

# Looking Ahead

Wartburg affirms commitment to  
access, affordability, and experience



## Nick Arp '19

Biochemistry, M.D.-Ph.D. student

University of Wisconsin

MEDICAL SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM

### Q & A

#### How did Wartburg prepare you for this program?

The comprehensive education I received at Wartburg fostered a strong foundation in critical thinking and effective communication — all of which are indispensable in my current dual-degree pursuits. Engaging in undergraduate research also ignited my passion for scientific investigation and provided me with essential research skills that have seamlessly translated into my Ph.D. studies. Overall, Wartburg's nurturing environment and emphasis on holistic learning uniquely equipped me for success in the rigorous and dynamic landscape of biomedical research and patient care.

#### What do you like most about your research?

What I find most captivating about my current research is delving into the complex world of cellular metabolism within macrophages, a type of immune cell important for protecting us from infections and helping with wound repair. Unraveling the metabolic pathways that impact these cells not only contributes to a deeper understanding of their functions but also holds potential for groundbreaking insights into various diseases. The opportunity to uncover novel connections between metabolism and immune responses fuels my curiosity and underscores the significance of the work in advancing both basic science and potential therapeutic avenues.

#### Where do you hope to be in 10 years?

In a decade, I aspire to be making significant strides at the intersection of academic medicine and basic biomedical research. My goal is to lead a dynamic research group at an academic medical center, where I can continue to explore the fundamental mechanisms underlying diseases with the hopes to apply these insights to innovative patient care. Through my role as a physician-scientist, I envision contributing not only to the advancement of scientific knowledge but also to the translation of discoveries into tangible benefits for individuals and communities.

#### What do you wish all prospective students could know about the Wartburg experience?

The incredible value of its small class sizes and unparalleled mentorship and advising from faculty and staff. This unique environment fosters not only close-knit relationships but also provides personalized guidance that goes beyond academics.



Share your Wartburg experience at  
[wartburg.edu/alumni-success](http://wartburg.edu/alumni-success)

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### ON THE COVER:

Students complete real-world bacteriophage research in Dr. Sean Coleman's class.

COVER PHOTO BY ROLAND FERRIE '08

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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 [wartburg.edu/alumni](http://wartburg.edu/alumni).

### TRANSCRIPTS:

To obtain an official college transcript, contact the Registrar's Office or complete an online request form at [wartburg.edu/registrar](http://wartburg.edu/registrar). There is a \$5 fee per transcript. Requests must include maiden and all married names used, as well as birth date or Social Security number. Enclose return address and payment with the request.



# WARTBURG

## — IN THE NEWS —

For more, visit [wartburg.edu/news](http://wartburg.edu/news)

### Ndhlovu receives grant for project to end period poverty in Zambia

**Rabecca Ndhlovu '24**, a Davis United World College Scholar from Zambia, received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant to teach young girls in the Chongwe District of Zambia how to make and sanitize reusable menstrual pads. She hopes her effort in the



Rabecca Ndhlovu

rural community will help reduce period poverty, which is defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education. Each young person received a sewing kit, plastic bucket, and laundry bag so they can maintain the pads.

"Period poverty is a sensitive topic and because it's not talked about, that puts a lot of pressure on the girl child. It is not something that girls can embrace but a constant reminder they have to battle," Ndhlovu said. "It also can become a financial burden."

Though Ndhlovu is earning her degree in computer information systems and business administration, sustainability and humanitarian work have played an important role in her life since her early school days at the Pestalozzi Education Centre. She was taught to use her head to solve problems in the community, have a heart for others, and use her hands to take care of the environment and those around her.

"You have to use all the opportunities that you get to help out the community, and that will help you too. You get to learn your own strengths and weaknesses, amplify your communication skills, and learn project management," she said.

Philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis founded Davis Projects for Peace in 2007 to celebrate her 100th birthday. Wartburg students have received a grant every year since the program's inception.



#### SPOTLIGHT

### Bechtel's Ioponics system selected for Iowa STEM Scale-Up Program

For the third time in as many years, the aquaponics program developed by **Dr. Michael Bechtel '94** was available to all Iowa educators thanks to the STEM Scale-Up Program from the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council. The program, called Ioponics, combines aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (growing plants without soil) to create a controlled micro-ecosystem for year-round hands-on learning.

Since 2021, Bechtel and his team of Wartburg students have placed more than 200 40-gallon systems in 76 of Iowa's 99 counties.

In addition to his work in Iowa, Bechtel has partnered with educators in 14 states to bring Ioponics and sustainable agriculture education to students there. Learn more at [wartburg.edu/ioponics](http://wartburg.edu/ioponics).





## AWARDS

## Faculty, staff recognized

Dr. Suleman Abdiah, former visiting assistant professor of business administration, was awarded the 2023 John O. Chellevold Student Award for Excellence in Teaching and Professional Service.

Dr. Rick Snyder, associate professor of education, was named the Advisor of the Year.

**Jason Thueme '10**, senior manager for retail dining and special events, was named the Outstanding Administrative Staff.

Dr. Patricia Dietz Parsons, exercise science; Dr. Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler, religion; and the **Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland '00**, religion, were promoted to associate professor and granted tenure.

Thomas Payne, professor of art, was granted emeritus status.



Dr. Rick Snyder



Jason Thueme '10



Dr. Patricia Dietz Parsons



Dr. Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler



Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland '00



Thomas Payne

## Dance Marathon raises more than \$130,000

In 2023, Wartburg College Dance Marathon raised \$131,527.15 for the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, a member of the Children's Miracle Network. Combined with 2022 funds, WCDM has donated more than \$300,000 in support of mental health. Last year, the dollars were used to begin a fund to recruit and train a postdoctoral fellow in clinical child psychology as well as other mental wellness initiatives for patients, their families, and their caregivers. This year's donations will continue to grow the Wartburg College Child Psychiatry Fund and support the Suicidal Adolescent Family Empowerment Program.



## Illg earns prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship

For the fourth time in five years, a Wartburg student-athlete has earned an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship. Softball player **Sydney Illg '23** is attending medical school at A.T. Still University's Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.

On the field, she is a career leader in runs scored and games started and appears in the top 10 in six other game categories. Illg is the 45th Wartburg recipient of this scholarship and the second from the softball program. The NCAA awards up to 126 \$10,000 postgraduate scholarships annually.







# Call her chaplain, *please*

## Falenschek ready for new challenges as dean of spiritual life at Wartburg

The Rev. Maggie Garberg Falenschek has a request for her new Wartburg College family: When you see her out and about, please don't call her pastor, as she prefers chaplain.

"The chaplain title feels much more descriptive of my work on a college campus. I get to do pastoral things, but my role is really extended beyond the walls of the chapel," said Falenschek, who joined the college Aug. 7 as the new dean of spiritual life and Herbert and Cora Moehlmann Chaplaincy Chair. "I'm here to walk alongside and to equip students of many different world views and backgrounds and stories, and I think the word chaplain gets at that a little better."


**"I get to do pastoral things,  
but my role is really  
extended beyond the  
walls of the chapel."**

— The Rev. Maggie Falenschek

Falenschek comes to Wartburg from Gustavus Adolphus College, where she served as chaplain, director of campus ministries, and director of the Gustavus Academy for Faith, Science, and Ethics.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Falenschek earned her undergraduate degree at Concordia College in Moorhead before heading west to Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif., for her Master of Divinity. It was in California that she fell in love with campus ministry while interning at Stanford University with the Episcopal Lutheran campus ministry team. She returned to the Midwest to serve as a pastor for youth and family ministries in Urbana, Ill., before landing at Gustavus. Falenschek and her spouse, Nikoli, have two rescue dogs.

As someone who credits a campus pastor with helping her find her calling, Falenschek is excited to have the opportunity to be that person for students at Wartburg.

"She was the first person to help me see myself in this kind of role. She was super encouraging, but she also let me fail at things I needed to fail at," Falenschek said. "She was always a calming, sacred presence for me. I love that I get to have the opportunity to help emerging adults as they navigate life and their own leadership by equipping them with the skills and tools they need to thrive in those transformative years." 

### Q & A

#### How did your participation in Wartburg's German Heritage Tour help you acclimate to your new role?

I've been joking that was the best onboarding I could have ever imagined. I was getting an in-depth view into the history of not only our college, but of Waverly, too. Even more valuable was the opportunity to get to know 20 people from different departments that I then knew when I arrived. Those kinds of connections would normally take semesters to develop, if they ever even did.

#### What do your tattoos mean to you?

I sometimes feel I don't look like your typical church leader or an administrator at a college, but my tattoos are stories of different parts of my life that have been meaningful for me. My tattoos show a bit of my story on my skin. They are important to me because I feel like they help me live into this role as my authentic self.

#### Tell us more about your running interest.

I've run six marathons, and I'm pretty proud of that. They were six very slow marathons, but I did it. Folks will likely see me running around town. I'm really excited because Waverly has the beautiful paved trail system, and I'm already getting to explore those spaces on my runs.





## Ehretsman honored for leadership in humanitarian efforts

Since the early days of her career, Wartburg College President Rebecca Ehretsman has built a legacy of creating opportunities for humanitarian work and leadership. In the last year, her efforts were recognized by the American Association for Hand Surgery and her former employer, Elon University.

Ehretsman was the recipient of the 2023 American Association for Hand Surgery Humanitarian Award, which honors an association member who has made or continues to make special contributions or personal sacrifices for the betterment of humanitarian efforts. Elon University also presented an inaugural leadership award that bears her name in recognition of the role she played in establishing the university's nursing program during her tenure from June 2017 to July 2022.

In November 2022, Ehretsman embarked on her 19th medical mission, this time with the Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation, a nonprofit that regularly sends surgeons, therapists, anesthesiologists, nurses, and volunteers to provide comprehensive training and screen more than 200 children with congenital limb differences and traumatic injuries in Guatemala. She also sits on the foundation board.

"Becky has dedicated her career to not only humanitarian efforts abroad, but to her work as an educator, mentor, and leader in the United States," wrote Gretchen Bachman, an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Northern Arizona University. "In previous roles as professor, program director, and dean of health sciences, she educated, influenced, and mentored scores of students and organizational leaders along with fostering an environment of giving back."

While at Maryville University, Ehretsman created the first global learning opportunity within the School of Health Professions, which resulted in eight trips to Guatemala between 2006 and 2013 and included more than 50 occupational and music therapy students.


At Concordia University Wisconsin, she participated in a global health equity outreach program that served Guatemala and Nicaragua, resulting in five missions with more than 30 physical and occupational therapy students.

In addition to her extensive work in Guatemala and Nicaragua, Ehretsman also has participated in hand care medical missions in Haiti and Cambodia.

"It is an incredible honor to receive this award from the American Association for Hand Surgery, the organization that significantly impacted my professional opportunities, introduced me to lifelong friends, and helped form my commitment to global health equity and education," Ehretsman said.

Her work in Guatemala began when she met Lynn Bassini, a beloved mentor and friend, on her way to a professional conference.

Born and raised in Guatemala, Bassini shared her plan to create the Guatemala Healing Hands Foundation and Ehretsman was intrigued. She joined the team for the first time in 2005.

"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," Ehretsman said. 



Volunteer therapists create custom hand splints for the children after surgery to optimize healing and positioning.





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# Athletic

Wartburg's Hall of Champions added another 17 trophies in 2023.



# RECAP



4

Wartburg College finished 16th in the Learfield Director's Cup for NCAA Division III, the highest rank for an American Rivers Conference school. The Knights have ranked in the top 25 in DIII for 19 of the last 21 years. For the 19th straight year, Wartburg also claimed the A-R-C All-Sports Championship Trophy, which recognizes the conference's top overall program. The Knights also won the Marjorie Giles Women's All-Sports Championship Trophy for the 18th time in school history and the Elmer Hertel Men's

All-Sports Championship Trophy for the 24th time. This marks the 13th time the college has claimed the conference's Triple Crown.

The college also led the A-R-C with 91 spring student-athletes earning 2022-23 All-Academic team honors, bringing the total for the year to 215, also first in the conference.

During the 2022-23 season, six Knights earned College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-America honors, bringing Wartburg's total to 128.





## Esports 1

In its inaugural season, the Wartburg esports Overwatch team won the National Esports Collegiate Conference Navigators League bracket with a 4-2 victory over East Stroudsburg. A new esports arena opened for the team in fall 2023.

## Men's Basketball

Men's basketball earned a spot in the A-R-C Tournament for the 11th straight season, and four Knights were named to All-Conference teams.

## Women's Basketball 2

Women's basketball won its 10th regular season conference championship en route to a seventh consecutive NCAA tournament appearance. The Knights made it to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2018-19 and finished the season No. 15 in the d3hoops.com Top 25 poll and No. 17 in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association poll. Four Knights were named All-Conference, including the MVP, **Sara Faber '24**. The Knights also earned the top spot for Division III in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Academic Top 25 Team Honor Roll.

## Men's Golf

Men's golf closed the 2022-23 season with a fourth-place finish at the A-R-C championships. **Nick Lechtenberg '24** had the top individual finish this season with a win at the Viking Invite.

## Baseball

Wartburg qualified for the A-R-C Tournament for the third straight season. Four Knights were named to All-Conference teams, including a first-team selection for **Keaton Gray '24**.

## Softball 3

Wartburg won the American Rivers Conference Tournament for the second straight year to advance to the NCAA Tournament. Six were named All-Conference, and **Reegan Deputy '23** and **Lauren Frerichs '23** earned All-Region honors.

## Wrestling

The team finished as national runner-up and had two individual champions: **Zane Mulder '24** (174) and **Massoma Endene '25** (197) 4. The duo later earned A-R-C MVP honors, and Eric Keller was named conference Coach of the Year.

## Women's Indoor/Outdoor Track & Field

The Knights placed ninth at the Indoor National Championships with seven athletes earning All-American status in five events. The team also earned sixth at the Outdoor National Championships with six athletes earning All-American status in six events, including **Aubrie Fisher '24**, the national champion in the 3,000m steeplechase.

## Men's Indoor/Outdoor Track & Field

**Deyton Love '24** earned All-American status with a fifth-place finish in the 60m hurdles at the DIII indoor national championships. The men placed 10th at the outdoor national championships, with three athletes earning All-American status in four events.

## Clay Target Sports

Wartburg took home the national championship in the Classic All-American Schools for Division 2 programs at the SCTP/ACUI National Championships. **Libby Faust '26** 5 was named the D2 All-American field national champion.

## Men's Tennis

Wartburg advanced to the A-R-C Tournament semifinal for the fourth straight year. **Lucas Huffman '23** was named All-Conference in singles and doubles play and became the program's career leader in doubles wins and wins at No. 1 doubles.

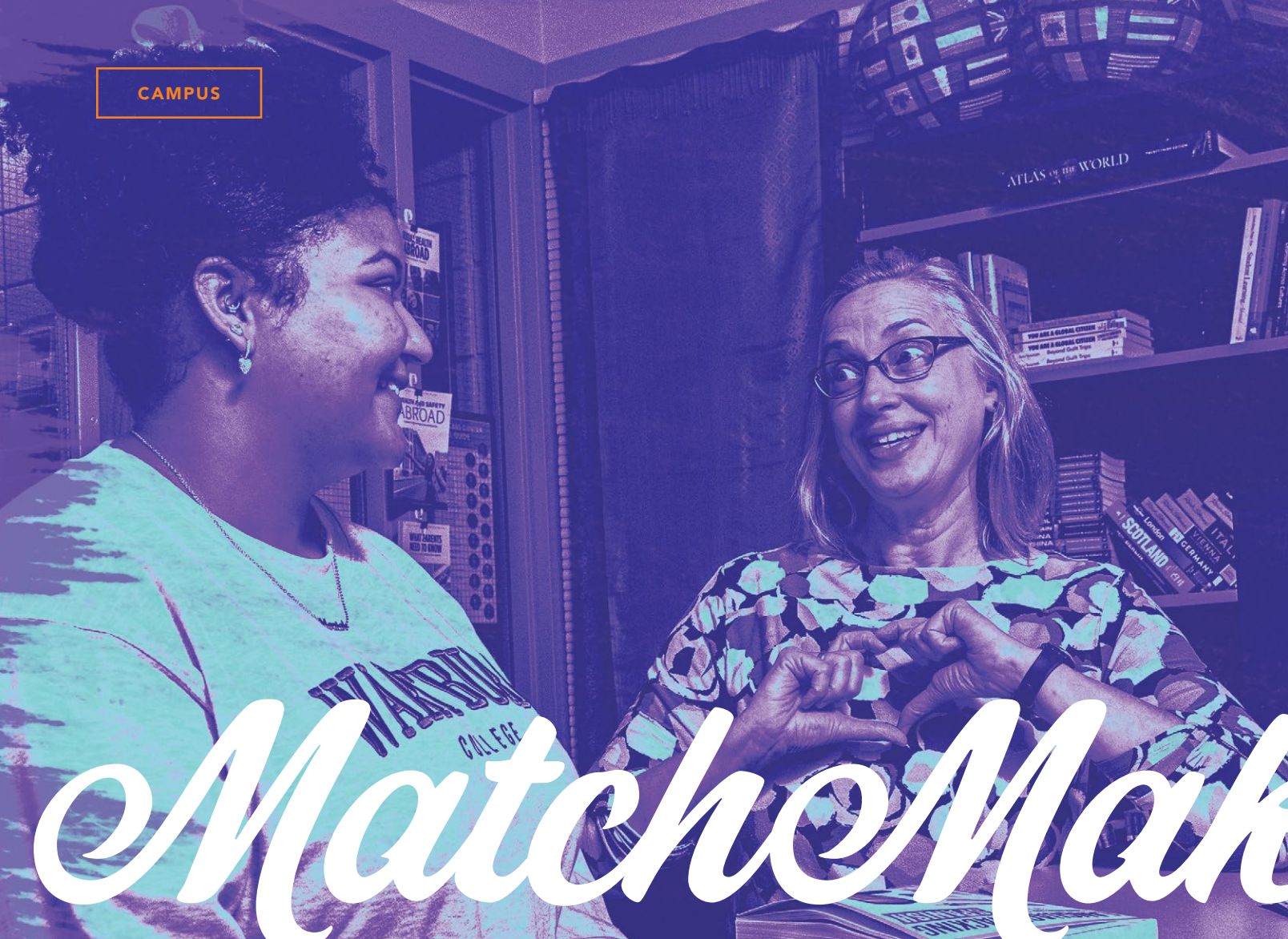
## Lacrosse

In the program's final season, **Britta Solheim '24** and **Lindsay Langford '23** were named All-Conference.



Stream many of your favorite Knights athletic events online at [wartburgknightvision.com](http://wartburgknightvision.com)





# MatchMaker

## Sihler's passion for travel translates to opportunities for students

Kathleen Sihler never had the opportunity to study abroad as a student, though travel and a learned appreciation for other cultures were important pieces of her upbringing.

"My parents traveled in Western Europe as young adults and were passionate about that experience. They took me to Europe when I graduated high school, and then when I moved to Iowa I had opportunities to travel to Russia with students through the University of Northern Iowa and Italy with students from Wartburg," she said. "Every travel day I woke up thinking that never in my life did I think I would have these kinds of opportunities. It was a powerful and addicting sensation."

Today, Sihler spends every working day thinking about those experiences and how she can help make them possible for more Wartburg students. As the college's

study away coordinator and competitive scholarship and fellowship adviser, it's her job to match students to opportunities in both areas. Though Wartburg has long had a study away coordinator in some capacity, Sihler said the structure of the scholarship and fellowship adviser role is new to the college and means she is able to put more focus on helping driven and talented students find funding for opportunities they might not otherwise have.

Currently, the college has about a dozen scholarship and fellowship opportunities that students regularly apply for and have success receiving. Sihler's goal is to maintain stability with those applications while finding new opportunities that can serve even more students. But finding those matches isn't as easy as some think.

"I need to get to know each of these students, so I ask them a whole lot of

questions. My goal is to 'see' the story of who they are, where they have come from, what is meaningful for them, and what they want to do moving forward," she said. "Oftentimes students don't have that perspective on their uniqueness, so I have to tease that out of them and get them to see themselves differently through the application and interview process."

That's why even a failed application can have immense benefits.

"The process of researching opportunities and reflecting on what is being offered is a great opportunity for growth. Obviously receiving the scholarship or fellowship is the ultimate goal, but that process comes at a valuable time for students as they are preparing for work or graduate school and learning how to go out and represent themselves," she said. [W](#)



Here are just a few of the scholarship opportunities Sihler can help students with.

"Oftentimes students don't have that perspective on their uniqueness, so I have to tease that out of them and get them to see themselves differently."

— Kathleen Sihler

Peer

## In 2022-23



The study away office collected 195 total passport records.



Students traveled to more than 30 locations around the globe.

## Students awarded competitive Gilman scholarships

Eight Wartburg students were awarded a Gilman International Scholarship that offset their costs while studying abroad. Applicants must be Federal Pell Grant recipients and can receive between \$100 and \$5,000 through the competitive application process. All Wartburg students received \$4,000.

Those receiving the scholarship were **Sophia Broers '24**, who studied in Italy during May Term; **DaQuevion Burke '23** and **Hayden Stone '22**, who toured through Greece, Italy, Austria, and Germany with the Wartburg Choir; **Peyton Emgarten '23** and **Ja'Niya LaBeaux '24**, who studied in Rwanda during May Term (see page 14 for more); **Brianna Higgins '24**, who studied in the Bahamas during May Term; **Giselle Rodriguez '23**, who studied in San Sebastian, Spain, during Winter Term; and **Carson Rygh '23**, who studied in the Netherlands, Germany, and England during May Term.

## Zelle receives ELCA physics scholarship for second year

**Paul Zelle '24** was awarded a \$5,000 Rossing Scholarship in Physics from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the second time in as many years. He is pursuing a double major in computer science and physics and is active in multiple music ensembles on campus.

"I am interested in finding an area where physics and computer science intersect, especially if it also involves music. One line of study I am interested in is looking at neural networks for processing audio, and whether this could incorporate the physics of sound," Zelle said.

Fewer than 15 scholarships are awarded annually as part of the Thomas D. Rossing Fund for Physics Education through the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Buchheim awarded R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship

**Andrew Buchheim '23** was one of two students to receive an R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship and will receive up to \$36,000 paid over three years.

Buchheim, who graduated with a degree in political science and English, is pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After earning his Ph.D., he would like to teach at a university or college.

"A holistic education positively impacts the individual. English, whether through literature or composition, is always going to be an academic discipline involving fundamental questions about language, culture, and communication — these questions connect with virtually any other subject, and working through them helps us become more conscious and critical people as we engage with the world," Buchheim said.

## Dunne receives Fulbright award to Taiwan

**Maeve Dunne '23** is spending the 2023-24 academic school year on the southeast coast of Taiwan working through the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board's English Teaching Assistant Program.

Dunne earned a degree in neuroscience and sociology. She eventually plans to attend law school.

"Taiwan has a culture that I am eager to learn about, and I can't wait for the growth I will see in myself after this experience. I feel honored and incredibly grateful for this opportunity," she said.



Learn about the new **Knight's Experience** fund, which makes experiential learning more accessible to all students, on page 18 or visit [wartburg.edu/give](http://wartburg.edu/give) to help support the program.

Pictured: Sihler talks with **Mariah Ambrose '25** to plan her next study away adventure.



“The church was where I was

**MEANT  
TO BE’**



## **Erika Breddin has once again found her home in an ELCA church**

It has taken time, but **Erika Breddin '94** is finally comfortable in both her personal and professional lives. She and her wife, Melissa Breddin, have two daughters, Adriana and Jasmyn, who are thriving at Cedar Falls High School. Breddin was recently installed as the pastor at St. Ansgar Lutheran Church and serves as a contract pastor at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, both in

Waterloo, though she is a full member of the United Church of Christ.

Breddin grew up in the Lutheran faith, the oldest child of Lutheran missionaries in Papua New Guinea, but her relationship with the church has been tested through the years for myriad reasons. She felt called to church work early on, but the church was a difficult place for her to be; Breddin was assigned



male at birth and lived in that identity for much of her life. She is transgender.

While still hiding her truth from others and suppressing her gender dysphoria (the discomfort or distress one can feel when their gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth), Breddin married her first wife and enrolled in courses at Wartburg Theological Seminary in 1999. As part of her studies, she spent an inspiring year at the Augustana Hochschule, a theological seminary in Neuendettelsau, Germany. She had just completed her third year of seminary when her divorce caused her to be outed to the church. The ELCA was still nearly 15 years away from publicly recognizing same-sex relationships and allowing the ordination of LGBTQIA+ clergy. Though she was forced to leave seminary, she never lost her faith.

"I still felt the church was my place to be, but I wasn't positive that the ELCA was the right place for me," she said.

So she stepped away. She found work she enjoyed as a goldsmith and eventually rejoined church life as a member of the United Church of Christ in Cedar Falls with the intent of "sitting in the pew and singing in the choir." And she did, for a while, until other church leaders started noticing her love for liturgy and people and her gifts for pastoral ministry.

After nearly five years of nudging, Breddin accepted the UCC's invitation to step into a leadership role. One month later, she was preaching her first sermon. She was ordained in the United Church of Christ, and for six years, Breddin served Saint Paul's United Church of Christ in rural Cedar Falls. She moved to Stuebenville, Ohio, for four years to serve at Zion United Church of Christ, where she helped the church implement support groups, increased community visibility, and grew membership for the first time in 25 years.

It's also where she finally embraced who she was. Though she was coming into her own, she still felt there was something missing. Breddin had never been able to finish earning a graduate degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary.

"I felt that while I was pastoring, the fact that I didn't have a master's degree was a perceived deficit from the congregations

when they were looking at me as a potential pastor," she said.

A chance meeting with a former seminary professor, the Rev. Dr. Norma Cook Everist, provided the boost she needed to once again face that challenge. In 2019, Everist "took it upon herself to write about what she saw as a miscarriage of justice," Breddin explained. Everist, then an emerita faculty member, pleaded Breddin's case at the seminary, and eventually she was granted admission. In 2021, Breddin graduated with a Master of Arts in religion.

It was about the same time that Breddin was contacted about a possible opportunity at St. Ansgar Lutheran Church.

"I was serving at Ripley United Church of Christ in Traer and had assumed I would just keep doing what I was doing. When St. Ansgar's current contract pastor asked me if I would consider

a contract position at St. Ansgar, my first question was 'Would they be willing to consider me?'" she said. "I preached my trial sermon on Pentecost and began serving there in July 2021."

Though she also has taken on additional pastoral duties at Zion Lutheran, she isn't yet ready to consider a full return to the Lutheran fold. For now, she's happy with her "dual citizenship" in the UCC and Lutheran churches.

She has other concerns about the ELCA, too. Despite the 2009 proclamation that provided her and other LGBTQIA+ individuals a path to ordination and the 2013 resolution encouraging all ELCA synods, congregations, and members to support legislation that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, Breddin says overall the organization still has a long way to go.

"There are pockets where there is change, but the reality is still that a lot of LGBTQ candidates wait years longer for a call and when they receive calls, they often aren't full time or they are offered the position because the congregation feels they have no other options," she said. "It took a long time for the church to fully recognize the equality of

women in ministry and for the congregations to really live into that as well."

For now, at least, Breddin believes she has found a few of those churches that not only talk the talk but walk the walk. There have been some struggles along the way, but things are moving in the right direction. Despite presiding over 20 funerals in the last two years, attendance at weekly services is up by about 15, which doesn't seem like much until accounting for the uphill battle churches have faced following the pandemic.


And she still loves the work she is doing, spending Sunday mornings with her congregation.

"I love liturgy. I love the story the liturgy tells. I love crafting and preaching a good sermon. The core component of my ministry is joy; I want people to know that faith is joyful and that church should be filled with

**"I never go out of my way to try and make my churches LGBTQ-friendly, but I help make them fully who they are and who they were meant to be."**

— Erika Breddin '94

joy," she said. "We are serious about our worship, but we don't take ourselves seriously. My congregation now sees how deep my faith is and my love of God, but they also see me being a complete and total goof. But they always know that I love the church, and I care about them.

"I have tried to do other things, but I have never been fulfilled. There are other pastors who are better than me, but this is what God wants me to do, and because of that, I have been blessed with the opportunity to serve amazing people and congregations over the years. And every church I have been with has grown, both in numbers and in their understanding of the world around them. I never go out of my way to try and make my churches LGBTQ-friendly, but I help make them fully who they are and who they were meant to be. If that means being LGBTQ-affirming and growing in their welcoming of others, even better." 



The group visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial to better understand the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

# BUILDING RESILIENT LEADERS

## May Term course teaches students how Rwandans found peace, justice following genocide

After nearly 10 years, **Steve Noah '71** has fulfilled his dream of helping Wartburg College students experience the heartache and restoration of Rwanda firsthand.

Noah, who served in advancement at Iowa State University and William Penn University from 2002 until his retirement in 2013, first visited Rwanda in 2008 when he and his wife **Jane Schmidhuber Noah '72** traveled there to recruit four students to study in Iowa. Since then, he has helped dozens of Rwandans study in the United States and encouraged U.S. colleges and universities to take students to Rwanda.

Beginning on April 7, 1994, the African country was devastated by a genocide against the Tutsi that is estimated to have killed up to 1 million people in 100 days. Despite the death and destruction of 29 years ago, Noah sees nothing but beauty

and hope in a country he has now visited 35 times.

“The genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda was brutal. The equivalent of the population of Waverly was killed every day, for 100 days, by clubs and machetes during the genocide. That is a terror no one here can visualize. People know this and have a hard time believing the country can be safe,” he said.

Dr. Brian McQueen, associate professor of sociology, has been interested in the country and the work it has done in the areas of gender equality and restorative justice since 2010. Shortly after coming to Wartburg, he was introduced to Noah and began planning a way to get Wartburg students to Rwanda. Several roadblocks, a global pandemic, and seven years later, he took his first May Term class in 2023.



During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the equivalent of the population of Waverly was killed every day for 100 days.





The group laid flowers at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

## FEATURE

"I've taken students to places to work with the most impoverished populations in the world. This time it was to work with people who had been victims of the second-largest genocide in the 20th century," he said. "These are difficult things I ask the students to do, and they have to work very, very hard at it. To see them learning, how they are developing and changing, and how their lives are improving because of this is the big takeaway for me."

The course started with a three-day peace and justice training through the Kigali Genocide Memorial that set the stage for nearly every experience that would follow.

"The training is based on restorative justice practices, which is an idea of how to restore society back to its functional state after bad things have happened. This is something that has worked amazingly well in different places, most notably Australia and New Zealand, but Rwanda is using it in a way that has never been done before," McQueen said. "After the genocide, the training was seen as absolutely necessary because you had a society that was completely fragmented."

After the training, the students saw what they learned in action in one of the country's reconciliation villages, where victims of the genocide live side-by-side with perpetrators of the same horror. But McQueen said it was more than just living next door to someone; the people in the villages work together to ensure everyone prospers. For instance, in Rwanda owning a cow is a sign of prosperity. The students met a woman who gave her cow's calf to her neighbor, who also was a member of the family that murdered her family. The students also met a man and woman from opposite sides of the genocide who are now married and have children.

Dr. Debora Johnson-Ross, vice president for academic affairs, traveled with the group for several days, including during their visit to the village. An Africanist, Johnson-Ross has visited many African countries, but this was her first time in Rwanda.

"This experience was transformational for me to see those who were victims of the genocide living next door to those who were perpetrators and living in peace and

cooperation with one another. They have not forgotten what happened to them, but they have made conscious decisions to live together in peace," she said. "I think this is a model that is not typically seen. It speaks to the power of the individual to make a decision and then live out that decision."

McQueen invited **Olivia McAtee '19** to join the group in Rwanda as a chaperone and to provide support during debrief sessions following the harder days. McAtee works in statewide prosecutions for the Iowa Attorney General's Office, so seeing the restorative justice work firsthand was of great interest.

"We are seeing such a divide in our own country, so it was interesting to see the way they are working with each other and finding ways to bring some of those lessons home to my life and work," she said. "I saw the importance of humanity while I was there, and I think I will definitely have a little more grace with people on all sides of the justice system after this experience."

**"Evil sometimes prevails, but usually it doesn't. Usually evil is overcome by good, but only if somebody works to generate the good."**

— **Olivia McAtee '19**

McQueen, who teaches courses in criminology and criminal justice, hopes the students also were encouraged by what they saw and are inspired to implement what they learned.

"This is still something I am trying to wrap my head around. I've seen it, so I know this kind of reconciliation exists, but I still don't understand how you get to that point," he said. "This experience was so important for our students, especially today. I believe we have a real problem in the United States, and we could really benefit from the work being done in Rwanda."

In addition to the training and reconciliation village visits, the students

Students started the course with a three-day peace and justice training.



The group spent an hour with Rwandan President Paul Kagame.



The group visited a reconciliation village to see what they learned in practice.



also learned about Rwandan culture, visited several genocide memorial sites, spent time in a traditional village, had an hourlong dialogue with President Paul Kagame, and met many other political and community leaders.

While **Laurel Woodrum '23** was impressed by all of the officials they were able to meet — “One doesn’t usually just visit and get to meet the president of a country” — it was an experience with Solid Africa that helped her focus on her future plans. In Rwanda, food services are not included in a hospital stay; instead, families are expected to fill that void. When families are unable to provide for their loved ones, Solid Africa steps in to ensure patients receive the nutritious meals needed for their recoveries. The Wartburg team volunteered with the organization serving food at a hospital.

“That was a really eye-opening experience for me,” said Woodrum, who earned her degree in biochemistry and plans to enroll in medical school following a gap year. “The hospital was just like a big warehouse with curtains used to make makeshift rooms, but that was normal for them. That was a spark moment for me. I’ve always known I wanted to do some kind of outreach work as a doctor, but that was when I knew it was something that I would really like to pursue in the future.”

Woodrum wasn’t the only one called to service while in Rwanda. McAtee was particularly moved by her experience at the Groupe Scolaire Bare school, and upon returning to Des Moines, she started a fundraiser to cover the cost of school lunches for nearly 90 students for the entire year.

“The kids there were all so full of joy and so appreciative of the things we brought them that day, and it was just some reusable menstrual pads for the girls and a guitar for the band. The whole school came out to welcome us and were cheering about the gifts. They were so excited about something that most of us take for granted,” she said. “When I learned that school lunches were something that they struggled with, talk about taking things for granted. If families here struggle to pay for school lunches, we have social programs that can help. They don’t. I figure many of us spend more than \$60 a month on subscriptions, and that can pay for an entire year of lunches for a student.”


McAtee knew she couldn’t afford to foot the entire bill, but using her network, she was able to raise more than \$6,000 for the school.

“One of the very first weeks I was in this job at the Attorney General’s Office, someone said to me: ‘Evil sometimes prevails, but usually it doesn’t. Usually evil is overcome by good, but only if somebody works to generate the good,’” she recalled. “Positive things don’t just happen, but if you have the right people around you, you only have to put in a little effort to create the ripple effect. It was the community around me that believed we could help all of those students.”

After Johnson-Ross left the group in Rwanda, she traveled to Nuremburg, Germany. While there, she visited the Nuremburg Trial memorial at the Nuremburg Palace of Justice, where surviving World War II criminals were tried. Peace education is important there, too, but is done with a different approach. Since then, she’s been thinking of ways to connect what she experienced in Rwanda with what happened in Germany in a way that would allow Wartburg students to experience both.

“It would be an emotionally taxing course, but for students interested in social work, political science, or political psychology, it would be an interesting educational opportunity,” she said.

She’s also been ruminating on opportunities for Wartburg students in Rwanda and Rwandan students at Wartburg, a dream that Noah has had for decades.

“Jane and I jumped on this roller coaster nearly 20 years ago. Since then, I’ve met people who are now like family to me,” Noah said. “I would love for more students at Wartburg to experience even a fraction of that so that they can begin to love this place like I do.” 



Watch a video featuring these experiences at [wartburg.edu/rwanda-2023](http://wartburg.edu/rwanda-2023)

## ABOUT



## Steve Noah’s ties to Rwanda

Steve Noah helped Kuder, a career guidance and educational consultant based in Adel, Iowa, launch the Rwandan Career Guidance Program in 130 secondary schools. The program, which was operational from 2012 to 2018, trained several hundred teachers and helped more than 35,000 students.

At the request of Ambassador James Kimonyo, who was the Rwandan ambassador to the U.S. in 2008 and is now the Rwandan ambassador in China, Noah assisted with the development of the Institute for Agriculture, Technology, and Education of Kibungo, now known as the University of Kibungo. Noah was invited back in 2016 to speak at commencement.

Noah now serves as the special adviser to the CEO of Aegis Trust, an organization working to prevent genocide through peace and values education. In Rwanda, the Trust manages the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

Students, McAtee, and Noah with a group of students in a restoration village.





"Being a journalist, in many ways, is about looking out for vulnerable people."

— Jonathon Gregg '08

# Solo but never alone

## Award-winning multimedia journalist Jonathon Gregg can do it all

If **Jonathon Gregg '08** looks familiar, you may recognize him from his on-air work at KCRG-TV9 in Cedar Rapids or the stations he's worked at since.

The multimedia journalist has covered local news in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Kentucky during his decorated career — and he has a few new awards to put on the mantle.

For the second straight year, Gregg was named the Solo Video Journalist General of the Year by the National Press Photographer's Association, an honor reflecting the past year's body of work.

One piece of that body netted him an additional editing award, 2023 Serious Feature — Solo Video Photojournalist, also from NPPA. The focus of the winning package was the ongoing recovery in Mayfield and Dawson Springs, Ky., from a tornado on Dec. 10, 2021. The storm killed 57 people as it traveled 165 miles over nearly three hours that night.

"Western Kentucky is not unlike Iowa, not unlike the area around Waverly," Gregg said. "A similar size community, 10,000 or so, and the EF4 tornado passed directly through the center of town, cutting diagonally across the city around 9:30 in the evening."



Gregg, the lead multimedia journalist for Spectrum News 1, and his colleagues headed to Mayfield, about 3.5 hours from their homebase in Louisville, to document the devastation and share the need for assistance with the rest of the state.

"I was there for, I think, seven or eight or nine days staying in a roadside motel and then going out each day to understand the scope of the damage — and also more importantly, understand how the people were doing, how the people were affected, and what they needed."


Gregg headed back to Mayfield in June 2022, six months after the storm, to check up on residents and the often-fraught rebuilding process. The four-minute video story that resulted won him the editing award and contributed toward the journalist of the year honor.

Gregg had plenty of relevant experience to draw on in Kentucky. In his first year out of college, he covered the EF5 tornado that ripped through Parkersburg, Iowa, and historic flooding along the Cedar River.

"A journalist will often say to themselves, 'I've seen this before, unfortunately, but fortunately it has better equipped me to cover it and to be a thoughtful journalist,'" Gregg said. "I still think about how Iowans were affected during that time."

He also credits his Wartburg education for his success.

"The encouragement and emphasis that our professors had on students having internships with television stations pushed me to a different level, where I was going out of my comfort zone to better equip myself for being a TV journalist," Gregg said. He also noted the support and mentorship from **Cliff Brockman '75**, now professor emeritus in journalism, and **Paul Yeager '98**, a producer, director, and host for Iowa PBS.

"Being a journalist, in many ways, is about looking out for vulnerable people," Gregg said. "And to receive some of these accolades in terms of the coverage that I do, it reinforces the idea that I'm working with a purpose. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to continue to tell stories for Kentucky." 



Watch the award-winning video at [wartburg.edu/gregg](http://wartburg.edu/gregg)

### Even more awards

Since we spoke with Gregg, he took home two statuettes at the regional Ohio Valley Emmys. The Emmys, his 14th and 15th, were awarded for other packages he created in the news categories of Societal Concerns and Historical/Cultural/Nostalgia.





# LOOKING AHEAD



## Wartburg affirms commitment to access, affordability, and experience

Building on the success of the 2023-24 recruitment effort, in which all admitted students were guaranteed a minimum \$30,000 scholarship, Wartburg College took its responsibility to increase accessibility in higher education one step further with the rollout of the Wartburg Commitment.

The three-pronged Wartburg Commitment starts with a new competitive tuition sticker price of \$25,000, which will allow more students to discover the value of the Wartburg experience. All pieces of the Wartburg Commitment will go into effect in the 2024-25 school year.

“Families often make decisions based on published tuition prices without knowing

about the scholarship and financial aid packages that significantly impact sticker price,” said Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, president. “We want to ensure all students have access to a Wartburg education and the experiences we offer.”

The new tuition model also will apply to returning students. Thanks to the lower tuition rate, year-over-year increases —





historically about 4 percent — will be smaller dollarwise, keeping costs down for students as they complete their degrees.

In addition to the new competitive price, Wartburg also announced the Access to Excellence initiative. It guarantees all new Iowa students who qualify for the Iowa Tuition Grant and are admitted to the college will have their full tuition costs covered through institutional, state, and federal gift assistance.

“When we first started looking at our tuition model, we knew serving our lower- and middle-income families needed to be one of our top priorities,” said Rick Willis, vice president for student recruitment. “All new Iowa students who fill out the FAFSA will automatically be evaluated for eligibility in this program so they can focus on the more important elements of their college search — finding the college that fits their academic, co-curricular, and personal needs. Of course, we hope they will find exactly what they are looking for here at Wartburg.”


As part of the Access to Excellence program, out-of-state students who demonstrate similar financial need will receive a minimum of \$9,500 per year. Wartburg will continue to recognize student achievement for all students through generous scholarships and other financial aid offers.

The final piece of the Wartburg Commitment is the Knight’s Experience, a one-time disbursement of up to \$1,500 that students can use in their second, third, or fourth year to offset the cost of an experiential learning opportunity. Qualifying programs include study away, internships, research, service trips, and more.

“We are committed to experiential learning that occurs both inside and outside the classroom. The opportunity to learn about diverse communities and cultures through immersion and shared experiences is a distinct aspect of a Wartburg College education,” Ehretzman said. “We believe every Wartburg student should have access

to a broad range of learning experiences, but we know that cost can be a barrier. The Knight’s Experience funding will put these opportunities within reach for even more students.”

The college will continue to offer students opportunities in more than 60 areas of study, including engineering, public health, actuarial science, business administration, exercise science, and music therapy, all rooted in the liberal arts tradition. Co-curricular options also will continue to grow and thrive with 18 music ensembles open to all majors, including four that tour internationally on a rotating schedule; a legacy of athletic dominance in more than 20 NCAA Division III sports; and student organizations that include honor societies and academic organizations, as well as more focused groups in spiritual life, the performing arts, service, and sports and recreation.

“We are proud of the breadth and excellence in the opportunities we have to offer at Wartburg College and excited by the possibility that this change will make them more accessible for prospective and current students alike,” Willis said. 



## A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH



### Competitive Price

REDUCTION OF  
TUITION  
AND FEES



### Access to Excellence

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR  
IN-STATE &  
OUT-OF-STATE  
STUDENTS



### Knight’s Experience

ONE-TIME AWARD FOR  
EXPERIENTIAL  
LEARNING



To learn more about the Wartburg Commitment, visit [wartburg.edu/commitment](http://wartburg.edu/commitment)



# The MASTERS of T O M O R R O W

## Wartburg graduates first Master of Arts in leadership cohort



### MASTER OF ARTS LEADERSHIP

Commencement weekend 2023 at Wartburg was one for the history books, and **Felecia Boone '93, '23 M.A.** came dressed to impress: peacock blue shoes to match the color of her new academic hood.

Boone and her 14 classmates proudly hold the honor of earning the first master's degrees awarded by the college after finishing the two-year Master of Arts in leadership program. The graduates received their academic hoods at a special ceremony May 27 before crossing the stage May 28 to receive their degrees. The hood color represents public administration, which is closely associated with leadership.

"It was an incredible moment to see the inaugural cohort of Master of Arts in leadership students donned with Wartburg

College hoods and to give our first graduate-level diplomas," said Wartburg President Rebecca Ehretzman.

The graduate students came from as far away as Copley, Ohio, and Oak Park, Calif., and represented an array of work sectors, including business, K-12 and higher education, public administration, the military, agribusiness, and faith communities. *(Read more about them on the following pages.)*

**Tara Price Winter '01, '23 M.A.** is the college's executive director of admissions and was chosen by her peers to speak at the hooding ceremony.

"We all know Wartburg has done leadership well. It's a pillar of our mission statement. The opportunity to align my





## The program

The Master of Arts in leadership online degree program was designed for working professionals and provides a deep foundation of problem-based learning about leadership from different perspectives. It builds on the college's longstanding commitment to leadership education, which includes a thriving undergraduate minor, the Irving R. Burling Distinguished Professorship in Leadership held by Dr. Michael Gleason, and the college's Institute for Leadership Education.

The cohort model helps students develop deep relationships and learn from classmates with different perspectives, and the online, primarily asynchronous delivery model allows working professionals to fit coursework into their schedules.

Tuition discounts are available for Wartburg alumni and those employed by a member of the Wartburg Learning Alliance.


career and this program simultaneously has been a tremendous asset for my learning, growth, and productivity in my role on campus," said Winter.

Student projects included bettering team culture and morale, maximizing workflows across a family of banks, and improving a workplace employee evaluation system.

**Kayla Vale '13, '23 M.A.** created a professional development program for paraeducators in her school district as her master's project. It was so successful her principal offered her an additional paid position to continue running it.

"They are even back-paying me for the work I put in this school year," she said. "It is fantastic to see the importance of my project and the value behind it."

Dr. Michael Gleason, associate dean for graduate studies and director of the Institute for Leadership Education, said the program's emphasis on real-world project implementation makes it valuable not only for students but also their communities and workplaces.

"From the beginning of the program, we ask students to think about deep, complex issues they would like to address in their workplace or community," Gleason said. "This way our students are seeing the relevance of what they are learning in our program in their own workplace and communities every day." 

MEET A FEW OF THE NEW MASTERS 



For more information about Wartburg's Master of Arts in leadership, visit [wartburg.edu/leadership-masters](http://wartburg.edu/leadership-masters)





## Felecia **Boone** '93 '23 M.A.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant, Hennepin County  
**Minneapolis, Minn.**

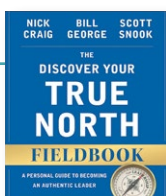
### Why I chose Wartburg:

“The stars aligned: the timing, the fact that it was virtual, and being an alum with a discount. It all just came together.”

Years spent searching for the right master's program

8

My most impactful reading assignment



## Bradley **Fasse** '03 '23 M.A.

Senior Business Application Analyst, USAA  
**Grimes, Iowa**

“I’ve tried to do something big, more or less, with each decade of my life. So when I turned 40, I was contemplating, what am I going to do? It was during the pandemic hitting, and between reading some books and good marketing on Wartburg’s part, this was presented to me and I thought, ‘That is a direction that I want to pursue.’ The fact that it’s the first [master’s degree] in school history, that was appealing to me, being a third-generation Wartburg graduate.

“I was prepared for the papers. I was prepared for reading the textbooks and everything. But getting input and sharing input through the entire learning process over the last couple years with the group was just my absolute favorite.”



# Sara Swanson '09 '23 M.A.

Loan Processing Manager, Glenwood State Bank  
**Glenwood, Minn.**

## Q & A

### What did you learn in the coursework for your Master of Arts in leadership?

One of the most impactful parts of this program has been growing in my own confidence and then being able to apply that to my work and see the benefits in real time. I'm a more effective employee because I understand myself better and I understand how to work with others better.

### Did your experience extend beyond the classes you were taking?

My mentors throughout this program were two leaders within my organization. We met regularly and we kind of downloaded and processed what I was learning and how it applied to our everyday lives for all three of us as leaders in our organization.

### What was your favorite part of the program?

Our intensive weekends where we all got to meet on camera together and get real-time feedback from each other.



# Kayla Vale '13 '23 M.A.

Special Education Teacher, North Linn Community School District  
**Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

“I’ve come out of my shell a lot. I’ve had to be very, very vulnerable. I’ve had to explore my leadership style a lot, and that has really helped me in my profession.”





# LIAISON TO THE STARS

Youde manages film, TV portrayals of Coast Guard



How much value is there in 2.23 million sets of eyes? According to **Steven Youde '00, '23 M.A.**, the answer is \$21 million.

That's how much free advertising the U.S. Coast Guard received through an episode of *MasterChef* last year, which Youde helped arrange as director of the Coast Guard's Motion Picture and Television Liaison Office in Los Angeles.

Every time the Coast Guard appears on screen — whether that's a Mr. Beast video

"There's three people in the entire Coast Guard that do this job: myself and then my two staff members," Youde said. "It's a very unique assignment."

If you're, say, Katy Perry and hoping to film your *Electric* music video on Coast Guard-protected land in Hawaii, your first step is to call Youde's office. He and his staff evaluate each request — around 200 a year, though only about 30 will pan out — and then coordinate any necessary assets, like boats, helicopters, and the crews that operate them.

"It's not always yes, because we don't have extra boats and helicopters laying around," Youde said. "Every Coast Guard resource we use in a production is also an operational asset. We can be called on at any time to respond to an emergency. We try to participate in as many productions as we can, but it's a delicate balance. Entertainment productions are a great way to tell our story to a large audience, but our primary missions always come first."

"They get to tell their mom, 'Hey, turn on *NCIS*, and I'm going to be on TV.' I got to do it too."

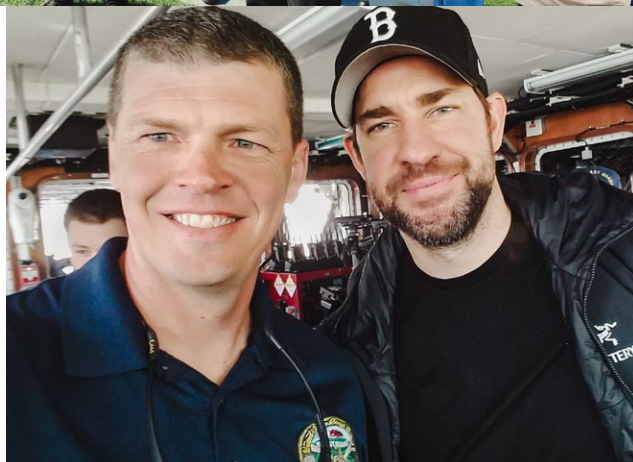
— **Steven Youde '00, '23 M.A.**

on YouTube, episodes of *Deadliest Catch*, or the 2006 Kevin Costner film *The Guardian* — Youde's office is involved behind the scenes.





Youde's department helped coordinate Coast Guard appearances and equipment for Gordon Ramsay's *MasterChef* and Katy Perry's *Electric* video.



Left: Youde on the set of *The Price Is Right*. Above: Youde poses with John Krasinski. Right: Scott Bakula and Youde.

Requests that would portray the Coast Guard in a negative light or operating outside normal procedures are nonstarters. Part of Youde's role includes being on set to make sure a director or cinematographer isn't asking for unrealistic or unsafe actions from Coast Guard units.

"Production days are a lot of fun. It's often a long and grueling day, but it's exciting to see all the planning and hard work come together," said Youde. "If a director asks us to do something that wasn't part of the original plan, we have to make a quick decision, which often means telling them no. We have to be there to protect our people and our assets."


Branches of the armed forces have been involved with media like this since before World War II. As Youde calculated with *MasterChef*, the publicity is well worth it, especially given that production companies cover any costs the Coast Guard incurs during filming. It's also a fun perk for guard members to appear on screen.

"They get to tell their mom, 'Hey, turn on *NCIS*, and I'm going to be on TV.' I got to do it too. I got to call my mom and say, 'Hey, turn on *MasterChef* tonight, you'll

see me,'" Youde said. "I'm generally not on the show. I'm the one moving the pieces. But I did sneak into a couple of things," like *MasterChef* and a taping of CMT's *Hot 20 Countdown*.

When pressed about his favorite celebrity encounter, Youde is quick to note he typically works more with directors and writers than on-camera talent. "We don't generally get involved with the actors until the day of filming. Most of our work is done well in advance."

Nevertheless, many of the big names attached to these projects have been eager to work with and thank their Coast Guard co-stars. Youde admits meeting Scott Bakula was "pretty exciting, because I grew up on *Quantum Leap*." Gordon Ramsay, the infamously irascible star of *MasterChef*, is also a nice guy when the cameras are off.

The Coast Guard was involved in a scene for *A Quiet Place*, directed by *The Office*'s John Krasinski. "John was really great to work with. He has so much respect for the Coast Guard and the work we do," Youde said. "At the end of filming that day, he was the one asking for pictures. It really meant a lot to our crew." 

## FEATURE



## Moving on

We spoke with Youde over Commencement weekend, where he was part of the historic first cohort of Master of Arts in leadership graduates. Since then, he has retired from his career with the Coast Guard — a planned move that drove him to enroll in the leadership program.

"I wasn't sure what life after the Coast Guard was going to look like," said Youde.

"I wanted to leave the service with something new and fresh on my resume, but really, as I entered a different workforce, I wanted to find a way to sort of refresh my skill set."

### Why pursue his master's degree at Wartburg?

This was my home for four years. This is where I met my wife. This is such an important place to me that the opportunity to come back to a new program, I couldn't pass it up.

### And the most important thing he learned?

My career has been in a world of authority and orders and compliance and things like that. But that's not leadership. Getting people to do what you tell them to do is not leadership. Leadership is really truly connecting with people to develop a shared purpose. It's leading with people instead of leading over people.





PHOTO BY TAWASI CLARKE

**KEEP PUSHING.**  
**A SETBACK IS NOT DENIAL.**



# AZZIE FORBES IS KILLING IT

**Dr. Azzie Forbes '10** is in her third year working at York College, a college in the City University of New York system, where she is a doctoral lecturer and director of social work practicum education. Her consulting business, A to Z Coaching & Consulting, is thriving. And most recently, she completed the testing necessary to become a licensed psychotherapist so she can see clients part time at the Brooklyn Center for Psychotherapy.

Not too bad for a woman who came to college virtually homeless.

As a high school student in Chicago, Forbes never thought she would attend college. But Jason Woods, a Wartburg admissions counselor at the time, saw her potential and was adamant she consider something more for herself. The personal touches in his recruiting convinced Forbes to give Wartburg a try.

"He sent me a card for my birthday and a gift card at Thanksgiving to get a meal. I don't think he understood how big that was for me," she said. "He knew affording college would be tough, but he said we would figure it out. He said Wartburg would change my life, and he was right."

Though Woods left the college shortly after Forbes arrived, Krystal Madlock, associate dean for inclusive community, continued to push her toward graduation despite family hardships that included the loss of her youngest brother, Keith, and personal mental health struggles. She took some time off in her second year but came back and found her home in the social work

department with the help of Drs. Tammy Faux and Susan Vallem.

"They could see that I liked to help people and that I had a story that would help me empathize with others," Forbes said. "I took my first social work class with Tammy, and she spoke life into me."

Following graduation, Forbes went to work for Fox Family Christian Action, a nonprofit ministry that took her in during the college summer months when she didn't have a steady home to return to. At just 21, she was managing the summer staff and volunteers; attending court dates, learning-plan meetings, and eviction meetings with clients; and connecting churches in nearby under-resourced communities with programming opportunities for their members.

"Krystal helped me prepare for the interview and encouraged me every step of the way. I remember she told me, 'This is the kid you were growing up. Be who you wish someone would have been for you,'" Forbes said.

While on vacation in New York, Forbes connected with the president of Harlem Children's Zone, an organization that works to increase high school and college graduation rates for Harlem students. He was impressed with her work and offered her a job in his organization. Forbes quickly moved on from the Children's Zone to Good Shepherd Services, another nonprofit serving under-resourced students. But all these positions were just stepping stones to Queens Community House, where she would oversee two alternative high

schools for students who had aged out of traditional schools but still didn't have the credits they needed to graduate. During her time there, she transformed one of the lowest-performing schools into a top performer.


"These kids had grown up with the same kinds of issues I dealt with or saw in my neighborhood and family dynamic — issues with parents and life circumstances that kept them from succeeding. This work was right up my alley," she said. "I saw so many of these young men as the little Keiths who didn't get to make

**"He said Wartburg would change my life, and he was right."**

— **Dr. Azzie Forbes '10**

it. My school had a 76 percent male population. I took in the males that no one else would take in."

Now, Forbes is focusing her efforts at York College and her consulting business on better training for individuals who are helping the kinds of children and young adults she's been working with for years. She's already dreaming up new ways she can improve the system for providers and clients.

"I always tell my students, 'If you don't know it or don't have it, go find it. It may take you longer than the average person, but a setback is not denial. Keep pushing,'" she said. "And that is what I do every day." 



# KNIGHTS in the News



## Three honored with Young Alumni Award

The Rev. Emily Norris '08, Maj. John Koehler '10, and the Rev. Dan Hanson '12 received the Young Alumni Award, which honors graduates from the past 15 years who are living the four pillars of the Wartburg mission statement. Read more about the recipients at [wartburg.edu/young-alumni](http://wartburg.edu/young-alumni).

## 1980s

**Dr. Dennis Bricault '80**, Chicago, Ill., spent the fall semester as a Fulbright Core Scholar at the International University of Central Asia in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. He also served as a consultant at a two-day media literacy workshop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. He is a professor of Spanish and director of the ESL program at North Park University.

**Dr. Teri Brooks Mora '83**, Edmond, Okla., earned a doctorate in educational leadership – Latino student success at West Texas A&M University, Canyon, Texas, and is an educational consultant/community engagement specialist at Mid-America Christian University, Oklahoma City, Okla.

**Lisa Samuelson '84**, West Des Moines, retired in May 2021 after 30 years with Nationwide Insurance. She was a data analyst in commercial lines.

## 1990s

**Erik Russell '90**, Woodburn, Ind., created his position of quality assurance analyst at Conduent for the state of Montana. He was previously with Conduent for the state of Indiana for 30 years.

**Susan Bachman West '96**, Farmington, Minn., was elected to the board of directors for the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association. She is CEO of Bachman's Inc., Minneapolis.

**Col. David Max '98**, Oslo, Norway, is assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Oslo as an air attaché in the Air Force. He earned a master's degree in strategic studies at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pa.

**Dr. Andrew Green '99**, Pella, is the director of institutional research at Central College.

## 2000s

**Britta Monson Fisher '00**, Arvada, Colo., is president and CEO for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. The mayor of Denver declared Feb. 1, 2023, "Britta Fisher Day," recognizing her exceptional service to the community as Denver's first chief housing officer and executive director of the Department of Housing Stability.

**Amelia Weber Armstrong '04**, Platteville, Wis., is a 2023 Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms participant. This yearlong program culminated with a two-week international

## New fountain springs forth on campus



A new fountain, featuring three flowing water basins as well as programmable color-changing LED lights, has been constructed on campus.

"I was originally inspired by the above-ground cistern at the Wartburg Castle," said **Andrew Bell '08**, who sat on the committee charged with replacing the fountain on campus. Bell also is a partner at Align Architecture & Planning, the firm that helped the college with the project. "The first version I put before the

committee only had a single basin that looked more like the cistern in Eisenach, but after we got feedback from different stakeholders, we decided on the three-basin design."

The original Wartburg fountain was a gift from the Class of 1927 and stood in front of Wartburg Hall. In 2005, the original fountain was replaced with the most recent iteration, which had been inoperable since the bowl crumbled in October 2021.

The replacement was completed just before homecoming weekend 2023.



field experience in Colombia in July. She has completed six years of service on the executive board for the Wisconsin Music Educators Association and began her 20th year teaching vocal and general music at Platteville High School this fall.

**Kevin and Steffanie Tomlinson '06 Bonnstetter**, Knoxville, announce the birth of Kal Logan on Feb. 6. Steffanie is director of communications and marketing at Central College, Pella.

**Jessica Grasby Dawson '06**, Wyoming, Iowa, is a K-4 music teacher in the Anamosa Community School District. She earned a master's degree in music education at Lakeland University, Plymouth, Wis.

**Jesse Gavin '06**, Dubuque, is a marketing/communications specialist at UnityPoint Health – Finley Hospital.

Tim and **Katelin Gannon '08 Valster**, Pella, announce the birth of Raegan Michelle on Dec. 30.

**Tyler Carlson '09 and Sarah Frazell '09**, Washington, D.C., announce the birth of Julien Tyler Carlson-Frazell on Feb. 19.

## 2010s

Larry and **Kristin Vale '11 Cudzewicz**, Greenfield, Wis., announce the birth of Carter on Feb. 13.

**Nathan '11 and Amy Welsch**, Plano, Texas, announce the birth of Charlotte on Dec. 7. Nathan is director of research and insights at Genesco Sports Enterprises.

Jason and **Justina Wuebker '13 Meek**, Des Moines, announce the birth of Sanders Allen on March 3.

Brad and **Stacey Knoll '13 Reints**, Shell Rock, announce the birth of Emmitt on Nov. 14.

**Mollie Emerson Jones '16**, Bluffton, S.C., is coordinator of student engagement at the University of South Carolina Beaufort.

**Dr. Stephen Klaassen '18**, Las Cruces, N.M., earned a doctorate from the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa School of Community Medicine in May. He is in a one-year transitional residency program at Mountain View Regional Medical Center in Las Cruces. Following that, he will enter a four-year diagnostic radiology residency program at Integris Health in Oklahoma City, Okla.

**The Rev. Blake Shipman '18**, Dubuque, is a development officer at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

**Alex Hohensee '19**, Marion, Va., is a graduate student in physician assistant studies at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Va.

## 2020s

**Courtney Moser '20**, Westby, Wis., is the foundation and marketing director at Bethel Home & Services, Viroqua, Wis.

**Leticia Silva '22**, New York City, is assistant candidacy and call administrator and worship music coordinator at Metropolitan New York Synod.



## Wartburg Medals presented to four college champions

The Wartburg Medal recognizes individuals who have provided significant service to the college over a sustained period and have a personal commitment to the college's mission, quality, and character. The college awarded four in 2023.

**Bill Hamm '66**, who died in June, was Wartburg's interim president from 2008 to 2009. Throughout the years he has supported scholarships, arts and music programs, and facilities at Wartburg. He also served on the Transforming Tomorrow National Committee and was a member of the Alumni Board. *(Read more about Hamm on page 33.)*

**The Rev. Durwood "Bud" Buchheim '53** served churches in Iowa and Arkansas and was bishop of the Iowa District of the American Lutheran Church. He and his wife, Dona, are members of the Wartburg Heritage Society and Tower Society.

Hans-Peter Brodhun, the former lord mayor of Eisenach and chair of the Wartburg Castle Foundation, served on the Board of Regents from 1998 to 2021.

Günter Schuchardt, former director of the Wartburg Castle, served on the Board of Regents from 2001 to 2021.

The late **Bill Hamm '66**, former interim president of the college, also sat on the committee. His initial donation spurred the fundraising for the project, which allowed the fountain to be completed without any cost to the college. Hamm died June 6.

"I was friends with Bill through Rotary, and I appreciate the passion he had for this project," Bell said. "With him having passed now, the fountain will be something that will always remind me of him and how strongly he felt about the college."

Read more at [wartburg.edu/news](http://wartburg.edu/news).

## Thanks to our fountain donors

Bill Hamm

Brent & Dawn Jaeger

Michael & Marge McCoy

Murray McMurray & Paula Chuchvara-McMurray

Ralph & Marcia Peterson

Franklin I. & Irene List  
Saemann Foundation

Dr. Mark F. Trax & Dr. Ann Henninger





## McCoy receives CASE Volunteer of the Year Award for work with Wartburg

Michael McCoy, chair of the Wartburg College Board of Regents, was the recipient of the 2023 Bill Franklin Volunteer of the Year Award given by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

McCoy was nominated by the college for support that has spanned more than three decades. In addition to supporting the college as a parent and through his work at Hormel Foods, Mike and his wife, Marge, co-chaired the college's Transforming Tomorrow Campaign Committee and have provided more than \$7 million in gifts for capital projects, an endowed chair, and numerous other enhancements.

"Mike and Marge are both exemplary servant-leaders. Not only do they contribute significant amounts of financial support to the college but also time, energy, and advocacy," said **Scott Leisinger '87**, vice president for institutional advancement.

**Emma Ammons '23**, Waverly, is a sixth-grade science teacher in the Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District, Vinton.

**Jenna Bachus '23**, Solon, is a graduate student in forensic psychology at Marymount University, Arlington, Va.

**Addie Dean '23**, Johnston, is a tax associate at Eide Bailly.

**Gavin Dooley '23**, Belle Plaine, is a personal trainer in Cedar Rapids.

**Maddie Ellingson '23**, Waukon, is a forensic staff accountant at Stegner McFarlin Spaete LLC, Walnut Creek, Calif.

**Marina Fredregill '23**, Urbandale, is a music therapy intern at Creative Remedies LLC, Aurora, Colo.

**Austin Griffin '23**, Winona, Minn., is on the audit staff at UHY LLP, West Des Moines.

**Micah Harber '23**, St. Paul, Minn., is a tax associate at Redpath and Company.

**Lily Hollerung '23**, Northfield, Minn., is a marketing contractor.

**Keagan John '23**, Glendale, Ariz., is a financial adviser at Northwestern Mutual.

**Annie Mast '23**, Waterloo, is a special education teacher at Waverly-Shell Rock Middle School, Waverly.

**Jonathan McNamara '23**, Plainfield, Ill., is a history teacher and football coach at Maquoketa High School, Maquoketa.

**Grant Meth '23**, West Branch, is a high school physical education and health teacher at West Branch Community Schools.

**Hulices Mireles '23**, Des Moines, is a sales representative at DR Horton, Ankeny.

**Kyle Oberbroeckling '23**, Davenport, is a baseball instructor at EL1 Sports, Bettendorf.

**Asher Schneider '23**, North English, is a K-6 general music and 5-6 grade band teacher at WACO Elementary School, Crawfordville.

**Tsering Tashi '23**, Waverly, is a graduate student in pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Illinois Chicago Pharmacy School.



## Koenig receives honorary Wartburg College degree

**Dr. Duane Koenig '53** received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Wartburg College during Commencement.

Koenig, of Beatrice, Neb., served with the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956, retiring as a staff sergeant. His medical career in family medicine and general surgery spanned more than 30 years. After retiring, he spent 10 years as a volunteer physician/surgeon at the Foundation for African Medicine and Education Medical Outpatient Clinic in Karatu, Tanzania, during which time he spent up to six months annually treating patients and mentoring the clinic's full-time Tanzanian doctors.

A saxophone player, he is credited with initiating Knightlites, the college's jazz band. He also established the Dr. Duane G. & Violet I. Koenig Endowed Fund for Jazz/Swing and funds the Dr. Duane G. & Vi Koenig Endowed Scholarship. Koenig and his wife, Vi, are members of the President's Round Table and the Heritage Society.



## Stay Connected

Have you recently been married, had a baby, retired, changed jobs, or have other life news to share with your fellow Knights?

Share your news at [wartburg.edu/update-our-records](https://wartburg.edu/update-our-records). Send high-resolution wedding photos to [markcomm@wartburg.edu](mailto:markcomm@wartburg.edu) and we'll add them to our Facebook album.





# KNIGHTS

## In Memoriam



### 1940s

**Esther Ide Gies '41**, Longmont, Colo., died Jan. 30. She was a filing department manager at Lutheran Mutual Life Insurance Co., Waverly.

**Mary Ann Vagts Roop '45**, St. Cloud, Minn., died Jan. 16. She was a teacher.

**Robert Wagner '48**, Minneapolis, died April 9. A U.S. Navy veteran, he earned a master's degree in educational administration from Drake University, Des Moines. He was a math teacher and went on to serve in administrative roles at the school and district level.

**The Rev. Eugene Ketterling '49**, Waverly, died Dec. 28, 2022. A U.S. Army veteran, he earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and was ordained July 23, 1950. He served parishes in North Dakota and South Dakota.

**Martha Knoll Martens '49**, West Des Moines, died Feb. 4.

### 1950s

**Marvin Goetz '50**, Bellevue, died May 13. A U.S. Air Force veteran, he owned and operated an implement dealership until retiring in 1983. Later, he sold real estate.

**Eleanor Stubenvoll Luehrsen '50**, Reedsburg, Wis., died April 17. She studied music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She taught voice and directed choral groups for over 40 years.

**The Rev. Jewayne "Joe" Baumgartner '51**, Fremont, Neb., died Dec. 6, 2022. He earned a degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and was ordained in 1955. He served congregations for 56 years in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. He is survived by his wife, **Vernita Frese Baumgartner '51**.

**Annamarie Walther De Young '51**, Houston, died Feb. 21. She earned a doctorate in education from Michigan University, Ann Arbor, and was an English teacher and a writer in Japan and the U.S.

**Doris Hagen Hanusa '51**, Oshkosh, Wis., died March 29. She attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was a teacher. She is survived by her husband, **Ralph Hanusa '50**.

**The Rev. Raymond Heilener '51**, Germantown, Tenn., died Feb. 15. He attended Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and served congregations in Illinois.

**Winifred "Jeannette" Hodel Allen '52**, Lincoln, Neb., died March 25. She was a teacher.

**Lester "Pete" Becker '52**, Arlington, Texas, died April 11. He was a teacher and salesman and went on to work for the Iowa Highway Commission and Federal Highway Administration.

**The Rev. Robert Gremmels '52**, Waverly, died Feb. 28. He earned a master's degree in journalism from Ohio State University, Columbus, and a Bachelor of Divinity from the seminary at Capital University, Bexley, Ohio. He was ordained in 1959. He taught journalism and public relations at Wartburg College until retiring in 1994, serving as chair of the Communication Arts Department. He received an alumni citation in 1970 and the Wartburg Medal in 2014. He is survived by his wife, **the Rev. Beth A. Olson '85**. *Consider a gift to the Robert C. Gremmels Graduate Journalism Fellowship or the Marion Gremmels Women's Studies Memorial Scholarship in his honor.*

**The Rev. Kenneth Pohlmann '52**, Huntley, died Jan. 17. He served congregations in Iowa and Illinois. He also served as director of confirmation ministry with the Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation of the American Lutheran Church, Minneapolis.

**The Rev. Kenneth Truckenbrod '54**, Sun City, Ariz., died July 15, 2022. He served congregations in Illinois and California. He is survived by his wife, **Wanda Billing Truckenbrod '54**.

**Marilyn Budzine Buette-meier '55**, Blaine, Minn., died Jan. 9. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She was a pastor's wife and homemaker.

**Barbara Budzine Fenkner '55**, Bellevue, Wash., died Dec. 10, 2022. She earned a bachelor's degree from Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash., and a master's degree from Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, both in education. She was a teacher until retiring in 1998.

**Carolyn Langholz '55**, Walkerton, Va., died April 23. A 20-year U.S. Navy veteran, she was a journalist.

**Lois Imm McClure '55**, San Clemente, Calif., died April 10. She was a teacher. *Consider a gift to the Lester Imm Endowed Scholarship in her honor.*

**Donna Luettke Nowak '55**, Naples, Fla., died Jan. 9. She was a church secretary.

**Audrey Rappold Seifert '55**, Plymouth, Wis., died May 4. She was a school secretary and later went on to work in the photo department at Adams Rexall.

**Ruth Adix Smith '55**, Lynnwood, Wash., died Dec. 23, 2022.



**Kenneth Starck '56**, Iowa City, died Jan. 8. He earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri, Columbia, and a doctorate in mass communication from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He was a reporter in Illinois, Tennessee, Iowa, Finland, and China. He went on to teach at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and then the University of Iowa, Iowa City, where he taught for 30 years and served as director of the School of Journalism for 17 years.

**Roger Swinton '56**, Shell Rock, died April 1. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a dairy farmer and a field representative for AMPI for 20 years.

**George Herbener '57**, Louisville, Ky., died December 22, 2020. A U.S. Air Force veteran, he earned a doctorate from the University of Louisville and was an associate professor at the University of Louisville Medical School for more than 25 years.

**Verne Johnson '57**, Tioga, N.D., died July 3, 2022.

**Eugene Matthias '57**, Denver, died April 12. A U.S. Army Reserve veteran, he was a farmer and director of Readlyn Savings Bank for 32 years. He is survived by his wife, **Janice Malquist Matthias '60**.

**Donald Denkinger '58**, Cedar Falls, died May 12. A U.S. Army veteran, he graduated from Al Somers Umpire School and was a Major League baseball umpire for 30 years.

**The Rev. Melvin Frahm '58**, Appleton, Wis., died July 22, 2022. A U.S. Army veteran, he earned a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, and served congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. He is survived by his wife, **Joan Pirner Frahm '61**.

**Ovie Jessen '58**, Fayetteville, Ark., died Jan. 8. A U.S. Army veteran, he worked in traffic management until retiring in 1999.

**Roger Klingman '58**, Nashua, died Jan. 27. He earned a master's degree from Northeast Missouri State, now Truman State University, Kirksville, and was a teacher and coach.

**Stanley Vogel '58**, Eagan, Minn., died Dec. 28, 2022.

**The Rev. John Wilker '58**, Thousand Oaks, Calif., died Oct. 9, 2022. He is survived by his wife, **Phyllis Koester Wilker '58**.

**Avona Arends Lehmann '59**, Kent, Wash., died July 14, 2022. She was a teacher. She is survived by her husband, **the Rev. Richard Lehmann '56**.

**Marlene Haibeck Vorthmann '59**, Freeport, Ill., died Feb. 19. She earned a degree in English, speech, and journalism and was a homemaker and speech teacher and coach. She is survived by her husband, **Everett Vorthmann '58**.

## 1960s

**Marianne Cook Chalstrom '60**, Ames, died Dec. 28, 2022. She was a teacher and media center specialist and later went on to work in human resources for the state auditor's office in Des Moines for 26 years.

**Mary Jo Logan Kaiser '60**, Milan, Tenn., died March 1. She was a respiratory therapist. She is survived by her husband, **Robert Kaiser '59**.

**Lorraine Johnson Mastin '60**, Eau Claire, Wis., died Feb. 12. She was an elementary music teacher. She is survived by her husband, **Ron Mastin '58**.

**Keo Miller '60**, Falls Church, Va., died Dec. 29, 2022. She was an elementary school teacher and later a secretary at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. She earned a master's degree in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, and was a school social worker for 23 years. She was also a counselor at Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington D.C.

**Russell Muhlenhaupt '60**, Snelling, Calif., died Dec. 9, 2022. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a USDA food inspector in the produce industry until retiring in 2008.

**Mary Ann Happel Mixdorf '62**, Waterloo, died Dec. 15, 2022. She was an elementary school teacher.

**Catherine Gammelin Rehfeldt '62**, Rochester, Minn., died Jan. 19. She was a teacher and homemaker.

**Nancy Brunscheen Dunahugh '63**, Cedar Falls, died Feb. 7. She worked in the computer technology industry.

**Arlen Koelling '63**, Sumner, died April 7. He earned a degree in engineering from Iowa State University, Ames, and went on to earn a master's degree in engineering from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He worked at North American Aviation in California; McDonnell Douglass, St. Louis, Mo.; Kochring Cranes, Waverly; and John Deere, Waterloo, until retiring in 1999. He was also a farmer.

**Verla Bartels Steege '63**, Fredericksburg, died April 13. She was a teacher for 37 years until retiring in 2004.

**Joan Stewart Tuft '63**, Sterling, Ill., died Dec. 29, 2022. She was a teacher until retiring in 1999.

**William Buenting '64**, Kirkland, Wash., died Dec. 12, 2022. He was a junior high science teacher.

**The Rev. Edward Nieman '64**, Coon Rapids, died July 4, 2022. He served as pastor in five parishes for 41 years.

**James Adams '65**, Cedar Falls, died Feb. 27. He worked in management for Hy-Vee, Waterloo, for 32 years.

**Larry Olk '65**, Sheffield, died Jan. 24. A U.S. Army veteran, he worked at Rath Packing Co., Waterloo, and then Hormel Foods until retiring in 2005. He is survived by his wife, **Emma Easton Olk '65**.

**Arlyn Ristau '65**, Denver, died Jan. 30. He earned a master's degree in microbiology from Arizona State University, Tempe, and a doctorate in biological sciences from the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley. He taught at Wartburg College from 1968 to 1981; at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls; and at Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo, until retiring in 2016. He was also an insurance agent. He is survived by his wife, **Karen Jorde Ristau '68**.

**The Rev. Keith Tomlinson '65**, Waverly, died March 10. He earned a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, and was ordained June 29, 1969. He served congregations in Ohio and Iowa for more than 40 years. He is survived by his wife, **Virginia Boldt Tomlinson '64**.



**Dennis Brown '66**, Naperville, Ill., died Dec. 24, 2022. He earned a master's degree in English and literature from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. He taught college English for six years and went on to serve as vice president of distribution for an international medical firm.

**Vance Cope-Kasten '66**, Pittsboro, N.C., died March 15. He earned a degree in philosophy from Lawrence University, Appleton, Wis., and a doctorate from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He taught philosophy at Ripon College, Ripon, Wis., until retiring in 2013.

**William Hamm '66**, Waverly, died June 6. He earned a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He began his career in admissions at Wartburg College. He went on to serve as vice president at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Calif. Later he served as president of Waldorf College, Forest City, and president of the Foundation for Independent Higher Education, Washington, D.C. He returned to Wartburg College as interim president in 2008-09 and then served as president of the Lutheran Education Conference of North America. *Consider a memorial gift to the Hap & Pauline Hamm and Teresa & Loren Lou Endowed Scholarship in his honor.*

**Robert Mundt '66**, DeWitt, died March 23. He attended the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and was a teacher, coach, and guidance counselor.

**Mary Charlson Swenson '66**, Osage, died Dec. 18, 2022. She was a vocal music teacher in the Osage Community Schools until retiring in 2010. She is survived by her husband, **Ken Swenson '66**.

**Roger Fuerstenberg '67**, Davenport, died May 1. A Vietnam War veteran, he was a teacher and an administrator in the Davenport school district for more than 35 years.

**Kenneth Melhus '67**, Papillion, Neb., died May 17. A Vietnam and Army Reserves veteran, he earned a master's degree in business management from Bellevue University, Bellevue, Neb. He worked for a telephone company for 26 years. He went on to work for the Army Corps of Engineers.

**Sandra Koepsell White '67**, Waverly, died March 4. She was an elementary school teacher.

**Peter Dart-Fashun '69**, Ripon, Wis., died Dec. 24, 2020.

**John Gross '69**, Lakeville, Minn., died Jan. 15. A U.S. Army veteran, he was a sports journalist.

**Dean Knight '69**, Readlyn, died Dec. 15, 2022. He was a teacher and later went on to work at Terex Cranes, Waverly, until retiring in 2010.

## 1970s

**The Rev. William Christ '70**, Roseville, Minn., died Jan. 2. He attended Goethe German Language Institute in Passau, Germany, and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. He was a management consultant and owner of Lakota Associates. As an ordained Lutheran pastor, he served congregations for more than 10 years. He went on to become a Benedictine Oblate with the Benedictine Monastery of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minn.

**Dorothy "Dottie" Baseler Carvalho '71**, Pittsburg, Calif., died Dec. 1, 2022. She was a teacher and choir director.

**Eugene Judd '71**, Due West, S.C., died Feb. 21. He worked for Kraft General Foods, serving as plant manager in Illinois, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

**Carroll Cutler Jr. '75**, Dublin, Ohio., died Jan. 18. He earned a master's degree in music education from Ohio State University, Columbus. He served as a band director until retiring in 2011. He is survived by his wife, **Blythe Boyer Cutler '75**.

**Marcia Sundet Klinefelter '76**, Shell Rock, died Dec. 25, 2022. She earned a master's degree in education from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. She was a 7-12 grade teacher for 34 years and went on to teach literacy education classes at the University of Northern Iowa. She is survived by her husband, **Michael Klinefelter '72**.

## 1980s

**The Rev. Eileen Bennewitz Johnson '81**, Parkersburg, died Feb. 8. She attended Ellsworth College, Iowa Falls. She farmed with her husband, worked at the Ackley newspaper, and later served as interim pastor at several area churches.

**Karin Moe Tovey '82**, Waverly, died Dec. 12, 2022. She worked as an operations coordinator for RENK America, Muskegon, Mich., retiring in 2022.

**Debra Fischer '83**, Branson, Mo., died Jan. 9. She was a band and choir teacher.

## 1990s

**Wanda Williams-Tiedt '92**, Dunkerton, died Dec. 27, 2022. She was an in-home family therapist for at-risk youth.

**Brad Buchholz '94**, Council Bluffs, died Feb. 17. He was a supervisor at Glenwood Resource Group, Glenwood.

**Julie Hill Johnson '98**, Wadena, died Feb. 15. She worked for Adults Inc. and later for Hope Center.

**Ruth McGee '99**, Davenport, died Feb. 5.

## 2000s

**Janelle Young Morio '01**, Hiawatha, died Jan. 8. She earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and worked for Transamerica as a lead auditor.

## 2010s

**Merry Gillaspie Van Der Hart '15**, Herman, Neb., died Feb. 17. She was a science teacher.

## Friend of the College

**Dorothy Starr**, Clive, died Jan. 24. She was a faculty member in the Department of Social Work from 1975 through her retirement in 1992. During that time she also served as the department chair. During her time in Waverly, she also co-founded Waverly Child Care and Preschool.





# A DIFFERENT KIND OF *Homecoming*



## Wartburg graduates find new community at Eisenach Village

LINDA STULL MOELLER '66

Rennie Fiegen Scharlau '61 and Ed Scharlau '61

For alumni living in Waverly's Eisenach Village, reconnecting with their alma mater is a year-round opportunity thanks to a partnership established in 2006 between Wartburg and Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community.

Initially proposed by former Wartburg President Jack Ohle, Eisenach Village got under way after Wartburg sold 30 acres of land to Bartels and helped ease the financial burden of the project by deferring part of the payment until lots were sold.

The first townhomes were completed in 2009, and a Klubhaus for social gatherings opened in 2013. Eisenach Village reached a milestone at the end of 2022, when the final units opened for occupancy, creating a community of 92 townhomes. The 137

village residents include 29 alumni and two honorary alumni.

Bartels operates the independent living community for those age 55 and older. Wartburg offers benefits that include an ID card providing free admission to athletic events and a discount at the college store and campus eateries. Village residents are entitled to one free session per year of Wartburg's Keep on Learning program and can audit a Wartburg class free of charge. Residents receive one free ticket each to Christmas with Wartburg. They can also join The W with no activation fee.

**Ed '61 and Rennie Fiegen '61 Scharlau** were living in Austin, Texas, when they began discussing the move to a retirement community.

"Easy access to sports, church, and music were all on our list," said Rennie. "We also wanted to be closer to family and to be able to meet people and keep our minds active."

The Scharlauss had Wartburg friends living in Eisenach Village, and Ed had already organized Water to Thrive well projects through Waverly-Shell Rock schools. They made their initial commitment in 2015 and moved to Waverly in May 2018. Serendipitously, they live in the same quad as **June Rickhoff Mehlhaus '61**, Rennie's senior-year housemate at Wartburg.

Several village residents are involved in the Wartburg Scholarship Club, which provides treats for students to raise money for scholarships. Many residents attend music, cultural, and sporting events and


support booster groups. Others help provide food for international students during college breaks and serve on the Keep on Learning planning committee.

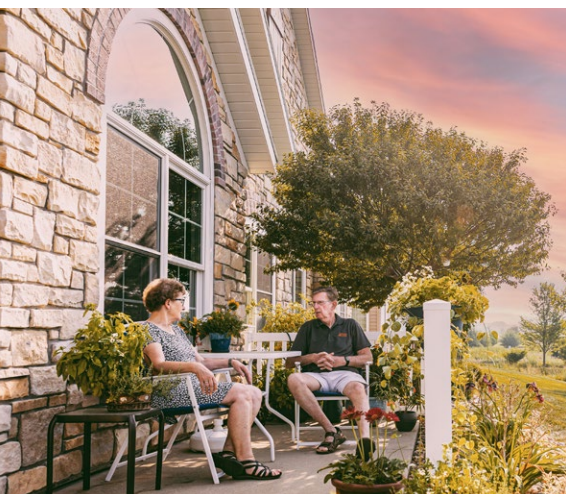
"I think it's been a good partnership," said **Scott Leisinger '87**, Wartburg's vice president for institutional advancement. "I'm always surprised at the number of alumni, regardless of where they are from, who have a genuine affinity for Waverly."

**Harry '66 and Elle Gerdes '66 Blobaum** made the decision to move to Eisenach Village in 2019.

"We like the feeling of living a rural life with a pond and walking trail just outside our door, but we also have the convenience of nearby shopping and cultural activities," said Harry. "We enjoy the involvement opportunities, social interaction, and exchange of ideas."

Angie Daniels, Bartels marketing and development coordinator, describes Eisenach Village residents as "a community of caring and talented individuals who support our main campus in a variety of ways."

"Some volunteer on the main campus, donate treats and goodies to the staff and residents, or donate monetarily toward our fundraising efforts," Daniels said. "They are wonderful representatives of Bartels and Wartburg in the Waverly community." 



Elle Gerdes Blobaum '66 and Harry Blobaum '66



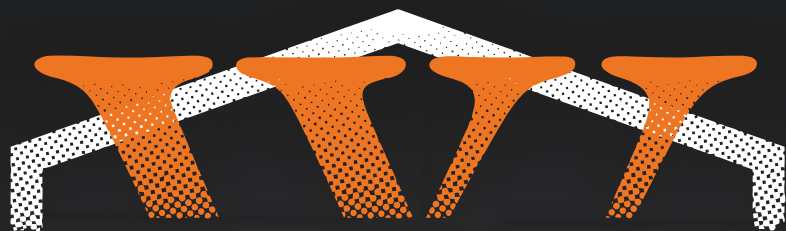
Bartels maintains a waiting list of those interested in purchasing a home in Eisenach Village. More information is available at [bartelscommunity.org](https://bartelscommunity.org)



PARTICIPATE

PROVIDE

PROMOTE



W A R T B U R G C O L L E G E

# UKNIGHT day

**THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024**  
**WARTBURG.EDU/UKNIGHTDAY**

*Congratulations to Amy Pilcher,  
the Ultimate Knight on UKnight Day 2023.  
Could you be next?*

## Connect with Fellow Alumni

### KNIGHTS TO KNOW

WOMEN OF WARTBURG

Join President Ehretzman, current students, alumni, and other friends of the college for Knights to Know, a series that explores the amazing work Wartburg graduates are doing out in the world. The theme this year is Women of Wartburg. Each virtual session is free.

**Spotlight on Black Entrepreneurship**  
Wednesday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m.  
*Virtual event*

**Spotlight on Health Care**  
Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m.  
*Virtual event*

To learn more or register for a session, visit [wartburg.edu/knights-to-know](https://wartburg.edu/knights-to-know).



The Alumni & Parent Engagement Office plans several opportunities for the Wartburg community to gather throughout the year.

Check out the list of upcoming events for one near you at [wartburg.edu/alumni-events](https://wartburg.edu/alumni-events).

## Thank you to our corporate partners

### Gold Partners

Hawkeye Stages  
Cedar Valley Medical Specialists  
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### Bronze Partners

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## Stay Connected Find us online



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## Update your info

Tell us what you're up to and  
update your contact info at  
[wartburg.edu/alumni](http://wartburg.edu/alumni).



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WARTBURG  
**HOMECOMING  
& FAMILY WEEKEND**  
October 12-15, 2023  
See the full recap online  
[wartburg.edu/homecoming](http://wartburg.edu/homecoming)

