



PILLARS *of*
IMPACT

Our Purpose in Action

APRIL 7-10

2026



Pillars of Impact: Our Purpose in Action is a celebration of the pillars in the Wartburg community who represent and embody the foundational pillars of the Wartburg mission: **leadership, service, faith, and learning.**

Learn more about our major institutional awards and nominate deserving Knights and friends at www.wartburg.edu/pillars-week.

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LEAD + SERVE

Celebration *of* **LEADERSHIP
AND SERVICE**

— April 7, 2026 —

Wartburg lives out the leadership and service pillars of its mission by preparing students to lead with integrity and to serve with purpose in their communities and professions. The Celebration of Leadership and Service Awards ceremony recognizes students, faculty, and staff who exemplify the college's mission through meaningful involvement, commitment, and positive impact on others.

Celebration *of* **LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE**

7 p.m. — McCaskey Lyceum

Special Thanks

Emcees

Zack Crawford
Katie Steinlage

Music by Ninth Street Jazz Band

Cooper Daugherty
Anthony Girone
Danson Moody
Jalen Wynter

National Society of Leadership and Success

Executive Team

Vanessa NehmzowPresident and IT Coordinator
Ruby Robertson Vice President
Emery Breitbarth Membership Outreach Chair
Khylie Wainwright Publicity Chair
Maria Colette Lei Secretary
Morgan Link Fundraising Chair and Treasurer
Dr. Michael Gleason Adviser

Inductees

Inioluwa Akingbemila	Maria Colette Lei
Makinzey Brannon	Carter Newbrough
Emery Breitbarth	Ryleigh Pinion
Kalena Davenport	Katie Steinlage
Kaitlyn Davies	Margaret Van Speybroeck
Brooklyn Hubbard	Khylie Wainwright
Consolate Kumboko	Bladley Zimunya

Leadership Minor

Ella Aulwes
Olivia Baxter
Colton Berg
Makinzey Brannon
Bridget Canfield
Isabella Canney
Sam Conway
Brandon Cushion
Haylee DeLong
Charles Dojan
Ryan Folkerts
Aidan Gruver
Blake Halleran

Ally Happ
Keyshawn Harris
Landon Hartsell
Owen Hatcher
Kaya Hines
Cooper Johnston
Mikaela Kime
Alex Koch
Alexis Larson
Hayden McCormac
Gwen Mews
McKade Munn
Trey Nelson

Nicholas Nin
Lily Peterson
Brendan Rader
Andrew Robinson
Tyler Schermerhorn
Jagger Schmitt
Morgan Schut
Myah Shier
Lance Sobaski
Katie Steinlage

Baldwin Leadership Fellows

Tamara Bochere Ataya
Brandy Beatty
Kaden Behrens
Ahloa Delong
Will Fagle

Mikayla Gabrielson
Hannah Radzwill
Jaelyn Stowe
Poon Supapa
Cale Tucker

Davis Projects for Peace

Hannah Radzwill

Bladley Zimunya*

*nationally selected grantee



Learn more!

Scan the QR code on your mobile device to view details about each of the leadership and service awards in this program or visit www.wartburg.edu/leadership-service-awards.



+ Student Senate Awards

Student Senate Leadership Scholarship

Madeline Boulanger

Landon Jepson

John O. Chellevoid Student Award for Excellence in Teaching & Professional Service

Garrett Arensdorf

Outstanding Academic Advisor

Dr. Cole Davidson

Outstanding Administrative Staff Award

Lindsey Leonard

Outstanding Non-Administrative Staff Award

JP May



+ SEED Coalition Awards

Presidents' Student Leadership Award

Katie Steinlage

Presidents' Civic Educator Award

Dr. Abbylynn Helgevold

Presidents' Community Partner Award

Retrieving Freedom Inc.

Presidents' Community Collaboration Award

Community Builders

Student Life Awards

Dell Award for Peace & Justice

Boboya Gabu
Hannah Radzwill
Katie Steinlage
Lauryn Tate

Peacemaker

Third-Year: Alexa Brockmueller
Second-Year: Thantazile Mamba
First-Year: Alyssa Moore

Nobility Award

Brody Bauer
Dawson Clark
Charles Heuton
Thaddeus Nance
Kali Nelson
Abi Peyman
Grant Rogers

Outstanding International Senior

Tamara Bochere Ataya

Outstanding Service Organization

Sanctuary Leadership Team

Outstanding Student Organization

Latino & Hispanic Heritage Society (LHHS)

Outstanding Organization Advisor

Greg Drewes

Spirit of Student Life

Jami Dare
Jennifer Dickey

Debbie E. Heida Award

Haylee DeLong
Lauryn Tate

Staff Council Awards

Outstanding Administrative Staff Award

Tara Winter

Outstanding Non-Administrative Staff Award

Mark Dunnick

Spiritual Life & Campus Ministry Awards

Pastor Trachte Award for Service

Lindsay Bienemann
Ruth Hein
Dr. Abbylynn Helgevold

St. Elizabeth Award for Service

Alina Ahamed
Landon Jepson
Hayden McCormac

WARTBURG COLLEGE

RiCE DAY

RESEARCH, INTERNSHIP, AND CREATIVE ENDEAVOR DAY

2026

Celebration *of* **ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT**

— April 9, 2026 —

Learning at Wartburg happens inside and outside the classroom, allowing students to connect knowledge with real-world application. These hands-on opportunities help students discover their strengths, build practical skills, and prepare them to live a life of purpose after graduation.

Undergraduate research, internships, and creative activity are integral to the educational experience at Wartburg College. This culminates in our annual RICE Day, which highlights the college's commitment to experiential learning by showcasing student accomplishments. Full session details are available at www.wartburg.edu/rice.

RICE Day Kickoff | 8:30–9 a.m., Levick Arena

All-Day Events | Art: Senior Student Displays; Internships

Session 1 | 9:15–10:15 a.m.

Historiography; ID 345; Music Therapy Clinical; Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology; Senior Seminar in Business Administration; Social Work: Field Education and Awards

Session 2 | 10:15–11:30 a.m.

Bremer County Senior Transportation Project; German Literature; Health & Human Performance; Honors Community; Music Education; National Student Advertising Competition

Session 3 | 1–2:30 p.m.

Biology 152 Research; Bremer County Senior Transportation Project; Education; Honors Community; Institute for Leadership Education; Music Departmental Recital; SEM 200: Borders and Belonging

Session 4 | 2:30–4:30 p.m.

Journalism & Communication Capstone Documentary

Session 5 | 3:50–6:15 p.m.

Music Ensemble Open Rehearsals

Session 6 | 7–9 p.m.

Art: Senior Exhibition Reception; STEM Poster Session



SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

PROVIDING ACCESS TO
WARTBURG'S MISSION

11:30 a.m. — Heritage & St. Elizabeth rooms
Saemann Student Center

The annual Scholarship Luncheon recognizes the generosity of Wartburg's alumni and friends and allows students to thank these donors for support provided on their educational journeys. A complete list of all annually funded, endowed, and memorial scholarships is available online at www.wartburg.edu/funding-scholarships.

Welcome

Laurie Everhardt '92, Director of Stewardship & Special Gifts

Invocation

Jack Willrett '26, Mason City, Iowa

Luncheon

Chicken Marsala
Fettuccine
Roasted Asparagus
Tiramisu

Student Recipient Reflection

Nicholas Raine '27, Anamosa, Iowa

Scholarship Donor Reflection

Dr. Scott Meyer '82, West Des Moines, Iowa

Closing

Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, President

Loyalty Song

Lyrics to the Loyalty Song are printed on the back of this program.

New Scholarships Awarded in 2025-26

Anna Amman Wartburg Commitment Annually Funded Scholarship

Dr. Michael and Dr. Kathleen Book Teacher Education Scholarship

Vern and Jean Byl Annually Funded Scholarship

Mark and Barbara Hanawalt Wartburg Commitment Scholarship

Richard and Virjean Helgeson Endowed Scholarship

Rev. Elmer and Irene Drewelow Henrichs Memorial Scholarship

Carol Wessels Bye Koeneman Scholarship

Andre Daniel Kurtz Memorial Scholarship

Mike and Marge McCoy Wartburg Commitment Scholarship

Dean Meier Math Scholarship

Scott and Ruth Meyer Endowed Scholarship

Jack and Rachel Mithelman Scholarship

Gary Robert Porter '76 Annually Funded History Scholarship

Margaret Phillips Porter '77 Annually Funded Education Scholarship

Ratekin Family Wartburg Commitment Annually Funded Scholarship

Rathje Family Annually Funded Scholarship

Erik Skuster Legacy Scholarship

Suede Scholarship

Carla (Eichhorn) '78 and Brent Takemoto Annually Funded Scholarship



Celebration *of* **DISTINCTION**

April 10, 2026

The Celebration of Distinction honors outstanding alumni, friends, and students who exemplify all four pillars of leadership, service, faith, and learning. Through recognition such as the Graven Award, Young Alumni Awards, Wartburg Medal, and Outstanding Seniors, the college recognizes individuals whose lives and achievements reflect Wartburg's values and enduring impact.



GRAVEN AWARD

MINISTRY OF
THE LEITY

10:15 a.m. — Wartburg Chapel

The Graven Award is funded by an endowment established by Judge Henry N. and Helen T. Graven. It is given to a person “whose life is nurtured and guided by a strong sense of Christian calling and who is making a significant contribution to community, church and society.” More information about the award is available at www.wartburg.edu/graven-award.

Prelude

Prelude, Brenda Portman

Dr. Karen Black, Cantor and College Organist, Professor of Music,
and Rudi Inselmann Endowed Professor in Organ

Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Rev. Maggie Falenschek, Dean of Spiritual Life
and Herbert and Cora Moehlmann Chaplaincy Endowed Chair

Opening Hymn

Alleluia, Jesus Is Risen, ELW #377, v. 1, 2, 4

Presentation of the Graven Award

Dr. Rebecca Ehretzman, President

Remarks

Joe Davis

Anthem

Come, Ye Disconsolate, Samuel Webbe, arr. Michael Engelhardt
Wartburg Choir, directed by Dr. Lee Nelson, Patricia R. Zahn Endowed
Chair in Choral Conducting

Blessing/Sending

Chaplain Falenschek

Postlude

Suite Breve: III. Fanfares (for the Reeds), Craig Phillips
Dr. Black

Graven Award Recipient: Joe Davis

Joe Davis is an award-winning spoken word artist and bestselling author who uses poetry to power possibility.

He is the founding director of Finding Your Freedom Practice, a wellness ecosystem teaching body-centered practices through spoken word, writing, music, theater, film, and dance. Davis holds a Master of Arts in theology of the arts and also heads a multimedia production company, a soul funk band, and a racial justice education program. His work has been featured on BET, MPR, CNN, VH1, and the Twin Cities CW.



“All of my favorite pastors and preachers use poetic images. All of my favorite poets have theology in their work,” Davis said. “Faith is being fully enfleshed in the living, breathing word — our relationship to God is poetry. I believe that we are co-creators with God, forming a beautiful, beloved community that we long to live in. Everyone has a creative spark.”

Based in Minneapolis, he tours internationally to join schools, faith spaces, nonprofits, businesses, and correctional facilities to practice envisioning and embodying a world of collective liberation and human flourishing.

“Joe has been serving the church for a long time,” said Chaplain Maggie Falenschek, Davis’ nominator. “He is a frequent voice in ELCA circles, working to draw the church towards a future where all people can flourish. His work for racial justice and education is formed by his Lutheran faith and the spirit of ‘always reforming.’ Joe cares deeply for the lives of young people.”



AWARDS DINNER

GRAVEN AWARD
WARTBURG MEDAL
YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD
OUTSTANDING SENIOR RECOGNITION

6 p.m. — Heritage & St. Elizabeth rooms
Saemann Student Center

The Celebration of Distinction dinner recognizes the following honors:

- The Wartburg Medal, to those who have provided significant service to the college and are committed to our mission, quality, and character.
- The Young Alumni Award, to recent graduates living out our mission.
- Outstanding Senior recognition from academic departments.
- The Graven Award (see page 13).

Learn more at www.wartburg.edu/awards.

Welcome

Ellen Engh '08, Director of Alumni & Parent Engagement
Kennedy Hiles '21, Assistant Director of Alumni & Parent Relations

Prayer

Jacoba Jacobs '26

Dinner

Spring Mix with Honey Vinaigrette | Honey-Glazed Chicken
Rice Pilaf | Buttered Carrots | Honey Lemon Cheesecake

Greetings from the Alumni Board

Jen Bye Christy '95, Wartburg Alumni Board President

Outstanding Senior Recognition

Dr. Debora Johnson-Ross, VP for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty

Presentation of Young Alumni Awards

Young Alumni Award Committee, Wartburg Alumni Board
Tim Greenwald '08, chair; Amelia Armstrong '04;
Maddie Baez '18; Vernon Birmingham '00

Graven Award Recognition

The Rev. Maggie Falenschek, Dean of Spiritual Life and
Herbert and Cora Moehlmann Chaplaincy Endowed Chair

Presentation of Wartburg Medals & Closing

Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, Wartburg College President

Loyalty Song *(lyrics printed on the back of this program)*

Lizzie Hobby '26, Jacoba Jacobs '26, Hannah Johnson '26

2026 Outstanding Seniors

Actuarial Science	Sam McDevitt
Accounting	Brandy Beatty
Art	Anya Poggenklass
Bachelor of Music Education /Music Therapy	Ella Hayden
Biochemistry	Clay Nielsen
Biology	Claire Brown
Business Administration	Nora Tweeten
Chemistry	Tamara Ataya
Computer Science	Ibrahim Cara
Criminology & Sociology	Kelly Giardina
Economics	Armandine Mabote
Elementary Education	Alison Newton
Engineering	Aiden Tobin
English	Rewa Chababo
English Education	Ashley Stapley
Environmental Science & Studies	Leah Cherry
Exercise Science	Kali Nelson & Bella Skay
History	Kale DiMarco
International Relations	Armandine Mabote
Journalism & Communication	Lizzie Hobby
Math	JoJo Tynismaa
Math Education	JoJo Tynismaa
Music Education	Jacoba Jacobs
Music Therapy	Hannah Johnson
Neuroscience	Ella Vander Zee
Political Science	Taryn Norris
Psychology	Carson Stetter
Secondary Education	JoJo Tynismaa
Social Work	Erica Knupp
Spanish	Claire Brown

2026 Young Alumni Awards



Kyle Fleming '12, Waverly, Iowa

Kyle earned his Wartburg degree in music therapy. After earning his master's degree from Augsburg University, he opened a private practice, Fleming Music Therapy, with a focus on child and adolescent mental health treatment while also including broader community mental health and arts programming. Kyle is a frequent author and conference presenter, sharing best practices in the field. He is an assistant professor of music therapy at Wartburg.



Samantha Pfab Hospodarsky '20, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Samantha graduated from Wartburg with a degree in religion. She is the assistant director of student success and retention for the University of Northern Iowa, where she has created new onboarding programming to better support transfer students and re-engage the student body at large after semester break. She also oversees the Success Coaching program, a peer-to-peer initiative to support students on academic alert, and serves on multiple committees dedicated to inclusivity and social justice.



Olivia McAtee '19, Des Moines, Iowa

Olivia earned her Wartburg degree in psychology and sociology. After chaperoning the college's first May Term course in Rwanda in 2023, she created a fundraising drive to provide school lunches for students at the Groupe Scolaire Bare in the country's Eastern Province. This ongoing effort has provided more than 80,000 meals over three years, keeping students enrolled who could not otherwise afford this cost. Olivia is the director of development at SAFE Center of Iowa.

2026 Wartburg Medals



The Rev. Dr. Michael Burk '77, Edina, Minn.

Michael was the head pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School in Waverly before accepting a call to oversee the creation of the ELCA's new hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. He was elected bishop of the Southeast Iowa Synod from 2008-2020 and served as vice chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops. Michael briefly exited retirement to serve as interim presiding bishop for the ELCA. He has previously served on the Board of Regents and as co-chair of the Alumni Board.



Steve '71 & Jane Schmidhuber '72 Noah, Clive, Iowa

Steve and Jane have been generous supporters of the college, contributing to lecture series, building projects, and scholarships. They have done extensive advocacy for civil rights at home and in Rwanda, providing educational opportunities for students there and sponsoring study in the U.S. These efforts dovetailed into a May Term travel class focused on the Rwandan genocide and restorative justice. Steve has served on the board of Iowa Micro Loan and helped found Farmers for Free Trade, a national advocacy group.



Susan Kosché Vallem '66, Waverly, Iowa

Sue taught in the Department of Social Work from 1987-2013, serving as chair for much of that time, and developed the Day on the Hill advocacy event where social work students travel to the Iowa Capitol. She was also instrumental in forming the service dog training partnership with Retrieving Freedom. She served on the board of the Waverly Health Center from 1985-2024 and continues to provide clinical licensure and internship services for Lutheran Services in Iowa.



alumni REFERRAL AWARD

Refer a student and they can
RECEIVE \$2,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS!

With the **Alumni Referral Award program**, graduates can help today's high school students experience more through a Wartburg education.

Follow these three easy steps to **help a student receive a \$2,000 award!**



1

Fill out the student referral form.



2

The student applies to Wartburg.



3

The student receives \$500 annually in aid when they enroll!

The deadline to refer a student graduating from high school is **Dec. 1!**

Fill out the student referral form
at www.wartburg.edu/refer.

Nominate A KNIGHT

www.wartburg.edu/awards

Nominations due **MARCH 1** for
Wartburg Medal,
Honorary Degrees,
Alumni Citation, Graven Award,
and Athletic Hall of Fame

Nominations due **NOVEMBER 15** for
Young Alumni Awards



Loyalty Song

College of our brightest days,
Unto thee we chant our praise.
N'er thy name shall cease to be
A most happy memory.

Thine the spirit we love best,
Finest in the East or West,
And we sing with loyalty:
Wartburg College, hail to thee!



WARTBURG[™]
COLLEGE Experience more.™

Wartburg College is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.