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SUMMER/FALL 2021

ILLINOIS WESLEYAN

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

Titan Among Titans

BURKE NIHILL '00



ALL IN, ALL DAY

[ALL IN FOR] WESLEYAN

April 8, 2021

Record-Setting \$2.5 Million and 3,500 Donors!

An absolutely incredible All In for Wesleyan began with a remarkable and motivational \$1 million challenge that set the pace, and then the Titan Community stepped up and led us to exceed our goals beyond what we could have imagined.

A huge THANK YOU to all the alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff and students who displayed incredible generosity and contributed to IWU's best giving day ever. Your support changes lives and makes a lasting impact at IWU.



3,587 donors



\$2,539,574



24 hours



10 challenges



47 states



FEATURES

12 Titan Among Titans

Burke Nihill '00 is the president and CEO of the National Football League's Tennessee Titans, where he and his family are all part of the team.

16 Keeping Our Community Safe

Through her many campus roles, **Vickie (Noltkamper) Folse '86** helped the Illinois Wesleyan community safely navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

20 Reimagining Radio

Illinois Wesleyan's storied campus radio station, WESN, is evolving through renewed interest and investment while continuing to serve as an important platform for student voices.

24 Leaving a Legacy

Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award winner **Dr. William Farrar '71** has made a lasting impact through his many leadership roles at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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ON OUR COVER:

Burke Nihill '00, president and CEO of the National Football League's Tennessee Titans, sits for a photo at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee.



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From the President's Desk

As I write, America seems to be emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. After so many months of isolation, uncertainties and fear, this spring truly feels like a time of renewal. It's a time of renewal and celebration on the Illinois Wesleyan campus as well.

Just a few weeks ago, we celebrated a joyful Commencement — and an unusual, triple one. Two separate ceremonies for the Class of 2021 were held, and almost 100 members of the Class of 2020 returned to campus for a truly jubilant third ceremony. We promised them last year they would be able to celebrate in person, and it was wonderful to share in their joy. Though large parties weren't possible, each grad was able to invite four guests, and it was clear how much everyone enjoyed being able to come together in person for this special day.

Commencement marks a new beginning, and in many ways the University seems poised for new beginnings, as we plan for in-person classes and a return to more normal activities in the fall. Despite the complexities of teaching and learning over the past year, faculty, staff and administrators have moved forward on new initiatives.

Several academic programs have substantially revised their offerings. The School of Music has dramatically reorganized its programs, simplifying the pathways in the curriculum, adding some new fields — such as jazz and world music — and devising ways to offer more opportunities for students outside of the major to study music. The School of Art has been enriching its offerings in design, with the assistance of two new faculty members. Students in design provided a delightful experience in the fall, when they provided a fashion show of “COVID couture” — wearable creations which ensured that the wearer would be distanced six feet from others.

New programs are also developing in health-related fields. The School of Nursing has received approval for a minor in public health, an interdisciplinary field of particular interest in light of the experiences of the pandemic. In addition, the biology program is focusing increased attention on students' interests in pre-health professions, for example with a planned “immersion experience,” in which students would have opportunities to visit medical and other health profession schools, meet with IWU alumni currently enrolled in such programs, interact directly with health professionals, and take special topics courses.

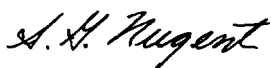
Global studies has also reimaged its curriculum. The major has been renamed international and global studies and has become more thematic than geographic. It also makes use of the second language that students take as part of IWU's general education requirements. The major also now integrates community-based learning to immerse students in real-world concerns of recent immigrants in Bloomington-Normal.

Offerings in accounting, business and finance have long been flagship programs, and student interest in these fields continues to grow. With a new entrepreneurship major and the arrival of several new faculty members, the academic departments in State Farm Hall are collaborating to develop a plan for eventual accreditation as a business school. These programs received a boost recently, with a generous gift from an alumnus, which will make possible a laboratory of Bloomberg terminals for students' use.

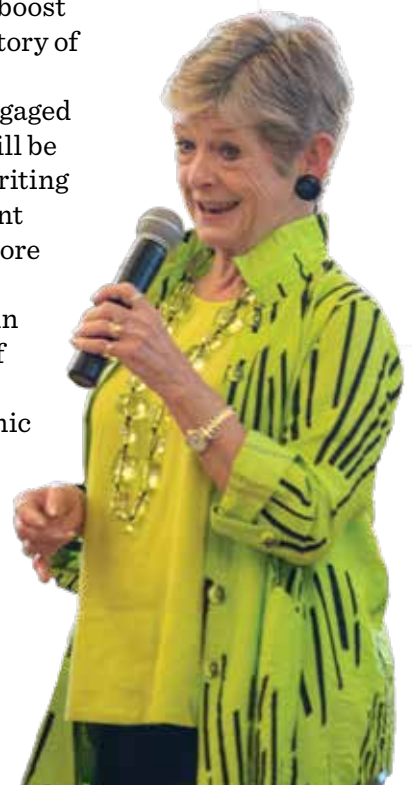
A new initiative that will benefit students in all disciplines is the Center for Engaged Learning (CEL) being developed in The Ames Library. The building's first floor will be redesigned to bring together multiple academic support systems, including the Writing Center, peer tutoring and study skills programs. Ames is already a center of student activity; this new configuration of student services promises to make it an even more valuable resource.

With the CEL, Illinois Wesleyan continues to expand opportunities to engage in what researchers call “high-impact practices” — that is, the most effective ways of teaching and learning.

The spirit of innovation that helped IWU navigate a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic lives on as we venture into another season of renewal and a new academic year.



S. Georgia Nugent
Illinois Wesleyan University President



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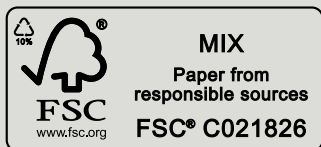
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Inside IWU

FEATURED NEWS, EVENTS AND VIEWS FROM THE IWU CAMPUS

Record-Setting \$2.5 Million Raised During All In for Wesleyan

All In for Wesleyan records were shattered on April 8, 2021, as an all-time high 3,587 donors collectively raised a record-setting \$2,539,574 in just 24 hours.

Illinois Wesleyan University's ninth annual day of giving saw the Titan community unite to achieve a historic \$1 million matching challenge set forth by an anonymous alumnus.

All In for Wesleyan gifts and pacesetter challenges surpassed the day's million-dollar goal to secure the \$1 million match shortly after 9 p.m., pushing this year's total over \$2 million. Earlier in the evening, the goal of receiving contributions from at least 2,500 donors was also surpassed.

"The success of All In for Wesleyan this year was extraordinary. Our anonymous donor jump-started that success with a \$1 million challenge, and the excitement and generosity just kept building throughout the day," said IWU **President S. Georgia Nugent**. "The funds contributed are cause for celebration, no question. But, to me, even more exciting was the level of participation. More than 3,500 people joining on a single day to show their support for Illinois Wesleyan is a great sign of the Titan community's commitment to this University."

Alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff and friends of the University across the country and the world came together this year to break All In for Wesleyan records for dollars (previously \$1,007,55, set in 2020) and donors (previously 2,475, set in 2013) in support of Illinois Wesleyan students and the campus community.

"The participation we saw from the Titan community was phenomenal," said IWU Vice President for Advancement **Steve Seibring '81**. "Our dedicated alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff and students recognized this incredible day as an opportunity to make a difference in support of our students and the direction of the institution. This support will go on to make an impact for many generations of Titans."

"I have the most earnest appreciation for our challenge donors who truly helped to inspire and encourage others to make their own philanthropic contributions. I can't thank them enough for their commitments to Illinois Wesleyan and the futures of our students."

Donors who may have missed out on this year's All In for Wesleyan can still show their support by visiting www.iwu.edu/giving.



(Above) Students enjoyed a shaved ice treat from the Kona Ice truck during All In for Wesleyan.

Diaz Named 2022 Kemp Award Winner

Illinois Wesleyan Professor and Chair of English **Joanne Diaz** was named the 2022 recipient of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence at Illinois Wesleyan University. The announcement was made April 14, 2021, during the Kemp Foundation's Ceremony, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Joanne Diaz

The Kemp Award winner, selected by the faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee, is recognized for bringing spirit, passion and scholarship to the art of teaching. Professor of History **Tom Lutze**, the 2021 Kemp Award winner, was recognized by **Toni Jenkins**, daughter of emeritus Illinois Wesleyan trustee **Parker Kemp**, on behalf of the Kemp family and foundation. Lutze then delivered his Kemp address, "Up Against the System!: Investigating Systemic Problems; Inventing Systemic Solutions," in the virtual ceremony.

Diaz, a member of the faculty since 2008, is a poet, scholar and teacher. In announcing Diaz, Provost **Mark Brodl** said, "A nominator's letter provided compelling evidence for how our 2022 honoree inspires students' curiosity, love of learning, creative aspirations, idealism, ethical awareness and sense of professionalism."

A "true teacher-scholar," according to Brodl, Diaz has published numerous award-winning pieces, including articles, poems, textbooks and books. Her book titles include: *The Lessons*, winner of the 2009 Gerald Cable Book Award; *My Favorite Tyrants*, winner of the 2013 Brittingham Prize in Poetry; and *The Little Magazine in Contemporary America*, co-edited with Ian Morris.

The Kemp Foundation's Ceremony, which replaces the traditional Honors Day Convocation, also recognized retiring faculty members: Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry **Melinda Baur**, Professor of French and Francophone Studies **Chris Callahan**, Ben and Susan Rhodes Endowed Professor in Peace and Justice and Chair of Educational Studies **Irv Epstein**, Professor of English **Kathleen O'Gorman** and Professor of History **Mike Weis**. Departing adjunct faculty were also recognized, including: Adjunct Instructor of Sociology **Emily Barr**, and Adjunct Instructor of Hispanic Studies **Cecilia Sanchez**.

Evans and Shipley Named Inclusive Excellence Award Winners

Maggie Evans and **Chandra Shipley** were named the recipients of the fourth annual Illinois Wesleyan University Leadership Awards for Inclusive Excellence at a virtual campus presentation on April 9, 2021. The winners were nominated by members of the IWU community and selected by the University Council for Diversity.

Evans is an assistant professor of educational studies. Her courses actively explore social justice in education with a broad definition of diversity, including race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status. As a champion for inclusive excellence outside the classroom, Evans advocates for inclusive practices, including recent advocacy for Illinois Wesleyan's COVID-19 grade forgiveness policy and for inclusive course evaluations. As an active collaborator with NexSTEM initiatives, she helps ensure access for women to STEM fields.

Shipley is IWU's director of academic advising and Student Accessibility Services. She plays a leadership role in supporting students with disabilities, a growing and often overlooked part of diversity and inclusion. She ensures students have accommodations and the individualized support they need in order to be successful in their academic pursuits and personal growth. Shipley is a tireless advocate and educator for students with disabilities, now about 10% of IWU's student body.

The Leadership Award for Inclusive Excellence, presented to a faculty member and staff member annually, is intended to lift up the critical work of advocacy, education and community, as we strive to be a campus committed to social justice, equity and inclusion.



Maggie Evans



Chandra Shipley

Brown-Ajayi to Direct Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Sharla Brown-Ajayi brings more than eight years of experience at Illinois Wesleyan into her new role as director of the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI).

Brown-Ajayi, who served as ODI's interim director for two months, replaces **Hannah Mesouani**, who recently accepted a position at The Immigration Project.

"I'm excited to join the Student Affairs team and be a part of the good work of diversity, equity and inclusion," Brown-Ajayi said. "IWU students are outstanding people, and my goal is to support and empower them during their college years as well as continue ODI's role as a resource for the campus community."

The inaugural staff recipient of the University's Award for Inclusive Excellence in 2018, Brown-Ajayi most recently managed daily operations of the Provost's Office as the senior administrative assistant to the provost. Since joining Illinois Wesleyan in 2012, Brown-Ajayi has also worked as the office coordinator for MCLL/Hispanic Studies and the Language Resource Center, and as the senior administrative assistant to the Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development.

Brown-Ajayi is the co-founder of the IWU Language School for Kids, and she serves as the advisor of the IWU Black Student Union. Brown-Ajayi is also a co-founder and co-chair of The Alliance (originally the IWU Black Faculty and Staff Association), and she collaborated on the inaugural Unity Gala planning committee.

Additionally, Brown-Ajayi has participated in the Search Advocate/Validity, Equity & Diversity in Hiring Workshops, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Safe Zone Training, and the Posse Plus Retreat.

"Through her campus and community experiences, Sharla brings outstanding University leadership and advocacy to this key position," said Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students **Karla Carney-Hall**. "I am excited to work with her to shape our campus community."



Sharla Brown-Ajayi

IWU and Heartland Community College Announce Guaranteed Admissions Agreement

Illinois Wesleyan University and Heartland Community College have adopted a Guaranteed Admissions Agreement that will provide an easy transition for students transferring from one institution to the other.

"We know that the majority of community college students begin their studies with the intention of completing a four-year degree," **President S. Georgia Nugent** said. "To the extent that Illinois Wesleyan can become a transfer destination, HCC, IWU and our community all benefit."

The admissions agreement allows a variety of students with diverse interests to continue their education at IWU, with HCC's Associate in Arts and Science degree encompassing over 30 subjects spanning the humanities, sciences, topics in business, and more.

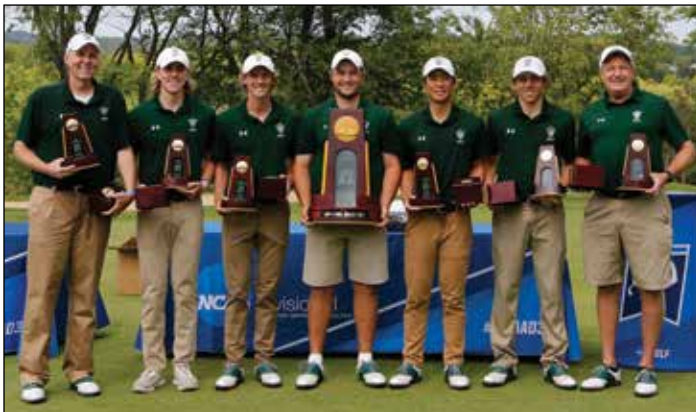
HCC students are guaranteed admission to Illinois Wesleyan under the following criteria:

- IWU guarantees the acceptance of all transferable credits earned from the HCC transfer-oriented degree program and no distinction will be made by IWU between the completion of these courses and those offered at IWU.
- Students may have to take additional prerequisite course requirements specific to certain majors.
- Students who complete the HCC transfer-oriented degree program with a 3.0 grade-point average or higher on a 4.0 scale and submit an official transcript from HCC are eligible for guaranteed admission.

"We are excited to partner with HCC to streamline the transfer experience," said IWU Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing **LeAnn Hughes**. "And, as Hawks become Titans, we will continue working with them — as we do with all of our students — to ensure an on-time graduation plan from Illinois Wesleyan."



Men's Golf Team Wins National Title



The Illinois Wesleyan men's golf team won the 2021 NCAA Division III Championship at Oglebay Resort and Golf Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, May 11-14, 2021. The title marked the team's second straight national title, after winning in 2019 (the 2020 championship was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic), and the IWU athletic department's ninth overall team national championship.

Rob Wuethrich '21, Jimmy Morton '22 and Ethan Wilkins '23 earned All-America honors with top-10 finishes at the NCAA Championships. Wuethrich was also named one of five finalists for the Division III Jack Nicklaus Player of the Year award. The Titans won the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin Championship, April 30 through May 1, 2021, at Weibring Golf Club in Normal, Illinois, as Wuethrich, Morton, Wilkins, **Andrew Abel '21** and **Justin Park '21** all garnered all-conference honors.

Men's Lacrosse Advances to NCAA Elite Eight

Men's lacrosse authored a historic season, finishing 15-2 overall and making the program's first-ever NCAA Tournament Elite Eight appearance. The Titans won CCIW regular-season and tournament championships. **Rick Smith '22** was named CCIW Offensive Player of the Year and **Max Bousky '21** was CCIW Defensive



2021 Men's Lacrosse

Player of the Year. Eight Titans earned All-CCIW honors; Smith, Bousky, **Will Harris '21, Carson Kiichle '23** and **Connor Kiichle '23** were named to the first team, while **Jory Vance '21, Daniel Dickerson '22** and **Paul Mucci '22** nabbed second team selections. Bousky and Smith were United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association All-America Honorable Mention picks. The Titans finished the season ranked No. 12, the highest national ranking in team history.

Men's Basketball Wins CCIW Tournament

Men's basketball won the CCIW Championship and finished the season ranked No. 4 nationally. The Titans finished with an 8-1 record. **Matthew Leritz '22, Charlie Bair '21** and **Doug Wallen '21** were named to All-CCIW teams; Leritz and Bair were first team selections, while Wallen landed on the second team. Leritz also earned D3hoops.com All-America and All-Region honors, and became the 25th player in program history to earn College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-America status.

Women's Golf Ninth at NCAA Tournament

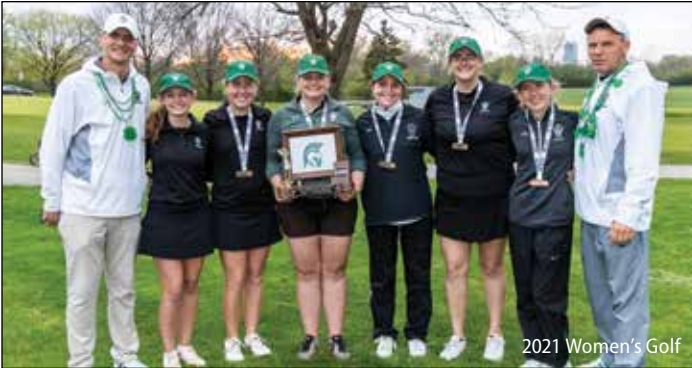
Women's golf finished tied for ninth at the NCAA Championships in East Lansing, Michigan, May 11-14, 2021. IWU previously claimed the CCIW Championship behind All-CCIW performances from **Jenna DeMay '21, Lexi Onsrud '24, Jackie Garcia '21, Emma Thorman '24** and **Maggie Warrner '21**. DeMay tied for second to lead the Titans at the CCIW Championship. Following the season, Garcia was named a Women's Golf Coaches Association All-Region selection and **Craig Onsrud** was named Golf Pride WGCA Division III Assistant Coach of the Year.

Women's Lacrosse earns NCAA At-Large Bid

Women's lacrosse earned a share of the regular-season title and earned the program's first-ever at-large berth to the NCAA Tournament, while posting an 11-4 mark. **Janaye Godfrey '21**, the first Titan named an IWLCA Defensive Player of the Week when she received the honor on March 9, 2021, was named CCIW



2021 Men's Basketball



Defensive Player of the Year, and was joined on the All-CCIW First Team by **Riley Rooney '21**, **Cassandra Jones '22**, **Anna Peters '21** and **Hannah Foley '21**. **Landry Elliott '22** was a second team selection. Godfrey, Foley, Rooney, Jones and **Bridget O'Malley '22** reeled in IWLCA All-Region honors.

Sosa Named WBCA Player of the Year

Women's basketball compiled a 6-4 record while **Kendall Sosa '21** (pictured below) was named the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Division III Player of the Year, D3hoops.com All-American and Central Region Player of the Year, and the CCIW's Most Outstanding Player. Sosa was also a CoSIDA Academic All-America First Team and All-CCIW First Team pick. **Riley Brovelli '21** and **Samantha Munroe '21** were named to the All-CCIW Second Team.

Titan Roundup

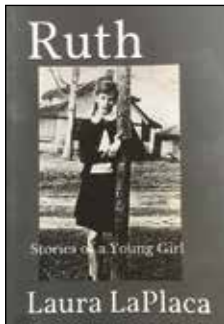
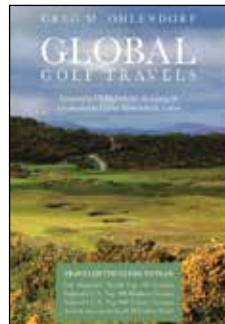
Baseball was led by the All-CCIW Second Team trio of **Evan Ranneklev '22**, **Jared Mutter '22** and **Cole Greer '24**, and finished with a record of 17-25. **Quinn Gudaitis '21** and **Jacob Cyrus '24** earned weekly honors from the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association. ... **Cross country** competed against CCIW foes in a virtual 5k race during the fall. The women won the event, while the men finished seventh. ... **Football** competed in four games in which the Titans went 3-1. **Mike Murphy '21** was a two-time D3football.com Team of the Week pick, while **Jake Buhe '22**, **Jacob Finfer '22**, **AJ Lust '22**, **Mike Norwood '21** and **Chris Wojciak '21** were recognized on the national team of the week as an offensive line unit.

... **Men's soccer** posted a 3-2-3 record ... **Men's tennis** went 7-7 and **Demetrios**



Triantafel '22 was named an All-CCIW Second Team selection. ... **Men's volleyball** secured three wins in its inaugural season. ... **Softball** finished 27-16 overall as **Colleen Palczynski '22** earned CCIW Player of the Year and National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-Region honors. Palczynski and **Hayley Earl '22** were All-CCIW First Team selections, while **Natalie Grubczak '23** and **Kristina Sherwin '24** were second team picks. ... **Swimming & diving** had 16 members — eight from the men's team and eight from the women's team — earn All-CCIW distinction. **Ellen Gilbert '22** was named a College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America All-American in the 100- and 200-yard butterfly, while sophomore **Lauren Feddersen '23** garnered All-America status in the 200-yard breaststroke. **Hannah Murray '24** was named CCIW Co-Rookie of the Year. ... **Track & field** saw 32 Titans record All-CCIW performances as the women finished second, and the men seventh, at the CCIW Outdoor Championships. **Ayana Blair '21** and **Rebekah Harden '22** were named the CCIW's Indoor Field and Track Athletes of the Year, respectively. Blair, Harden, **Zach Anderson '20**, **Addison Bendery '23**, **Katie North '21** and **Kelsey Wyman '21** qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Championships, where Blair (shot put), North (10,000-meter run), and Wyman (400-meter hurdles) posted All-America finishes. ... **Women's bowling** competed in its first season in 2020-21, notching three wins. ... **Women's soccer** compiled a 6-1 record and **Maureen McGrath '21** earned CoSIDA Academic All-District honors. ... **Women's tennis** picked up three wins on the season. ... **Women's volleyball** posted a 7-4 overall record.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some teams did not play full schedules, and many conference and national awards were either delayed or not presented. For more details and full coverage of Illinois Wesleyan athletics, visit www.iwusports.com.



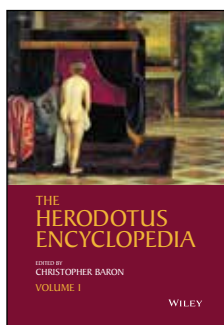
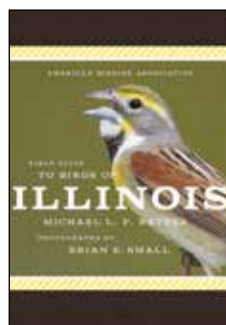
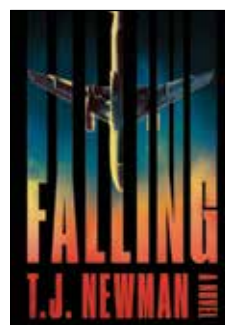
BOOKS

Laura LaPlaca '78 penned her debut novel, *Ruth: Stories of a Young Girl*, which follows its protagonist through rich, familiar and heart-warming stories of a childhood in a small Wisconsin town and into young adulthood. Through her stories, readers come to see that life's simple events are the ones that enrich lives and shape destinies. *Ruth* is available on Amazon in both Kindle and paperback versions.

Rev. Dr. Leonidas A. Johnson '81 published *Phenomenal Vision: Eyesight to Life Sight* in October 2020. The book is an exploration of Rev. Dr. Johnson's pioneering insight into the relationship between eyesight and the various ways we view and process information. The aim of the book is not only to help teach how to process information about our world that encompasses a biblical worldview, but to help develop a biblically-sound decision-making strategy. Rev. Dr. Johnson is a certified optometrist who has spent a lifetime helping people to see. *Phenomenal Vision*, which was named *The Magic Pen's* "February Book of the Month," is available on Amazon.

Greg Ohlendorf '85 penned *Global Golf Travels*, a 400-page account of his travels to play the world's most renowned golf courses, released in June 2021. In May 2019, Greg became only the second person in history to play a *GOLF Magazine* World Top 100 list, *Golfweek* U.S. Top 100 modern and classic lists, plus at least one course in all 50 states. The journey took him to all corners of the United States and 17 foreign countries. The president and CEO of First Community Bank and Trust in Beecher, Illinois, Greg has previously been published on *Golfweek's* digital platform, and will publish his first print article in *The Golfer's Journal* in August 2021.

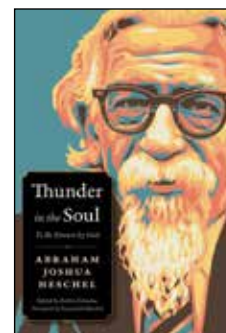
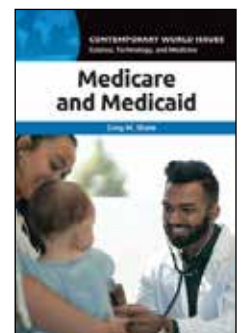
Christopher Baron '95 is the editor of *The Herodotus Encyclopedia*, a three-volume set with over 2,500 entries written by 180 contributors from across the world, published by Wiley-Blackwell. *The Herodotus Encyclopedia* is the first work of its kind, providing a comprehensive gateway to Herodotus, the fifth century B.C. Greek author known as the "Father of History."



Michael L.P. Retter '02 is the author of *Field Guide to the Birds of Illinois*, which is entering its second printing. Michael is also the editor of *North American Birds* and special issues editor of *Birding*, both magazines published by the American Birding Association.

Torri "T.J." Newman '06 signed a two-book deal with Simon & Schuster's Avid Reader Press in February 2021, and her debut novel *Falling* will be released in July 2021. A former flight attendant, T.J. came up with the idea for *Falling* on a cross country red-eye flight. The thriller takes place on a crowded flight from Los Angeles to New York, during which the pilot learns his family has been kidnapped and he must crash the plane to save them, all while the flight's passengers remain unaware of the drama unfolding in the cockpit. A week after the announcement of her book deal, Universal Pictures won a bidding war for the screen rights for *Falling*. T.J., who has since left her job as a flight attendant, has already begun work on her second novel. *Falling* is widely available.

Dani Jauregui Norwell '13 penned *Fairly Familiar: A Collection of Short Stories* in July 2020. *Fairly Familiar* is filled with stories of connection, disappointment and love, and uses the backdrop of a family to explore the inner workings of our shared humanity. It is available on Amazon. A second collection of short stories, *Snapshots of Spain*, is set for release later this year.



Issac Funk Endowed Professor of Philosophy **Robert Erlewine's** book *Thunder in the Soul: To Be Known By God* brings together a collection of writings by rabbi and activist Abraham Joshua Heschel, whose words he says are "beyond merely relevant, they are urgent" at this precarious moment in history. *Thunder in the Soul* compiles Heschel's writings on a number of topics, from the distressing lack of wonder and awe in modern Western society to the nature of God's relationship with humans. Robert participated in a live online event, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: A Prophetic Voice for Our Moment*, a lively discussion on how Rabbi Heschel's words speak to our search for racial justice, environmental responsibility and spiritual renewal, on May 13, 2021.

Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Political Science **Greg Shaw** addresses the many questions surrounding how Medicare and Medicaid work, as well as current reform proposals in his book, *Medicare and Medicaid: A Reference Handbook*, published by ABC-CLIO LLC in January 2021. The book charts the history of Medicare and Medicaid since 1965, examining the strengths and shortcomings of the two far-reaching government health insurance programs that, together, support over 40% of Americans. The book addresses major controversies in a way that will be accessible to a broad readership.



Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Anthropology **Chuck Springwood** contributed to the book *Race in American Television: Voices and Visions that Shaped a Nation*, published by Greenwood Publishing Group in January 2021. Chuck authored the chapter "Northern Exposure: Native Americans on Television." *Race in American Television* is available at the ABC-CLIO/Greenwood website.

ART

Bob Ward '60 spent time during the pandemic and stay-at-home orders creating art which was featured in an exhibit, "Art in the Time of Coronavirus," at the Union Museum of Art and History in Farmerville, Louisiana. An artist specializing in acrylic on canvas painting, Bob was one of three artists showcased in the exhibit. A retired professor of painting at Northeast Louisiana University, Bob has served on the Union Arts Council board of directors for nine years and guided all its art shows.

Stew Salowitz '76 (A) was the artist of an accepted submission in the McLean County Arts Center's 2021 Amateur Exhibition. Stew's watercolor painting *Hidden Stream* won first prize in the adult painting category, and was on display in the MCAC's Brandt Gallery on March 6, 2021, after a virtual presentation of awards earlier that day. "I am a novice as an artist in every sense and never started painting until after retirement in September 2019," said Stew, Illinois Wesleyan's former sports information director. "I have taken some classes at the McLean County Arts Center, including a watercolor class with Dale Evans, who was very encouraging and helpful in getting me to use some rich colors on the painting."

Renee McGinnis '84 (B) had three paintings included in an exhibit, "Ephemera: The Power of Impermanence," at The Art Center Highland Park, May 7 through June 12, 2021. Renee's oil paintings *USS Caliente*, *Battersea Power Liner* and *USS Lilly* were included in the gallery at the suburban Chicago nonprofit arts organization. The exhibit coincided with the Center's annual benefit on May 8, 2021, and included an artist reception on May 21, 2021.

Erika (Rozinek) Holst '01 curated "Fashioning Illinois: 1820-1900," an exhibition that examined the experience of making, wearing and caring for women's clothing in the 19th century. The exhibition ran from July 2020 to July 2021 at the Illinois State Museum's Springfield facility, and from Aug. 3, 2020, to Jan. 18, 2021, at the Illinois State Museum's Lockport facility. Erika is the curator of history at the Illinois State Museum.

Associate Professor of Nursing **Wendy Kookan** was among the exhibitors featured in "Nurses Relaxation and Renewal Through the

Arts," a showcase event for nurses' art expressions, celebrating the World Health Organization's designation of 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse, on display at the International Museum of Surgical Science in Chicago, April 9 through July 11, 2021. She had another crewel embroidery piece on exhibit at SullivanMunce Cultural Center, in Zionsville, Indiana, April 23 through May 20, 2021. Wendy was named director of Millikin University's School of Nursing in January 2021, and will begin her appointment in August 2021.

MUSIC

Dawn Upshaw '82 was a featured performer on the second album from Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw, *Narrow Sea*, released on Jan. 22, 2021. *Narrow Sea* comprises five parts, each a new setting of a text from *The Sacred Harp* collection of shape-note hymns. A five-time Grammy Award winner, Dawn is a world-renowned opera singer, and was the recipient of Illinois Wesleyan's Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumni Award in 1988.

Concert pianist **Gerald Lee '97** performed at the Gold Derrick Gallery in Sistersville, West Virginia, on May 16, 2021, as part of the ArtsLink Concert Series. The performance marked Gerald's fifth occasion to play for ArtsLink, the arts council for West Virginia's Wetzell and Tyler counties. Gerald is a professor of piano at West Liberty University in West Liberty, West Virginia, where he has been a faculty member since 2002.

Illinois Wesleyan Visiting Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the IWU Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble **Sey Ahn** was invited to serve as conductor of the Missouri All-State Orchestra. She provided a virtual session for the students, who were not able to rehearse or perform in person this year due to the pandemic. The all-state orchestra included 79 string players from across the state. They were recognized during the annual Missouri Music Educators Association Conference, held Jan. 27 through Feb. 3, 2021.

THEATRE

The Barn III Dinner Theatre and Event Center presented its first show in over a year with *Hat's Off to Mom, A Mother's Day Tribute*, which ran May 6-9, 2021. The production was co-written and co-directed by **Abby Reel '04**, the owner and operator of The Barn III. Abby also starred in the production honoring themes of motherhood, sisterhood and friendships through songs, jokes, skits and more, all dedicated to the mother figures in our lives.

DOCUSERIES

Dr. Shuting "Susan" Zhong '11 is the creator and co-producer of *LIMITLESS*, a docuseries presented by Allergan Aesthetics highlighting inspiring stories from women plastic surgeons who have risen to prominence within their field as society presidents. Each woman tells her own story of resilience and fortitude, with advice for future women leaders in plastic surgery. Dr. Zhong is a plastic surgery resident at the University of North Carolina. *LIMITLESS* is available on YouTube.





IN-PERSON COMMENCEMENT CLASS OF 2020



(Above) David Uwajeh '20 is embraced by his mother after the Commencement ceremony for the graduates of the Class of 2020.

Illinois Wesleyan celebrated two graduating classes in three sessions of an unprecedented, in-person Commencement exercise on May 2, 2021, which recognized the achievements of the graduating classes of 2020 and 2021. Splitting the Class of 2021 into two sessions, and allowing graduates of the Class of 2020 to return for an in-person ceremony in a third session, promoted adherence to health guidelines set forth by local and national organizations to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



(Above) Students who might normally include messages on mortarboards, like Kathleen Holub '20, were able to do so on masks.



(Above) School of Theatre Arts grads (from left) Braden Tanner '20, Josiah Tennent '20 and James Conklin '20 pause for a photo.



(Above) Geisha Jimenez Williams, a leading executive in the energy industry, provides the keynote address.



(Above) Graduating members of the Class of 2020 await the beginning of the in-person Commencement ceremony.



(Above) Nicki Purpura '21 (left) walks across the podium to receive her diploma.



COMMENCEMENT

CLASS OF 2021



(Above) Jenny Ly '21 poses for a photo with her mother after the first session of a Commencement exercise for graduating members of the Class of 2021.



(Above) President S. Georgia Nugent laughs while addressing the Class of 2021 prior to the start of the Commencement exercise.



(Above) Classmates (from left) Gia Joyce '21, Shakira Cruz Gonzalez '21, Shaela Phillips '21, Samira Kassem '21, Que Jackson '21, Jarlai Morris '21 and Sarah Garces-Rivera '21 pose for a photo after Commencement.

(Below) Graduates of the School of Nursing included (from left) Lauryn Lingad '21, Bonnie Smith '21, Taylor Robinson '21 and Meghan Lehmann '21.



(Above) Men's golf teammates (from left) Rob Wuethrich '21, Andrew Abel '21 and Justin Park '21 pose for a photo.

Burke Nihill '00 is the president and CEO of the National Football League's Tennessee Titans, where he and his family are all part of the team.

TITAN AMONG TITANS

Story by MATT WING

The way Burke Nihill '00 describes landing a job with the Tennessee Titans sounds like an advertisement for LinkedIn.

And that's where it starts: a paid advertisement on the professional networking website.

"LinkedIn creates an algorithm, and if you search for jobs in a certain location and you're in a certain profession, they start putting advertisements in your feed," Nihill said. "And I had this job posting for the Tennessee Titans general counsel that popped up in my feed."

Nihill was intrigued but questioned his qualifications. He had never worked in sports. Most general counsels had twice his experience. But with each reading of the posting, he was able to form an argument he possessed what the Titans sought. With encouragement from his wife and kids, he applied

for the job.

He was surprised when his phone rang.

"I made it through round after round of interviews, and a few months later we were moving to Nashville," Nihill said. "It was exhilarating to get that offer."

Four years and two promotions later, Nihill got another phone call. This time it was Titans majority owner Amy Adams Strunk.

"It was the beginning of the pandemic, so everyone was working remotely, and she called to let me know (Titans president and CEO) Steve Underwood had retired," Nihill said. "And, to my great surprise and delight, she asked me to step into his role."



The first job Burke Nihill ever wanted was to be the starting third baseman for the Chicago Cubs.

When the suburban Chicago kid realized his big league dreams may never come true, he considered alternatives. Maybe he would follow in his father's footsteps as a dentist. Or maybe he'd become a teacher or a coach. He enrolled at Illinois Wesleyan knowing he'd be able to pursue many paths.

Nihill changed majors five or six times but never because he lacked interest in the subject material. "I always got curious and interested in something else," he said.

Nihill finally settled on business administration. He planned on a career in accounting, but a business law class changed his plans.

"I was on these parallel paths where I was interviewing at accounting firms, but also thinking about taking the LSAT (Law School Admission Test)," Nihill said. "I had taken one of Professor (David)

Marvin's business law classes and I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed him. It wasn't a drag to get through class."

Nihill took the LSAT. He applied to law schools. Accepted to the University of Illinois College of Law, he drove to the mall to buy an orange and blue Illini hat.

But once again, his plans changed.



A game of cards. A bag of Twizzlers. A sorority formal.

The progression of a relationship between Illinois Wesleyan students was unique, for sure.

Burke Nihill and Holly (Munch) Nihill '00 met playing cards at a bar in their final semester at IWU. They quickly learned they had much in common. They were both business administration majors. They were both active in Greek life, he in Theta Chi, she in Sigma Kappa. They both loved sports.

Holly Nihill was on the track team and served on the gameday operations staff for the football team on which her brother John Munch '98 was an All-American linebacker. Burke Nihill was on the club lacrosse team and a daily visitor at the Shirk Center, where he was incapable of turning down a pickup game invitation.

They were both competitive, whether it be on the track, the court, or in a game of cards.

It was a perfect match.

"I thought he was super sweet and really cute," said Holly Nihill. "I was the social chair of my sorority and we had a formal coming up, and I really wanted to go with someone special."

The courtship began. Plans were made to attend the formal. In the meantime, Burke Nihill indicated his interest in the same way a

penguin does by presenting its mate with a perfectly smooth pebble: he offered a gift.

"This was before students had personal computers, so if you wanted to check your email, you had to go to the computer lab," he recalled. "I knew from our earliest flirtations and dates that she liked Twizzlers, so when I knew she had some homework to do, I'd walk over to Buck Library and walk around, cubby by cubby, peeking over each one to see



(Above) Burke '00 and Holly (Munch) Nihill '00 pose for a photo before the Tennessee Titans' 2019 playoff game at Baltimore's M&T Bank Stadium.

(Opposite page) Burke Nihill sits for a photo inside Tennessee's Nissan Stadium.

if she was in there so I could give her some Twizzlers.

"It was just to show her that I was learning about her and to give her a little gift."

The relationship faced a test with Commencement fast approaching. Both made post-graduation plans prior to their meeting. Burke Nihill was going to law school at the University of

Illinois. Holly Nihill had planned a move to Arizona.

"We figured the best way to give us a chance was to find a spot where both of us could settle in," Burke Nihill said. "And it ended up being worth the sacrifice of our plans because we were engaged the next year and married the year after."



The first member of the Nihill family to work in professional sports wasn't Burke Nihill.

"I interned with the Chicago Bears for a couple summers and was eventually offered a full-time position," said Holly Nihill. "But I knew I would be supporting us while Burke was in law school, so I decided it was best to pass."

Having abandoned their post-graduation plans, the Nihills relocated to Chicago. Burke Nihill enrolled at Chicago-Kent College of Law while Holly Nihill supported the young couple with a job in account management at MetLife. After earning a law degree, Burke Nihill landed a job at a Chicago-based firm representing small businesses. The Nihills soon began a family.

The hours were long for Burke Nihill. He was rarely home in time to help put his daughter to bed. Wanting to spend more time with his family, he considered a career change. Holly Nihill was one step ahead of him.

"One night I looked over her shoulder and saw her looking on one of the job sites for me," Burke Nihill recalled. "It spurred a conversation that inspired me to find something else."

Burke Nihill found an opportunity at OfficeMax as associate general counsel, but his duties there quickly grew beyond the scope of

TITAN AMONG TITANS

legal transactions. He built a reputation as a creative problem solver. That reputation followed him to VMWare, a Silicon Valley software company, where he took a leadership role managing a team of 10 lawyers. “I had such unbelievably patient mentors who invested in me as a leader,” he recalled. “It was a big part of my journey.”

Near the end of his time at VMWare, a seminal moment came by way of a three-month assignment in Atlanta. Burke Nihill was tabbed to lead the legal team of a newly acquired business. The Nihills had never left Chicago and the prospect of leaving — even for just a few months — was not an appealing one.

Three months later, their feelings had changed.

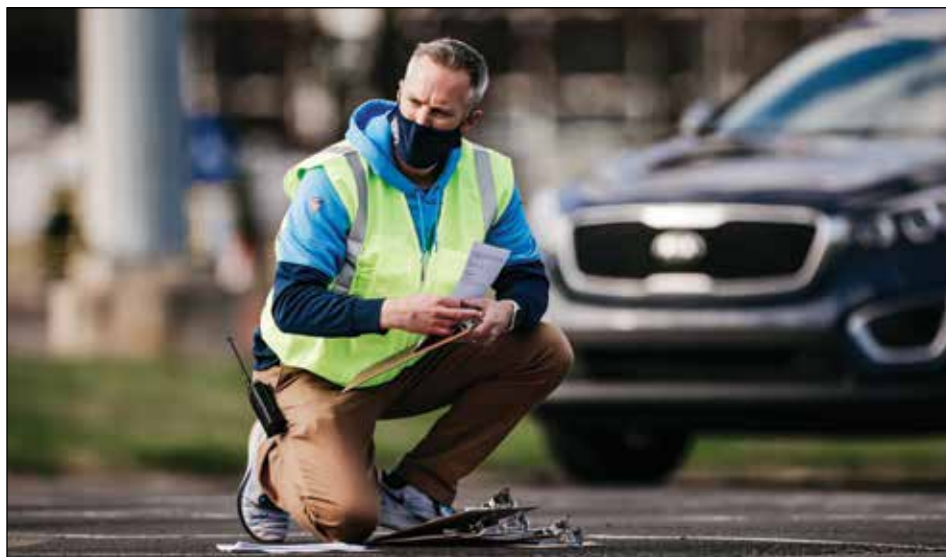
“We never thought about moving, but being forced to do it gave us this perspective that maybe there were some advantages to it,” Burke Nihill said. “Our family became closer because we were all we had, and we also got to see a different culture, a different way of life.

“It was a really eye-opening experience and kind of convinced us we could move.”



In the Tennessee Titans’ third season in Nashville, and first using the Titans moniker, the team played in the Super Bowl for the first time in franchise history. Late in the fourth quarter, needing a touchdown to tie the game, Titans wide receiver Kevin Dyson caught a pass and darted toward the end zone, only to be tackled at the 1-yard line as time expired.

It was one of the most exciting finishes in Super Bowl history, albeit a disappointing one for the Titans. But it offered hope for the future.



(Above) Burke Nihill volunteers during a COVID-19 vaccination clinic hosted at Nissan Stadium in Nashville.

This was in 2000.

The following years produced mixed results. When Burke Nihill first came on board in 2016, the Titans were in the midst of an eight-year playoff drought and the reluctant owners of the top pick in the NFL Draft by virtue of having the league’s worst record the season before.

The Titans were struggling. So were the Nihills.

“The first year here was hard,” Holly Nihill said of the move to Nashville. “I’m not a cryer, but I think I cried every day that first year.”

Slowly, fortunes started changing for the Titans ... and the Nihills.

The Titans posted their first winning campaign in five years in Burke Nihill’s first season with the team. The next season, they won their first playoff game in 15 years.

The Nihills, meanwhile, settled into their new home. The Nihill children made new friends and immersed themselves in school, sports and activities. Burke and Holly Nihill made new friends, too, including many through the Titans.

Wanting to become a “real southerner,” Burke Nihill took an interest in barbecuing and smoking meats.

He settled into his role with the Titans, too. As general counsel, he served in a legal function, managing vendor contracts and employment issues. Then president and CEO Steve Underwood — himself the team’s former general counsel — took Nihill under his wing, inviting him to meetings and project work extending far beyond the legal realm.

Burke Nihill gladly accepted additional responsibilities. Through two promotions — first to vice president in 2018 and then to senior vice president in 2020 — he took on oversight of human relations and stadium operations. He was asked to spearhead the Titans’ successful bid to host the 2019 NFL Draft, a smashing success with records set for attendance and viewership.

Nihill’s talent as a creative problem solver and jack of all trades became evident to the Titans’ top brass.

“I had a really unique opportunity,” he said. “I was able to get

involved and have visibility and build trust within every corner of the organization.”



The role of an NFL president and CEO varies from club to club. The league’s top executives primarily oversee business operations. Some dabble in football operations. Others take on pet projects. In 2020, they were consumed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Burke Nihill wants to make his organization the best in the NFL. Even before he assumed the front office’s top position, he took notice of a mission statement prominently displayed in the team cafeteria. A group was formed to review it and, nearly two years and much discussion later, a new, simplified mission was unveiled.

Win. Serve. Entertain.

Nihill loves the new mission statement. He talks about it any chance he gets. That included a presentation to Illinois Wesleyan students, sponsored by the Hart Career Center, in April 2021.

The bookend aims of the mission are simple. The Titans want to win games. They want to win championships. The organization also wants to entertain its fans. In the music capital of the world, where entertainment options are plentiful, the Titans have to stand out.

The other aim is perhaps the one Nihill is most invested in. He wants to show how the Titans are engaged members of the community. In just the past year, Nashville has endured flooding, tornadoes and a Christmas day bombing in its downtown district. The Titans have responded in the typical ways of donating supplies and funding relief organizations. But the Titans also show up. Burke and Holly

Nihill boarded buses with other Titans staffers, coaches, players and spouses to respond in crisis situations.

“We see ourselves as neighbors to our community,” Burke Nihill said. “We write plenty of checks to help in those situations, but we feel it’s more meaningful if we can show up ourselves.”

The Nihill kids do their part, too, handing out school supplies to underprivileged students on the first day of school every year. “Getting to see our kids serve is pretty special, and I know it’s impacted them,” Holly Nihill said. “It’s given us the chance to talk about having a duty to give back to the community.”

By living their mission, the Titans’ visibility in Nashville is on the rise. Success is judged by wins and losses, of course, but the Nihills see success when their kids’ friends visit their home wearing Titans T-shirts, or when they see a wall covered in Titans apparel at Dick’s Sporting Goods.

“A lot of it has to do with the success of the team, but we’ve taken

a different approach to how we engage with fans and serve the community,” Burke Nihill said. “They get to see us loving the community, which I think in turn inspires them to love us back.”

The Titans’ future is bright. In 2019, they came just one win shy of the Super Bowl. In 2020, the franchise won its first division title in a dozen years.

The Nihills’ future is bright, too. Once hesitant to leave Chicago, Nashville is now their home. Holly Nihill says they’ll be buried there one day. Burke Nihill says that even when his time with the Titans is up, his family will be sticking around.

The Titans and the Nihills are rooted in the community.

“I honestly believe this is where we are supposed to be,” Burke Nihill said. “Holly and I really try to pay attention to that fact and do it justice by leveraging what we’ve been given here to do good in our community.

“And hopefully during my leadership of this organization we can continue to do really great things.” ❖



(Above) Once reluctant to leave their suburban Chicago roots, the Nihills are happy to call Nashville home.

Through her many campus roles, Vickie (Noltkamper) Folse '86 helped the Illinois Wesleyan community safely navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Vickie (Noltkamper) Folse '86 prepared to address a group of graduating nursing students for the final time in a classroom setting this spring, she searched for the right words to say.

The Illinois Wesleyan professor and director of IWU's School of Nursing ultimately chose to let her students do most of the talking.

"It was important to acknowledge their personal exhaustion and the magnitude of this pandemic, with the awareness that they are entering a very different healthcare system than what they envisioned when they committed to nursing as their major," she said. "We reflected back on a year that has been surreal and punctuated by a raw awareness

of the vulnerabilities that we all experience."

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many difficult discussions on Illinois Wesleyan's campus, and Folse has been in on most of them. As a faculty member in the School of Nursing, she has played a leading role in preparing the next generation of nurses to enter the healthcare sector during one of the most uncertain times in our history. As the executive director of both IWU's Arnold Health Services and Counseling & Consultation Services, she has guided essential services benefiting students' physical and mental health.

As a member of IWU's COVID-19 campus response team, she's been



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Story by MATT WING

an unwavering, science-driven leader in developing health guidelines and policy to keep the Illinois Wesleyan community safe and healthy.

“Vickie has been tireless — and essential — in working to keep this campus safe,” said IWU President S. Georgia Nugent. “Her relationships in the health community enabled us to have clear, accurate and timely information. Her formidable organizational skills helped us to effectively manage testing, contact tracing, vaccination clinics, and more.”

Nugent pointed to Folse’s vital roles in Health Services and Counseling & Consultation Services — posts initially assumed in interim capacities less than six months prior to the pandemic — and her total commitment to the well-being of the entire Illinois Wesleyan community.

That dedication, Nugent said, helped Illinois Wesleyan manage the pandemic in an exemplary fashion, with low case totals and infection rates, and broad community adherence to the “Titan Pledge to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19.”

“Honestly, I don’t believe we could have succeeded as we did without her,” Nugent said of Folse. “I could sum it up this way: Vickie Folse is Illinois Wesleyan’s Dr. Fauci.”



A childhood playground accident and ensuing trip to the emergency room marked an important moment in setting Vickie Folse on a nursing career path.

In a frenzied dash to the tetherball pole while she was in the fourth grade, Folse collided with a classmate. Briefly dazed, she quickly noticed everyone on the



(Above) Vickie (Noltkamper) Folse '86 works with Illinois Wesleyan nursing students in the classroom. (Opposite page) Folse pauses for a photo in her Stevenson Hall office.

playground was staring at her. She soon learned why as she was quickly transported to the ER to receive stitches for a gaping head wound.

Unlike those around her, Folse remained calm throughout the ordeal. Before the doctor stitched her up, she asked for a mirror so she could see the treatment she was receiving.

“I had this nice combination of handling a crisis calmly and being intrigued by the roles of the healthcare providers around me,” she said. “And it really solidified my interest.”

Folse later enrolled at Illinois Wesleyan as a nursing major and, while her primary focus was cemented years earlier by that playground injury, she knew she wanted to explore other subjects. In addition to her nursing coursework, she counted philosophy and religion courses among her favorites. She immersed herself in campus life and joined Sigma Kappa Sorority. She met her future husband, Dick Folse '85.

Vickie Folse began her nursing career at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois.

A couple years later, she earned a master’s degree in psychiatric nursing from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She resumed her work at Saint Francis and shortly thereafter began “dabbling in teaching,” leading clinical courses at Bradley University. In 2002, she earned a doctorate in nursing from St. Louis University.

Later that year, she returned to her alma mater in a full-time capacity as an assistant professor in IWU’s School of Nursing.

She had come full circle.

“I was a student here more than three decades ago — I don’t know where the time has gone — but I love that the quaintness of Illinois Wesleyan has remained and that the faculty-student relationships have endured,” Folse said. “I look at students’ experiences today and they very much parallel my own.”



When Vickie Folse and members of IWU’s COVID-19 campus response team first convened in early 2020, they could never have imagined how all-consuming their work would soon become.

Illinois Wesleyan’s first official

communication regarding what was then termed the “2019 Novel Coronavirus” was sent on Feb. 3, 2020. The ensuing weeks and months entailed many more such messages, the pivot to online instruction for the remainder of the spring semester, and hundreds of hours planning for a safe return to campus for the 2020-21 academic year.

“The questions we were receiving at the beginning were so raw because we knew so little about the transmission of the virus then,” Folse said. “People were trying to balance their commitment to Illinois Wesleyan with a very real fear of the risks they could bring home to their families. People who weren’t involved in the official campus conversations or who weren’t reading the scientific literature were coming to work and they were frightened.”

Folse met regularly with health and government officials, including the McLean County Health Department. Prominent alumni working in healthcare were consulted. A partnership with Redittus Laboratories was developed to conduct on-campus testing. Folse also met weekly with medical directors from other colleges and universities in Illinois to discuss the evolving science and the responses on their campuses.

In some instances, Illinois Wesleyan instituted policies more stringent than the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, and local and state health departments.

“Not everyone agreed with us, but I stand by the decisions we made because we were making them within the context of a residential campus community that has athletics as part of our DNA

and face-to-face learning as our tradition of teaching,” Folse said.

The Illinois Wesleyan community has been steadfast in its commitment to mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and cleaning protocols, which helped keep case rates low on campus, Folse said. Conducting baseline testing — required tests for all students upon arrival on campus at the outset of the fall and spring semesters — also played a vital role in preventing the spread of the virus.

Folse says she’s proud of the University’s response to COVID-19 and commitment to the Titan Pledge. She played a leading role in keeping the campus community safe, but insists it was a team effort.

“I can’t think of a single person on this campus that wasn’t somehow involved in either decision-making or in implementing very difficult policies or procedures that allowed us to stay true to our academic and residential mission while keeping people safe,” she said.



Vickie Folse sat across the table from familiar faces when she returned to Illinois Wesleyan to interview for a faculty position. Many were her former professors.

Folse was hired by Illinois Wesleyan as an assistant professor in 2002. She was promoted to associate professor in 2008. A year later, she earned an even bigger promotion.

“Many of the faculty members who taught me were still here and were my colleagues for many years,” she said. “So it was a great honor when, after a national search in 2009, I was chosen to be the director of the School of Nursing, because many of the people on that

search committee were those very faculty members who were here when I was a student.”

Under Folse’s leadership, the School of Nursing has continued to grow as one of Illinois Wesleyan’s most well-subscribed programs. Folse has frequently published and presented research, and reviewed others’ work in nursing journals. She’s earned grants for the School of Nursing and faculty-student research. She’s served on countless campus groups and committees doing wide-ranging work, from setting curriculum to student advising to serving on hiring committees. In 2018, she earned the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence.

Her reputation as a campus leader well known, Folse has been relied upon heavily in recent years. She served as interim director of IWU’s School of Music for 14 months, beginning in June 2018, and, just three months after finishing that role, took on the role of interim executive director of IWU’s Arnold Health Services and Counseling



(Above) Folse was the winner of the 2018 Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence.

& Consultation Services. (Folse eventually shed the interim tag and will remain in the role through the 2021-22 academic year, though the University remains committed to finding a full-time executive director.)

“Vickie Folse has long been an outstanding campus leader as director of the School of Nursing,” President Nugent said. “But this year, her contributions to our campus have been incomparable.”

It’s all in a day’s work for Folse, who, despite her many roles, still counts teaching as her primary focus. After all, she was once in her students’ shoes.

“I think it’s a great perspective to have, and it probably makes me more tolerant of the students talking to each other in the back of the classroom,” she said with a laugh. “They could be future leaders.”



Sixteen months after the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vickie Folse sees a light at the end of the tunnel. Widespread availability of vaccines and declining positivity rates — both locally and nationally — are cause for optimism as Illinois Wesleyan prepares to welcome students back for the fall semester.

“We’re not out of the woods yet, but I think we have a template that works well for us,” Folse said. “I think we can be successful in staying the course.”

The 2021-22 academic year will be the third consecutive school year impacted by the pandemic, though not nearly to the extent of the past two years. Illinois Wesleyan is planning a full return to face-to-face learning, and after more than a year of mostly online, hybrid and HyFlex course offerings, programs



(Above) Illinois Wesleyan nursing students administered COVID-19 vaccines during two sessions of an on-campus vaccine clinic this spring.

like nursing that rely heavily on hands-on learning will soon be back to serving students in their pre-pandemic modalities.

Though the pandemic necessitated new modes of instruction never before deployed at Illinois Wesleyan, Folse has the utmost confidence in the preparedness of nursing students whose experiences were altered because of the pandemic.

“The cumulative four-year experience they had may have been cut short by a few months, but that doesn’t take away from the totality of their experiences. I remain as confident in the graduates of 2020 and 2021 as I always have,” Folse said. “My youngest daughter finished work on her nursing degree in 2020, so I watched IWU students navigate all of those abrupt shifts through the lens of a parent watching her own daughter do the same at another university.”

For all the opportunities dashed by the pandemic, a few were born from it. Illinois Wesleyan nursing students were offered experiential learning opportunities as volun-

teers during on-campus COVID testing clinics and, more recently, two sessions of a vaccine clinic hosted at the Shirk Center.

As she prepares for students returning to campus in just a few short weeks, Folse has often reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed us. “It’s been an opportunity for all of us to slow down and reevaluate what’s important,” she said. “I hope we don’t lose that.”

The tragic loss of life over the past 16 months has been heartbreaking. Initial inadequacy of personal protective equipment was disheartening. Inconsistent messaging from the highest levels was frustrating to all, especially those in healthcare and health education.

But Vickie Folse chooses to focus on the good as she reflects on the COVID-19 pandemic and how it’s impacted the Illinois Wesleyan community.

“The best part, without question, has been watching our campus come together to achieve a shared goal,” she said. “The highlight has been seeing what, when we are unified, we could accomplish.” ❖



REIMAGINING RADIO

Story by JOHN TWORK

Illinois Wesleyan's storied campus radio station, WESN, is evolving through renewed interest and investment while continuing to serve as an important platform for student voices.

Seated behind the guest mic with less than a minute before showtime, Jez Lafuente '24 admits that he's suddenly feeling nervous.

"It's just a conversation," assures Lea Spiers '22 with a calming smile. Spiers pulls the host mic closer and checks the nearby computer screen where a digital countdown indicates the final moments of a song.

"Ten seconds," she says to Lafuente and Martin Rodriguez '23 who are seated across from her, separated by a large mixing board covered in an orderly array of lighted buttons and dials. As the music fades, Spiers flips on the mics and welcomes the listening audience to

her show, *Diversity Deep Dish*, live on 88.1 WESN — Illinois Wesleyan University's student radio station.

On this week's episode, Spiers and her guests — Lafuente and Rodriguez — are discussing the animated television series *Steven Universe*. As promised, Spiers pulls Lafuente and Rodriguez into an engaging, natural conversation. The mics seemingly disappear.

And, yet, Spiers remains aware of the technical aspects, checking audio levels and occasionally adjusting the mic stands. As her guests chat, she glances at a tablet where her notes for the show are compiled in a digital document.

Spiers, Lafuente and Rodriguez discuss many aspects of *Steven Universe* with a focus on ways that the show has "set the bar for inclusion in animated television," according to Spiers.

"The diversity of the cast is incredible ... and the music!" Lafuente exclaims. "Speaking of music..." says Spiers, seizing upon the natural transition to play a song featured on the show.

To a listener, Spiers sounds like a seasoned professional. In reality, this is only her 10th episode. Two months ago, she had never spoken on the radio.

But, after receiving a campus-

wide email from WESN Advisory Committee Chair Tony Bankston '91 inviting students to consider hosting or DJing for an hour or two each week, Spiers decided to give it a try. Now, she's among about 30 students who are part of the newly revitalized and increasingly relevant WESN.

Launched in the 1970s, WESN has a storied history that includes an impressive list of successful alumni who honed the craft of broadcasting in Kemp Hall's basement studio. Through the decades, technology at the station has changed — from music on vinyl, to eight tracks, to cassette tapes, to CDs, to digital tunes. The purpose of the station has also evolved.

Bankston — now Illinois Wesleyan's associate athletic director — started at WESN as a first-year student during the fall of 1987 amid the station's alternative rock heyday. While walking to his room on the second floor of Magill Hall, a classmate noticed Bankston's R.E.M. concert T-shirt and suggested that he consider DJing a show at the campus radio station.

"College radio back then was the only place you could find alternative music, like R.E.M.," said

Bankston, who first DJed Fridays from 8-10 p.m. "People would listen from the fraternity house or as they were getting ready for a social event or something like that, and then people around town would listen as well. So, it just became a really fun outlet to play music."

Bankston said in the 1990s, students filled up WESN's weekly schedule with shows from 6 a.m. until about 2 a.m. "And, there wasn't a computer in sight," he noted. As a student DJ, Bankston transitioned from playing cassette tapes to CDs. Former WESN general manager Rick Lindquist '99 oversaw station modernization and implementation of digital music in the early 2000s. Gradually, listeners' reliance on radio for music decreased as access to online music grew. With the development of MP3 players, smartphones and music streaming services, listenership and overall student interest in WESN waned. The once full schedule of live, student-hosted shows was replaced by primarily automated music and occasional community programming.

But, thanks to recent efforts by Bankston, Senior Digital Creative Strategist Curtis Kelch, School of

Theatre Arts Stage Electrician Joe Vitti '17, and local broadcaster Derek Bohlmann — who now serves as the station's general manager — WESN is undergoing a significant overhaul. Unchanged is the service that WESN provides: a platform for Illinois Wesleyan student expression.

To better support operations, WESN now airs underwriting spots — the nonprofit radio version of commercials — during Illinois Wesleyan sports play-by-play broadcasts and throughout student programming. Bohlmann provides much-needed consistent station leadership while overseeing fundraising efforts and technical operations, along with training and scheduling of student broadcasters. He also collaborated with Bankston on a comprehensive station renovation project which included replacing outdated equipment, upgrading the computerized automation system, and updating the studio with new paint, branded wall decals, and improved furniture.

At the beginning of the spring 2021 semester, Bankston sent that campuswide email seeking student involvement in recently relaunched WESN. Spiers, a sociology major with a double minor in women's



(Above) WESN has served as a creative outlet for students over the years, from 1972 (left) to 1987 (middle) to 2006 (right) to today.

(Opposite page) Lea Spiers '22 hosts *Diversity Deep Dish* on WESN this spring.



(Above) As WESN Advisory Committee Chair, **Tony Bankston '91** has helped lead the revitalization of Illinois Wesleyan's student radio station.

and gender studies and health, was intrigued. Though she had never considered hosting a radio program before, Spiers — who works as a peer mentor in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) — thought it could serve as a creative outlet for some of her primary interests.

"I like music. I love my work with ODI — diversity and inclusion are very important to me. So, I could kind of combine it all into one," Spiers said.

After expressing interest, Spiers visited the studio where Bohlmann explained the technical aspects of hosting a show. Spiers recalls taking detailed notes on her phone.

"It was a lot, and I was kind of nervous," Spiers admits. "You have to make sure your mics are in program mode, and make sure your mics are on and know what to click."

Generating content for the 90-minute, weekly program was less daunting for Spiers. Before her first show, Spiers created a mission statement that she reads at the beginning of each episode: "We strive to connect students in innovative ways to ODI and its resources, provide students with a virtual space for expression and community, and

promote/inform decisions, different initiatives on campus and in the Bloomington-Normal community through an inclusive lens."

"I just really like connecting with students and centering students' voices that aren't always at the center of attention on campus," Spiers said.

Although she lacked specific radio experience, Spiers — similar to countless WESN alumni — quickly identified parallels between her liberal arts academic experience and hosting an on-air program.

"In research methods, we had a unit on in-depth interviews," Spiers said. "And so it was fun seeing those connections between how to create a research-oriented interview and what questions you ask, what probes you might want to use to follow up on questions, especially in the interview instrument. That was a cool way of seeing those two worlds (sociology and radio) collide."

She continued, "It's a huge conglomeration of all my interests, and I love one-on-one, deep conversations, hence 'Deep Dish' as the name; that's how things knit together."

Like many of the other new WESN programs, Spiers' *Diversity Deep Dish* has taken inspiration not from other radio shows, but from podcasts. "I love podcasts. I love NPR's *Code Switch*," Spiers said.

Bankston, who jokingly refers to terrestrial radio as "the original podcast," sees increased interest among students who want to host on-air conversations, akin to podcasts, focused on news, politics, social justice, entertainment and sports among other topics. He also notes that along with centering student conversations, WESN still

provides a platform for music that isn't played on commercial radio.

As word continues to spread about opportunities at WESN, Bankston is confident that involvement in the revitalized station will grow from around 30 students to more than 100.

"For any Illinois Wesleyan major, enhancing those communication skills through an extracurricular like doing a radio show really ties together the liberal arts experience," Bankston said. "With a vibrant radio station, I think we're going to continue to have students who end up pursuing careers in broadcast communications after graduation because of the exposure that they had through WESN."

After wrapping up a semester of *Diversity Deep Dish*, Spiers isn't quite ready to begin applying for jobs in professional radio. However, she is looking forward to returning to the WESN airwaves this fall.

"I hope that the sphere of influence and awareness around the show gets larger," said Spiers. "Representation is really important to me. That has been a very rewarding aspect of doing the show — knowing that students are feeling seen and feeling heard."

Nearly 50 years since it first signed on, WESN is vastly different in many ways, yet importantly similar through its ability to amplify the authentic voices of Illinois Wesleyan students, via 88.1 FM. ❖



Listen to WESN live at: iwu.edu/wesn.

Launching Careers

Since its founding in 1972, WESN has provided an outlet for scores of Illinois Wesleyan students to share their voices with the campus and greater Bloomington-Normal community. For nearly 50 years, the student radio station has helped launch careers in broadcasting, journalism and related fields.



"When I arrived in Bloomington in the fall of 1992, I brought with me a stack of cassettes containing a variety of music in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu. Although a busy academic and social life meant that I did not have time, I was very keen to share the music with my South Asian friends on campus. When I heard about an early week-end morning slot on WESN, I jumped on it. For me it was the best way to stay in touch with my music and culture even though I knew my audience was fairly limited. But little did I know that I was developing skills that would one day become very useful. Learning to operate the sound desk and talk freely on live radio gave me an immense sense of confidence when I embarked on broadcast journalism. Looking back, I can still feel the invisible hand of WESN on my shoulders, holding me steady as I walk into the studios of the Broadcasting House in London."



Junaid Ahmed '96

BBC News journalist and co-editor of the podcast *The Real Story*

"WESN was truly a game changer for me. I was recruited out of Dodds Hall by Ken DeLuc '81. He was pioneering an early form of social media, a call-in show where people were encouraged to get worries off their chests. I helped Ken field calls and, I must confess, I would force some of my Sigma Kappa sisters to offer up complaints, just to avoid dead air. In the basement of Kemp Hall, I learned it all: how to work a mic, backtime a spoken lead-in, how to cue an album. I was even the proud carrier of a third class FCC license; I have kept the wallet-sized card to this day. When I got my own time slot, I was thrilled to program a very eclectic show that might pivot from Pachelbel to P-Funk. I truly found my passion that year and decided to pursue a different career path in grad school that would lead to decades on the air in TV news. So thanks, WESN and Ken DeLuc, for opening that nondescript side basement door!"



Demetria Kalodimos '81

Television News Presenter and Executive Producer at the *Nashville Banner*

"I'm grateful IWU has WESN — that it was there for me while a student and that it is still there today. This little 100-watt transmitter radio station that serves students on campus now has me working for the world's largest audio entertainment company, reaching tens of millions of listeners every day. WESN gave me the career focus I sought and it keeps getting better. Radio today is very different than when I first started. Yet, what WESN can provide for students today is still very much the same and just as valuable as it was back then for me: the ability to learn how to entertain; to communicate; to contribute to communities; to be a scrappy DIYer (which matters in commercial radio as well); and to understand how simple yet important it is when someone on the radio can make a listener laugh, smile and feel great when they hear a favorite song, or simply relate to news and events happening that day."



Chris Kennedy '87

Senior Director/Music Programming, Insight and Personalization at SiriusXM Radio

"I got started in radio working at WESN in the summer of 1974 and loved every bit of the freedom of working at a college radio station. The summer format was very loose and featured music and hosts of all kinds. Former IWU English professor Bob Bray and Spencer Sauter '70 had a late night show called "Ultramontane," playing a lot of what would later be called progressive rock, Pink Floyd and King Crimson. I was considerably less progressive and tried to master running the turntables, talking into the microphone, reading the news. The signal was not exactly booming into the community, so mistakes weren't noticed by too many listeners. When the school year started I still did a show and even a couple of football broadcasts, but by January Term 1975, I had an internship with local commercial station WIHN that eventually became a regular part-time job, leading to a 12-year run on WJBC."



Stew Salowitz '76

Retired Sports Information Director and Radio Personality

Illinois Wesleyan's
2021 Distinguished
Alumni Award winner
Dr. William Farrar '71
has made a lasting
impact through his
many leadership roles
at The Ohio State
University Wexner
Medical Center.



LEAVING A LEGACY

Story by MATT WING

Dr. William Farrar '71 etched his name into the Illinois Wesleyan football record book when, on one crisp fall afternoon in 1968, he plucked five North Park passes from midair to set a Titan football record for interceptions in a single game. The mark has stood for over 50 years and no one has even come close.

It's a record Farrar is proud of, for sure, but it will pale in comparison to the legacy he will leave when he retires one day from a career that has already spanned well over four decades at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

A surgical oncologist specializing in the treatment of breast cancer, Farrar has held leadership positions at institutional, state and national levels over the course of a distinguished career. He's currently chief executive officer of The James Cancer Hospital and Solove

Research Institute, director of the Stefanie Spielman Comprehensive Breast Center, and the Dr. Arthur G. and Mildred C. James-Richard J. Solove Chair in Surgical Oncology.

It's three full-time jobs for one person, all with a common aim.

"It's all about patient care and trying to make a difference. Caring for cancer patients is something I have truly found worthwhile and meaningful," Farrar said. "It's been tough to figure out when I should retire because I really feel that taking care of cancer patients is my purpose — and I have been blessed to meet, treat and help thousands of unique patients along their cancer journeys."

Dr. William Farrar is the winner of Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award.

"I really was very humbled when I was told, but I'm proud to repre-

sent my class," Farrar said. "To be considered for and receive this award is something that I had never even thought about."

Farrar was born in Centralia, Illinois. His family moved to Clinton, Illinois, when he started elementary school, and eventually to Aurora, Illinois, by the time he entered the fourth grade. He was active in sports and brought home report cards that would make any parent proud. Plans to become a doctor were made early on.

"I think it was back in the seventh grade when we had career night and we had to write down what we wanted to do and, for me, number one was medicine and number two was law," Farrar said. "We also had a family friend who practiced medicine, and he often spoke about how much he loved his career and helping patients."

Farrar served as an orderly at a local hospital during his high school summers, and his interest in medicine grew from those experiences. Scouted by an Illinois Wesleyan recruiter because of his athletic talents, Farrar chose IWU for equal parts academics and athletics. He stood out in the classroom, where he was mentored by influential professors Wendell Hess and Dorothea Franzen. He stood out on the field of competition, too, starring for the Titans' basketball, football and golf teams. He won a total of 10 varsity letters.

"I enjoyed all aspects of both the academic as well as the athletic experiences Wesleyan provided for me," Farrar said. "It was exactly what I wanted and what I needed. I was actually sorry I had to leave Wesleyan because I really had such a good time and such great friends."

Bachelor's degree in hand, Farrar enrolled at the University of Virginia for medical school, where he found himself better prepared than many of his classmates. "Wesleyan did a great job of educating me for the next step," he said.

Farrar landed at The Ohio State University in 1975 to serve his general surgery residency. Aside from a two-year fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, he's never left Columbus, Ohio, for any significant stretch of time.

Much like the professors who inspired him at IWU, Farrar found a mentor at OSU in Dr. Arthur James, who encouraged him to pursue surgical oncology.

"I was his partner until he retired in 1989," Farrar said. "During that time, I learned of his desire for a cancer hospital to be built in Columbus, which was completed in 1990, and I'm grateful to

have been here before and since its opening."

Farrar has served in many roles over the past 31 years at The James, from director of the surgical oncology division, to heading the surgical oncology fellowship program, to serving as the director of medical affairs. He was appointed interim CEO of the hospital bearing his colleague's name in 2017. A year later, he was named its permanent CEO.

Farrar has had chances to work elsewhere, but he's never seriously entertained an opportunity that would take him away from The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center — especially The James.

"I've just never really wanted to leave what I helped build here in Columbus. That's why I'm still here," said Farrar, who still operates two days a week. "One of these days I'm going to retire, but I'm not quite sure when that will be."

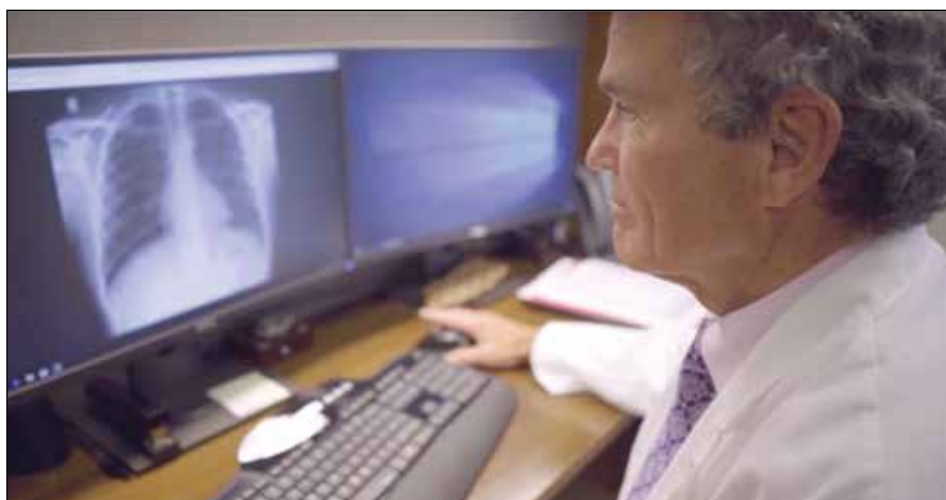
Farrar says he has plans for when that day comes. He and his wife Kathryn will spend more time with their four children and seven grandchildren. Farrar passed his athletic prowess on to his kids — his

son was an accomplished hockey player and his three daughters all won state tennis championships in high school — and the grandkids are beginning to play organized sports now, too.

Travel will be part of retirement as well, although a trip to Illinois Wesleyan won't have to wait until then. Farrar will be back for Homecoming 2021 to celebrate his 50-year reunion and accept the Distinguished Alumni Award.

A busy career and family life have limited Farrar to only a couple of return trips to his alma mater over the years, but he's looking forward to seeing what has changed and what has remained the same at the University where he left his mark.

"I'm sure it will be a lot of fun," he said. "I hope the people I played sports with and my fraternity brothers are able to come back and we get a good turnout. I'm hoping I'll be able to see old friends, talk about old times and embellish stories from back then that weren't as good as we'll make them sound when we tell them now, so I'm really looking forward to all of it." ❖



(Above) Dr. William Farrar '71 reviews an X-ray on the campus of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. (Opposite page) Farrar, Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, poses for a photo on the campus of the Wexner Medical Center.

Kathleen Larey Lewton '70

Loyalty Award



Only one name will be engraved on the Loyalty Award that Illinois Wesleyan presents to an individual at its Homecoming 2021 festivities, but the recipient of that award wishes there was room for a lot more.

Kathleen Larey Lewton '70, the recipient of Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Loyalty Award, would like to share the honor with each and every member of her graduating class.

"This really is an award for all of our class volunteers, including our reunion committee, so I'll be accepting it and saying it's for the Class of 1970," Lewton said. "It'll be for our class members' involvement and support of IWU since we came to campus 55 years ago."

The Class of 1970 has been one of Illinois Wesleyan's most active alumni groups. "People are involved via alumni chapters, helping with recruiting, speaking to classes, giving and raising contributions, working with faculty in their majors and the Career Center," Lewton said. "The first Alumni Association Board president was Mark Sheldon '70, and that's just the topline list.

"Class member involvement is as varied as our class members were when we were on campus."

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of change when young people worked to shape the world around them. IWU students at the time rallied to end the "women's hours" curfew and compulsory chapel, and fought to allow jeans on campus and male visitation in women's residence halls. They also responded to world events, like the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the struggle for civil rights, the Vietnam War and the Kent State shootings.

"Not everyone agreed, but we had a lot of dialogue and sharing of

involved is because of the amazing faculty who taught and supported us."

Lewton's connection to IWU has remained particularly strong. She's never missed a Homecoming, despite a career that's taken her all over the country. Lewton wrote for *The Pantagraph* before segueing into health/science public relations, at Bowling Green State University, two leading academic medical centers and several global PR agencies, before finally founding a consulting firm with two colleagues in 2005.

Lewton, of course, brings that communications background and passion to her IWU service: more than 20 years as a trustee (now

"This really is an award for all of our class volunteers, including our reunion committee, so I'll be accepting it and saying it's for the Class of 1970."

— KATHLEEN LAREY LEWTON '70

opinions, and it was always civil," Lewton said. "After Kent State, some wanted the flag lowered. On many campuses, students just pulled the flag down, but in our IWU way, a group asked President (Robert) Eckley for permission, which was later given after a Student Senate vote to make the formal request."

Members of the Class of 1970 were engaged then. And they're engaged now.

"You got to know your classmates really well, and not just the people in your major or who you lived with. You got to know the people you worked with on committees, social events, Student Senate and more," Lewton said. "The other reason I think so many of us are still so

co-chairing the marketing committee and serving on the diversity initiatives committee); hosting fundraisers; chairing inauguration events; recruiting students; and, of course, leading the class reunion committee since graduation.

And for its 50th class reunion, the Class of 1970 has endowed two "Spirit Awards," a faculty/staff award and a student scholarship.

"Everyone who has served on our reunion committees was active when they were students," Lewton said. "If there's a lesson there, it's that campus activists become loyal alums, and looking at our recent and current students, I can see we have many more loyalists joining the ranks." ♦

Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15

Robert M. Montgomery Young Alumni Award



When Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15 received a phone call informing him he had won an award from his alma mater, he first had to turn down the volume on an episode of *Paw Patrol* playing loudly on his TV.

Cabrales-Vasquez was babysitting his niece and nephew, a common duty for someone who has always put family first. He has long felt a responsibility to provide for them, and that support extends to his greater community, too.

From co-founding a nonprofit as a high school student to his current role with Year Up Chicago, a nonprofit workforce development program, Cabrales-Vasquez is dedicated to helping others.

Luis Cabrales-Vasquez is the winner of Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Robert M. Montgomery Young Alumni Award.

"The community that I come from is resilient," he said. "When I talk about my life and my upbringing, a lot of people focus on the things that I didn't have and, while that is a big part of what pushed me to where I'm at today, it's also the things I had in spades that a lot of

people don't."

Cabrales-Vasquez's journey to a career in community service and advocacy started long ago, probably back when he was an 11-year-old boy sweeping hair at a local barber-shop to earn money for his family. It continued at IWU, where he worked five part-time jobs — all while carrying a full course load — to be able to send money back home.

"I'm the middle child of seven, but I kind of grew up like the oldest child," he said. "My parents are

"I always tell people in my community that everything I have — my skills, my resources, my knowledge, my education, my network, my pocketbook, whatever it is — it is available to all of you."

— LUIS CABRALES-VASQUEZ '15

undocumented, and my siblings are of mixed citizenship status. Some of us are undocumented, and that creates barriers in finding work or getting ahead.

"I was a first-generation college student and I still had a family to support, so I had to find a way to make a full-time income while graduating on time."

Cabrales-Vasquez earned a bachelor's degree in sociology at IWU, all while active in Acacia, cheerleading, and other campus groups and jobs. He went on to earn a master's degree in social work, with a certification in nonprofit management, from the University of Illinois.

Cabrales-Vasquez graduated there on a Saturday, moved to Chicago on a Sunday, and started his job at Year Up on a Monday. "No gaps in my resume," he jokes.

The work he does now is rewarding, especially when he sees young people succeed. But Cabrales-Vasquez cringes when others cite him as a success story. It makes him think of others who didn't have chances to be successful.

That's why he does what he does.

"I couldn't just live my life and walk away from my community without feeling guilt that I'm not doing anything," he said. "I always tell people in my community that everything I have — my skills, my

resources, my knowledge, my education, my network, my pocketbook, whatever it is — it is available to all of you." ♦



**Best of Illinois Wesleyan:
Alumni Awards Ceremony**

Illinois Wesleyan 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award winner **Dr. William Farrar '71**, Loyalty Award winner **Kathleen Larey Lewton '70** and Robert M. Montgomery Young Alumni Award winner **Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15** will be recognized at the Best of Illinois Wesleyan: Alumni Awards Ceremony on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021, at 6 p.m. in Young Main Lounge, during Illinois Wesleyan's Homecoming 2021 activities.

W
ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
Homecoming
Your Story Starts Here
October 1-3
2021

We are looking forward to welcoming our alumni, parents and friends back to campus for an in-person celebration this fall. It is our full intention to once again provide the traditional Homecoming experience. Any COVID-19 protocols recommended at that time by state health authorities and the Centers for Disease Control will be followed to ensure the health and safety of our campus community and the greater Bloomington-Normal community.

Class Reunion Weekend

We're celebrating both 2020 and 2021 milestone reunions this year! If your grad year ends in 0, 1, 5 or 6 — we've got special events planned for you. Reconnect and reminisce with your classmates. Visit iwu.edu/reunions for more details.

Back to College Classes

Attend presentations by alumni award winners **Dr. William Farrar '71**, **Kathleen Larey Lewton '70** and **Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15**, as well as other featured speakers from the Titan Community.

Best of Illinois Wesleyan: Alumni Awards Ceremony

Join **President S. Georgia Nugent** and the Alumni Association Board of Directors in honoring our 2021 Alumni Award winners, Golden Titans and other special members of the Titan Community.

Stay up-to-date on our full schedule of events, reunions, and more at: iwu.edu/homecoming.



ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

Recipients of the 2021 alumni awards will be honored at the Best of Illinois Wesleyan: Alumni Awards Ceremony on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021.



Dr. William Farrar '71
Distinguished
Alumni Award



**Kathleen Larey
Lewton '70**
Loyalty Award



Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15
Robert M. Montgomery
Young Alumni Award

Titan Tailgate

Show your Titan spirit with friends and family before the football game. All who are celebrating a Milestone Class Reunion are invited to the Reunion Tailgate to enjoy lunch and refreshments.

Club Tommy

This event is perfect to meet up with friends and classmates. Enjoy a DJ, heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine.

Other Events

Titan pep rally and games, family fun on the Quad, archives museum, football game, academic departmental and affinity group receptions, all-campus chapel service and much more!

#IllinoisWesleyanHomecoming



Alumni Update

NEWS, WORKS AND CELEBRATIONS OF IWU ALUMNI & FRIENDS

1963

Dave Kindred was featured in a wide-ranging segment on CBS's *60 Minutes* on March 28, 2021. The segment highlighted Dave's award-winning career as a sports writer, in which he covered the biggest events and most notable athletes for more than five decades. It also featured his "retirement project" of chronicling the Morton (Ill.) High School girls' basketball team and his recently published book, *Leave Out the Tragic Parts: A Grandfather's Search for a Boy Lost to Addiction*, a memoir of his late grandson's life as a train-hopper battling alcoholism. Dave's *60 Minutes* segment is available on YouTube.

1966

Denny Matthews returned to the booth for his 51st year of broadcasting Kansas City Royals baseball in April 2021 after calling games from his home during the COVID-shortened 2020 season. The former Illinois Wesleyan Distinguished Alumni Award winner's return to calling games in-person was highlighted in a feature in *The Athletic*.

1971

Tom Hensel was honored as Plainfield (Ill.) Central High School renamed its basketball court Tom Hensel Court in a ceremony in April 2021. Tom retired from the Plainfield school district in 2004 after serving as a teacher, coach and administrator for more than 33 years. He also taught in the Illinois communities of Minooka, Wyoming and Galesburg.

Steve Watts was presented the Thomas B. Herring Community Service Award by the Galesburg (Ill.) Area Chamber of Commerce for "volunteer activities exemplifying the true meaning of

service to others and a willingness to do so without recognition and publicity," on Nov. 19, 2020. Steve retired from the practice of law in 2018, and currently serves as chair of the Knox County Mental Health Board.

1973

Dr. Paul Pedersen was elected trustee-at-large of the Illinois State Medical Society at its 2021 annual meeting. Dr. Pedersen is board-certified in internal medicine and is vice president and chief medical officer at OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington, Illinois. He has been an ISMS member since 1980 and served as its president from 2019-20. He will serve as trustee-at-large through April 2022.

1975

David McCord will retire from a 36-year career as a professor at Drake University in December 2021. David joined the Drake faculty in 1984 after six years practicing law as an assistant attorney general for the State of Arizona and as an attorney with Wentworth & Lundin in Phoenix. A former winner of Drake's Levitt Distinguished Community Service Award and the Iowa Governor's Public Service Award, David plans to do volunteer work with his church and other nonprofits in retirement.

1976

Larry Ekin has been a COVID-19 contact tracer for the State of Maryland for more than a year. He also serves as a peer mentor and inbound triage agent. "When I was going through my cancer surgery and subsequent radiation treatment, I realized the psychological importance of feeling like somebody was on my side. Part of my responsibilities as a contact tracer

allow me to extend that feeling to others," Larry said. "My involvement as a contact tracer is motivated, at least in part, by a sense of paying my respect to the people who gave me that support when I needed it."

Chuck Kennedy, a mechanical engineer at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, was awarded the Bronze Medal for Technical Merit from the National Defense Industrial Association in a virtual event on Sept. 22, 2020. The award recognizes outstanding achievements in science or engineering, and is presented to individuals who inspire others in the field and do work that helps increase public awareness of undersea warfare and its importance to defense preparedness. "It was a complete shock, but it's a lucky crowd to be in," Chuck said. "The past honorees are some really smart people that I look up to. It makes me feel good that the work that I have done over the years has been recognized and that my team has done good work for the country and for the U.S. Navy."

1977

Jim Molinari joined the Boston College men's basketball staff as an assistant coach in April 2021. Jim spent the previous two seasons as an assistant at the University of Oklahoma and the five before that at the University of Nebraska. Jim formerly served as head coach of the men's basketball teams at Western Illinois University, Bradley University and Northern Illinois University.

1979

Bob Page, president and CEO of the University of Kansas Health System, was named *Ingram's* inaugural "Executive of the Year." Bob oversees 13,000

employees, six acute care and two behavioral health hospitals across Kansas. He has been with the health system since 1996, first as chief financial officer. Among his proudest achievements are patient satisfaction scores that rank the health system among the nation's top academic medical centers. *Ingram's* is a leading business publication in Kansas and Missouri. Bob received Illinois Wesleyan's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2013.

1981

Sandra Steingraber presented a talk, "Toward the Fossil-Free Future: Food, Farming, Fracking, Climate & Justice," at a virtual event sponsored by the Ecology Action Center, a nonprofit agency in Normal, Illinois, on May 12, 2021. The renowned environmental scientist provided the presentation, which was free and open to the public, in celebration of the Ecology Action Center's 50th anniversary.

1986

Alex Calvert was named to First State Bank of Bloomington's Board of Directors in February 2021. Alex is the managing member of Calvert Funeral Homes with eight locations in Central Illinois. He joined Calvert Funeral homes in 1987 after earning a funeral service degree from Mid-America College of Funeral Services.

1989

Renee (Weber) Donaldson was promoted to vice president of operations for the Behavioral Health Service Line for Advocate Aurora Health in August 2019. In the new role, Renee focuses on strategic initiatives for both inpatient and outpatient growth, as well as development and expansion of virtual platforms for patient care delivery.

Andrew Porter was inducted as a fellow in the American



Monica (Cheek) Hall '90

College of Trial Lawyers in October 2020. Fellowship is extended to experienced trial lawyers of diverse backgrounds who are regarded as best in their state and whose professional careers have been marked by the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, civility and collegiality. Membership can never be more than 1% of the total lawyer population of any state. Andrew is a partner at the law firm of Salvatore, Prescott, Porter & Porter.

Jennifer (Scott) Seeling was promoted from sales director to general manager of Leg-ends in Concert Las Vegas, the longest-running show on the Las Vegas Strip. Jennifer will also serve as interim production manager as the show resumes after the COVID-19 shutdown. The show is performed in the Legends in Concert Theatre, located inside the Tropicana Hotel and Casino.

Illinois Wesleyan Adjunct Assistant Professor of Biology and Laboratory Coordinator **Sheryl (Swartz) Soukup** and her work to adapt one of IWU's large biology lab courses for remote learning during the pandemic were featured in a story in *The Pantagraph* in April 2021.



Amy (Peterson) Olson '90

1990

Monica (Cheek) Hall was named a nurse educator fellow by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, supporting her research on Type 2 diabetes in the African American community. An associate professor of nursing at Illinois Wesleyan, Monica was awarded \$10,000 by the IBHE in an effort to ensure the retention of well-qualified nursing faculty at institutions of higher learning. Monica's work on diabetes spans much of her career, beginning with her position as a diabetes educator at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, Illinois, where she also served as an intermediate care unit manager and performance improvement facilitator. As a member of the American Association of Diabetes Educators, she helped coordinate a research study focusing on the benefits of a diabetes care team in the inpatient setting. She has also been a co-investigator on multiple research studies, including the development of an insulin drip protocol that is currently used at Carle Foundation Hospital.

Amy (Peterson) Olson was the 2020 recipient of the prestigious M3 Insurance President's Club

Award. Amy joined M3 as an advisor in 2006 and was named partner in 2015.

Scott Swayne was named chief people officer for Potbelly Corporation, effective April 26, 2021, where he will lead the Human Resources and People Team in developing and advancing strategic initiatives that strengthen Potbelly's culture and drive talent acquisition solutions. Prior to his role at Potbelly, Scott served as senior global talent acquisition director at McCormick & Company, where he led the global recruiting team that sourced and hired talent in support of McCormick's performance and growth agenda. He previously held human resources roles at General Mills, Genesis Systems Group and Abbott.

1991

Krista (Reinhold) McDunn earned a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from Judson University in May 2020. Krista works as a therapist at Centennial Counseling Center in St. Charles, Illinois.

1992

David Zimmerman was appointed publisher of NavPress, a Christian Publisher in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in March 2021. A veteran of the Christian publishing industry, David joined NavPress in 2014 as senior acquisitions editor after working in several roles at InterVarsity Press and Scripture Press.

1993

Jason Chambers was elected circuit judge for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, covering Ford, Livingston, Logan, McLean and Woodford counties in Illinois, in the Nov. 3, 2020, general election. He is currently presiding

over cases in McLean County. Before being elected to a full term, Jason was appointed to fill a vacancy on the bench by a unanimous order of the Illinois Supreme Court in August 2018. Prior to that, he was twice elected state's attorney in McLean County.

Dr. Michael Howard was recognized among *Sheridan Road Magazine's* "North Shore Premier Doctors" in February 2021. Dr. Howard is a board-certified plastic surgeon who has served the Chicago area since 2005. He previously served on the clinical faculty of the University of Chicago, and was recently recruited by Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital to further develop its plastic surgery division and micro-surgical breast reconstruction program.

1994

Holly (Franzen) Rollo was named director of nursing, nursing operations, nursing finance and support services, at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, Illinois, in September 2020. Holly brings nearly 30 years of experience to the job after previously serving in nursing roles at: Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital, in Geneva, Illinois; Children & Teens Medical Center Ltd., in Schaumburg, Illinois; Advocate Sherman Hospital, in Elgin, Illinois; and Advocate General Lutheran Hospital, in Park Ridge, Illinois.

James Standerfer is the director of Lighthouse Point Academy, a school-within-a-school at North Broward Preparatory School in Coconut Creek, Florida. An accomplished English teacher, special educator and international teacher, James oversees 18 teachers and 140 students in grades 3-12. His school provides a college preparatory curriculum for students with learning differences. As a member of the senior leadership team of



your news to *IWU Magazine*, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702, iwumag@iwu.edu, or via our website, at www.iwu.edu/magazine.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWS

My Fellow Titans,

For the past two years, it has been my absolute pleasure to serve as president of the Alumni Association. I am so grateful that I had the chance to connect with so many of you and to contribute and promote Illinois Wesleyan in this role.

I would like to take a minute to thank my fellow board members who have worked tirelessly to continue to make Illinois Wesleyan the best it can be and help drive alumni connections to each other and to the University. We faced some major challenges this year, but it was amazing to see the board and the Titan Community rally together to support one another.

I encourage you all to stay engaged and involved with IWU. Our Alumni Association is a robust group that is strong and resilient, and what makes us unique is our tight-knit family that continues to grow year after year as we welcome new graduates. Be sure to mark your calendars for Homecoming, Oct. 1-3, 2021, when we can all gather again (while following COVID-19 safety protocols).

Thank you for the opportunity to lead our Alumni Association, it has truly been my honor. As my presidency comes to a close, I hope you will join me in welcoming my dear friend and dedicated alumnus, Dirk Behrends '87, as he becomes our next Alumni Association president.

I look forward to seeing you all on campus soon!

Go Titans,



Molly Rollings '99

*President, Alumni Association
Board of Directors*



Ways to Get Involved

Alumni In Action

Visit Campus

Save the Date for Homecoming, Oct. 1-3, 2021.

Give Back

Support current and future Titans at iwu.edu/give.

Share Your Experience

Talk with prospective IWU students.

Get Social

Follow the Alumni Association on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Make Connections

Join an alumni chapter in your region.

Titan Talks

Lifelong learning and engagement opportunities are available to the Illinois Wesleyan Community through Titan Talks.

Most recently, Tony Award and Golden Globe nominated producer **Bill Damaschke '85** (right) discussed his career in entertainment and journey from Illinois Wesleyan to Broadway.



Watch archived Titan Talks and stay tuned for future Titan Talks at iwu.edu/titan-talks.



NBPS, his role also affords him the opportunity to collaborate in the daily operation of the parent school, a community of over 1,500 students.

1995

Susan (Nielsen) Frances earned a Master of Divinity degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School in May 2019 and was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in August 2020. Susan spent 18 years practicing law and now serves as part of the ministerial team at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Illinois.

1996

Matthew Harder was appointed to the City of Wheeling, West Virginia's Arts & Cultural Commission on March 16, 2021, by Wheeling's city council. Matthew has been a member of the West Liberty University faculty since 2005, and also serves as dean of WLU's College of Arts and Communication. The mission of Wheeling's Arts & Cultural Commission is to promote and develop artistic and cultural activities and initiatives that stimulate economic development, and to advance the quality of life and vibrancy of the greater Wheeling area.

1997

Elisa (Siebert) Egan was promoted to senior product development manager, North America, for food manufacturer Mars Wrigley, where she is responsible for gum, mints and fruit snacks, including Extra, Orbit, Doublemint, Altoids, Hubba Bubba, Skittles, Starburst and Life Savers.

1998

Kyle Garifo has worked in real estate development for over 13 years. His work includes several ground-up condominium construction projects in Chicago, over 200 flipped homes, marijuana dispensaries in three

states and development of The Heathers Senior Homes in suburban Chicago. Kyle is the founder of 41 Development Group, LLC, which raises capital from outside investors for future dispensary construction and expansion of The Heathers Senior Homes into new communities to meet increasing demand for senior living.

Nate Knuffman was named vice chancellor for Finance and Operations and chief financial officer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in March 2021. Nate had served as interim vice chancellor for Finance and Operations since August 2020, and was instrumental in helping the university develop a comprehensive plan to address financial challenges and create a new budget model during unprecedented times. He joined the administration at UNC Chapel Hill in 2018 as senior associate (deputy) vice chancellor for Finance and Operations, overseeing the division's strategic planning and data analysis functions to align Finance and Operations' priorities with the university's strategic plan. He previously served as vice president for financial planning and analysis at the UNC System office, where he was a member of the senior team advising the UNC System president and supporting the UNC Board of Governors in finance and business matters.

John Munch was named superintendent of La Grange Highlands (Ill.) School District 106 in April 2021. John previously served as the assistant superintendent for human resources in Hinsdale-Clarendon Hills (Ill.) Elementary School District 181 for the past seven years. His prior experience includes serving as principal of Troy Heritage Trail Elementary School in Joliet, Illinois, and working as a middle school assistant principal, teacher and social worker.



John Munch '98

Becky (Frieburg) Smith was among the honorees included in *The Pantagraph's* "Heart of Health Care" series to commemorate Nurses Week. Becky is the senior vice president of Nursing & Clinical Services at Heritage Operations Group in Bloomington, Illinois.

1999

Rick Lindquist returned to Illinois Wesleyan's staff in January 2021 as director of Information Technology Services and Academic Technologies. Rick previously served on IWU's ITS staff from 2000-17.

2000

Paul Vranas received a 2021 Neighborhood Star Award from Denver's Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation organization. The awards honor community members who make a difference in their neighborhoods to make Denver a better place to live. Paul's work includes: creating the Lowry Coronavirus Help Group, a local mutual aid organization for neighbors to assist those in need; starting the "Federal Benefits During a Pandemic" Facebook group, where 11,000 followers help each other navigate complex government aid programs; and organizing neighbors to overturn a ban on lawn signs that existed in his homeowners association.



Rev. John Michael Betz '03

2001

Matthew Glavin was promoted to member by international law firm Cozen O'Connor P.C. Based in Chicago, Matthew helps clients navigate the complex legislative and regulatory landscape in Illinois. His background in politics, government and managing in-house government affairs operations for large corporations allows him to bring unique value to his clients. Before joining Cozen O'Connor, Matthew served as the national director of government affairs for American Water, overseeing legislative and regulatory policy in 47 states for the largest privately owned water utility in the country.

Dr. Michael Pulia presented "Antimicrobial Resistance, COVID-19 and Me: A Winding Road to a Research Career," to IWU students on March 19, 2021. Dr. Pulia is a tenure-track assistant professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he directs the Emergency Care for Infectious Diseases Research Program.

2003

Rev. John Michael Betz is executive director of the Department of Spiritual Health at Wellstar Health System in Atlanta. He applies his background in public health and chaplaincy as the

department expands its Clinical Pastoral Education program and continues to add more chaplains to the ever-growing system to perform or provide religious, spiritual and humanist care.

John Camardella announced in March 2021 he will take a one-year sabbatical from his teaching duties and resign as head boys' basketball coach at Prospect High School, in Mount Prospect, Illinois, in order to pursue a master's degree in religion and public life at Harvard's Divinity School. Inspired to increase the religious and cultural literacy of both educators and young people alike, John will enroll in the first new master's program at HDS in more than 50 years. John's relationship with Harvard dates back to 2018, when he served as an education fellow for Harvard Divinity School's Religious Literacy Project. Though he will return to his teaching role at Prospect High School upon completion of the master's degree, he will not return as coach of the basketball team, where he has compiled a 232-149 record, 10 divisional titles, three conference championships and a pair of regional titles.

Mike Wilson II accepted the position of assistant vice president of Capital Programs and Utility Services for the University of Illinois System in

August 2020. His duties include overseeing and supporting major construction projects and the master plan for the three universities of the University of Illinois System. Among his new duties is serving as president of Prairieland Energy Inc., a university-related organization that supports energy services for the University of Illinois System.

2004

Gianina (Taylor) Baker presented "Reframing Assessment in a Post-Pandemic World" in a virtual event hosted by Seton Hall University on May 12, 2021. Topics covered included learning outcomes, alternative assessments, leveraging technology to enable learning, assignment design and reducing the need for online proctoring. Gianina is the acting director at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, a resource-research institute founded to discover, document and disseminate effective assessment of student learning practices at colleges and universities.

Joe Binder presented "New Technologies for Waterborne Pressure Sensitive Adhesives" to IWU students on March 26, 2021. Joe is a research scientist at the Dow Chemical Company in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. He previously worked for BP. A former student-athlete, he was featured in an *IWU Magazine*

story in 2010 as a member of the Team USA squad that competed in the International Association of Ultrarunners 100-kilometer World Championships.

Jessica Freiburg was elected co-managing partner at Sassetti LLC, a greater Chicago-based public accounting firm. Jessica joined Sassetti in 2004 and has led the firm in several initiatives, including recruiting, retention and advancement, and development of the company's outsourced accounting department. She has established and managed various client relationships within the areas of tax compliance and planning, audit, and outsourced accounting.

Maria (Holsen) Mangold was promoted to registrar at the University of Montana in December 2020. She had previously served as interim registrar since July 2020 after three years as registrar and director of student services in UM's Alexander Blewett III School of Law. Maria has worked at the university since 2010, first as an academic advisor in UM's College of the Humanities and Sciences. She has additionally served on UM's Staff Senate, including as Staff Senate chair, and on the inaugural Women's Leadership Initiative cohort. Maria previously served in various advising and student support positions at Roosevelt University, Loyola University Chicago, DePaul University and the University of Chicago.

Rachael Marusarz was promoted to vice president, development/chief development officer at Sinai Health System in Chicago, where she now leads fundraising efforts to support the city's largest private, nonprofit safety net healthcare system. Rachael earned a doctorate in transformational leadership and coaching at Wright Graduate University in 2019, and has served as an adjunct faculty member there since 2020.

Sarah (Brown) Smith was named associate principal for curriculum and instruction at Andrew High School, in Tinley Park, Illinois, in March 2021, ahead of the 2021-22 academic year. Sarah previously served as division chair of the English, English learners and music programs at Sandburg High School in Orland Park, Illinois.

2005

Dr. Dave Aggen was the recipient of the Illinois Wesleyan Chemistry Department's Alumni of the Year award, presented virtually on April 16, 2021. Dave earned his Ph.D. and M.D. at the University of Illinois and is a medical oncologist focused on development of next generation immunotherapies for kidney, bladder and prostate cancer. He is an assistant attending physician at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

2006

Lynsey Sloan was named associate vice president of statewide foster care at Children's Home & Aid in October 2020. Lynsey oversees all services provided by CH&A to youth and families involved in the child welfare system and acts as a liaison between CH&A and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

2007

Kate Tombaugh is the founder and executive director of Poco a Poco, a nonprofit summer music festival and vocal training program for high school-aged musicians in her hometown of Streator, Illinois, which celebrated its fifth year in 2021.

David Young was named music director at First Presbyterian Church in Lincoln, Illinois, in March 2021. David joins First Presbyterian from Shirley Christian Church in Shirley, Illinois. In the new role, he will direct the First Presbyterian Church choir, organize the church's



Jessica Freiburg '04



Maria (Holsen) Mangold '04

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, via email at iwumag@iwu.edu, or by mail at P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702. All submitted content received by **May 10, 2021**. The submitted content deadline for the Winter 2021-22 issue of *IWU Magazine* is **Oct. 4, 2021**.



Scott Moreau '01 married **Sonia Rincón Moreau** on Sept. 28, 2020, at Grey Havens Inn, Georgetown, Maine.



Ralph Pineda '15 married **Samantha (Noga) Pineda '16** in an intimate ceremony on Jan. 22, 2021. They plan to renew their vows and host a larger wedding celebration with family, friends and fellow IWU alumni on Jan. 22, 2022.



Joseph Petrando '17 and **Anne Marie Pasternock '16** were married in a small ceremony with family on Dec. 20, 2020, in Highland Park, Illinois.

musical programs and expand its musical outreach into the community. David teaches music at Lincoln Elementary School, where his ensembles have regularly grown in size.

2008

Marcus Dunlop, a partner at HG Vora Capital Management, LLC, was appointed to the board of directors of the ODP Corporation. Marcus has served as an investment professional at HG Vora, one of ODP's largest shareholders, where he focused on value-oriented and event-driven investments across the capital structure. He was an analyst at Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., in the Bank Debt Portfolio Group, focusing on credit analysis and restructuring debt of non-investment grade companies.

Caitlin (Ludwig) Pusateri was named executive vice president of the Rockford (Ill.) Chamber of Commerce. Caitlin will serve as lead executive, oversee day-to-day operations of the chamber and provide leadership on strategic initiatives. Caitlin joined the chamber in 2010 and has worked in various capacities ever since. She is on the boards for the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, the Discovery Center Museum and Rockford Leaders.

2011

Sara Ghadiri was the recipient of the National Immigrant Justice Center Human Rights Award in April 2021. Sara was recognized for her commitment to ensuring access to justice, as well as her leadership of Chapman and Cutler LLP's pro bono program, at the 22nd annual National Immigrant Justice Center's Virtual Human Rights Awards on June 8, 2021. The awards brought together a global audience to honor human rights champions and celebrated the contributions of business, civic and community leaders. Sara serves as Chapman's pro bono counsel, where

she supervises and administers the firm's pro bono programming, services and partnerships. She was the recipient of Illinois Wesleyan's Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumni Award in 2020.

2012

Amber Sipich opened a small storefront in Chicago's Roscoe Village neighborhood called And Studio, which builds on her existing graphic design business. And Studio offers prints, home decor and handmade goods, as well as goods from other local artists and makers. Amber has her own intaglio press and makes monoprints that are sold in the store. She hopes And Studio will soon be able to host workshops and events in store when COVID-19 restrictions allow.

Bret Swango was awarded the Innovation Award in the Americas by his employer, Colliers, an international commercial real estate advisory firm. As the head of workforce analytics, Bret and his team are leveraging machine learning and the latest agile technology to transform data into insight and give tenants, investors, developers and landlords a competitive advantage in the location selection process. In April 2021, Bret was named one of the 150 global finalists for the OnCon Icon Top Data & Analytics Professional Award.

2014

Brad Gresik founded an election-technology startup called Tally Up, which provides predictive voter analytics and strategies for down-ballot elections. For the 2020 cycle, Brad and his team of three data scientists partnered with over 25 campaigns ranging from large municipality races to state general assemblies.

2015

Meghan (Henwood) Burgess, a fifth-grade teacher at Champaign, Illinois' Holy Cross



Bret Swango '12 (p. 35)

Elementary School, was featured as *The News-Gazette's* "Teacher of the Week" in April 2021. Meghan has taught at Holy Cross since 2015. Topics covered in the Q&A piece included her passion for teaching, her favorite material to teach, and how she has engaged with students in virtual environments.



Emily Brown '17

Colleen Melone joined the Lincolnwood (Ill.) Public Library District as head of information services in November 2020. She previously worked at White Oak (Ill.) Library District and Bloomington (Ill.) Public Library.

2017

Emily Brown earned a law degree and graduated *magna*



Sydnie Wells '20

cum laude from the University of Illinois College of Law in May 2020, and was sworn into the Illinois bar in January 2021. She began a career as a mechanical engineering patent examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in October 2020.

Charlotte Coats joined North Suburban Legal Aid as a staff

attorney in February 2021. Charlotte assists in the clinic's domestic violence practice. She previously served as a domestic violence team legal intern at the Legal Aid Society in Chicago. She earned additional experience at Legal Aid Chicago, Citizen Advocacy Center and Prairie State Legal Services. While a Juris Doctor candidate at DePaul University, she gained a 711 license to render legal services in the State of Illinois and represented survivors of domestic violence in family law.

Preslav Mantchev was sworn into practice before the Illinois Supreme Court after graduating *cum laude* from the University of Illinois College of Law and passing the Illinois Bar exam. His legal career began at the University of Illinois Office of University Counsel. He assists with anti-trust, labor and employment, and constitutional issues.

2018

Jack Roireau provided a virtual presentation to Illinois Wesleyan students on Sept. 11, 2020, in which he discussed his IWU education and experiences, as well as his master's work, "Synthesis and Biological Evaluation of Antibacterial and Herbicidal Pyranopyrans." Jack earned a master's degree in organic chemistry at Villanova University in 2020, and is currently working as a process chemist at Flamma Group.

Tiny Titans

Meredith (Ford) Oliver '01 and Patrick; Desmond Ahimsa, born April 10, 2021
Dr. Cathy Long Baumann '04 and Jason; Emmett Brian, born Dec. 29, 2020
Brette (Bower) Gallagher '04 and Patrick; Bowenn Thomas, born April 24, 2020
Megan Greenfield '04 and Brian Rueffer; Tessa Paige, born Nov. 16, 2020
Michelle (Uhlenkott) Roughton '05 and Richard; Russell, born Feb. 21, 2021
Erin (Fleck) Lett '06 and **Brian '05**; Hailey Rose, born Jan. 26, 2021
Alesia (Perry) Whitt '05 and Eric; Levi James, born Dec. 1, 2020
Heather (Geeser) Huftalin '06 and Andy; Lena Rose, born Feb. 2, 2021
Kristin (Rathke) McWilliams '07 and **Patrick '07**; Eden Anne, born Dec. 21, 2020
Kate Tombaugh '07 and Steven Weimer; Julia Caroline, born March 21, 2021
Bridget (McFadden) Wicherek '09 and Mark; James Francis, born Jan. 10, 2021
Alessandra (Bollero) Ladd '10 and **Kraig '10**; Alessia Caroline, born Jan. 13, 2021
Kelly (Cantlin) Johnson '12 and Kyle; Nellie Ann, born July 5, 2020
Caroline (McMahon) Mastandona '12 and **John '10**; Juliet Rose, born April 8, 2021
Kristen (Gattuso) Wenzel '12 and **Scott '12**; Sam Thomas, born Dec. 27, 2020
Laura (Woodsmall) Hardisty '14 and Huntington; Judah Everett, April 8, 2020
Maddie (Mueller) Fink '15; Elaine "Ellie," born March 14, 2021
Jen (Prochotsky) Laflamme '15 and **Garret '15**; Benjamin David, born Feb. 5, 2021
Anissa (Ortiz) Mowbray '16 and Cole; Thomas David Elijah, born March 3, 2020

All submitted content received by **May 10, 2021**. The submitted content deadline for the Winter 2021-22 issue of IWU Magazine is **Oct. 4, 2021**. All submitted content may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.

Muyi Yang was named a Kwok Scholar and awarded a full scholarship to pursue studies in the Master of Public Policy program at Oxford University. Muyi is a Rotary Peace Fellow at Uppsala University in Sweden and also serves as coordinator of the Nordic and Baltic Region of the Rotary Peace Fellowship Alumni Association Europe. Having founded a nonprofit sport and academic training school for at-risk youth in Latakia, Syria, Muyi was selected for the scholarship by the Kwok Scholars Association as a young leader with commitment to public service and advancing the welfare of marginalized groups around the world.

2020

Isaac Simmons was certified as a candidate for United Methodist ministry in April 2021. He is the director of operations for Bloomington's Hope United Methodist Church, and is the first openly gay man to be certified by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference's Vermillion River District Committee on Ordained Ministry. He is also believed to be the first drag queen certified in the United Methodist Church. Isaac, who goes by Ms. Penny Cost in drag, is one year into what is typically a five-year process to be ordained in the church. He has spoken and preached in full drag all over the country, and he delivered a message to Hope's congregation on April 11, 2021, as part of its "Drag Sunday" programming, as Ms. Penny Cost.

Ally Wiegand joined the Heartland Community College softball coaching staff as its pitching coach in August 2020. The former Illinois Wesleyan All-American expanded her duties at HCC in February 2021, when she added the role of success connections facilitator.

Sydney Wells has a budding career in the outdoor sports TV industry. She has been a regular on *Relentless Pursuit*, the Sportsman Channel show hosted by her father, for several years.

She also co-hosted Season 2 of *Viral Outdoors* on the Outdoor Channel in 2020. Most recently, Sydney took leadership of Barstool Outdoors in February 2021.

2021

Jonathan Pantan will enroll in the Washington College of Law at American University this fall. Jonathan finished work on a bachelor's degree in business administration at Illinois Wesleyan in December 2020.

Faculty, Staff and Friends

Professor of Physics Emerita **Linda French** presented a talk titled "Eyes on the Asteroids: Studying Distant Objects with Ground-Based Optical Telescopes," in a "Friday Night Livestream" from Kopernik Observatory & Science Center in Vestal, New York, on Feb. 19, 2021, celebrating the winter night sky. Linda was previously elected as one of the American Astronomical Society's inaugural Legacy Fellows, an honor reserved for only a small percentage of members of the professional society.

Byron S. Tucci Professor of Spanish and Chair of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures **Carolyn Nadeau** helped present "It's All in the Salsa: Mexican Stories of McLean County," part of a McLean County Museum of History virtual speaker series highlighting local immigrant stories, in February 2021.

Assistant Professor of Music **Lisa Nelson** gave two presentations at the American String Teachers Association National Conference in March 2021, "Solo & Ensemble and Festival: Exploring Works by Women Composers" and "Beyond Suzuki: Elementary Method Books, Pedagogical Repertoire, and Recital Pieces for the Violin/Viola Studio." She also performed Alexander Raichev's "Aria for Solo Viola" at three regional conferences of the College Music Society.

HART CAREER CENTER HAPPENINGS

Illinois Wesleyan's Hart Career Center continues to engage alumni and connect them with current students in virtual ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent months, the alumni and friends below have played leading roles. 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 or (309) 556-3095.

Careers in Computer Science

Matthew Dearing '00, Vanessa (Rodriguez) Macias '14, Megan Presnak '05, Alan Russian '15 and Michael Turner '99

Careers in Government

Matthew Glavin '01

Careers in Investments

Corey Schieler '97

Careers in Music/Entrepreneurship

Kate Tombaugh '07

Careers in Sports

Laura Bonds '16, Kayla (Kindred) Roan '08, Tim Smith '17, Clint Warren '05 and Laura Warren '98

Experiences in the Spanish Caribbean

Cheryl Portwood-Peden Emery '74

From IWU Titans to Tennessee Titans

Burke Nihill '00

Money Management: Financial Literacy Tips

Ben Miller '96

Pre-Health Programming

Keith Carter '17, Brian Gegel '94, Dr. Eric Hughes '03, Dean Khrisat '19, Matt Lucas '20, Keila Magafas '18, Claire Michael '19, Dr. Henry Moore '97, Dr. Beth Mulberry '86, Melissa (Umansky) Podrazik '16, Dr. Katie Rothas '14, Krista Sheppard '94, Rachel Tomazin '19 and Courtney (Pyle) Yamada '97

Virtual Practice Interviews

Scott Black '10, Kevin Clark, Angela Kupper-Smith '10, Kevin Latman '06, Jeff Lockenvitz '84 and Elizabeth (Sowatzke) Schlicht '09

Additional Virtual Programming

Hussain Hasan '91, Will Jenkins '12, Vi Kakares '20, Jason Kotecki '14, Esther Niedert '20, David Rasho '01, Todd Stocke '93, Jill Volk '87 and Arica Williams '16

Faculty and Staff

Thomas Merritt of Bloomington, Illinois, died March 7, 2021. He was 84. Tom worked at Illinois Wesleyan for 18 years in the physical plant. He also worked for East Lawn Funeral Home/Service Corporation International for 20 years. He cared for and took pride in his community and the places he worked. He was an avid golfer, and frequented the local Eagles and Moose lodges. More than anything, he enjoyed time spent with family. He is survived by his wife, three daughters, eight grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and two brothers.

Alumni

Elinor "Jean" (Scott) Rook '43 died March 14, 2019, in Costa Mesa, California. She was 97. Jean lived in Elmhurst, Illinois, and served as a home economics teacher at York Community High School. She was deeply involved in her community, devoted to her P.E.O. International chapter, and was an avid bridge player. One of her greatest loves was travel, and she enjoyed many international and domestic adventures in retirement. After wintering in Palm Springs, California, for many years, she moved there permanently in 2008. She will be remembered for her generosity, talent and her love of family. She is survived by two children and many friends and extended family members.

Colleen (Costigan) Welch '46 of Manhattan Beach, California, died Feb. 16, 2020. She was 95. Colleen served during World War II, teaching anti-aircraft gunnery. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at Illinois Wesleyan and later a teaching degree from Loyola Marymount University. She worked at *The Pantagraph* before moving to California in 1954. There, she taught at both American Martyrs School and Bishop Montgomery High School. Her many hobbies included golf, calligraphy, painting and bridge. She will be remembered for her wit, kindness and friendship to the many who were fortunate to know her. She is survived by three children, eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and a brother.

Phyllis (Bender) De Hart '50 died Jan. 8, 2021. She was 91. Phyllis majored in sociology and earned a bachelor's degree at Illinois Wesleyan, where she was active in Alpha Gamma Delta. After graduation, she worked at Marshall Field's flagship store on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. In that role, she interviewed a man who later became her husband. They moved to Champaign, Illinois, so her husband could attend law school, while Phyllis worked for an insurance company. They moved to Aurora, Illinois, where he established a law practice and Phyllis became involved in Child Welfare Society, Inc., and the American Association of University Women. She was involved in charitable organizations, assisted her husband in his legal practice, served as a substitute teacher and was active in bridge clubs. Phyllis loved and embraced life, and brought joy to all those around her. She is survived by her husband, daughter, eight grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, two sisters, and many nieces, nephews and extended family members.

Carol (Fulk) Hunt '52 of Ludington, Michigan, died April 7, 2021. She was 90. Carol attended Michigan State University before transferring and graduating from Illinois Wesleyan. She attended college and worked full-time while raising four children. She was a teacher known for being kind and nurturing, but also able to instill discipline in her students. She was active in her church, and loved her dogs and family homes and cottages in Michigan, Florida and North Carolina. She is survived by her husband **Phillip Hunt '51**, four children, including **David Hunt '73**, 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Robert Joiner '53 of Warrenton, Oregon, died March 19, 2021. He was 89. Bob attended Illinois Wesleyan and was active in Phi Mu Alpha and Blue Key Honor Society. He later learned the trombone so he could play in jazz clubs. Bob joined the U.S. Army after his IWU graduation, and was stationed with the Seventh Army Symphony in Germany, where he directed a radio show and wrote the arrangements for singers and masters of ceremonies. Upon his return stateside, he completed work on a master's degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Bob was a highly sought-after musician and teacher, and he played in many bands. He also was a stockbroker and salesman of musical instruments. He is survived by his wife, daughter, two stepchildren, several grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Dana (Johnson) Brown '59 of Bloomington, Illinois, died Jan. 31, 2021. She was 83. Dana studied Spanish and history at Illinois Wesleyan, where she also met her husband **Wayne Brown '60**. She was a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority, Egas Senior Women's Honorary Society and Mortar Board National Collegiate Honor Society. Dana enjoyed golf, tennis and traveling, especially to Sanibel Island, Florida. She and her husband later spent many years at their winter home at Kelly Greens Golf & Country Club in Fort Myers, Florida, where Dana was a member of the club's traveling golf and tennis teams. Dana was also a member of Crestwicke Country Club in Bloomington, and the Crestwicke Women's Golf Association. She was a member of First United Methodist Church in Normal, Illinois. She is survived by her husband, two daughters, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Mary (Fulkerson) Hopper '59 of Orange City, Florida, died Feb. 7, 2021. She was 83. Mary earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education at Illinois Wesleyan, where she was active in Kappa Kappa Gamma and Delta Kappa Gamma. She learned to play bridge at IWU, an activity she enjoyed the rest of her life. Mary taught at Lavallette and Tuckerton elementary schools in New Jersey. She was active in religious life as a member of The Great Outdoors Church in Titusville, Florida, and Tuckerton United Methodist Church in New Jersey. She and her late husband enjoyed traveling, touring the country in their RV. She is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren, extended family members and friends.

Kent Mahlke '59 died Oct. 1, 2020, in Boynton Beach, Florida. He was 84. Kent earned a bachelor's degree in sociology at Illinois Wesleyan. He traveled the world in his extensive career in sales, marketing and management. Before retiring in 2005, he was president of Nationwide Laboratory Services in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Kent had a great sense of humor and was well-known for his repertoire of jokes. During his retirement years, he enjoyed traveling, swimming and caring for his tropical backyard garden. He is survived by his wife, four children, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

William "Bill" Stanicek '59 of Sun Lakes, Arizona, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was 85. Bill studied physical education and was active in Tau Kappa Epsilon at Illinois Wesleyan. He spent his career in education as a teacher and coach. He enjoyed guiding young people with a no-nonsense approach to life and sports, and served as a father figure to many. He enjoyed his roles as husband, father, grandfather, uncle and life coach. He is survived by his wife, three children, six grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews and extended family members.

Constance "Connie" (Popovich) Pavich '60 died Jan. 28, 2021. She was 84. Connie studied art at Illinois Wesleyan and became a junior high school art teacher. She painted and participated in art shows, and sold many of her works over the years. Connie met her future husband at a Serbian basketball tournament in Milwaukee. They

soon married and started a family. Connie was a dedicated homemaker who regularly hosted dinner parties where Serbian music was always playing in the background. She was a highly regarded cook who enjoyed sharing recipes. She liked working with her hands and was known by the employees at her local Ace Hardware. She also enjoyed technology; after buying her first computer in the late 1970s, she took computer courses and conducted video calls with family before they became commonplace. Connie read two newspapers and completed the crossword, jumble and word search puzzles in both every day. She was a dedicated fan of the Chicago Cubs and took great pleasure in the team's World Series victory in 2016. Connie most enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren, with whom she spent many hours doing art projects.

Sharon (McIntyre) Keene '61 of Sierra Vista, Arizona, died March 22, 2021. She was 81. Sharon studied sacred music at Illinois Wesleyan and taught high school choral music in Harvard, Illinois, for 25 of her 30 years in teaching. Under her leadership, Harvard High School's music department won eight state championships. Upon retirement, she and her husband moved to Sierra Vista, where she volunteered as director of the Sierra Vista Community Chorus and served as choir director at Faith Presbyterian Church. She had previously served as choir director for 30 years at First Presbyterian Church in Harvard. Music was always an important part of Sharon's life, second only to her family. She is survived by her husband **Edwin Keene '61**, four children, including **Christopher Keene '91**, six grandchildren, and three foreign exchange children.

Elizabeth Holmes '62 of Austin, Texas, died March 28, 2021. She was 81. Elizabeth earned bachelor's degrees in English and speech at Illinois Wesleyan; she graduated as salutatorian and was active in many campus organizations. After IWU, she pursued graduate studies at the University of Chicago and University of Texas before earning a master's degree in library and information services from the University of Rhode Island. She was a high school English teacher in Illinois, taught graduate level courses in New Hampshire, owned a bookstore in Texas, and worked as a librarian for over four decades. She enjoyed writing and published haikus. She employed her storytelling ability to bring children and literature together. She loved people, books, conversation and her family. She is survived by three children, five grandchildren, a brother, the father of her children, **Warren Townsend '63**, and many cousins, including **Anne Foster Nott '65**.

William Tolson '62 of San Francisco died April 13, 2021. He was 80. Bill was active in Sigma Chi at Illinois Wesleyan. He enjoyed a successful banking career that allowed him to retire early and spend time with his family. He made many lifelong friendships through memberships in Rotary Club and The Family. He enjoyed sport fishing, golf, keeping up with news and current events, and investing in and watching the stock market. He celebrated life as a longtime San Francisco resident hosting dinner parties, rooting for the Giants and 49ers, and taking in the view of Alcatraz and the San Francisco Bay from his home on Russian Hill. He loved turkey dinners with all the trimmings, fresh Dungeness crab and sourdough bread from Fisherman's Wharf, and gin martinis. He enjoyed time spent with his wife, was a devoted father to his children, and cherished time with his grandchildren. He is survived by his wife, five children, two granddaughters, and a brother, **Joseph Tolson '56**.

Carol Wiborg '64 of Glenwood, Illinois, died Feb. 5, 2021. She was 78. Carol earned a bachelor's degree at Illinois Wesleyan and a master's degree at the University of Illinois. She spent the majority

of her career with the Department of Defense, teaching in Japan and Germany. She also taught for four years in the Flossmoor (Ill.) school district. She enjoyed travel, music, photography, theatre and reading. She sang in choirs in Japan, Germany and suburban Chicago, including the chancel choir at First Presbyterian Church of Chicago Heights, where she was also in the hand bell choir, served as an elder, and participated in women's organizations and other committees. She is survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Charles Bimba '66 died Jan. 12, 2021, in Sarasota, Florida. He was 77. Chuck played baseball and studied business administration at Illinois Wesleyan. He went on to serve as president and chief executive officer of Bimba Manufacturing Co., in University Park, Illinois, a company founded by his father in 1957. In the 1990s, he became involved in business consulting and lay ministry work. Chuck was proud of his Lithuanian heritage and taught business classes at Vilnius University soon after the country gained its independence. Some of Chuck's favorite days were spent fly-fishing in a trout stream, and some of his favorite evenings were spent at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago. He was an avid fan of the Chicago White Sox and University of Illinois athletics. Chuck was known for his sense of humor and for being kind, ethical, humble and guided by faith. He is survived by his wife, four children, five grandchildren and two sisters.

Stanley Cade '67 died March 23, 2021, in Herrin, Illinois. He was 75. Stanley earned a bachelor's degree in music at Illinois Wesleyan and a master's degree in education from Northern Illinois University. He taught music for over 40 years, including concert, marching and jazz bands, and choral music, in the Illinois communities of Toluca, Morris, St. Anne, Mooseheart and Chicago Heights, as well as Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He also taught private lessons for many years and played trombone with the Batavia (Ill.) Community Band. He is survived by a fiancée, son, grandson, two siblings, and many nieces and nephews.

James Hartley '67 of St. Charles, Illinois, died Feb. 8, 2021. He was 77. Jim studied history, earning a bachelor's degree at Illinois Wesleyan and a master's degree at Northern Illinois University. Jim founded and managed his own home remodeling business. He previously worked in a variety of roles related to the construction and sale of solar energy systems. Jim enjoyed woodworking, playing guitar, and helping his friends build websites for their businesses. He was known for his wry sense of humor, quick wit, and seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of many fields. He is survived by two sons, five grandchildren, a sister, **Susan (Hartley) Raeder '63**, a niece and a nephew.

Susan Jean Vanek Mackoway '69 died March 28, 2021, in Peoria, Illinois. She was 73. Susan earned a bachelor's degree in nursing at Illinois Wesleyan, where she was an active member of Alpha Tau Delta. Susan worked in pediatrics at Methodist Medical Center in Peoria. She was a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Washington, Illinois. In retirement, she enjoyed time with family. She is survived by three children, including **Debra Mackoway Bluestein '94**, and eight grandchildren.

Carol (Payne) Brinkley '75 of Williamsburg, Virginia, died Feb. 4, 2021. She was 67. Carol studied English and French at Illinois Wesleyan. She spent the following years living in Germany, where she worked as a health spa attendant and au pair. After returning to the U.S., she took graduate classes at The New School in New York City and worked at the United Nations. She later worked in a variety of roles with Trailways Bus Company and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In 1988, she took a recreational sketching class, where she met her future husband. Carol worked briefly as an independent

Deaths Reported

Yolande "Mac" (Beall) Bily '41; March 25, 2021
Frances Ruth (Wegel) Alvis '44; April 30, 2021
Colleen (Costigan) Welch '46; Feb. 16, 2020
Mary (Chatten) Malban '48; Nov. 3, 2020
Alan Smith '49; Feb. 15, 2021
Alma (Alexander) Somerville '49; Feb. 26, 2021
Mildred (Gaston) Berryman '50; April 23, 2021
Mary (Norton) Cunningham '50; March 6, 2021
James "Bill" Harris '50; Jan. 23, 2020
Jack Jeangerard '50; Jan. 9, 2020
Roger Miller '51; Feb. 11, 2021
William Lewerenz '52; Jan. 21, 2020
Alison (Cope) Puffer '52; May 25, 2020
Birthele Theobald '52; March 23, 2021
Nancy (Hill) West '52; April 25, 2021
Joan (Yoder) Ioas '53; May 25, 2020
Omer Carey '54; Sept. 21, 2020
Joyce (Harney) Voss '54; April 3, 2021
Cleo (Spellmeyer) Chiti '56; Feb. 9, 2021
Mary Jo (Krahl) Krupka '57; March 4, 2021
Ida Gray '58; April 3, 2021
Joe Vernon '58; March 22, 2021
Richard Popp '59; Feb. 7, 2020
Sandra (Dawson) Barnett '61; Dec. 11, 2020
Jeanne Fordham '61; Sept. 15, 2020
Edward Berlin '62; Feb. 23, 2021
James Proctor Brown, III '62; Jan. 4, 2021
Carol (Messinger) Zavatsky '63; April 20, 2019
Pamela (Heins) Raymond '64; Jan. 21, 2021
Steven Eiker '65; Sept. 29, 2020
Gary Fox '65; Feb. 23, 2020
James Dohren '66; Aug. 27, 2020
Thomas Pfister '66; Feb. 22, 2021
Lawrence Bear '69; Jan. 17, 2021
Oliver "Chuck" Olsen '70; Jan. 1, 2020
Glenn Neumann '72; Sept. 29, 2020
James Harper '74; March 16, 2020
William McConnell '76; Jan. 10, 2021
Aaron Fleming '80; Dec. 12, 2020
Cheryl (Covey) Ramsey '80; Feb. 20, 2021
Nanette (Dersch) Seacrist '85; Feb. 15, 2021
Donald Jones '94; Jan. 20, 2021
Susan Leupold '02; Oct. 21, 2020
Colleen Gleason '15; July 27, 2020

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 the names of relatives of the deceased who are IWU alumni.

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franchise holder for Caring Transitions, Inc., an estate management company for seniors, for the Peninsula Agency on Aging, and later part-time at the Williamsburg Antique Mall. She was a longtime member and director of the Williamsburg Scottish Festival and was honored by the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg with its "Scot of the Year" Award in 2005. She was active in church life, singing in the choir and serving on many committees. Carol was known and loved by many for her kindness and concern for others, her smile and approachability. She is survived by her husband, a sister, and many extended family members.

Sue Ellen (Brown) Haliski '75 of Culpeper, Virginia, died Feb. 8, 2021. She was 68. Sue earned a bachelor's degree in nursing at Illinois Wesleyan and moved to Portland, Oregon, where she worked for 25 years as a registered nurse in labor and delivery, lactation consulting, and orthopedics, at Good Samaritan Hospital, Legacy Health Group and Visiting Nurses. She lived in Charlotte, North Carolina, from 2004-09 before moving to be closer to family. She is survived by her husband, daughter, granddaughter and two sisters.

Carolyn (McCaughey) Hodge '78 of Naples, Florida, died April 19, 2021. She was 64. She was a member of Kappa Delta at Illinois Wesleyan. Carolyn was a dedicated teacher for 40 years, impacting the lives of thousands of children and mentoring new generations of educators. She finished her teaching career at Pelican Marsh Elementary in Naples, where she had many friends. Carolyn loved to travel to places all over the country, including Wrigley Field, and as far away as the Greek islands. At home, she enjoyed trips to the library, quiet afternoons reading, and time in her pool or on the water, where she often made her famous margaritas for boat trips or watching sunsets on the beach. She was happiest when surrounded by family and friends. She is survived by her husband, two daughters, including **Marissa Hollo-way '07**, sister and mother, **Clarene (Makinson) McCaughey '50**.

Michael Brown '92 of Bloomington, Illinois, died April 21, 2021. He was 51. Mike was a member of Sigma Chi and the baseball team at Illinois Wesleyan. He was a standout athlete in several sports, but his first love was baseball. During his baseball career, he was formed and molded by countless teammates and coaches from Lexington (Ill.) High School, Illinois Wesleyan, Bloomington Bobcats, Twin City Stars and American Legion, ultimately leading to him playing in the Los Angeles Dodgers organization. Mike was a financial advisor, community volunteer, mentor and baseball coach, notably as an assistant at IWU for 22 years. He is survived by two children, his parents, two brothers and many nieces and nephews.

Lucinda Shair '00 of East Grand Rapids, Michigan, died Jan. 6, 2021. She was 43. Lucy studied French and international business at Illinois Wesleyan. She lived in the International House on campus, where she met many lifelong friends, and studied in France. After earning a bachelor's degree at IWU, she joined the accounting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. While working for the firm, she earned a master's degree in accounting from the University of Southern California and achieved her CPA. Among her proudest achievements were managing a section of the federal effort to compensate victims through the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, and in an accounting and administrative role at DePaul University, helping underprivileged students receive a college education. Lucy met her husband in 2002 and they married in 2006. The couple had two children. Lucy was active in her children's schooling as co-president of the PTA. In 2018, she founded her own firm, Lucy Shair Financial. She built a vibrant practice helping people recognize their goals and plan for retirement. Lucy enjoyed hiking, fly fishing, kayaking and gardening. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016, she took on her diagnosis like she did everything else in life: head-on. She is survived by her husband, two children, parents, three siblings, and six nieces and nephews.

Allison (Tackitt) Thune '03 of Zionsville, Indiana, died Jan. 26, 2021. She was 40. Allison earned a bachelor's degree in music education at Illinois Wesleyan and a master's degree in choral conducting from Butler University. She taught at Roncali High School in Indianapolis and Romeoville (Ill.) High School, as well as two elementary schools. Her passions were choral music and motherhood. She is survived by her husband, two children, parents and sister.

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Viana Chau '21

Majors: Biology and International Studies



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AJ Lust '22

Major: Business Administration



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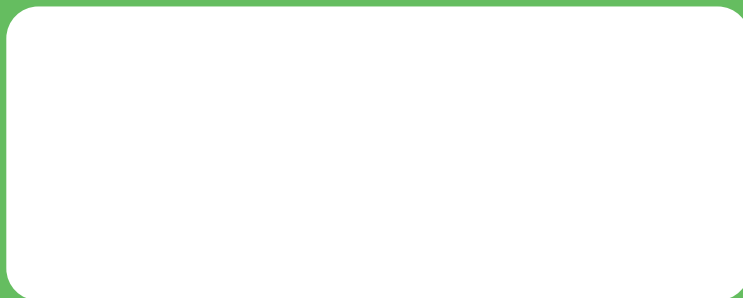
Macy Michoreczyk '24

Major: Chemistry

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Members of the Illinois Wesleyan men's golf team took aim at head coach **Jim Ott '91** (third from left) after winning their second straight NCAA team championship on May 14, 2021.

PHOTO FINISH