



# MEET PRESIDENT NEIDUSKI

Wartburg's 18th president is the first woman to lead the college

# SHARE YOUR WORTH IT STORY



## Alex Buchheim '21

JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATION

*Assistant director, alumni and parent relations*

### **Why did you choose Wartburg?**

I chose Wartburg largely due to family who attended before me and some of those underlying pressures of growing up and being the little kid who was going to Wartburg Homecoming. One of the main factors was the chance for experiential learning through on-campus organizations and programs like Wartburg West, which solidified my decision.

### **Why did you want to return to Wartburg?**

I was struggling to find a purpose in the work I was doing, and I was wanting and needing my work to feel impactful and purposeful. What better place to feel that than here at Wartburg College? I recognize how much investment and involvement the faculty and staff put into my career as a student, and I wanted to pay it forward to the next generations and classes of students in any way I could.

### **What are you looking forward to most when working with alumni and friends of the college?**

The passion I feel when talking with alumni and friends about campus and our great mission is so fulfilling. I can't wait to connect alumni and friends I knew as a student with current students. That strengthens the relationship alumni have with Wartburg while showing current students possible paths they can take after graduation and the network of support they're now a part of.

### **What is your favorite Wartburg tradition?**

This is a loaded question because there is no right answer! If I had to pick one, it would be Outfly. Places all over the country have traditions similar to Homecoming & Family Weekend or RICE Day. Outfly is totally us, totally our own, and feels very Wartburg-y in the best ways possible. It should honestly be a nationally recognized holiday for all Wartburg alumni — we'll work on that during my time here.

### **Why was your experience worth it?**

My experience was worth it because I was set up from the start to succeed. The different roles and jobs I had ultimately set me up for my current role as assistant director of alumni and parent relations. It's a full-circle moment to be working in the office where I had my first student job on campus five years ago, and I feel very blessed and energized to be a catalyst for new students I meet!



All Wartburg alumni are invited to share their successes and #WartburgWorthIt stories with us.

Please visit [www.wartburg.edu/worth-it-stories-alumni](http://www.wartburg.edu/worth-it-stories-alumni) to share your story.

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# Wartburg

FALL 2022

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**ON THE COVER:**  
Dr. Rebecca Neiduski became Wartburg's 18th president on July 1.

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If you have suggestions for *Wartburg Magazine* stories or comments about the content, contact Emily Christensen, magazine editor, at [emily.christensen@wartburg.edu](mailto:emily.christensen@wartburg.edu). Address corrections should be sent to the Alumni Office or submitted online at [www.wartburg.edu/alumni](http://www.wartburg.edu/alumni).

**TRANSCRIPTS:**  
To obtain an official college transcript, contact the Registrar's Office or complete an online request form at [www.wartburg.edu/registrar](http://www.wartburg.edu/registrar). There is a \$5 fee per transcript.

Requests must include maiden and all married names used, as well as birth date and/or Social Security number. Enclose return address and payment with the request.

# WARTBURG

— IN THE NEWS —

VISIT [WWW.WARTBURG.EDU/NEWS](http://WWW.WARTBURG.EDU/NEWS) FOR MORE NEWS



## Three faculty awarded new status

The Wartburg College Board of Regents has approved tenure and promotion for one professor and emeritus status for another.

Eric Sommermeyer, assistant professor of accounting, was awarded tenure and received a promotion to associate professor. Sommermeyer earned a bachelor's degree from Winona State University and an MBA from Upper Iowa University.

Dr. Craig Hancock, professor of music and director of bands, was granted the status of professor emeritus. He retired in July after more than 25 years of service. Hancock earned his bachelor's degree from Simpson College and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Iowa.

In addition, Dr. Dan Sundblad, associate professor of sociology, was promoted to a full professor.



Sommermeyer



Hancock



Sundblad

## Quaicoe receives Chellevold Award for teaching; two others honored

Dr. Nana Quaicoe was the recipient of the 2022 John O. Chellevold Student Award for Excellence in Teaching and Professional Service.



Quaicoe, assistant professor of economics and the James A. Leach Chair in Banking and Monetary Economics, was honored during an event hosted by the Wartburg College Student Senate. Other honorees included Dr. Penni Pier, professor of journalism and communication and Grant L. Price Endowed Department Chair, who was named the Advisor of the Year, and Ryan Doty, former assistant baseball coach, who was named the Outstanding Administrative Staff.

The Chellevold award honors the late John O. Chellevold, a longtime Wartburg mathematics professor and administrator. It was established by one of his former students, the late **Ross Nielsen '39**, who went on to a distinguished teaching career at the University of Northern Iowa and credited Chellevold as his inspiration.



## Redman leaves the college \$1.5 million

A Wartburg College alumna gifted her alma mater \$1.5 million from her estate.

**Joyce Redman '56** earned a master's degree in education from Clarke College (now Clarke University) in Dubuque. She was an elementary school teacher for 35 years, retiring in 1993. She also taught at the

Bremwood residential campus in Waverly and the Lutheran Youth Center in Wasilla, Ala. Redman died on Feb. 3, 2021.

In accordance with Redman's wishes, the college will use \$150,000 for academic scholarships that will benefit students and families with a high level of need, helping Wartburg remain an affordable option for those most in need of assistance.

The remaining dollars will be added to the President's Strategic Reserve Fund to enable the college to fulfill its distinctive mission.

In the past, these funds have supported initiatives such as creating the new academic program in exercise science and the new co-curricular opportunity in esports. Such funding comes at a critical time, as the college looks to implement initiatives emerging from its new strategic plan (*see pages 22-23.*)

"Joyce devoted her life to education and enriching the lives of children," said **Scott Leisinger '87**, vice president for institutional advancement. "Following her retirement, she attended Artist Series performances and Keep on Learning events on campus, exercising her love for lifelong learning. It's fitting that her legacy includes enabling Wartburg College to help future students discover and claim their callings."

The Wartburg College gift was only a portion of the nearly \$4 million Redman left to Iowa charities. Like Wartburg College, Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque also received about \$1.5 million from her estate. The remaining dollars were split among Allen College, the Waterloo Public Library, Iowa Public Television, and Iowa Public Radio.

## Buchheim, Pinkowski present at Johns Hopkins' Macksey Symposium

**Andrew Buchheim '23** and **Jane Pinkowski '24** presented their research at the Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium at Johns Hopkins University last spring.

Buchheim, a political science and English major, researched the history of disability during the time William Shakespeare was writing *Othello* to see how it was represented and also completed an analysis of *Othello* as a disability figure, using the historical links between race and disability to show how he is rhetorically disabled by not being white.

Pinkowski, a Spanish and sociology major, researched the rebellious language and linguistic strategies that Chicana women used in their writings to forge a space for themselves and their activism during the mid-1900s Chicano Movement in the U.S.

The Macksey Symposium offers undergraduate students studying humanities the opportunity to share their work in a professional setting. Attendees also participated in professionalization and recruitment events during the three-day symposium, including panels on graduate admissions, careers in publishing, and networking.



## Tamang receives grant for community shower project in Nepal

**Soniya Sanam Tamang '23** received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant to carry out a summer humanitarian effort that funded a community-run shower for girls and women in the Mahawai Rural Municipality of Nepal.

Tamang, a Davis United World College Scholar from Nepal, partnered with the Oda Foundation, a nonprofit that builds local leadership and supports health care and education in Nepal's Kalikot District. The solar-powered showers provide a safe and hygienic space for menstruating girls and women to shower and wash their reusable menstruation pads.

"Being on a menstrual cycle, a natural biological cycle that is vital in girls' and women's mental and reproductive health, is considered impure and a sinful act that brings misfortune to the family and livestock," Tamang wrote in her proposal. "Understanding societal and cultural context is important to understand the issues that are rooted in villages like Mahawai, and providing basic human rights through humanitarian actions will preserve and strengthen human relationships and erase societal issues."

Representatives from the Oda Foundation also hosted sessions to educate girls and women about good menstrual health management practices.

Philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis founded Davis Projects for Peace in 2007 to celebrate her 100th birthday. Davis, who died in 2013, committed \$1 million annually to fund 100 grassroots efforts by college students. Wartburg students have received a grant every year since the program's inception.



## Social work professors secure grants to develop open educational resources

Two Wartburg College social work professors have secured grants totaling \$5,500 to develop open-resource instructional materials for two undergraduate social work courses.

Dr. Tammy Faux, Tomson Family Distinguished Chair in Social Work, received a \$2,500 grant to develop content for an interviewing and assessment course.

**Tricia Coleman-Waterbury '02**, assistant professor of social work, will use her \$3,000 grant to develop resources for an existing open-resource book for an introductory-level social welfare course. The open-resource materials the professors develop will allow students to bookmark, save, and reuse them during future classes, in their portfolios, and in their professional work.

The grants were funded through the Iowa Private Academic Libraries' Open Educational Resources Project, which received money from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund. Faux also received \$3,000 in fall 2021 to develop open-resource instructional materials for an undergraduate social work research course.



## De Seriere to lead Wartburg College Concert Bands

Jeffrey de Seriere II has been selected to lead the Wartburg College Concert Bands in 2022-23.

The visiting assistant professor of music is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in wind conducting at Northwestern University. He holds a Master of Music in instrumental conducting and a Bachelor of Music in instrumental music from California State University, Long Beach.

He was a teaching assistant at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., serving as the conducting assistant for the university's Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Northwestern University Wildcat Marching Band, while also helping with an advanced conducting course. He also coordinated the NU Summer Conducting and Wind Music Symposium. From 2017 to 2020 he served as the director of instrumental music for the California School of the Arts, a then-new public arts charter school. As the founding director for the department, he built the budget, organized the curriculum, oversaw a faculty of 15 professional teaching artists, and grew the program from 60 to 125 students in three years.

In 2021, de Seriere was awarded the Southern California Band and Orchestra Association Rising Star Award for his dedication to students and music education in his community.



Michael Gleason, Katelyn Eilders, Jenna Smuszkiewicz, Lorna Puhl, Aloaye Abdul Saliu, and Andrea Salow



## Wartburg places second at Leadership Challenge Event

A team of Wartburg students took second place in the College Division at the Washburn University Leadership Challenge Event last spring. The students also received the Emerging Leader Award, which honors the best performance by a collegiate team that has participated in the event for less than two years.

**Jenna Smuszkiewicz '23, Andrea Salow '22, Aloaye Abdul Saliu '23, Lorna Puhl '22, and Katelyn Eilders '24** competed against nine other college teams under the leadership of Dr. Michael Gleason, Wartburg's Irving R. Burling Distinguished Professor in Leadership. The challenge focused on environmental issues, with teams having to find solutions to a wastewater spill at a local factory.

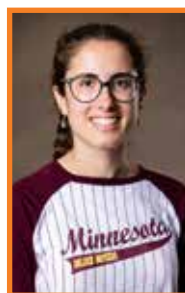
"The event was amazing and surpassed all expectations that I had. Not only was it organized by hardworking and intelligent Washburn students, but it also was a great way to get some real-world leadership skills," said Eilders.

## Wartburg team places second at Iowa Collegiate Mathematics Competition

A team of three Wartburg College students placed second in the 28th annual Iowa Collegiate Mathematics Competition.

**Paul Zelle '24, Saad Khattak '24, and Jeff Miller '25** competed against 14 teams from six other Iowa colleges and universities. A University of Iowa team took home first place.

Each team was given a two-page exam with 10 questions. This year's test was administered at the students' home schools in compliance with ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. The competition is sponsored by the Iowa Section of the Mathematical Association of America.



## Amaro Marquez awarded R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship

**Rocio Amaro Marquez '22** is one of only two students to receive an R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship.

Amaro Marquez, who graduated with a degree in biochemistry, will receive up to \$36,000 paid over three years as a fellowship recipient. She is pursuing a doctorate in molecular, cellular, developmental biology, and genetics at the University of Minnesota. Originally from Spain, she studied at United World College Dilijan in Armenia before attending Wartburg.

The fellowship, established by the McElroy Trustees in 1983, is designed to "encourage persons of accomplishment, intelligence, integrity, and leadership ability to pursue challenging academic careers."

After earning her doctorate, Amaro Marquez wants to complete a post-doctoral fellowship at the American Cancer Society and pursue a career in pediatric cancer research.

"I think I have always wanted to go into cancer research, so it was easy for me to find my path. Thankfully, I have had a lot of opportunities to be involved in labs and get experience in research," she said. "I started getting involved my sophomore year of high school in part because my teacher in Spain was a biochemist. At my UWC school, I developed my own scientific projects, and even though they weren't necessarily cancer related, I knew then I wanted to go into cancer research."

Most recently, Amaro Marquez has worked on ovarian cancer research with Dr. Shawn Ellerbroek, Wartburg's Ralph E. Otto Endowed Professor in Chemistry. In 2021, she was a participant in the National Science Foundation's summer research experience at Johns Hopkins University, which included an introduction to the field of bioinformatics.



← **Dance Marathon 2022**

Wartburg College Dance Marathon did it again! Participants raised a record-setting \$176,365.14, which was donated to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, affiliated with the Children's Miracle Network.



## McLey receives ELCA scholarship for seminary

**Jared McLey '22** is the recipient of an ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship, which covers full tuition for students of tremendous promise attending ELCA seminaries.

McLey, who graduated with a degree in religion, is attending Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque.

In addition to summer work at Camp Ewalu in Strawberry Point, McLey has served as the youth director for Kimball Avenue United Methodist Church, volunteered with a local Boy Scout troop, and spent his winter break volunteering with the pastor who serves at Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community in Waverly.

The ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship program was designed to make seminary more affordable, thus enabling more future ministers to go to seminary and graduate with less debt.



## Zelle receives ELCA physics scholarship

**Paul Zelle '24** was awarded a \$5,000 Rossing Scholarship in Physics from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Zelle is pursuing a double major in computer science and physics and is active in multiple music ensembles on campus.

"I would like to work in an area where physics, music, and computer science intersect," Zelle said in his application. "I have read about neural networks being used to efficiently mimic solutions to equations in physics, and I would be interested in researching how machine learning, especially physics-guided neural networks, can be applied to problems in acoustics and music production."

Zelle is one of only 14 students from the entire network of ELCA colleges and universities receiving a Rossing award. The scholarships, awarded to exemplary students in physics, are made possible by the Thomas D. Rossing Fund for Physics Education through the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



## Frank, Salzwedel receive honorary degrees at May Commencement

Dr. **Tony Frank '81** and **Jack Salzwedel '82** each received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters during the college's May Commencement ceremony.

Frank is chancellor of the Colorado State University System, which includes CSU Fort Collins, CSU Pueblo, CSU Global, and the emerging CSU Spur campus at the National Western Center in Denver. Salzwedel is chairman of the board of American Family Insurance and served as the chief executive officer from November 2011 until he retired in December 2021.

Frank earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Wartburg, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in comparative pathobiology from Purdue University. In 2008, he was named the 14th president of Colorado State University. Prior to that, he served in a number of capacities at CSU. In 2015, Frank took on additional duties as chancellor of the CSU System. In July 2019, he stepped down as president and moved into the full-time role of chancellor.

He and his wife, Dr. Patti Helper, have three daughters.

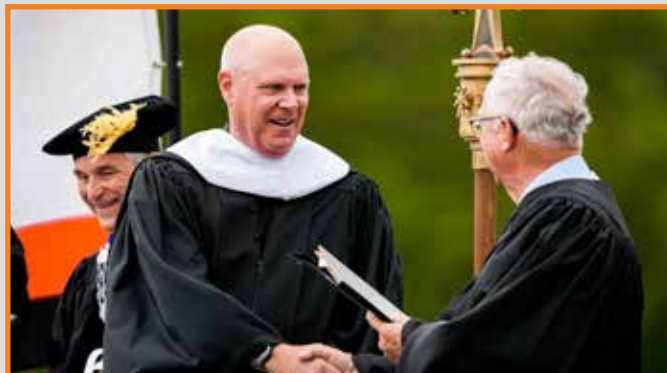
Salzwedel began his career with American Family in 1983 as a claim adjuster. In 1985, he became an agent for the company and took sales and product line leadership roles, leading up to his election as chairman and chief executive officer.

He and his wife, **Sarah Slife Salzwedel '82**, established the Salzwedel Family Foundation and have been leading community supporters of the United Way, American Family Children's Hospital, Bethel Horizons, and other Wisconsin charities.

Salzwedel served on the Wartburg Board of Regents from 2007 to 2016. The Salzwedels established Wartburg's Slife Institute for Social Work Consultation, Research, and Training in 2012. In 2019, they offered a challenge gift in support of the Outdoor Athletic Facilities project; the men's and women's soccer venue is



Tony Frank '81



Jack Salzwedel '82

named Salzwedel Field in their honor. Sons **Luke '13**, **Tyler '15**, and **Sam '23** all played soccer for the Wartburg Knights. In 2021, the Salzwedels made a lead gift to support the renovation of Centennial (now Slife) and Vollmer halls (see pages 20-21.)



# WARTBURG ATHLETICS RECAP

BY KATIEJO KUHENS SVENSON '07

PHOTOS JULIE PAGEL DREWES '90

Wartburg College finished 17th in the Learfield Directors' Cup for NCAA Division III, the highest rank for an American Rivers Conference school. The Knights have ranked in the Top 25 out of 438 schools in DIII during 18 of the last 20 years.

The college also led the A-R-C with 89 spring sport student-athletes earning 2021-22 All-Academic team honors, bringing the total for the year to 224 (also first in the A-R-C). During the 2021-22 season, six Knights earned College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-America honors, bringing Wartburg's total to 122.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The team qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the sixth-straight season, earning an at-large bid that had them squaring off against Millikin University in the first round. The women, who were ranked No. 18 at that time, lost the game 81-68. **Jaedon Murphy '24** was named first-team All-Conference and D3hoops.com All-Region. **Macy Harris '23** and **Sara Faber '24** both earned second-team All-Conference honors.



Murphy

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Knights finished the season 16-10 with a 9-7 record in conference play. **Codey Hicks '23** set the single-season record in field goal percentage (.740) and led all players in NCAA Division III in this category. **Drew Olson '22** earned first-team All-Conference honors, while **Jack Molstead '23** was placed on the second team and **Keagan John '22** earned an honorable mention.



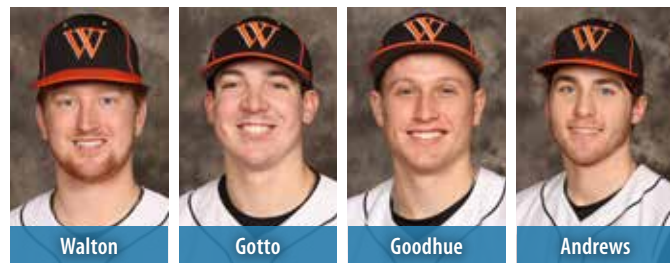
Hicks

## MEN'S GOLF

The team finished sixth at the A-R-C Championships behind a 13th-place finish by **Drew Olson '22**, who shot a 234.



Olson



## BASEBALL

The baseball team (25-20) fell to Coe 10-6 in the A-R-C championship game, though **Zach Walton '24** hit his 13th homerun of the season, tying a school record for most in a season, and drew his 39th walk, setting a new single-season record. Walton, **Dylan Gotto '22**, **Max Goodhue '23**, and **Caleb Andrews '25** were named to the All-Conference Team. Goodhue, Gotto, and Walton also earned D3baseball.com third-team All-Region and American Baseball Coaches Association/Rawlings NCAA DIII second-team All-Region honors for their efforts on the field. Gotto broke the school's all-time strikeout record after punching out a conference-best 96 batters to put his career total at 278, and Goodhue tied the record for most triples in a season (8).



## SOFTBALL ↑

The Knights (27-12, 9-7 A-R-C) claimed their fourth conference tournament title and an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in the last three seasons. The team advanced to the Super Regional round for the first time since 2008. **Ella Link '24** was named first-team All-Region and All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association, while **Olivia Brecht '22** earned second-team All-Region honors and **Ashley Nelson '24** won a spot on the third team.



## ↑ MEN'S WRESTLING

The wrestling team finished the regular season 13-1 before going on to earn its 15th NCAA Championship. The Knights also won the 2022 A-R-C Championship, the 39th conference title in program history and 29th in the last 30 seasons. **Zayren Terukina '23** was a national runner-up at 141 pounds, though he and the other six Knights — **Brady Kyner '22**, **Joe Pins '24**, **Kris Rumph '23**, **David Hollingsworth '23**, **Zane Mulder '24**, and **Kyle Briggs '22** — earned National All-American status. Terukina also was named the A-R-C MVP of the Year, while Coach Eric Keller earned his sixth Coach of the Year honor. Kyner, Pins, Rumph, Hollingsworth, Mulder, Briggs, and **Antwon Pugh '25** earned All-Conference honors.

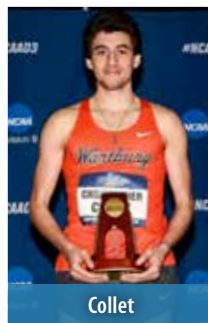
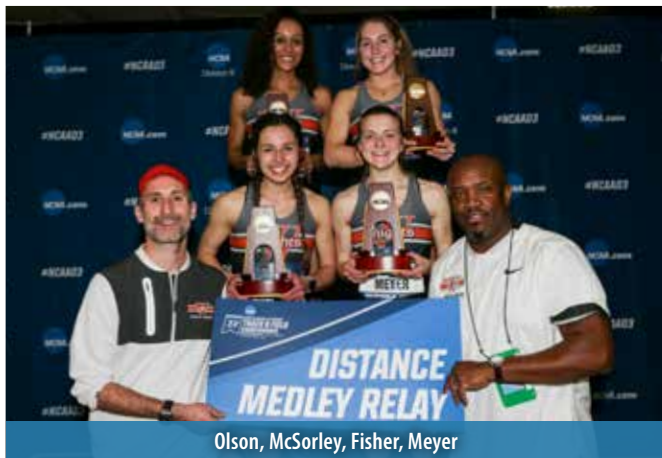


## INDOOR TRACK & FIELD ↓

The women's distance medley relay team of **Aubrie Fisher '24**, **Carson McSorley '23**, **Ellie Meyer '25**, and **Taylan Olson '23** claimed a national championship and All-American status at the 2022 Indoor National Championships. Other All-Americans include **Breya Christopher '24** in high jump and **Jackie Ganshirt '22** in the 400. Earning All-American status on the men's team were **Joe Freiburger '22** in the men's 5000, **Christopher Collet '23** in the mile, and **Deyton Love '24** and **Dallas Wright '22** in the 60m hurdles. Overall, the women finished sixth and the men finished 17th at nationals.

## ↑ CLAY TARGET SPORTS

Wartburg won a national title in the ACUI Classic All-American event (Division 4) in March 2022. The event included competition in trap, skeet, and sporting clay events.



## MEN'S TENNIS

The 2021-22 team set the season record in wins (25) but fell to Coe College in the A-R-C Tournament semifinals.

**Lucas Huffman '22** set the career record in singles wins (61) and season record in singles wins (21). Huffman earned first-team All-Conference honors in both singles and doubles, while teammate **Jackson Eells '24** earned first-team in doubles.



Huffman



Eells

## WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Wartburg qualified for the Midwest Women's Lacrosse Conference (MWLC) tournament for the first time in program history but fell to Lake Forest College in their first playoff game. **Bri Greiskalns '23** repeated as the Midwest Women's Lacrosse Conference Midfielder of the Year, and Greiskalns and **Kristin Mahoney '23** both earned a spot on the first-team All-Conference roster. **Alyson Hasner '25**, **Madalynn Burke '24**, and **Britta Solheim '25** earned second-team honors, while **Mallory Thys '24** was named to the All-Sportsmanship team. Additionally, 13 lacrosse student-athletes were named to the MWLC All-Academic team.



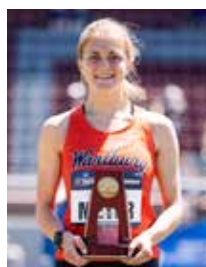
Greiskalns



Mahoney

## OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD ↓

Ranked nationally for the duration of the season, the women's outdoor team claimed its 23rd conference outdoor title while the men finished in second. Twenty Knights qualified for the NCAA National Outdoor Track and Field Championships, which ended with a fifth-place overall finish for the men and ninth-place finish for the women. **Christopher Collet '23** claimed a national title in the 3,000 steeplechase, and **Dallas Wright '22** earned one in the 400 hurdles. **Aubrie Fisher '24** was a national runner-up in the 3000 steeplechase, resetting her own school record in the event. Wright also took third in the 400m dash, and **Breya Christopher '24** was third in the high jump. **Joe Freiburger '22** finished in fifth in the 5000m, **Ellie Meyer '25** took sixth in the steeplechase, **Daekota Knott '25** took home seventh in the triple jump, and **Shaelyn Hostager '25** finished seventh in the 10K. Ryan Chapman was named National Men's Assistant Coach of the year by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. Both Fisher and Wright were named second-team Academic All-America by CoSIDA. Fisher and Wright also earned second-team Academic All-America honors.



Meyer



Hostager



Knott



# PASSING THE BATON

Hancock retires after 27 years teaching and directing at Wartburg

BY STEPHANIE ROBBINS BOEDING '99  
PHOTOS JULIE PAGEL DREWES '90 AND WARTBURG COLLEGE ARCHIVES



Band tour at Great Wall of China, 2013



Christmas with Wartburg, 1996

**I**T'S THE END OF AN ERA of music at Wartburg College, and for Dr. Craig Hancock, the hardest part of retiring from his post as director of bands is not the goodbye. "It's that there'll never be another hello," he said.

Hancock said hello to Wartburg in 1995. When he interviewed, students remember him standing on the podium in Band Hall, looking at the Wartburg College Concert Band, and saying, "I'm Dr. Craig Hancock, and I want to be your band director." College leaders wanted him to lead as well, and he took over the program from Dr. Robert E. Lee that fall, becoming only the second director to command the podium since 1959.

Taking the baton from such a beloved and long-tenured director did not intimidate Hancock. While preserving the heart of the program, he brought his technical expertise — honed at three other Midwest colleges and during his doctorate work at the University of Iowa — and a simple philosophy: "Onward and upward."

"The trajectory, going somewhere, to keep going up — that was the change I envisioned, the seed from Bob Lee, and I just watered it a bit," Hancock said. "History will judge whether in fact we did that."

Wartburg's concert band program, known as the WCCB, grew to 120 students in the mid-1990s. After Hancock's first European tour in 1997, he split the WCCB into two groups: the Symphonic Band, which rehearsed three times a week, and the Wind Ensemble, an auditioned group that gathered every weekday in late afternoon and became the touring instrumental ensemble.

Other changes came throughout Hancock's tenure at Wartburg. In 2004, the international tour rotation among the college's auditioned ensembles changed to every three years, and he began to dream of helping students experience a totally different culture.

"I set my sights on Japan. What's less comfortable than a place where you can't even read the language?" said Hancock. "If my job as a college professor is to take you out of your comfort zone and challenge you, without endangering you, and you do something you never dreamed you would do, then let's go to Japan and see the sights and live with the families for a month."

## 27 YEARS IN NUMBERS

- ◆ 27 tours that traveled to 13 countries and 20 states
- ◆ 5,300 rehearsals
- ◆ 974 concerts
- ◆ 116 Christmas with Wartburg performances
- ◆ More than 1,000 works conducted with college bands
- ◆ About 110 potential band directors trained as music education majors
- ◆ About 165 student-teachers supervised
- ◆ About 2,100 instruments repaired

## HANCOCK'S FAVORITE PLACES

- ◆ Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany
- ◆ Zeven, Germany
- ◆ Eisenach, Germany
- ◆ Uto, Japan
- ◆ Beijing, China
- ◆ Salzburg, Austria
- ◆ Prerov, Czech Republic

## HANCOCK'S FAVORITE BAND PIECES

- ◆ *The Lord of the Rings Symphony*
- ◆ *Irish Tune from County Derry*
- ◆ *Festive Overture, op. 96*
- ◆ *Composition VIII O Magnum Mysterium*
- ◆ Any works by Claude T. Smith



And so began a Wind Ensemble tradition of alternating May Term tours between Europe and Asia. “The stars in their eyes are just as bright about both places, the memories from both places are just as bright, the changes in their worldview are just as phenomenal,” Hancock said of Wartburg students’ experiences abroad.

Hancock discovered a sign in a park the first morning he spent in Beijing that has come to have special meaning for him. “The paths split, and here in America we would make a beeline through the shortest distance. But there was a small sign there in that park that said, ‘The grass has feelings too.’ Since that moment, that’s been my best definition of the difference between their culture and ours.”

At the Wind Ensemble’s home concert on April 10, before heading out on tour, Hancock directed the group as usual until near the end, when the students abruptly stood up and exited the stage. A group of concert band alumni then filed into the seats on stage and, under the direction of **Jeana Larson ’01**, played the premiere of a piece commissioned to celebrate Hancock’s life and career: *Celebration Fanfare* composed by **Joshua Evanovich ’07**.

Larson, current president of the Iowa Bandmasters Association, also presented Hancock with the Friend of IBA award; he is only the second educator to receive the statewide honor. “He’s had hundreds of band directors in Iowa alone from his 42-year teaching career,” said Larson when giving the award. “He has spent countless hours traveling, leading clinics, teaching, and fixing instruments for students throughout the Midwest so they, too, can experience the joy of being in a band.”

On May 25, Hancock conducted the Wartburg College Wind Ensemble for the final time in a special concert where alumni and

colleagues from throughout his tenure spoke about his impact and their favorite memories. The event followed Hancock’s final tour with the group, originally planned to be the Wind Ensemble’s regular May Term European tour. It was re-envisioned as a tour of the American Heartland to fit the tightened travel parameters of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had canceled all traveling ensemble tours the previous two years.

Both concerts were followed by receptions where alumni and well-wishers gathered and had the opportunity to complete a page in a memory book created by alumna **Kristin Vale Cudzewicz**

’11, which she presented as another surprise to Hancock during the April 10 concert. The April 10 and May 25 concerts, along with the alumni band performance, can be watched on Knight Vision at [www.wartburg.edu/knightvision](http://www.wartburg.edu/knightvision).

In reflecting on retirement, Hancock thought back to his European travels over the years. “I’d like to go back to visit some of the places I’ve been: Rothenburg, Germany, the old soul of it; London; Prerov in the Czech Republic. There’s enough of a Renais-

sance man in me that I would’ve liked the Middle Ages — the ‘old world’ places appeal to me,” he said.

Alumni, colleagues, and friends created a travel fund that will help make those dreams a reality for Hancock and his wife, Elizabeth.

Hancock will continue to serve as pastor at his local church and as director of the Greater Waverly Municipal Band in the summer, and he plans to conduct clinics and judge school music contests.

“It’s the fact I’m not waving a stick for an hour a day, interacting with students, and making music, that’s what I’ll miss ... not the logistics of the job, the coming in in the morning. It’s the people.” 🍷

The trajectory, going somewhere, to keep going up — that was the change I envisioned, the seed from Bob Lee, and I just watered it a bit. History will judge whether in fact we did that.



# A LIFE OF SERVICE

In a time of despair, Margie Mowry Ketterer '67 stepped up

BY ALAN SIMMER '07 PHOTOS SUBMITTED

**A** MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS, spreading through unknown means, leaving death and grief in its wake. While those words likely conjure the early days of COVID-19 for many, **Margie Mowry Ketterer '67** will always think of the height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and '90s.

"They talk about the fatigue with the medical workers and all of that, that sounds familiar to me," Ketterer said. "I call it my war experience, because people were dying all of the time."

As a social worker, Ketterer had a front-row seat to the devastation HIV/AIDS wrought on the gay community in Florida, where she's lived for decades. She's been a volunteer moderator for a support group of men living with HIV/AIDS since 1989.

"There was always somebody that I knew from my group going to the hospital," Ketterer said. "When you're in a thing like that, you learn to really live in the present, in the moment. We'd go to two funerals one week, and we'd be at a picnic the next week for the 4th of July. And we'd be having a good time at the picnic. You just lived; it was intense."

Ketterer graduated from Wartburg with a degree in social work, which she put to use in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Eventually, she went back for a master's degree in mental health counseling at what is now Nova Southeastern University.

To finish her degree, Ketterer needed an internship, and her professor handed out cards with possible placements.

"Ninety-eight percent of the list he gave us was the exact same work I was already doing: family and kids, family and kids, nothing different," she said.

Due to the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, Ketterer was the only one in her class to check the option for AIDS patients — so that's where her professor sent her. As part of her internship, she was asked



to run a support group for gay men living with AIDS.

"And I loved it," she said. "I really liked it, and I stayed with it."

More than 30 years later, she still catches up with the group twice a month — sometimes online, due to the pandemic. Thanks to continual advances in treatment for HIV/AIDS, members now have more time to talk about everything from other health issues to the little joys and frustrations of each day.

"We're like a senior support group for each other now," Ketterer said. "I have the same problems they do."

"It's almost like going to a roundtable discussion of doctors," said Brian Vodicka, who has been in the group for more than six years. "And then the group offers support and ideas."

Vodicka joined the group after moving to Florida from Texas, where he did not have a similar support system.

"It means everything in the world," he said. "You have a circle of friends that will drop anything they're doing if you've got an emergency."

Though the format and membership of the group may change, Ketterer continues to do what she always has: provide a friendly ear, good advice, and resources for help.

"Marge is the main anchor. She's the main rock," said Vodicka. "Marge is a very loving human being, and we have been blessed to have known her."

Members like Vodicka aren't shy about showing their appreciation. She was honored in 1999 (pictured above) for 10 years of "undaunting facilitation" with a plaque stating, "We all love you." A few years ago, the group surprised Ketterer with a dinner and another plaque in honor of 30 years of service.

"Now we're just not counting because we're all getting too old," she said. 🍷

# YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

The Young Alumni Award honors graduates from the past 15 years who are living the four pillars of the Wartburg College mission statement: leadership, service, faith, and learning. **This year's recipients are:**

## Scott Tjeerdsma '07

*Pella, Iowa*

As an advocate for children of all ages, Scott Tjeerdsma's dedication and growth mind-set has led to great success as a teacher and coach.

Since his graduation from Wartburg, he has served the Pella Community School District in various capacities. He began his career with the district teaching fourth grade before switching to seventh-grade math. Tjeerdsma completed his master's degree in educational leadership at Viterbo University in 2015 while teaching full time and is currently pursuing additional coursework in an athletic director program at Morningside College. He now serves as the middle school's athletic director and dean of students.



## Jenna Manders '15

*Dubuque, Iowa*

Dedication to service and philanthropy were hallmarks of Jenna Manders' experience as a Wartburg student. Years later, her journey has provided new opportunities to educate others about the importance of philanthropy and helping others in need.

As a Wartburg student, she served as an intern with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. After graduating magna cum laude in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in business administration and sociology, she returned to the foundation as a full-time employee. In her six years with the foundation, she held a number of roles and received several promotions.

"I have never met a young professional with as much ambition and drive to succeed as Jenna," wrote nominator Amy Unmacht.

Today, Manders serves as the community foundation services coordinator for the Iowa Council on Foundations. In this role she is the point of contact for Iowa community foundations, helping answer questions about Endow Iowa and the County Endowment Fund. She also supports data collection and reporting, oversees three grant programs, and supports conference and event development and implementation.

This change of pace has allowed her to devote more time to her family and community in other ways. She owns a liquidation business with her two brothers. The three also have converted a vacant convent into 10 apartment units and are working to add nearly 20 more in the Catholic school next door.

In her free time, Manders' dedication to supporting excellence in community foundations inspires her to work as a National Standards reviewer, where she reviews and assesses community foundations for accreditation.

BY CHRIS KNUDSON '01

PHOTOS JULIE PAGEL DREWES '90 AND SUBMITTED

Tjeerdsma is an active volunteer in his community. He directed and founded the Pella Track Club for elementary and middle school students, serves on the leadership team of the Leader in Me program, and volunteers on the board for the Klompen Classic, a fundraiser for a program that provides support services to community members in need.

His nominators described his leadership and strong work ethic coming from a "servant heart." In particular, they mentioned his desire to work with students who struggle to learn. His supportive demeanor and genuine interest in their success, while also holding them accountable, has allowed him to develop positive relationships with all the students he teaches and mentors.

Tjeerdsma and his wife, Julia, are active members of Second Reformed Church of Pella and have three children. He has served as a deacon and led service/mission trips to Haiti and New Mexico through his church.

## Dr. Nnamdi Nelson '12

*Emeryville, Calif.*

Driven by the desire to help people in need, Nnamdi Nelson began his academic journey as a pre-med major. He spent the summer of his junior year at Wartburg West working as a research assistant at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. It was during this period that Nelson discovered his passion for biomedical research.

After graduating, Nelson worked at Integrated DNA Technologies synthesizing reagents used for genomic research. He was quickly drawn to biomedical research at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, where he worked on projects designed to understand the causes and treatments for a new form of eye disease.

Nelson earned his doctorate in neuroscience at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During that time, his work as a science outreach leader for the Education Justice Project brought science classes to incarcerated teenagers at the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center.

Nelson was a technology analyst at the University of California San Francisco Innovation Ventures office and served on the leadership team of Biotech Connection – Bay Area, a nonprofit organization committed to nurturing the next generation of biotech leaders. As the vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Nelson led efforts to improve the diversity of trainees and clients that work with BCBA.

Nelson recently joined Northwestern University's Innovation and New Ventures Office. He manages a portfolio of cutting-edge life science technologies developed by students and researchers and works to expedite the development of the technologies into useful products that benefit society. He also supports numerous programs aimed to increase the number of female and minority inventors and entrepreneurs at Northwestern University.









# MEET PRESIDENT NEIDUSKI

Wartburg's 18th president is the first woman to lead the college

BY EMILY CHRISTENSEN PHOTOS JULIE PAGEL DREWES '90

**W**HEN DR. REBECCA NEIDUSKI WAS ANNOUNCED as the 18th president of Wartburg College on March 21, 2022, there were tears of joy in the Chapel as she ascended the stairs to accept the role. Women, both young and old, were excited to see themselves represented in the college's presidency and listened raptly as Neiduski thanked everyone for the honor and privilege of serving Wartburg College.

In those first moments as president-elect, Neiduski laid out her dreams for the future of the college.

"I pledge to honor the work you have accomplished and continue to champion the importance of a faith-based liberal arts education and the empowerment it can offer. That is my commitment to each of you as we look forward to *Our Brightest Days*, as outlined in our strategic plan," she said. "It's difficult to overstate the power of higher education — more specifically, a liberal arts education that prepares people who are ready to engage in social discourse. Engaged citizens who are ready to approach their lives and the world with the ability to think critically and intentionally. To respect and honor the diversity of thought and identity of people around them. To accept ideas that are different than their own with curiosity and humility.

"Today, this is more important than ever before. I believe it is our shared responsibility to prepare the next generation to be inclusive and culturally competent individuals who can, quite literally, change the world," she continued.

Since June, when she arrived on campus well ahead of her July 1 start date, Neiduski has, with the help of others, distilled a 122-page strategic planning document into four themes that will guide the work of the college in the coming years (see page 22); attended several conferences; met hundreds of alumni and supporters at events

across the Midwest; begun meeting with college faculty and staff to learn more about their roles at the college; met with students who live on campus throughout the summer months; and continued to emphasize the importance of building an inclusive community through the spirit of ubuntu (see page 20).

"I am committed to being in service to others and leading by example as we embrace and appreciate the value we bring to this place and to each other," she said.

Neiduski came to Wartburg from Elon University, where she served as the dean of the School of Health Sciences; advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; and helped execute the university's strategic plan.

Prior to Elon, she was the chair and program director for the Department of Occupational Therapy and a professor of occupational therapy at Concordia University Wisconsin from 2013 to 2017. She also was an associate professor of occupational therapy with tenure at Maryville University from 2002 to 2013.

A certified hand therapist, Neiduski also sits on the board of directors for the Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation. The organization's highly specialized team of surgeons, therapists, anesthesiologists, nurses, and volunteers provides comprehensive training and education to health care providers and students in Guatemala; screens more than 200 children with traumatic injuries and congenital limb differences; and provides training for and maintains connection with local therapists who provide post-operative care.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in movement and sport science from Purdue University, a Master of Science in occupational therapy from Washington University in St. Louis, and a Doctor of Philosophy in education from Saint Louis University.



President Rebecca Neiduski met many students and alumni on the RAGBRAI route pit stop.

**Q: Why Wartburg, why now?**

From my first Zoom interview, it was clear to me that Wartburg is a special place. The loyalty of families, faculty, staff, the board, and the local community to our college is unique in higher education, and I couldn't pass up the opportunity to be part of it.

**Q: When did you know you wanted to be an occupational therapist?**

As a high school athlete, I headed off to Purdue University ready to be an athletic trainer. My career goals evolved toward physical therapy as I began my undergraduate journey, and then I heard an occupational therapist speak as part of a health professions panel. The intersection of creativity, adaptation, and client-centered care were a perfect match for my interests and characteristics.

**Q: Why did you specialize in hand therapy?**

The complex anatomy and function of the hand has always intrigued me, and the practice of hand therapy often feels like a challenging puzzle waiting to be solved. Helping people regain function of their hands to participate in life is incredibly fulfilling.

**Q: Why did you choose to invest your time in education?**

When I started teaching occupational therapy students, it became immediately obvious that I could both contribute to the profession as a whole and extend my reach to so many more patients through the students I helped prepare.



← Waverly Outfly



At the Greater Waverly Municipal Band concert →



← At her introduction to campus

**Q: And why the switch to administration and now a presidency?**

Throughout my career as a therapist, educator, and leader, I have taken great pride in helping others accomplish more than they thought possible. I look back and recognize that from a very young age, my father served as an incredible role model as an administrator and leader in Lutheran education. I feel called to serve others through leadership, and the presidency of Wartburg College will afford me the privilege of working together with our students, staff, faculty, and stakeholders to continue to advance this fantastic institution.

**Q: You had the opportunity to spend three weeks on campus before your official start date. Why did you feel that was important?**

I chose to spend three weeks with President (Darrel) Colson for two specific reasons. First, I wanted to spend intentional time learning from him and gathering his reflections on his tenure as Wartburg's 17th president. Second, I wanted to demonstrate my commitment to learning about Wartburg College prior to beginning my presidency and build trust with those who work and learn here.

**Q: What did you learn?**

Without question, I learned that Wartburg College is blessed with faculty, staff, and stakeholders who are wholly committed to ensuring our prosperous future. People here care about each other, take tremendous pride in their work, and keep our mission of challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service at the center of everything they do.

**Q: How did that help you as you moved from president-elect to president?**

By July 1, I had been warmly welcomed by the campus community and had a starting sense of the work we are now pursuing together for the benefit of Wartburg College.

**Q: You already have spent a lot of time with the college's new strategic plan, *Our Brightest Days: Realizing Purpose, Leading Change*. What excites you the most about the new plan?**

I am most excited about the number of people, both on and off campus, who have served as leaders and thought partners in building the plan. The plan focuses on four main themes: Educating Mind, Body, and Spirit; Inclusive Community; Student Success; and Competitive Advantage. These themes will help us educate the whole person; prepare our students for a changing world; realize our distinction; and continue to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff within a dynamic and supportive community.

**Q: How do you see the college leaning into that work in the coming months and years?**

The strategic plan will serve as the lens we look through to see and direct our shared work. Annual priorities will help us stay both goal-directed and focused on the work that will advance Wartburg College and ensure our prosperity.



Celebrating a bags win with students



Spending time with the strategic plan



# FUN FACTS



**HOW MANY RACES HAVE YOU RUN?  
DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE?**

Two triathlons, a handful of half marathons, and many 5Ks. The sprint triathlon was by far the most enjoyable experience because the training was reasonable and the course was built for speed.

**NUMBER OF COUNTRIES VISITED:**

15

**FAVORITE BOOKS:**

*The Goldfinch, The Great Alone, and The Nightingale*

**FAVORITE TELEVISION SHOW:**

*Ted Lasso*

**IF YOU WEREN'T A HAND THERAPIST  
OR COLLEGE PRESIDENT, WHAT  
WOULD YOU WANT TO BE?**

A cardiac surgeon

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR  
FREE TIME?**

I love to do yoga, go hiking, and spend time with family and friends.

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

"Kindness in words creates confidence.  
Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.  
Kindness in giving creates love." — Lao Tzu

**Q: What is your goal for your first six months in office? First year?**

My goal for the first six months is to fully engage with our campus community, spending time getting to know and value our students, staff, and faculty. Within the first year, I hope to have met many alumni and stakeholders and learned why Wartburg holds a special place in their hearts. And of course, I hope that by the end of our first year together, our community has made strides in achieving our strategic plan and continuing to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff.

**Q: You talk often about how you would like to engage with our students. Why is being accessible to them so important to you?**

Our students serve as the center point of everything we do. Educating them in mind, body, and spirit and helping them grow as citizens of our world is why we are called to higher education. Being accessible to them means that I care about them and am excited to see who they will become during their time at Wartburg.

**Q: How do you see yourself engaging with them throughout the year?**

Honestly, in as many ways as possible! Service learning has been an integral part of my work in academia, and I will certainly find ways to serve alongside our students both on campus and in the community. But the simple ways, like a cup of coffee in the Konditorei or a quick chat on a walk across campus, will be important too. And of course, I'll be supporting their co-curricular pursuits whenever possible.





Meet the President Cedar Valley



Engaging with students at a picnic



**Q: What about faculty and staff? How will you build relationships with them?**

In addition to creating listening sessions with all departments and divisions on campus, I intend to follow the advice two wise administrators offered as I began my presidency: to engage in campus life and see people at work. Observing classes, interacting with staff throughout campus, and appreciating the effort of our faculty and staff through the eyes of the students will be important to building relationships and trust.

**Q: How would you describe your leadership style?**

I have always been a servant-leader: someone who encourages diversity of thought, strives to create a culture of trust, fosters leadership in others, and prioritizes institution over self. As I have grown as a leader, I have found the greatest satisfaction in working closely with a team to pursue exciting and challenging opportunities.

**Q: What do you see as the greatest challenge facing higher education?**

In my opinion, the greatest challenge will be attracting and retaining students. With a proliferation of negative media about the cost and equity of higher education, families will continue to expect greater outcomes at competitive prices.

**Q: What advantage do you think Wartburg has when facing that challenge?**

Our advantage is our people and the holistic educational experience we create. Together, we will continue to build on our traditions and ensure that the educational experience we provide exceeds the expectations of our students and their families.


**Q: At Wartburg, we talk a lot about embracing our passions. What are you passionate about? How do you make time to engage in those passions?**

I am passionate about serving others and have spent a significant amount of time participating in medical outreach and education around the world. In November, I will return to Guatemala for the 19th time with the Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation. Wartburg College has been incredibly generous in allowing me this time to continue to serve as part of my presidency.

**Q: How did you get involved with that work and why have you continued to make it a priority in your life?**

My work in Guatemala began when I met Lynn Bassini, a beloved mentor and friend, on my way to a professional conference. Born and raised in Guatemala, she shared her plan to create the Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation and I was immediately intrigued. I joined the team for the first time in 2005, and we have returned once every 18 months to two years ever since. I have continued to make it a priority because of the incredible relationships I have built both with the people of Guatemala and our team members. I count the Guatemalan therapists I have been privileged to teach and learn from as lifelong friends and colleagues, and our team members as family.

**Q: You speak highly of another mentor as well. Can you tell us more about her and the role she has played in your life?**

Christine Novak, a highly accomplished researcher and physical therapist, served as my master's project chair at Washington University in St. Louis. For the past 26 years, Chris has pointed me toward opportunities and encouraged me to reach further than I thought I could. She has also served as an unwavering supporter and friend during the most challenging times of my life. 



## Ubuntu Center heralds more intentional approach to diverse campus community

BY ALAN SIMMER '07 PHOTOS JULIE PAGEL DREWES '90

**V**OLLMER HALL LOOKED A BIT DIFFERENT when students returned to campus this fall, with renovated rooms, new windows, and an expansion with community space on the northeast corner of the building. But there's a deeper change that goes beyond the physical improvements: Vollmer Hall is now part of the Ubuntu Center, the new name for the Centennial Complex. Centennial Hall, which will undergo a similar makeover next summer, has also been renamed to Slife Hall (*see sidebar*).

Ubuntu is an African philosophy often expressed as "I am because we are," which acknowledges our shared humanity and our obligations to each other. Though the core of this philosophy has been part of the Wartburg tradition for generations, the center's name represents a new focus on how community is developed on campus.

"I continue to hear from students who don't always feel welcome here," said Krystal Madlock, director of multicultural student services. "Building a community where everyone can be themselves has to be intentional. It can't happen just in the Ubuntu Center — every person and every department has to be involved."

Faculty and staff have been engaged with that work since the Ubuntu Center, which comprises Slife, Vollmer, and Hebron halls, was announced on June 17. Following the announcement, Dr. Shuaib Meacham, a professor at the University of Northern Iowa, presented professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion centered on the ubuntu philosophy.

"So many organizations approach DEI as a separate category of work," said President Rebecca Neiduski. "Instead, we're building those values into the foundations of everything we do. This is important work to me and will be a focus during my time at Wartburg."

Neiduski already has scheduled monthly forums with faculty and staff that include DEI-related professional development and recognition of employees living out ubuntu in ways big and small.


Other immediate initiatives include incorporating ubuntu into the coursework for IS 101, a required course for first-year students, and book discussions for faculty and staff. The addition to the Ubuntu Center, between Slife and Vollmer halls, includes a demonstration kitchen stocked with small appliances, tools, and ingredients from cuisines around the world, which is intended for students to share their cultures with each other.

"I love that the college is making ubuntu a focus," said **Joanna Towera Longwe '23**, who served on the art committee for the Ubuntu Center. "It was great to see everyone on the committee looking for ways to create a living space that would be welcoming for all students. From the fully stocked spice cabinets in the kitchen to the art pieces that will be hung up, the Ubuntu Center will be a great place to live, study, or just hang out."

While students enjoy the new space, faculty and staff continue working on ways to build up the Wartburg community.

"There's no cheat sheet or checklist for ubuntu," said Madlock. "We all have different roles, so ubuntu won't be the same from person to person. We're helping everyone across campus figure out what it looks like for them."

Dr. Debora Johnson-Ross, vice president of academic affairs, called on all first-year students and others in attendance at the college's Opening Convocation to engage with members of the Wartburg community from South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Namibia who grew up in a culture of ubuntu.

"They can help expand your understanding of ubuntu. As an American scholar who studies Africa, I am very aware of one important thing. Ubuntu belongs to the African peoples with whom it originated. It is not ours, but it is shared with us because of the very nature of the word. It is both inclusive and expansive," she said. "It acknowledges the humanity of us all." 



Mike McCoy, Wartburg College Board of Regents chair; Dr. Rebecca Neiduski, president; Gordy Field '23, student body president; and the Rev. Halcyon Bjornstad, interim dean of spiritual life, cut the ribbon on the newly named Ubuntu Center.

## CENTENNIAL HALL RENAMED

In May, the Board of Regents approved changing the name of Centennial Hall to Slife Hall.

The new name honors Harry and Polly Slife, longtime philanthropists and activists who are remembered as devoted servants of the college and the greater Cedar Valley. It also recognizes a \$2 million lead gift by one of their children, **Sarah Slife Salzwedel '82**, and her husband, **Jack '82**.

"My parents would never have thought their accomplishments were worthy of seeing their name on a building at Wartburg. They would be very moved by the gesture, and because of how they lived their lives, to have their name associated with ubuntu seems natural," Sarah Salzwedel said.

Centennial Hall used to draw its name from the "centennial appeal" put out by President C.H. Becker in 1952, the college's 100th anniversary, to raise money for a women's dormitory. The appeal was a success, with work beginning in 1953 and concluding before school began in fall 1954.



# OUR BRIGHTEST DAYS are still ahead



Wartburg's new strategic plan an exciting next step for the college

BY EMILY CHRISTENSEN

**M**ORE THAN A NOD TO THE COLLEGE'S LOYALTY SONG, the newly approved Wartburg College strategic plan, *Our Brightest Days: Realizing Purpose, Leading Change*, is an affirmation of optimism as we emerge from the pandemic.

"This strategic plan was built through collective visioning and commitment of the entire campus community. It is an exciting next step in the history of Wartburg College," said President Rebecca Neiduski, who has touted the new plan's four themes during "Meet the President" events hosted by the Alumni & Parent Engagement Office. "The themes of Educating Mind, Body and Spirit; Inclusive Community; Student Success; and Competitive Advantage will allow us to realize our brightest days ahead."

In late 2019, the college completed a community inventory assessing the campus and educational environment as well as that of our competitors. Led by strategic plan co-chairs Dr.

Shawn Ellerbroek, the Ralph E. Otto Endowed Professor in Chemistry, and Dr. Dan Kittle, then vice president for student life, a group of faculty, staff, and Board of Regents members met in February 2020 for a daylong discussion centering on possible strategic plan elements. Their progress was halted, though not for long, when campus closed in March 2020 in response to the pandemic.

In May 2020, a task force submitted a strategic plan vision statement to the Board of Regents for its approval. Rooted in the college's mission statement, this new vision statement will direct the short- and long-term strategic decisions and activities that surface through the plan.

*"Wartburg College is called to be the leading institution in education of the whole person. Together, we create an inclusive community combining diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences to prepare students to be resilient leaders of positive change through service in a complex world."*



## EDUCATING MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Wartburg will lean into its strengths: a liberal arts curriculum rooted in experiential and service learning with a commitment to vocation; extensive co-curricular programming; state-of-the-art facilities that ensure access to opportunities for intellectual growth and physical wellness; and a campus ministry rooted in our Lutheran tradition, open and welcoming to all.



## INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

We will create a community where all students, faculty, and staff are known and valued for the unique experiences they bring to the college. Rooted in our values that call us to serve our neighbor, our campus will be a place where we take care of one another. That support will provide our students with the confidence and resilience they need to be thought leaders and agents of change in today's world.



While juggling the additional work associated with serving and educating students during a pandemic, dozens of college faculty, staff, and board members spent countless hours working in small committees to develop the goals and strategies that would serve as the scaffold for the final plan.

And when opportunities for progress presented themselves, the college proceeded, always with eyes on the vision statement and how the investments would help Wartburg move closer to its goals.

The most visible of those efforts is the Centennial and Vollmer Hall Renovation Project, which successfully completed a \$9 million fundraising campaign in June 2022 to undertake a complete overhaul of Centennial (now Slife – *see page 21*) and Vollmer halls that will provide students with modern and accessible housing, building on a foundation of student success that extends beyond the classroom.

Other early successes include:

- The reorganization of divisions, which created a division focused on student recruitment.
- Creation of the Academic Resource Center and Student Success Center.
- Pursuit of a data warehouse that can facilitate data access needs of the campus as we strive to make more data-driven decisions.
- Creation of the assistant director for transfer admissions position in the Admissions Office.
- A complete review of the college's Plan of Essential Education that will streamline the general education curriculum.
- The implementation of Canvas, a new learning management system to streamline the tracking, reporting, and delivery of coursework.


"Building on the implementation of a new learning management system and energy around student success, Wartburg faculty and staff have achieved the momentum to propel us into our next era of excellence," said Dr. Debora

Johnson-Ross, vice president for academic affairs. "The faculty also are in the process of developing a proposal to replace the 20-plus-year-old Plan of Essential Education. The proposal, while still solidly rooted in the liberal arts, is designed to help students solve complex 21st-century problems, like food insecurity and environmental challenges. Students will declare academic majors and minors within disciplinary areas but will have additional interdisciplinary and experiential opportunities that prepare them for the real world."

Now, the college is looking to its outside stakeholders — alumni, community members, parents, and donors — to determine additional strategic moves that will help Wartburg become the college of our current and future students' brightest days.

"It's exciting to see this strategic planning process move to the next stage of engaging external stakeholders. The Board has established the vision, and the campus has developed overall goals; now it's time to involve alumni and friends in a co-creative process to consider and prioritize opportunities to realize that vision," said Scott Leisinger, vice president for advancement. "We look forward to engaging the broader Wartburg community in that dialog so that, together, we can ensure that the college's brightest days continue to be in front of us."

With a focus on the four themes — Educating Mind, Body, and Spirit; Inclusive Community; Student Success; and Competitive Advantage — Neiduski is excited to meet more Knights and hear how they see Wartburg growing and thriving through the rest of the '20s.

"These themes will allow us to both execute priorities and continue to engage stakeholders in envisioning the future," she said. "Our continued focus on the purpose of higher education and the opportunities for growth will ensure the prosperity of Wartburg College for many years to come." 



## STUDENT SUCCESS

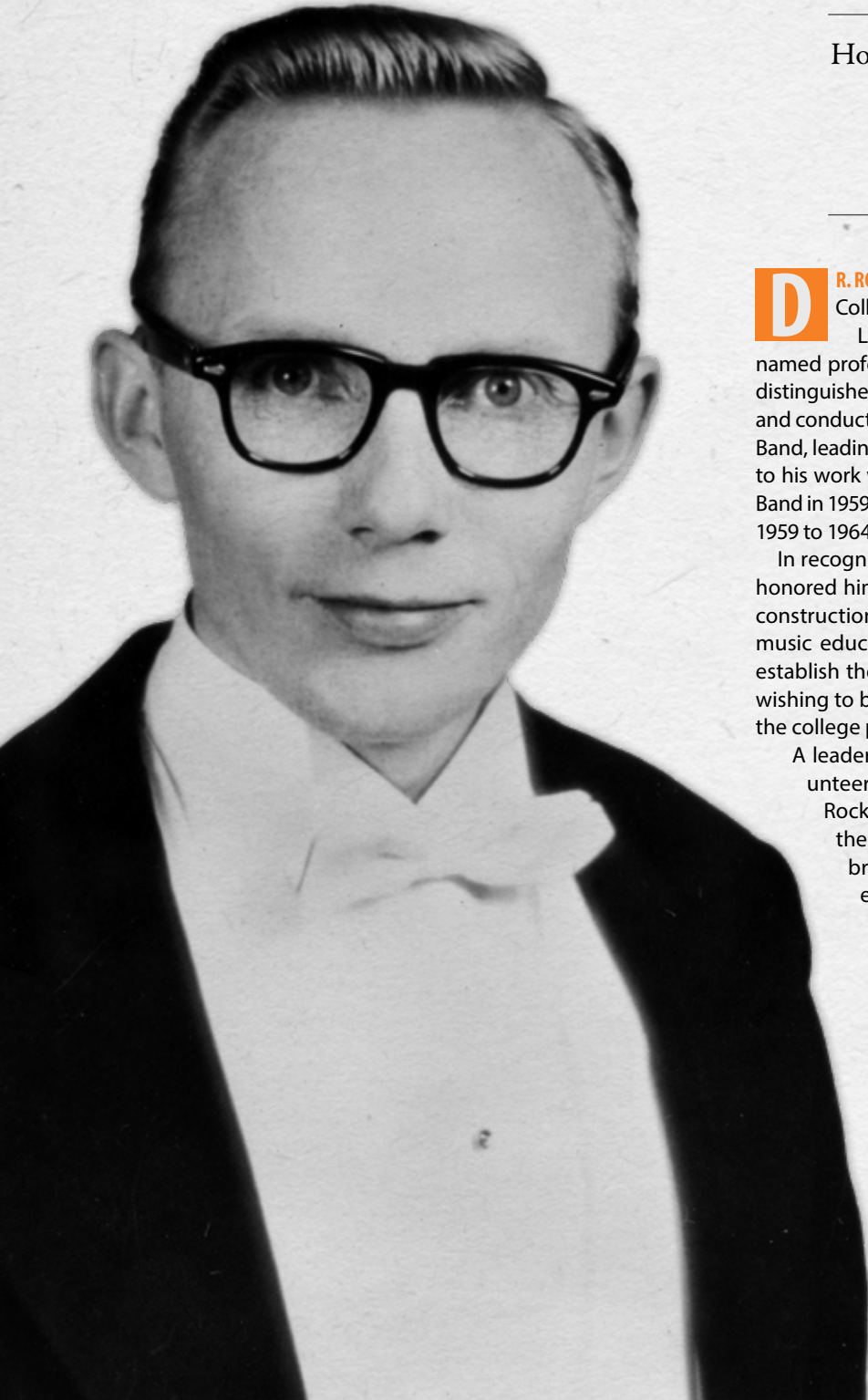
To attract and retain students, we will equip them with the skills they need to thrive on our campus, in the community, and in the world. Wartburg faculty and staff guide our students on their path to success and we will improve accessibility for all students — through policy, practice, and infrastructure — to ensure every student's successful navigation to graduation.



## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

To maintain affordability for students and guarantee long-term financial stability for the college, we will find innovative ways to diversify our revenue streams to decrease dependence on tuition. We will strengthen our recruitment and development of faculty and staff, empowering our employees to thrive as they contribute to the distinctiveness of the Wartburg story.

# Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Dr. Lee



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How a conductor impacted the lives of his students one pithy saying at a time

BY EMILY CHRISTENSEN

PHOTOS WARTBURG COLLEGE ARCHIVES

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**D**R. ROBERT E. LEE, AN ADVOCATE FOR MUSIC EDUCATION and Wartburg College, died Friday, June 24, at the age of 93.

Lee joined the Wartburg music faculty in 1959 and was named professor emeritus upon his retirement in 1995. During his distinguished 36-year tenure, he taught a variety of music education and conducting courses and directed the Wartburg College Concert Band, leading the band on its first European tour in 1973. In addition to his work with the WCCB, Lee also founded the Knightlites Jazz Band in 1959 and directed the Wartburg Community Symphony from 1959 to 1964.

In recognition of the impact Lee had on their lives, band alumni honored him by donating more than \$40,000 in his name toward construction of the Bachman Fine Arts Center. In 2018, band and music education alumni again honored his legacy with gifts to establish the Dr. Robert E. Lee Endowed Scholarship for students wishing to become instrumental music instructors. The same year, the college presented him with the Wartburg Medal.

A leader in the Waverly and Shell Rock communities, Lee volunteered at the Waverly Health Center and Waverly-Shell Rock High School with the band program. He co-founded the popular Shell Rock Spring Swing variety show with his brother-in-law in 1965 and was part of many novelty acts, especially anything related to polka or Dixieland music.

Lee earned a bachelor's degree from Luther College, which later awarded him the Carlos A. Sperati Award in recognition of his distinguished career in musical arts. He also earned a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin and a doctorate from the University of Iowa.

Upon his passing, we asked some of his students to once again come together to honor the man who had a lasting impact on their lives.

"So many of us knew this time was coming, but the passing of Dr. Robert E. Lee has still hit hard," said **Randall Winkey '76**. "Dr. Robert E. Lee — a true musician and lover of life who inspired generations of students to live life to the fullest. We continue to remember and use his wisdom on a daily basis. He was a great man who will so be missed."

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE THINGS FOR WHICH LEE WILL BE REMEMBERED.

**RANDALL WINKEY '76**

**Favorite Lee saying:** If you're on time, you're late!

**How Lee impacted your life:** He took this naive farm kid under his wing and encouraged me to experience life as a music major at Wartburg. That was certainly a decision that has impacted my life ever since. I was then a part of the very first European tour in 1973 and was so inspired by a director that could combine a serious love of good band literature with a bit of fun in the form of "Band-Aid Follies." That was staged every spring back then and also a part of our European tour program — much to the delight of our foreign audiences. Back before the advent of the cellphone, I sat many a day in Dr. Lee's office on the phone scheduling concert and host sites. His desk was always filled with boxes of raisins as his primary snack of the day. He insisted that the raisins and his daily dose of sardines flushed out his system and increased his odds of a long life. He was right!

**LINDA STULL MOELLER '66**

**Favorite Lee memory:** When I was in the band, every day he would put a saying up on the board. He was always very reflective about life and was always reading about more than just music. He was great at teaching us life lessons, especially when he took the band on tour.

**STEVE TRIPOLINO '77**

**Favorite Lee saying:** Don't let your studies interfere with your education.

**Favorite Lee memory:** My favorite memory was one of concern and compassion in regard to my future. He tracked me down at a place I had never seen him before: preseason football practice. He wanted to assure me even though football practice and band rehearsals overlapped, there would still be a place for me in the band in November after football was over. He once again confirmed how valuable the big picture remains.



**JO ANN KNIPFER SHERMAN '92**

**Favorite Lee memory:** In around 2010, we had to travel to Waverly-Shell Rock High School for large group contests. As I was warming up my band, it occurred to me that maybe Dr. Lee was listening to bands at the festival. Sure enough, as we walked into the gym to perform, I saw Dr. Lee in the bleachers. After our performance, I was walking out of the gym as my band was leaving, and Dr. Lee approached me from the bleachers. He was so complimentary of our performance and gave his affirmation toward me as a high school director (a job I had only held for about three years after having taught the lower grade levels for 15 years). I don't believe he ever heard my bands again, so I have a high level of appreciation for that moment in time.

**RICK BIEDERMAN '85**

**Favorite Lee memory:** Dr. Lee was one of a kind: a philosopher, an encourager, an inspiration, and a mentor. He witnessed to his faith in his own unassuming way. I was in the band when he had a revelation that too many band concerts were boring to the audience and that we needed to appeal more to our audience. He decided to do a couple Sousa concerts where he would dress up as John Philip Sousa. He also brought in special soloists. One was a tuba player who played the piccolo part on the tuba for *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. I am thankful I got to know him and be under his direction for my four years at Wartburg.

**ALAN FEIRER '91**

**Favorite Lee saying:** There's only one rule in music: Make it sound good.

**How Lee impacted your life:** In my 19 years as a band director, this REL-ism reminded me to keep it simple, not overthink things, and remember that music is an art form for us to enjoy. Those of us involved in music-making know that we can lose sight of that when we obsess about perfect breathing and alternate fingering mastery and ideal blend and pitch tendencies and getting the phrasing of the crescendo just right. This sticks with me, even though it's been a while since I've taught music full time. One can omit a couple words, and still live by it: "There's only one rule: Make it good." 🎵

READ MORE MEMORIES AT [WWW.WARTBURG.EDU/FALL22-MAGAZINE](http://WWW.WARTBURG.EDU/FALL22-MAGAZINE)

# KNIGHTS IN THE NEWS

## 1960

A former student endowed a scholarship in honor of **REX GROVE**, Bettendorf, who taught at Pleasant Valley High School for 32 years. The award supports a Pleasant Valley student showing promise as a writer.

## 1968

**MARY NORMAN CARTER**, Williamsburg, Va., retired from the U.S. Army where she earned the rank of colonel. She is also retired from Christus Spohn Health System.

## 1971

The Rev. **DIANNE STANGE PRICHARD**, DeWitt, earned a certificate from the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque. She was ordained July 31, 2021, in Muscatine and is pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Dixon.

## 1977

**MARY EVANSON BLECKWEHL**, Northfield, Minn., wrote *The Worry Knot*, a novel for middle-schoolers.

## 1980

**DAVID ROD**, Waconia, Minn., is retired.

## 1983

**EDMOND BONJOUR**, Stillwater, Okla., received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the International Leadership Alumni Advisory Board in October. The board includes alumni from nearly 40 states and five countries with agricultural and rural leadership programs.

**CHERYL BRUST CRANMER**, Godfrey, Ill., retired from Boeing after 34 years. She held positions in provisioning and logistics for the F-15 fighter aircraft.

## 1984

**KEVIN LUTKENHAUS**, LaBelle, Fla., is director of workforce development and career and technical education for the Hendry County School District in Hendry County, Fla.

## 1985

**JEANNIE GLENN**, Fort Wayne, Ind., is a regional donor officer at Reasons to Believe.

## 1986

**GARY JOHNSON**, Montgomery, Texas, sponsors two children in the U.S and three overseas, two of whom recently graduated from high school.

## 1987

**KERI MARTENSEN**, Cedar Falls, is retired.

**MARK ROSS**, Bettendorf, is co-founder of LandJet, which offers overland transport via mobile offices to business travelers.

## 1990

**JEFF HILL**, Petersburg, Ill., a former Wartburg wrestler, was a finalist for National Coach of the Year for Wrestling with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association.

**CHRIS** and Diana **NORSTRUD**, Forest City, were married June 12, 2021. Chris is a data quality analyst at Zywave.

**JEFF VOSS**, Ryan, a former Wartburg wrestler, was a finalist for National Coach of the Year for Wrestling with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association.

## 1992

Dr. **RACHELLE KARSTENS KECK**, Sioux City, is president of Grand View University, Des Moines.

## 1995

**JEN BYE CHRISTY**, Johnston, is a strategic portfolio manager at Principal Financial Group, Des Moines.

## 1996

The Rev. Dr. **JAY GRAVE**, Bellville, Texas, is pastor at St. John Lutheran Church.

**JOY MOHR**, Marengo, is a physician assistant and certified Wahls Protocol health practitioner at Iowa Women's Health Center, Cedar Rapids.

## 1997

**JOHNNA HAAG KLEIN**, Spooner, Wis., earned a school social work certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is a school-based therapist in the Rice Lake and Barron districts through Family Therapy Associates.

**CARRIE COOPER STADTMUELLER**, Fort Collins, Colo., is director of communications and development at Meals on Wheels of Loveland and Berthoud in Loveland, Colo.

## 1998

**ANNITA QUAGRAINE** and Isaac Linton, Calumet City, Ill., were married April 8, 2021. The couple announce the birth of son Kayden on Sept. 10, 2021.

## 2000

**ALISON ENABNIT WITTENAUER**, Amboy, Ill., earned a master's degree in nursing leadership and management at Western Governors University, Salt Lake City.

## 2001

**SHELLI BANDEMER**, Brentwood, Md., is an administrative assistant at the Archdiocese of Washington.

**STACY KNOPLOH** and Brian Hammett, St. Peter, Minn., were married in May 2021.

## 2004

**LONNA FIELD** and Christopher Goeden, Lakeville, Minn., were married in October 2021. Lonna is director of administration at the Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement, Minneapolis.

## 2005

**MICHELE LODGE**, Stanfield, N.C., is women's program director at the Bridge to Recovery treatment center.

## 2006

Mitch and **ANNE FATTIG JUELSGAARD**, West Des Moines, announce the birth of Claire on Sept. 27, 2021. She joins James, 3. Anne is a senior guest loyalty strategist with Casey's.

**ALAINA GOOS LYNCH**, Manchester, is materials manager at Regional Medical Center.

## 2007

**THOMAS RALSTON** and Sara Yenzen, Waterloo, were married March 19.

## 2008

Armando and **HEATHER HANSON ALANIZ**, Urbandale, announce the birth of Xiomara Elain on Oct. 20. She joins Andre-Pierre, 4, and Mateo Thomas, 2.

## 2010

**SARA MATCHULAT ZEJNIC**, Cedar Falls, is director of refugee and immigrant services at the Catherine McAuley Center, Cedar Rapids, providing comprehensive services to refugees and immigrants in eastern Iowa.

## 2011

**SEAN CORPSTEIN**, Des Moines, is an attorney at Whitfield & Eddy Law in the firm's construction law practice group. He earned his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law, Iowa City, in 2015 and is a member of the Criminal Justice Act federal defenders' panel.

**BRYAN** and **SAMANTHA IRVIN PURDY**, Huxley, announce the birth of Benjamin on Feb. 1. He joins Jack, 4, and Andrew, 2. Samantha is an agricultural research technician at the USDA's National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment.

Ana and **ASHLEY STOUT**, Mason City, announce the birth of Sawyer on Feb. 15.

## 2012

Eli and **NEVADA MORRISON CURTIS**, Menifee, Calif., were married July 9 and announce the birth of Cali on March 21, 2020. He joins Eli IV, 9, and Elayah, 6. Nevada is a child abuse investigator with the Department of Riverside Social Services, Lake Elsinore, Calif.

**KYLE** and Maghan **FLEMING**, Champaign, Ill., announce the birth of Luna Josephine on Feb. 7. Kyle is founder and lead music therapist at Fleming Music Therapy and the music therapist in residence at Wartburg.

**LAMAR** and **SKYE MORRISON HARVEY**, Richardson, Texas, were married Aug. 7, 2020, and announce the birth of Nassir Lamar on April 16, 2021. Skye is a sales executive at Black Girl Sunscreen, Van Nuys, Calif.

## 2013

**GAVIN '14** and **JESS WALLACE ALTHAUS**, Marshalltown, announce the birth of Avi Grey on Feb. 21. She joins Cohen James, 3, and Kaia Mae, 1.

**BENJAMIN GANSEMER**, Coralville, earned a doctorate in integrated biology from the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**HALEY PEELER** and **ANDREW FLORES '16**, Des Moines, were married Aug. 28, 2021. Haley is director of the Career Center, Grand View University.

**KELLI HOLMES**, Clarion, is an accounts receivable specialist at Pivot Bio.

## 2014

Kevin and **ABBIGAIL MUELLER BRANTCH**, Indianapolis, announce the birth of Adelaide Maxine Lynette on Oct. 30.

**ERICA OLSON GANSEMER**, Coralville, earned a doctorate in biomedical science, cell and developmental biology, from the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**SIMON SAGER**, Los Angeles, is executive assistant and associate producer at Vavani Productions.

## 2015

**ANDREA LOHF**, Iowa City, is associate director of operations and career coaching at Cornell College, Mount Vernon.

**MORGAN MCMILLAN**, Waukon, is general manager and golf professional at Oneota Golf and Country Club, Decorah.

The Rev. **TAWANDA MURINDA** and Bethany Klemetsrud, East Grand Forks, Minn., were married Sept. 25, 2021. He is associate pastor at Sharon Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, N.D.

**RYAN SEVERSON**, West Des Moines, is director of the Bulldog Club for Drake University Athletics, Des Moines.

## 2016

**LAUREN LARSON**, Davenport, is a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Moline, Ill.

**MITCHELL** and **MICAELA FORSYTH RAHM**, Cedar Falls, announce the birth of Monroe Jean on April 16, 2021. She joins Bishop, 2.

## 2017

**DANI GORDON**, Waverly, is client services director and partner at 1 Vision Communications LLC, Cedar Falls.

## 2018

**STEPHEN KLAASSEN** and **ALLISON BOUFFARD '20**, Tulsa, Okla., were married June 12, 2021.

## 2020

**EMILY BINGHAM**, Apple Valley, Minn., is volunteer program coordinator, refugee services, at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.

## 2021

**CLARE DUNNE**, Coralville, is a graduate student in the physician assistant program at Butler University, Indianapolis.

**ALEXA GANZVELD**, Cedar Rapids, is a digital marketing strategist at Metro Studios, Hiawatha.

**SAMARA HARMS**, Tripoli, is a graduate student in school psychology at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**JULIANA PELAEZ**, Des Plaines, Ill., is a graduate student in journalism at DePaul University, Chicago.

**ETHAN PFALTZGRAFF**, Waterloo, is a broadcast engineer at KWWL-TV.

**ALEXANDER STONE**, Cedar Rapids, is a graduate student in dentistry at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, Iowa City.

**AUTUMN VOYLES**, Kenosha, Wis., is a music therapy intern at Accent Care, West Allis, Wis.

## 2022

**MAX AALBERS**, Hampton, is a doctoral student in physical therapy at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

**ELSA ABRAHAMSON**, Van Meter, is a law student at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

**LINDSAY ALDINGER**, Iowa Falls, is a graduate student in nursing at Mercy College of Health Sciences, Des Moines.

**ALI ALI**, Waverly, is an analyst with Eurofins Scientific Inc., Cedar Falls.

**BRANDI ANTONIO**, Deerfield Beach, Fla., is a graduate student in kinesiology at the University of Central Florida, Orlando.

**BRITT AVERY**, Story City, is a marketing coordinator at KCL Engineering, West Des Moines.

**DANA BAUMANN**, Emmons, Minn., is a graduate student in veterinary medicine at Midwestern University, Glendale, Ariz.

**SIDNEY BAUMGARTNER**, Le Mars, is an English language arts teacher for fifth and sixth grades at Sheldon Community Schools.

**CASSIE BENGE**, Winterset, is a graduate student in clinical psychology at Kansas City University, Kansas City, Mo.

**DYLAN BERG**, Carlisle, is a mechanical engineer at Modus Engineering.

**BRANDON BLOEBAUM**, Kent, Ohio, is a graduate student in computational finance at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.

**NICHOLAS BOCKENSTEDT**, Strawberry Point, is a graduate student in immunobiology at Iowa State University, Ames.

**KAYLA BOEKE**, Zimmerman, Minn., is a marketing specialist at Written LLC in Maryland.

**TIA BOHLEN**, Wapello, is a law student at Drake University, Des Moines.

**NICHOLAS BOLLWEG**, New Vienna, is an account manager at HealthCheck360, Dubuque.

**STEVE BORNEMAN**, Grimes, is an accounting assistant at Denman & Company, West Des Moines.

**KAYLA BRITT**, Fredericksburg, is a high school math teacher for the Postville Community School District.

**CARLYE BROWN**, Davenport, is a fourth-grade teacher at Christ the King School, Des Moines.

**LONDON BUCKRIDGE**, Edgerton, Minn., is a fifth- and sixth-grade teacher for the Colo-NESCO Community School District, Colo.

**MADALYNN BURKE**, Waverly, is a client services coordinator at Retrieving Freedom.

**BRYCE BUTLER**, Mason City, is a dental student at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, Iowa City.

**CJ CHRISTOPHER**, Hudson, is a vendor management specialist at Lincoln Savings Bank, Waterloo.

**JEN DIEMER**, Sycamore, Ill., is a music therapy intern at Park Nicollet Hospital, St. Louis Park, Minn.

**COLE DUNCALF**, Long Grove, is a high school government teacher in the West Delaware Community School District, Manchester.

**ALEXIS EHRLICH**, Holy Cross, is a registered nurse in the operating room at MercyOne Medical Center, Dubuque.

**KELLIE ESCOVY**, Dubuque, is a Master of Divinity student at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque.

**TESSA FIELDS**, Lowden, is a tax staff accountant at UHY, West Des Moines.

**MADISON FLEMING**, Waverly, is a tax associate at RSM US, Cedar Rapids.

**JACKIE GANSHIRT**, Dubuque, is a doctoral student in physical therapy at Des Moines University.

**CAYLEE GARCIA**, Grimes, is a doctoral student in physical therapy at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

**JACE GLENN**, Dysart, is a sales producer at Cottingham & Butler, Dubuque.

**MAX GOODHUE**, Carlisle, is a graduate student in physical therapy at Des Moines University.

**ALEXIS GREEN**, Newnan, Ga., is a new business and marketing fellow at Spectrum Science, Atlanta.

**BREEYN GRYP**, North Liberty, is an elementary English language learner teacher for the Iowa City Community School District.

**KOURTNEY HARRIS**, Waverly, a U.S. Army sergeant, is a graduate student in direct practice mental health counseling at the University of Pittsburgh.

**RYLEY HELLE**, Worthington, is an account manager at Hilti, Kansas City, Mo.

**MADISON HIESTAND**, Plainfield, Ill., is a sixth-grade language arts teacher at Reed-Custer Community Unit School District 225U, Braidwood, Ill.

**KATIE HIRV**, Rockford, is director of communications at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School, Waverly.

**MICHAEL HOELZER**, Eureka, Mo., is a graduate student in data science at Maryville University, Town and Country, Mo.

**AMBRIEL JACOBS**, Winona, Minn., is a third- and fourth-grade teacher in the Sparta Area School District, Sparta, Wis.

**BRENNA JACOBS**, Saint Ansgar, is a graduate student in the accelerated nursing program, Allen College, Waterloo.

**IRELAND KNAPPER**, Clinton, is an audit associate at RSM, Des Moines.

**AUSTIN KOOPMANN**, Waverly, is a business analyst at Martin Brothers Distributing Co. Inc., Cedar Falls.

**BRADY KYNER**, Waverly, is the inaugural head women's wrestling coach at Wartburg.

**JULIE LENTH**, Luana, is a secondary Spanish teacher for the Allamakee Community School District, Luana.

**ISAAC LURSEN**, Fort Dodge, is an HVAC controls engineer at FM Controls Inc., Fort Dodge.

**ROCIO AMARO MARQUEZ**, Andujar, Spain, is a graduate researcher and a doctoral student in molecular, cellular, developmental biology, and genetics at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

**CLAIRE MARSH**, Waverly, is a marketing projects coordinator at Professional Office Services Inc., Waterloo.

**AMBER MARTENSON**, Gilman, is an art teacher for kindergarten through fourth grade in the Newton Community School District.

**JENSEN MCCLURE**, Boone, is an adolescent treatment technician at Community and Family Resources, Fort Dodge.

**ABIGAIL MCGRANE**, Manchester, is a junior high social studies and math teacher for the Adair-Casey Community School District, Adair.

**RILEY MCINTYRE**, Davenport, is a municipal police officer.

**JARED MCLEAY**, Waverly, is a graduate student in theology at the Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque.

**IRELYNN MCMURPHY**, Harlan, is a law student at Drake University, Des Moines.

**HAYLEY MCNEALY**, Huxley, is an English language arts teacher at Collins-Maxwell Middle/High School, Maxwell.

**DANIEL MILLER**, Carroll, is a vocal music director for grades 6-12 for the Ogden Community School District.

**SOH ONODERA**, Tokyo, Japan, is an area manager at Amazon, Colorado Springs, Colo.

**ANTHONY ONYIA**, Waverly, is a treasury management analyst at Bank of America, New York City.

**MADI OVERMANN**, Waverly, works in operations and project development in the finance division of McCord Health, North Liberty.

**DANIELLE PETERSON**, Watertown, Minn., is a Spanish teacher at Charles City High School.

**ANNABELLA PLACE**, Denver, is a first-grade teacher in the Kirksville Community School District, Kirksville, Mo.

**LORNA PUHL**, Council Bluffs, is a graduate student in organizational leadership at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

**LAUREN REICKS**, Cresco, is a graduate student in athletic training at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

**KAYLA REISCH**, Kenosha, Wis., is a graduate student in immunology at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**ELIZABETH RICKE**, Fonda, is a special education teacher at Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn Middle School, Sanborn.

**GRACE ROSEEN**, Chippewa Falls, Wis., is a research assistant at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

**ANDREA SALOW**, Manchester, is an admissions counselor at Wartburg College.

**JORDON SCHLETTY**, West St. Paul, Minn., is a clubhouse management intern with the Waterloo Bucks, Waterloo.

**HANNA SCHMITT**, Waucoma, is an education and outreach coordinator for the Winneshiek County Conservation Board, Fort Atkinson.

**MISHA SEEBECK**, Colfax, is a process engineer at Pella Corp.

**MADISON FREELAND SEITZ**, Waverly, is a producer with KMSP-TV, Minneapolis.

**TANNER SHIELDS**, Grand Junction, Colo., is a doctoral student in osteopathic medicine at A.T. Still University, Kirksville, Mo.

**MISSY SHOCKLEY**, Omaha, Neb., is a doctoral student in occupational therapy at the College of Saint Mary's.

**LETICIA SILVA**, Waverly, is an administrative/communications assistant at the New York Metropolitan Synod – ECLA, New York City.

**CAITLYNN SMITH**, Cedar Falls, is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in leadership at Wartburg. She is a supply chain specialist at Deere & Co. in Waterloo through Cerebral Staffing.

**FAITH SOTO**, Victorville, Calif., is a math teacher at Dunstan Middle School, Lakewood, Colo.

**ABBEY STRONG**, Grand Mound, is a graduate student in social work at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**EMMA STRONG**, Broomfield, Colo., is a graduate student in athletic training at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

**ABIGAIL THIER**, Waverly, is a graduate student in physical therapy at Washington University, St. Louis.

**JASMINE VANDERMARK**, Des Moines, is a graduate student in library and information science with a concentration in archives management at Simmons University, Boston.

**TRISTAN VOELKER**, Manchester, is a doctoral student in optometry at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Mich.

**DELLA WHITTAKER**, Oshkosh, Wis., is an assignment editor/digital producer at NBC 26 News, Green Bay, Wis.

**DALLAS WRIGHT**, Des Moines, is an operations manager at Target, Cedar Falls.

**MAECIE WRIGHT**, Douglas, Wyo., is a graduate student in epidemiology at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.



## STAY CONNECTED

Have you recently married, had a baby, retired, changed jobs, been promoted, or have other life news to share with your fellow Knights? Submit your news online at [www.wartburg.edu/update-our-records](http://www.wartburg.edu/update-our-records).



# IN MEMORIAM

## 1942

The Rev. Dr. **Edwin Schick**, Dubuque, died Feb. 9. He earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and his doctorate from Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J. He was ordained in 1946 and was a professor at Wartburg College and Wartburg Theological Seminary, where he served as dean of faculty. After retiring, he taught in Africa and served as assistant pastor for St. Peter Lutheran Church, Dubuque.

## 1943

**Jeanette Brinkman Schmitz**, Urbana, died Feb. 9. She was an elementary school teacher. Later, she and her husband owned a business that included a grain elevator, trucking, and hog buying.

## 1946

**Howard "Bill" Burman**, Janesville, died Nov. 29. He worked for a plumbing and heating company as well as farmed and built homes.

## 1949

**Dorothy Droste Hertel**, Waverly, died Jan. 11. She worked at Lutheran Mutual Life Insurance Co., Waverly; the U.S. Navy, Washington, D.C.; and Wartburg College in film services and the comptroller's office. She was a Wartburg Medal recipient in 2002. *Consider a memorial gift to the Dorothy Droste Hertel Scholarship in her honor.*

## 1950

**Lucille Krueger Ables**, Columbus, Ohio, died Oct. 28. She earned a bachelor's degree from Capital University and a master's degree in social administration from The Ohio State University. She was a social worker for the state of Ohio and later Lutheran Social Services.

The Rev. **Elwin Bergstraesser**, Lindsborg, Kan., died Oct. 22. He earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and then spent 67 years as a pastor in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Colorado, and Oklahoma.

**Elaine Jakel Renning**, Tulsa, Okla., died March 26. She was a homemaker and did volunteer work.

**Lorraine Kurtz Schelske**, Delmont, S.D., died Dec. 27. She was a school cook for 18 years.

## 1951

**Julia "Judy" Vogel Engelbrecht**, Waverly, died March 1. She was a homemaker. *Consider a memorial gift to the Edwin G. Engelbrecht Scholarship or George C. and Erna Vogel Scholarship in her honor.*

The Rev. **Henry Grishkowsky**, Dubuque, died March 25. He attended Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and was ordained in 1955. He accepted only one call, serving for 42 years in Derinda and Hanover, Ill.

**Richard Zimmerman**, Ormond Beach, Fla., died March 8. A U.S. Army veteran, he managed the family grain business, Fasco Mills Co., and developed grain accounting software. He sponsored the Zimmerman Tower in the Wartburg Chapel and Zimmerman Field at Walston-Hoover Stadium. *Consider a memorial gift to the Zimmerman Family Scholarship in his honor.*

## 1952

**Marvin Berger**, Waukee, died Jan. 18. A U.S. Navy veteran, he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Drake University, Des Moines. He was a certified public accountant.

## 1953

**Charles Lutz**, Richfield, Minn., died April 3. He worked in communications and social justice for several church agencies. He was awarded an alumni citation in 1972 and an honorary Doctor of Letters in 1986 from Wartburg. *Consider a memorial gift to the Charles and Hertha Bieber Lutz Church Communications Scholarship in his honor.*

**Bonnie Balke Roleder**, Lincoln, Neb., died March 21. She was an editor and an administrative assistant.

## 1954

The Rev. **Donald Johnson**, Kissimmee, Fla., died Jan. 19. He earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and went on to earn a doctorate from McCormick Seminary, Chicago. He served congregations in Iowa and Illinois. He served in leadership roles in the American Lutheran Church and then the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America until retiring in 1995.

**Mary Warnke Ling**, Somerset, Pa., died Feb. 18. She earned a degree from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, and was parish secretary and music director at Friedens Evangelical Lutheran Church, Friedens, Pa.

**Lyle Niemeyer**, Marshalltown, died Feb. 21. A U.S. Army veteran, he earned a master's degree in business education and accounting from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, and was a teacher at Marshalltown Community College for 31 years. After retirement, he worked as a financial planning counselor and tax preparer. He is survived by his wife, **Ruth Bauer Niemeyer '59**. *Consider a memorial gift to the Lyle and Ruth Niemeyer Scholarship or the Henry A. and Esther P. (Meyer) Niemeyer Memorial Scholarship in his honor.*

The Rev. **Marvin Rothfus**, Robbinsdale, Minn., died June 29, 2020. He attended Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served congregations in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Minnesota. He later worked for the Minnesota Head Start Association and retired in 1994 from factory work.

**Noreen Morton Ehler-Scott**, Conroe, Texas, died Dec. 12. She was an industrial artist in the marketing department of Rath Packing Co. and a homemaker.

## 1955

The Rev. **Conrad Grosenick**, Happy Valley, Ore., died Jan. 23. He earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served parishes in Illinois and Indiana. He later earned graduate degrees from Concordia Teachers College and Wartburg Theological Seminary.

**Christina Tuil Knox**, Los Lunas, N.M., died Nov. 11. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the National College of Education, Chicago, and a master's degree in reading from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. She was a teacher and reading specialist for 50 years and a professional storyteller.

**Norma McCallum Moberg**, North Branch, Minn., died Aug. 24, 2021. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Valley City State Teachers College, North Dakota, and was a teacher, real estate broker, and health care worker. She is survived by her husband, the Rev. **Frederick Moberg '52**.

## 1956

Dr. **Marian Lahmann Barnes**, Cedar Rapids, died Jan. 12. She earned medical degrees from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and was a physician.

The Rev. **Vernon Bigalk**, Apple Valley, Minn., died May 7. He earned a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served congregations in Minnesota, Indiana, and Tennessee. *Consider a memorial gift to the Gordon and Hedwig Yock Scholarship in his honor.*

**Alvin Ulrich**, Buffalo Lake, Minn., died Aug. 1, 2021. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a farmer and an insurance salesman.

Dr. **Thomas Wipperfurth**, Monona, Wis., died Nov. 23. He earned his graduate degree at the Illinois College of Optometry and owned an optometry practice.

## 1957

**Dennis Buske**, O'Fallon, Ill., died Dec. 4. A U.S. Air Force veteran, he attended Belleville Barber College and operated a barber shop for 40 years.

## 1959

**Barbara Norder Clasen Ehnen**, Cedar Rapids, died Jan. 18. She was a receptionist, museum curator, claims specialist, and courtesy driver. She is survived by her husband, **Marvin Ehnen '61**.

The Rev. Dr. **Marion Ross Kirk**, Wakefield, Kan., died Dec. 20. A U.S. Army veteran, he earned a degree at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis. He was a U.S. Army chaplain, led several congregations in Kansas, and was executive director of Milford Lake Ministries Inc. for 48 years.

Dr. **Luther Morton**, Madison, Wis., died Jan. 27. He earned a master's degree in zoology from the University of Texas and his medical degree from Kansas City College of Osteopathic Medicine. He practiced medicine for 30 years.

**John Rich**, Sumner, died March 23. A U.S. Air Force veteran, he was a farmer and worked at the Carnation Co., Waverly, and Deere & Co., Waterloo, retiring in 1987.

**Fred Schuchmann**, Oelwein, died Dec. 11. A U.S. Army veteran, he sold insurance until retiring in 2001.

## 1960

**Coleen Ganzevoort Baldwin**, Carlisle, died Oct. 22. She was a homemaker and sold Avon products.

The Rev. **Raymond Ehrman**, Sioux Falls, S.D., died Jan. 26. He earned a master's degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served congregations in Iowa and South Dakota. In addition, he worked in trucking and the heating and air conditioning industry.

**Merlyn Kasemeier**, Waverly, died Jan. 12. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a teacher for 32 years.

**Larry Schroeder**, Clear Lake, died Jan. 15. He earned a degree from Drake University and worked in the banking industry for 30 years.

## 1961

**Marian Hoelz Baderschneider**, Mahomet, Ill., died April 14. She earned a nursing degree from Allen College, Waterloo, and worked in many medical settings. She is survived by her husband, **Victor Baderschneider '59**.

**Kathryn Karsten Braatz**, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, died Dec. 22. She was a business teacher and later a market analyst in the aerospace industry. She is survived by her husband, **Norman Braatz '59**.

**Bruce Brye**, Signal Mountain, Tenn., died Jan. 21. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in sanitary engineering from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He worked at the Tennessee Valley Authority.

**David Siefkes**, Richland Center, Wis., died March 31. He earned a master's degree from the University of Missouri and an education specialist degree from the University of Wisconsin. He was a teacher and principal until retiring in 2001.

## 1962

**Beverly Alfrejd Blake**, Lady Lake, Fla., died Feb. 3. She earned a master's degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She was a teacher and school librarian.

**Leone Radke Fisher**, St. Paul, Minn., died June 7, 2021. She was a social worker and real estate agent.

**Sandra Ballou Link**, Ionia, died April 20. She worked in the insurance industry and later owned and operated a bed and breakfast in Clear Lake.

**Darwin Oehlerich**, Keystone, died Feb. 23. He was a teacher and a farmer.

## 1963

**Charles Allen**, Charles City, died Dec. 16. He worked at the Oliver Farm Equipment Co./White Motor Corp. plant in Charles City and later was a custodian in the Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock school system, retiring in 2006.

**Barbara Becker**, Owatonna, Minn., died Jan. 1. She was a teacher for more than 30 years.

**Joan Garbers**, Van Horne, died Nov. 25. She earned a degree at Upper Iowa University and was a teacher.

## 1964

**Bruce Hein**, Plymouth, Minn., died Jan. 16. He earned a master's degree in education from St. Cloud State University and was a teacher and coach for 34 years.

**Thomas Hicks**, Waverly, died May 8, 2021. He was an electrician and a U.S. Army Reserve veteran of more than 38 years, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

**Edward Keith**, Marble Rock, died April 19. A National Guard veteran, he was a farmer and worked in management until retiring.

**Tom Roach**, Boulder, Colo., died Nov. 13. He was the owner of Roach Galleries for 35 years. He is survived by his wife, **Shahnaz "Sandi" Khaksan Roach '67**.

## 1965

**Kathryn Becker Dettmering**, Waverly, died March 6. She was a teacher. *Consider a memorial gift to the C. H. Becker Memorial Scholarship in her honor.*

The Rev. **Albert Goldammer**, Dimock, S.D., died Aug. 25, 2021. He earned a master's degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served parishes in South Dakota.

**Gayle Fisher Johnson**, West Des Moines, died Nov. 7. She was a teacher and later an insurance underwriter, retiring in 2016.

## 1966

**Judith Jorgenson Arjes**, Lawler, died Dec. 21. She earned her associate degree from Waldorf College, Forest City, and was a paraeducator.

**David Calkins**, Cleves, Ohio, died Dec. 3. A U.S. Army veteran and a teacher, he earned a master's degree and continued his doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati. *Consider a memorial gift to the Diane Sheffler Calkins and Lloyd and Ruth Sheffler Music Scholarship in his honor.*

**Thomas Felton**, Mason City, died Nov. 22. A U.S. Army veteran, he attended Iowa State University, Ames, and earned a master's degree at the University of Northern Colorado. He was a teacher at New Hampton High School for 36 years.

**Carole Satterly Lafferty**, Center Point, died Dec. 13. She was a teacher for more than 30 years.

## 1967

**Jacquelin Knock Anderson**, Las Vegas, Nev., died Sept. 26, 2021. She was a retired investigative specialist for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.



## 1968

**Derald Caruthers**, Ramsey, Minn., died Jan. 8. He is survived by his wife, **Linda Clark Caruthers '67**.

**James Seidel**, Wausau, Wis., died Dec. 9. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a social worker and went on to serve as district court administrator for Wisconsin's Ninth District.

## 1969

**Richard Smith**, Marshalltown, died Dec. 17, 2020. He earned a master's degree from Iowa State University, Ames. He worked at Fisher Controls in Marshalltown and later at Richie Industries in Conrad.

## 1970

**Dorothy Petersen Baker**, Sumner, died Feb. 22. She was a farmer. She is survived by her husband, **Ken Baker '67**.

The Rev. **Timothy Zingale**, Pella, died April 2. He attended Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served parishes in Wisconsin and Iowa. He went on to develop an online ministry to mentor other pastors worldwide. He is survived by his wife, **Wanda Hodges Zingale '71**.

## 1971

**Beverly Borcharding Soenksen**, Bettendorf, died Jan. 7. She earned a degree from Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill., and was a teacher for more than 28 years. She is survived by her husband, **Glen Soenksen '69**.

## 1972

**Darlene Hesterberg Altes**, Gifford, Ill., died May 19, 2021. She was an executive assistant.

**Phyllis Ruder Corrick**, Omaha, Neb., died Aug. 17, 2019. She was a teacher, retiring after 33 years.

**Marilyn Reick Lee**, Cedar Falls, died Feb. 4. She was a teacher at Dike Elementary School for 22 years, retiring in 2000.

**Avis Young Montgomery**, Lake Mills, died April 7. She worked at Fleetguard for 38 years.

## 1973

**Thomas Egts**, Bettendorf, died Dec. 26. He was a project manager at Deere & Co. for more than 40 years. He is survived by his wife, **Pamela Snyder Egts '75**.

**Virginia "Susy" Ewoldt**, Davenport, died March 25. She taught music and string instruments.

**Shirley Krauss Leemaster Hall**, Hereford, Colo., died May 1, 2019. She was a teacher and farmer and worked at High West Energy for 36 years.

**Faith Roys McDowell**, Webster City, died Sept. 24, 2021. She earned a master's degree in chemical education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and taught science until retiring in 2010.

## 1974

**Dennis Bortvit**, Ruthven, died March 14. He was a teacher and later worked in sales, retiring in 2020.

**Cheryl Clark**, Cedar Rapids, died March 2. She earned a degree from Ellsworth College, Iowa Falls, and attended the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and Iowa State University, Ames. She was a social worker and a founding member of Peer Action Disability Support in Cedar Rapids.

**Keith Long**, Waverly, died Dec. 3. He worked for CUNA Mutual Group for 37 years until retiring in 2011. He is survived by his wife, **Christie Patrilla Long '75**.

## 1975

**Dennis Gibbs**, Cedar Falls, died March 12. He owned G&G Music, Waterloo, and performed with several bands.

**Karla Dutcher Sonksen**, Madison, Ind., died Dec. 3. She earned a degree in mathematics from Iowa State University, Ames, and spent many years volunteering.

## 1977

**Mark Anderson**, Kissimmee, Fla., died Jan. 16. He was a pianist for the Walt Disney Co. and was well-known at Walt Disney World for his performances at Casey's Corner and on Disney's BoardWalk. He is survived by his wife, **Luralee Lawfer Anderson '78**.

## 1978

**John Sauer**, West St. Paul, Minn., died Dec. 8. He retired from a career in finance.

## 1979

**Randal Chevalier**, Oelwein, died Dec. 20. He worked in sales of home furnishing and office equipment.

## 1984

**Amy Rannells**, Waterloo, died Feb. 19. She was a clerk at Blain's Farm & Fleet.

## 1987

**Jeffrey Everts**, Wauwatosa, Wis., died April 1. He earned a nursing degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was a traveling nurse, then worked at the veterans' hospital in Milwaukee for more than 20 years.

**Lisa Wilson**, Waterloo, died April 21. She earned a political science degree from Iowa State University, Ames, and a master's degree in public administration from Drake University, Des Moines. She was an insurance benefit specialist and training specialist at CUNA Mutual Group, Waverly.

## 1989

**Heather Henschel Bruemmer**, Oconto, Wis., died April 14. She served as executive director and ombudsman for the Board on Aging and Long-Term Care for the state of Wisconsin.

**Tasha Knepp Widner**, Friendship, Wis., died Nov. 22. She attended the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, and was employed at Colonial Savings as a senior home loan processor.

## 1992

**Michilyn Bingham**, Juneau, Wis., died Nov. 20. She previously worked in investment banking and was an audio technician for HCI Mobile Health Testing.

## Friends of the College

Former Wartburg regent **Martha Norell**, Stockton, Mo., died Feb. 14. She was a retired victim's advocacy counselor and mediator for Polk County Victims Services.

**Emily Schuh**, Granville, Ohio, died Feb. 16. She earned a bachelor's degree from Capital University, Bexley, Ohio, and a master's degree and doctoral degree from Ohio State University, Columbus. She was a teacher for 40 years. *Consider a memorial gift to the Dr. Henry and Amelia Schuh Scholarship in her honor.*

**Keith Schuld**, Cedar Springs, Mich., died Dec. 28. A former mayor of Waverly known for generous contributions to educational institutions, his donations funded an Olympic-sized pool at Wartburg, as well as classrooms and pianos at Waverly churches.

# INVISIBLE ART

Wartburg professor creates geo-art in shape of Knight's helmet

BY EMILY CHRISTENSEN

**I**N THE 14 YEARS THAT DR. BRIAN BIRGEN HAS BEEN GEOCACHING, he has found caches in more than 800 U.S. counties, 47 U.S. states (he's only missing Alaska, Idaho, and South Carolina), and even a few foreign countries. During that same time, he placed about 70 of his own caches at locations around the country.

That is, until this spring, when his number of placed caches exploded to more than 200. For nearly a year, Birgen, a professor of mathematics, has planned and executed the installation of a giant piece of geo-art in the shape of a Knight's helmet on a large plot of land between Waverly, Readlyn, Plainfield, and Frederika.

Geocaching is a treasure-hunt-like activity that uses GPS to aid individuals in hiding and seeking containers called geocaches. Geo-art is a collection of geocaches that have their posted coordinates arranged in a way that creates an image or spells out a word.

"A lot of the credit for this idea goes to Joe Turner (who geocaches under the alias Nascar Joe). He created a 150-cache geo-art of an Independence Mustang south of the town," said Birgen. "He inspired me to try one, but you need a big empty space on the geocaching map."

Using city- and county-owned rights-of-way and a nearby wilderness area, Birgen placed 133 caches this spring. The catch: None of them are actually where they appear on the map. To locate each physical geocache, one must first solve a puzzle.

"Some are easy. Some are hard, but if you want to complete the entire geo-art, it will definitely take some work," Birgen said.



Each star represents a geocache placed by Dr. Brian Birgen


**Stacey Snyder '86** is up for the challenge. A longtime geocacher, she was excited when Birgen mentioned that he was going to be placing new caches in the area. But he never mentioned just how many or that they would be a work of art.

"After I realized what he was doing, I tried to figure out what he was creating since he released the caches in different waves. I knew it wasn't the Wartburg W, and then I saw the Knight head," she said. "Cachers like to be the 'first to find,' and I knew right away I wanted to be first on at least a couple. One of the puzzles was a Set game puzzle, and I was first on that."

The puzzles include everything from linear algebra and Diophantine equations to Candy Crush screenshots and photos of Wartburg professors.

"I'm pretty proud of some of these puzzles. And every one has been found by someone, though there isn't a single person who has found all of the caches yet," Birgen said. "There's even a guy in Chicago who has solved all the puzzles, but he hasn't been here to find any of them yet. He just likes solving them."

Ever the mathematician, Birgen used an Excel spreadsheet to track the creation. Each of the 133 caches needed dummy coordinates (what is seen on the map), real coordinates (which had to be within two miles of the dummy coordinates), and a unique puzzle to solve. Then, Birgen had to hide each of the microcontainers and create their webpage at geocaching.com.

"It was a fun tribute to Wartburg. I know a lot of alums who are geocachers, and I wanted to put some art in the area, so the Knight head seemed like the most logical choice," he said. "It's a lot of fun to do, but it's kind of like renovating a house. It's a good experience, but you don't really need to do it more than once." 

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These are just two of the 133 puzzles Dr. Brian Birgen created as part of the project.



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