSHILA



ELIEKARLEVITZ

Growing in Christ

Northwestern's identity as a Christian college is central to everything students experience—from the courses they take, to the residence halls they live in, to the activities they join. Spiritual growth also happens through chapel speakers, Bible studies, mission trips and opportunities to serve. More than 400 students gather weekly for small-group opportunities, while 43% participate in short-term missions during their time at NWC.

PHOTO BY LEM MAURER



Sophonise Nielson '24 leads singing during Sunday night Praise and Worship.

Engineered by God

After Northwestern decided to add a new major, its search for a program director reached halfway across the world

BY ANITA CIRULIS

When Northwestern announced in May that the college planned to launch a new engineering program in the fall of 2024, pending accreditor approval, it turned a decades-long dream into reality. It also showed all those involved how God provides.

“Engineering is something that’s been on the table for many years, and we’ve never chosen to pursue it,” says Dr. Dean Calsbeek ’97, dean of natural and applied sciences. “We talked about it, but the known cost of starting a program has always been very inhibiting. You need to have a lot of space and facilities and equipment, and it requires numerous faculty.”

Attitudes changed, however, when Northwestern hired a research firm to identify academic programs that would be successful if added to the majors already offered by NWC.

“Engineering expands our STEM offerings,” Calsbeek explains. “We’re strong in science. There’s no reason to think we can’t do this area of science well too.”

The rationale for adding engineering extended beyond what’s best for Northwestern, however.

“There’s a need for Christian engineers—period,” says Calsbeek. “And there’s a growing need for engineers as well.”

Students would benefit, too, if Northwestern offered engineering. Having the major gives those interested in that field the opportunity to experience all NWC offers. “We know there were students who wanted to have a Northwestern education, but they also wanted to study

Dr. Young-Ji Byon is using his extensive administrative, teaching and research experience as he develops an undergraduate engineering program for Northwestern.

engineering, so they didn't apply," Calsbeek says. "And in some cases, they didn't even visit."

Justin Regehr, a sophomore from Chandler, Arizona, was recruited to play football and enrolled thinking he'd pursue a master's degree in engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. "When I found out that Northwestern was starting an engineering program, I was excited," he says. "It's definitely going to be a big step in the right direction."

Regehr's teammate, Evan Maxwell, shares his excitement. The freshman from Winterset, Iowa, calls the opportunity to study engineering and attend Northwestern through a football scholarship "the best-case scenario."

Laying the Groundwork

The research firm's findings weren't the only impetus for launching engineering at Northwestern. Calsbeek joined Dr. Nate Phinney, vice president for academic affairs, and Dr. Kim Jongerius, chair of the math and

physics department, in visiting several like-sized institutions with successful engineering programs. Virtual meetings were held with another half-dozen colleges and universities to gather information about the accreditation process, curriculum, budgets, and equipment and facility needs.

In the process, the trio concluded that a Bachelor of Science degree in general engineering was the right choice for Northwestern.

"The breadth of a general engineering degree seems to better fit a school like Northwestern, which is much more focused on breadth of learning," Jongerius explains. "It aligns well with who we are and what we do."

Checking U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, she discovered that specialized engineering degrees aren't the only option for those interested in a career in engineering. People get good jobs with a general engineering degree as well, and it has predicted growth for the future. Conversations with local engineering firms revealed another caveat: While companies may say

they want an electrical engineer for a position, for example, they're also likely to hire an applicant already interning with their firm if that person is talented and an obviously good employee. "If you're training your students well and if they're learning to think and to problem-solve—well, how many of us end up in a career field that's the exact major we had in college?" Jongerius asks.

Hiring a Director

With specifics of the major in place, the next step was to hire a director. The search committee wanted someone who would give the major a Christian focus, incorporate extensive use of hands-on learning, and think innovatively by embedding concepts like artificial intelligence into the curriculum.

They found all that in Dr. Young-Ji Byon, the associate chair of the department of civil infrastructure and environmental engineering at Khalifa University in the United Arab Emirates.

Jongerius is confident Byon will attract both engineering students

and engineering faculty to Northwestern.

"He's got vision. He's got energy. He's enthusiastic," she says. "He clearly loves engineering, and he's going to share that joy—the joy of figuring things out and problem-solving—with students."

Byon also loves Jesus.

Born in Seoul, he was 14 when his parents emigrated from South Korea to Canada. Because he didn't know English at the time, school was difficult, but he excelled in math and science. His parents were atheists with mixed exposure to different religions, but he occasionally attended a Korean Presbyterian Church.

"One of the things that hindered me to come to Christ was because of this pride I had," Byon recalls. "Until then, I hadn't seen someone who was a Christian who was good at math and science."

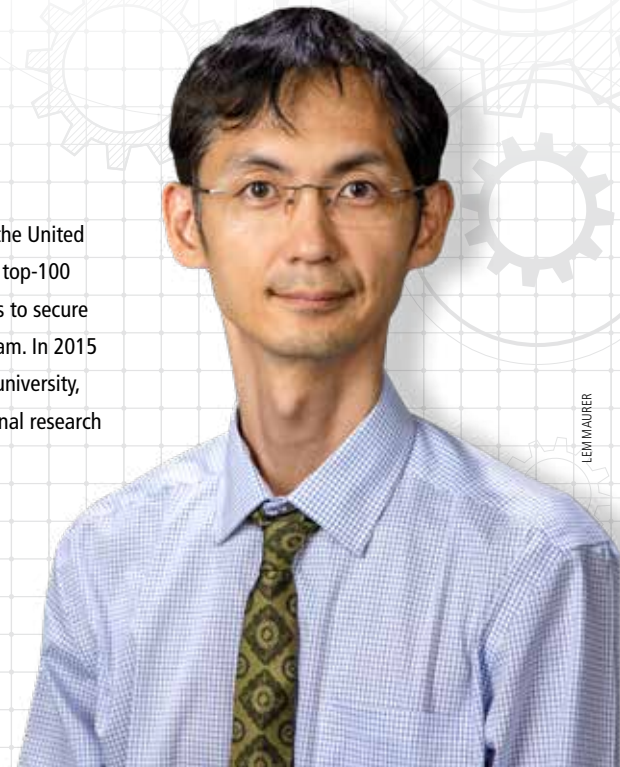
That changed when he attended a weeklong Christian summer camp for high school students. One day during lunch, he sat next to an engineering professor who had earned a Ph.D. from MIT and

Dr. Young-Ji Byon

The founding director of Northwestern's new engineering program attended the University of Toronto, where he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and master's and doctoral degrees in civil engineering. Postdoctoral fellowships followed at the University of Calgary and the University of Chile.

Byon's research focus is intelligent transportation systems—including connected and autonomous vehicles and deep-learning-based traffic control. He has managed grants totaling \$2.8 million and published more than 50 articles in internationally recognized journals.

While on the faculty of Khalifa University in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is ranked among the top-100 engineering schools in the world, Byon led efforts to secure ABET accreditation for its civil engineering program. In 2015 he received a faculty excellence award from the university, and in 2017 he was recognized with a UAE national research award for sustainable transportation.



LEMM MAURER



Although Northwestern's engineering major is slated to launch in the fall of 2024, Cohen McCann is among the current NWC students who are excited about the planned program.

taught at Seoul National University, the top institution in South Korea. The professor shared the gospel with him, and that evening during a worship service, Byon responded to an invitation to accept Christ.

"I came out of chapel and looked up to the sky, and I told God that I want to be an engineering professor, and I want to share the gospel just like that person did," Byon says.

God answered Byon's prayer. Things changed after he became a Christian. He grew more outgoing, his grades improved, and he received the gift of evangelism. "Whenever I have a chance to share the gospel, I get more energy," he explains.

Byon was admitted into Canada's most elite engineering program and eventually hired as a professor at Khalifa University, which was launching new engineering programs. As the first professor hired for Khalifa's civil engineering department, he found himself helping to hire his own boss and other faculty for the department. Eleven years at Khalifa and his

longevity in the civil engineering department provided him with extensive administrative experience.

Despite those benefits, however, Byon found himself growing "spiritually sick" in the predominantly Muslim country, prevented by law from sharing his faith and becoming the missionary engineer he thought he would be when he accepted the job. He also wanted his sons to grow up in a Christian community.

God Provides

Byon began looking for teaching jobs in North America and was eventually advised to check job listings posted on the Christian Engineering Society webpage. Since it was late in the hiring year for positions as a college professor, just three were still open: two for institutions looking for an engineering professor, and one—Northwestern—searching for an engineering director.

"If I had the luxury of many other job postings, I probably wouldn't have applied to Northwestern," Byon recalls. "I thought

it was out of my league. I'm an associate professor in my early 40s. I kept telling myself, 'I should be at least 55 years old. I'm 10 years too early.' But I applied."


Meanwhile, at Northwestern, Calsbeek was patiently waiting for the right applicant after first advertising the position in September 2022. When Byon's application arrived five months later, he jumped on it.

"I had an initial Zoom meeting with him," Calsbeek says, "and after that conversation, I emailed our search committee: 'I think we've got the one. You need to meet him, and we need to get him here.'"

Things moved quickly after that. Not only did Byon hear from Calsbeek three days after applying, but within a week, he was meeting online with the search commit-

tee. On March 3, he was flying to Orange City for an in-person interview.

Byon's day of interviews ended with a meeting with Northwestern College President Greg Christy. During their conversation, Christy asked Byon if he had any questions or concerns. He had one.

"Dr. Byon told me he thought he was too young, at 44, to be the director of our program," Christy recalls. "I shared with him how I was 40 when I became Northwestern's president and reminded him that those God calls, he equips. Then I told him we were offering him the job." 

Engineering Timeline

- Hiring of engineering program director (July 2023)
- NWC Academic Program Assessment Committee review and approval (Sept. 2023)
- NWC Academic Affairs Committee review and approval (Oct. 2023)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC) site visit request (Oct. 2023)
- NWC faculty review and approval (Nov. 2023)
- HLC site visit (Jan. 22–23, 2024)
- Anticipated HLC approval (Feb. 2024)
- Engineering program launch, pending regulatory approval (Aug. 2024)
- Graduation of first class of engineering students (May 2028)
- ABET accreditation secured (following graduation of first class of engineering students)

100 Years of THEATRE

Northwestern celebrates the impact of a department and its people

BY ANITA CIRULIS

Northwestern marked a century of theatre in 2023 with a weekend centennial celebration held in April.

More than 100 alumni returned to their alma mater to reunite with former castmates, reminisce, and attend events ranging from the showing of an award-winning documentary to an intergenerational performance of Black V, Northwestern's student improv team. The weekend concluded with the college's annual Theatre Patrons banquet, followed by the final production of Northwestern's spring play, *Harvey*.

Matt Foss '01 was among those who participated in the weekend's events. Now an associate professor of theatre at the University of Toledo, he co-wrote

and produced the documentary, *Sons of Toledo*, the true story of the city's Black-owned barbershops and their work on the frontlines of their communities. He was also a member of Black V while a student at NWC, as was Steve Hydeen '02, who went on to work in improv professionally after graduating from Northwestern.

The two joined other Black V alumni and current students for a standing-room-only show following the documentary.

"My experience with improv is usually, the shorter, the better. If it's good, it's good in small doses," says Dr. Robert Hubbard, chair of the theatre department. "But it was just consistently wonderful, and it went on for hours. It was just joyful—a lot of old friends



Theatre Through the Years

1923 *Gold Bug*, the earliest documented theatrical production at Northwestern Classical Academy, the forerunner of Northwestern College, is presented as the senior class play.

1942 Theora England begins her 34-year tenure at Northwestern. Hired to teach Latin and math, she soon starts a theatre program in response to the needs of the community and academy.

1950 Northwestern Classical Academy seniors perform *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* as their class play, which becomes the impetus for the college's annual children's production.

1959 Theora England organizes the Choral Readers, one of the first such groups in the United States, which performs for churches and civic groups.



Theora England started theatre at Northwestern, where she was a member of its faculty for 34 years.



A 1959 photo of the Choral Readers.



The cast of *Harmony Hall*, produced in 1935.



NORTHWESTERN ARCHIVES

What was once Orange City's American Reformed Church was converted into the Playhouse and served as the venue for Northwestern theatrical productions from 1970 to 2004.

1964 The Choral Readers take a two-week summer tour to the East Coast.

1967 Dr. Keith Allen begins his 35 years of service on Northwestern's theatre faculty.

1970 The Women's Auxiliary purchases a vacant church, which is transformed into The Playhouse, a dedicated space for Northwestern theatrical productions.

1973 Steve Pederson becomes the third member of the theatre department faculty, beginning a 13-year tenure.



Dr. Keith Allen (left), professor emeritus of theatre, visits with Corey Mellegaard '02 during the theatre alumni reunion that kicked off the department's centennial celebration.



Theatre Patrons and theatre alumni mingle with one another prior to the banquet that preceded the centennial's final event: a performance of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Harvey*.

working together, but we also had the current Black V team in there, so they got to perform with these people who were so good at it and so generous with their time.”

Another highlight for Hubbard involved *The Passage*, an upstairs hallway in the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center that now features panels with the titles and photos of plays produced at Northwestern throughout the years.

“I first started teaching here in 2002, and there were a group of alumni who came from that era,” he says. “We all congregated around the four panels from when they were here, and we just shared stories.”

Other attendees graduated in the 1950s and knew Theora England, the legendary founder of the theatre department. While not a Northwestern alum, Dr. Keith Allen, a theatre department faculty member for 35 years, worked with England and recalls the “turf wars” she fought when theatre shared the Multi-Purpose Auditorium with the basketball team.

According to Allen, rehearsals were held in the early morning or late evening to avoid conflicts with basketball practice. For a while, they were able to work quietly on sets behind the curtain on the Auditorium's stage during practices, but that ended when a theatre student stuck a screwdriver in the lighting system and “blew the whole system out.”

Searching for a solution, the college bought the former American Reformed Church building for \$40,000 with the help of the Women's Auxiliary. Despite being blocks from campus, what became known as The Playhouse was the department's home for more than 30 years—until the Bultman Center was built and the Multi-Purpose Auditorium was transformed into the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center.

Allen credits Northwestern President Lars Granberg with helping the department thrive. “He saw the liberal arts as a really important part of a student's development,” Allen says. “Jeff and Karen Barker had the same kind of vision when they came. We had a reputation for growing students, and our program was always very Christ-centered. As a result, we drew students from the East Coast to California.”

Further evidence of the theatre department's success lines a hallway in the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center: more than 100 award certificates from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, through which Northwestern students and faculty have received regional and national recognition for the quality of their work.

Theatre Through the Years

1977 Northwestern wins its first Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) award, a Certificate of Merit for Excellence in Properties for *The Play of Christmas*.

1978 The Theatre Patrons are established by Earle and Alice Douglas of Orange City.

1980 Jeff Taylor is hired as the department's technical director. He teaches at NWC for 33 years.

1988 Jeff and Karen Barker are hired to fill one full-time faculty position in the theatre department. They eventually both become full-time theatre professors, retiring in 2020.



JOSH HARRELL

Throughout the theatre centennial celebration weekend, alumni were invited to visit The Passage, an upstairs hallway in the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center where posters are hung documenting 100 years of Northwestern theatre.

For many of Northwestern's theatre graduates, that work continues beyond their college years. During the theatre centennial weekend—in addition to Foss and Hyde—current NWC theatre students heard from Sheric Hull '14, the lighting designer and facilities manager for Ballet Memphis in Tennessee, and Lindsay Bauer '08, an actor and the executive director of the Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts in Fairfield, Iowa.

Those four also spoke at the Theatre Patrons banquet, where guests received a program with the stories of other alumni who are now teaching theatre themselves, designing sets for the Guthrie in Minneapolis, acting in Chicago, working for a children's theatre company in Kansas City, serving as a communications manager for a Seattle theatre company, and earning Master of Fine Arts degrees in theatre.

JM Christiansen '15 is in graduate school at the University of Montana, where he is studying directing. Reflecting on his years as a student at Northwestern, he has high praise for his alma mater.

"It's rare to find a place so committed to building each other up while also remaining committed to good art," he says. "That's a hard balance to achieve, and I have not found another place that does both so well." 🏠

An Evening of Entertainment and Clean Fun

The earliest documented theatrical production at Northwestern took place in the spring of 1923 when the senior class of Northwestern Classical Academy presented Walter Ben Hare's *Gold Bug*. Originally scheduled for late January, the performance was delayed nearly two months due to an outbreak of smallpox and flu that prevented several cast members from attending rehearsals.

In an article in the student newspaper, *The Monitor*, the senior class shared the efforts they had taken to put on a "first-rate production." They assured students that "expense has been utterly disregarded in the matter of stage furniture, equipment, and costumes."

The seniors announced they paid \$25 for rights to the play—the equivalent of \$400 in today's dollars—rather than deciding to "put on an inferior play to which no royalty attaches." They also promised "an evening of entertainment and clean fun."

On March 16, *Gold Bug* was performed before a large crowd in Orange City's Town Hall, with musical interludes between acts provided by the sophomore class. *The Monitor* reported the play was produced in a "superior fashion" and singled out members of the cast for their "natural stage presence," how they "captivated the audience," and for demonstrating that "it doesn't take a villain to play the part of a villain."



NORTHWESTERN ARCHIVES

The cast of *Four Daughters*, produced in the 1940s.

1996 Kris Kling wins the KCACTF's Irene Ryan Best Classical Acting Award.

2002 Dr. Robert Hubbard is hired to replace Dr. Keith Allen upon his retirement.

2004 The Multi-Purpose Auditorium is remodeled into the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center.

2006 Jeff Barker is named Iowa's Professor of the Year.

2023 Northwestern celebrates 100 years of theatre with a centennial celebration weekend coinciding with the spring Theatre Patrons banquet and concluding with the college's production of *Harvey*.

STORIES OF



Caylan DeLucia (center) enjoys coffee and conversation with Stegenga Hall residents Grace Radcliffe (left) and Mary Walnofer.

HOME

Finding community and belonging at NWC

BY EMELIE (SWONGER '19) LAACKMANN

Being “at home” can mean different things to different people, but for many Northwestern College students, alumni, faculty and staff, “home” is found among the people of Raider Nation. As our campus community grows to include students and faculty from all over the world, it is the strong relationships, intentional support, and shared commitment to Jesus Christ that unites us as members of the same family.

Here are the stories of four Raiders who discovered “home” at Northwestern—and how the relationships they’ve made here continue to impact their lives.

CAYLAN DELUCIA RESIDENT DIRECTOR OF STEGENGA HALL

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Caylan DeLucia never imagined calling Iowa home.

But God had other plans.

While completing her master’s degree in higher education and

student development at Taylor University, DeLucia met Jason Katsma ’14, who was enrolled in the same degree program. When DeLucia’s current position opened at Northwestern, Katsma encouraged her to apply.

“I wasn’t sure about moving to Iowa, so I applied to other places—but I couldn’t get NWC out of my head,” she says.

Soon after DeLucia applied, she received an email from Marlon Haverdink ’97, Northwestern’s dean of residence life, to say he would be praying for her throughout the interview process.

“I remember thinking, ‘This is probably who I want to work for.’”

The icing on the cake was when Katsma accepted an offer as resident director of North Suites, making Northwestern’s campus feel a little less foreign.

“It really was a prayer answered in that I knew I’d get to be close to people I already know and love,” she says. “The Lord, Jason and Marlon all nudged me toward NWC.”

It’s a juggling act to live in the same environment where she works, but DeLucia relishes cultivating a sense of home for the women of Stegenka Hall.

Students are encouraged to schedule “one-on-ones” with either

her or a resident assistant, giving them ample opportunities to share their personal stories with someone who is there to listen.

“Conversations about anything and everything can turn into big moments where students share struggles openly and honestly,” DeLucia says. “Students feel comfortable doing that because we’ve had fun and lived in community together.”

In addition to caring for “Steg” residents as individuals, DeLucia reminds students that the college experience is also about getting to know others.

“We’re built to do life in community because the Lord has wired us for connection. There’s probably no other time in your life when you’ll live this close to so many other people.”

While DeLucia’s job involves creating a safe, supportive space for students, she says Northwestern’s students and staff have done the same for her.

“I set the table for the girls to feel known and loved, and they do the same for me. There are lots of good people here who have pushed and encouraged me. I wouldn’t really call the student life staff my co-workers, because they’re my friends too.”

LUIS RIVERA-SANTIAGO '17
GRADUATE ASSISTANT
WRESTLING COACH

When Luis Rivera-Santiago started classes in the fall of 2013, it was the first time he had stepped foot on campus. The distance from his hometown of Lake Havasu City, Arizona, made a visit to Northwestern difficult, but Rivera-Santiago was confident in his decision after talking with his admissions counselor and head wrestling coach Rik Dahl '96.

“My conversations with Coach Dahl and my admissions counselor really sold me on Northwestern,” he says. “Ten years later, I wouldn’t call Northwestern a ‘home away from home’ because NWC *is* home.”

The son of a single mother, Rivera-Santiago quickly found family in the Dahl household, where he celebrated every Thanksgiving during college. A few of Dahl’s children were in elementary school when Rivera-Santiago moved to northwest Iowa, giving him the

opportunity to embrace the role of “big brother.”

“Coach Dahl does a great job of making it about more than just wrestling. He and [his wife] Amy have always opened their home to everyone on the team,” he says. “Really, the Dahl family as a whole had a hand in forming me into the man I am today.”

In addition to his coaches and teammates, Rivera-Santiago says the professors who made an effort to get to know him also helped Northwestern feel like home.

When he needed an extra elective during his senior year, he enrolled in an introductory social work class with Donna (Pennings '92) Van Peurse, associate professor of social work, who welcomed him with open arms.

“Donna was and still is my favorite professor. She knew I wasn’t a social work major, but she still took the time to get to know me better and extended me a lot of grace,” he reflects. “I still see her around campus every so often, and we’ll stop for a quick chat to catch up.”

PHILIPPE PATRI '21
INTERNATIONAL ALUM

During the four years he attended Northwestern, Philippe Patri '21, an international student from Santiago, Chile, did not return home once. While the trip from Iowa to Chile was expensive, Patri says his decision to remain on campus had more to do with his dad.

“When I was four years old, my dad traveled to the U.S. and lived there for four years. He would always send letters back to Chile with stories,” Patri recalls. “Growing up, I saw him as a hero, and I wanted to do the same thing—four years in the U.S. without going back home, trying to write my own stories.”

Fortunately for Patri, stepping outside of his comfort zone would be rewarded. In Orange City, he found both home and family with his host parents, Sarah and Jared Weber, and church friends Mark and Jenon Scallon.

“The Webers were always there for me if I needed to make a run to the supermarket or even to do laundry,” Patri says. “Mark and Jenon were huge supporters too. I had a tooth problem, and because Mark’s a dentist, he did it for free. One year I was struggling a lot



Luis Rivera-Santiago found home among his teammates and the family of head wrestling coach Rik Dahl '96.

DOUG BURG

financially and they—along with Trinity Reformed Church—helped me with funds to support me through that COVID year.”

“It was so gratifying to know I was surrounded by good people and they actually cared about me,” he adds.

Northwestern’s coaching staff also made a significant impact in Patri’s life, ultimately leading him to accept Christ. Before he came to Northwestern, Patri was not a practicing Christian.

“I was actually a little bit atheist. I didn’t believe in anything,” he says.

Under the mentorship of men’s soccer coach Dan Swier ’06 and several other Northwestern coaches, Patri began to grow in curiosity about the Christian faith and started attending Monday Mornings for Men, a half-hour discipleship time for students, faculty and staff.

“My coaches made me see there are teachings from the Bible that we as men have to get together to understand, preach and practice,” Patri says.

Today Patri works for Sports Academy in Chile, an organization that prepares kids from ages

4 to 18 to be college athletes in the U.S. He has nearly 500 kids under his coaching leadership, but Patri strives to get to know each student’s story.

“That’s something that Northwestern taught me ... I treat people as people and not as numbers, because they matter and there’s a story behind every person.”

DR. JULIE MERRIMAN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF COUNSELING

Although she lives on a ranch more than 850 miles from Northwestern’s campus, Dr. Julie Merriman has felt like part of the Raider family from the very beginning.

“I’ve fallen in love with NWC from Meridian, Texas,” she says.

Shortly after Merriman started work as a remote faculty member in 2022, her husband was diagnosed with melanoma and underwent surgery to remove a cancerous brain tumor. Then she was diagnosed with breast cancer. During this challenging season of life, she was touched by the outpouring of support she received from Northwestern, including a



Dr. Julie Merriman feels like a part of the Raider community even though she teaches remotely from her home office in Meridian, Texas.

handwritten note from President Greg Christy.

“Everything from sending me cards to offering to hop on Zoom—they’ve made me feel supported,” she says. “Dr. Nate Phinney, vice president for academic affairs, has been especially kind. His Christianity is apparent in his leadership. It really is a gift.”

Even from halfway across the country, Merriman strives to provide that same individualized support to her students, any day, any time. She invites students to call or text her whenever they have a need.


“I’m an encourager,” she says. “That’s just who I am. I was a single mother trying to get through grad school, so I get it. I try to remember my experience and share that with them.”

Online video conferencing tools like Zoom have allowed Merriman to foster camaraderie with her students and fellow faculty members, something she never would

have thought possible prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I used to think we couldn’t teach counseling online, but COVID-19 changed things. Now I realize we can,” she says. “We meet as faculty and staff over Zoom every other week, and the college offers online book studies as a way to get to know other faculty.”

A former dean at Tarleton State University—part of the Texas A&M system with more than 16,000 students—Merriman is grateful that Northwestern is a place where she can be intentional about supporting both colleagues and students.

“As Tarleton got bigger, it no longer went with my mores and values,” she says. “We had grown from a department where we could support each other and our students. At Northwestern, I can support students again, and we can be the hands and feet of Christ in our department.” 



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Philippe Patri was grateful for the support of his host family, Sarah and Jared Weber, throughout his time as a student at NWC.

A photograph of a middle-aged couple, Rick and Jean Faber, standing on a grassy lawn. Rick is on the right, wearing a blue patterned button-down shirt and blue trousers, with his arm around Jean's shoulder. Jean is on the left, wearing a bright green cardigan over a patterned top and black pants. They are both smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a bright sky.

Leave a Legacy

Rick and Jean Faber contribute regularly to the Northwestern Fund and building campaigns. When they wanted to take their giving to the next level, they talked to their financial adviser about adding a planned gift to NWC. The result? The Fabers purchased a life insurance policy in which Northwestern is named as the beneficiary.

Learn how you can do the same by contacting Corky Koerselman, director of gift planning.



giving@nwciowa.edu
give.nwciowa.edu
712-707-7105

Rick '82 and Jean (Balvance '82) Faber give to Northwestern because "it's one of the few distinctively Christian liberal arts educations available." Their daughter, Lauren (Faber '19) Myers, graduated from NWC, and Rick serves on the college's National Advisory Council.

class Notes

'68 **The Rev. Leon Draayer** recently retired after working in a funeral home for 14 years. Previously he served 36 years as a pastor in the Reformed Church in America.

Dr. Corwin Smidt was one of four recipients of the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award from the religion and politics section of the American Political Science Association in September. The award honors scholars who have contributed to the field in profound ways through their research, mentorship and service. The winners were described as "towering figures shaping how the study of American religion and politics has been conducted."

'70 **Ivan Wiersema** retired as senior vice president of Cherokee State Bank, Cherokee, Iowa, in 2016 after 46 years of service.

'72 **The Rev. Roger Punt** serves as a retiree chaplain with the Reformed Church in America Board of Benefits in central Iowa and northwest Minnesota. He and his wife, **Judy (Van Dyke '72)**, have 11 grandchildren.

'73 **The Rev. Dr. Perry DeGroot** serves as pastor emeritus of Hope Reformed Church in Spencer, Iowa.

'76 **Dennis Durband** is the author of *Pressing On by the Grace of God: A Writer's Journey to Faith and Overcoming Adversity*, available on Amazon and Smashwords. The e-book autobiography chronicles how he overcame childhood trauma to pursue a successful career as an editor and journalist.

Roger Schmid has been retired four years after 43 years in banking. For the last 17 years of his career, he was president of Kingsley (Iowa) State Bank.

'77 **Barbara Hubers-Drake** played tenor sax in a Seattle concert by Bamboo and Brass LTD in October. The event featured the music of Dutch composer Douwe Eisenga.

The Rev. Nolan Palsma retired from full-time ministry in May. He served three Reformed churches over the course of his ministry and supported Northwestern as a member of the college's Board of Trustees and National Alumni Board.

'81 **Kenneth Van Kekerix** retired in May after 36 years with United Bank of Iowa in Ida Grove. During his tenure, he served as chairman of the board, president and CEO of United Bank, as well as president and CEO of Ida Grove Bancshares Inc.

'83 **Julia (Burt) Taves** is a field supervisor for student teachers at Colorado Christian University. She is also the author of two children's books, *Never the Same* and *Hi, God. It's Me Again: A Devotional Written by Kids for Kids*.

The Rev. Paul Wissink is now serving as the pastor of Spring Valley Reformed Church in Fulton, Illinois. Previously, he and his wife, **Nancy (Froehle)**, served together in ministry at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

'85 **Randy Ehlers** has been named executive director of The Gospel Mission, a nonprofit ministry dedicated to serving the needs of the homeless in the Sioux City, Iowa, region.

'89 **Ronna (Plender) De Vos** and her husband, Lyle, reside near Hull, Iowa. Their oldest son was recently married, their middle son is working in a neighboring community, and their youngest son is now a college freshman.

Red Ties

ROSS FERNSTRUM '12

Director of the Northwestern Network

In July, I sat with Jim Plagge, president of Bank Iowa and former Northwestern trustee, in his office in West Des Moines. Lisa (Lubbers '00) Meekma, who also works at Bank Iowa, joined us. We discussed locations, menu and logistics for a pregame meal before September's NWC football game at Drake in Des Moines.

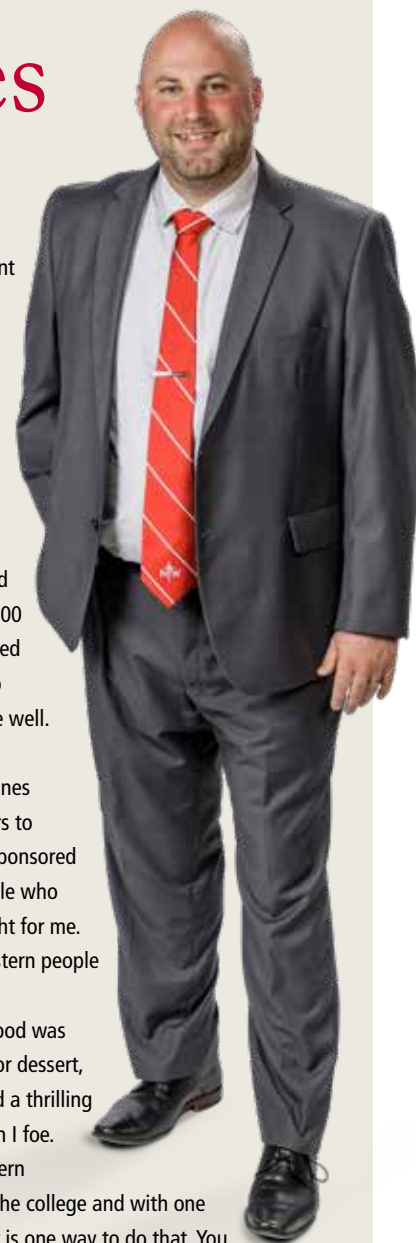
We thought 300 to 400 people would be an excellent turnout. Instead, nearly 700 alumni, friends, parents and fans registered for the event. We had to cap the event to ensure we could serve and host everyone well. What a response!

Many guests came from the Des Moines metro, while others traveled several hours to attend. They enjoyed a great BBQ meal sponsored by Bank Iowa. Seeing the variety of people who attended the tailgate meal was a highlight for me. Many guests reconnected with Northwestern people they had not seen in years.

The event was a great success. The food was delicious. The fellowship was fantastic. For dessert, the Northwestern football team delivered a thrilling overtime victory over their NCAA Division I foe.

My role as director of the Northwestern Network is to help connect people with the college and with one another. Attending a Northwestern event is one way to do that. You can also refer students, help with internships, share social media posts, speak to a class, and support the college financially. How would you like to be involved?

A specific invitation for you is to pray for Northwestern College. We have developed a prayer card with daily prompts that we'd love to send you. Please email alumni@nwciowa.edu to request your copy.



Leslie (Albers) Gustafson is the preschool director at Immanuel Lutheran Preschool in Schleswig, Iowa, and also serves as an early childhood special education teacher for the Schleswig Community School District. She recently published a devotional, *Kissed by the King*.

Anthony Huizinga works in quality control at K&K Fabrication in Austin, Minnesota. His wife, **Dawn (Knipple '90)**, is the office manager for Amy Swain Hearing Centers in nearby Hollandale, Minnesota.

'90 Cheri (Waggoner) Olerich and her husband, David, serve on the core team for Eden Church, a new church plant in Des Moines, Iowa, that is part of the Engage Network. Cheri has worked 11 years as a special education associate at Waukee Middle School, and David works as a truck driver with H&M Trucking out of Omaha.

'91 Kevin Alons began serving in the Iowa Senate in January 2023. He is joined by four other NWC alumni in the Statehouse: **Dr. Jeff Taylor '83** in the Senate and Reps. **John Wills '89**, **Zach Dieken '12** and **Skyler Wheeler '15**. Kevin, a colonel

in the Iowa Air National Guard, retired in December after 28 years of military service.

'93 Christopher Carlson is the corporate support representative for Nebraska Public Media in the Omaha area.

'95 Chad Noble is the chief financial officer and senior vice president for business intelligence at Central Payments in Sioux Falls.

Dawn (Van Den Berg) Van Den Bosch has joined Northwestern's advancement office as a gift officer.

'97 Ryoji Hata was the mastering sound engineer for the Grammy-winning album *Sakura*, by Masa Takumi, a multi-instrumental artist and composer.

'98 Stacey (Harman) Schmidt serves as the K-12 principal for Whiting (Iowa) Community School District. She is completing a superintendent endorsement through the University of Sioux Falls.

'99 Dan Nelson was recently named vice president of Salem

Events and Marketing, a department of the Salem Media Group in Irving, Texas.

'00 Serena Holthe is now the director of public policy for Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. She previously served as senior director of programs and strategy at the American Youth Policy Forum and as an attorney with the National Juvenile Defender Center.

'01 Stan De Zeeuw was promoted to superintendent of Sibley-Ocheyedan School District after serving five years as the district's grades 7-12 principal.

Dr. Kiley Fleming published a book, *Conflict Imagery: Developing a Reflective Framework*, in spring 2023. Available on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble, the book explores the use of metaphors, or imagery, to create compromise when navigating conflicts with others.

Ben Gerleman was named the 2022-23 *Northwest Iowa Review* Boys Basketball Coach of the Year after leading Central Lyon to a 24-1 record and the Class 2A state championship. He is now in his 14th year at Central Lyon after coaching at George-Little Rock for nine years. His

teams had compiled a 291-231 record prior to the start of this season.

Eric Vande Hoef was recently named president of American State Bank, which has branches in Sioux Falls and across northwest Iowa. He has worked with the bank for 15 years and previously served as vice president of retail and commercial lending.

'03 Brandon Woudstra was promoted from market president to CEO of American State Bank after eight years of service at the Orange City branch.






'05 Rachel Menke is the author of *Bigger and Better*, a book that reminds young children that Jesus is always "bigger and better" than any challenges they might face.

'06 Joshua Menning is assistant principal at Efterskolen Kildevæld in Kolding, Denmark. He regularly takes students on trips around the world. Past destinations have included Kenya, India and the Faroe Islands.

Kyle Osborne of Council Bluffs, Iowa, director of financial literacy at TS Institute,

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  Northwestern College, Iowa    @nwc Iowa



was included in the 2022 "40 under 40" list in *Midland's Business Journal*.

'07 **Zack Kruger** is principal of Lakeview Elementary School in Albert Lea, Minnesota. He previously taught third and fifth grades in Owatonna, Minnesota.

'08 **Nolan Hayes** is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Beatrice, Nebraska. His wife, **Amanda (Dengler '08)**, manages the Beatrice Foster Care Closet, one of four locations in Nebraska that provides foster youth with clothing and personal hygiene items.

Joe Heitritter is the CEO of Osceola Regional Health Center in Sibley, Iowa.

Terri Johnson was promoted to the role of individual placement and support employment specialist at Hope Haven in Rock Valley, Iowa. Hope Haven provides disability services and advocacy support to individuals with physical, mental and intellectual disabilities.

Nate Summers of West Des Moines, Iowa, is the senior vice president of UMB Bank.

Melissa (Hisel) Wallinga spent eight weeks last summer providing nutrition care for patients aboard the Global Mercy Ship in Senegal, Africa, as part of her studies for a doctorate in clinical nutrition at Rutgers University. She is the PICU and trauma dietician at St. Luke's Children's Hospital in Boise, Idaho.

'10 **Dr. Grant Landon** is a family practice physician at Jefferson County Health Center in Fairfield, Iowa.

Holly (Petersen) Schettler works as a research librarian at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa.

Jessica (Pomeranke) Volker received a doctorate in education from the University of South Dakota in May 2022.

Her journal, which studied mentoring experiences for new teachers and their willingness to remain in the profession, was published in the *Education Leadership Review of Doctoral Research*.

'11 **Alex Menning** completed residency as chief resident at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. He is now at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, finishing a one-year fellowship in colorectal surgery.

Lucas Peterson was selected as the 2022 recipient of the Burlington, Iowa, Police Department's Lt. Steve Casady Officer of the Year Award. The award is given to officers who demonstrate outstanding service to the Burlington police force.

Monica (Klarenbeek) Vink is a registered nurse at the Avera Women's Center in Sioux Falls, serving in the postpartum and gynecology department. She also works as a PRN nurse at Whispering Heights nursing facility in Rock Valley, Iowa.

Danielle (Arnone) Evjen is a special education teacher for the North Kansas City School District in Kansas City, Missouri.

'12 **Rebecca (Bagley) Mangold** is a licensed mental health counselor and registered play therapist at Creative Living Center in Orange City. She also provides counseling services on a part-time basis at MOC-Floyd Valley Elementary School.

'13 **Brett Leifson** serves as psychiatric clinical director for American Medical Associates in Chandler, Arizona. He is also a local and national speaker for various pharmaceutical companies.

Leslie Stover is the director of academic operations at Dakota State University in Madison, South Dakota. She previously served as associate director of marketing



RICK ARMSTRONG

A business education major at Northwestern, Kevin Fischer followed God's leading into the pastorate at Miami Vineyard Community Church, where he has served for 30 years.

Miami Voice

When Kevin Fischer graduated from Northwestern College in 1985, the Wisconsin native wanted two things: to make a positive difference and to live in a warmer climate.

He seemed to check both boxes when he got a job as a computer teacher at an urban Miami junior high school.

God, though, had bigger plans. Fischer and his wife, Debbie (Church '86), had been one of the first families to join the Miami Vineyard Community Church. When their pastor announced he was leaving, he asked Fischer to be his replacement. Fischer's instinct was clear.

"I didn't want to do it," he says. "But then I prayed, and God spoke in powerful, supernatural ways."

Fischer is now celebrating 30 years as lead pastor of the church, where Debbie serves as production pastor. Since then, the church has grown from 200 members to 5,000.

Fischer is especially pleased that the church is multicultural, just like Miami. He said that's the result of intentional steps, like integrating gospel music and offering Spanish translation at services. But those steps only work, he says, because they are motivated by a desire to help people see God's plan for them.

"He loves you," Fischer says. "He cares about you. He wants to know you."

BY JARED KALTWASSER



MEGAN WANSCHURA

Megan Coe has been raising funds for an Ecuadorian orphanage, For His Children, for seven years.

A Dream Fulfilled

For the first 10 years after graduation, Megan Coe '05 had a growing business career in the Twin Cities. She enjoyed it but didn't feel like she was making much of a difference.

Through the influence of several roommates and a coworker who had spent time in Ecuador, Coe fell in love with Latin American culture. God reminded her of a dream she had in junior high about moving to South America and working in an orphanage.

After a Google search for orphanages in Ecuador, Coe and two friends traveled there on vacation in 2015. Visiting a ministry called For His Children, she sensed the Holy Spirit's working.

When a staff member said they could use help with communications, Coe felt like her mind had been read. Through prayer and Scripture, Coe made the decision to sell most of her possessions and volunteer in Ecuador for three months. A position opened up. Coe stayed, met her husband and now works as the ministry's development director.

For His Children operates two locations and serves about 60 children annually—many of whom have special needs.

"They've come from traumatic situations, but this is a place of hope," she says. "We want to see transformation in their lives and share Christ with them.

"I fell in love with the children. It's a privilege to be a voice for them."

BY DUANE BEESON

and communications for Northwestern's Graduate & Professional Studies division.

The Rev. Tara Woodward serves as a missional networker in South Africa, where she facilitates and strengthens partnerships and theological networks in the Gauteng province. She also is developing diverse diaspora networks that seek to reach South African young adults through mentorship and teaching job skills.

'14 **Valerie (Luppen) Van Zandbergen** is a nurse practitioner at Sioux Center Health in Sioux Center, Iowa.

'15 **Tom Clarey** is the head football coach at Forest City (Iowa) High School. He previously served as the team's assistant coach for seven years.

'16 **Lawton De Jong** graduated as a doctor of veterinary medicine from Iowa State University in 2022. He now practices at Central Vet Clinic in Sioux Center.

Erin (Van Horn) Stahla and her husband, Grant, own a nationwide restroom and shower trailer business.

'17 **Ryan Christy** was one of six staff members at South Dakota State University to receive a 2023 Presidential Award of Excellence. He serves as the assistant athletic director for development for the Jackrabbits' athletic department.

Levi Letsche started a new position as an instructional coach at Sheldon High School, where he focuses on leadership development, math and career readiness. He is also the head football coach, an assistant track and field coach, and a co-leader of Fellowship for Christian Athletes. He was among five finalists for Iowa's 2023 Teacher of the Year.

Amie (Adams) Mortenson published an edited collection of essays by an Estherville, Iowa, natural historian, *The Observer: The Life and Writings of Bernt Olaf Wolden*. The book features many of Wolden's columns that appeared in *The Estherville Daily News* from 1930 to 1968.

Sakisha Smith is a case manager and pre-op/post-anesthesia nurse at the Children's Hospital of Colorado in Aurora.

'18 **Lucas Heiberger** assumed the role of community development director for the city of Sioux Center in January. Previously he served as director of student programs and first-year experience and as an admissions counselor at Northwestern.

Ginny Kjer is the southeast region program assistant at the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-4-H Youth Office in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Justin Kraft accepted a new position as the director of instruction at Spring Hill Golf Club in Wayzata, Minnesota. He received the 2022 Youth Player Development Award from the Minnesota section of the PGA while in his previous position at Medina Country Club. His wife, **Katie (Elliott '18)**, is a nurse in the pediatric intensive care unit at M Health Fairview Masonic Children's Hospital. She also serves as a development nurse, helping new nurses transition smoothly to their roles after orientation, as well as teaching staff to care for the hospital's most critical patients.

Robby Laughlin became an assistant baseball coach at Central College in Pella, Iowa, after two seasons as the head assistant coach at Bryant and Stratton College in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

'19 **Andrew Graber** was promoted to serve as the head strength and conditioning coach

for the University of North Carolina's women's basketball team after two years of experience in the Tar Heels' athletic department.

Blake Miller and his wife, **Melanie (Enkhorn '19)**, are registered nurses at the University of California Irvine Medical Center in Orange, California.

Graham Zomermaand took over ownership of the Subway franchises in Sioux Center, Orange City, Rock Valley and Hull, Iowa.

'20 **Josh Dahl** and his wife, **Lauren (Weber '18)**, opened Nova Patisserie, a food truck selling gourmet crepes. Josh is also the bakery manager at Brad's Bakery Bistro in Orange City, and Lauren is a freelance graphic designer and artist.

Aaron John Kaucher graduated from the U.S. Army Officer's Candidate School as a second lieutenant in May.

Megan Kingsriter of Cabot, Arkansas, is a therapist at Capstone Treatment Center, a Christ-centered residential treatment center for young men struggling with mental health disorders and addiction.

Megan Maass earned a doctorate in physical therapy from Creighton University. She now works as a physical therapist for Floyd Valley Healthcare in Le Mars, Iowa.

Mariah (Diekevers) Penny, Wayland, Michigan, completed a master's degree in nursing as a family nurse practitioner. She hopes to practice in women's health.

'21 **Kailee Jenness**, a licensed social worker at Promise Community Health Center in Sioux Center, is the recipient of the 2023 Unsung Hero Award from the Iowa Primary Care Association. The award is given to an individual who often works behind

the scenes but still shows steadfast commitment to providing exceptional service to patients.

Noah Minnick was promoted to parks and recreation director of Orange City, having previously served as the assistant director.

Jay Small is playing professional basketball in Albania. He is a member of KB Teuta Durrës of the Albania Basketball Federation Superliga.

'22 **Lydia (Bader) Andres** has begun pursuit of a Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey.

'23 **Lindsey Craig** is the naturalist for O'Brien (Iowa) County Conservation. She previously served as the interim naturalist for Sioux County.

Evan Olesen is the recreation coordinator for the city of Sheldon, Iowa. A former starting pitcher and infielder for the Raiders, he also plays third base and pitches for the Jackson Bulls, an amateur team in Jackson, Minnesota.

Jadeyn (Veltkamp) Sjaarda is the marketing and communications coordinator for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sioux Falls. Her husband, **Ryan '22**, is an actuarial associate for Sammons Financial Group.

New Arrivals

Leah McCormack and **Dietrik Vanderhill '03**, daughter, Ziahva Thorn, joins Djuna (4)

Kari (Tjeerdsma '04) and **Blake Wiekling '04**, daughter, Ayda Lynn, joins Owen (9), Liam (7) and Miles (5)
Caleb and **Leah (Seehusen '05) Stam**, daughter, Lacey Jo, joins Collin (11), Maria (8) and Ryan (4)



Anne and **Joshua Menning '06**, son, Zane Thorbjorn, joins Zoe (5) and Ezra (2)

Ben and **Jill (Dykstra '07) Bavier**, son, Calvin James, joins Eli (5) and Lucy (3)
Amber and **Josh Earleywine '08**, daughter, Alyssa Joy, joins twin sisters Emery and Londyn (4)

Amanda (Dengler '08) and **Nolan Hayes '08**, son, Levi Jeremiah, joins Asher (10), Lydia (8), Ezra (5) and Josiah (3)

Jeff and **Amanda (Wright '09) DeWit**, son, Jamus Jeffrey, joins Arley (4) and June (2)

Grant and **Kara (Johnson '09) Fifield**, son, Emmett Loch, joins Adelyn (10), Scarlett (9) and Connor (7)

Brent and **Robyn (Postma '09) McDowell**, daughter, Sophie Gladys, joins Evan (6) and Braden (3)

Greg and **Jaime (Haverly '09) Weeks**, son, Noah Gregory, joins Madison (7) and Owen (5)

Brent and **Teryn (De Haan '09) Woolf**, daughter, Frances May, joins William (7), Hazel (6), Calvin (4) and Silas (2)

Shaunna (Ell '10) and **Justin Derry**

'05, son, Thomas Mark, joins Martin (12), Samuel (10), Michael (8), Joseph (6), Mary (4) and Peter (2)

Neil and **Holly (Petersen '10) Schettler**, adopted daughter, Alexis Jenna, joins Jonas (2)

Lisa (Olivier '11) and **Ross Fernstrum '12**, son, Thomas Michael, joins David (5) and Johanna (3)

Jessica (Vander Velde '11) and **Tyler Glanzer '10**, daughter, Ivy Christine, joins Savannah (10), Owen (8), Emmitt (6) and Amaya (4)

Brian and **Rachel (Rager '11) Klett**, daughter, Lily Ann, joins Zane (5)

Taryn and **Alex Menning '11**, daughter, Harper Rae

Hannah (Haverhals '12) and **Ben Aguilera '12**, Marigold Hazel, joins Benito (5) and Michael (3)

Juliana (Pennings '12) and **Andrew Bloemendaal '09**, daughter, Kaatje Joy

Gerrit and **Kim (Reisma '12) Hansen**, son, Malachi David, joins William (6)

Cassandra (De Bruin '12) and **Garrett Sterk '13**, daughter, Corynn Renae

Timothy and **Alyson (Wesselink '13) Bents**, daughter, Johanna Marie, joins Isaiah (5) and Lauren (2)

Derek and **Jessica (Kleveland '13) Brown**, daughter, Kelsey Mae, joins Nora (6), Carter (4) and Devon (2)

Carly and **Jeffrey Hubers '13**, son, Rhys Gordon

Holly (Stewart '13) and Eduardo Sanchez-Perry '14, daughter, Penelope Rei

Kolbie and **Tony Vande Brake '13**, son, Lucas Mark, joins Madelyn (4) and Elsie (2)

Mitchell and **Megan (Rustad '14) Erickson**, son, Amos Mitchell

Rachel (Muilenburg '14) and Graham Kinsinger '13, daughter, Zoe Ann, joins Maisie (2)

Keith and **Valerie (Luppen '14) Van Zandbergen**, daughter, Blair Willa, joins Sawyer (3)

Alex and **Jessica (Locker '15) Herold**, daughter, Everly Rose

Caleb and **Haley (Ginger '15) Malenke**, son, Jaxson Neil

Emily (Horstman '15) and Tanner Nissen '16, son, Kooper Lee, joins Judah (3)

Ramiro and **Heather (Heilman '15) Uribe**, daughter, Margaret Jean, joins Lorraine (2)

Cory and **Renee (Hurley '16) Aamodt**, son, Elroi Robert

Caitlyn (Van Es '16) and Ryan Christy '17, son, Layne Earl

Michael and **Megan (Cole '17) Bylund**, daughter, Briar Lila

Brandon and **Joslynn (Roth '17) Clark**, son, Cayden Ray, joins Harley (3)

Heather (Busch '17) and Lawton De Jong '16, son, Bennett Wells, joins Case (3)

Naomi (Sandquist '17) and James Teutschmann '17, daughter, Charlotte Zion, joins Eleanor (2)

Bekah and **Joe Vander Stelt '17**, daughter, Madden Noel, joins Brynlee (1)

Marissa (Wiese '17) and Lee Wynja '18, daughter, Taya Kay

Aubree (Douma '18) and Jordan Axelson '18, son, Joah Richard, joins Jessa (4) and Jay (3)

Naomi (Schimmel '18) and Raphael De Hoyos '18, son, Pompey Lytton, joins Pryor (3)

Jen (Te Grotenhuis '18) and Ben Grev '19, daughter, Junia Fern

Nicole and **Josh Hornstra '18**, daughter, Holland Ann

Chandler and **Morgan (Boroviak '18) Kramer**, daughter, Emmie Marie, joins Lainey (2)

Jamie (Jongerius '18) and Cole Prescott '19, daughter, Haven Dey, joins Judah (2)

David and **Michelle (Palafox '18) van Beek**, daughter, Eliana Luisa

Carter and **Betsy (Huyser '19) Foughty**, daughter, Maple Joyce

Jerod and **Katie (Te Grotenhuis '19) Hansen**, son, Benson Lee

Kelsey and **Jacob Johnson '19**, daughter, Mya Ruth

Jessi (Carver '19) and Joseph Kelly '19, son, Ezra Ellis, joins Elle (2)

Andrew and **Amanda (Klyn '19) Reps**, son, Aiden Thomas

Mariah and **Graham Zomermaand '19**, son, Metler Jack, joins Leni (4)

Hannah (Wamhoff '20) and Ian Hofer '20, son, Micah Alan, joins James (2)

Mariah (Davis '20) and Robby Laughlin '18, twin daughters, Kamryn Marie and Kennedy Mae

Maria and **Trevor Rozeboom '20**, daughter, Ruby Ann

Ryan and **Heather (Van Itallie '20) Ver Meer**, daughter, Elizabeth Rose

Abigail (Moody '21) and Aaron John Kaucher '20, son, Elijah James

Jada (Carlson '21) and Carson Marco '20, daughter, Leighton Marynn

Tess (Erickson '21) and Craig Sterk '21, son, Theodore James

Marriages

Mary Eason '71 and Harlan Lammers '71, Orange City

Keisha Diephuis '10 and Marty Van-Westen, Rochester, Minnesota

Jessica Pomeranke '10 and Michael Volker, Albion, Nebraska

Melinda Fjeld '14 and Joshua Dykstra '15, Sioux Falls

Dani Maurer '14 and Kevin Collette, Denver, Colorado

Leah Wielenga '15 and Charlie Mos-terd, Holland, Michigan

Amanda Kearney and **Conner Ubben '18**, Bondurant, Iowa

Rose Abdo and **Noah Haverdink '19**, St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Shelbie Dobmeier and **Christian Korver '20**, Bellflower, California

Go All In!

Join others in giving to Northwestern during the college's annual day of giving.



Thursday, Feb. 8

Follow us on social media for the latest updates.
#RaidersAllIn allnday.nwciowa.edu



Schuyler Sterk '21 and **Kitrick Fynaardt '21**, Iowa City, Iowa
Samantha Ubben '21 and **Colton Harold '21**, Vancouver, British Columbia
Lydia Bader '22 and **Luke Andres '23**, Princeton, New Jersey
Alaena Trevino '23 and Denny Pederson, Omaha, Nebraska

The couples reside in the city listed.

In Memoriam

Maxine (Roos '47) Heemstra of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, died Oct. 16 at age 95. She taught in Orange City and Rock Rapids, Iowa, before becoming a wife and mother to two children.

Newman De Haas '48, Silver Spring, Maryland, died Feb. 24 at age 95. He worked as a physicist at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab in Laurel, Maryland, where he co-invented a patented cryogenic tank support system.

Harold Vander Laan '49 of Orange City died Feb. 27 at age 95. From 1961 to 1989, he served as Northwestern's registrar—in addition to a brief stint as the college's director of admissions. His replica of Zwemer Hall has been used as Northwestern's Tulip Festival float for 25 years.

James "Jimmy" Kui Bong Fong '50 died Feb. 23 in Honolulu, Hawaii, at age 94. An Army veteran, he founded Sealy Mattress of Hawaii with his siblings.

Stanley Sprik '50, age 92, died Jan. 20, 2023, in Edgerton, Minnesota. He devoted his life to Christian education, working as a teacher and administrator at schools in northwest Iowa and Worthington, Minnesota.

Willis Vander Maten '50 of Orange City died Sept. 27 at age 93. He served four years with the Air Force before work-

ing as a delivery truck driver for Wonder Bread and as a salesman for Stark Stormor Sales and Wick Buildings in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Lois (Harmelink '52) Behr, 93, of Stromsburg, Nebraska, died March 25. A graduate of Northwestern Junior College, she earned her elementary teaching certificate from Westmar College. She taught country school, worked as a teacher's aide, and completed her career as a secretary in an insurance office.

Viola (Meyer '52) Eden, Moses Lake, Washington, died May 29 at age 91. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Seattle Pacific University and spent much of her career teaching in the Pacific Northwest. In retirement, she worked as a church librarian at Valley Fourth Memorial Church and helped start a ministry for widows that still operates today.

Gerald Horstman '52 died Jan. 16, 2023, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at age 92. He taught science classes at the junior high and high school levels before beginning a 24-year career as a microbiology instructor at Grand Rapids Junior College.

Charlene (De Boer '52) Kloster of Longmont, Colorado, died April 2 at age 90. She was born in Le Mars, Iowa, and raised in the Orange City area before moving to Longmont in 1969. She worked with the University of Colorado food services for more than 20 years.

Gladys (Oldenkamp '52) Korver, age 91, of Orange City died July 4. She taught second and third grade at Newkirk (Iowa) Public School and later taught elementary math in Pipestone, Minnesota.

Esther Rozendaal '52 of Grand Rapids, Michigan, died March 7 at age 91. She taught in rural schools for two years before beginning a nursing career that included work at a hospital and in nursing homes.



GEORGE JOHNSON

Megan Leinart was recognized as Emerging Leader of the Year by the International Parking & Mobility Institute in 2020.

Long-Term Parking

Most drivers inching toward the top of a parking garage and spiraling back down focus on finding a space—and putting the brakes on their frustration.

Megan Leinart '06 thinks about carbon emissions, fuel costs and the time spent near but not at the intended destination.

A marketing and parking sustainability expert based in Lincoln, Nebraska, Leinart advises parking technology providers as they develop tools such as mobile apps, automated parking and curb management solutions, and digital cameras. The president of Leinart Consulting also walks clients through parking sustainability certification requirements and design strategies to make parking structures more efficient.

While at Northwestern, the business major participated in Chicago Semester. There, an adviser encouraged Leinart to find her dream job by pairing her interests in marketing and architecture. She spent nine years at a parking architecture and engineering firm post-graduation.

Parking sounded "boring" at first; now, she says, "it's 17 years later, and I'm never leaving."

"I love my job because it gives me the opportunity to learn about every aspect of the industry," Leinart says. "My clients are developing the innovative solutions that are transforming the future of parking and curb management."

With articles in numerous industry publications, Leinart also co-authored a report for the United Nations on sustainable urban planning and design.

BY AMY PHILLIPS

Forrest Hubers '53, age 88, died Dec. 23, 2022, in Sioux Falls. In addition to his career in sales, he worked with Prison Fellowship in Illinois and Colorado, a prison ministry that advocates for criminal justice reform and shares the gospel with prisoners and their families.

Leona (Stander '54) Eggink of Allendorf, Iowa, died Sept. 13 at age 89. After earning a teaching degree, she taught first grade in Melvin, Iowa, and later worked as an aide at the local middle school.

Betty (Kraai '54) Korver, age 89, died Oct. 5 in Orange City. She worked as a teacher's aide at Maurice-Orange City Elementary School for 32 years. The wife of longtime Northwestern football coach **Larry Korver '54**, Betty was a loyal supporter of the Red Raider football team.

Marlene (Oordt '55) Rons, age 87, died Aug. 30 in Orange City. She taught in Sioux Center and Phoenix and Tempe, Arizona. After returning to northwest Iowa, she and her husband established Rons Motor Sales, a car dealership in Orange City.

Betty (Aalberts '56) Vander Zwaag of Orange City died Nov. 8 at age 87. She spent much of her career teaching or substiting in the Boyden-Hull School District, working well into her 70s.

LaVonne (Sterler '57) Blankers, 84, died May 24 in Archer, Iowa. After earning a teaching certificate from Northwestern, she taught elementary school in Orange City and Archer. She later worked as a substitute teacher in the Sheldon Community School District.

Ernest Fedders '57 of Orange City died Sept. 29 at age 84. He was a crop farmer and raised livestock on a farm south of Orange City.

Audrey (Vander Schaaf '58) Van

Grouw of Le Mars, Iowa, died Nov. 30, 2022, at age 84. She worked at Hope Haven and Village Northwest as she enjoyed building relationships with people who have intellectual disabilities.

Roger Van Ommeren '61 died Feb. 9 in Thousand Oaks, California, at age 83. He started his career as a copy editor for the *Minneapolis Star* and later became a professor of journalism at the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University and Mississippi University for Women.

Larry Huygens '62 of Sioux Center, Iowa, died Jan. 29, 2023, at age 82. He helped his father run Doc's Café in Sioux Center, becoming co-owner of the restaurant in 1976.

Roger De Haan '63, age 85, died Oct. 15 in Orange City. He farmed and raised his family northwest of Orange City before moving to town in the late 1980s. He was an active member of his church, where he served on consistory, sang in the choir and taught Sunday school.

Joan (Kuyper '66) Rietkerk died Nov. 16, 2022, in La Palma, California, at age 78. She taught elementary school for 35 years.

Allen Kusters '67 died Jan. 19, 2023, in Sioux Falls at age 77. He started his career as a social studies teacher, eventually becoming the coordinator of social studies curriculum for the Sioux Falls School District. He also served as a district director overseeing federal grants and programs and worked for the South Dakota Department of Education.

Nolan Bogaard '68 died Dec. 9, 2022, at age 76. He and his wife, **Mary Lynn (Sikkema '71)**, had been living in Coralville, Iowa, for 37 years, where he worked as a building inspector.

Mary (Wissink '68) Stegemann, 76,

died May 24 in Lakefield, Minnesota. For 35 years, she taught junior high science and was a school librarian.

Charlene (Oolman '69) Brower of Gilbert, Arizona, died Jan. 15, 2023, at age 95. She taught nine years in schools across Iowa before moving to Arizona, where she taught 20 years.

Earl Bomgaars '71, age 74, died Nov. 16 in Orange City. A Raider football player, much of his career was spent working as a diesel mechanic and heavy-duty wrecker operator for De Jong Oil in Orange City. He also held roles with Russell's Ready Mix, Diamond Vogel Paint and EZ Liner.

Marcene (Boertje '72) Cox, Boyden, Iowa, died Nov. 5, 2022, at age 72. A Raider basketball player, she taught at Boyden Elementary School for 26 years and subbed at area schools in retirement.

John Hughes III '72, age 82, died Oct. 13 in Storm Lake, Iowa. He worked as a teacher until 1978 when he became a social worker at Cherokee (Iowa) Mental Health Institute.

Tom Estes '73, age 72, died in Sioux Center on June 2. A basketball and baseball player for the Raiders, he taught and coached at schools in Montezuma, Little Rock and Sioux Center.

Mary (Arentsen '74) Neeb died Dec. 17, 2022, at age 71 in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. She taught preschool, kindergarten and fourth grade in the Sheboygan Area School District and later worked as a secretary at the Early Learning Center.

Belva (Vander Ploeg '75) Van Gorp, 70, of Sheldon, Iowa, died Dec. 29, 2022. She and her husband, **Elwin '75**, lived and worked on the farm until Elwin's death in 1994. She then began a career with Village Northwest Unlimited, managing its Fantasia gift shop for 26 years.

Doris De Hoogh '78 of Orange City, 89, died April 15. She worked as a librarian and media specialist at Freeman (South Dakota) Junior College and Academy and at Hesston (Kansas) High School.

Marlene (Van Aalsburg '78) Pannkuk of Manchester, Missouri, died Sept. 6, 2022, at age 67. She worked at Kirk of the Hills, a church in St. Louis, for several years before leaving to support her husband, Leon, in full-time evangelism.

Tobin Wrice '81, age 64, of Riverside, New Jersey, died Feb. 27. Passionate about coaching and sharing his love of sports with others, he coached boys basketball teams in Iowa and New Jersey and established an instructional recreational league. He also coached his daughter's AAU soccer team and went on to coach other teams in the AAU program.

Larry Blake '83 of Manning, Iowa, died Oct. 24 at age 64. A member of the 1983 NAIA national championship football team, he taught history and social studies at schools in Sioux City, Atlantic, Saydel and Manning. He also coached basketball, football, baseball, and track and field.

Mark Moss '85 of Orange City died Feb. 13 at age 61. He enjoyed a diverse career in locations around the country, including work at YMCA of the Rockies in Colorado; a manufacturing job in Tulsa, Oklahoma; service as a park ranger in South Carolina; and most recently, work at Woudstra's Meat Market in Orange City.

Gary Steffen '85, age 60, died Oct. 7 in Lakeville, Minnesota. He played football for the Raiders for three years and was part of the 1983 NAIA national championship team. He spent much of his career working for Toro, but also had his own information technology consulting business and most recently worked for US Bank.

Claudia (Ellwein '86) Anderson, 70, died Jan. 21 in Paullina, Iowa. She taught elementary school in the Sioux Falls School District, Paullina Community School and South O'Brien Schools from 1986 to 2015.

Jorja (Heitland '89) Timm of Sheffield, Iowa, died Aug. 22 at age 58. She taught physical education for several years in Titonka, Iowa, before becoming a stay-at-home mom, coach and grandma.

Lyncon Olson '96 died May 10 in Janesville, Minnesota, at age 49. A football player for the Raiders, he worked a variety of jobs, including as an insurance salesman and at LJP Waste Solutions in North Mankato, Minnesota.

Ryan Wrather '96 of Orange City died Dec. 19, 2022, at age 48 after a 28-year battle with cancer. He worked as a sales manager at Kraai Furniture in Orange City.

Doug Ebel '01 died Aug. 30 in Paullina, Iowa, at age 65. While farming, he furthered his education at Northwest Iowa Community College and Northwestern. He later worked at Iowa State Bank as a loan officer.

Brandon Jacobson '02, age 43, of Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, died May 1. He was a member of the Raiders men's basketball team and helped lead them to the NAIA championship in 2001. After graduation, he worked as a loan officer and underwriter.

Raymond Frye '17 of Orange City died April 13 at age 37 as the result of a car accident. He served in the 185th Iowa Air National Guard, the 177th New Jersey Air National Guard, and in the Army, where he completed a tour in Iraq.

Ardell Hegstad of Orange City died Dec. 7, 2022, at age 92. She was on staff at Northwestern's Ramaker Library from 1973 to 1992.

Herbert Bruxvoort, Orange City, died Nov. 3 at age 87. He drove trucks for Pals Transfer in Orange City and for American Freight. He later served 20 years on Northwestern's grounds maintenance crew.

Dr. Don Lindskoog died Aug. 14 in East Windsor, New Jersey, at age 85. He taught psychology at Northwestern from 1967 to 2002. While a professor at NWC, he met his wife, **Verna (De Jong '62)**, who taught English at the college from 1971 to 1999.

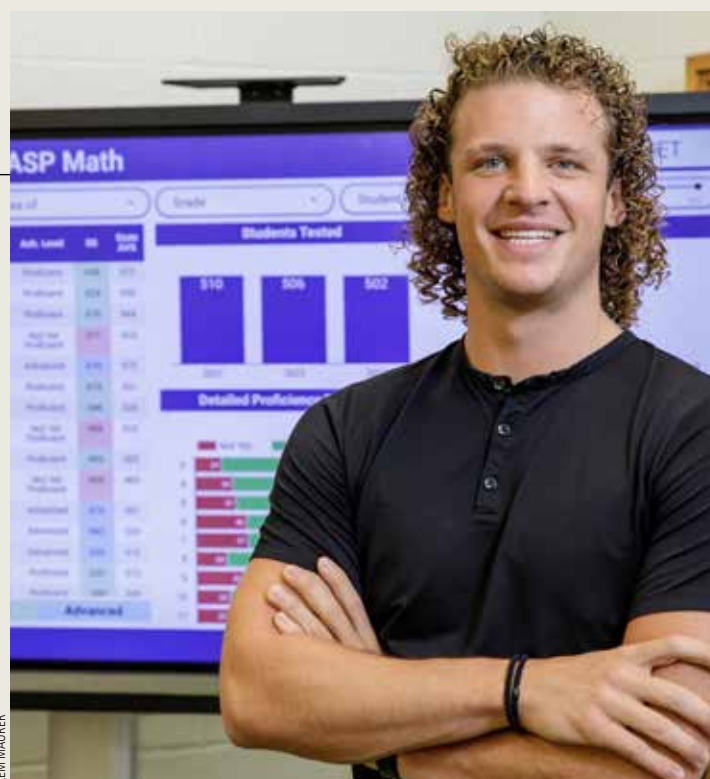
Helen (Van Es) Huisman, 84, died Dec. 15, 2022, in Orange City. From 1956 to 1960, she served as secretary to Northwestern College President Preston Stegenga.

Dr. Jay Van Hook of Oviedo, Florida, died Aug. 20 at age 84. In addition to his 25-year tenure as a philosophy professor at Northwestern, he also taught at the University of Central Florida.

Marcia Olson of Orange City died Dec. 5 at age 73. She worked at Northwestern in the 1980s and early 1990s, teaching, working in learning assistance, and serving as retention/orientation director for a time. She later served as director of the Northwest Iowa Alcohol & Drug Treatment Center.

Barry Lawrensen, age 64, died Oct. 8 in Orange City as the result of a heart attack. He served 20 years at Northwestern as an audiovisual technician and later was a missionary in Asia and a teacher at Sioux Falls Christian.

LET US KNOW: Email your news for the next *Classic* by Sept. 15 to classic@nwciowa.edu.



LEM MAURER

When the speaker for a session on data visualization at an international education conference failed to show, Sam Callahan volunteered to fill in with material he had been preparing for a future presentation.

Impromptu Presenter

Sam Callahan '19 can toggle between listener and lecturer in the time it takes to say "The Power of Visualization."

That's the name of the impromptu presentation Callahan gave at the International Society for Technology in Education conference, held in Philadelphia this past June, when the speaker for a session on data visualization failed to show. Callahan's talk on the same topic was "90% ready" for another event when he offered himself as a last-minute sub, engaging the dozens of educators in attendance and inspiring one school principal to stay an hour after to chat.

A third-grade teacher at Sioux Center's Kinsey Elementary since 2019, Callahan recently added the role of district data specialist to continue the work he started his very first year: making school data accessible. He's found that interactive charts and graphs are key to efficient communication in the linguistically diverse district—and easier to navigate than complex spreadsheets.

"For five minutes at the start of a meeting, we can look at data and learn from it right away," Callahan says. "Then we spend the rest of our meeting designing action plans and figuring out how to actually help kids."

Callahan recently tracked 12 years of testing trends for the district. His data visualization included 90,000 scores.

BY AMY PHILLIPS

Classic Thoughts

The Jersey

BY ROBERT HUBBARD

The mood is frantic this August morning as we struggle to make ready our Iowa home to move in three college women. The plan is to sublease it for four months while I spend my academic sabbatical healing from the October suicide of our youngest son, Auggie, and trying to make art in the Bahamas. April will once again run the theatre program at a college in North Dakota.

April bravely throws herself into the task of making our three sons' rooms habitable for young women. After five days of work, two of the rooms are ready. Auggie's room remains untouched.

It is common, I understand, to leave a room like this alone. April did make a small and courageous foray into the room to clean and organize it a bit two months after Auggie's death. But most of his beloved possessions remain in

this lonely, longing and holy space. We usually keep the door closed. But a few times a week, we separately find our way in to grieve. I've taken to sitting on his bed, nostalgically readorned by April with Auggie's boyhood Scooby-Doo sheets and comforter, even though the room was last occupied by a 19-year-old Northwestern sophomore.

I usually weep while sitting on the bed, surrounded by artifacts of Auggie's obsessions: classic and battered video-game consoles; a long-untouched binder of NFL trading cards; collections of dystopian sci-fi book series; and volumes of impenetrable philosophy, from Plato to Marx to Kant to Kierkegaard. Worn-out folders of tuba sheet music, two bass guitars, their cases, their amps, their tangled cords, and a full-size electric keyboard further clutter the room with remnants of our talented boy's bottomless and desperate passion for music.

By now, days have passed since our two older boys' rooms were cleared; Auggie's room remains frozen, a time capsule of precious artifacts. Afraid to ask, I try to soften my delivery: "What do you think we should do about Auggie's room?"

"I'll take care of it," she says, averting her eyes to the floor.

"I can try to help."

"No. I'm doing it," she resolves. Although relieved,

I am a little hurt to be left out of this terrible duty. But I can read my wife well enough to know to shut up.

Nine months out from that dreadful day when our boy left us, unexpected moments of grief may occur less frequently, but they still happen. When they do, they snatch from us the deception of complacency, rip us from the belief that our lives will ever be the same.

From our living-room sofa, I realize that April has been in Auggie's room for some hours now, and I don't hear her moving around up there. Concerned, I quietly climb the stairs to the second floor and peek to the left, through the threshold, to our youngest son's room. April sits with her back to me at the foot of Auggie's bed facing the open walk-in closet. A neatly ordered pile of clothing rests on the floor in front of her. She's going through his garments one by one.

April's arms stretch forward at eye level, suspending a child-sized Denver Broncos jersey in front of her, her fingers gently pinching the blue mesh fabric of its tiny shoulders. The jersey dangles in front of her, lifelike, almost as if someone is in it. From the upstairs hallway, I witness a mother holding this empty vessel, this proxy for her son, our son, as if in the moment before a loving embrace. An 8-year-old boy's jersey, loved by him and proudly worn by him longer than it reasonably fit. It covered and conformed to his torso, his beautiful little body. Within this tattered nylon shell, the remembered shape of Auggie's boyhood essence levitates between his mother's outstretched arms. How cruel to share his shape, how pitiless that this hollow shroud impersonates our fidgety, giggling boy, a joyful child once accurately described by an observant uncle as "criminally cute."

An instant from now, when my brave and mourning wife inevitably lowers the jersey, our beautiful boy's silhouette will be vanquished from the room. I can't witness this. I jerk back from the doorway and gently, silently crumble to a crouch on the stairs.

This is a lightly edited excerpt from *Scenes With My Son: Love and Grief in the Wake of Suicide*, a memoir written by Dr. Robert Hubbard, NWC professor of theatre, and published in October by Eerdmans. His youngest son, Auggie, died by suicide in 2020 after years of battling clinical depression.



Auggie Hubbard celebrates after his high school baccalaureate service with his parents, April and Robert.

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We're Raiders.
And Raiders stand out.

We're called to be different—
and to make a difference.
To matter—and succeed
in ways that matter.

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Courageous + faithful.
We build community +
experience belonging.

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LEW MAURER

When Ron De Jong '71 took an admissions counselor job after graduation, he figured he'd work at NWC for a year and then begin a career in teaching and coaching.

At the end of November, De Jong finally retired fully after 52 years on

Northwestern's staff, including 40 in admissions and external relations and another dozen as a part-time fundraiser.

Whatever his role, De Jong saw himself as a storyteller, something of which he never tired. "It's been

really gratifying to share stories about an education that affects the whole person, helping students grow in their spiritual walk as they prepare for their careers."

De Jong was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from

the North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals in 2010 and the Distinguished Service to Northwestern College Award in 2015.

the Classic