

2024-25

the Classic

THE NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE MAGAZINE



TOP OF THE CLASS

Meet four standout award winners

Also
Raiders' Favorite Reads
Colenbrander Crushed
AI at NWC

26

Students sprint to the finish of the 2018 mattress race during the Coly Olympics, one of the popular traditions of Northwestern's oldest dorm, which was razed this winter.



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

On the Cover:

Jason Groendyke '02, principal of East Elementary School in Sheldon, was named the 2024 Iowa Elementary Principal of the Year.

PHOTO BY AARON ECKMANN

Online-Only Option

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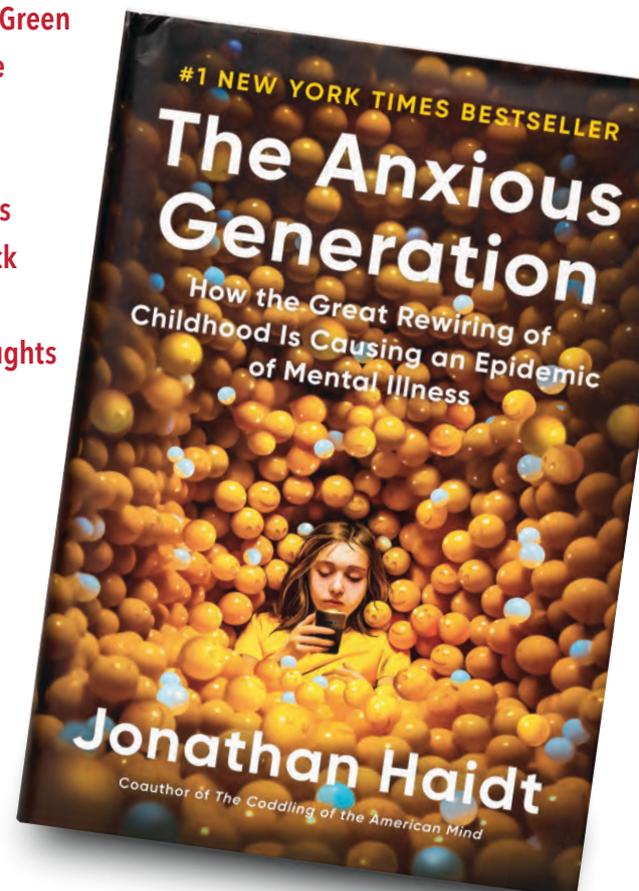


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Zwemer View



LEW MAURER

Honored and Humbled

In December, Michelle and I completed our 17th year serving Northwestern College. What a journey it has been! Few things have been as honoring or humbling as what our family experienced on Oct. 4 at the dedication of Christy Suites. When we moved here in December 2007, it never crossed our minds that there would be a building on campus bearing our names.

Words cannot adequately express how deeply touched and humbled Michelle and I are that the Mary DeWitt family chose to bestow this honor on us, with the board's approval. It means so much coming from the DeWitt family.

Mary and her late husband, Jack, have continued the legacy of Jack's parents, Marv and Jerene, as the most significant benefactors in the history of Northwestern. It is also touching that the last major gift of Marv and Jerene's foundation was directed to Christy Suites by Mary and all of Marv and Jerene's children and their spouses.

I often think of how Northwestern would likely be a much different place had Marv and Jerene's pastor at Ottawa Reformed Church in West Olive, Michigan, not encouraged Marv to get involved at "this little college out in northwest Iowa." The impact of the DeWitt family on the Christian mission of Northwestern has been an integral factor in transforming this college.

Thank you, DeWitt family, for answering God's call to invest in the mission of Northwestern College—along with many other committed alumni and friends who provided the \$14 million needed to make Christy Suites possible.

The best part is seeing the smiles on the faces of the young women who live there. They are grateful to all who made this incredible facility possible. They love the community spaces all over the building, the tall ceilings and large windows in each room, and the private study rooms on the end of each wing on every floor. (See pages 20 and 48 for more on Christy Suites.)

Last May, we were also blessed to break ground for the \$6.4 million Den Hartog Athletic Complex. I am thankful John Den Hartog was able to be there for that joyful occasion, as John passed away on Thanksgiving Day.

John loved Northwestern College and Raider athletics. He and his wife, Ann, gave to every capital project completed in the last 12 years. John was a fixture at home Raider games, especially football, where he loved to watch from the Den Hartog Press Box hospitality suite.

I will miss John dearly, but similar to the DeWitts, John and Ann's legacy of generosity continues with their children Barb, Julie, John and their spouses.

Even after 17 years at Northwestern, I continue to be amazed and humbled by the generosity and legacy of so many Northwestern families from generation to generation. Praise the Lord!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Christy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Greg Christy
President

 [X.com/NWC_PGC](https://x.com/NWC_PGC)

Around the Green

New Tech-Based Programs

As technology plays an increasing role in our work and ability to connect with others, the current job market is brimming with opportunities for the technologically savvy. A study by the Computing Technology Industry Association shows that the tech workforce is projected to grow twice as fast as the overall U.S. workforce over the next 10 years.

Northwestern is preparing students for this reality with the

addition of two new tech-based programs: cybersecurity and writing and digital media.

The cybersecurity major shares several course requirements with Northwestern's computer science and software engineering majors, including web development, database management systems, and networking. Cybersecurity students also take courses in Windows and Linux server administration, digital fo-

rensis, and risk management. Two psychology courses give students insight into human vulnerabilities that attackers might use to gain unauthorized access.

"There has been a lot of effort over the past several years to get students interested in cybersecurity, and that seems to be working," says Mark Haselhoff '12, chair of the computer science department. "As the field has become more popular, more prospective students have asked me specifically about cybersecurity during campus visits. We trust that this program will contribute positively to our growing enrollment at Northwestern."

Based in the English department, the writing and digital media major takes traditional English courses and applies them to digital tools like social media, websites and video. In addition to reading and writing stories, students also learn about

the countless ways those stories take shape, whether as a Disney movie or a Kindle e-book.

Course topics include digital publishing—where students make book "trailers" with basic animation and voiceovers—and virtual reality software used to design interactive museum exhibits.

Courses in writing genres like media writing and feature writing, along with courses in web design, photography and graphic design, will give students a skillset that could lead to careers in editing, publishing, communications and social media marketing.

"In addition to providing future career flexibility, this program will prepare students who love words and ideas to engage audiences in ways that are both intellectually rich and emotionally compelling," says Dr. D. Nathan Phinney, vice president for academic affairs.



LEM MAURER

In recent years, Northwestern has added several new programs with a focus on technology, including software engineering, engineering, cybersecurity, and writing and digital media.

BELLA ITALIA

Home to some of the finest composers in musical history, Italy is widely considered one of the most significant contributors to the art of music. This spring, members of Northwestern's Symphonic Band will join that symphony of song when they make a music mission tour to the country March 1 to 11.

The tour will include performances in Naples, Rome, Florence, Santa Maria degli Angeli and Bologna. The 48-member ensemble will also have the opportunity to visit sites of historical, spiritual and cultural significance, such as the Pompeii ruins, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the Accademia Gallery in Florence and the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

"While Italy is a country of outstanding culture, museums, historical sites and works of art, it has a strikingly low population regularly attending church," says Dr. Angela Carlson, director of the Symphonic Band. "We look forward to growing in our relationship with Christ, reflecting his love to the people we meet, and pointing others toward Jesus throughout this opportunity."



LEM MAURER

On their March tour to Italy, Northwestern's Symphonic Band will perform in some of Italy's best-known centers of art and culture, including Naples, Rome and Florence.



After designing the set for *Silent Sky*, Jack MacGregor had a lead role in the Northwestern production. He was honored last spring with a second-place award in the national KCACTF set design competition.

Prize-worthy Planetarium

JOSH HARRELL

Taking his cues from research, story and fellow production staff, theatre major Jack MacGregor created a set design that set him—and audiences—among the stars.

From Denison, Iowa, MacGregor placed second nationally for scenic design at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) competition last April. He also won a summer fellowship

to work as a scenic designer for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut, which is described as the launchpad of American theatre. During the summer, MacGregor worked alongside some of the most respected and admired theatre makers in the world.

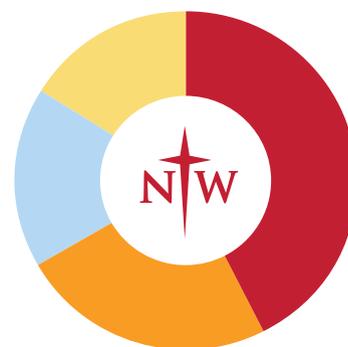
MacGregor, who dreams of becoming a professional scenic designer, was honored for his work

on Northwestern's production of *Silent Sky*, a drama based on the true story of Henrietta Leavitt, a female astronomer who made a groundbreaking discovery within a male-dominated profession in the early 1900s.

Silent Sky was produced in the spring of 2023, when MacGregor was a sophomore. "The show was going to be in the round, so

I decided to make the set a planetarium," he says. "Since the play revolves around astronomical discoveries in the 1900s, I decided to paint the floor and set pieces reflective of 1900s astronomical art. I loved the design process, seeing it come to fruition, and experiencing how it helped tell the story."

GIVING TO NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE IN 2023-24



TOTAL \$8.7 MILLION

■ CAPITAL \$3.7 million

■ ENDOWMENT \$2.1 million

■ RESTRICTED \$1.5 million

■ UNRESTRICTED \$1.4 million



737

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



\$204,335

Gifts from individual churches

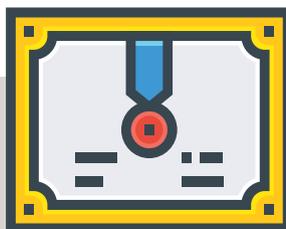


Amount per student underwritten by unrestricted gifts

\$1,200

318

Total number of endowed scholarships at NWC



439



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



JANUARY



519

Number of donors who have given 20+ consecutive years



\$76.9 million

Value of Northwestern's endowment as of June 30, 2024

Campus Life

Student Influencers

BY EMELIE (SWONGER '19) LAACKMANN

As social media has continued to evolve, so has Northwestern College. In addition to accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter), NWC has been making inroads on TikTok with the help of student social media managers.

TikTok is a video-sharing app that allows users to create and post short-form videos. Northwestern's TikToks focus on campus life, including "day in the life" documentaries, game day interviews with Raider fans, tours of campus buildings, and highlights of student activities. Most clips are only 30 to 60 seconds in length, but editing together different takes and adding text overlays and sound effects can become time-consuming.

Janna De Haan, a senior graphic design major from Lincoln, Nebraska, spends five to 10 hours per week coming up with video concepts, filming, and then editing clips, along with two other student managers.

"I love the brainstorming process of what to post, creating content that is 'trendy,' and seeing how well it performs," she says. "I love social media, because it's so easy to see progress and what resonated with our audience."

The key to social media success is high engagement, which can be achieved by gaining new followers or accumulating likes, comments, shares or views. TikTok frequently introduces new video concepts, so to increase engagement, student managers use trending audio, captions or hashtags to push their post to the top of users' TikTok feeds.

Before graduating with degrees in business management and marketing in May, Lauren (Eidsness '24) Watson was a student social media manager for nearly two years. She now works as an account executive for the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.

"Working with [current college] students to create content is valuable, because they know what high school students want to see," says Watson. "College students remember what it

was like to be searching for the right college to attend, so they can create videos that are both appealing and helpful to prospective students in making their decision."

Freshman social media manager Megan Heitritter interviews freshman Luke Williams for a TikTok video. Heitritter and two other students spend between 5 to 10 hours each week creating videos for Northwestern's TikTok and Instagram accounts.

AARON ECKMANN



More Education

Northwestern's education department has two new majors underway this year: special education teaching and education studies.

With the special education teaching major, students receive endorsements in all three levels of special education and graduate with a strong understanding of methods and strategies for teaching students with diverse needs.

The education studies major equips students for careers outside the traditional classroom. This non-licensure degree is perfect for those who would like to lead educational programming for a museum, performing arts school, nature center or historical site. These students will gain a deeper understanding of education practice and have the option to specialize their degree in a variety of areas.

Presenter

Julie Vermeer Elliott '97, Northwestern's vice president for student life, was a plenary speaker at September's Council for Christian Colleges & Universities Legal and Public Policy Conference in West Palm Beach, Florida. Elliott co-presented "Legally Sound and Theologically Rich: Can One Policy Be Both?" with attorney Gene Schaerr.

In their presentation, Schaerr articulated ways to strengthen college policies from a legal standpoint, and Elliott helped attendees consider how their policies align with their institution's theological beliefs.

"The best policies are ones that reflect the unique mission and cultural ethos of a particular institution," Elliott explains. "Christian colleges and universities should do what they can to craft policies and statements that are outgrowths of their deepest beliefs and commitments."

Enrollment Growth Continues

Northwestern continues to set enrollment records. Total enrollment for fall 2024 was 1,719, up from last year's 1,675 and representing the sixth consecutive year of records.

This year's freshman class was the largest since 2010, with 327 full-time first-year students enrolled, compared to 283 last year. Northwestern also continued to set a record in graduate students, with 521 enrolled, up two from 2023.

Northwestern had 1,135 residential students this fall, including undergraduates and 60 in the master's program in physician assistant studies. Another 584 were online students in the graduate programs in business, counseling and education, as well as undergraduate programs in early childhood education, interpreting and nursing.

The freshman class included 46 students of color, 14.1%, another record. International student enrollment was the highest since at least 2007, with 49 residential undergraduates.

"We are excited to have another year of record-setting enrollment and to see the largest freshman class in 14 years," says Tamara Fynaardt,



Northwestern set a new record of 1,719 students this fall.

GEOFF JOHNSON

Northwestern's vice president for enrollment and marketing. "It's clear that Northwestern's success at helping students stand out academically, spiritually and relationally is attractive to new students and their families. We are thrilled that God has provided more students who desire to be prepared to lead lives of significance."

Bultman Addition

After breaking ground on a new addition to the Bultman Center last May, construction of the John & Ann Den Hartog Athletic Complex is well underway. The exterior walls and roof were completed before winter set in, and the building is scheduled for use by the fall of 2025.

The nearly 8,000-square-foot facility will provide new and renovated locker rooms and coaches' offices, as well as a 140-seat team meeting room. With the addition and subsequent renovations to existing areas, every team will have

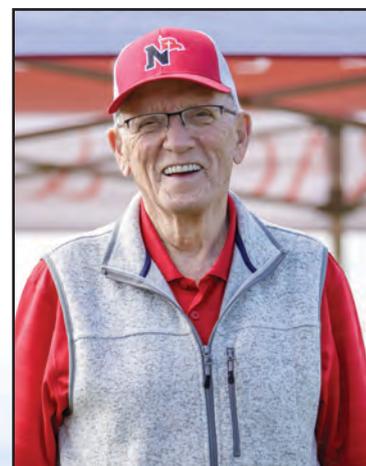
its own dedicated locker room, and needed office space will be provided for assistant coaches and graduate assistants.

The building is named for the late John and Ann Den Hartog, who gave the lead gift for renovations to the Bultman Center's main entrance, lobby and gymnasium, as well as for the addition. It was designed by 10Fold Architecture and Engineering of Ames, Iowa, with Eric Vermeer '00 serving as the lead architect.

More than \$5.7 million of the

building's total \$6 million cost has been raised so far. Former athletes, parents and Raider fans are invited to sponsor and name a locker to help complete the college's fundraising efforts. To sign up for a locker sponsorship, visit nwciowa.edu/locker-campaign.

John Den Hartog, a Raiders fan and longtime NWC supporter who died in November, gave the lead gift for an addition to the Bultman Center that will be completed by this fall.



LEM MAURER



Welcome to the Hall

Larry Korver '54, who led Northwestern's football team to two national championships during his 28-year tenure as head coach, joins Nick Saban, Urban Meyer, Michael Strahan and Michael Vick in the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame class of 2025. Korver and 21 other inductees will be honored on Dec. 9 in Las Vegas.

From 1967 to 1994, Korver's teams compiled a record of 212-77-6. In addition to winning national titles in 1973 and 1983, the Red Raiders advanced to the postseason 11 times. His teams were runners-up in 1972, 1979 and 1984 and reached the semifinals three additional times.

Korver received NAIA Coach of the Year honors in 1973 and 1985. A 1990 inductee into the NAIA Hall of Fame, he stands 11th on the NAIA's all-time coaching wins list.

"This is an incredible achievement for Coach Korver, cementing his legacy as one of the greatest college football coaches of all time," says Tony Hoops, vice president for athletics.

"His outstanding success on the field pales in comparison to the impact he had on others," says current head football coach Matt McCarty '03. "He built a tradition of excellence in Raider football that continues today."



DOUG BURG

Thirty-one years after he retired as Northwestern's head football coach, Larry Korver will be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame next December.

Best Christian Workplace

It's confirmed: Northwestern College is among the top Christian workplaces in the nation.

Data from this fall's Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI) survey—which measures the health of workplace culture in Christian organizations—certified Northwestern as a Best Christian Workplace for the

second year in a row. The college scored an all-time high of 4.05 on a five-point scale, with 92% of employees participating.

The BCWI survey addresses several key drivers that 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 place to work are

remarkably consistent," says President Greg Christy. "They value our Christian mission; they appreciate the ways they're encouraged and empowered to achieve excellence; and they love our community, especially the students and people they get to work with. As a leadership team, we are grateful these results indicate that Northwestern is a place where employees feel they can flourish."

In addition to praising Northwestern's leadership and strategic direction, most employees noted that they believe Northwestern reflects Christ to the world, including the respondent who wrote, "Our shared faith in Christ is at the forefront of Northwestern's mission and work, proven by our leaders' attention to prayer and commitment to reminding employees of our true and greater purpose."

Dr. Ashley Jairam explains a concept in a math class. Employees taking last fall's Best Christian Workplaces Institute survey gave Northwestern its highest rating since the college began administering the tool 11 years ago.



GEOFF JOHNSON

Face Value

Perfect Pass Rate

The first four graduates of Northwestern's online master's degree program in clinical mental health counseling recorded a 100% pass rate on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam.

"The 100% pass rate is confirmation that our curriculum is excellent and that we have prepared them well," says Dr. Julie Merriman, program director. "I'm very proud of them and look forward to seeing the impact they will make as counselors."

The graduates received their master's hoods at commencement in May.

Award-winning Coder

Senior computer science major Pratik Paudel was on a team that won the developer tools track at HackHarvard 2024, a computer coding event in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in October.

Paudel and three peers—students at universities in Massachusetts, Ontario and Texas—built a real-time error-monitoring tool to help developers quickly find, understand and fix problems.

Paudel and fellow NWC computer science senior Mari Hirota were among more than 1,000 students accepted to participate in the event.

"Everyone was so passionate and driven to build something amazing," says Paudel about the event. "Being in that environment was both motivating and humbling."

Dr. John Vonder Bruegge

Teaching students to listen and discern

You have study and work experiences on the East Coast and overseas. What brought you to NWC?

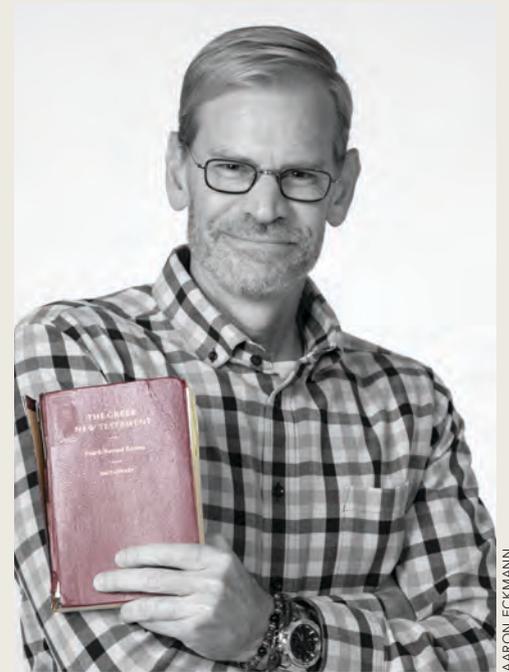
Working in academia, you must be prepared to go wherever the job is. When I was finishing up my time at Yale, I saw a posting for a position at Northwestern. I asked a friend who was from this area if he had ever heard of Northwestern College. He said, "Yes—great school. You should apply for that job." The rest is history. I'm also a native Missourian. Small Midwestern towns don't scare me.

What about the character of God surprises, challenges and/or inspires you?

We worship a fundamentally communicative God. The prophets' ubiquitous phrase was, "Thus says the Lord ..." But I've also learned to appreciate all the things God doesn't say. John 21:25 reminds me that the Bible doesn't tell me everything. The great philologist Erich Auerbach claimed that God's selective silence is in large part what humbles us, even subjects us. Silence is fundamental to music (we call them "rests"), and we don't criticize Beethoven for leaving some of the notes out. God, too, is a master composer, and he knows how to use silence—to punctuate, to motivate, to captivate—as much as words.

What brings you the greatest joy in teaching?

Christians tend to consume the Bible in pre-packaged, bite-sized chunks. That's all great, but I love it when students finally start to appreciate the big picture. The ark, the ram in the thicket, the Red Sea—they all point to the cross and remind us that, just when it looks like we've hit a dead end, God finds a way. That's a far cry from mining the Bible for a cool quote to put on the back of a T-shirt. That's seeing the grand design, wide-eyed.



AARON ECKMANN

Dr. Vonder Bruegge is the Marvin and Jerene DeWitt Professor of Biblical Studies and the dean of arts and humanities. A Northwestern faculty member since 2004, Vonder Bruegge is an author holding a doctorate from Yale University and master's degrees from Harvard and Covenant Theological Seminary. In 2009, he won the Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award. A co-director of Northwestern's Honors Program, he leads the Honors Program's summer study abroad in Greece, where he was recognized as an official tour guide by the Greek Ministry of Culture.

What do you like to do for fun?

My dog really likes to hunt pheasants, but he can't hold a shotgun. So years ago he cut a deal with me: "You handle the 12-gauge," he said, "and I'll do everything else." It's a good partnership.

RETIRING R



LEM MAURER

After 18 years of teaching Spanish in Northwestern's foreign languages department, Dr. Diana Gonzalez retired last May.

Cultural Connector

Nearly 25 years ago, Dr. Diana Gonzalez, professor of Spanish, came to the United States for the first time. With an Argentinian birth certificate and a doctorate earned in Germany, Gonzalez was new to American customs, so when one of her students asked for a pop quiz, she was surprised.

"In other places I studied or taught, nobody liked quizzes or asked for one!"

Gonzalez spent 18 years on Northwestern's foreign languages faculty before retiring last May. While students benefited from learning Spanish from a native speaker, they also gained an appreciation for the many cultures of the countries where Gonzalez lived and studied.

"My teaching assistants taught me so much about life in this area, customs and college culture—and I shared with them about my experiences," says Gonzalez.

Nick VanRijs '23, a Northwestern admissions counselor, says he'll always remember Gonzalez's love for people and their interests.

"Conversation class was one of my favorites because, in addition to practicing our Spanish, we'd start out talking about whatever was going on in our lives. She'd remember things about us and our families—even if it was something we hadn't told her recently."

Piet Koene, professor of Spanish, translation and interpretation, notes that his colleague's high expectations for her students fostered growth.

"Diana encouraged and pushed students to reach the full potential of their linguistic capabilities," he says.

In retirement, Gonzalez is learning about an entirely new culture: life outside of academia. But as she mentions in her parting words to students, "Do not be afraid of change and exploring new things."



ARON ECKMANN

Jay Wielenga's love for his alma mater motivated him to invite others to support Northwestern. He retired as vice president for advancement in May but continues to raise funds and friends for NWC on a part-time basis.

Friendraiser

During Jay Wielenga's nearly 30 years in the advancement office at his alma mater, Northwestern experienced an incredible transformation—and according to President Greg Christy, much of the credit belongs to his colleague.

"Ultimately, anyone in the advancement profession is judged by how many resources are given and the impact those gifts have on an institution," Christy says. "Under Jay's watch, more has been contributed to Northwestern than at any previous time in our history."

Wielenga joined NWC in 1995 as the college's alumni director, served as director of advancement for eight years, and retired in July after 15 years as vice president for advancement.

"It was not a career move. It was a calling," the 1982 NWC graduate says of his decision to work for Northwestern. Whatever role he held, Wielenga has always been in the relationship business. "It's all about investing in the lives of other people and inviting them to invest in Northwestern," he says.

During his tenure, funds were raised to construct or remodel more than a dozen buildings; giving to scholarships, missions, athletics and the arts increased; and the largest amount of annual fund donations in Northwestern's history were made during 2023–24.

"It's been a privilege to work alongside President Christy," Wielenga says. "He does such a great job sharing the vision and mission of the college. We love our students and get the most joy from seeing them benefit from our donors' generosity."

Though retired as vice president, Wielenga continues to call on donors in a part-time role as Northwestern's senior advancement officer.

AIDERS

Seven contribute 124 years to NWC



LEM MAURER

Dr. Jim Mead, who retired in May after 24 years at NWC, was beloved for his engaging teaching style, vast biblical knowledge, dry sense of humor, and love of God's word.

Pastor Teacher

Dr. Jim Mead spent 12 years in ministry before finally realizing his dream of becoming a professor.

Despite having earned two master's degrees from Reformed Theological Seminary, Mead found a teaching position difficult to secure without a Ph.D. After serving as a pastor at churches in Louisiana and Arkansas, he enrolled in Princeton Seminary's doctoral program in biblical studies. Five years later, he was hired by Northwestern.

Mead taught biblical interpretation, Old Testament, Hebrew and Christian Story at NWC for 24 years until his retirement in May.

"I wouldn't be the teacher I am without the ministry experience," he says. "My goal was for students to develop a deeper love for the Bible. I wanted them to realize there isn't a contradiction between knowing a lot about the Bible and loving the God of the Bible."

Among the students impacted by Mead was Dr. Justin Pannkuk '09. "I remember him being so winsome and compelling," Pannkuk says. "He combined tremendous knowledge with genuine humility and just the best sense of humor ever. His classes were engaging, demanding, enlightening, fun and oriented toward the love of God."

Pannkuk is now the academic dean for an academy in South Bend, Indiana—an educator like Mead, his mentor.

Looking back at his career, Mead recalls his expectation of one day teaching at a seminary. "Those doors didn't open," he says, "but by coming here, I probably taught 10 times the number of people I would have taught in a seminary, and they went into all walks of life, not just into churches and ministry."



LEM MAURER

Prior to her retirement last May, Dr. Julie Dragstra combined her love for the nursing profession with training the next generation of compassionate care providers.

Nurse + Educator

When Dr. Julie Dragstra first graduated from nursing school, the role of "teacher" was not something she anticipated for her future. But after collaborating with former nursing professor Dr. Ruth Daumer on a project for her master's degree, Dragstra was offered an adjunct teaching position at Northwestern.

"I didn't envision myself as a nurse educator, but God put the right steps in place at the right times for me to be part of Northwestern's nursing program," Dragstra says. "I encourage future generations of nurses to go forward in faith because God sees the master plan."

Dragstra retired as an associate professor of nursing last May, marking 16 years of teaching and nine years of service as nursing department chair.

"Under Julie's leadership, our nursing students maintained high scores on the NCLEX board exam, which was a testament to her ability to look at current health care trends and help the department pivot to meet those needs," says Dr. Karie Stamer, the new department chair. "But it's her servant heart that stands out to me the most. She is so compassionate and willing to give of her time to anyone who needs it."

While Dragstra's work as a professor has ended, providing top-notch nursing care continues to be an integral part of her life. She now works part time as an RN in assisted living and hospice and enjoys additional time being a grandma—patching up grandkids' bumps and bruises as needed.

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11



After 20 years on Northwestern's Spanish faculty, Kris McDonald retired in May and now serves as an interpreter in the community.

Outreach Advocate

For 20 years, Kris McDonald knew that most of the students in her beginning and intermediate Spanish classes were only there to fulfill Northwestern's general education language requirement. She loved the challenge.

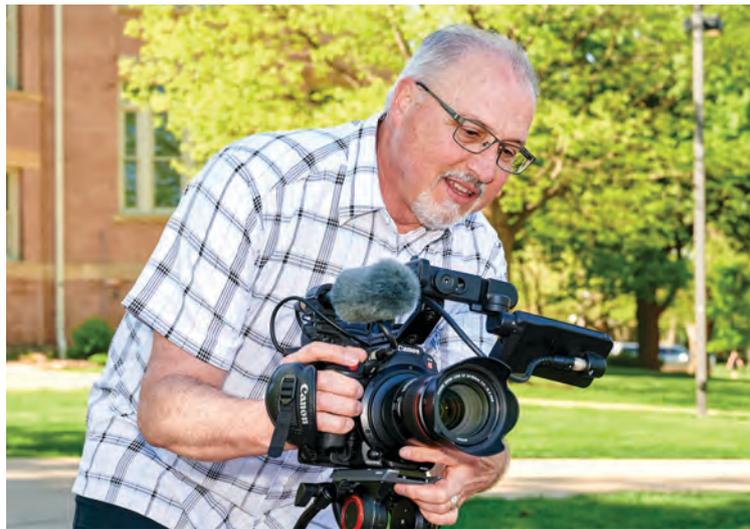
"I told them at the beginning of the semester and repeated it from time to time: My goal was to give them a few basic tools to take a step toward the cultural 'other,'" says McDonald, who retired in May. "It means the world to others that you would take a step toward them rather than expecting them to take the first step."

Longtime colleague Piet Koene says McDonald met that goal. "She imbued her classes with creative ways of teaching students to learn to appreciate the many contributions that Hispanics and Latinos have made so that students can more fully live out Jesus' command to love our neighbors."

McDonald told her students of things she'd learned from her many interactions with Latinos—including humbling times when she probably hadn't responded in a culturally appropriate way. And she shared inspiring stories of people who have overcome many odds.

A former high school teacher, McDonald coordinated Northwestern's Spanish chapels and served with students on mission trips focused on Spanish-speaking populations. Closer to home, she has assisted with Orange City's Festival Latino and worked to build connections with the growing local Hispanic community through her church.

In retirement, McDonald continues to take steps to reach out and learn from others, as she is working part time as a translator/interpreter for the Sioux Center Community School District.



Lem Maurer, Northwestern's first multimedia producer, retired in June after 11 years of service to the college.

Camera Man

Lem Maurer's co-workers appreciated his quirky sense of humor—and even his voracious appetite for home-baked treats. But after his retirement in June, it's his creativity and collaborative spirit that they miss most.

"Lem blessed us with high-quality photography and videography that have been very effective in recruiting students and compelling constituents to be grateful for Northwestern," says Duane Beeson, director of marketing and communications. "Northwestern is definitely better because of his contributions."

Maurer started at NWC as an audiovisual (AV) technician in 2013, bringing more than 20 years of photography and videography experience. After he produced a few videos for the marketing office, the college offered him a full-time position as multimedia producer in 2018.

Since then, his hard drives became jam-packed with Northwestern milestones and memories—amounting to more than 30,000 images and 15 terabytes of video.

"Lem always did such a phenomenal job of capturing the spirit of our campus," says Châu Le '21, Northwestern's administrative web programmer, who worked with Lem while she was a student. "His videos reminded me that my job is about serving our students, and they made me really proud to be a Raider."

Maurer's service to Northwestern didn't always fit a traditional 9-to-5 schedule, as he spent many evenings and weekends capturing photo and video at campus events. He also traveled to North Carolina to cover a national football championship and even shot video at a track meet in 40-mph winds and freezing rain.

RECRUITING RAIDERS

In August, Northwestern welcomed 327 new first-year students, its largest freshman class since 2010. Shepherding high school students from an initial inquiry through the application process is a team effort involving not only the admissions staff, but also Northwestern faculty, staff and current students. These numbers from the 2023-24 recruiting year provide a glimpse into what's involved in recruiting Raiders.



Lori Anderson was one of the first professors in Northwestern's physician assistant studies program. She retired in August after five years of teaching.

LEM MAURER

Patient Provider

Over the course of her medical career, Lori Anderson wore many hats: licensed practical nurse, pharmaceutical sales representative, physician assistant (PA) and disease management consultant. The common thread in all those varied positions, however, was patient education. That planted the seed that someday she would like to teach in a PA program.

When Northwestern's PA program launched in 2019, Anderson became one of its first professors of practice, teaching for five years before her retirement in August. In addition to teaching hands-on skills, she was intentional about integrating faith into course content.

"I think there is a natural opportunity to express our faith as we care for the whole person: mind, body and spirit," Anderson says. "I also like to share ideas on how to meet people where they are and serve as Christ's hands and feet when caring for the sick."

Anderson's many connections in Iowa health care contributed to the program's success in finding preceptorships for students, providing them with critical clinical practice.

"Lori didn't know a stranger, which was demonstrated by her ability to build relationships with everyone she met," says Jill Van Otterloo, director of Northwestern's PA program. "We miss her passion for the students, the program and the PA profession."

"She is truly a professor who cares about our education and the care that we will provide to our future patients," writes a current student. "I know I will be a better health care provider because of the skills that she taught me."



22% Percentage of applied students who enrolled

32,000+

Number of miles traveled by Northwestern's admissions staff

32

Number of different admissions marketing publications mailed to prospective students

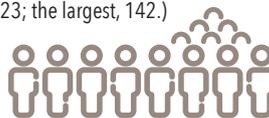


97

Number of different admissions marketing emails sent to high school seniors and/or their parents



70 Average attendance at a group visit Raider Day, including parents. (The smallest Raider Day numbered 23; the largest, 142.)



5,000

Average number of steps taken on a campus tour



1,483

Total number of applications received

CAMPUS TOUR TRADITION

When Northwestern students see a classmate they know leading a campus tour, they will call out "Happy Birthday, [Name]," whether it's the tour guide's birthday or not.



1,400

Approximate number of student campus visitors



1½ Average number of bad jokes told by a tour guide on a campus tour



Dr. Young-Ji Byon is undergoing training to become a program evaluator for the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

LEW MAURER

Evaluator in Training

Dr. Young-Ji Byon, the founding director of Northwestern’s engineering program, has been selected for training to become an ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) program evaluator.

Byon is preparing to effectively assess undergraduate engineering programs at other universities and colleges seeking accreditation from the premier global accrediting organization for engineering and STEM programs. The process will conclude with a simulated visit training at ABET headquarters in Baltimore in May.

Hired by Northwestern in 2023, Byon previously led the successful ABET accreditation process for the civil engineering programs at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, one of the world’s top-100 engineering universities. He has had engineering teaching, administration and research experiences on three continents.

The American Society of Civil Engineers recommended Byon for ABET program evaluator training. The new evaluator candidates are described by ABET as a very elite group of faculty members who have at least 10 years of engineering experience, a demonstrated interest in improving engineering education, extensive experience with the accreditation process, and strong research credentials.

Byon earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and master’s and doctoral degrees in civil engineering at the University of Toronto, Canada. With a research focus on intelligent transportation systems—including connected and autonomous vehicles and deep-learning-based traffic control—Byon has managed grants totaling \$2.8 million and published 55 articles in internationally recognized journals.

Published

Dr. Jeff Schouten, associate professor of kinesiology, has released a curriculum book, *Home School Physical Education for K-5 Families and Cooperatives*.

In his book, Schouten offers lesson plans for skills like throwing and catching, as well as for ball games and racquet sports. Each lesson plan includes a warmup activity, a 15-minute lesson focus, a 10-minute game that incorporates the focus, and a cooldown activity. His curriculum includes five lessons for each grade, with age-appropriate activities. Schouten deliberately chose basic types of activities that a non-trained teacher could do with students, so if a mom or dad needs a

lesson for a specific grade, they have one.

Schouten says the book developed from lesson plans he and his Northwestern students majoring in physical education created for a homeschool PE program conducted for the greater Orange City area. Since its 2022 inception, the program has drawn an average of 100 students per session from up to 80 miles away.

Schouten writes, “Studies have consistently demonstrated that children who participate in regular physical activity tend to perform better academically, showing higher scores in subjects like math, reading and science.”



Kinesiology professor Dr. Jeff Schouten has published a book that offers physical education lesson plans for homeschooled students.

LEW MAURER

ON THE JOB

Northwestern's 2024 graduates achieved a 99.5% placement rate within six months of graduation. A survey of members of the class revealed that 80% are employed, 19% are in grad school, and 0.5% are either volunteering or not searching for a job.

"Our 2024 graduates credit their NWC education with helping them choose majors and prepare for careers and graduate study," says Dr. Elizabeth Pitts, director of the Compass Center for Career and Calling. "More importantly, they point to their curricular and cocurricular experiences as providing a biblical framework for thinking about vocation as not just work, but

all of life's roles, responsibilities and relationships. It is our joy to watch them bring their gifts to such a wide array of influence."

The Mayo Clinic, Fidelity Investments, Nebraska Sports Council, KELO TV, Lincoln (Nebraska) Public School District, and Interstates are just a few of the more than 143 organizations that hired Northwestern's 2024 graduates. Students are pursuing graduate programs at institutions such as Johns Hopkins University, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the universities of Alabama, Iowa, South Carolina and Wisconsin.

The average reported salary for

class of 2024 graduates who are employed full time was \$52,878. The maximum salary reported was \$93,600.

Data was collected by the Compass Center using the First-Destination Survey of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Northwestern's survey response rate of 100% far exceeds the national standard of 65% set by NACE.

Noah Roisum is pursuing a master's degree in international relations at the prestigious Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He's among the 19% of Northwestern's class of 2024 alumni enrolled in graduate studies. Overall, the class achieved a 99.5% placement rate.



ZAC LUCY

Up and Running

Fifteen students are enrolled in Northwestern's new engineering program, which was approved last spring by the Higher Learning Commission and launched this fall.

Offering concentrations in civil, computer, electrical and mechanical engineering, the program will be eligible to achieve ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accreditation upon graduation of the first cohort in 2028.

Northwestern's newly completed 4,000-square-foot Engineering Lab includes three lab areas. It will house 3D printers, rapid prototyping equipment, robotic arms, a wind turbine/tunnel, automated CNC machines, and equipment for strength and materials testing.

Dr. Young-Ji Byon, the program's founding director, has led the development of its vision, curriculum and educational spaces. A search is currently underway for an additional faculty member in mechanical/civil engineering.

"Our vision is to be a Christ-centered engineering program that equips students with an excellent engineering foundation, creative and innovative minds, and hands-on experience with a missionary mindset so they will become 'light and salt' for Christ in the field of engineering," says Byon.

Northwestern's new engineering program is housed in the Engineering Lab just west of the DeWitt Family Science Center.



AARON ECKMANN

Resourceful Data Master

It takes a certain kind of giftedness to know how to use data to make things better. Dr. Jennifer Schon has that gift.

Northwestern's director of institutional research, Schon was chosen as the staff recipient of the 2024 Inspirational Service Award in May. The award recognizes staff who go beyond excellence in their performance, have demonstrated a selfless commitment to service, and whose dedication to Christ is apparent in their daily work and interactions.

"Jen doesn't just complete data requests for our offices—she consistently strives to improve the reporting processes we currently have in place to make everyone's job easier," says Janette Reuter, comptroller. "She is one of the most thoughtful and hardworking co-workers I've had the pleasure to work with. She is organized, has great attention to detail, and collaborates well with both faculty and staff."

Schon came to Northwestern in 2018 as associate director of institutional research. She was named director in 2022. She also serves as an instructor in data science and statistics and as assistant project manager for a major campus database transition.

Schon earned a doctoral degree in communication studies, with a focus on interpersonal and computer-mediated communication and a minor in quantitative psychology, at the University of Kansas. She also



LEM MAURER

Recognized as a hard worker who seeks to make others' jobs easier, Director of Institutional Research Dr. Jennifer Schon was named Northwestern's 2024 Staff Inspirational Service Award winner.

completed a master's in communication studies at the University of Kansas and a bachelor's degree in communication studies and business management at Buena Vista University.



LEM MAURER

Students describe anatomy instructor Jolene Harris as an outstanding teacher who puts in extra effort to ensure they do well in her courses. She received the 2024 Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award.

Masterful Teacher

"She does an outstanding job outlining the incredible beauty of God's human creation" and "I looked forward to her class every day" are two comments from students who nominated Jolene Harris for the Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award.

Harris, instructor of anatomy, was named the 2024 recipient of the award and honored during the college's commencement ceremony in May.

The award recognizes full-time faculty who embody the college's Vision for Learning in their classroom teaching. Recipients are those who have distinguished themselves in their ability to lead their students to trust, love and worship God; to engage ideas; to connect knowledge and experience; and to respond to God's call.

Student nominators spoke of Harris' concern for both them and

their learning. "Jolene truly cares that every student in her courses does well," said one. "And she puts in extra effort to achieve this." Another wrote, "She can effectively explain material to freshmen all the way up to graduate-level students. That's a sign of a great teacher."

Harris has taught anatomy for Northwestern's undergraduate biology department and graduate physician assistant program since 2020. She earned a master's degree in clinical anatomy and a bachelor's degree in biology from Creighton University. She previously lectured in anatomy for the Ross University School of Medicine in the Caribbean and the University of Illinois Medical School in Peoria, as well as for the undergraduate and graduate programs of the University of Nebraska Omaha and Creighton University, respectively.



GEOFF JOHNSON

Kyle Ochsner, professor of practice in kinesiology and director of athletic performance, was honored with Northwestern's 2024 Faculty Inspirational Service Award.

Strong Professor

When developing athletic strength and stamina, overload is key. Pushing oneself past current limits is the business of Kyle Ochsner '09—a business that became personal last year.

Ochsner joined Northwestern's staff in 2012 as the Raiders' first full-time strength and conditioning coach. Now as professor of practice in kinesiology and director of athletic performance, he develops and oversees the strength and conditioning programs for many athletic teams and teaches courses for the strength and conditioning career concentration.

Throughout the 2023–24 school year, Ochsner had been working under professional overload; both the other athletic performance coach and the graduate assistant left. Despite that, he stepped up to the task.

Ochsner was honored as the faculty recipient of Northwestern's 2024 Inspirational Service Award in May. The award recognizes faculty who go beyond excellence in their performance, have demonstrated a selfless commitment to service, and whose dedication to Christ is apparent in their daily work and interactions.

"He is exactly the kind of employee who helps set Northwestern apart from other institutions," says Dan Swier '06, head men's soccer coach. "He melds the perfect blend of academic rigor, care for his students, and the charisma to create a fun and dynamic learning environment. His students love spending time with him."

"Coach Ox' infuses every session with boundless energy and enthusiasm," says one of his student-athletes. "He consistently puts the needs of his athletes above his own to ensure they reach their goals."

Ochsner earned a master's degree in exercise and sports science from Texas Tech University.

Soulful Excellence

In 2 Corinthians 5:7, we all are called to "walk by faith," yet few of us are a public example to others while doing it. Dr. Robert Hubbard, professor of theatre, is one of those few.

Gifted in writing, teaching and expression of thought and soul, Hubbard was awarded the 2024 Faculty Excellence in Faith and Learning Award during commencement ceremonies in May.

The author of two books and several autobiographical one-man shows, his most recent work is a book titled *Scenes With My Son: Love and Grief in the Wake of Suicide*.

"In Bob's book about his son's death, we experience the reality of Bob's deep faith, his professional skills as a storyteller, and his ability to set the stage for those who—for one reason or another—need to hear his message," wrote a faculty colleague

in nominating Hubbard for the award.

A member of the Northwestern faculty since 2002, Hubbard received the award in recognition of his devotion to scholarship and creative expression in ways that faithfully share the wonder, truth and beauty of God's revelation in Scripture and creation.

Hubbard has also been the recipient of a Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival fellowship and is a contributor to the Think Christian blog.

"Bob helps students see the faith integration in each of the productions he is involved in as director, actor or playwright," wrote another faculty member.

Hubbard earned doctoral and master's degrees in theatre from Bowling Green State University and a bachelor's degree in theatre and English from Minot State University.



ANDREW MARINKOVICH

Author, playwright, director and theatre critic Dr. Robert Hubbard was the 2024 recipient of the Faculty Excellence in Faith and Learning Award.

Mastering Business

Northwestern has added an online Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree to the portfolio of programs offered by the Graduate and Professional Studies division.

“Among the many options in today’s MBA market, Northwestern’s program stands out as one that not only provides valuable faith integration, but also individualized learning outcomes relevant for each student,” says Dr. Fan Fei, associate professor of business and economics and director of the MBA program.

“From learning to become a CEO to gaining skills that drive innovation, our students are excited about how the online asynchronous courses mesh seamlessly with their full-time responsibilities.”

Through online, eight-week classes, students log into their courses to complete assignments when it works for them. Created to be accessible for working professionals, the curriculum is flexible and can be completed in one or two years.

Throughout the 33-credit

program, students learn how to incorporate leadership principles and develop effective strategies to succeed in the business environment. The program covers core content areas in accounting, finance, economics and marketing.

Dr. Fan Fei, a member of Northwestern’s business and economics faculty since 2016, leads the new online MBA program.



AARON ECKMANN

Three New Administrators Hired

Northwestern welcomed Jackie Davis, Russ Adams and Dr. Julie Merriman into new administrative roles in 2024.

Davis, a veteran of higher education advancement with 23 years of experience, was named Northwestern’s vice president for advancement following a national search. In this role she leads the 10-member advancement team, provides strategic direction for fundraising initiatives, and cultivates relationships with donors.

Davis began her employment with Northwestern in 2010, serving in a variety of leadership roles in admissions and advancement during her tenure—most recently as director of advancement.

Adams began two new leadership positions: director of the Master of Education program in educational administration and assistant director of the Center for Innovation & Leadership.

The former superintendent of schools for the MOC-Floyd Valley



Jackie Davis



Russ Adams



Dr. Julie Merriman

Community School District, Adams brings more than 20 years of educational leadership experience. He leads the online educational administration master’s program, directs the Accelerate Siouland leadership program, serves as a Franklin Covey trainer, and continues partnerships with stakeholders.

Merriman, a member of the faculty for Northwestern’s graduate counseling programs since 2022, was appointed to direct them last fall.

She previously served as department head and then associate dean of the counseling program at Tarleton State University in Texas. Her other experience includes serving as a school counselor, children and adolescent services director for two mental health centers, and clinical director for an addiction treatment center. She has also maintained a private practice since 1999.

Northwestern's 2024 alumni of the year are (from left) the Rev. Jonathan Opgenorth '88, Alyssa (Currier '14) Wheeler, Dr. Dick Van Holland '58, and Dr. Darla (Vander Sluis '84) Olson.

Notable Alumni

The 2024 Distinguished Alumni Awards recognized an obstetrician named a West Michigan Best Doctor, a longtime Northwestern business professor, a policy analyst who fights human trafficking, and the leader of an organization that provides people with daily access to God's word.

Dr. Darla (Vander Sluis '84) Olson

Distinguished Professional Achievement

Dr. Darla Olson retired after a 31-year career as a physician serving women and their babies during pregnancy and childbirth. She spent 18 years with West Michigan Obstetricians & Gynecologists, three years teaching and supervising OB-GYN residents at Spectrum Health Downtown, and 10 years as an OB-GYN at Spectrum Health Zeeland Community Hospital. She was also a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for 35 years and was named a West Michigan Best Doctor in 2002, 2005 and 2015. Olson majored in biology/pre-med at Northwestern, then earned her medical degree from the University of Iowa.

Rev. Jonathan Opgenorth '88

Distinguished Service to Humankind

The Rev. Jonathan Opgenorth serves as president of Words of Hope, an organization dedicated to providing people around the world with daily access to God's word through a variety of media. After majoring in religion at Northwestern, he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. He was co-pastor of Fellowship Reformed Church in Muskegon, Michigan, before being called to serve as the senior pastor of Trinity Reformed Church in Orange City, a position he held for 17 years. Opgenorth also has served as a trustee for Words of Hope and NWC, and on the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America.

Dr. Dick Van Holland '58

Distinguished Service to Northwestern

Dr. Dick Van Holland was a longtime business professor at Northwestern, retiring in 2011 after 29 years of teaching at his alma mater. During his tenure at NWC, he was awarded the college's Excellence in Teaching Award twice. He was also named the Outstanding Iowa Post-Secondary Business Educator by the Iowa Business Education Association and won the National Outstanding Advising of Students Award from NACADA, the National Academic Advising Association. Van Holland earned a bachelor's degree from Augustana College in Sioux Falls after graduating from Northwestern Junior College. He also holds a master's degree and doctorate from the University of South Dakota.

Alyssa (Currier '14) Wheeler

Standout Young Alum

Alyssa Wheeler is the policy analyst in the Office on Trafficking in Persons of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to that role, she worked as a legal fellow for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and as associate legal counsel for the Human Trafficking Institute. An attorney, she earned her law degree from The George Washington University Law School. Wheeler's passion for justice was fanned into flames at NWC, where she majored in political science and Spanish. While in law school, she was a recipient of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award and interned with the International Criminal Court, International Justice Mission, and Human Rights Watch.

Endowed Appointment

Northwestern's board of trustees has appointed Dr. Heather Hayes as the James and Margaret Blekkink Professor of Education.

The endowed position provides annual funds to support the recipient's scholarly work. Criteria for the appointment include a distinguished record as an outstanding teacher; recognition for scholarly and leadership contributions to one's discipline; exemplary service to the department, NWC and the larger community; and a demonstrated commitment to the college's mission.

Hayes joined the education department in 2022 and teaches in both the undergraduate and graduate education programs. Specializing in disability advocacy, she has presented her research results at several professional conferences and had them published in professional journals. Among the courses she teaches are those on behavior management and teaching methods for students with disabilities.

Hayes is a University of Kansas graduate who earned a master's degree in special education from the University of Central Missouri and a doctorate in special education from the University of Northern Colorado.



AARON ECKMANN

Dr. Heather Hayes has been appointed to the education department's endowed professorship.

Business Standouts

Northwestern business students continue to stand out in the global Business Strategy Game. Last spring, three teams of senior business majors finished in the top 1% of the more than 5,000 teams competing.

The online simulation assigns participants the task of running an athletic footwear company. Northwestern's students compete as part of their business capstone course, Strategic and Ethical Management.

Dream Home

Christy Suites is the newest addition to campus and getting rave reviews.

"Living in Christy has been really neat. It was intentionally designed to foster community," says resident assistant Grace Dahl, who spoke at the dedication of the women's suite-style dorm in October.

The dorm's open and bright two-story fireside room has become a hotspot for movies and board games, including an almost daily

game of Bananagrams. "My friends and I love it," RA Hope Wallace says. "It's fun because it's a big space, so anyone who wants to play can join in."

The emphasis on community in the building's design successfully encourages interactions among residents and students from across campus. The first floor of Christy Suites has a 24-hour convenience store; the second-floor lounge has a full-size kitchen and large island

with seating; and the third floor has a large lounge capable of accommodating all residents for hall meetings and other gatherings.

Each of the three floors has unique study nooks for individuals or groups, while every wing includes enclosed study rooms for six and a light-filled study area next to the outer staircases. The many windows treat those inside to stunning views of campus.

Christy Suites anchors an entire residential section of Northwestern's campus and adds a significant presence to the main entrance.

The new \$14 million Christy Suites honors President Greg Christy and his wife, Michelle, at the request of its lead donors, Mary DeWitt and her family.



AARON ECKMANN

High Rankings

Northwestern continues to get affirmation from experts about the quality of its education, value and programs. Here are some of the latest rankings:

- Niche.com ranks NWC No. 1 in Iowa for safety, best dorms, and best colleges for education. Northwestern is ranked No. 2 in the state for best campus.
- *Money* magazine and *U.S. News* again include Northwestern on their lists of best colleges.
- *U.S. News* ranks Northwestern's online bachelor's degree programs 21st. This is the highest score among institutions in Iowa and among members of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). NWC offers online degree-completion programs in early childhood education.
- The *U.S. News* ranking of online master's in education programs rates Northwestern 77th out of more than 300 schools. Northwestern's M.Ed. program ranks best among CCCU institutions and second best in Iowa.
- The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption includes NWC on its Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces list for the 12th year. Northwestern ranks fifth in the education industry—behind only Yale, Notre Dame, Baylor and Emory.



GEOFF JOHNSON

High rankings continue to come in from *Money* magazine, *U.S. News* and Niche.com.



ZAC LUCY

Commencement Record

Northwestern awarded degrees to a record 399 students at commencement in May. Bachelor's degrees were awarded to 252 students, with 147 earning master's degrees.

Northwestern's previous spring graduating class record was 377, set in 2021.

Cynthia Moser '74, a retired Sioux City attorney, gave the commencement address.

A record 399 degrees were awarded in May. An additional 31 physician assistant students received their master's degrees in August.

Teams on a Mission

BY DUANE BEESON

Just a few weeks before Northwestern's fall semester started, sophomore Elsa Meyer got an education.

Working with 16 other members of the Red Raiders women's basketball team to run sports camps and assist in a water ministry in Zambia, Meyer learned some truths about God and life.

"I met people who overflow with joy and abound in peace while still lacking many of the possessions we can't imagine life without," she says. "It was a reminder to me that true life is found at the feet of Jesus. It has nothing to do with circumstances or what we do, but simply who he is.

"Secondly, I grew in my ability to connect with people who at first glance seem to have nothing in common with me," she says. "We can both teach each other, and we both desperately need Jesus."

Coach Kristin Rotert had been to Zambia with the team's partnering mission agency, Poetice, twice before and knew her athletes would grow as they sought to share their faith and expand their worldview. Next August, she plans to take another group—this time, including students from across campus.

Earlier last summer, 15 NWC wrestlers and coach Rik Dahl '97 renewed a longstanding relationship between the Northwestern program, two wrestling clubs, and residents in several Czech Republic cities. Since 1999, the Raiders have sent eight groups to the former communist country.

"It's very clear from the five trips I've taken that God's kingdom is growing among the Czech people, thanks to the prayers of the saints and the faithful work of people like the missionaries we partner with," says Dahl.

Northwestern's entourage taught and shared their testimonies in schools, led worship at churches, built relationships with Czech wrestling club members as they practiced and competed against them, and helped clean up an abandoned cemetery.

This spring break, several members of the women's soccer team will travel to Cáceres, Spain, to practice, compete and connect with members of a professional soccer team.

"Team mission trips enable our athletes to live out our mission of honoring Christ through excellence in athletics by developing community with one another and serving those in need," says Tony Hoops, vice president for athletics. "These opportunities are life-changing and part of what makes the Raider athletic experience truly unique."

**For more on Raider sports,
visit nwcraiders.com**



Elsa Meyer demonstrates dribbling skills at a sports camp the women's basketball team conducted in Zambia last August.

BIG-PICTURE GIVING



"We've made specific gifts to Summer of Service, the baseball team, and various building projects through the years, but we know our gifts to the Northwestern Fund allow us to support every Northwestern student and the overall mission of the college."

Join Noah '13 and Amanda (Eisenga '12) Bohlmann in giving to the Northwestern Fund, which annually invests in scholarships, academic programs and support services that benefit the entire campus. Gifts of any size are needed and welcomed.



Good Medicine

Since Northwestern's nursing major was added in 2006, it has grown to become the college's second-most popular major. The department now has an entire floor of the DeWitt Family Science Center dedicated to preparing future nurses, with mock medical rooms, human patient simulators, an electronic health records program and a computerized medication system. Northwestern nursing graduates consistently achieve a 100% pass rate on their board exams, and the program is approved by the Iowa Board of Nursing and ranked No. 3 in Iowa by RNCareers.org.

PHOTO BY GEOFF JOHNSON



Dr. Karie Stamer, a nursing professor and chair of the department, uses a human patient simulator in a lab session with nursing majors Josie Ridley (center) and Maria De Jong.

Home, Sweet Bunker



Campus says farewell to Colenbrander Hall after 64 years of service

BY DUANE BEESON

Joseph Kunert '23 recalls walking through Colenbrander Hall as a prospective student and being underwhelmed. "It was dark, and it smelled bad. I told my mom I was never going to live there."

Months later, Kunert returned to campus. What started as an

overnight visit—in Colenbrander again—turned into three nights because of a bad snowstorm. "I was surprised by guys taking the effort to get to know me—the genuine care they had. That made me decide to stay in Coly." By the time he graduated, he had lived all four

years in Colenbrander, serving as a resident assistant the last two.

Kunert's Coly experience was echoed by several other former residents. They use words like "prison," "stone cold" and "bunker" to describe the concrete-reinforced building. (For many

years, Coly actually had fallout shelter signs posted throughout its halls.) Long excluded from official admissions tours, it was unattractive. Meager. Modest. (On second thought, "modest" might not be the best word. Rest in peace, hallway slip-n-slides.)

“At some unknown future date, these walls will crumble to dust, but only eternity will reveal the impact upon society which was made by the men who for a few short years dwelt here.”

Orange City Mayor Chester Van Peurseem, in a 1959 letter for Colenbrander Hall’s time capsule, opened this winter

But Colenbrander alumni remember most of all the camaraderie they experienced—which may well have been encouraged by sharing the experience of living in Northwestern’s oldest, biggest and most austere dorm.

“Coly was so great because I found myself living with people from all over the country and world with such different backgrounds,” says Jesse Aguilera ’05 of The Woodlands, Texas. “I loved it. One of the things I really appreciated as a freshman and sophomore was that there were juniors and seniors living in the dorm. I think that was really fundamental in my maturing, because I became part of their group.

“I was surrounded by people who actually cared about me,” he remembers. “I didn’t know about that type of friendship before Coly. And when you have fun people with integrity who are willing to challenge you to make you better, that really makes life rich.”

Marlon Haverdink ’97, dean of residence life, knows Coly and its legacy better than most. He lived there three years as a student and returned to serve as resident director from 2000 to 2003. He has overseen Northwestern’s residence life program since 2011.

Haverdink says Coly had a diversity of residents simply because it was always the largest hall on campus. Its nine wings held strong, unique identities for many years. And, as the home of many athletes, Colenbrander had a competitive culture that manifested itself in watching games together and playing intense intramurals, card games and video games.

“We shared a lot of life together and had many meaningful conversations,” he says about his time as a student in Coly. “We always felt like we belonged, and we really learned what it meant to love our neighbor in tangible ways.”

Coly’s motto in recent years has been “Deum Fratresque Diligite” (Love God and Your Brothers). Brandon Van Marel ’02, now a pastor in Rogers, Arkansas, saw that lived out during his eight



For nearly 20 years, graduates who lived in Colenbrander Hall four years could paint a block in the basement. That tradition will be commemorated with a display in Smith Hall.

years in Coly—four as a student and an additional four as its RD from 2005 to 2009.

“I developed such great friendships in Colenbrander—guys that really encouraged me in my walk with the Lord. Those four years were transformative, helping me learn what it means to be a man of God and a man of integrity.”

More than three decades after graduation, Dan Van Gorp ’92 of Redlands, California, says most of his great memories of Northwestern are tied to his time in Colenbrander. “It is where we experienced community and the most memorable conversations and antics of our college career.”

A much more recent alum, Chris Jelken ’21, recounts stories of crowding 15 to 20 guys in a dorm room for coffee and debates about everything from sports teams to deep theological topics. There was lots of spontaneous fun, like trips to La Juanita’s in Sioux City and an assortment of capers and pranks.

Now an advancement officer for Northwestern, Jelken says, “We’ll miss the building.” Then he corrects himself: “But, really, we won’t. The building is nothing without the people. The building itself wasn’t special at all—it was the people in it.”

The Coly File

- Built in 1960, the building originally housed 80 men and was funded through a \$250,000 federal loan.
- It was named in honor of Henry Colenbrander, who served as president of the board of trustees for 33 years and was pastor at Orange City’s First Reformed Church more than 35 years.
- Its U shape was created by a 1962 addition that eventually allowed for a capacity of 220 men.
- The basement housed dining facilities and later served for about 15 years as the home of the business department.
- The venerable dorm’s traditions included an annual hog roast, the Coly Christmas celebration, a steak-and-trap-shoot event, and Coly Olympics.
- Colenbrander’s men moved into Fern Smith Hall this fall after Christy Suites opened for women. Coly was torn down this winter, and the space will be used to extend the campus green from the DeWitt Family Science Center to De Valois Stadium.



INTELLI LEARN

NORTHWESTERN GRAPPLES WITH THE IMPACT OF GENERATIVE AI

G E N T N I N G

BY ANITA CIRULIS

In a webinar for Christian college admissions professionals, marketing expert Bart Caylor shared videos of himself speaking in both German and Spanish. He knows neither language.

The videos were created with generative artificial intelligence (AI), which uses machine learning models to learn from and mimic large amounts of data. The algorithms—or computer instructions—of generative AI are capable of creating new text, images, music, audio and video.

Caylor made both videos using HeyGen, an online AI tool that produces videos replicating a person's appearance, speech patterns and voice—even syncing the movement of lips to match the words being spoken.

As with video, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing fields such as health care, transportation, agriculture, manufacturing and the sciences. The 2024 Nobel Prize in chemistry went to three scientists who used AI to decode amino acids and predict the structure of proteins. The machine learning model they developed can do in minutes what humans would take years to accomplish.

Artificial intelligence is also impacting education, especially with the arrival of ChatGPT in November 2022. A free version of the AI-powered conversational tool, or chatbot, is available to anyone with internet access and a smartphone, tablet or computer. After its launch, it quickly became a viral sensation on social media as people shared examples of what it could do—from creating music to planning an itinerary to writing computer code. Within five days, ChatGPT had more than one million users; as of December 2024, that number had grown to more than 300 million weekly active users.

Dr. Nate Phinney, Northwestern's vice president for academic affairs, says that while AI has been around for decades, it's the generative aspect of it—as well as, now, its accessibility—that presents a new challenge to the teaching profession.

“We use writing as a way of helping students both learn and think, and then also to assess the degree to which they've done that,” he explains. “If students use artificial intelligence to create written texts, they may be short circuiting the learning and reflecting process, so questions emerge about how professors can use student writing to assess learning. That's a challenge of AI.”

Just as there are drawbacks to AI, there are also benefits. In a global survey conducted in 2024, 65% of respondents reported that their organizations are regularly using generative AI.

“In the workplace, it's a shortcut. It's an efficiency tool,” Phinney says. “But what's tricky is that real learning is not



Allison Delperdang collaborates with ChatGPT to generate ideas and be more efficient in her work as Northwestern's associate director of brand and digital marketing.

AARON ECKMANN

always efficient. Students still need to learn the mechanics of learning. We don't want AI to circumvent that process."

Allison Delperdang is a Northwestern employee who uses ChatGPT to be more efficient. Intrigued by ads with the moniker "Powered by AI," she started experimenting with the application in 2023, and six months ago, added it to the tools she uses for her digital marketing work for Northwestern.

"What I like most about it is the brainstorming side of it," she says. "I ask it for ideas or headlines or topics. It's great for repetitive projects when you need something new and fresh. I have a team of students who work for me, and ChatGPT is almost like having another student employee."

Landon Van Berkum '22, who teaches computer science at Northwestern, uses AI to generate computer code for his classes. "It's really good at coming up with examples, so it saves me a fair amount of time," he says. "I think the reason I'm able to use it effectively, though, is because I already know what is good and bad about those examples. I can imagine someone with less experience in programming interacting with it and not knowing the difference."

While generative AI can be used for computer coding, brainstorming, summarizing text and answering questions, there are fears it could become a perfect plagiarism tool due to its ability to compose text in ways that are undetectable by plagiarism software.

Shortly after ChatGPT was introduced to the world, Phinney scheduled a workshop for faculty to discuss the new technology's potential

impact on teaching and student learning. Then, because the first and most obvious use of generative AI and Chat GPT is the creation of brand-new text, he tasked Dr. Tom Truesdell '01, director of student success, with drafting a statement on generative AI.

"We didn't want a specific and tailored policy, because we know this is a developing area," Phinney says. "We wanted something that would guide faculty and students and give them the flexibility they need to both experiment with—and set limits on—generative AI in the context of their classes."

Per the statement, Northwestern's goal is to help students better understand generative AI so they can use it effectively and ethically. Professors are asked to talk about generative AI and make clear their expectations regarding its use in class; students are prohibited from using the technology to produce content that violates Northwestern's academic integrity standards.

"We call it 'academic integrity,'" Phinney says, "but the real issue is it can make it look like someone has learned and thought about something they haven't actually learned and thought about."

Truesdell, who also coordinates Northwestern's Writing Across the Curriculum program, says it's important for faculty to understand how generative AI is being used in their field—and for students to know the reasons for assignments.

"We don't want to just say, 'You can't have ChatGPT do it because that's cheating,'" he explains. "It's more, 'Here's why we're asking you to do this. Your brains are growing at an exponential rate right now and

making connections between the things you're learning. We want to maximize that process, and technology too often prohibits that from happening.”

Both Phinney and Truesdell believe professors will need to change how they teach and how they assess learning.

“When we ask students to write a paper, it makes us ask the question, ‘What do we want to accomplish? What is our objective?’” Truesdell explains. “We want students to reflect and to practice critical analysis. So, how do we do that in an age when AI and ChatGPT are available?”

Truesdell suggests assigning more in-class and reflective writing, as well as focusing on process-based writing, in which students share successive drafts of their papers with their professors. He has also, however, introduced writing assignments that specifically ask students to use generative AI and to analyze AI writing for what it does and does not do well.

Dr. Heather Hayes, assistant professor of education, is clear with her students about when AI is not to be used in her courses. And, like Truesdell, she has also incorporated generative AI into her teaching: for example, asking students to use ChatGPT to assist them in creating a lesson plan.

“AI will provide a pretty decent lesson plan, but it’s not individualized to the needs of a specific group of students,” she says, “so they have to make changes to accommodate their students and to make it directed to whatever the assignment is, and then they have to cite AI as a resource.”

Dr. Chris Hausmann, professor of sociology, also requires his students to be transparent about their use of artificial intelligence.

“I put quite a bit of time into developing AI guidance for my classes,” he says. Those guidelines require that students’ work represents their own original ideas and that any use of AI supports—rather than substitutes for—their own analytical and writing processes. He also expects his students to document how their work emerged from engagement with course materials and, if they use it, from AI. To ensure any writing is their own work, students must cite their sources frequently and embed those sources in their arguments.

Hausmann is part of a Generative AI Planning and Awareness Team created by Phinney that also includes the college’s director of computing services, library director, and faculty from the computer science and business departments.

During the past fall semester, the team focused on gathering information and understanding generative AI. Together, they read *Teaching With AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning*. They also discussed a survey Hausmann and students in his Research Methods class conducted that revealed approximately two-thirds of Northwestern students are using generative AI.

This spring semester, the team is focused on making recommendations and identifying resources that Northwestern will need to provide to students, faculty and staff. Their expectation is that, eventually,

working with generative AI will be a skill that human beings learn relatively early in life.

“One person compared this to the Microsoft Office skills of the last 20 years,” Hausmann says. “In the same way we interact with software like Word and Outlook, people will have to know how to use generative AI to get things done.”

While the impact of generative artificial intelligence isn’t fully known, what is clear is that the communication and critical thinking skills taught by Northwestern will become more important than ever.

“In the same way we want our students to develop information literacy, they will need to develop AI literacy,” Truesdell says. “We have an obligation to help our students understand this technology and use it well.”

Even more important, Van Berkum says, is the perspective on generative AI provided by a Christian higher education institution like NWC.

“There are discussions that need to be had about creation, creativity, consciousness and individuality that AI is going to spur on,” he says. “As long as we are willing to have those conversations, thoughtfully, we’ll all be better Christians for it.” 



Dr. Tom Truesdell '01, who coordinates Northwestern's Writing Across the Curriculum program, was tasked with drafting a statement on generative artificial intelligence to guide the college's faculty and students in their teaching and learning.

BY JADELL FORMAN

TOP of the CLASS

FOUR NORTHWESTERN ALUMNI stood out to state and national award committees over the past year. Receiving awards in the areas of education and accounting, the winners share a common denominator: thriving in the work they do for other people and God's glory.

The accounting award recipient didn't even know the award existed. She was just trying to do her best with the "mundane" task God gave her of preparing for the CPA exam during the summer after college.

The education awards highlight three seasoned educators who developed ingenious methods and solutions within their roles as theatre teacher, assistant principal and principal.



Grant Hegstad was Iowa's sole recipient of a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award for 2023-24. He serves as MOC-Floyd Valley High School's assistant principal, career experiences coordinator and head football coach.

PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP

Grant Hegstad '10 is the product of good guidance. He knows that. When describing the direction he received in career preparation, Hegstad uses words such as *intentionality*, *relationship*, *affirmation* and *career training*.

Now as the MOC-Floyd Valley High School assistant principal, Hegstad uses those qualities and methods to do for high school students what NWC professors did for him. They helped him find his place in the professional world, and he wants to return the favor

and help high school students find theirs.

Evidenced by the numbers, students want this too. Under Hegstad's leadership, student participation at the school's career center has quadrupled over the past four years. The Milken Family Foundation noticed this—and Hegstad's other educational contributions—and awarded him a national Milken Educator Award, an honor that includes \$25,000 he can use however he wants.

The award, known as the "Oscars of Teaching," isn't one for which educators can apply or be

Jessica Chipman is a teacher, playwright, actor and director who leads acting workshops through her newly established Wild Gem Theatre Company. Chipman received a 2023–24 National Federation of High Schools Outstanding Theatre Educator Award.



LICIA MARIE PHOTO + FILM

nominated. Instead, the Milken Family Foundation searches for and selects teachers they want to honor.

Last February, at an all-school assembly in Orange City, only the principal and superintendent knew what was about to happen. Department of Education Director McKenzie Snow spoke, followed by Dr. Jane Foley of the Milken Family Foundation; they announced Hegstad as a 2023–24 recipient.

“I had no idea I was receiving this award,” Hegstad says. “It was a pretty incredible surprise.”

The foundation commended

him as someone who cares about the long-term well-being of students personally and professionally. That caring takes place at the school’s career center, where under Hegstad’s leadership, students acquire training and employment at area organizations, leading to job offers post-graduation. The center’s partnership base is expanding to include medical and educational fields—all engineered to help students find out what they like and are good at.

This is part of God’s plan, which Hegstad references while describing his work with a nod to

Northwestern’s mission statement: “My hope is that I can consistently engage in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers me to follow Christ and pursue his redeeming work in the world.”

A STAGE OF JOY

“The stage should be a place of joy and security, if art is to be made well,” says Jessica (Laaveg ’02) Chipman.

Many times throughout her teaching career, Chipman has received accolades for art made well. Last February she received the 2023–24 National Federation of

High Schools Outstanding Theatre Educator Award for Section Five, which includes Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Nominated by a fellow theatre educator, Chipman became the Minnesota nominee through the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), which oversees secondary athletics and activities in Minnesota. The MSHSL is an affiliate of the National Federation of High Schools, which presented the award.

In teaching and directing high school students, Chipman

Jason Groendyke, the 2024 Iowa Elementary Principal of the Year, was also recently named among 37 National Distinguished Principals by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.



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emphasizes teamwork and process. Colleagues call her visionary and her approach extraordinary. Success in Chipman's group productions include taking the top award, seven years in a row, in the MSHSL one-act play competition.

While helping others grow in skills and knowledge, Chipman says, "I am always looking to learn, and there's always something for me to learn when I step into a teaching role." As for finding joy within education, she says, "There can be joy in problem-solving, in analysis, in line memorization, in crafting of props and puppets

and set pieces, and certainly in the relationships built along the way."

Recently bowing out of full-time teaching, Chipman is teaching one class, Acting and Improvisation, at Alexandria Area High School this semester. Otherwise, she leads acting workshops for young people through Wild Gem Theatre Company, which she started "to tell important stories well."

Chipman says she has taken her cues from "some wonderful Northwestern professors who exemplified the curiosity, excellence, good humor, rapport with others,

and thoughtfulness I have tried to emulate as an educator and director. Among them are Joanna Trapp, Carl Vandermeulen, Tim McGarvey and Karen Barker."

Chipman's experiences within Northwestern's Black V improv team taught her to trust herself as an artist and collaborator. "Improvisation is about jumping in before you are 'ready,'" she says, "and seeing what happens if you try."

WORK HARD + PLAY HARD = LEARNING

On a foggy December morning in 2023, students arrived at East

Elementary School in Sheldon, Iowa, to find someone on the roof dressed as Luigi (from the Super Mario Brothers video game), jumping and waving amidst confetti streamers and music. Later at ground level, Luigi (also known as Principal Jason Groendyke '02) exchanged high-fives and rock-paper-scissors matches with students, all of whom he knows by name. This is a normal day at East Elementary.

Four months later—this time dressed in business casual—Jason Groendyke received the 2024 Iowa Elementary Principal of the Year award. That honor came shortly after East was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

This was not so normal for Groendyke or the school. When he arrived in 2014, East Elementary had just been given the status of School in Need of Assistance for low reading scores, with math close behind.

Groendyke led the charge, with staff and faculty alongside, to make sure all students could learn. It worked. Since 2018, East Elementary has been considered a High Performing School. And the latest Iowa school performance profile lists East as one of only 16 in the "Exceptional" category.

"My staff was craving to do better," Groendyke explains. "They just needed the support, guidance and leadership," which has culminated in what is now "a high-quality multi-tiered system of supports."

Drawing from the mission and values he learned at Northwestern, Groendyke says he wants every

student to feel cared for as a person—not only as a student—and to approach each day with intentionality and compassion.

Compassion has motivated Groendyke ever since a spring service trip he took as a Northwestern student. In a low-income neighborhood in New Orleans, the group's service was to simply play with the children, and that is what they did.

"The part of that day that stands out the most to me is when a child

fell asleep in my arms," he recalls. "I believe that child felt safe. That experience became a milestone for me, shaping my belief that relationships are foundational to effective learning."

MINDSET BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE

In the spring and summer of 2023, Hannah Van Meeteren '23 wasn't studying only for the four-part exam that would make her a certified public accountant. She

was studying for her future.

"A deeper understanding would better equip me for the CPA exam process and even more so for the career that would follow," Van Meeteren says. "I think this motivation may have set me apart."

Indeed. It set her in the top 40 scores of more than 86,000 people who took the CPA exams that year. As a result, the American Institute of CPAs named her one of 40 winners of the Elijah Watt Sells Award. Van Meeteren also earned

the highest score of those who took the exam in South Dakota in 2023.

Upon receiving scores for the first exam, Van Meeteren realized she had done very well, way beyond the minimum passing requirement. "Many would say I had 'over-prepared.'" After the second exam, she learned of the award, which provided "... a little extra motivation but was never the single motivating factor.

"I have always tried to approach learning in and out of class with a mindset beyond the immediate," says Van Meeteren. She credits Vonda (Elgersma '88) Post, professor of accounting, for challenging students to learn skills instead of memorizing content. "All of my professors encouraged my peers and me to go beyond what was merely expected.

"There were many days when I felt I couldn't hold anything more in my brain," says Van Meeteren. "It probably would have been easier and more enjoyable to spend the summer post-college and pre-career far from any accounting books and tests. Knowing that this process would be just a short season in a greater and longer story helped keep me motivated to stay on track."

While tutoring at Northwestern, Van Meeteren realized she was able to understand accounting with relative ease and help others understand it too. In January, she began a new job doing just that, helping people with their taxes through her work at Eide Bailly, a large CPA firm in Des Moines, Iowa. 🏠



Hannah Van Meeteren studied more than 500 hours for her four CPA exams. Her hard work paid off, as she recorded one of the nation's 40 best scores out of more than 86,000 candidates in 2023.

LON MONAHAN



Raiders Read

Looking for a good book to curl up with this winter—or to put on your summer reading list? Here are some favorites of Northwestern faculty and staff.



A BOOK THAT CHANGED MY MIND

A FORT OF NINE TOWERS: AN AFGHAN FAMILY STORY

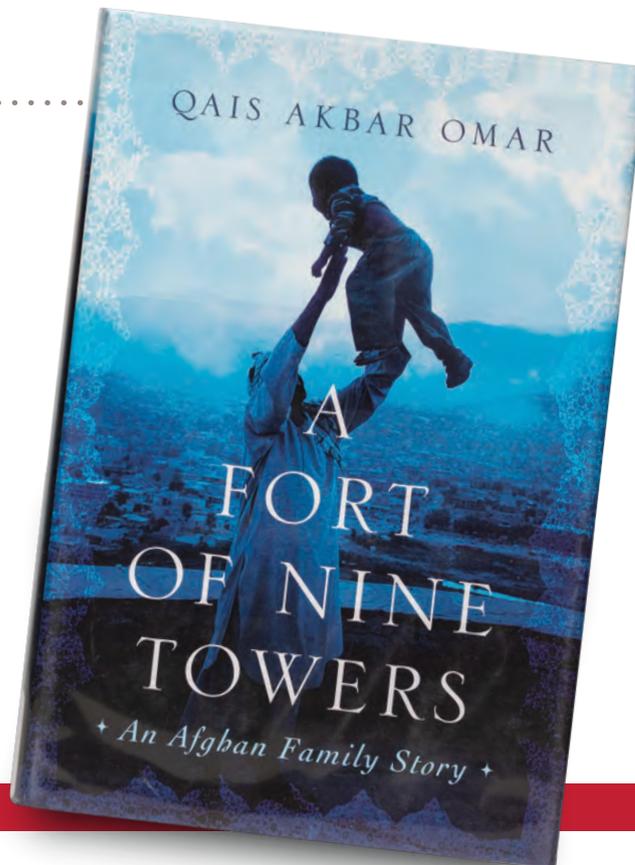
by Qais Akbar Omar

This is a first-person account of a family's struggles in Afghanistan from the end of the Russian period, through the time of the Mujahedin, then of the Taliban, and finally a bit past the end (caused by the Gulf War) of the first Taliban rule. After reading this book, I have a much better understanding of the history and culture of the region and of the differences between average people in the country and the factions that have ruled it.

Recommended by

Kim Jongerius

Professor of Mathematics



A BOOK EVERY GRADUATING SENIOR SHOULD READ

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MONEY

by Morgan Housel

This gripping book is NOT about managing money. It's about knowing more about ourselves through our relationship with money. It's a behavioral finance book that explores how emotions, personal experiences and biases shape our financial decisions. And it offers powerful examples of the ways in which luck, long-term thinking and humility can shape our financial destiny. This book offers practical insights into building wealth, dealing with uncertainty, and developing a mindset that can lead to financial independence and happiness.

Recommended by

Fan Fei

Director of Northwestern's MBA Program

A BOOK EVERY PARENT/EDUCATOR SHOULD READ

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION

by Jonathan Haidt

The subtitle of this book is "How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness." It's an eye-opening exploration of how technology has affected children.

Recommended by

Sarah (Miersma '19) Hofland

Student Teaching Placement Coordinator

BEST BOOK TO READ WITH YOUR FAMILY

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

by Barbara Robinson

I first heard this story when my parents read this book to my sisters and me when we were growing up. Even after having read the book more than a dozen times, it still makes me laugh and reminds me how our Savior's birth changed everything.

Recommended by

Rachel (De Groot '01) Popken

Access Services Coordinator

THE SCORE THAT MATTERS

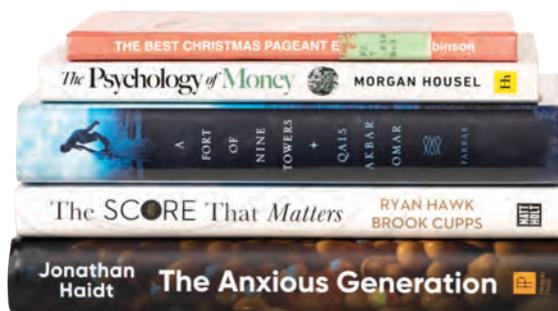
by Ryan Hawk & Brook Cupps

Hawk and Cupps do an incredible job of guiding leaders through the process of developing excellence in themselves so they can help build excellence in those they lead. The wisdom and exercises in this book are simple, practical and accompanied by compelling stories.

Recommended by

Cole Prescott '19

Director of Esports



OUTSMART YOUR BRAIN: WHY LEARNING IS HARD AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE IT EASY

by Daniel T. Willingham

I recommend this book for high school seniors heading to college or for freshmen who need help being successful academically. Willingham provides a wealth of research-based tips to help students learn deeply, take tests with greater confidence and calmness, beat procrastination, enhance focus, use time well, and manage anxiety. Each chapter ends with a "For instructors" section that gives ideas on how to help students build the skills needed to succeed. It's easy to read and full of examples and anecdotes.

Recommended by
Samantha Winn
Accessibility Specialist



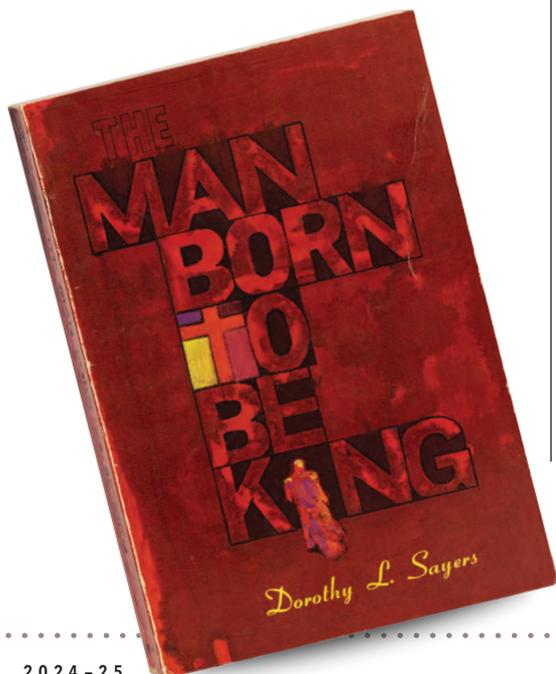
FAVORITE CLASSIC

THE MAN BORN TO BE KING

by Dorothy L. Sayers

During World War II, British author Sayers wrote a cycle of 12 plays on the life of Jesus for BBC radio broadcast. I've read them through twice now, and I heartily agree with C.S. Lewis' response to them: "I have re-read it in every Holy Week since it first appeared, and never re-read it without being deeply moved."

Recommended by
Douglas Firth Anderson
*Professor Emeritus of History,
 Reference Librarian, and Archivist*



COLOR-COURAGEOUS DISCIPLESHIP

by Michelle Sanchez

In this book, with the subtitle "Follow Jesus, Dismantle Racism, and Build Beloved Community," Sanchez demonstrates that anti-racism work is actually discipleship. Through the lens of Scripture, she examines how we are commanded to awaken to this work as part of our Christian faith walk.

Recommended by
Valerie (Roman '93) Stokes
Professor of Social Work

BEST SCIENCE FICTION BOOK

EXHALATION

by Ted Chiang

Chiang is one of the finest science fiction writers of the last 20 years, and this collection of stories is a fantastic read. Each one is intensely human and ripe for theological exploration.

Recommended by
Harrison Wiebe Faber
NEXT Program Assistant

A BOOK I COULDN'T PUT DOWN

BARKSKINS

by Annie Proulx

Barkskins is an ambitious *magnus opus* (over 700 pages!)—an epic, powerful work of historical fiction that spans five centuries and multiple generations, tracing the impact of European colonization on the land, people and natural resources of North America. Proulx's ability to describe environment is on full display as readers become immersed in the trees and forests of North America and New Zealand. You feel as if you are there with the settlers, indentured servants, indigenous peoples and loggers as they fight for survival and control. In the process, you gain powerful insight into life in New France and the practices of logging companies in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Recommended by
Tom Truesdell '01
Director of Student Success

A BOOK EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD READ

SURPRISED BY HOPE

by N.T. Wright

The subtitle of this book is "Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church." While Wright has written more than seems humanly possible, I've had a hard time getting enough of his wisdom ever since former Northwestern President Bruce Murphy gave every faculty member a copy of *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who He Was and Is*.

Recommended by
Jeff VanDerWerff '83
Dean of the Social Sciences



Technological Transformations



NORTHWESTERN ARCHIVES

Students work on a paper in the Learning Resource Center in the mid-1980s.

BY DUANE BEESON

As Northwestern faculty and staff grapple with the challenges and opportunities posed by generative AI, the college's archives reveal how previous technological revolutions impacted NWC.

The computer era at Northwestern College began in 1961, when the business and registrar's offices experimented with IBM machines that recorded grades on report cards, accelerated the class registration process, and compiled the Honor Roll. An article in the January 1962 *Classic* stated that Northwestern was in the vanguard of data processing.

"At this time, there are only a few hundred schools in the nation using electronic machines," the story read, "but it is estimated that a decade from now, over 5,000 schools will find them indispensable."

In the mid-1970s, the library purchased a DEC "minicomputer" and connected to the OCLC national bibliographic network, making the cataloguing process much more efficient.

Northwestern created a computer center in 1978 and began teaching programming classes. By the mid-1980s, NWC had become the first college in Iowa to have an online library search system, and a computer science major was underway.

A new academic computer system installed in 1993 was 100 times more powerful than the VAX it replaced.

Thanks to a \$23,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, Northwestern connected to the internet in early 1995. Students and employees were able to log on from any of the 240 PCs on the campus fiber-optic network, which linked most campus buildings, including all residence halls.

By 1997, each dorm room had a network port, and the internet's T1 link operated at 1.4 megabytes per second. The college's North Central Association accreditation report described the computer technologies on campus as "most impressive."

Northwestern's network, web services and policy of replacing all campus computers within four years led to it being named among America's most-wired colleges by *Yahoo! Internet Life* magazine in 2000.

Northwestern installed some wireless access points in the late 1990s, and the college became completely wireless by 2010.

When Director of Computing Services Harlan Jorgensen joined Northwestern's staff in 1992, one in 10 students had a computer. Today, many students have four or more devices—such as a laptop, watch, phone and smart TV. And while playing video games wasn't allowed decades ago, nearly 97% of the campus' bandwidth is now used for non-academic purposes, including gaming, watching videos and movies, and consuming social media.

Though Northwestern's internet speed has gone from 10 megabytes per second in 2015 to 3.5 gigabytes today, the cost has gone down by two-thirds. But the college spends \$75,000 just to secure the network—which is always on the minds of the college's computing services staff.

"Being this connected comes with some pitfalls," says Dan Robinson '01, associate director.

Class Notes

'68 **David Boelman** retired after 52 years in education, having spent the last 15 years at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa. He participates in Drake University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and volunteers at the Des Moines International Airport.

'70 **Dr. Bob Boerigter**, a former Northwestern coach and athletic director, was inducted into the Hall of Fame for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics in June. He served as AD at five institutions and was commissioner of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association from 2010 until he retired in 2017. He lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

'73 History was made during the sixth inning of the NWC alumni baseball game on Oct. 5, as three generations of one family were on the field together. **Dave (Bucky) Aalbers**, Orange City, played second base, with his son **Brady '99** of Alton at shortstop. Brady's son **Carter '26** hit a home run, high-fiving his grandfather and dad along the way. Dave will have two other grandsons playing sports for the Red Raiders this fall.

'82 **Marlo Van Peurse**, theatre director at Pella Christian High School, was selected as 2024's Iowa Theatre Teacher of the Year by the Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards program. This is the second state to honor Van Peurse, as he was also the recipient of Michigan's 2002 Theatre Teacher of the Year.

'84 **Mary (Vermeer) Nyhof** retired as conservation assistant for the Sioux County Soil & Water Conservation District in July after 40 years of service.

Jay Rozeboom, head football coach at West Lyon High School for 32 years, was named the *Northwest Iowa Review's* 2024 Football Coach of the Year. He led the Wildcats to a 13-0 record and the Class 2A state championship, their sixth in school history.

'85 **Melanie Boscaljon** of Raleigh, North Carolina, has been working for the North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors since 2015. In 2023, she

was promoted to manager of the continuing education department.

'87 **Kevin Derr**, principal at Holland Heights Elementary, was recognized as Region 12 Principal of the Year by the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association.

'88 **Dr. Randall Haight**, Jefferson City, Missouri, is the chief medical officer at MU Health Care Capital Region Medical Center, where he also serves as chief of the department of community practice. In December 2023, Capital Region named him Physician of the Year.

Jill (Pals) Hulsing received the Golden Plaque of Distinction from the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Association last July for her career achievements as a softball coach. She coaches softball at BGM High School in Brooklyn, Iowa.

Kreg Lensch retired in July after a 36-year career in education. He most recently served as superintendent for the Glidden-Ralston and Paton-Churdan school districts in Iowa.

Ted Schultz has been the sports information director at Iowa's Grinnell College since 2007 and was recently elected as chair of the Midwest Conference Championships Committee.

Karmen Woelber, a physical therapist in Waterloo, Iowa, recently completed a two-year fellowship program in treating chronic pain. She is now one of 60 Fellows of Pain Science in the United States.

'89 **Melissa Vickery-Bareford**, Woodford, Washington, teaches theatre classes and recently directed *James and the Giant Peach* and *Around the World in 80 Days* for Journey Theater, a Christian youth theatre. Her husband, **David Bareford '90**, published two original plays last year—*Seeking Mister Hyde* and *Don Quixote de la Center*—in addition to an academic text on fight choreography.

'90 **Douglas Pals** was hired as general manager of Minburn Communications, a telecommunications

Red Ties

Ross Fernstrum '12
Director of the Northwestern Network

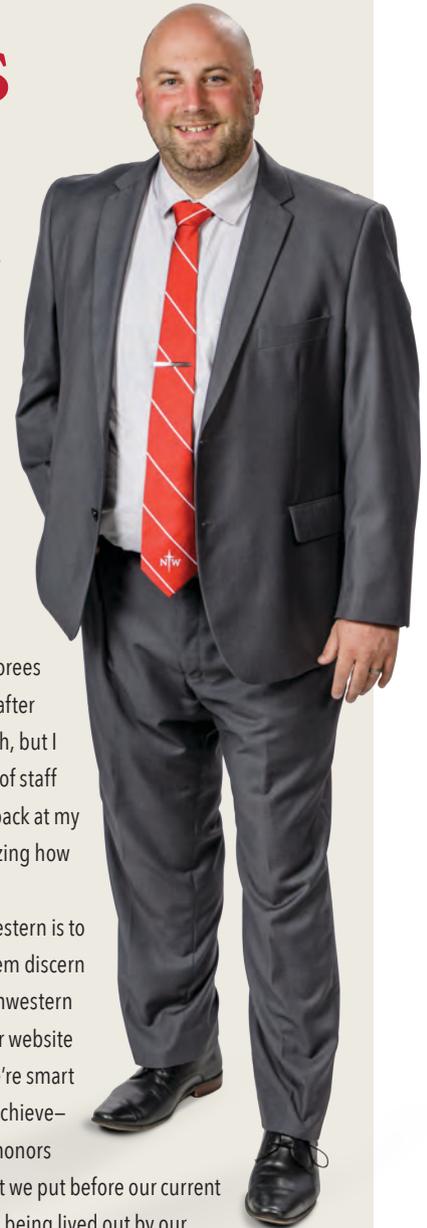
One of my favorite events each Homecoming weekend is the Distinguished Alumni Dinner, when Northwestern has the privilege of honoring alumni in four different categories. Hearing from each standout honoree at the dinner is a special experience and always inspiring. Our alumni are doing incredible work around the world, and you can read about some of them on page 32 of this issue, as well as throughout the class notes section.

One of our Distinguished Alumni honorees from this fall wrote me the following note after Homecoming: "I don't visit campus enough, but I was reminded this weekend of the quality of staff and students there! I have always looked back at my time at NWC with deep appreciation, realizing how much it shaped who I am today."

Our call as faculty and staff at Northwestern is to invest in our students. We want to help them discern and develop their God-given talents. Northwestern encourages our students to Stand Out. Our website expounds on that: "We lead and serve. We're smart and strong. Courageous and faithful. We achieve—not for ourselves, but because excellence honors God and serves others." This challenge that we put before our current students is what I witness, time and again, being lived out by our alumni.

While we love to celebrate our graduates and honor their achievements, "Standing Out" as we define it doesn't mean you'll always receive awards and external recognition. We are called to lead and serve in a variety of settings. A faithful life should leave an impact on those around you—whether in your home, church, workplace or community.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)



provider in Minburn, Iowa. Upon the current CEO's retirement, he will assume the role of CEO in April 2025.

'91 Sue (Grandia) Fonkert received the 2023 Sanford Health Network Eide Bailly Business Employee of the Year award. The award recognized Fonkert, who is lead patient access representative at the Sanford clinic in Sheldon, Iowa, for "work of exceptional quality and productivity."

'92 Cory Brandt was among the coaches selected for the Iowa Football Coaches Association (IFCA) Hall of Fame in 2025. In 25 seasons as head coach for Boyden-Hull/Rock Valley, his squads went 185-73 with 17 playoff appearances, including a 2016 state championship. He also received IFCA Coach of the Year honors in 2016.

'94 Jill (Kempers) Freeborn of Urbandale, Iowa, is mourning the loss of her husband, Roger, who died in May.

'96 Kristin (Falksen) Knoke, Ogden, Iowa, had a chapter published in *Threads of Purple: Weaving Stories of Grace, Strength & Redemption* about her infant son and how God used his death to transform

how she mothers and approaches life. She writes under the pen name of Kristin Marie Taylor.

'97 Dr. Mike Bogaard retired from active duty in the Air Force after 21 years of service. He now serves as a clinical professor at the Arizona College of Optometry.

Krista (Van Gorp) Clayton of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was promoted to director of publicity at InterVarsity Press, where she has worked for 26 years.

The Rev. Dr. Derek Vande Slunt completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from Regent University with distinction and published his dissertation titled "Healing Shame in Marines." He is serving as a Navy chaplain at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. His wife, **Tina (Jackson '97)**, teaches English at Havelock High School.

'99 Marilee (Johnson) Lace now resides in Chinquapin, North Carolina, where she works as a livestock accounting specialist for Villari Food Group. She also recently welcomed her first grandchild.

'01 Julie (Jansen) Oldenkamp was named the *Northwest Iowa Review's* 2024 Volleyball Coach of the Year after leading the Sioux Center High School team to a 29-6 record and a Class 3A state tournament berth. Her teams have compiled a 494-184 record since 2008.

'03 Jaylene (Wiersema) De Vos teaches English at Cherokee (Iowa) High School. Her husband, **James '03**, teaches chemistry, physics and advanced placement biology, also at Cherokee. Their oldest daughter, Julia, is in her freshman year at NWC.

Heather (Block) Grafing was named the *Northwest Iowa Review's* 2023–24 Girls Basketball Coach of the Year after leading the Central Lyon High School team to a 20-4 record and a state tournament berth for the third season in a row. Her Lions have compiled a 158-56 record in nine seasons.

Kristin (Breems) Rucks is vice president of development and marketing at Bethesda, which provides senior living care services in west-central Minnesota.

'04 Amy (Ropte) Johnson relocated to North Mankato, Minnesota, in

2021, after her husband died from a four-year battle with dementia. She is a software developer at MEI Total Elevator Solutions.

Travis Klein is the new president of Citizens State Bank in Sheldon and Boyden, Iowa. He has worked at the bank for more than 20 years.

Rebecca Lanquist, Maple Grove, Minnesota, started a consulting business to help global medical device manufacturers navigate the U.S. payer system and strategically plan for commercialization.

Dr. Josh Perkins has been promoted to associate vice president and dean of students at Kent State University. He most recently served as Kent State's assistant dean of students and director of the CARES Center, where he doubled the number of students served by a basic needs crisis resource center.

Julie (Westenberg) Pickard was among 12 educators honored in September as 2024 Christian Teachers of the Year by the Herzog Foundation. A Bible and art teacher at Des Moines Christian School, she also received the Iowa Medal of Merit from Congressman Zach Nunn.



PICTURE PERFECT.

Follow along to see Raider memories in the making.
#RaidersStandOut

  Northwestern College, Iowa    @nwciowa



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. King Hickman and his colleagues at GPS Dairy Consulting were named 2024 Industry People of the Year at the World Dairy Expo for their efforts to keep cattle healthy through advanced nutrition and herd management.

Honored Dairy Consultant

When he graduated from veterinary school, Dr. King Hickman '85 thought his job was fixing sick animals. A dairy cattle specialist, the native of Sheldon, Iowa, saw prompt care for sick cows as the key to a healthy herd.

“But after a number of years of fixing the sick animals, it dawned on me that if I could keep the herd healthy, I wouldn’t have to fix the cattle,” he says.

That mindset shift led to a shift in career emphasis. Hickman became an expert in animal nutrition, working in private practice and the corporate world. In 2009, he and two colleagues formed GPS Dairy Consulting, which today advises clients as far away as Australia. The consultancy takes a holistic approach.

“Anybody can print the ration, but getting all the people on the dairy to work together, setting goals, making them better leaders and better at their jobs, will make the dairy perform that much better,” he says.

In October, Hickman and his GPS colleagues were named Industry People of the Year at the World Dairy Expo. Hickman says he’s honored to play a role in supporting healthy food production.

“I have a passion for safe food and feeding the world,” he says.

BY JARED KALTWASSER

Katie (Lichter) Tesch was the 2024 cross country recipient of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union’s Golden Plaque of Distinction award. She coaches and teaches business education at Ridge View High School in Holstein, Iowa.

’05 Lisa (Miller) Koerselman is the administrative assistant for Northwestern’s music department.

’06 Justin Dowdy is principal at Cozad (Nebraska) Elementary School. He lives in Gothenburg with his wife, Jillian, and kids, Jackson and Jamie.

Mike Mulder is the superintendent of the MOC-Floyd Valley School District and was named the 2025 Iowa Fine Arts Administrator of the Year by the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education.

’07 Bruce De Haan was promoted to director of operations at Voya Financial Advisors in Windsor, Connecticut. He and his wife, **Alyssa (Barr ’07)**, and their family live in West Des Moines, Iowa.

’08 Tom Bartello is principal of Walnut Street School in Des Moines, Iowa. He previously served as an associate principal at Hubbell Elementary, also in Des Moines.

Angela Jiskoot, West Des Moines, was honored in June with her second Governor’s Volunteer Award—for her leadership and eight years of service on the Volunteer Iowa Commission—by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. She received her first award in 2015 from former Gov. Terry Branstad.

The Rev. Sarah Palmsa was elected vice president of the Reformed Church in America’s General Synod in June. She is co-pastor of New Hope Church in Powell, Ohio.

’09 Emily Entsminger was named program director for the Uganda Studies Program, a study abroad opportunity that she participated in as a student. She previously served as the program’s student life coordinator and as a faculty member.

Samantha Johnson is a broker associate and office manager for Southeast Iowa Realty in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. She also serves on the Southeast Iowa Regional Board of Realtors.

Kathleen (Kropp) Marsh is the supportive living supervisor at a group home for adults with developmental disabilities in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Trista (Knoke) Pitt was named the 2024 Council Bluffs Teacher of the Year. She is a reading interventionist at Carter Lake and Franklin elementary schools.

’10 Stephanie (Lantz) Martin is a senior admissions counselor working remotely for Northwestern College. She and her husband, Ryan, reside in Pella, Iowa.

Emily (De Weerd) Moret and her husband, **Jesse ’10**, are the owners of Northwest Realty, with locations in Orange City and Sheldon, Iowa. Emily serves as the agency’s broker, and Jesse is one of 11 real estate agents.

’11 Austin McCombs earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Dordt University in 2023. He was promoted to the role of sergeant with the Sedro-Woolley Police Department in Washington last March. He also serves as artistic director for the Lynden Chorale Society and the orchestra conductor for Lynden High School musicals.

’13 Matt Eriksen holds a Master of Divinity degree from Talbot School of Theology and is a chaplain at Sanford Health in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Chase Rozeboom is an assistant principal for Sioux Center’s Intermediate and Middle Schools. He also coaches baseball for Sioux Center High School. His wife, **Claire (Roesner ’14)**, is a physician assistant with Sioux Center Health.

Holly (Stewart) Sanchez Perry is an instructor at the Air Force Justice Advocate General’s School at Maxwell Air Force Base

in Montgomery, Alabama. She previously served at Kadena Air Base in Japan.

Jonathan Taves started a specialized physical therapy clinic in 2019 and sees patients from around the globe. He invented and patented a device called SAM (Simple, Affordable, Migraine relief) sold through his Novera Headache Center. His wife, **Janet (Pitsenberger '14)**, volunteers as a nurse at a pregnancy resource center where she teaches a newborn care and breastfeeding class. They live in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Dr. Daniel Van Kalsbeek is a critical care pulmonologist at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Tanya Woodward had a chapter of her master's thesis published in the *Journal of Religion and the Arts* titled "My Soul Cries Out: The Psalmic Aesthetic in Edwidge Danticat." She also recently began teaching English at the Bavarian International School in Munich, Germany.

'17 Amanda (Vander Stelt) Lemke is the costume shop manager for Northwestern's theatre department.

Levi Letsche is principal of MOC-Floyd Valley High School in Orange City. Previously he served as head football coach and instructional coach at Sheldon High School.

'18 Tabitha (Frey) Caffrey graduated from Wichita State University with a Master of Social Work degree in May. She is now serving as a program officer with Episcopal Migration Ministries, an organization that oversees support services for refugees.

Jen (Te Grotenhuis) Grev completed her Master of Social Work degree in 2023 and is serving as a clinical trainee in the day treatment program at the Family & Children's Center in Winona, Minnesota.

Nicholas Heider is in his fourth year of teaching at Santiago Christian School in the Dominican Republic. He is also head coach of the school's varsity basketball program.

Robby Laughlin joined Northwestern College's baseball coaching staff last fall as a full-time assistant. He previously served as head assistant and hitting coach at Central College.

Hannah Lautner teaches preschool and elementary music at the American Cooperative School of Tunis (ACST) in Tunisia. She holds a master's degree in educational leadership from SUNY Buffalo State University. She previously taught five years in Kuwait.

Nathan Wedel was recently named assistant vice president and location manager of Iowa State Bank's Orange City branch.

'19 Maddie (Jacob) Kuchel recently launched her own bookkeeping business, which she operates from her home in Alton, Iowa.

Blake Mulder is the creator of a YouTube channel, Shadowxx25, where he posts videos of himself playing and providing commentary for video games. He has a channel following of nearly 4,000 subscribers.

Peace Preston will graduate with a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from A.T. Still University of Health Sciences in Kirksville, Missouri, in May. She plans to pursue a residency in pathology.

Eric Wasson completed his law degree from the University of Nebraska in May. He is now serving as an associate attorney with Blazek Law Group in Omaha.

'20 Lydia Kerekes participated in the Iowa STEM Teacher Externships Program last summer, a program that provides teachers with industry opportunities and enables them to create classroom experiences that have real-life applications. Participating educators receive \$5,000 and three graduate credits from the University of Northern Iowa.

Bradley Laackmann was promoted to director of athletic communications for Northwestern Red Raider athletics in July.

'21 Kit Fynaardt had an article published in *Newsweek* in May about his use of Pokémon GO to teach college math. A doctoral student in mathematics at the University of Iowa, he taught PokéMath, a popular course that covers foundational math concepts.

Chris Jelken has joined Northwestern's advancement office as a gift officer. He previously raised funds for Inspiration Hills Camp and Retreat Center.

Brett Moser has been coaching the Raiders football team since 2021 but was promoted in January from special teams coordinator and defensive line coach to defensive coordinator.

Ryan Van Ostrand completed the 2024 Iowa Bankers Association's Commercial Lending School as one of the top five students in his class. He serves as a credit analyst in the business banking department at Clear Lake (Iowa) Bank & Trust.

Joel Van Peurse was named Young Director of the Year at the South Dakota Bandmasters Convention last February, and he received the Outstanding Young Music Educator of the Year award from the South Dakota Music Education Association in October. He is the band director at Mitchell Middle School and assistant director of the high school marching band.

'22 Tim Czirr joined Northwestern's institutional research team as a part-time reporting analyst last fall.

Natalie Lausen is now an assistant athletic trainer for the Raiders after completing an internship with Northwestern's athletic training department.

Audrey Leyen is resident director of Stegenga Hall at Northwestern. She previously served as a registered nurse for Sanford Medical Center in Sheldon, Iowa.

Jonah Tews is the new resident director of Northwestern's North Suites after completing his master's degree in higher education from Taylor University last May. His wife,

Brittany (Kuijper '21), teaches transitional kindergarten at MOC-Floyd Valley Elementary School in Orange City.

'23 Aaron Eckmann is the multimedia producer for Northwestern's marketing and communications office.

Brian Vandenberg was hired as head men's tennis coach for the Raiders. He also works at Interstates in Sioux Center.

'24 Kade Fey is a loan officer at Iowa State Bank in Orange City.

Dalton Jacobsma is pursuing a master's degree in sports administration and coaching at Liberty University and serving as a graduate assistant in athletic performance at NWC.

NEW ARRIVALS

Mary Beth (Sears '04) and Nate Breen '04, adopted son, Derick Andrew (7), joins Jacob (16) and Christian (12)

Paul and **Britney (Vertanen '05) Daugs**, twin boys, Timothy Finn and Tobias Luther, join Titus (11), Kyah (9) and Silas (6)

Cecil and **Danielle (Dupre '07) Coffman**, daughter, Alice Erin Rose

Mitchell and **Kristen (Moss '08) Andringa**, daughter, Bethany Mae, joins Malachi (8), John (7), Isaac (5) and Lucy (3)

Carrie (Manifold '10) and Jason Blaha '09, son, Julian Dane, joins Jesse (10), Jamie (7) and Adelaide (4)

Tyler and **Marit (Langley '11) Byron**, son, Sonder Scottlee, joins Timbre (7), Wislaf (4) and Navy (3)

Janna (Bloemendaal '11) and Kadrian Hardersen '08, daughter, Karsyn Lynn, joins Braelynn (9), Kynleigh (8), Adley (6), Haidyn (4) and Kyren (2)

Joe and **Val (Kleinjan '12) Albert**, daughter, Rynlee Anne, joins Kyler (3)

Juliana (Pennings '12) and Andrew Bloemendaal '09, son, Hans Robert, joins Kaatje (2)

Derek and **Kylie (Underwood '12) Meyer**, daughter, Liesl Joyce



SUBMITTED PHOTO

As director of public affairs for the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Chrislyn Skippings is the department's face during high-profile criminal cases.

Paving the Way

God had big plans for Chrislyn (Kemp '90) Skippings to pave the way for young future leaders—and it all started at Northwestern.

Looking back, Skippings sees how her participation in several clubs on campus allowed her to observe strong leadership skills and began to shape her for the future God planned.

“These clubs contributed significantly to my growth and development, and being president of the International Club truly enhanced my leadership skills,” she says.

Returning to her homeland in the Bahamas after graduation, Skippings joined the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF). In her 34-year tenure with the force, she has applied the leadership skills learned at NWC and helped open doors for young leaders in her area. She was the first female leader to serve in several high-ranking roles within the RBPF, including her current position as director of public affairs.

“I believe that youth model what they observe and are taught,” Skippings says. “I want to be a leader who is a model of excellence consistent with and reflective of Christ. As I reflect on my experience at Northwestern and the present experiences of my daughters who attend NWC, I’m ecstatic to see that the standard of excellence has been maintained.”

BY KIRSTEN POGGENKLASS

- Andrew and **Brittini (Donahue '13) Hall**, daughter, Evangeline Kathryn
- Larissa (Sapp '13)** and **Ben Miller '13**, daughter, Sydney Jean, joins Avery (8), Sawyer (6) and Emery (4)
- Alex and **Annaliese (Cloeter '13) Ward**, daughter, Ruby Grace, joins Barrett (4)
- Rachel (Van Gorp '13)** and **Tyler Zeutenhorst '13**, son, James Timothy, joins Isaac (7) and Samuel (4)
- Cody and **Christa (Curl '14) Baker**, daughter, Letta Mae, joins Elisha (4) and Eden (2)
- Johannah (Jensen '14)** and **Davis Bloemendaal '14**, son, Ty Soren, joins Walker (8), Briar (6), Kase (4) and Leyton (2)
- Caleb and **Sara (Van Gorp '14) Chiang**, son, Luke Paul, joins Sophia (2)
- Melinda (Fjeld '14)** and **Joshua Dykstra '15**, daughter, Emma Jean
- Francisco and **Andrea (Andersen '14) Garcia**, daughter, Kaia Kay, joins Giovanni (3) Papito and **Kelsey (Martinez '14) Joseph**, daughter, Eden Christelle, joins Israel (7) and Hezekiah (4)
- Nicole (Jacobs '14)** and **JD Pluim '13**, son, CJ, joins Hayden (2)
- Hannah and **Joeshph Hendershott '15**, daughter, Mercy Shae, joins Linley (4) and Ruthie (2)
- Alexia (Pater '15)** and **Jason Katsma '14**, daughter, Hope Lynn, joins Ellen (2)
- Michelle (DeJarnette '15)** and **Patrick Kleinjan '13**, son, Cooper James, joins Kennedy (2)
- Stephanie and **David Runia '15**, son, Carter John, joins Mackenzie (4) and Kelsie (2)
- Jeremy and **Arianne (Gesell '16) Hollman**, daughter, Kyra Carolynn
- José and **Emily (Nienhuis '16) Marcial**, daughter, Ila Eldie
- Krista (De Bruin '16)** and **Elijah Schaefer '18**, son, Truett Lee, joins Judah (2)
- Kyle and **Allison (Reisma '16) Van Wyk**, daughter, Eleanor Grace
- Delaney (Dugger '17)** and **Derrick Akers '18**, son, Skyy Jacob
- Paige (Hubers '17)** and **Caleb De Haan '16**, daughter, Harper Nicole
- Johnathan and **Koriene (Schulte '17) Gallagher**, daughter, Saylor Kay
- Marissa and **Casey McKinstrey '17**, daughter, Louise Kathleen, joins Callum (3)
- Haley (Smith '17)** and **Joshua Wilson '17**, daughter, Alaina Clairdell Marie, joins Everett (1)
- Jordyn (Oostra '18)** and **Colton Kooima '18**, son, Calvin James
- Hayley and **Connor Sams '18**, son, Micah William
- Timothy and **Michaela (Van Riesen '19) Aulner**, son, Ezra Ryan, joins Raelynn (1)
- Kelsey and **Jacob Johnson '19**, son, Jonah Todd, joins Mya (2)
- Brenna (Ellington '19)** and **Micah Rens '22**, son, Elijah Grahm, joins Harrison (2)
- Megan (Shulstad '20)** and **Riley Chartier '21**, daughter, Layla Rose
- David and **Shelby (Goodrich '20) Clay**, daughter, Maeve Holland
- Shania (DeBoer '20)** and **Alex Currier '19**, son, Tatum Lee
- Hannah (Wamhoff '20)** and **Ian Hofer '20**, daughter, Ezra Kate, joins James (3) and Micah (2)
- Anna (Kiel '21)** and **Nathan Wedel '18**, daughter, Remi Joy, joins Hudson (2) and Hadley (2)
- Megan (Blauw '22)** and **Perkins Aiyegbeni '19**, son, Hezekiah Emmanuel
- Haley (Smit '22)** and **Nicholas Evans '22**, daughter, Ozzy Noelle, joins Rory (2)
- Kathleen (Chicas '22)** and **Kaleb Schrock '22**, twin daughters, Lucia Lee and Mia Isabel

MARRIAGES

- Melody Paynter '06** and Michael Benson, Kansas City, Kansas
- Stephanie Lantz '10** and Ryan Martin, Pella, Iowa
- Sarah Rickard and **Matt Eriksen '13**, Bismarck, North Dakota
- Tanya Woodward '13** and Luke Walkenhorst, Bavaria, Germany
- Jenna Kitchenmaster '16** and Jacob Richardson, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Jenn Nibbe '16** and Bradon Weinstein, Burnsville, Minnesota
- Tabitha Frey '18** and Jacob Caffrey, Wichita, Kansas
- Anna Gravrok and **Keaton Hettver '18**, Eden Prairie, Minnesota
- Lizzy Rice '18** and **Nathan Huysen '16**, Orange City
- Ingrid Ramirez '19** and Ryan Silver, Huntington Beach, California
- Morgan Roberts '21** and **Ezra Meyer '23**, Spencer, Iowa

Carsyn Hamstra '22 and **Chris Jelken '21**, Orange City

Emily Schwarz '22 and Enoch Ariko, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Vonnie Pratt and **Benjamin Akers '23**, Des Moines, Iowa

Jakob Van Der Werff '23 and **Erin Brouwer '25**, Spokane, Washington

Gideon Fynaardt '24 and **Naomi Lief '24**, Madison, Wisconsin

Eli Haverdink '24 and **Maci Brenneman '25**, Orange City

AJ Bomgaars '26 and Anna Evink, Hospers, Iowa

The couples reside in the city listed.

IN MEMORIAM

Joanne (Mol '43) Johnson died Sept. 5 at age 99 in Lincoln, Nebraska. She taught elementary school for four years, then worked for Meredith Corporation in Des Moines for 18 years.

Marcia (Hubers '43) Zwiép, 99, died May 6 in Miami. She taught generations of students typing and business skills. After 30 years in Massachusetts, she and her husband, Don (recipient of NWC's 1992 Distinguished Professional Achievement award) returned to Orange City for retirement and wintered in Florida.

Joan (Hofmeyer '48) Bonnema, Orange City, died March 12 at age 93. She worked for Pluim Publishing for 58 years and also spent several years working for K-Products, Northwestern Bank and Hope Haven.

Josephine (Boender '48) Van Oort, age 95, of Englewood, Colorado, died June 26. Following graduation from NWJC, she worked as a secretary in Northwestern's registrar's office. She and her family later relocated to Denver, where she was a cook at Iliff Preschool.

Gladys (Fedders '51) Eason died Nov. 8 at age 90 in Orange City. She and her husband, Leo, farmed near Carnes, Iowa.

Casey Korver '51 died Jan. 6, 2025, at age 93 in Orange City. In addition to serving in the military, he worked as an accountant at a public accounting firm in Pipestone, Minnesota.

Carole (Grooters '52) Nilsson of Owatonna, Minnesota, died Oct. 19 at age 92. She was a schoolteacher at Owatonna High School for more than 35 years, mostly teaching English.

Arthea (Hulstein '52) Raak died in Worthington, Minnesota, on Dec. 20, 2023, at age 90. After a 25-year teaching career, she became one of the first female realtors in the region, eventually advancing to ownership of Coldwell Banker.

Carol (Van Oort '53) Bras, Orange City, died May 6 at age 90. She spent much of her early career as an elementary school teacher in Newkirk, Sioux Center and Fenton, Iowa. She later worked 18 years for the Hospers Telephone Company.

Geneva (Statema '53) Burggraaf, age 90, of Rock Valley, Iowa, died July 29. She taught at Rock Valley Christian and at a Christian school in Volga, South Dakota. A gifted baker, she made many sweet treats served at the Towne House Family Restaurant in Rock Valley.

Clarence Pennings '53, Orange City, died Aug. 18 at age 91. He served two years in the Army before beginning a 60-year career on the family farm, where he raised livestock and grew corn and soybeans.

Mae (Vander Wilt '54) De Gooyer, age 90, died Dec. 28 in Sioux Center, Iowa. She served in a variety of health care-related roles, including that of CNA, aide, co-director of Sioux County Public Health, and receptionist at Sioux Center Medical Clinic.

Dr. Leo Landhuis '54 of Pittsford, New York, died Nov. 19 at age 89. A leader in the field of ophthalmology, he served as director of the University of Missouri's Lions Eye Bank and national president of the Lions Eye Bank. He was honored by NWC as a distinguished alumnus in 1984.

Dr. Donald Van Etten '54, age 90, of Rapid City, South Dakota, died Sept. 23. After he finished surgical training, he and his family pursued mission work in the Middle East for three years. He later opened his own surgical practice and, in retirement, served in the South Dakota House of Representatives



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A former college resident director, Scott Schnyders seeks to bring a sense of belonging to the employees and guests of Refuge of Hope Ministries, where he is CEO.

Overcoming the Insurmountable

Everyone has a story, and not all of them are happy. But at Northwestern, God equipped Scott Schnyders '04 to help people change their story of struggle to one filled with hope.

As the recently appointed chief executive officer and former long-time shelter director of Refuge of Hope Ministries in Canton, Ohio, Schnyders is passionate about helping people face obstacles that seem insurmountable.

“The most transformative gift in my work is the ability to be present with those who are struggling,” he says.

Schnyders shares that seeing his resident director, Marlon Haverdink '97, foster an environment of belonging in his dorm provided a model for how to love and care for people in powerful ways. Equally important are the skills he learned in Dr. Scott Monsma's classes, which taught him how to look for the underlying causes of a person's trials.

“As we address issues of poverty, we see the need to address the structural problems contributing to people's situations so that we can contribute to lasting change,” says Schnyders.

Sharing God's love as they care for people's needs, Schnyders and his team regularly see people who battle addiction, mental health and family trauma be made alive again through the hope found in Jesus.

BY KIRSTEN POGGENKLASS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sierra Rosetta Tumbleson '23 (left), shown here from the Northwestern University theatre production of *How to Know the Wild Flowers: A Map*, was among six people featured as *American Theatre* magazine's Rising Leaders of Color for 2024.

Rising Leader

While at Northwestern College, Sierra Rosetta Tumbleson '23 won several national theatre awards. Now pursuing a doctorate in theatre at Northwestern University, she continues to receive acclaim, having been named one of six Rising Leaders of Color by *American Theatre* magazine in May.

Tumbleson credits this honor to her connections within Northwestern University and its faculty support, which gave her several opportunities to participate in Chicago-area productions. "Also, there hasn't been a lot of Native American representation in the Rising Leaders of Color program, or in theatre in general, so I appreciate that they want to uplift Indigenous artists," she says.

Tumbleson, an enrolled citizen of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe tribe, grew up in Trimont, Minnesota. Her father is a farmer, and her mother was a high school speech and drama coach. In her younger years, Tumbleson helped with many backstage tasks, gladly following her mother's directions.

While at NWC, the theatre major participated in multiple productions each year and was selected for a literary fellowship at the prestigious Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center and for participation in Yale University's Indigenous Performing Arts Program. Studying at Northwestern University on a full scholarship, Tumbleson hopes to become a theatre professor like those at NWC who inspired her to great achievements.

BY JADELL FORMAN

for eight years. He received Northwestern's Distinguished Service to Humankind Award in 2007.

Robert Ver Heul '54, age 90, died Nov. 22 in Spencer, Iowa. He operated Love Tire Shop and Bob's Suzuki in Cherokee, Iowa, before working at Holzhauser's and Letsche's Radio Shack.

Leroy Intveld '56, age 87, died Oct. 2 in Sioux Center, Iowa. He spent the first 20 years of his career in education, teaching and coaching in Cornell, Bayard and Sac City, Iowa. He later established the insurance business at American State Bank in Sioux Center.

Gladys (Vander Wolde '56) Van Drie, age 87, died March 31 in Estes Park, Colorado. She and her husband, Rudy, owned free community newspapers in Ames, Boone and Knoxville, Iowa. Her achievements as a publisher earned her the Robert S. Green and Publisher of the Year awards—two of the highest honors awarded by the Association of Community Publishers.

Shirley (Langstraat '57) Goering, New Ulm, Minnesota, died March 9 at age 85. She and her husband, Verlin, farmed in rural New Ulm for 43 years. She also worked for 15 years as a paraprofessional.

Dr. David Walgenbach '57, age 86, of Burnsville, Minnesota, died May 30. An entomologist, he taught and researched at several universities, most recently at South Dakota State. He also conducted research for Chevron Chemical Company in Des Moines and Minnesota's Southwest Experiment Station and UMore Park Research Center.

Marlene (Hulstein '58) Bruns of Spencer, Iowa, died Aug. 8 at age 85. She taught elementary school for nearly 40 years in Cleghorn, Algona and Spencer.

The Rev. Carl De Jong '58, Grand Rapids, Michigan, died Dec. 18, 2023, at age 85. He served as minister to churches in New York City; Denver; Los Angeles; Hospers, Iowa; and Oak Forest, Illinois.

Rodney Hulstein '58 died Dec. 12 in Sioux Center, Iowa, at age 94. A Korean War veteran, he worked in his family's trucking

business for nearly 30 years. His employment also included delivering grain and lumber and working part time for Mouw Motor Company and Ver Hoef Automotive.

Delbert Vander Schaaf '59 of Orange City died Nov. 4 at age 83. In addition to farming near Middleburg, Iowa, he drove semitrucks for Meerdink Trucking and enjoyed restoring antique Oliver tractors.

Allen Zevenbergen '59, age 84, died Sept. 13 in Sioux City, Iowa. He taught K-12 vocal music for 45 years in Iowa and Nebraska.

Gordon DeBoer '61 of Riverside, California, died Feb. 25, 2024, at age 82. In addition to serving 27 years as a Navy pilot, he was chairman and CEO of Hollywood Film and Video, Neighborhood Acceptance Corporation, SST Investor Services, and CentrePoint Financial Services.

Kathryn (Westenberg '62) Nyhof, age 85, died Nov. 14 in Stoughton, Wisconsin. She taught on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in New Mexico and in a one-room school in West Bend, Wisconsin.

Frederick Ploegstra '62 died March 13 in Greeley, Colorado, at age 91. He served in the Marine Corps in Korea and later became an instructor at Lowry Air Force Base. He also taught in Christian schools in Rock Valley and Sioux Center, Iowa.

Dr. Harold Westra '62 of Clive, Iowa, died July 28 at age 85. He worked in education his entire career, serving as superintendent of schools in Basin, Wyoming; Chariton, Iowa; and Oskaloosa, Iowa. He also served as chief administrator of the Southern Prairie Area Education Agency.

Norlan Top '65 of Arnolds Park, Iowa, died Nov. 10 at age 81. He held a variety of jobs, including that of teacher, coach, handyman and funeral planner.

Miriam (Schutte '66) Behrens, George, Iowa, died Feb. 24, 2024, at age 83. She taught first and second grade for nearly 30 years in Sibley, Iowa.

Donald Carey '67 died Aug. 21 in Brunswick, Maine, at age 78. He worked as

a commercial lines underwriter at several insurance companies, earning the title of Certified Insurance Counselor.

Ronald Cordes '67 of Gridley, Illinois, died Dec. 11 at age 80. He earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Kansas and served as a social worker in children's home, mental health center, and hospital settings.

Judy (Roelofs '67) Kreun died Oct. 20 in Bigfork, Minnesota, at age 80. She served as a church organist for 34 years and taught piano lessons.

Jeannie (Kleinheksel '67) Seely, age 79, died Aug. 4 in Spencer, Iowa. She worked at Johnson Elementary School for 25 years as a secretary.

Roberta (Kalm '68) Olsen, Coralville, Iowa, died Jan. 31, 2024, at age 90. She taught school in Royal, Iowa, and also served as a substitute teacher.

Steven Ellsworth '69 of Rock Rapids, Iowa, died Nov. 23 at age 78. He was a teacher at Central Lyon School for 36 years, where he taught sixth-grade science, English and spelling. In 1990, he was a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Education.

Kent Eknes '70 died Dec. 21 in Rock Valley, Iowa, at age 76. During his 35-year teaching career, he also coached football, wrestling, and track and field. He was active in the Rock Valley community, serving as mayor for over 20 years and as president of the Hope Haven board. He helped make Hope Haven's first wheelchair delivery to the Dominican Republic.

Larry DeZeeuw '71, age 75, of Ashville, Ohio, died May 8. He spent his career teaching junior high school and coaching, serving nearly 30 years in Nora Springs, Iowa.

Robert Schalekamp '71 died June 19 at age 75 in Orange City. An Army veteran, he worked in quality control at Diamond Vogel Paint and served five years as a security assistant at Northwestern.

Merwin Heitritter '72 died May 16 at age

76. He served with the Air Force in New Mexico and spent his career farming near Boyden, Iowa.

Mary (Wissink '72) Zeilenga died Jan. 12, 2024, in Sioux Center, Iowa, at age 73. She taught at the Sioux Center Community Schools for many years and was particularly dedicated to helping her students with their reading skills.

Bonnie (Wickenhagen '73) Allison, age 72, of Spencer, Iowa, died Feb. 1, 2024. She dedicated her life to voluntary service, including helping to resettle refugee families from Laos.

David Tienter '74 died Aug. 20 in Port St. Lucie, Florida, at age 79. He served in the Vietnam War with the Navy and later worked as a paralegal specialist for the Social Security Administration.

Gary Schipper '79 died March 22 in Hospers, Iowa, at age 68. He worked as a mechanic and later as a car salesman for several dealerships in northwest Iowa.

Daniel Sorenson '80 of Pella, Iowa, died Oct. 3 at age 66. He worked in accounting for the Pella Corporation and retired from Third Church as executive director of operations after 17 years of service.

Carol Van Gelder '80 of Orange City died Sept. 6 at age 89. She worked with the Sioux County Department of Human Services for more than 40 years, during which time she took classes at Northwestern and earned her social work degree in her 50s.

Audrey (Rammelkamp '84) Brady died Jan. 1 at age 67 in Fonda, Iowa. After attending Western Theological Seminary, she became an ordained minister of the Reformed Church in America and served as both a pastor and hospital chaplain. She also served in the counseling and social work fields.

Allen DeVos '84 of Le Mars, Iowa, died Sept. 15 at age 63. He worked at Wells Dairy for 37 years, serving as union president and compliance and negotiating officer.

Connie (Stewart '86) Hadley of Wilmore,

Kentucky, died Jan. 27, 2024, at age 60. She loved children and enjoyed working at the Jessamine Early Learning Village, as well as volunteering at her church's weekly Kids Formation gathering.

Rhonda (Mills '86) Hellenga died Sept. 12 in Spring Lake, Michigan, at age 60, after a long battle with posterior cortical atrophy. She taught for 30 years in schools across the country and was also active as a cheer coach, play director and youth group leader.

James Ekema '87, age 69, died Oct. 17, 2023, in Middleburg Heights, Ohio. He spent his career working in retail and also enjoyed sharing his musical gifts on the piano.

Mary Jasper '89 died Dec. 20 in Ocala, Florida, at age 82. She enjoyed a career in education, teaching English as a second language students and preschoolers.

Pamela Heemstra '93 of Des Moines, Iowa, died May 13 at age 54. Most recently, she worked for Sun Chemical. Her career also included a four-year stint playing professional women's football for the Sacramento Sirens.

Dr. Brian Darby '02 died July 26 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, at age 44. He was a professor in the University of North Dakota biology department, where he had served since 2011.

Kevin Ulmer '06 of Bemidji, Minnesota, died Sept. 17 at age 41. He was the head coach of Bemidji State University's volleyball program for nine seasons. He also coached at Bethel College (Indiana) and Georgetown College (Kentucky).

Isaac Appel '10, age 37, died June 27 in Redfield, South Dakota. A Navy veteran, he worked in roofing and construction. He also served as a sheriff's deputy and worked at Redfield Energy, where he helped produce the billionth gallon of ethanol.

Nikki (Zika '16) Green died March 15 in Le Mars, Iowa, at age 29. She worked as an enrollment counselor for Northwestern's Graduate and Professional Studies division for two years and coached the Le Mars Community High School girls soccer team.

Grahm Kenobbie '20 of Lincoln, Nebraska, died Feb. 13 at age 26. He worked as a software engineer for Constellation West and Speedway Motors.

Dr. Harold Hammerstrom, 97, died Oct. 3 in Sheldon, Iowa. He taught chemistry at Northwestern from 1957 until 1988.

Dr. Harold Heie of Orange City died Nov. 18 at age 89. He served as vice president for academic affairs at Northwestern from 1980 to 1988. He also held teaching and administrative roles at three other Christian liberal arts colleges and contributed to faculty development programming at schools affiliated with the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

Mary "Jean" Mast of Holland, Michigan, died Dec. 30 at age 87. She was the first female coach for Raider athletics, serving five seasons as head coach of the women's basketball program and three seasons as head coach for volleyball. She also coached softball and field hockey, in addition to teaching.

Elizabeth Radandt, age 86, died July 8 in Naples, Florida. She was married to Dr. Friedhelm Radandt, who was Northwestern's president from 1979 to 1985. The couple served in Christian higher education across the country, including in Illinois, Iowa, New York, Washington and California.

Dave Thayer of Lakeville, Minnesota, age 81, died Sept. 29. He served as Northwestern's head wrestling coach from 1978 to 1984. He later coached at Ohio Northern University before ending his career at Kraai Furniture. He was a wrestling official for 35 years.

Dr. Matthew Floding died May 14 in Minneapolis at age 69. He was Northwestern's chaplain from 1989 to 1998. Most recently, he served as director of ministerial formation at Duke Divinity School.

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

Classic Thoughts

A Glimpse of the Heavenly Banquet

BY JULIE VERMEER ELLIOTT '97

In late April 2023, on what was certainly the coldest, snowiest April day on record, we gathered in front of an empty field to break ground on a new women's suite-style hall, the Greg and Michelle Christy Suites.

I remember sharing at the time about how this new building would meet a key need for our campus—a place for our female students to enjoy the same kinds of amenities that are offered to our men through the North Suites: private, in-suite bathrooms and large lounges for community building. We hoped that this building would meet the practical need of attracting more women to Northwestern.

I also shared how the vision for this building went beyond the practical to encompass the spiritual as well. Nearly every design decision was driven by the

foundational belief that we as humans, made in the image of God, are made for relationship.

This hall is anchored by inviting community spaces in the center of every floor. It includes booths and nooks where students can sit face-to-face and engage in meaningful conversation. It has a full-size kitchen with island that invites students to break bread together. These elements are designed to call students out of their rooms, off their phones, and into spaces where friendships can grow. And given the epidemic of loneliness plaguing this generation, these friendships are more important than ever.

On that cold day in April 2023, we had a dream, a design, and donors who had caught the vision and generously pledged their resources. I am delighted to report that our dreams for this space have become a reality. The women who live here love to call this place home. Every day they are hanging out in one another's rooms, discussing big ideas in the lounges, watching movies in the fireside room, and inviting friends over from across campus.

This past Sunday, I witnessed a poignant example of Christian community in the flesh. I was bringing a few items to the fireplace room on the second floor and noticed that about 20 students, both men and women, were packed into the second-floor kitchen. They were cooking together, listening to music, and making lots of noise. The hum of joyful friendship filled the entire second floor. Then suddenly, the hum stopped. Curious to see what happened, I peeked my head from the fireplace room and was blown away by what I saw. Twenty students were gathered around the island filled with good food, their heads bowed, giving thanks to the Lord for the food and for one another.

Those of us of more advanced ages can miss just how profound this image really is. In a world in which young people are marked by isolation and disbelief, it is a life-changing experience for our students to come to a place where they find their people and find their Lord. This image was a holy moment—a thin space where I caught a brief glimpse of the heavenly banquet. Such moments happen every single day in this hall and the others across campus.

So thank you, generous donors and fervent prayer warriors, for catching the vision for this space and committing your resources toward it. Thank you, Greg and Michelle, for embodying in your leadership what Christ-like love looks like in community. And thanks to our Lord for allowing his redeeming work to be done in this beautiful, blessed space.

This is a lightly edited version of the speech Julie Vermeer Elliott '97, Northwestern's vice president for student life, gave at the dedication of the Greg and Michelle Christy Suites on Oct. 4. The new facility is home to 157 women. See page 20 for more details.



ZAC LUCY

Raiders Stand Out

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.

Raiders lead + serve.
We're smart + strong.
Courageous + faithful.
We build community +
experience belonging.

We achieve—not for ourselves,
but because excellence
honors God and serves others.

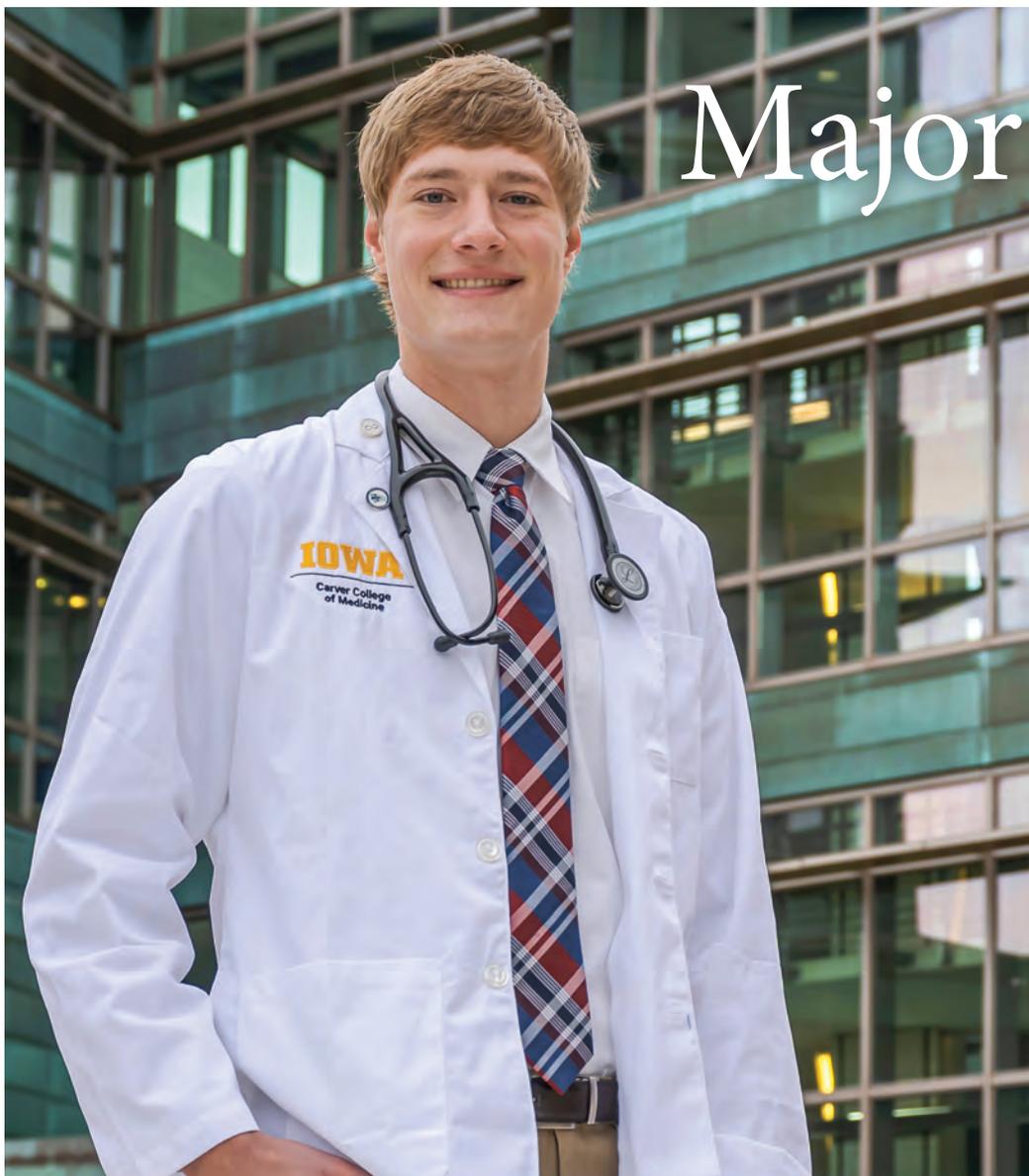
We're equipped.
For our careers.
For God's call on our lives.
For success.
For significance.

Because we're Raiders.
And **#RaidersStandOut.**

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Iowa's
STANDOUT
Christian College

NORTHWESTERN
COLLEGE



Major Success

A doctor's son, Isaiah Gritters knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, so he began his Northwestern education with majors in biology-health professions and chemistry.

When he graduated in May, he had also completed majors in economics and finance, becoming what is believed to be Northwestern's first quadruple major grad. And he did it while earning a 4.0 GPA.

Now a student at the University of Iowa, Gritters says completing these four majors has significantly enriched his med school experience.

"The time management and organizational skills I developed at Northwestern have been invaluable in navigating the curriculum. Interpersonally, my diverse academic background has allowed me to connect with classmates from many disciplines. Additionally, my studies in economics and business have given me a unique perspective on how these fields shape health care and its delivery."

the Classic