

# WORDHORD

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Northwestern College  
English Department Newsletter

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## A Tribute to Ms. Kim Van Es

by Marie Jeppesen

As an English Department, we devote our daily lives trying to turn our thoughts into words, or at least giving it our best shot. However, I believe we can all agree that words fail to capture the dedication, joy, and undeniable passion of our beloved professor and colleague, Kim Van Es. From her loving intentionality in and out of the classroom to her persistent efforts behind the camera at department parties, Van Es never fails to make us smile.

Though she spent a few years as a Dordt Defender, both as an undergrad and a professor, Van Es was happily accepted into the Raider family when she decided to transition from a Northwestern adjunct to work full-time in 1997. From that point forward, Ms. Van Es has cultivated an image as a servant-hearted professor—one who will go out of her way to make a student feel accepted on campus or give a listening ear when times are rough. Her passion for serving Northwestern students didn't go unnoticed either. Ms. Van



Kim with Alum Erin (Brasser) Vandevte '16 at an Iowa Council of Teachers of English Conference in the fall of 2016.



“Thank you for pouring your life into me and into all of your students!”

— Mary Schreuder '05

Es was awarded the first Faculty Inspirational Service Award in 2013 for going above and beyond expectations



Kim giving some personalized instruction to students in her 2007 English class.

and embodying a strong Christian perspective in serving students and staff alike on campus.

Van Es's responsibilities on campus have varied over the years, but a common thread through all of them is her devotion to a whole person, no matter who they are. As the English Teaching coordinator, she prepared her students not only as instructors in a classroom, but as bearers of God's light into the world. Mary Schreuder '05 said, “I am forever indebted to her grammar class as it taught me so much about the love of language and the importance of communication. Furthermore, her wise guidance and mentorship gave me the skills necessary to thrive as a teacher. I want to thank her for pouring her life into me and into all of her students.”

Chris White '09, another English teaching alum, expresses the same sort of gratitude: “Ms. Van Es is probably the most genuine person I have ever met. Even 8 years removed from NWC, she continues to show sincere investment in me, my family, and my work as a teacher.” As part of Van Es's troupe of English Teaching majors, I have seen her passion for language and punctuation come to life in her Grammar in the Classroom course. As the campus Grammar Guru, Van Es presents the nit-pickiness of sentence structure misplaced modifiers as an opportunity to better communicate with the world around us. She has helped me, and many others, realize the connection between our Christian mission and grammar. How cool is that?

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## A Tribute to Ms. Van Es



Upper left to right: An assortment of English faculty and students gather at the Van Es home for a word game party; Ms. Van Es' First-Year Seminar students along with O-Staff leaders do community service during the 2016 fall semester orientation; Lower left to right: Kim with dancing partner Lee Stover perform their routine in the 2010 NWC Dancing with the Profs competition; While on a Spring 2014 Service Project, Ms. Van Es and then senior literature major Emma Westerholm assist alum Nathan Mastbergen in his Opelousas LA classroom; Kory McMahan and Ms. Van Es participate in the 2016 I-Club Ethnic Fair.



(Continued from page 1)

Besides English Teaching, Ms. Van Es is one of the First-Year Seminar coordinators and professors, an advisor for many of the conditional students on campus, and a frequent supporter of multicultural events. In the often complicated but extremely rewarding world of FYS, Dr. Fynaardt offered some insight to the impact Van Es has made on the program: "Her FYS colleagues have appreciated her curriculum planning and her fastidious work with the quotidian matters of the course, the food she brings to FYSA and the copious notes she takes—we're really, *really* going to miss her."

Ms. Van Es stays incredibly busy in her personal life as well, as you probably can imagine. Serving as the chair of the Sioux County Democrats, Van Es has been a prominent voice for the party in Northwest Iowa. She has organized opportunities for community members to participate in conversations about politics and become more educated about how we can better

serve the people of Sioux County. Van Es also uses her down time to volunteer at The Bridge in Orange City and to use her grammar skills in the form of copy editing. In fact, she has served as the copy editor for 12 books and a few professor dissertations with another project still in the works. In addition to all that, Ms. Van Es runs actual marathons, bakes delicious zucchini bread, and travels around the U.S. with her husband Jerry to visit family and friends. I'm exhausted just writing about all of it.

Like I said before, words can't possibly describe the impact Kim Van Es has had on the campus, the department, and all of us. There will be an empty office and some large shoes to fill (I'm looking at you, Chris Nonhof), but as long as we continue to serve each other and the rest of God's creation to the best of our ability, her legacy will live on at NWC. If nothing else, there will just be a little less photographic documentation of it.

*Best Wishes, Kim!*

# Reflections on Kim's Legacy . . .



English Professor  
Joel Westerholm

The students Kim advises and mentors leave Northwestern, not only as desirable, hireable teachers, but as people with a mission. Kim has had an important part in the formation of quite a few genuinely admirable people who have gone on to do God's work well.

Kim took her role as teacher and mentor a step farther and really got to know me, and even after I left Northwestern still shows an interest in my life and career. That's just the kind of person Kim is.

- **Rebecca Wiggins**, Class of 2012

Of all the people at Northwestern who impacted my teaching, Ms. Van Es is the single most important influence. She taught me the two most important things: to have high standards for my students and to let them know that I love them.

- **Ashlee Koedam**, Class of 2013



English Professor  
Michael Kensak

Kim, I cannot imagine a better role model for the scores of students you have mentored. In their classrooms and workplaces, they are benefitting from your guidance and extending your hospitality. Thank you, my dear sister, for illuminating Granberg, Doorenbos, and Kepp Hall with your merry diligence.



English Professor  
Ann Lundberg

I think of Kim Van Es as ...

- ◆ an innovative mentor of English Teaching Majors who takes students to professional conferences and has them read cutting-edge YA novels that I would never have the courage to teach.
- ◆ a generous host who has offered her house to a variety of English Department celebrations.
- ◆ a sounding board and second reader of documents.
- ◆ a grammarian *par excellence* who has caught my foolish errors on more than one occasion.
- ◆ the colleague most likely to complete the circle of communication when I send out an "email from the chair."
- ◆ a dear friend who is unafraid of honest give-and-take.
- ◆ a most excellent hiking partner.

Ms. Van Es was the reason I became an English teacher. She taught me that there is no student, no problem too big or small, that is underserving of a conversation. I cherish each of those conversations - because they have shaped my teaching and more importantly, my faith in God.



- **Tanya Woodward**  
Class of 2013



Director of Academic  
Support Tom Truesdell

My dominant impression of Kim has been her commitment to enabling students to bring their lived experiences into the classroom. I believe her success as an educator—particularly concerning her work with marginalized and underprepared students—is largely a result of this commitment, and I am grateful to have worked alongside her because of it.

When we moved to town, Kim was the first person to show up and help unload boxes from the trailer to our house. She hasn't stopped helping me transition. In fact, my greatest comfort in trying to fill the massive void she's left is her promise to help me do so. I am beyond grateful for her help, her care, and her friendship.



Education Professor  
Chris Nonhof

(Continued on page 11)

## On the Road to Learning

Marie Jeppesen, Dr. Lundberg, and I had the opportunity to attend the Streamlines Literature and Writing Conference the first weekend of November. The conference was held at the University of Dubuque and featured presentations in many different genres of writing.

Marie and I both were invited to share some of our own writing at the conference. Marie presented her paper entitled *Using Latin as a Model for Understanding and Appreciating English*, which explains some differences between Latin and English grammar and examines how Latin can be used to help students better understand how English grammar works. During the same session, a student from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville presented a paper titled *African American Vernacular English: Battling Social Acceptance* which also dealt with how grammar is taught in the classroom. It was very interesting to see how the two papers, written from two separate perspectives, intersected at several points.

I was able to read my creative nonfiction essay *No Trespassing* at the conference. *No Trespassing* considers the way that we think and talk about death in conservative Christian American culture and questions why we place such a strong emphasis on dying honorably. In the question and answer time that followed I was able to talk about my beliefs about the afterlife as a Christian, which helped me to remember that I can use my writing as a form of Christian witness.

We were also able to listen to a wide variety of papers, stories, and presentations at the conference. We heard poetry, short stories, essays about women's literature, and a panel about the importance and relevance of teaching handwriting in elementary schools. Professor Barbara Lounsberry from the University of Northern Iowa delivered the keynote address. Professor Lounsberry encouraged us to develop our skills as writers by reading thirty minutes a day and writing thirty minutes a day. She also spoke about the benefits of keeping a journal or diary, the value of writing in community, and the importance of sending our writing into the world to allow others to read it.

At the conference, we were also able to meet many other college-aged writers and talk with them about their experiences. We ate lunch and supper with two girls, Abbey from Houston Baptist University and Rachel from Iowa State University, on Saturday. I enjoyed getting to know both of them and talking with them about their writing.

In addition to the academic encouragement we received from the conference, we were also able to have some fun throughout the trip. On the way to Dubuque, we listened to the soundtrack of *Hamilton*, and Dr. Lundberg tried Jimmy John's for the first time. After the conference, we spent some time driving around downtown Dubuque and saw some beautiful old buildings and enjoyed the landscape. We also went to a bookstore and a thrift shop near our hotel.

Streamlines was an enlightening, encouraging experience, and I am very grateful for the opportunity I had to attend.



Marie Jeppesen & Jayde Logemann

# BOOKS vs E-BOOKS

## DOES ONE HAVE TO WIN?



By Jayde Logemann

Since the 1971 release of the US Declaration of Independence online by Project Gutenberg, the mediums and trends of publication have changed drastically. Within a whirlwind of 46 years of technological advancement, the simple ebook has skyrocketed into a multi-billion dollar industry. From Voyager Company's books on CD-ROM in the 1980s to the networks developed in 2009 by Sony to allow libraries to rent out electronic books, the idea of reading off a screen instead of off a page has captivated culture's attention and pocketbook. After Apple's release of the iPad in 2010 and its creation of iBooks, more than half a million ebooks were sold in one month. In 2013, the sale of ebooks comprised about 20% of all book sales in the U.S, and, the year before, ebook sales made more than the sales of all hardcover books in the U.S.

When asked whether they prefer to read print books, ebooks, or a combination of both, about 57% of North-western English majors and minors said they prefer to read print books. The other 43% said they read a combination of both, and none favored ebooks over print books. Many who favor print books enjoy the feel-



ing of holding a book in their hands and the ability to annotate easily.

Elizabeth Johnston said, "Whenever I'm reading on a screen I tend to be less focused," and Maria Van Zweden commented, "Reading an ebook makes my head hurt." Megan Cummings said, "A good printed book is so relaxing to touch, read, and smell."



On the other hand, those who responded that they read both print and ebooks tended to prefer ebooks when traveling. Briley Weidner stated, "I like to read both. Print books are better, but it isn't always feasible to carry around many print books." Samuel Olson said, "I prefer traditional books for their enhanced readability and feel. E-books for their accessibility and convenience." Although the campus is divided as to whether print books or ebooks are better, the general consensus seems to be that print books are more pleasurable to read while ebooks tend to be more convenient (and often much cheaper). So, although ebooks are becoming increasingly more popular, don't be too surprised if you see an English major sitting in a hammock outside this spring with a cup of coffee and a good old-fashioned book.

### Benefits of Publishing Ebooks

- \* Traditional publishing has become more difficult.
- \* The market for ebooks is growing rapidly.
- \* Ebook publishing is fast and easy.
- \* Self-publishing an ebook is much cheaper than self-publishing a print book.
- \* Ebooks are easier to revise than print books.

### Disadvantages of Ebooks

- \* Ebooks are much easier to pirate.
- \* Ebooks don't smell like books.
- \* Reading off a screen can create glares which make reading more difficult.
- \* Many ebooks lack proper formatting or may be incompatible with certain reading devices.
- \* Print books don't have to be charged.

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# SENIOR PROFILES

## Amie Adams *Writing & Rhetoric, Religion*

I always know I've hit a milestone in my life when I realize just how small I am. (And no, that's not a short joke.) The last time I felt this way was during my senior year of high school. You know, one of those moments when you're standing in a high place—a big kid on top of the world—and then you look down and realize that everyone around, yourself included, thinks that they've got it all figured out.

The truth is, they don't. This realization is a humbling experience because, despite the fact you know some things, you don't know everything.

Now, four years have flown by, and I'm here on the peak of my final semester of college, feeling that same infinitesimal reality. I've experienced a whirlwind of academia and community at Northwestern, and I know some really cool stuff, but I definitely don't know everything.

My time at Northwestern is best described as a profound maturing process, one for which I am incredibly grateful. I thought I was pretty good at writing when I came to college (whether that was an accurate appraisal is a different story), but the Writing & Rhetoric major has transformed my voice into one I am proud to call my own. A lot of the improvements have been practical—learning to be concise, unique, and descriptive—but I am most thankful for how the English Department has shaped my ability to approach the world thoughtfully. College has taught me how to think well and engage in magnanimous conversations with others.

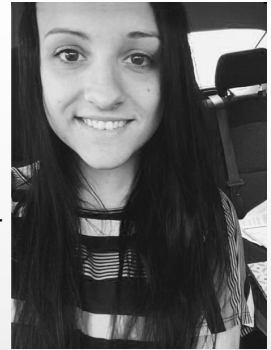
Rhetoric of Persuasion played a huge role in this. In class, I learned to evaluate arguments and present my own in a humble and thoughtful way. Before Northwestern, I had no interest in rhetoric. I shied away from public speaking and buried my nose in a book for most of my twelve years of public school. I never expected to develop such a deep appreciation for it, but I've come to realize how vital good rhetoric is to society. After all, *everything's an argument*.

Moving forward, I'm not quite sure where I'm headed, but I'm hopeful that I will have the opportunity to continue crafting words into stories worth telling. Here, I've deepened my love for creative nonfiction and nature writing, and I'm looking forward to adventures worth writing about.



## Sierra Young *Literature*

I am a small town girl from Maine who ventured into the Midwest for my Northwestern experience. I joined the English Department in 2015 and have enjoyed every moment since.



Throughout my journey at Northwestern I have learned to have confidence in my writing as I strengthen my logical reasoning and analyzing skills. My favorite part about being in English at Northwestern was watching myself develop as a writer. Before starting college I was a very academic writer that solely wrote to answer a topic question given by the professor. As the years went by I was able to watch myself expand my writing abilities, even writing fiction (something I never thought I'd do!). Looking back at my work from my freshman year to my senior year is astounding and extremely encouraging.

As I graduate this May I look forward to putting those skills to the test as I work for the U.S. Homeland Security as a Customs and Border Protection agent.

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Lucas Fratzke *Literature, Writing & Rhetoric*

Words have always fascinated me. I'm not so sure I can properly explain why, but the ability to make accessible something taking place in my mind is, to me, beyond profound. So I found my way to the Northwestern English Department. Not satisfied with just a degree in literature, I decided to take on the writing and rhetoric department too. Now, for better or worse, I (nearly, as I am not done yet) stand on the other side. From this point I could launch into an exhaustive list of all that I have learned over the past few years in terms of literary analysis and creative writing techniques and rhetorical knowledge, but such things are rather secondary to other things that I learned from my time in the English department. What I really learned, some things that will honestly stick with me, can be adequately summed up as follows:

One, I don't actually know anything. The more I study a certain field, the more I realize just how much I really don't know about, or rather, how much more there is to learn. This is not a discouraging experience, but a humbling one, something that I will be reminded of when approaching the world. Two, never underestimate the power of strong coffee at any point of your day (or night). Three, wordiness does not equal knowledge or clarity; more often than not, brevity is key. Fourth, listen first, respond later; much later. Fifth, professors actually *aren't* scary. Talk to them, joke with them, eat with them, relate with them; professors are people too. Sixth, your fellow English majors will probably get you better than you get you; go out for coffee (or drinks) with all of them. Seventh, never feel like you know what you're talking about.

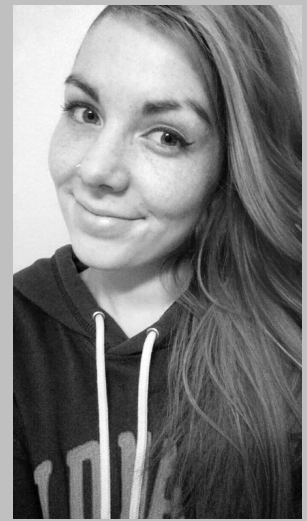


And lastly, and perhaps most importantly, failing is not only okay, but sometimes your best option. The feedback that you can get from your peers and professors on any of your work is one of the most invaluable sources of personal progress that you can find. Listen sincerely to all of the criticism that is given to you, even if, no especially if, you disagree with them.

In closing, as I am already not following my third rule, I'll end with something simple, something I learned after getting it wrong so many times: just have fun with it. Get excited about small things, we all understand. That's about the best I can do for a quick summation of my experience at Northwestern, in all of its past deadline, hopped up on caffeine, one in the morning glory.

## Alice Church *Literature*

I definitely have nothing to say about myself.



# SENIOR PROFILES

## Leigh Carson *Writing & Rhetoric*

Perhaps the most impressive thing I have learned about during my time in the NWC English department is the ability of my fellow classmates to create large amounts of adverb jokes in regards to my name. "That went perfect-Leigh!" It *never* gets old. Although I suppose it is good vocab practice. In complete honesty, there has never been a moment of doubt about my decision to change my major to Writing and Rhetoric all those years ago. It's not been an easy path, but you don't learn as much if the road is already paved for you. Because of this, confidence was the best gift I was given from the English department – confidence in my writing style, in my communication abilities, and in the journey of what it means to be a "rhetor" (Lord knows I'm still figuring that one out). Somewhere, from my beginnings in Intro to Rhetorical Studies with Sowienski, in between visiting Marie in Van Es' office on the way to the "pick-me-up jar" and accidentally walking in on a Spanish class multiple times because I was early, to turning in my last college essay ever in American Literature with Lundberg, I experienced the joy of finding a calling I hadn't anticipated: spreading God's love through the written and spoken word. And, if further down the "life goal's" road, I do end up a librarian, I look forward to imbuing the patrons that visit with that same appreciation. Thanks, all. You have blessed me richly.



## Whitney Jorgensen *English Teaching*

I never intended to be a teacher. In high school, I always enjoyed my English classes, but when I started as a freshman at Northwestern, I was undecided and awkward. It wasn't until I took Professor Westerholm's Literary Context class that I realized how much I enjoyed reading and literary analysis. I thought, I might as well make a career out of it and become an English Teaching major! With encouraging teachers like Professor Nonhof, Professor Westerholm, and Professor Van Es cheering me on, I was prepared to take on any class and now student teaching.

Although I love the Education department, I know that the English department is my home at NWC. I have loved attending the game nights and bonfires with my favorite teachers and classmates and hope I can attend more with my busy schedule as a student teacher. Being an English tutor, a writing tutor, a speech judge, and an attendee at conferences like ICTE, NCTE, and the Calvin Festival of Faith and Writing have been amazing opportunities that have furthered my education and love for the arts.

As this year comes to a close, I will finish my semester as a student teacher and begin looking for jobs as a full on English teacher. This July I will be getting married to another English major (Lucas Fratzke) and we will begin a search for our new home and life as we look forward to life after college. We will certainly miss the place that has been our meeting place and home for four years, but we also can't wait for married

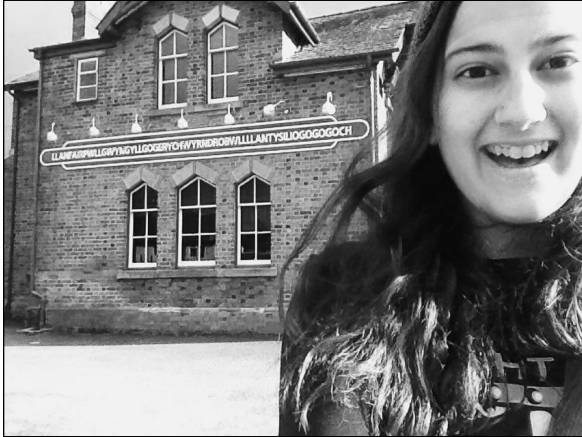




# SENIOR PROFILES

## Carrie Bouwman

*Writing & Rhetoric and Art*



My first semester at Northwestern, I wasn't taking any English classes, only art classes and Gen Eds because that's just how my schedule worked out. Then the next semester I took a few English classes and I knew immediately I made the right choice to come here to get a writing degree. My fellow English majors and the English professors made me feel welcome. As I took more and more classes in the English corner of campus the more I came to appreciate all of the quirks in the English department.

One of my favorite things about English classes is that when we get to class, my classmates and I start to talk about the readings we had to do for that day, and then realize that we should wait until class starts, because that's literally what we're going to talk about in class. I can see a change in my writing style since I came to school as well. I think it might be a side effect of having classes with Dr. Martin, because my stories have gradually gotten darker as time goes by. Although, this isn't necessarily a bad thing.

I'm not sure what I want to do with my majors, so what happens next for me isn't quite set in stone, but I have very loose plans to move to China for at least a year. My brother is living there right now and is confident he can get me a job. I would most likely end up teaching kindergarten, and when we have days off my brother and I will do some traveling.

## Savannah Sheets

*English Teaching*

I am thrilled to have been a part of the Northwestern English Department. They have been a second family to me. They taught me to dream of bigger things and to strive to fulfill my wildest goals. Because of my Northwestern family I've accepted a job at Modern Knowledge School in Bahrain next fall. I will be teaching Drama, Speech and Debate, while also directing and coaching each. Without Northwestern's English Department, I couldn't undertake such a change. They have prepared me to travel half-way around the world.



Northwestern as a whole has changed who I am. I had little self-confidence before coming to this school and now I feel as though I can conquer anything. My professors taught me to have faith in myself and to see the value in my own unique personality. My book hoarding has been encouraged during my years at Northwestern. My library has grown by hundreds and it seems that whenever I meet up with a professor or fellow English student I am carrying a new book under my arm.

I am going to miss my Northwestern family, but I can't wait to begin my new journey that they have prepared me for.

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Nicole Montgomery *English Teaching*

Home. That's what the English department and Kepp Hall have been for me these last four years. And the professors and fellow majors? Family. To say I'll be sad to leave this place is an understatement, but I'm at least able to move out into the real world knowing one thing: the education I have been given in this department has prepared me well to serve and love others.



My first year of college, I came into the English department thinking I was out of place or that I didn't belong. I was quickly proven wrong. After taking Art of the Essay with Professor Sowienski (I still miss him), I learned I was in good company, having the opportunity to be vulnerable with those who loved and supported me well. Attending the Festival of Faith and Writing, traveling 12 hours with a bunch of English nerds, and spending a weekend with those who shared my passion affirmed my choice to join the English department.

Several years have passed, and I can still say the same thing. My professors have encouraged me time and time again, reminding me that my story is important, and the work I do is important to love others. I'll never forget the time spent with Dr. Martin and two other English majors on my endeavor to create an insane amount of poetry, the time spent traveling with the English Teaching majors to ICTE and NCTE and geeking out over the incredible presentations we saw, the small moments of sharing a cup of coffee with a peer before class during a tough week. I'll never forget the love I felt in this place.

Going forward, I'm scared as hell. I'm not afraid to admit that. The world out there is scary, and there are days I still feel ill-equipped to serve my future students, but I know that regardless of where I land, regardless of what I teach, and regardless of who I teach, this department will still hold a place in my heart and will still be there rooting me on. For that, I'm incredibly grateful. Thank you, professors. Thank you, peers. Thank you,

## Kinbrae Bezdicek *English Teaching*



**Danielle Cupp**  
*English Teaching*

**Sharla DeBruin**  
*Literature*



# Reflections on Kim's Legacy . . .

(Continued from page 3)



English Professor  
Samuel Martin

One of my best memories of working with Prof. Van Es was at the Calvin Festival of Faith and Writing last year, going to different sessions and having sidewalk discussions about who would be a good author to invite to campus for a Deep Song reading. After one of those conversations Prof. Van Es emailed Nigerian novelist Chigozie Obioma, who'd we'd both gone to hear in Calvin's seminary chapel, and she invited him to campus this term. And he said yes! It's great to work with a colleague like Kim, who's as passionate as I am about introducing our students to leading writers from around the world.

## Alumni Notes

**Aleisa Dornbeierer-Schat**, (W&R '07) is now the editor of *The Dordt College Voice*.

**Amanda [Karsen] Vazquez** (English Teaching '11) recently accepted the position as the Director of the Orange City Public Library.

**Anna Henke** (Literature '11) works as a copywriter for Baker Publishing Group, creating ads for the Bethany House and Chosen Books divisions. She also blogs about books at <https://loveonlit.com/> and can be found on Litsy @annahenke (3,600+ followers, litfluence: 42,000+).

**Christine Roy** (English Teaching '12) has completed her Master of Education, Teacher Leadership Track, through Northwestern College's online program. Christine teaches high school English at Al Raja School in Bahrain.

**Elise [Wolthuisen] Drenkow** (Literature Major and W&R Minor '11) is now the Online Adult Literacy HSED (High School Equivalency Diploma) Instructor for Northwest Iowa Community College.



## Alumni Profile Connie (Bastemeyer) Albers '79

When I graduated from Northwestern College in 1979 with an English major and a minor in theater/speech, I expected to pursue a career as a high school teacher, helping students understand and appreciate great literature and challenging them to develop writing and speaking skills to become more articulate communicators. During my senior year I'd had a semester internship with a master teacher, honing my teaching skills and learning the techniques of classroom management. I was ready to be an educator! But as many ardent young graduates soon discover, a career path is seldom a straight line.

Being from Iowa, going to college in Iowa, and after a year of teaching in Iowa, wanderlust got the better of me. I made several moves. After stints in banking and retail, plus getting married and raising children, I found myself back in education, working in an alternative high school in Minnesota. When that program underwent major "restructuring" I knew it was time to make another move.

Because I was the product of a church-affiliated liberal arts col-

lege, I applied for an office position at St. Olaf College. I wouldn't be teaching, but I'd be working in an academic environment for a mission-driven institution. I've had two previous positions here before assuming my current role in 2008 as Director of Stewardship in the Advancement Division.

Fundraising is a wonderful profession, donor relations even more so. I often joke that I have the best job on campus, because I don't have to ask donors for money. I'm not the "Please," but the "Thank you!" Strong communication skills are essential in my job. I interact with students, staff and faculty across campus, and with donors across the country.

While no two days are ever the same, I use my writing skills daily. I craft endowment agreements for donors, finding the "sweet spot" that matches a donor's desire with the college's need. I compose personalized acknowledgements to donors for gifts that support everything from the annual fund to more specific purposes. I prepare reports for our President, informing him about individual donors

and their gifts. I facilitate meetings between donors and beneficiaries of their generosity, whether that's a group of students or a professor's research project. I write impact reports demonstrating the difference a donor's support has made. I edit campaign communications and solicitations. Through meaningful contacts with donors I support fundraising efforts by building lifelong relationships and instilling trust that their gifts are an investment in the continuing success of the college.

When the endowment reports get me bogged down and the thesaurus runs out of good words for "generosity," I think about the fact that I am playing an important role not only in the world of fundraising, but in the lives of individual donors. I express gratitude and share the impact of their uncommon generosity. My thank you note might hit someone's mailbox on the day they need it most. And through expressing gratitude, I have learned to be more grateful myself.