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Spring 2020

## Volume 29, Issue 1, Spring 2020

Office of Communications, Illinois Wesleyan University

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SPRING 2020

# ILLINOIS WESLEYAN

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

A portrait of Marc Talluto '94, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a grey blazer over a white checkered shirt. He is smiling and gesturing with his right hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

## Manor of Learning

MARC TALLUTO '94



# [ ALL IN <sup>FOR</sup> ] WESLEYAN

ALL IN, ALL DAY



**Let's be All In, All Day together during our annual day of giving!**

Encourage fellow alumni and friends to support our students and campus community.  
Show your pride, make a gift, and share how you're **All In, All Day** on **All In for Wesleyan**.  
*Stay tuned for the announcement of a new date for All In for Wesleyan.*

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**#ALLINFORWESLEYAN**





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**Marc Talluto '94** speaks with guests at an open house at Wesleyan Manor, a student-run Airbnb benefiting Illinois Wesleyan's Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship program.

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Illinois Wesleyan Entrepreneur in Residence **Marc Talluto '94** provides students with experiential learning opportunities through internships that benefit IWU's Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship program.

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A personal loss inspired **Chad McGehee '03** to broaden his horizons and led to his discovery of meditation. Now he helps others use meditation to reach personal well-being and performance goals.

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Influential professors fostered the freedom to explore unexpected interests for **Alison Sweeney '01**, who now does the same for her students at Yale University.

**Editor's Note:** At press time, Illinois Wesleyan University is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. Any information on the campus impact and response provided in these pages will surely be outdated and incomplete by the time this magazine reaches you.

We encourage you to visit [www.iwu.edu/covid-19](http://www.iwu.edu/covid-19) for the latest updates.  
Thank you and be well!



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## From the President's Desk

As the 20th president of Illinois Wesleyan University, I'm excited to be embarking in the year 2020 on a presidential tour to cities across the United States to meet alumni and friends of the University. We're calling the events "I With U," based on a suggestion in my acceptance remarks when the presidency was announced:

*"I want to propose today a new, unofficial motto for IWU, and it's 'I With U.' Now, the 'I' in this is not an egotistical 'I.' Instead, it's a recognition that — to create the community we want and need to be — everyone is an important 'I'; everyone contributes to what we do here; everyone matters. 'I With U' can be, I hope, a way of reminding ourselves of our values as a community."*

And alumni are obviously a tremendously important part of the Illinois Wesleyan community, 23,633 strong! I'm hoping to hear about what the University means to you — and also about your hopes for the future. What do you feel is strongest and most valuable about IWU? What changes do you think would make us an even better institution? These are the conversations I'll be having with alumni in the coming year, as I also hope to bring news of the great initiatives and accomplishments of our students and faculty members.

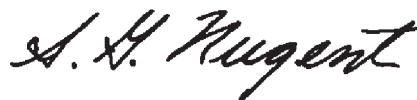
We started the tour in late January, with a visit to the Phoenix area, where the Arizona Connection, with its 34-year history, is the longest-running off-campus event. This year, the weekend began with a small dinner hosted by former President Dick Wilson and his wife Pat at their stunning Scottsdale home. The centerpiece of the Arizona Connection was a luncheon held at McCormick Ranch Golf Club. In attendance this year were about 70 alumni and friends. It was a pure joy to meet so many wonderfully welcoming members of the Illinois Wesleyan family.

There are many stops on the presidential tour, including Florida and an upcoming McLean County event on campus. At all of these events, it will be great to meet many of you, hear your stories and share the future of Illinois Wesleyan (see pages 32-33 for a full listing of dates).

Back on campus, Feb. 1 was the date of a very special celebration for IWU's most famous athlete, basketball star Jack Sikma '77. Jack was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame on Sept. 6, 2019, and Titan Nation showed up in force. The February event was an opportunity to fete this outstanding alum on campus as well. Many of Jack's teammates, classmates, fraternity brothers, brother Bob Sikma '80 and coach Dennie Bridges '61 joined in the celebration. Before that evening's resounding win against Carroll, we dropped a new Sikma banner (see coverage on page 9). Later, Sikma fans and friends gathered in the Hansen Student Center, where Jack sat down with Assistant Athletic Director Tony Bankston '91 for a fun and candid interview.

In February, we hosted the Council for IWU Women Summit (see coverage on page 6). The two-day program brought over 150 attendees to campus for keynote speakers, mini-presentations and sessions focused on this year's theme, "Sharing Truths." I was honored to provide the keynote address.

Also, on Feb. 17, we launched the first annual "President for a Day," where I exchanged places with a student (see coverage on pages 14-15). He interacted with the members of the University's cabinet, as well as the board chair, while I attended his classes. At the end of the day, we discussed our experiences on *The Argus'* student-run "Slightly Underwhelming" podcast. A video recap from the day was also posted to IWU's official YouTube channel. I invite you to check them out!



**S. Georgia Nugent**  
Illinois Wesleyan University President





## IWU MAGAZINE STAFF

### EDITOR

*Matt Wing*

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

*Ethan Lubin*

## CONTRIBUTORS

### DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Ann Aubry*

### ASST. DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

*John Twork*

### WEB CONTENT SPECIALIST

*Kristen Buhrmann*

### VIDEOGRAPHER/PHOTOGRAPHER

*Nick Helten*

### PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

*Lexie Bragg Chavey*

### DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS

*Katie Gonzales*

### STUDENT WRITERS

*Megan Baker '21*

*Vi Kakares '20*

Office of Communications

(309) 556-3181

IWU Admissions Office

(800) 332-2498

[www.iwu.edu](http://www.iwu.edu)

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[iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu)

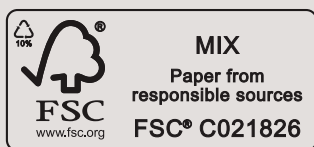
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# Inside IWU

FEATURED NEWS, EVENTS AND VIEWS FROM THE IWU CAMPUS

## Vinyard Honored for Decades of University Leadership

Recently retired Illinois Wesleyan University Board of Trustees Chair **George Vinyard '71** was recognized for nearly 50 years of service and leadership to the University during the board's October meeting.

In Vinyard's honor, the Memorial Center's Davidson Room — the location of board and student senate meetings — was renamed the Vinyard Room, and the Humanities Division presented Vinyard with a Distinguished Humanities Alumnus award. Vinyard, who remains on the board, served as chair from 2005-19. He joined the board in 1977 and was elected secretary in 1993, beginning a 26-year tenure on the executive committee.

"For all of the people here — faculty, staff and trustees who I've worked with over the years — anything I may have accomplished was the result of being part of a great team," Vinyard told the audience during an Oct. 24, 2019 dinner in recognition of his service. "It's been my honor, my privilege, and my pleasure to work with this group."

Vinyard began serving the University, first as a student senator, and later, as student senate president, in 1970-71. He returned post-graduation to work with President **Robert Eckley** as an administrative assistant from 1972-74. Vinyard then enrolled at the University of Michigan Law School, where he graduated *cum laude* in 1977 and was immediately recruited by Eckley to join the board as a 27-year-old.

Former President **Richard Wilson**, who shared a decade of his 11-year presidency with Vinyard as board chair, remarked, "The relationship between a college president and the board chair is critical, and I feel fortunate to have had someone with George's insights, experience and sensitivities to work with for a decade."

Under Vinyard's leadership, Illinois Wesleyan's "Transforming Lives" capital campaign resulted in a transformed campus in many ways, from physical improvements such as Joslin Atrium and State Farm Hall, academic support including endowed professorships, to expanded funding for student financial aid.

Current board chair **Tim Szerlong '74** concluded, "We hope that the spirit of George's commitment, thoughtful consideration and calm demeanor will inspire all of us to never forget his service, caring, and contributions to our alma mater, and to plant our feet firmly on the path he created."

Vinyard, who works professionally as an attorney in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in 1971 with a degree in English literature.



(Above) Retired Illinois Wesleyan University Board of Trustees Chair **George Vinyard '71** speaks during an Oct. 24, 2019 dinner in recognition of his service.



## Students Honored at HackHarvard for Dog-Training Robot

**T**rain-O, a dog-training robot developed by a team of Illinois Wesleyan University students during a 36-hour hackathon, was recently awarded “Best Hardware Hack” at Harvard University’s fifth iteration of HackHarvard.

Computer science and physics double major **Nico Lopez ’21** secured funding from IWU’s Student Senate to attend HackHarvard with a team consisting of fellow computer science and physics double major **Bobby Koirala ’22**; mathematics and physics double major **Minzhao Henryken Liu ’20**; and business and computer science double major **Evan Quist ’23**. Zekun Liu, an industrial engineering student at Purdue University, also joined the Train-O team upon arrival at HackHarvard.

Lopez, who serves as president of Illinois Wesleyan’s Association for Computing Machinery, said his team’s project was inspired by a friend’s beloved emotional support dog named Laverne. “Laverne’s owner wanted to send her to a dog-training camp or something like that, but she can’t because she goes crazy being around other dogs,” Lopez said. “So, we were thinking of how we can make this happen, and it just seemed natural to automate something like that. It seems like conditioning a dog to be trained — to sit, to roll over — there’s almost an algorithmic approach to it.”

Train-O, a robot that can function as both a dog’s trainer and companion, was subsequently developed. Similar in appearance to a Roomba vacuum cleaner, Train-O delivers a command by projecting a recording



(Above, from left) Bobby Koirala ’22, Evan Quist ’23, Zekun Liu, Minzhao Henryken Liu ’20, and Nico Lopez ’21 developed Train-O, which was named “Best Hardware Hack” at HackHarvard.

of the owner’s voice. It then uses computerized visual processing to determine if the command was successfully executed by the dog, and if so, Train-O rewards the positive behavior by dispensing a treat.

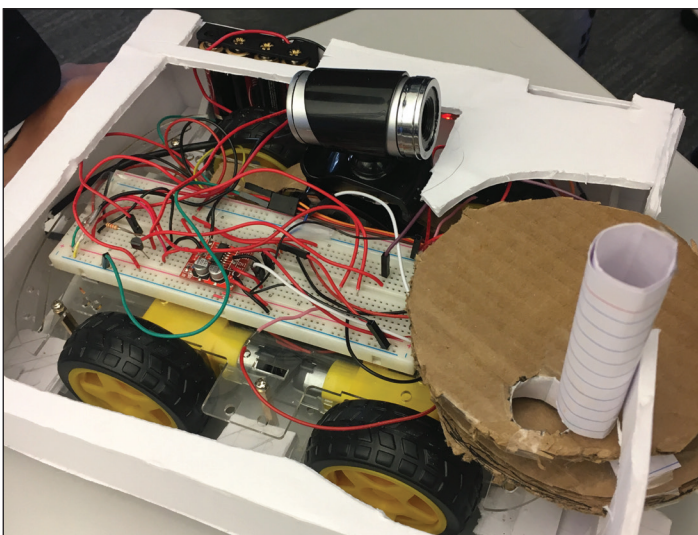
“If your dog naturally sits down when commanded to do so, you want to see that, and as soon as you can, reinforce it,” Lopez said. “So, we wanted to create a robot that could actually do that, and potentially, do it better than a human.”

Lopez and his team applied to HackHarvard, and their robotic dog-training proposal — one of 83 entries from around the world — was accepted. The Illinois Wesleyan team joined hundreds of fellow college students from five continents at Harvard, where they had 36 hours to make Train-O a reality.

“A hackathon is hours of no sleep. It’s pure, hardcore development — and it’s nonstop,” Lopez said, adding that teams could not get a jump-start on their projects. “We were so tired, we had a schedule for people to go to bed, so that someone was always continuing to develop what we were building.”

Combining physics, computer science, business, and communication skills, Lopez said he and his Illinois Wesleyan teammates had an inherent advantage over other teams because of their liberal arts background.

“Being part of a liberal arts environment gives you a lot of opportunities to write things concisely and cohesively and be able to express your ideas and communicate what you think,” he said.



(Above) A team of Illinois Wesleyan students developed Train-O, a dog-training robot, during Harvard University’s 36-hour HackHarvard.

## Illinois Wesleyan Ranked No. 4 'Liberal Arts College on the Rise'

Based on “amazing success over the past 15 years,” Illinois Wesleyan University was ranked No. 4 nationally among “incredible liberal arts colleges on the rise,” according to *College Gazette*.

In compiling the top-10 list of schools on the rise, *College Gazette* researched and compared demonstrated institutional success over the past 15 years in programs, student and alumni accomplishments, faculty accolades, and other similar metrics.

*College Gazette* noted Illinois Wesleyan’s quality of academic offerings by citing Niche.com’s recent rankings that place IWU in the top-70 nationwide for programs in nursing, education, performing arts and physics. Overall, IWU is ranked No. 25 nationally according to WalletHub’s “Best Colleges Ranking.”

Student experience additionally pushed IWU near the top of the metrics. According to *College Gazette*, “the campus life separates Illinois Wesleyan from many other liberal arts schools; sports, Greek life, and more are central components to the unique experience at Illinois Wesleyan.”

Job placement among Illinois Wesleyan graduates also factored into *College Gazette*’s ranking. *College Gazette* cited a study by Zippia which deemed IWU the top school in Illinois for getting a job. In 2018, 97% of graduating students found work or placement into graduate school within six months of graduation, based on a survey conducted in accordance with the National Association of Colleges and Employers.



## Entrepreneurship Fellowship Winner Plans Luxury Pet Hotel

Business administration major **Rachel Rosch '20** dreamed of owning her own pet boarding facility since she was 8 years old. Thirteen years later, she is poised to make her dream a reality.

Rosch is the recipient of the \$5,000 IWU Entrepreneurship Fellowship for “Amber’s Playground,” a luxury pet boarding business she plans to open in northwest suburban Chicago in 2020. The biannual fellowship provides students with the opportunity to pursue their entrepreneurial passion under the supervision of a faculty member and guidance of a successful entrepreneur.

From an early age, becoming an entrepreneur was appealing to Rosch. “I like to come up with my own ideas and I liked the whole idea of owning my own business, and being able to take it down all the paths that I can and the only blockage be me,” Rosch said. “From there, I knew I wanted to own something with animals. And then when (our family dog) Amber came into my life, I decided that was the name.”

Amber’s Playground will be a luxury pet hotel with a “rustic, retreat” vibe that includes indoor and outdoor facilities for pets. The hotel will welcome all kinds of animals, in addition to offering a variety of services such as grooming, dog walking and at-home sitting.

“My knowledge of the industry has grown a lot,” Rosch said. “I don’t really know how this industry can go obsolete because I kind of look at it like childcare or senior care because your pet is a living thing.”



(Above) Rachel Rosch '20 poses with her family dog Amber. Rosch plans to open a luxury pet boarding business.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY AT IWU

(Left) Associate Professor **Jessie Dixon-Montgomery** provided the keynote address at Illinois Wesleyan’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Celebration and Commitment on Jan. 20, 2020. The day included workshops, community service and advocacy opportunities, and concluded with the 30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival. The annual MLK Teach-In was held on Jan. 22, 2020.



## McLean County Scholarship Annual Guarantee Increases to \$30,000

**M**cLean County high school graduates admitted to Illinois Wesleyan University are now guaranteed a total scholarship package of at least \$30,000 per year as recipients of the McLean County Scholarship Guarantee.

The Illinois Wesleyan Associates — a group of local community and business leaders, and IWU alumni — have raised more than \$1.1 million over the past two years to support the McLean County Scholarship, enabling the annual award to increase by \$3,000, from \$27,000 to \$30,000, for incoming students.

Over the course of four years, incoming McLean County Scholarship recipients will receive no less than \$120,000 in aid, up from \$108,000. Depending on the academic status of the student, it is likely they could be eligible for additional scholarship funds.

“Ongoing fundraising efforts by the Illinois Wesleyan Associates for the McLean County Scholarship demonstrate how much our local alumni and friends understand and value the education that Illinois Wesleyan provides,” **President S. Georgia Nugent** said. “It is fitting that our community leaders of today are helping make it possible for the leaders of tomorrow to attend and flourish at Illinois Wesleyan.”

Established in 2018, the McLean County Scholarship represents an institutional commitment to recruit and retain McLean County’s top students. In 2019, 42 incoming McLean County students enrolled at Illinois Wesleyan, a 56% increase from 27 McLean County students in 2017.

Assistant Vice President for Advancement **Carlo Robustelli** said, “I am extremely pleased, though not at all surprised, that the leaders of this community have invested so generously in our local students. Illinois Wesleyan is fortunate to be located in such a supportive place with such impressive students, and we hope to do our part by providing McLean County students with ladders of opportunity and a transformative experience right in their backyards.”

Students who are residents of McLean County graduating from a McLean County high school in 2020 are

“It is fitting that our community leaders of today are helping make it possible for leaders of tomorrow to attend and flourish at Illinois Wesleyan.” — **PRESIDENT S. GEORGIA NUGENT**

eligible for the scholarship with their official Illinois Wesleyan University application. No additional application is necessary. Prospective students must be admitted (without restrictions) and live in on-campus housing to be eligible for the scholarship. Transfer students who attended a McLean County high school are also eligible for the McLean County Scholarship.

A group of leaders committed to local education, the Illinois Wesleyan Associates launched a four-year campaign, beginning in 2018, which sets out to raise \$2 million (\$500,000 per year) for the McLean County Scholarship Fund.

The group was formed in 1953 by Adlai Rust, former president and chairman of State Farm Insurance Company, in order to strengthen the ties between the McLean County community and Illinois Wesleyan faculty, staff and students. More information about the Illinois Wesleyan Associates can be found at [www.iwu.edu/associates](http://www.iwu.edu/associates).



## COUNCIL FOR IWU WOMEN SUMMIT

(Left) Members of the Council for IWU Women pose for a group photo at the Council for IWU Women Summit, held Feb. 21-22, 2020, on Illinois Wesleyan’s campus. The annual event provides women within the IWU community opportunities to learn from and encourage one another, discuss social topics concerning women, network with successful alumnae, and channel inspiration to take on leadership roles in today’s world.

## Roesner Named Associate Provost

**R**ebecca Roesner, chair and professor of chemistry at Illinois Wesleyan University, has been named associate provost. Roesner replaces **Lynda Duke**, who retired in December 2019 following an 18-year career with the University.

“Dr. Roesner is widely respected by faculty, staff and administrative colleagues for her gentle pragmatism and creative insights,” Illinois Wesleyan Provost and Dean of the Faculty **Mark Brodl** said. “Our students hold her in the highest regard. In addition, she has served many years as a department chair and a leader across campus in a wide range of positions. As a result, she brings tremendous insight to her role in Academic Affairs, and we are fortunate to have her stepping into the associate provost role.”

Roesner joined the Illinois Wesleyan faculty in 1997 and was named chair of the Department of Chemistry in 2006. She earned a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from the University of Kansas and a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and history from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1992.

A highly regarded teacher and researcher, Roesner received the 2014 Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, the University’s highest teaching honor, which is presented annually to a faculty member. She has also been awarded the American Chemical Society Stanley C. Israel Regional Award for Advancing Diversity in the Chemical Sciences (2019), Illinois Wesleyan’s James D. Dougan Award for Contributions to Faculty Governance (2017) and the Iota Sigma Pi Centennial Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (2014).



(Above) **Rebecca Roesner** speaks at the NexSTEM announcement event on Nov. 8, 2018. Roesner, a member of Illinois Wesleyan’s faculty since 1997, was named associate provost in January 2020.

“I’m grateful for the very warm welcome I’ve received in my new role, and it’s energizing to be joining the administration during a period of campus-wide innovation,” Roesner said. “I look forward to collaborating with colleagues, students, and the broader community in new ways to support the University’s mission.”

An inorganic chemist, Roesner has included dozens of Illinois Wesleyan students in research which has appeared in publications such as *Inorganic Chemistry*, *Advances in Inorganic Chemistry* and *The Chemical Educator*.

Roesner has also co-directed the Summer Science Program for Leadership Inquiry and Campus Engagement since 2014, and she has served as principal investigator for NexSTEM, a National Science Foundation grant-funded program launched in 2018 that provides scholarship support, community-centered research experiences and mentoring for talented STEM students with financial need.



## DECEMBER GRADUATES

(Left) **President S. Georgia Nugent** (left) and **Pooja Patil '20** (right) pose for a photo with the ceremonial pineapple at the December Graduate Brunch, on Dec. 8, 2019, in the Turflur Room.



## Titan Athletics Report

### Women's Soccer Wins CCIW Tournament



The Illinois Wesleyan women's soccer team repeated as College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin tournament champions with an overtime victory over Augustana on Nov. 9, 2019.

The Titans finished the season with a 15-6 record as they made their seventh-consecutive and 12th overall appearance in the NCAA Tournament, advancing to the second round after topping UW-Whitewater, in overtime, in the opening round, on Nov. 16, 2019.

**Caelyn Steffens '22** garnered both CCIW Offensive Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year honors, marking the second-consecutive year that a Titan claimed the league's top player award, after **Flower Edington '20** earned the honor in 2018. Steffens, Edington and **Cameron Hindel '21** were selected to the All-CCIW First Team, while **Rachel White '22** was named to the second team. Steffens, Edington and Hindel were also tabbed United Soccer Coaches All-Central Region selections.

### Top-Ranked Men's Golf Wins Golfweek Fall Preview

Fresh off its first NCAA Division III national championship in program history, the Illinois Wesleyan men's golf team entered the 2019-20 season as the top nationally ranked team, according to the Bushnell *Golfweek* Preseason Poll released Aug. 23, 2019.

The Titans' depth was on full display at the CCIW

Preview, on Sept. 24, 2019, as IWU claimed the top two spots in both the team and individual standings.

IWU wrapped up the fall portion of its schedule with its fourth tournament win of the season at the *Golfweek* NCAA Division III Fall Preview, held Oct. 13-15, 2019, in Destin, Florida. The Titans fired a final round 278 to finish with the best 54-hole score in program history (837). **Rob Wuethrich '21** carded an opening round 64 to finish 6-under-par, capping the best round in team history with a birdie putt on hole 18.

### North Competes at Cross Country Championships

**Katie North '21** became the sixth Illinois Wesleyan woman ever to qualify for the NCAA Division III Women's Cross Country Championships, placing 130th out of 277 runners at the national meet on Nov. 23, 2019. North clocked a time of 23:03.2 on the 6,000-meter course at Tom Sawyer State Park in Louisville, Kentucky.



Katie North '21

North was an All-Midwest Region selection as she finished 16th at the Midwest Regional. She was also IWU's top finisher at the CCIW Championships, placing second and earning all-conference recognition with a time of 22:29.3.

### Women's Golf Runner-Up at CCIW Championships

Three top-10 finishes propelled the Illinois Wesleyan women's golf team to a runner-up finish at the CCIW Championships, Sept. 27-28, 2019, in Kansasville, Wisconsin. **Jackie Garcia '21** claimed third place on the individual leaderboard with a 54-hole total of 229, while **Melanie Wolf '20** and **Rylie Loux '20** took fourth and eighth, respectively.

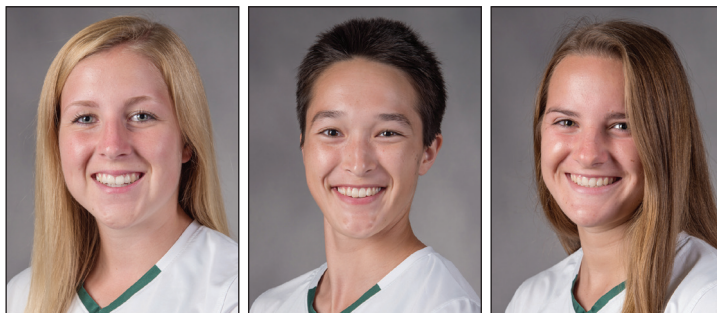
In six fall tournaments, IWU finished no lower than sixth as a team. The Titans' strong fall, which has them ranked 16th nationally heading into the spring, was highlighted by a fifth-place finish at the *Golfweek* Division III Fall Preview, held Oct. 13-15, 2019, in Destin, Florida.

### Trio of Volleyball Titans Earn All-League Honors

The Illinois Wesleyan women's volleyball team displayed resilience, finishing the 2019 season with a 9-20 overall record against the nation's toughest schedule. IWU finished second in the CCIW with a league record of 6-2. **Madi Corey '22** landed on the All-CCIW First Team, while **Courtney McAuliffe '22** and **Jessica McCall '21** earned second-team nods.



Madi Corey '22



Caelyn Steffens '22

Flower Edington '20

Cameron Hindel '21

### Men's Soccer Plays in CCIW Tournament Final

The Illinois Wesleyan men's soccer team finished with a 9-8-2 overall record and a 5-2-1 mark in league play. The Titans won a conference tournament semifinal match in penalty kicks before falling to North Park by a 2-1 count in the final.

**Patrick Hickey '20** was chosen for the All-CCIW First Team, while **Doug Ballard '20**, **Luke Cangilla '20** and **Alex Ruckstaetter '20** received second-team accolades. **Logan**

**Servin '22** was named to the CoSIDA Academic All-District VII First Team, and was the only sophomore to do so. Hickey and Ruckstaetter additionally garnered United Soccer Coaches All-Central Region honors.



Patrick Hickey '20

### Titan Football Sets Sack Record in Season Finale

The Illinois Wesleyan football team concluded the season with a 6-4 overall record, including a 6-3 mark in CCIW play. The Titans used a record-setting defensive performance in their season finale against North Park, as nine players combined for a school-record 15 sacks in the game, while junior defensive tackle **Mike Murphy '21** tied the individual single-game mark with 4.5 sacks.

**Trevor Koepke '20**, **Dave Lux '20** and Murphy were selected to the All-CCIW First Team on the defensive side, while **Jake Buhe '22** was tabbed a first-teamer on offense and **Dean Zigulich '20** was picked as a first-team specialist. **Ryan Swift '20** and **Jack Healy '20** were named to the All-CCIW Second Team.



Mike Murphy '21



Trevor Koepke '20



Dave Lux '20



Jake Buhe '22



Dean Zigulich '20

### Titans Honor Jack Sikma with Banner in Shirk



Illinois Wesleyan athletics celebrated the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame induction of **Jack Sikma '77** (above) on Feb. 1, 2020, with the unveiling of a banner in the rafters of the Shirk Center. With Sikma's No. 44 hanging above the court and Sikma in the stands, the Illinois Wesleyan men's basketball team defeated Carroll, 88-44, before a crowd of 2,036 fans.

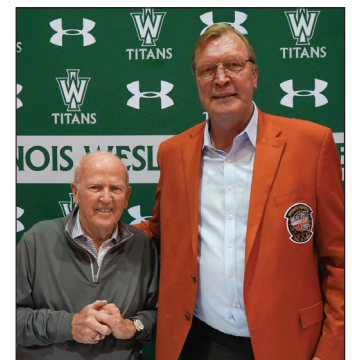
Sikma is the school's all-time leading scorer (2,272 points) and rebounder (1,405). In each of his final three seasons at IWU, the Titans won CCIW championships and advanced to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Tournament in Kansas City, Missouri.

Sikma was a three-time NAIA All-American and was the top vote-getter as an Associated Press College Division All-American as a senior when he averaged 27.0 points and 15.4 rebounds. In four years, his teams went 83-32, and he was chosen as the CCIW Most Outstanding Player for three-straight years. He was inducted into the Small College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2017, the NAIA Hall of Fame, and was a member of the NAIA 50th and 75th All-Anniversary teams.

The No. 8 overall pick in the 1977 NBA draft by the Seattle SuperSonics, Sikma scored 17,287 points and snared 10,816 rebounds in his NBA career, and was a key player on Seattle's 1979 championship team. Sikma holds Seattle team records for rebounds (7,729) and free throws made (3,044).

Sikma is the only center to have led the NBA in free throw shooting percentage, converting 92.2% in 1987-88 with the Milwaukee Bucks.

His jersey has been retired both by Illinois Wesleyan and the Seattle SuperSonics.



Dennie Bridges '61 (left) and Jack Sikma '77 (right)



## BOOKS

The fifth collection of poetry from **Mark Yakich '92**, *Spiritual Exercises*, was published by Penguin Books in July 2019. *Spiritual Exercises* is a dynamic and discerning journey of devotion and temptation in pursuit of the divine. Not trifling in ambiguity but diving headlong into it, *Spiritual Exercises* wrestles with popular gods as much as with personal ghosts. From autism to eroticism, from benediction to excommunication, and from grief to gratitude, this collection lays bare a full spectrum of emotional life, showing us how grace can be as playful as it is sincere. *Spiritual Exercises* is widely available. Mark is a professor of English at Loyola University in New Orleans. He has also served as editor of *New Orleans Review*, a journal of contemporary literature and culture, since 2012.

**Jac Jemc '05** published a second collection of stories in October 2019. In *False Bingo*, we watch as sinister forces — some supernatural, some of this earth, some real and some not — work their way into the mundanity of everyday life. Fueled by paranoia and visceral suspense and crafted with masterful restraint, the 20 stories explore what happens when fears become real, if only for a fleeting moment. *False Bingo* is widely available.

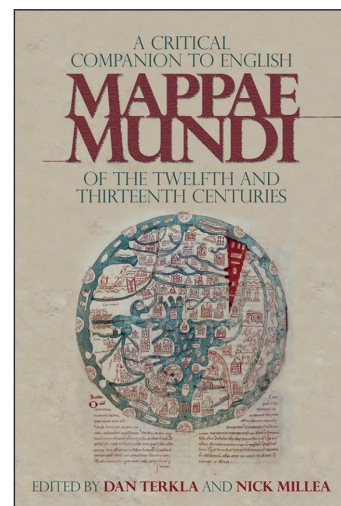
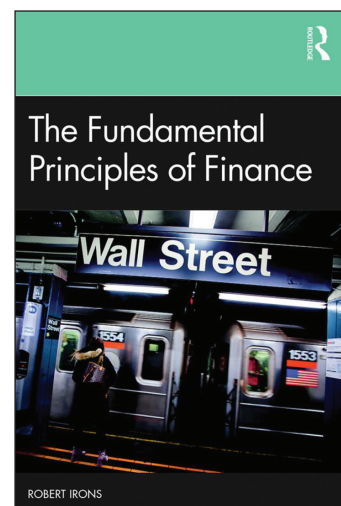
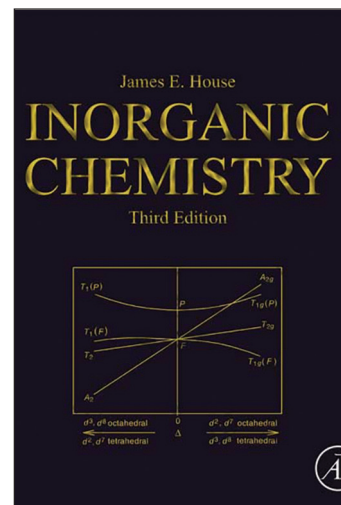
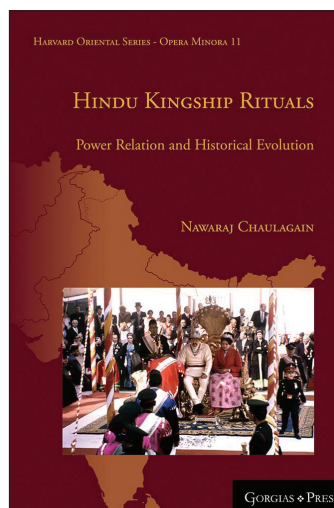
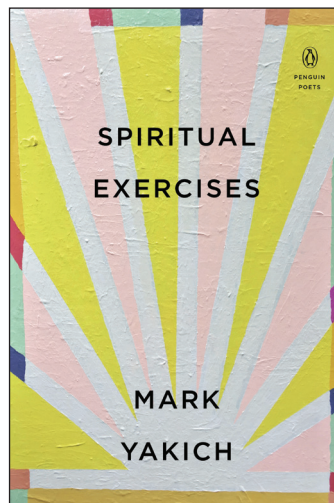
The intersection of Hindu religion and politics is considered in *Hindu Kingship Rituals: Power Relation and Historical Evolution*, written by Illinois Wesleyan Assistant Professor of Religious Studies **Nawaraj Chaulagain** and published as part of Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora-11 by Gorgias Press. The monograph is available at the Gorgias Press website.

The third edition of *Inorganic Chemistry*, a senior-level text by Illinois Wesleyan Adjunct Professor of Chemistry and Scholar in Residence **James E. House**, has been published by Academic Press, a division of Elsevier Science. The first edition was published in 2008, the second in 2013, and a translation of the book has also been published in Japanese.

*The Fundamental Principles of Finance*, a textbook written by IWU Associate Professor of Finance **Robert Irons**, offers a new and innovative approach to financial theory. It was published by Routledge Publishing in August 2019. The textbook introduces three fundamental principles of finance that flow throughout the theoretical material covered in most corporate finance textbooks. *The Fundamental Principles of Finance* was later selected for Spanish translation and publication.

Emeritus Professor of English **Dan Terkla** and Nick Millea, maps librarian at the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library, edited and contributed to *A Critical Companion to English Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, a work examining the seven most significant English maps of the world from the time known as *mappae mundi*. Published by Boydell Press, the book is the first collection devoted to the important group of maps and makes use of current digital and spectral technologies to flesh out their historical context, creation and uses. The book was supported in part by funds from Illinois Wesleyan's Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant, and editorial assistance was provided by English major **Jon Recchia '20**. It is available at [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com).

## Authors and the Arts



All submitted content received by Feb. 3, 2020. Submissions may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.





## ART

Artwork from **Dennis Kleidon '66** was featured in a number of galleries in recent months: the WHAM West Gallery in Phoenix in November 2019; Gallery Andrea in Scottsdale, Arizona, in December 2019; the Miami Beach Art Now Show in December 2019; the Los Angeles Modern and Contemporary Art Show in January 2020; Art Fair 14C in Jersey City, New Jersey, in February 2020; and the Art on Paper Show in New York City in March 2020. Dennis' work will also be shown throughout the summer at the Walter Wickiser Gallery in New York City.

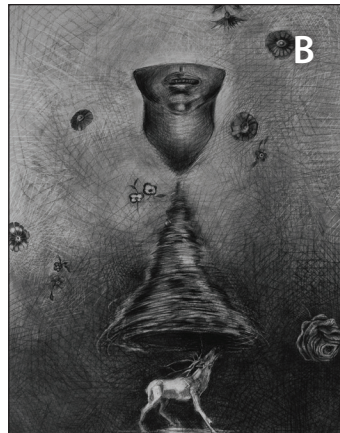
**Greg Billingsley '94** (A) was welcomed to MacMurray College for a reception and gallery talk to discuss his art showcase, *Nigredo*, on Dec. 5, 2019, at the Applebee Gallery in the Putnam/Springer Center, in Jacksonville, Illinois.

The works of five faculty members (B) were on display Sept. 3 through Oct. 17, 2019, as part of the Faculty Biennial at The Merwin Gallery. The show featured work from faculty members **Connie Estep**, **Mark Genrich '83**, **Claire Hedden**, **Joshua Lowe** and **Carmen Lozar**. Showcased alongside the Faculty Biennial, in the Wakeley Gallery, was the work of Emeritus Professor **Timothy Garvey**. A public reception was held for both exhibitions on Oct. 5, 2019, in conjunction with Homecoming festivities.

Illinois Wesleyan Assistant Professor **Joshua Lowe** was selected to receive an Award of Excellence from *Communication Arts*, an international creative competition, and is currently featured in the publication's 2020 typography annual. Joshua was also a featured artist in *Beyond Pedagogy*, an exhibit hosted by Prairie State College's Christopher Art Gallery, Jan. 2-30, 2020, in Chicago Heights, Illinois, which featured pieces by art faculty from Illinois colleges and universities.

## TV & FILM

**Lindsey Fitzharris '04** (below) will host and star in *The Curious Life and Death of...*, a new series on the Smithsonian Channel premiering in 2020. The show will follow Lindsey as she combines forensic science and investigation to tackle a death shrouded in mystery in each hour-long episode. Lindsey is a bestselling author and medical historian who authored the award-winning *The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine*.







PHOTO/KELLY LEWIS

Andy Kreiss '86 (left) and Russ Konstans '88 (center)

## MUSIC & PERFORMANCES

**Mary Selk '43**, retired Bloomington (Ill.) High School Choral Music Director, presented a program of BHS Alumni Chorus members on Oct. 5, 2019, at Westminster Village, a Bloomington retirement community. Mary directed the first and last numbers of the program. One of her former students, **John Waddell '63**, sang three solos.

**Bob Riseling '59** participated in a guest artist recital for clarinets at Western University in London, Ontario, on Nov. 21, 2019. Bob performed in three chamber works, and three of the works included in the program were written for him. Bob was later invited to Arizona State University in December 2019, where he discussed commissioning of new works from composers with doctoral clarinet candidates. He also provided a master class for clarinet students and performed *Motor City Memoir* by Alan Torok, complete with video representations of 1960s Detroit, as part of the visit.

Acclaimed opera vocalist **Zelotes Edmund Toliver '70** performed a concert of African American spirituals at the Cinema Arts Centre in Huntington, New York, on Feb. 23, 2020.

**Jim Barnett '82** directs the Senior Songsters of Kirksville, Missouri, who performed a Christmas concert tour, consisting of six performances in the Kirksville area in December 2019. Jim and his wife Pam, who is a member of the group, were featured in a Q&A in the *Kirksville Daily Express* in November 2019.

Illinois Wesleyan School of Theatre Arts alumni **Andy Kreiss '86** and **Russ Konstans '88** (above) returned to Maples Repertory in Macon, Missouri, to reprise their roles in *Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and then some)* in December 2019. Andy and Russ first performed in the production, which follows three actors in a quest to tell every Christmas story ever told, 10 years ago on the Maples Rep stage. Andy is Illinois Wesleyan's director of marketing. Russ is a communication and technology instructor at Byron (Ill.) Middle School.

The Chicago Composers Orchestra premiered a piece for soprano and full orchestra, written by composer **Eric Malmquist '07**, with **Ariana Strahl '07** as the featured soloist, on Oct. 26, 2019. The Chicago Composers Orchestra was founded by **Brian Baxter '07**, now executive director of the Quad Cities Symphony, and is currently celebrating its 10th season.

**Bryonha Marie Parham '07** was featured as Mayor of Bikini Bottom as part of the ensemble of *The SpongeBob Musical: Live On Stage!*, filmed for TV in front of a live theater audience, and airing on Nickelodeon in December 2019.

**Kate Tombaugh '07** and IWU adjunct instructors **Nancy Pounds** and **Laurel Beard** performed in *Messiah*, on Dec. 15, 2019, at St. Paul's Church in Streator, Illinois.



Kenny Tran '17

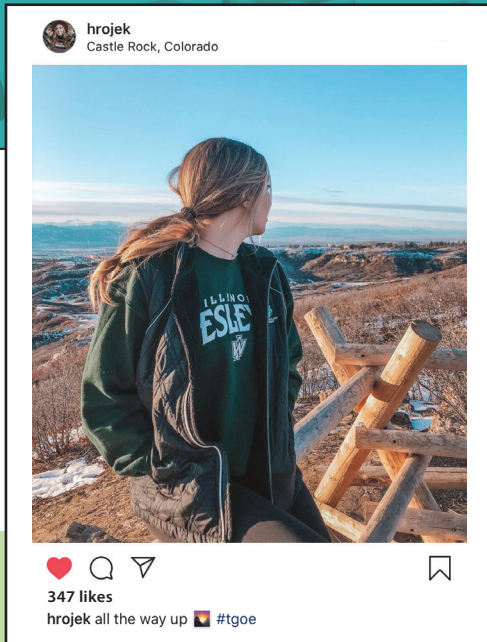
**Kenny Tran '17** starred in the U.S. premiere production of *Maybe Happy Ending*, Jan. 21 through Feb. 16, 2020, at Alliance Theatre, in Atlanta. Winner of six Korean musical awards and the Richard Rodgers Production Award, *Maybe Happy Ending* made its English-language debut with Kenny playing the role of Oliver. Kenny's previous credits include *Vietgone* at American Stage Theatre; *Men With Money* and *Christmas Canteen 2018* at the Aurora Theatre; *Legally Blonde* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the Thingamajig Theatre Company; and *The Little Mermaid* at the Serenbe Playhouse.

**Jacob Taitel '18**, a graduate student at the University of Michigan, coordinated a workshop at the University of Michigan, Jan. 11-12, 2020, where he applied for and received a grant to bring Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Theatre Arts **Nancy Loitz** to teach an introductory workshop on the Alba method of emotional induction. Jacob also returned to IWU on Feb. 9, 2020, to perform an alumni recital.

Professor of Music **David Vayo** recently attended two premieres of his musical compositions. On Oct. 18, 2019, in Houston, Shawn Head and Daron Kirsch performed *Mirroring* for shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) and cello. Additional performances of *Mirroring* took place on Nov. 1 and Nov. 22, 2019. The premiere of *Songs of Ourselves* for baritone voice, two trombones, two percussionists and piano, sung by **James Martin '92**, a professor of voice at Dickinson College, took place on Oct. 27, 2019, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. *Songs of Ourselves* features three poems written specifically for the project by Ohio's first poet laureate, Amit Majmudar.



# #IllinoisWesleyan SOCIAL LIGHTS



We are watching for your  
#IWUTitanPride posts on  
social media, so be sure to  
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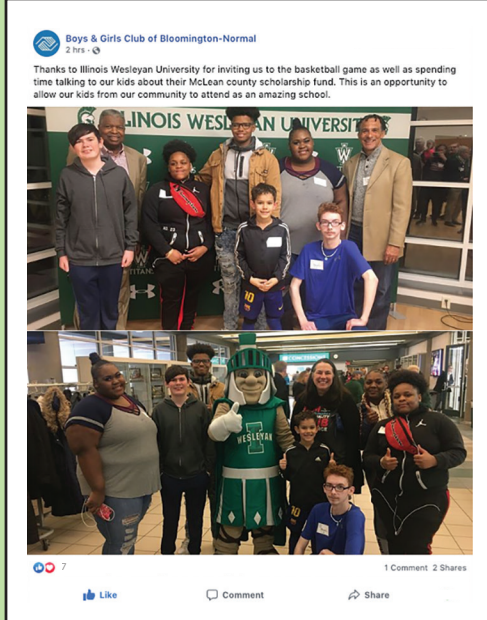


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## #IllinoisWesleyan Social Lights





# PRESIDENT FOR A DAY

**President S. Georgia Nugent** swapped places with **Jack McKermitt '20** as part of Illinois Wesleyan's inaugural "President for a Day" event, held on President's Day, on Feb. 17, 2020. President Nugent attended McKermitt's classes, while he handled her schedule for the day, which included meetings with members of the cabinet and phone calls with the board chair and mayor.



(Above) McKermitt's first meeting of the day is with Illinois Wesleyan Vice President for Business and Finance **Matt Bierman**.



(Above) McKermitt's busy day continues with a phone conversation with Chair of the Board of Trustees **Timothy J. Szerlong '74**.



(Above) McKermitt met with IWU Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students **Karla Carney-Hall**.



(Above) McKermitt introduces himself to IWU Vice President for Advancement **Steve Seibring '81** prior to their meeting in the President's Office.





(Above) President Nugent and McKermitt share a laugh before trading roles for the day when she presents him with his lunch: a can of tuna. Nugent tells McKermitt it is something she would normally eat for lunch on a weekday.



(Above) Nugent speaks with Associate Professor of English **Molly Robey** after attending her ENG139 class "Freaks!" which explores the representation of physical, psychological and social abnormality in fiction and film.



(Above) Nugent asks a question during one of her classes.



(Above) Nugent makes her lunch selection at the Bertholf Commons. (Right) Nugent laughs while conversing with students over lunch.



(Above) Nugent and classmate **Brianna Fogo '21** encourage each other during their PEC122Y volleyball class.





# MANOR OF LEARNING

Story by MATT WING

Illinois Wesleyan Entrepreneur in Residence **Marc Talluto '94** provides students with experiential learning opportunities through internships that benefit IWU's Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship program.

**M**arc Talluto '94 comes from a family of teachers. His parents are teachers. His siblings are teachers. Their spouses are teachers.

But, alas, Talluto did not choose that career path. Instead, he is a self-described “serial entrepreneur,” best known for founding and building the information technology service management consulting company Fruition Partners. He is also an adviser, consultant, board member and investor in a number of tech companies, startups and real-estate ventures.

Talluto keeps plenty busy, but teaching is still in his DNA.

As such, he has remained con-

nected to his alma mater in myriad ways. He currently serves on Illinois Wesleyan's Board of Trustees and previously served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. He sponsors scholarships. He established IWU's Entrepreneurship Fellowship, which twice a year awards a student (or student group) a grant of \$5,000 to pursue an entrepreneurial vision.

Talluto additionally serves as Illinois Wesleyan's “entrepreneur in residence,” where his expertise is an asset to IWU's Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship program. For students thinking of starting a business or investing in a startup, Talluto



is an unparalleled resource. Many have gleaned knowledge from him while enrolled in the upper-level DTE courses he has co-taught the past four semesters.

But the newest — and perhaps most interesting — way that Talluto has given back to his alma mater is through an initiative that could only have been imagined by someone with his entrepreneurial spirit.

At the outset of his term as IWU's entrepreneur in residence, Talluto pondered the idea of a student-run business. He considered many options: a bakery, coffee shop, pizza place, food truck, a franchise of some sort. But he admittedly knew nothing about food service.

Then came the light-bulb moment.

"I know real estate, and Airbnb is a proven platform," he said. "That was the genesis of this."

Talluto's idea was to bring together a group of students and have them run a local residential property as an Airbnb — short-term lodging booked online, similar to Vrbo and HomeAway — while handling all

aspects of managing the property. Student interns would, under his guidance, manage all facets of running the Airbnb as a business: reservations, maintenance, cleaning, marketing, customer service. They would do it all.

And then the kicker: revenue generated from rentals would be funneled back into Illinois Wesleyan's DTE program.

"Students are getting great expe-

**"Every time I work with students, I'm always impressed. I give them guidance, but they know what needs to get done."**

— MARC TALLUTO '94

riences in class, hearing about entrepreneurship and starting businesses, but it's not actually doing it. That's a big difference," Talluto said. "We have some classes where students try to build a business, but building a startup takes longer than four months, and I liked the challenge of creating a student-run business."

The concept of a business that

quickly became known as "Wesleyan Manor" was born. A plan was devised. Recruited students were given their charges.

The first assignment: find a house.

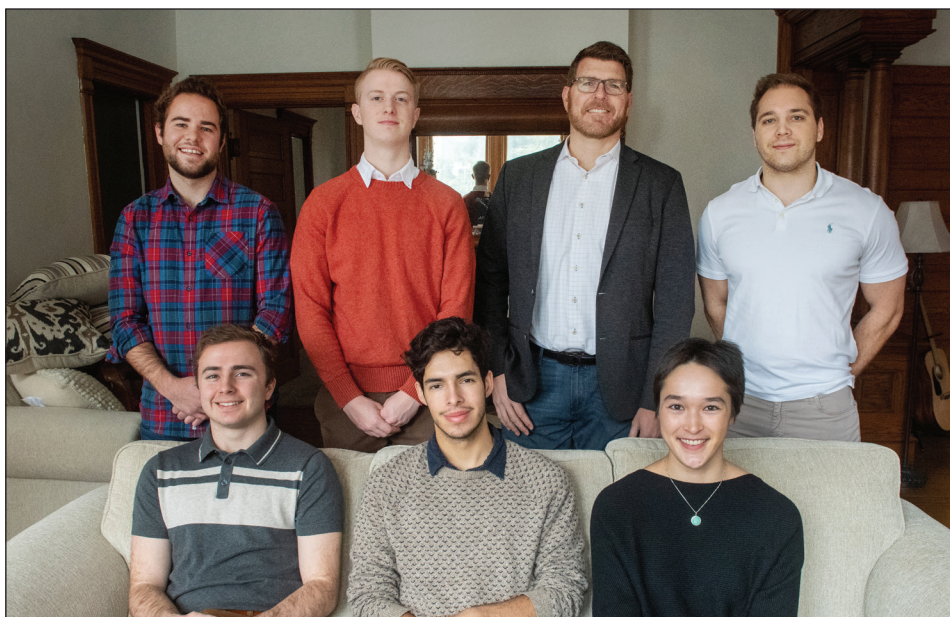
"When I learned it was going to be an Airbnb for students to run, I was so on board with it," said Flower Edington '20, a DTE major and one of the first student interns to work on the project. "When I heard that we were going to be in charge of finding

the house and coming up with what it would provide for guests, it was just so exciting that we would be in charge of it all."

The group did its homework. Student interns explored Bloomington-Normal real estate listings and surveyed locations, conducted market research and examined Airbnb analytics. The students eventually pitched to Talluto a historic home near both Illinois Wesleyan and downtown Bloomington. He was sold.

But purchasing the property was just the first step. The home at 1007 East Jefferson Street, once honored with the prestigious Gift to the Street Award by the Old House Society of Bloomington-Normal, was in need of some attention. The house built just seven years after the conclusion of the American Civil War required more than a few upgrades and repairs to match its stately title.

"When I had the opportunity to visit the home before I signed on, I was just blown away," said Rowan Hanold '20, this year's student project manager. "But there was definitely some work to be done."



(Above) Marc Talluto '94 poses with past and present student interns at Wesleyan Manor. (Opposite page) Talluto works with Illinois Wesleyan Instructor and Director of DTE Tara Gerstner '01 and students in an upper-level DTE course he co-teaches.



Students led the efforts. Getting the six-bedroom, five-bathroom home ready for guests presented the group with a daunting to-do list. But, utilizing strengths of the group's individual members, tasks were slowly and methodically checked off. Flooring was replaced. Walls were painted. Landscaping was revived.

"This internship was different because the students took initiative. We had ideas. We had plans. We took care of everything," said Mateo Grajales '21, a business administration and psychology double major who served a May Term internship last year. "It wasn't that we were given tasks or had to do everything we were told. If you wanted to improve something, you did it."

To make the space livable, the house needed beds and furniture. The kitchen needed plates and bowls and utensils. The bathrooms needed soap and shampoo and towels. The house needed some basic technology (televisions, WiFi) and some of the more advanced variety (automatic locking doors, keypad entry).



(Above) Talluto and **Rowan Hanold '20** discuss a recent upgrade at Wesleyan Manor in January 2020.

After the exhaustive process of making the home functional, decorating it provided a much-needed outlet for creativity. Students incorporated a piano and guitar into a music-themed room, complete with a record player and selection of albums. Upstairs is a game room with a dartboard and foosball table.

"They knew what needed to be done here more than I did," Talluto said of the interns. "They are constantly coming up with things to fix or ways to improve."

By late 2019, the house was ready for its first guests.

The first to stay at Wesleyan Manor was a group of IWU soccer parents in town for a game. A review posted to Airbnb by a member of the group included words like "fabulous" and "sensational." And the group enjoyed their stay enough that when the soccer team held its end-of-the-year banquet a couple months later, it sought its lodging again at Wesleyan Manor.

Other guests have had positive experiences and posted similar glowing reviews. But the early success did not come without hard work, dutiful maintenance and a few emergency fixes.

There was the time a window broke upstairs. Another time the heat went out. Over winter break, Hanold got a call from guests informing him the garbage disposal was broken. Another time, a group of students courageously replaced a leaky toilet.

"It was something we had never done before," Hanold said. "It was pretty gross, but we ended up bonding over it, and we installed the new toilet and everything works fine now."

Those are precisely the challenges Talluto had envisioned students grappling with as he hatched the idea to operate an Airbnb.

"I couldn't even make up all the experiences these students have had," he said. "Whether they're dealing with contractors or vendors, dealing with neighbors or customers, dealing with Airbnb — all of those things — I think it's been a tremendously valuable experience for them."

Word of Wesleyan Manor has spread through the Illinois Wesleyan community — and not just among



(Above) Airbnb rentals of Wesleyan Manor, located at 1007 East Jefferson Street in Bloomington, began in late 2019. (Inset) The home was presented the Gift to the Street Award by the Old House Society of Bloomington-Normal in 1992.

potential guests. Talluto has been contacted by friends and fellow alums wanting to get involved in other ways. One returned to Bloomington-Normal last year to help fix the roof and make some general repairs. Others have offered similar assistance.

An open house in February introduced more members of the IWU community to Wesleyan Manor, and advance rentals are coming

**“Marc is probably the most interesting mentor I’ve ever had. He’s one of those people who likes to have you learn from your own mistakes, but he’ll also try to nudge you in the right direction.”**

— BAILEY MCPHERSON '19

in every day. Commencement and Homecoming weekends are booked, as are most weekends this spring and summer.

“It’s been great and by far exceeded my expectations,” Talluto said of the early success. “We have bookings out for months in advance because people are looking at soccer tournaments, volleyball tournaments, Commencement, Homecoming. We have dates booked out for the next 10 months.”

Talluto has been pleased with the early returns and the support it will provide to the DTE program (although many interns are DTE majors, internships are open to all students). There has already been discussion about expanding the operation and potentially managing more properties.

But, perhaps above all else, Talluto is pleased with the students he works alongside.

“Every time I work with students, I’m always impressed,” he said. “I give them guidance, but they know what needs to get done. They’re on top of it. They’re ahead of it. They take care of things before I even think of them.”

The students, though, are equally impressed by Talluto.

“Marc is probably the most interesting mentor I’ve ever had,” said Bailey McPherson '19, one of the first student interns to work at Wesleyan Manor, who now works for a Talluto-backed realty management firm in Chicago. “He’s one of those people who likes to have you learn from your own mistakes, but he’ll also try to

nudge you in the right direction.”

Illinois Wesleyan students taking part in the Airbnb internship are getting experiences extending far beyond the run-of-the-mill internships bemoaned by Talluto, wherein eager learners are all too often assigned menial tasks like making copies or fetching coffee.

“I like to think that these are very unique experiences,” said Talluto,

who doesn’t hesitate to answer affirmatively when asked if he would have benefitted from such an internship. “I don’t know how many universities have ongoing, operating businesses that students themselves pretty much run on their own.”

Talluto, after all, comes from a family of educators. A strong belief in the power of education has been firmly instilled in him. He has a special affinity for the kind of hands-on, experiential learning that can be gained through working at a business like Wesleyan Manor.

As someone passionate about education, he is increasingly motivated to share the knowledge he has gained from a highly successful career.

And he does it with an eye toward the future.

“Learning and education have always been a strong part of my personal foundation, so I see the university experience and ambition as ways to foster the next generation of leaders,” Talluto said. “I’m hoping that, through this experience, other alumni will see the University as a way to channel what they’ve learned over the years back into the next generation.” ♦



(Above) Talluto speaks with guests at an open house at Wesleyan Manor in February 2020.



A personal loss inspired **Chad McGehee '03** to broaden his horizons and led to his discovery of meditation. Now he helps others use meditation to reach personal well-being and performance goals.

Chad McGehee '03 never intended to be *that guy*.

He knew the stereotypes about meditation. He sensed the skepticism. He could feel eyes rolling before he even said it.

Heck, sometimes even *he* wanted to roll *his* eyes.

"There's an old joke: how do you know if someone is a meditator?" McGehee asks, rhetorically. "Just wait five minutes and they will tell you!"

McGehee never intended for meditation to be such a big part of his life. It just happened. He tried it and found that it worked. He offered tips to others he thought could benefit. That's all. A career in meditation was never a consideration.

But that's just what happened. A school teacher for eight years,

McGehee began integrating meditation and mindfulness sessions into work with students and teachers. Then came an opportunity with The Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a research group with the mission of promoting well-being and relieving suffering through a scientific understanding of the mind. The group sought to accomplish its mission through research and implementation methods. Meditation was one such method.

"It was an unbelievable opportunity," McGehee said. "And it's been a dream job."

McGehee is now a Learning and Program Development Manager (he prefers the simpler title of "meditation teacher") for Healthy Minds Innovations, the nonprofit arm of

# TRAINING THE MIND

Story by MATT WING



The Center for Healthy Minds. His group takes the work done by the Center's research team and applies it to help people reach personal well-being and performance goals.

McGehee's particular expertise is working with individuals performing in high-stress environments. Using the practices he initially learned to help himself, McGehee now delivers mindfulness and meditation techniques to hundreds of individuals each year. He works closely with law enforcement officials, corporate executives, and a growing number of UW-Madison student-athletes, as the athletics community has begun to see the benefits of meditation.

"I never intended to be a meditation teacher," McGehee said of his career. "I just wanted to be Chad and let this practice support me in being a happy and healthy person."

McGehee didn't seek out meditation. It kind of found him ... albeit in a roundabout way.

The unexpected death of his father, during his junior year of high

**"I never intended to be a meditation teacher. I just wanted to be Chad and let this practice support me in being a happy and healthy person."**

— CHAD McGEHEE '03

school, left a 17-year-old McGehee — "not a kid, but not yet an adult," he explains — to process some difficult emotions.

"I think one of the things that comes from suffering — and I understand this now from a lot of people — is it illuminates some of the deeper questions of what it means to be alive and live a good life," McGehee said. "So those were some of the questions I was trying to answer when I came to Illinois Wesleyan."



(Above) Chad McGehee '03 leads a meditation session at The Center for Healthy Minds in February 2020.

McGehee sought to broaden his horizons at IWU. A self-described "small town kid" with admittedly limited experiences, McGehee enrolled in classes in unfamiliar subjects. He was inspired by President Minor Myers jr. and "the joy he had for learning, simply for learning's sake." He was fascinated by a physics professor's interest in poetry. He was encouraged by a psychology professor to write. He was

Eastern contemplative traditions while a student at IWU, though it wasn't until a couple years after his graduation that he sought out a local meditation group.

That decision changed his life. "I was hooked," McGehee admits.

"It was meditation that really gave me not only the skills but a framework to understand my own mind, how my mind operates, and how the mind can be a source of suffering or not," he continued. "At that point, my suffering was different. Years had passed since I lost my dad, and it was beyond dealing with his death.

"It was just being a human and dealing with all the layers of being a human."

Meditation provided McGehee a powerful tool. Whether it was a long day at work or a testy exchange or simply the feeling of being overwhelmed, meditation was a way for McGehee to recover and move on from stressful situations as well as a way to connect more meaningfully with all the good in his life.

He sensed similar stress and frustration in others. Actually, he sensed it in nearly everyone he interacted with. He especially

moved by an assistant football coach who one day sensed that one of the team's student managers was "just a little off" and took the time to make sure McGehee was OK.

McGehee's IWU experience was equal parts education, self-discovery and personal growth. He left campus with a bachelor's degree in Hispanic studies, but much more, including a lifelong quest for knowledge and meaning.

He was first introduced to



## TRAINING THE MIND

sensed it while teaching, from both students and fellow teachers.

Despite apprehension to discuss his background in meditation — he wasn't ready to publicly endorse the power of the practice — McGehee shared techniques with a few trusted colleagues. He later did the same with students he thought might benefit. Eventually, he incorporated meditation principles into his teaching of students and the professional development he delivered to teachers.

"It was after those initial experiences that were benefiting kids and colleagues that I started to get even more motivated," McGehee said. "I wanted to learn more so that others could continue to benefit from these practices."

McGehee immersed himself deeper into the meditation community. Instead of one session a week, he did two. Then three. Then almost every day. He constantly sought to learn more by reading about and researching meditation methods. He asked questions. He tried new techniques.

When his sister-in-law, an academic adviser at Kent State University, told him the women's field hockey team she worked with might benefit from what he was doing, McGehee led sessions over Skype. Later, when his school district hosted a screening of a documentary produced by The Center for Healthy Minds, McGehee was asked to begin the event with a brief meditation practice.

McGehee and a Center for Healthy Minds representative struck up a conversation after the screening. "We were just nerding out about mindfulness and education," McGehee recalls. "But then she said they had two positions they were going to be posting, and that I would be a great candidate."

McGehee could hardly contain



(Above) McGehee provides meditation training to a variety of groups, including law enforcement officials, student-athletes and corporate officials.

himself. "I honestly had to use all my skills of self-regulation to not jump up and down and lose my mind at that moment," he remembers, laughing. An interview was scheduled. The job was offered.

"It was an unparalleled opportunity to dive into my passion, which is just so rare," McGehee said. "I knew I had to take it."

The job has allowed McGehee to fully dedicate himself to medita-

tions can be anything: concentration, focus, resilience, connecting to others in a healthy way. There are so many things we can train the mind for, and most of us don't realize we have this ability."

The training McGehee provides varies by the groups and their goals. He conducts an eight-week mindfulness-based training program for law enforcement officials, combining didactic content with

**"At this point, my life is so deeply intertwined with meditation, it's impossible to imagine life without it."**

— CHAD MCGEEHEE '03

tion, and the work has continually evolved. His role with The Center for Healthy Minds was initially to study the impact of mindfulness and meditation training in education and law enforcement. When Healthy Minds Innovations was later established to take the Center's research out into the world, his focus shifted to delivering that training, primarily to groups of individuals operating in high-stress environments.

"Meditation gives us the opportunity to train our minds and develop qualities that we're interested in," McGehee explained. "Those quali-

ties can be anything: concentration, focus, resilience, connecting to others in a healthy way. There are so many things we can train the mind for, and most of us don't realize we have this ability."

The training McGehee provides varies by the groups and their goals. He conducts an eight-week mindfulness-based training program for law enforcement officials, combining didactic content with

But the client demanding most of McGehee's time these days is the UW-Madison athletic department.

McGehee's connection with the

department started with a simple request from former All-American linebacker Chris Borland, who famously retired from the National Football League after just one season, in which he earned All-Rookie Team honors, citing head trauma concerns. Borland had returned to Madison wanting to do something to benefit former players.

A pilot program to teach meditation to 17 former NFL players was launched, though McGehee knew there would be skepticism.

"We had these hard-nosed, rugged individuals, and none of us knew if they'd do it or if they'd just think it was some hippy-dippy, out-there stuff," McGehee said. "But by the way we delivered it, we found they were receptive and really benefited from the training."

"Some of the guys were connected with UW athletics — some of them were on staff — and they said, 'Hey, we think this could help our student-athletes.'"

McGehee's involvement with UW athletics started with limited interactions with the men's basketball team. It has grown exponentially since. McGehee has become as familiar to some UW student-athletes as their own coaches. He often travels with teams to away contests; he accompanied the football team this year to the Rose Bowl and joined the women's volleyball team when it competed in the NCAA Tournament's Final Four. McGehee's success with the basketball, football and volleyball teams has led to more work, specifically with the golf, tennis, softball and wrestling teams. He's also provided training to athletics administration and support staff.

McGehee's work has been recognized far beyond the UW campus. He was profiled in the *Wisconsin*

*State Journal* as part of the newspaper's "Know Your Madisonian" series. He was featured in an ESPN *College GameDay* segment highlighting his work with record-setting running back Jonathan Taylor, a likely early selection in the 2020 NFL draft.

UW All-American volleyball player Dana Rettke, a strong contender to represent Team USA at the 2020 Summer Olympics, advocated for mindfulness and meditation training during the national broadcast of an NCAA Tournament



(Above) McGehee talks with University of Wisconsin men's basketball player Brad Davison during a recent practice.

match. During the Badgers' Final Four match against Baylor, she reflected on her mindfulness training, saying, "I have a growth mindset in a match. If I make mistakes, I grow from it and move on."

And moving on is one of the many things McGehee can help with. Negative events are inevitable in athletics — a missed serve, a fumble, a turnover — but being able to quickly recover from those negative events can provide student-athletes with an advantage.

"If we can train our minds to let go of those thoughts and get back in

the present moment, then we're not lost in thoughts of the past or the future," McGehee said. "We'll have recovered more quickly from that negative event and respond to what's actually happening in front of us."

McGehee's role with UW athletics continues to grow, and he doesn't expect that to change anytime soon. He likens the growing acceptance of mindfulness and meditation training to the boom in strength and conditioning that has taken place over the past half century.

"The implementation of it is very much still in development," McGehee said. "Right now there are a few people doing it. There's a little science pointing to the benefits of it. But I think we'll look back in 10 or 20 years, and training the mind in this way will be just as commonplace as training the body."

"I look forward to being in the middle of that."

He also looks forward to working with new groups and future generations, and providing them with the meditation skills that have had such a positive impact on him, personally.

"I find it deeply rewarding and satisfying," he said. "I think it's giving folks skills that can support them in living happier, healthier, more connected, more purposeful lives, and I'm deeply fortunate to be able to do this."

Why is it all so important to McGehee? He's not quite the "wait-five-minutes-and-he'll-tell-you" guy from the old joke ... but he will tell you if you want to know.

"Meditation has helped me in every fathomable way. It continues to help me as a husband, as a father, as a member of the community," McGehee said. "At this point, my life is so deeply intertwined with meditation, it's impossible to imagine life without it." ❖





# MENTORING MATTERS

Story by MATT WING

Influential professors fostered the freedom to explore unexpected interests for **Alison Sweeney '01**, who now does the same for her students at Yale University.

Alison Sweeney '01 arrived on Illinois Wesleyan's campus in the Fall of 1997 knowing one thing for certain: she wanted to do a lot of things.

The two-hour drive down Interstate 39 from her hometown of Rockford, Illinois, gave Sweeney one last opportunity to make a mental checklist of all the endeavors she planned to undertake as an eager college freshman.

"I had a lot of interests in high school that I wanted to keep pursuing," she explained.

Sweeney ultimately chose IWU for the freedom to do just that. Some gentle coaxing from her parents,

alums Dennis '73 and Sue (Peters) Sweeney '75, didn't hurt. But passions for biology and Russian language and playing the trumpet — and the desire to delve into previously unexplored areas — guided her decision more than anything else.

"I was really excited about the opportunities at Wesleyan to pursue a lot of interests with some seriousness all at once," she said.

Sweeney found what she was looking for at IWU and, thanks to mentoring from dedicated faculty members, her eyes were opened to new interests and fascinating areas of study.

Gabe Spalding, B. Charles and



Joyce Eichhorn Ames Professor of Physics, proved to be an important ally for Sweeney. When a burgeoning interest in physics sometimes felt at odds with a declared biology major (Sweeney was a double major in both biology and Russian), Spalding offered encouragement and advice on how to combine her interests. “I remember having some really good conversations with him,” she said.

“I don’t know if students at some of those research schools receive as strong a grounding in the fundamentals in the field. I think that is what Illinois Wesleyan really offered me ...”

— ALISON SWEENEY ’01

Marina Balina, recently retired Isaac Funk Professor of German and Russian, helped Sweeney land a spot in IWU’s study abroad program that sent Sweeney to Bratislava, Slovakia, for a semester. “I couldn’t have done that without Dr. Balina’s support,” Sweeney said.

Biology professors Will Jaeckle, Loni Walker and the late Susie Balser also played important roles during Sweeney’s time at IWU.

And an experience gained between her sophomore and junior years at IWU provided a breakthrough moment for Sweeney.

Encouraged by Balser, her research adviser at IWU, Sweeney applied for the National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates program and was selected for a summer internship at Stony Brook University. The program offered Sweeney the opportunity to research at a top-flight institution, alongside a distinguished professor sharing her research interest in invertebrate physiology.

She was greeted with some bad news, however, upon her arrival that summer at Stony Brook.

“My intended mentor had gone to Sweden for research and they had to scrounge up somebody else for me,” Sweeney recalled. “The guy was a biogeochemist and, at first, I was like, ‘What am I going to do? This is a disaster! I don’t know anything about biogeochemistry!’”

But Sweeney found her new

an unexpected shift in the focus of her research without blinking.

“Although it wasn’t anything like what I thought I was going to be doing, I had a real knack and love for the process of research in and of itself,” Sweeney said. “It ended up being a great experience, being thrown into this thing that I wasn’t initially interested in, and I found that the process of asking and answering a question through experiments and data was really exciting and satisfying.”

Sweeney finished her time at Illinois Wesleyan with a bachelor’s degree two years later. She graduated *magna cum laude* and with research honors for her study, “Morphology and Vascular Physiology of the Segmented Marine Worm, *Glycera dibranchiata*.” A Presidential Scholar and a charter member of IWU’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, Sweeney left IWU ready for the next chapter of her story.

Sweeney credits her IWU experience for helping her navigate a rigorous Ph.D. program at



(Above) Alison Sweeney ’01 (left), seen here through a dry-erase board, works with her research team at Yale University’s Sterling Chemistry Lab.



## MENTORING MATTERS

Duke University and six years of postdoctoral work at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Research interests born at IWU blossomed in those settings. At Duke, she pursued a doctorate in biology, even while her academic interest veered toward physics (once again, Spalding provided guidance). At UCSB, she published her first major research findings, detailing the biophysical mechanisms that underpin squid camouflage.

"I don't know if students at some of those research schools receive as strong a grounding in the fundamentals in the field. I think that is what Illinois Wesleyan really offered me, and I think that's really served me well in having a strong foundation to work from and being able to be flexible and creative," Sweeney said. "I started off as a generalist, rather than a specialist, leaving undergrad."

Sweeney earned a multitude of awards and grants and fellowships during her time at Duke and UCSB, all of which helped her eventually land her first professorship, at the University of Pennsylvania, in 2012

(a recommendation from Spalding, who put in a good word with Penn faculty members, only strengthened her candidacy).

The new role allowed Sweeney not only to lead a research group for the first time in her career, but to build it from the ground up,

**"You sort of watch (students) grow up and mature in science, and the process is just really fun and satisfying."**

— ALISON SWEENEY '01

selecting undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students to fill out the team's roster. The group studied the evolution of novel materials in nature, which provided an umbrella wide enough to cover Sweeney's many areas of interest. Studies included the self-assembly of squid eye lenses, giant clams' ability to turn sunlight into fuel, and the mechanism behind the dazzling array of shapes found in grains of pollen.

Sweeney is, and has always been, fascinated by the simple solutions

nature employs to thrive in a complex world; she's prone to phrases like "nature finds a way" and "nature figures it out." Whether it's self-assembly of squid lenses (which she compares to throwing a set of loose Legos in a paper bag, shaking it, and opening it to find a fully-assembled

Lego castle) or the way iridocytes and microalgae cells align in giant clams to concentrate sunlight in what can fairly be described as a natural solar panel, Sweeney constantly marvels at processes in nature that not even the world's leading engineers can replicate.

But Sweeney isn't the only one who wonders *what if*...

There's growing interest within the scientific community to determine if nature's solutions, perfected by evolution, can be used as blue-



PHOTOS/CYNTHIA BARNETT

**(Left)** Sweeney dives for giant clams on a research trip to Palau.

**(Above)** Sweeney's research shows that giant clams thrive because of a simple process, perfected by evolution.

prints for 21st century products and processes. Sweeney attended a conference in Switzerland last year focused on “biomaterials,” “bioinspiration” and “biomimicry” — all trending topics in the field.

“This notion that biology knows how to do really sophisticated things with really simple building blocks is a popular idea,” Sweeney explains. “I think where we are at, and I think what we are working toward as a field, is how do you formalize this and what is sort of the best algorithm for taking a notion of how biology works, or the principles of how biology works, and systematically translating those things into new things?”

“And I think we’re getting better at it.”

Sweeney took another step in her academic journey last summer when she moved from one Ivy League institution to another, joining the faculty at Yale University. The move was made, at least in part, to accommodate her marriage to a fellow professor (her husband is a chemist who also leads a research team). The couple had maintained what Sweeney termed an “Amtrak marriage” — she utters the phrase with what sounds like equal parts love and loathing — for three years.

Leaving Penn was difficult, Sweeney said, but it also afforded her an opportunity to do something new and exciting. She spent the Fall 2019 semester rebuilding her research group and getting acclimated to the academic environment at Yale. She’s teaching a large undergraduate course this spring and expects to be quite busy balancing her teaching schedule while rebooting her research group.

As the group’s leader, she’s perpetually trying to “stay in business” through dedicated grant-



(Above) Sweeney and members of her team conduct research at Yale’s Sterling Chemistry Lab.

writing and identification of other resources. An annual trip to the island country of Palau to study giant clams requires coordination and funding. Even more planning is needed when the group secures time aboard a National Science Foundation-owned research vessel that enables the group to collect and study deep-sea squid.

“We basically pack up the whole lab into a moving truck and take the truck to the ship,” Sweeney explained. “That ends up being a really intensive one- or two-week period where we work really long hours to get as much data and as many samples as we can in a really compressed time.”

The bulk of Sweeney’s time is spent working with students. She assigns work to eager undergraduate students thirsty for experience. She mentors graduate students, weaning them from supervised roles to independent work. She serves as a sounding board for her postdocs, some of whom go on to lead their own research groups.

“When I got my professorship, mentoring students was kind of the

big question mark. It’s the one part of the job that you know you are going to have to do, but you don’t have any real direct experience with it, and you don’t know what it’s going to be like,” Sweeney said. “But I have been beyond pleasantly surprised to find that it’s really the meat of the job and the most fun part of the job to have these really smart, talented early-20-somethings show up on your doorstep and want to do your work with you.

“You sort of watch them grow up and mature in science, and the process is just really fun and satisfying.”

Sweeney often sees younger versions of herself in the students she works alongside, especially when they pose interesting questions or suggest unique lines of inquiry.

And, in that moment, she tries to do for them what her many mentors did for her.

“A lot of it comes back to my experience at Illinois Wesleyan and being given a lot of freedom to explore my interests,” Sweeney says. “And those lessons I learned at IWU have served me well mentoring my own students.” ❖



# Alumni Update

NEWS, WORKS AND CELEBRATIONS OF IWU ALUMNI & FRIENDS

## 1961

**Emil Ludy** and his lifelong love of hockey were featured in *The Pantagraph* in January 2020. Emil helped Team USA's 80-and-over hockey team to a victory over Team Canada in the third annual Coupe Canada Cup 150 at Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, in October 2019. Emil, now 80 years old, still plays twice a week at the Bloomington (Ill.) Ice Center, and he was the second-youngest member of Team USA's 80-and-over squad.



Emil Ludy '61

## 1968

Los Angeles Dodgers Midwest Scouting Supervisor **Gary Nickels** was named Midwest Scout of the Year by Major League Baseball at its Winter Meetings in December 2019. Gary was previously inducted into the Midwest Scouts Association Hall of Fame and the Mid Atlantic Scouts Association Hall of Fame in 2009. He has been a baseball talent evaluator for 48 years, having served in the Philadelphia Phillies, Chicago Cubs, Baltimore Orioles, San Diego Padres and L.A. Dodgers organizations.



Gary Nickels '68

## 1969

**Karla (Dickinson) Barry** successfully defended her dissertation and earned a Ph.D. in organizational learning, performance and change, from Colorado State University, on Dec. 13, 2019. She previously earned a master's of applied communications degree from the University of Denver, where she has been an adjunct professor for several years. Karla currently consults with organizations on employee improvement interventions.

## 1971

Acclaimed actor **Frankie Faison** appeared on the cover of Theta Chi's quarterly magazine, *The Rattle*, this winter. The issue includes an extensive Q&A interview covering a range of topics, including his decisions to attend IWU and pledge Theta Chi.

## 1972

**Bill Lambrecht**, a Washington, D.C.-based investigative and political reporter, was named the inaugural visiting professional at the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland's Philip

Merrill College of Journalism in January 2020. Bill will assist with science and environmental investigative projects, taking advantage of expertise across the UMD campus, as part of the new role. He will work with Howard fellows in the master's program to produce at least one investigative project during the spring and summer of 2020. An award-winning journalist and author, Bill spent the majority of his career with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

IWU professor emeritus **Marcia Thomas** spoke at an event marking the 150th anniversary of John Wesley Powell's historic expedition, at Illinois State University's Horticulture Center, on Nov. 15, 2019.

## 1975

**Debbie Burt-Frazier** has been elevated to full-time professor in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Science at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, where she teaches academic and research writing and introduction to literary studies. Debbie also remains an adjunct faculty member at Wilberforce University, where she teaches English and communications.

## 1977

**Cindy (Cline) Bufford** was presented with the Georgia State Recognition Award at the Southeast Regional Conference of the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society, in Columbus, Georgia, on Oct. 5, 2019. The award was presented in recognition of her contribution, service, leadership and dedication to the advancement of WOC nursing. Cindy has been a WOC nurse at the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta University Medical Center, in Augusta, Georgia, for the past 20 years, and has worked there as a registered nurse for a total of 37 years.

**Jim Molinari** was inducted into the Bradley University Athletics Hall of Fame on Jan. 22, 2020. The former head coach of the Bradley men's basketball team is the program's all-time leader in Missouri Valley Conference coaching wins (110) and fourth in Bradley history in total wins (174). Jim, who has also served as head coach at Northern Illinois, Minnesota and Western Illinois, is currently an assistant at Oklahoma.

## 1978

**James Messmore**, a senior vice president and infrastructure market principal, recently celebrated 25 years of service at Hanson Professional Services Inc. James joined the company in 1995 and works at the Chicago regional office. He develops and implements programs to achieve profitable growth, oversees staff, and develops and maintains relationships with clients for the infrastructure market. He has been involved in a variety of transportation-related projects, including serv-

ing as principal-in-charge for the widening and reconstruction of a 22-mile section of Interstate 90 (also known as the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway) in Boone, Kane and McHenry counties, and of a 3.6-mile section of Cook County's South Tri-State Tollway, which involved the design of the Halsted Street interchange. Hanson is a national, employee-owned consulting firm providing engineering, planning and allied services.

## 1979

**David Darling** was selected as a Leading Lawyer for 2020 by the Leading Lawyers Advisory Board. A partner and shareholder in the law firm Stone & Johnson, Chartered, Dave was nominated by his peers to earn the distinction which recognizes less than 5% of all lawyers licensed to practice in Illinois. Dave is also a member of the Illinois Wesleyan Alumni Association Board of Directors and a member of the IWU Chicago Regional Board.

**Kathleen Murray**, president of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, since 2015, was renewed for another term, the college's board of trustees announced in December 2019. Kathleen will serve another five years in office, dating from July 1, 2020. Kathleen's presidency to date has been marked by the development and implementation of five strategic priorities (increasing access and affordability; enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion; innovating curriculum; connecting to life after Whitman; and celebrating location), and the construction of two campus buildings. Prior to her time at Whitman, Kathleen served as provost and dean of the faculty at Macalester College.

## 1981

**Mark Allen** is a music teacher at Kemper Elementary School, in Cortez, Colorado, celebrating



James Messmore '78



Kathleen Murray '79



Shaye Mandle '93



your news to *IWU Magazine*, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702, [iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu), or via our website, at [www.iwu.edu/magazine](http://www.iwu.edu/magazine).

his 38th year as a public school music, band and choir teacher. He has taught in Illinois (three years), Arizona (10 years), New Mexico (19 years) and Colorado (six years). Mark has directed both the Cottonwood (Ariz.) Community Band and the Four Corners Community Band, and is currently a member of the Cortez Public Arts Advisory Council.

**Bobby Moews** will be inducted into the Illinois High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame at the organization's annual coaches clinic on March 28, 2020. Bobby was head coach at Bloomington (Ill.) Central Catholic High School for 22 seasons, compiling a record of 155-73 with two state championships. A 1977 graduate of the school, he earned 10 letters as a student-athlete at Central Catholic.

## 1982

**Maureen (Flynn) Skerda** spoke at the November 2019 meeting of the Warren County (Pa.) Well Armed Woman chapter. Maureen is the president judge

of the 37th Judicial District on the Warren-Forest County (Pa.) Court of Common Pleas.

## 1983

**Peter Berg** was named director of the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations at Michigan State University, where he has been a professor for 21 years, in September 2019.

## 1989

**Eric Gardner** was awarded his second National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, which will provide \$60,000 to support a yearlong study of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a 19th century African American writer, orator and activist. NEH Fellowships are competitive awards granted to scholars pursuing research in history, literature, philosophy and other areas of the humanities. A professor of English at Saginaw Valley State University, Eric previously earned an NEH Fellowship in 2012-13.

**Jennie (Scott) Seeling** accepted a new position as sales direc-

tor for Legends in Concert, the longest-running show on the Las Vegas Strip, in December 2019. The new role will include oversight of all aspects of sales and assistance with day-to-day operations of the show.

## 1993

**Julie Brown-Haapapuro** has served as the head of human resources for PBS Distribution, in Arlington, Virginia, since 2018. Julie previously served in a variety of human resources leadership roles, most recently at MicroStrategy and Freddie Mac. She also serves as president of JBH Consulting, Inc., a human resources consulting service she founded in 2010.

**Shaye Mandle** recently took part in a panel discussion on the technological and economic renaissance taking place in Rochester, Minnesota, hosted by *Finance & Commerce*. Shaye has served as president and CEO of the Medical Alley Association since May 2014, overseeing a period of dramatic growth and transformation for the association. Shaye is a former recipient



of Illinois Wesleyan's Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

## 1995

**Colleen M. Kennedy** earned a Ph.D. in public policy and administration, with a specialization in terrorism, mediation and peace, from Walden University, on Aug. 11, 2019. Colleen's dissertation was titled "Evaluating U.S. Counterterrorism Policy on Domestic Terrorism Using the Global Terrorism Database." Colleen was inducted into the Golden Key International Honour Society in 2018. She is currently a visiting assistant professor of sociology and criminal justice at Rockford University, where she also serves as the coordinator of the peace and conflict studies minor.

**Laura Orvidas** became the CEO of Xmaps Inc., a digital mapping company for outdoorsmen and hunters, in 2018, after spending nearly 18 years as an executive at Amazon. Laura was featured in a *Wall Street Journal* story in November 2019, highlighting the many former Amazon employees who have ascended to leadership roles with other companies.

**Brian Sampias** joined Accel Entertainment as its financial controller in September 2019.

Accel is the largest slot machine operator in the United States and recently went public on the New York Stock Exchange. The move followed a 13-year career with BP where he most recently served as Director, Record to Report, Global Business Services Americas.

## 1996

**Mandy Leifheit** recently joined the board of Seattle Rep Theatre where she serves as co-chair of the younger patrons program committee, and serves on marketing and gala committees. Mandy's involvement with supporting the arts in Seattle started when she began volunteering with ArtsFund in 2016. ArtsFund is a nonprofit organization supporting the arts through leadership, advocacy and grant making. Mandy works as a strategic account executive at Microsoft in its advertising division. Mandy also serves as Illinois Wesleyan's Seattle Regional Alumni Committee president.

**Jason Richards**, a senior member of Willis Towers Watson's Retirement Management Group, was named to *Chief Investment Officer's* list of "2019 Knowledge Brokers," recognizing the world's most influential investment consultants. Jason, who joined Willis Towers Watson in 2002,

helps large-scale pension plan sponsors identify, assess, manage and monitor the impact of pension financial risk on their organizations. Willis Towers Watson is a leading global advisory, broking and solutions company.

### **Beth (McNair) Sondgeroth**

was named head of school at Cornerstone Christian Academy, an independent college preparatory school in Bloomington, Illinois, in December 2019. Beth will become head of school on July 1, 2020. She has served Cornerstone in a variety of roles in her 22-year tenure, including: pre-kindergarten and elementary music and Spanish teacher, fifth-grade instructor, junior and senior high Spanish and English teacher, academic dean, and Upper School principal.

**Chad Wills** organized Farmer City, Illinois' annual Christmas parade for the 25th-straight year in 2019. Chad took over the lead role during his senior year at Illinois Wesleyan. He has worked at COUNTRY Financial for the past 23 years, where he is currently manager of auto claims.

## 1997

Champaign (Ill.) County Assistant State's Attorney **Sarah (Anderson) Perry** is running for Piatt (Ill.) County State's

Attorney. Sarah has spent much of her career as a child advocate, representing minors in abuse and neglect cases. She served as a guardian ad litem in Cook County (Ill.) after finishing law school. She worked in private practice and as a county court appointed special advocate in San Diego before returning to her Piatt County hometown of Monticello, Illinois, in 2008. After several years as a stay-at-home mom, she returned to work in 2013 in the Champaign County State's Attorney office.

**Greg Watchinski** was inducted into the Decatur (Ill.) Public Schools Athletic Hall of Fame. A graduate of Stephen Decatur High School, Greg was a standout member of SDHS's football and track teams before competing for Illinois Wesleyan's football team.

## 1999

**Amanda (Sebolt) Hjerpe** was reelected as a trustee for the Winfield (Ill.) Public Library District in April 2019. She has served as a library trustee since 2016. Amanda has also been a foundation liaison for DuPage County Animal Services and DuPage Animal Friends in Wheaton, Illinois, since May 2019.

**Lisa Leali** was named Lake Bluff (Ill.) Elementary School District 65's next superintendent at a



Jason Richards '96



Lisa Leali '99



Ryan Jumper '00



Charlene Recio '02



**Michael Mayo '02, Sarah (Evans) Mayo '03 and family**

school board meeting on Dec. 19, 2019. Lisa, who is currently the chief education officer at Kenilworth (Ill.) School District 38, will assume the new role on July 1, 2020. She will oversee a K-8 district that serves 882 students in two schools in the suburban Chicago village. Prior to her work in Kenilworth, Lisa spent nearly 20 years as a teacher and administrator in Hawthorn School District 73 in Vernon Hills, Illinois.

## 2000

Madison County (Ill.) Associate Judge **Ryan Jumper** spoke to seventh- and eighth-grade members of the Student Athlete Leadership Team at Liberty Middle School in Edwardsville, Illinois, on Nov. 18, 2019. Ryan used photos and newspaper clips to take students on a journey of his time as a student and athlete growing up in Edwardsville. Ryan was appointed associate judge in the Third Judicial Circuit in March 2018 and is currently assigned to the Family Division and Bond County Civil Division. He was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2006.

## 2001

**Erik Hjerpe** accepted a new role with his employer, Tree-

House Foods, as senior director of information technology and principal digital architect. Erik will celebrate 10 years with Tree-House Foods in July 2020.

## 2002

The family of **Michael Mayo** and **Sarah (Evans) Mayo '03** will be featured in an episode of HGTV's *House Hunters International* this spring after the family moved to Wales in 2019. The move allowed Sarah to study at Bangor University, where she is pursuing a second master's degree in music research/musicology, while Michael works remotely as a marketing consultant.

**Melissa Neis** was presented the 2019 OURHAUS Award, for her philanthropic leadership and dedication to supporting social change through theatre, by Collaboraction Theatre Company, a Chicago-based nonprofit arts organization. A vice president with Parr Insurance Brokerage, Melissa has served on Collaboraction's Board of Directors for five years and played a leading role in the group's spring fundraiser and donor cultivation event. She also currently volunteers with Heartland Alliance's Women's Empowerment Program.

**Charlene Recio** was elected by members of the Will County (Ill.) Women's Bar Association as president of its executive board in January 2020. An eight-year veteran as Will County Assistant State's Attorney, Charlene joined the organization in 2013. She has served in many roles, including as secretary, treasurer and vice president of the executive board. Charlene also currently serves as vice president of the Illinois Prosecutors Bar Association and is an active member of the Will County Bar Association.

## 2007

**Beth Lanza** joined The Center for Voice and Swallowing Disorders at The Ears, Nose, Throat, and Plastic Surgery Association, in Orlando, Florida, as a speech language pathologist, in September 2019. Beth earned a master's degree in communication disorders at Northern Illinois University in 2018 and, as part of her postgraduate work, started Bridges Choir, a choir for adults with language and cognitive communication disorders. After graduate school, Beth completed her clinical fellowship at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center, receiving training at the Voice and Upper Airways Clinic as well as the Neurogenic Communication Disorders Clinic.

**Anna Slevin** is the president and designer of streetwear label ASC (Anna Slevin Collection), operating out of Wicker Park, Illinois. Anna's collection emphasizes function, comfort, affordability and sustainability; she often uses deadstock fabric, all packaging is recycled and recyclable, and hang tags are made from paper sourced from sustainable forests. Anna was featured in *Vogue* in November 2019. Her collection is available at [www.annaslevin.com](http://www.annaslevin.com).

**Kathryn (Sentman) Totz** joined Baymard Institute as a UX researcher in September 2019.

Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, Baymard is a leading independent web usability research institute conducting original large-scale research studies on all aspects of the e-commerce user experience. Prior to joining Baymard, Kathryn worked at Verint Foresee, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as a senior usability analyst, after earning a master's degree from the University of Michigan in 2010. Kathryn lives in and works from Miami.

## 2008

**Ann M. Erickson** started a new position as a legal writer for *Law Bulletin Media* in November 2018, where she focuses on legal publications and information services. Ann graduated from Chicago-Kent College of Law at Illinois Institute of Technology in 2012, and she previously practiced law at Morrison & Mix for six-and-a-half years.

**Kristin Tvrdik** serves as medical director of the Hinsdale (Ill.) Humane Society Pet Rescue and Resource Center. She became the organization's first on-staff veterinarian in May 2019. She provides daily medical care for animals residing in the shelter and also offers reduced-cost vaccination clinics. Kristin previously served as medical director of a high-volume spay/neuter clinic and shelter in South Bend, Indiana.

## 2009

**Alex Roth** was promoted to private client services manager for RSM US LLP's Champaign, Illinois, office. In his new role, he provides compliance and consulting services to multi-generational wealthy families and private business or investment entities, including personal, charitable and trust taxation and estate/gift taxation.

(continued on page 33)



## *My Fellow Titans,*

We are at the beginning of a new year, a new decade and a new era for Illinois Wesleyan. I hope you all are as excited as I am about the upcoming year and all of the new possibilities of the future.

Speaking of new beginnings, we have a new president! I am excited to welcome President S. Georgia Nugent to the IWU family. I've had the pleasure of meeting our new president and can confidently say that not only does she have an impressive resume and a great vision for the University, but she is a wonderful person. I am certain IWU is in the best possible hands under her leadership. **Be on the lookout for your opportunity to meet and welcome our new president during the Presidential Welcome Tour** (see tour stops on opposite page).

I am excited about this year's Homecoming and look forward to seeing many of you back on campus. This year, classes ending in 0 and 5 will celebrate reunions. Last year's reunion classes raised nearly \$2,000,000! Going forward, all classes will have fundraising goals. To the 2020 reunion classes, I challenge you to do as well as — if not better than — the classes that celebrated reunions in 2019.

Thanks to all of you Titans who give, volunteer and assist in making IWU what it is today. I encourage you to reach out to your fellow classmates, fraternity/sorority members, roommates and all Titans in your circle to get them involved. To continue being a great University with a unique experience will require all of us to do our part.

Go to [www.iwu.edu/alumni](http://www.iwu.edu/alumni) for ways to get engaged.

Go Titans!

**Molly Rollings '99, President**  
*Alumni Association*  
*Board of Directors*



## The Presidential Welcome Tour

This is an opportunity for alumni, parents and friends across the country to meet and welcome our 20th President, S. Georgia Nugent, to the Titan family.

President Nugent will share her inclusive vision — **I With U: One Community, One Purpose**. She also welcomes your stories of Titan pride along with your questions on the future for Illinois Wesleyan.

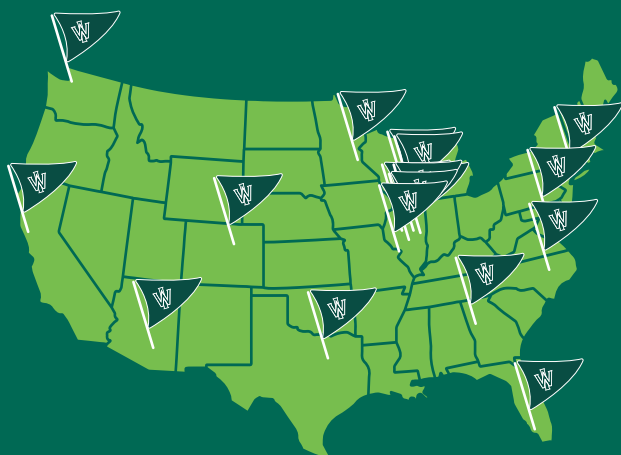
Check the listings for events in your region. For more details, visit:  
[www.iwu.edu/presidential-tour](http://www.iwu.edu/presidential-tour)





## Tour Stops

Phoenix	Champaign, IL
Naples, FL	Peoria, IL
Chicago - <i>The Metropolitan</i>	Springfield, IL
McLean County - <i>Illinois Wesleyan University</i>	St. Louis
Washington, D.C.	Atlanta
San Francisco	New York City
Chicago - <i>Western Suburbs</i>	Dallas
Minneapolis/St. Paul	Raleigh
Denver	Seattle



*Invitations are forthcoming. Be sure to register and share with fellow alumni, parents and friends.*

**There is strength in numbers.** We need you to be in the number. We are looking for more alumni to join regional committees to help plan events and activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Adriane Powell at [apowell@iwu.edu](mailto:apowell@iwu.edu) or (309) 556-1355.

(continued from page 31)

**Claire Sheehan** was recognized as a Jodie Harrison Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and inducted into the St. Charles (Ill.) East High School Athletics Hall of Fame on Feb. 1, 2020. A three-sport athlete at St. Charles East, Claire made her biggest impact on the basketball court, where she helped the Saints to their first regional title in 17 years during her senior season. An all-state selection as a prep player, Claire went on to a decorated basketball career at Illinois Wesleyan. She now serves as a pediatric dentist at Lurie Children's Hospital.

### 2010

**Kate (Feriozzi) Flemming** was named the community manager of The Zeal Center for Entrepreneurship, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in November 2019. Kate previously served as the program coordinator for Millikin University's Center for Entrepreneurship, where she also taught several adjunct courses in arts and social entrepreneurship.

**Katherine Slevin** has spent her career in the baking and pastry business, and, after a life-changing volunteer experience, now puts her skills to use in the name of community. Katherine, who volunteered at a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos at the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis, established C. Love Cookie Project, LLC, to give back to communities in need. Based in Portland, Maine, C. Love Cookie Project donates 21% of all sales to three local organizations working with international populations. The business was featured in a WMTW-TV news report in November 2019. More information is available at [www.clovecookieproject.com](http://www.clovecookieproject.com).

### 2011

**Kristina Dakis** practices family medicine at Gibson Area

Hospital, in Gibson City, Illinois, and clinics in Gibson City and Hoopeston, Illinois. Dr. Dakis attended medical school at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, where she received multiple awards and was admitted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. She first became familiar with Gibson Area Hospital when she designed a rotation at the healthcare facility as part of her residency. She joined the staff full time in November 2019. Dr. Dakis was profiled in a story in the *Hoopeston Chronicle* in January 2020.

### 2013

**Megan George** was hired as assistant to the city manager of Tualatin, Oregon, in October 2019. Megan previously served as assistant to the city manager of Carlton, Oregon, from June 2016 to September 2017, and more recently worked for the League of Oregon Cities, where she served as an operations director. In her new position, Megan will be responsible for city communications and special projects, including management of a \$20 million neighborhood safety and traffic flow bond, oversight of the Tualatin Service Center, and planned expansion of the Tualatin Public Works Department.

**Joe Musso** joined CBS Sports HQ, a streaming video sports channel produced by CBS Sports and CBS Interactive, as a full-time anchor in December 2019. Joe previously served as a sports anchor for KOVR-TV, a CBS affiliate in Sacramento, California, and KOLN-TV, a CBS affiliate in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Shane Smith**, a former IWU golf standout, earned regular season status on the Korn Ferry Tour for the upcoming season thanks to his performance at the Korn



Ferry Tour Qualifying Finals, Dec. 12-15, 2019. The Korn Ferry Tour is the developmental tour for the PGA TOUR and will feature 28 tournaments, played in 20 states and four countries outside of the United States, in 2020, culminating with the Korn Ferry Tour Finals in August 2020. The 28 total events are the tour's most since 2010 and will include \$18,850,000 in official prize money, the largest figure on the tour in over a decade.

## 2014

Former Titan basketball stand-out **Katy (Seibring) Neally** forms part of a husband-wife coaching duo at Fieldcrest High School, in Minonk, Illinois. Katy has assisted her husband Mitch in each of the past two seasons in coaching the Fieldcrest girls' basketball team, which won the program's first-ever regional title last year, and another in February 2020.

## 2016

**Amanda Macuiba**, a member of Illinois Wesleyan's 2016

national champion women's outdoor track and field team, ran in the 2020 Olympic Marathon Trials, in Atlanta, on Feb. 29, 2020 (results not available at press time). Amanda qualified for the Olympic trials by running a personal-best time of 2:44:29 at the California International Marathon, on Dec. 8, 2019, in Sacramento, California. A compensation analyst at IDEX Corp., in Lake Forest, Illinois, Amanda ran 90-100 miles a week in preparation for the trials.

**Zack Talbert**, a third-year University of Illinois veterinary student, won the Morrison Swine Innovator Prize for his research and proposed new technology. Zack's presentation discussed how current fumigation rooms are failing in effectiveness and introduced a prototype device for making fumigation practices more efficient based on research from trials he ran at his house. Zack was presented the award at the Allen D. Leman Swine Conference, hosted by the University of Minnesota, in September 2019.

## 2017

**Andrew Kauerauf** earned a master's degree in museology at the University of Washington in August 2019. His thesis was titled "Understanding Modern History Museum Smartphone Mobile Guides and Apps."

**Donavan Laible** was promoted to assurance senior associate for RSM US LLP's Champaign, Illinois, office. In his new role, Donovan is responsible for leading a team through the audit process, preparing financial statements and understanding the needs and strategies of a diverse client base.

**Xingchen "Stella" Wang** returned to campus to offer a beginner's workshop on how to pronounce Chinese names, sponsored by the International Office, on Nov. 11, 2019, in the Vinyard Room. The group explored the importance, history and unique structure of Chinese names in the workshop, which was a part of International Education Week activities. An international student dedicat-



Xingchen "Stella" Wang '17

ed to international education on college campuses, Stella is currently pursuing a master's degree in college student personnel administration, at Illinois State University, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2020.

## 2018

**Zach Silver** and **Ellen Stumph '19** are working with Laurie Santos, director of the Comparative Cognition Laboratory and the Canine Cognition Center at Yale University. Zach is a graduate student interested in how nonhuman animals learn from and about human agents. He also provides original music for Santos' podcast *The Happiness Lab*. Ellen is one of the Canine Cognition Center's lab managers and is interested in understanding social decision-making processes in canines and non-human primates, as well as uncovering the origins of pro-social behaviors in humans.

## 2019

Former All-American volleyball player **Tyler Brown** rejoined the Titan volleyball team as an assistant coach in January 2020.

## Tiny Titans

**Tony Gray '98** and Barbara Borst; Tecora Elizabeth, born Sept. 18, 2019

**Bill Brumett '05** and Amy; Claire Patricia, born Sept. 25, 2019

**Jessica (Dixon) Sarros '06** and Arin; Benjamin Michael, born July 30, 2019

**Chris Seps '07** and Traci; Mason, born Oct. 11, 2019

**Laura (Cathelyn) Steffensmeier '07** and Greg; Brooke Leah & Grant Kenneth, born Dec. 30, 2019

**Alissa (Sherman) Miller '08** and Sam; Elizabeth Sophia, born Sept. 30, 2019

**Amy (Burns) Ehmen '09** and Ryan; Mackenzie Mae, born July 29, 2019

**Danielle (Lauritson) O'Kelley '09** and Shawn; Finnian Andrew, born Oct. 3, 2019

**Elizabeth (Sowatzke) Schlicht '09** and Joe; Harriet Jean, born Sept. 1, 2019

**Kathryn (Kohles) Schmitz '09** and **Philip '09**; Audrey Caroline, born June 11, 2019

**Melinda (McNeil) Magerkurth '10** and **Grant '10**; Jacqueline James, born Dec. 13, 2019

**Cate (Bayles) Tinker '11** and Patrick; Phoebe Louise, born Jan. 21, 2020

**Karley (Bridgewater) Keller '12** and **Doug '10**; Brooks Bridgewater, born Jan. 25, 2020

*All submitted content received by Feb. 3, 2020. Submissions may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.*

# HART CAREER CENTER HAPPENINGS

**Illinois Wesleyan's Hart Career Center** is constantly engaging with alumni and connecting them with current students in fun and enriching ways. See below who has helped out recently. Do you want to assist students to ensure their career success? Does your organization have internships or employment opportunities for Titans? Contact the Career Center staff at [ccenter@iwu.edu](mailto:ccenter@iwu.edu) or (309) 556-3071.



## Fall Career Fair, Sept. 23, 2019

Nina Anderson '19, Michael Billington '19, Stephen Billington '19, Patrick Capalad '19, Kasey Evans '12, Hope Gassmann '19, Katie (Ficker) Hanlon '02, Jordan Hassan '18, Jessica Hill '19, Michael Jackson '04, Yolanda Juarez-Sotelo '17, Logan Kent '13, Justin Krzeczowski '18, Skylar Mihalik '16, Huyen Nguyen '17, Katie Nitz '12, Mi Pham '17, Eric Rydell '17, EJ Schiller '12, Aneesh Sehgal '15, Breck Seitz '15, Sue (Snapp) Seibring '82, Culley Summers '94, Fred Thompson '12, David Vaughan '11 and Ben Webster '06

## Journalism/Media Panel, Oct. 4, 2019

Chris Fusco '94, Elizabeth (Weinstein) McMahon '96, Sarah Weinstein Edwards '96 and Justin Williams '97



## Finance/Technology Luncheon, Nov. 6, 2019

(Above, from left) Bruce Cather '80, EJ Schiller '12, Christine (Rogers) Dierker '01, Dave Malcom '00, Vanessa (Rodriguez) Macias '14, Moyo Ajayi '17 and Rod Adams '95

## Minority Alumni Reception, Oct. 5, 2019

Will Hobbs '11 and Yolanda Juarez-Sotelo '17

## Nursing Career Fair, Nov. 13, 2019

Beth Messina '81, Karolina Sierzputowska '16 and Katie Vallorano '16

## Etiquette Dinner, Jan. 21, 2020

(Above, from left) Jeremiah Barnes '14, Ashley Spain Barnes '16, Corey (Hills) Burgess '09, Jordan Kuhns '13, Desiree Quizon-Colquitt '89, Jessica Shull '03, Karen (Moe) Bellis '99, Annaliese (Schaefer) Gentry '01, Melissa (Gadrinab) Beaver '93, Matt Majernik '07, Esteban Lizano '01 and Joel Brigham '04; not pictured: Barbara (Carlson) Nathan '80

## Practice Interviews

Todd Barth '93, Scott Black '10, Bruce Cather '80, Shawn Gravelle '96, Michael Henry '11, Logan Kent '13, Brian Lett '05, Dave Moravec '84 and Brock Taylor '18

## On-Campus Recruitment

Jessica Allhands '16, Heidi Boos '08, Sean Dwyer '10, Kaity (Crane) Emmerson '14, William Hanson '18, Hussain Hasan '91, Mike Heaton '14, Tara Isenberg '17, Michael Jackson '04, Will Jenkins '12, Dave Malcom '00, Brian Rawlins '01, Isaac Roethemeyer '18, Amanda Schmidt '18, Scott Searles '95, Ashlee Kuhl '02, Mike Stephens '07 and Aaron Telford '02

## Additional Programming

Sean Conroy '96, Justin Holschbach '06, Meg McKeen '00, Megan Mink '18, Joe Norris '99, Shannon O'Rourke Kasali '07, Will Jenkins '12, Sana Shafuiddin '17, Tina (Spears) Simmons '06, Rachel Tomazin '19 and Mary (Miller) Wilson '07



# Titan Celebrations

**IWU Magazine** considers for publication photos of IWU people at celebrations and reunions of alumni.

Please send your Titan Celebration photos to *IWU Magazine*, at [www.iwu.edu/magazine](http://www.iwu.edu/magazine), via email at [iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu), or by mail at P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702. All submitted content received by Feb. 3, 2020.



(Above) A group of Illinois Wesleyan alumni, faculty, staff and friends competed in the Bourbon Chase, a 200-mile running relay race through Kentucky's historic "Bourbon Trail," Oct. 18-19, 2019.



(Above) Linda (Gitzendanner) Hines '68 and Stuart Hines '67 celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 6, 2019, at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan. (Inset) The Hineses met at IWU in 1964.



(Above) An alumni group reconnected over a weeklong reunion in Pakistan in February 2019. Those in attendance included (from left): **Hanif Tayab Hasan '91**, **Hussain T. Hasan '91**, Malik Zia, **Todd Strong '91** and **Moaz Rab '91**.



(Above) **Melissa Umansky '16** and **David Podrazik '15** were married Sept. 21, 2019, at Evelyn Chapel, surrounded by family and friends, with many alumni in attendance. **Nolan Valdivia '17**, **Brian Yager '17** and **Erica Podrazik '10** were members of the bridal party.



(Above) **Lia Analitis '16** married Raymond Gewargis on July 27, 2019, in Atheras, Kefalonia, Greece. Bridesmaids included **Allie Handzel '16** (far left), **Lizzy Sanders '16** (third from left), **Lauren (Estes) Del Cielo '16** (sixth from left), **Anna Lowenthal '16** (sixth from right) and **Kacie Graves '16** (second from right).



(Above) A group of Kappa Kappa Gamma sisters held a reunion in Chicago in April 2019. They included: (back row, from left) **Alicia (Deppe) Kavanaugh '93**, **Kimberly Luthin '93**, **Meggen (Gould) Burkard '93**, **Katie (Vertin) Deneen '93**, **Nancy Mi Kim '93**, **Jeanna (Wright) Ross '93**, (front row, from left) **Sunny Johnson '93**, **Charlotte (Enns) Joslin '93**, **Julie Brown-Haapapuro '93** and **Kelli (Boutelle) Risse '93**.





(Above) **Melanie Arthur '07** and **Michael Catron '06** were married Sept. 1, 2019, at The Hideout in Chicago, with many alumni and friends present.



(Above) **Tess Johnson '16** and **John Fegan '17** were married Sept. 7, 2019, at Evelyn Chapel. Their reception was held in the Memorial Center.



(Above) **Lauren Jensen '05** (second from left) and **Charles Tanner Hughes '05** (third from left) were married Nov. 11, 2018, in New Orleans. **Katie (Jurgens) Bishop '05** (far left) served as the matron of honor.



(Above) **Jordan Kuhns '13** (crouched, right) married Alex O'Brien (crouched, left) on Oct. 19, 2019, at Destihl Brewery, in Normal, Illinois, with many alumni and friends present.



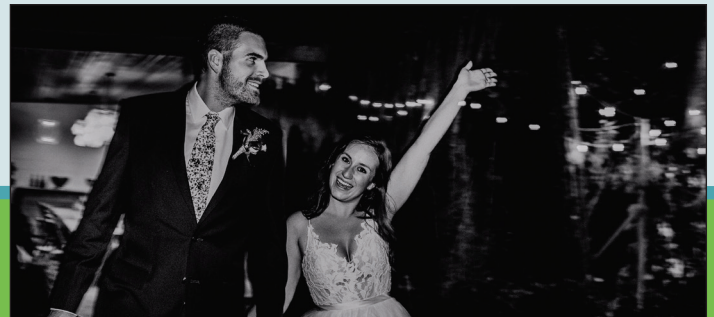
(Above) **Emilee Monken '18** and **Erich Lieser '18** were married June 8, 2019, in Casey, Illinois, with many alumni present, including Emilee's parents, **Ann (Cochonour) Monken '92** and **Tom Monken '92**, and sister, **Abigail Monken '21**.



(Above) **Carly Floyd '17** married Nicholas Sherman on Dec. 7, 2019, at Evelyn Chapel, with many IWU alumni, faculty and staff members present. **Nicole Chlebek '16** and **Tess (Johnson) Fegan '16** were bridesmaids, **John Fegan '17** was a groomsman, and **Cayley Rydzinski '18** officiated the wedding.



(Above) **Jennie Black '14** and **Chris Tatara '14** were married Sept. 27, 2019, in Wheaton, Illinois, with many alumni and friends present.



(Above) **Jen Prochotsky '15** and **Garret Laflamme '15** were married on Sept. 21, 2019, in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.



## Alumni

**Maxine “Mickey” (Lebkuecher) Drexler ‘46 ‘57** of Bloomington, Illinois, died Sept. 25, 2019. She was 94. Mickey earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in voice performance at Illinois Wesleyan, and received the outstanding music award at commencement in 1946. Mickey taught voice at IWU for 35 years. She additionally served as president of IWU’s Alumni Association and League of Women. She was a lifelong member of First Christian Church, where she sang in the choir, occasionally as a soloist, and for many years directed choirs. She also served as a deacon and taught Sunday and vacation Bible school. She was also active in Sigma Alpha Iota, P.E.O. International, Amateur Musical Club Board and Habitat for Humanity. She was a member of a bridge club for more than 60 years and loved golf, sewing, decorating, crafts, gardening and dinner parties. She corresponded regularly with many of her former students and colleagues. She also loved to travel with family and students. She is survived by two children, including **Richard Drexler ‘77**.

**Dorothy (Stokes) Faughn ‘47** of Springfield, Missouri, died Jan. 5, 2019. She was 92. Dorothy studied music at Illinois Wesleyan, where she was active as a member of Delta Omicron. She went on to a successful career in music, both as a performer and a teacher. Dorothy was a well-known band director in Malden, Missouri, and often performed during Sunday church services. A single mother who raised four successful children, Dorothy also cared for her parents in their later years. Dorothy was happiest when spending time with family. She is survived by four children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

**Dale Garrett ‘50** died Dec. 29, 2019, at his home in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was 94. Dale was a World War II veteran who served in Iwo Jima as a member of the United States Naval Construction Battalions, also known as the Seabees. After the war, he returned to his hometown of Bloomington, Illinois, and enrolled at Illinois Wesleyan. Dale met his wife in Bloomington and the couple relocated in 1954 to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where Dale set up a successful State Farm Insurance agency that served customers in the area for 47 years. Dale was active as a member of First Presbyterian Church, and enjoyed hunting, fishing and golf. He is survived by his wife, four children, 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



**Jack Snyder ‘52** of Bloomington, Illinois, died Oct. 31, 2019. He was 90. Jack remained involved with Illinois Wesleyan throughout his life, through the Illinois Wesleyan Associates and as an adviser to IWU’s recent capital campaign. Jack was known for having developed over 20% of the land area of Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. He also had developments in Champaign, Illinois; Springfield, Illinois; Peoria, Illinois; Pontiac, Illinois; Longboat Key, Florida; and Englewood, Florida. He is survived by his wife, three children, nine grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and his brother, **Benjamin Snyder ‘53**.



**Jeanne (Cicciarelli) Centers ‘53** died Jan. 11, 2020, in Peoria, Illinois. She was 88. Jeanne was active in Kappa Kappa Gamma and earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration at Illinois Wesleyan. Jeanne was a member of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church and the Women’s Guild, serving as its president in 1967-68. She is survived by two children, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

**Charles Gaines ‘53 ‘54** died Nov. 11, 2018. He was 86. Charles studied music at Illinois Wesleyan, where he was active in many music-related organizations and professional societies, and earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees at IWU. He taught elementary school music and managed church music programs in Illinois and, later, New York, while he pursued a doctorate from Union Theological Society. Charles began his academic career at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, in 1965. He remained chair of the school’s department of fine arts until shortly before his retirement in 1998. He also served as director of music for the First Presbyterian Church of Clinton and the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwood, South Carolina, and founded and directed the Laurens County (S.C.) Chorale. Former South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford conferred The Order of the Silver Crescent, the South Carolina Legislature recognized his leadership in a proclamation, and the mayor of Greenwood later proclaimed June 15, 2012 as Charles T. Gaines Day. Charles is survived by his wife **Jean (Reichert) Gaines ‘53**, three children, including **Deborah (Gaines) Abbott ‘76** and **Betsy (Gaines) Bone ‘82**, and eight grandchildren.

**Dennis Mattix ‘59** of Joliet, Illinois, died May 2, 2019. He was 81. Dennis taught physical education and driver’s education, and coached basketball for 35 years before retiring from Plainfield (Ill.) School District in 1993. He was an active member of Hope United Methodist Church and Phi Gamma Delta. Dennis was a golfer, sports enthusiast and lifelong St. Louis Cardinals fan, but most of all enjoyed time with his family. He is survived by his wife, five children, including **Blake Mattix ‘91**, nine grandchildren, a special niece, and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Joan (Kaisler) Orth '61** died Nov. 25, 2019, in Durham, North Carolina. She was 80. Joan was initially a music major, but switched to education and later obtained a master's degree in reading arts from Cardinal Stritch University, where she taught remedial reading for 10 years before retiring. Joan was an avid Green Bay Packers fan and stockholder. She decided to take up the harp — at age 76 — through the Duke University continuing education program. She was a lifelong supporter of classical music in Milwaukee and the Raleigh-Durham area. She is survived by her husband and three children.

**William Richard "Dick" Setchell '68** of Mendota, Illinois, died Dec. 28, 2019. He was 73. Dick studied political science and theology at Illinois Wesleyan, and was a member of Theta Chi. Dick was a farmer and owner of several businesses. He was an avid historian and antique collector, with particular interests in antique firearms and Native American artifacts. He was also invested in passing on family history and traditions. He enjoyed his grandchildren, fishing and debating spiritual or political matters. Dick was a member of Rotary International and was active in church council, church youth groups and confirmation classes. Dick is survived by his wife, two daughters, two stepdaughters, six grandchildren, two siblings, and many nieces and nephews.

**Phillip Glotfelty '70** of Shorewood, Illinois, died Nov. 1, 2019. He was 71. Phil met his future wife **Jody (Carlson) Glotfelty '70** while attending Illinois Wesleyan. He began his career at Kemlite Corporation, where he established the company's human resources department, and later joined First Midwest Bank Corporation, from which he retired in 2006. He was active in many groups and organizations, including: Sports Car Club, Jaycees, Joliet (Ill.) Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Council, Joliet Kiwanis Club, and Plainfield (Ill.) United Methodist Church. He enjoyed golfing, playing cards and Trivial Pursuit, sharing meals with friends, and watching his grandchildren play sports and perform onstage. He is survived by his wife, children **Sherry (Glotfelty) Steele '99** and **Jeffrey Glotfelty '00**, seven grandchildren, brother, and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

**Earl Kirk '71** of Aurora, Illinois, and Evansville, Indiana, died Nov. 27, 2019. He was 70. Earl studied French at Illinois Wesleyan and went on to earn graduate and ABD degrees at Indiana University. He was employed as an instructor at Southwestern College (1978-79), an instructor and administrator at Baker University (1978-2003), and as the director of study abroad and Harlaxton College coordinator at the University of Evansville (2003-15). Earl was a world traveler, fluent in several languages, and had a love of people, history and cultures. He was an inspirational educator, administrator and mentor who encouraged students to achieve their goals in education, studying and traveling abroad. He is survived by three siblings, a special aunt and uncle, and several nieces, nephews and other family members, colleagues and friends.

**Julie (Bauman) Swango '74** of Normal, Illinois, died Dec. 14, 2019. She was 67. Julie studied elementary education at Illinois Wesleyan and later earned a master's degree in education from Illinois State University. She served as a third-grade teacher in McLean County (Ill.) Unit 5 schools for 35 years. She was a talented seamstress, baker and gardener. She loved to travel, especially to her family cabin in



*All submitted content received by Feb. 3, 2020. Submissions may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.*

## Deaths Reported

**Nina (Heady) Baird '48**; June 10, 2019

**Mary (Parkin) Cotton '48**; June 21, 2019

**James "Bill" Harris '50**; Jan. 23, 2020

**Don Miller '50**; Jan. 4, 2019

**Dorothy (Brown) Orlopp '50**; Dec. 8, 2019

**Jane (Sutton) Aussieker '52**; Feb. 24, 2019

**Paul Braziller '52**; Oct. 17, 2019

**Donald Wick '53**; Dec. 4, 2019

**Roslyn (Martini) Gott '57**; Oct. 10, 2019

**Clara (Orstedt) McCannon '57**; Dec. 11, 2019

**Rachel (Junilla) Weaver '58**; Dec. 7, 2019

**Nancy (Brubaker) Niemi '59**; Oct. 1, 2019

**Neil MacDonald '59**; April 25, 2019

**Judith (Naylor) Sinn '62**; Nov. 1, 2019

**Lynne (Ehrhart) Lewis '67**; Dec. 5, 2019

**Robert Bruehl '70**; Aug. 28, 2018

**Karen (Hockenyos) Yarnell Goodwin '71**; April 24, 2019

**Linda (Fisher) Shearin '71**; Oct. 10, 2019

**Kathleen Miller '76**; Oct. 21, 2019

**Angela (Anderson) Dyer '81**; Nov. 29, 2019

**Scott Layman '81**; April 6, 2019

**Julie (Cherian) Abraham '00**; Oct. 26, 2019

**Erin Simpson '00**; Aug. 14, 2019





Wisconsin, where she enjoyed time with her loved ones. Julie was a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church of Merna and Sigma Kappa, both of which blessed her with lifelong friends. She is survived by her husband **Gary Swango '73**, three children, four grandchildren and two sisters.

**Kevin Long '80** of Normal, Illinois, died Nov. 24, 2019. He was 61. Kevin had served as textbook coordinator in the Illinois Wesleyan University Bookstore, beginning in 2002, before transferring to Campus Safety in July 2019. He is survived by three children, two grandchildren and three brothers.

**Mark Harris '83** died Oct. 5, 2019, in Aledo, Illinois. He was 58. Mark loved to entertain and earned a BFA in drama at Illinois Wesleyan. He traveled many career paths but finally found his calling in the ministry. Mark served churches in Fairview Heights, Illinois, and St. Joseph, Illinois, and was most recently the pastor at Aledo United Methodist Church. He was also a devoted family man and enjoyed nothing more than time spent with family. Diagnosed with cancer in 2017, Mark chronicled his journey through a blog he described as "a daily look at the life of a shaved-headed, earring-wearing, rock drumming, United Methodist minister." Writing with transparency and authenticity, Mark's blog inspired many fighting the same battle. He is survived by his wife, two sons, including **Sam Harris '10**, three siblings, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

**Kimberly (Kaskavage) Coomber '88** of Fairbury, Illinois, died Nov. 19, 2019. She was 61. Kim studied nursing at Illinois Wesleyan and later served as a registered nurse at Fairbury Hospital, Dr. Orville Hable Medical Office, and Thomas Metcalf School, where she provided care for children with disabilities. She most recently served patients at Livingston County Health Clinic in Pontiac, Illinois. Kim was

a fan of the Prairie Central High School Hawks and Chicago Cubs. She loved spending time with family and especially enjoyed attending her grandchildren's sporting events. She is survived by her husband, three children, eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild and a sister.

**Robert Stone '90** of Fox Lake, Illinois, died Oct. 24, 2019. He was 51. Bob studied accounting at Illinois Wesleyan, where he was also active in Theta Chi. He was a lifetime Mason and certified public accountant. He supported his children in all their endeavors and especially enjoyed watching his daughter perform and his son play baseball. He is survived by his wife, two children, father, stepmother, four siblings, and many nieces, nephews and friends.

**Shawn Gravelle '96** of Bloomington, Illinois, died Jan. 12, 2020. He was 45. Shawn was a member of Theta Chi at Illinois Wesleyan. He later earned a master's degree in enterprise architecture from Penn State University. Shawn went on to a career as a technology director at State Farm. He also volunteered his time to the McLean County Arts Center, as treasurer and president of its board of directors. He loved difficult puzzles, going to concerts, and planning Disney vacations, but most of all enjoyed spending time with his family. He is survived by his wife **Kerry (Butler) Gravelle '95**, two children, father, two brothers, including **Erik Gravelle '98**, and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

**Jason Dennis '99** of Chicago, and formerly of Prophetstown, Illinois, died Dec. 18, 2019. He was 42. Jason studied history and educational studies at Illinois Wesleyan. He was a standout member of the Titan track and field team, winning the NCAA Division III indoor shot put title in 2000. Jason began his teaching and coaching career at Leyden (Ill.) Township High School and later taught and coached at Oak Park-River Forest (Ill.) High School, where he also served as dean of students and assistant principal. He most recently served as director of education for the American Rental Association. He is survived by his fiancée, parents, sister, grandmother, two nephews, and many cousins, aunts and uncles.

**Bradlee Boyd '09** of Bloomington, Illinois, died Nov. 26, 2019. He was 33. Brad studied business administration and mathematics at Illinois Wesleyan, where he earned the Harold E. and Edith B. Hall Memorial Scholarship. Brad was the chief operating officer of Low Cost Interlock, Inc., and he often sought out opportunities to use his entrepreneurial skills in other business ventures. Brad was passionate about sports, hunting, fishing, music and craft beer. He is survived by his wife, parents, two sisters, including **Kalynn Boyd '19**, grandmother, grandfather, two nieces, and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

**Editor's Note:** *IWU Magazine* runs obituaries of alumni based on information received from our readers. Please include full name of deceased; IWU class year; date and place of death; essential biographical information; and survivors, including name of surviving spouse and names of relatives of the deceased who are IWU alumni.

Send to *IWU Magazine*, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702, [iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu), or via our website, at [www.iwu.edu/magazine](http://www.iwu.edu/magazine).



— 2019 REUNION RECAP —

**\$1,890,631.99**

RAISED

**737**

TOTAL  
DONORS

**410**

CLASS REUNION  
ATTENDEES

**15**

CLASS REUNION  
EVENTS

## 2019 Classes in Reunion Year (4s and 9s) Concludes with Huge Impact!

### Special Recognition:

1974 — Largest Total Giving Amount (\$1,228,031)

1969 — Highest Donor Participation (26%)

Most Homecoming Attendees (48)

2004 — Highest Young Alumni Participation Total (23%)



SAVE THE DATE

**2020 Class Reunions**

**Oct. 9-11, 2020**

What impact will you leave in 2020?  
Rise to the reunion challenge and work together to leave a legacy.  
Can you raise \$2,000,000 and reach 500 attendees?

Visit [iwu.edu/reunions](http://iwu.edu/reunions) for more information.





## *trophy time*

Members of the Illinois Wesleyan women's soccer team hoist the championship trophy after winning the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin tournament.

PHOTO FINISH