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SPRING 2022

ILLINOIS WESLEYAN

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

Cause for Celebration

SALUTING 50 YEARS OF TITLE IX
AND IWU WOMEN'S ATHLETICS



[ALL IN FOR WESLEYAN]

ALWAYS A TITAN

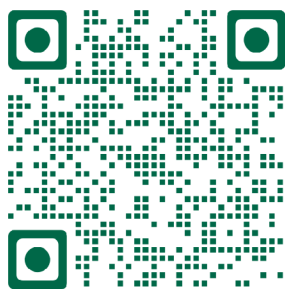
APRIL 19, 2022

Save the date for our annual day of giving, All In for Wesleyan. It's a day when alumni, parents and friends of the University come together and celebrate their common bond of being a Titan.

On April 19, you'll hear from current students, participate in exciting challenges and make a real difference across our campus community.

Once you're a Titan, you're always a Titan. So show your IWU pride by spreading the word and making your gift!

iwu.edu/all-in



#ALLINFORWESLEYAN





FEATURES

10 Cause for Celebration

As Title IX turns 50, the Illinois Wesleyan women's athletics community reflects on the progress that's been made and the work that still needs to be done.

18 Made to Fly

Propelled by an entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to improve life in his home country of Nigeria, **Babawande Afolabi '10** founded Green Africa Airways, a startup providing affordable air travel in Africa's most populous country.

22 Lending a Hand After Loss

Illinois Wesleyan's Parent Fund supports enrolled students who lose a parent to death or permanent disability and has served as a beacon of hope to both current and former students by providing assistance during times of need.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 31 | NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2022

ON OUR COVER:

Signed into law on June 23, 1972, Title IX has prevented sex-based discrimination and provided opportunities for women for the past 50 years. Illinois Wesleyan celebrates the anniversary, specifically through its impact on IWU's women's athletics program.

green africa
Welcome to the future

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As I write, spring is coming to Central Illinois in fits and starts. But regardless of the vagaries of the weather, it's clear that a season of renewal and change is happening at Illinois Wesleyan.

Everywhere we look across campus, new programs and opportunities for students are being developed. Many of these will enhance the position we already hold as the number one small college in Illinois for job placement of graduates. A study published in February by Georgetown University ranked more than 4,000 colleges and universities in America, in terms of return on investment. Ten years after graduation, Illinois Wesleyan alumni were in the top 10% nationwide. That ranking continued to rise for alumni further from their year of graduation.

Planning for The Petrick Idea Center, a hub for campus innovation and entrepreneurship, continues to move forward aggressively. A site has been identified, and we are working with an architectural consultant to solidify plans. Other recent developments include fields of study that we know are significant in our current environment and that students feel are important. For example, our highly regarded School of Nursing will be adding more fields of study in health sciences, including a new major in public health. Data science has recently been approved as a major. The new major in entrepreneurship (with obvious connections to The Petrick Idea Center) has proven very attractive to students. This magazine includes an article about one of our extraordinarily entrepreneurial graduates, Babawande Afolabi '10.

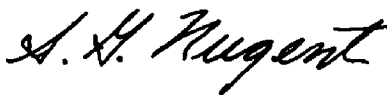
*“Everywhere we look across campus, new programs and opportunities
for students are being developed.”*

— PRESIDENT S. GEORGIA NUGENT

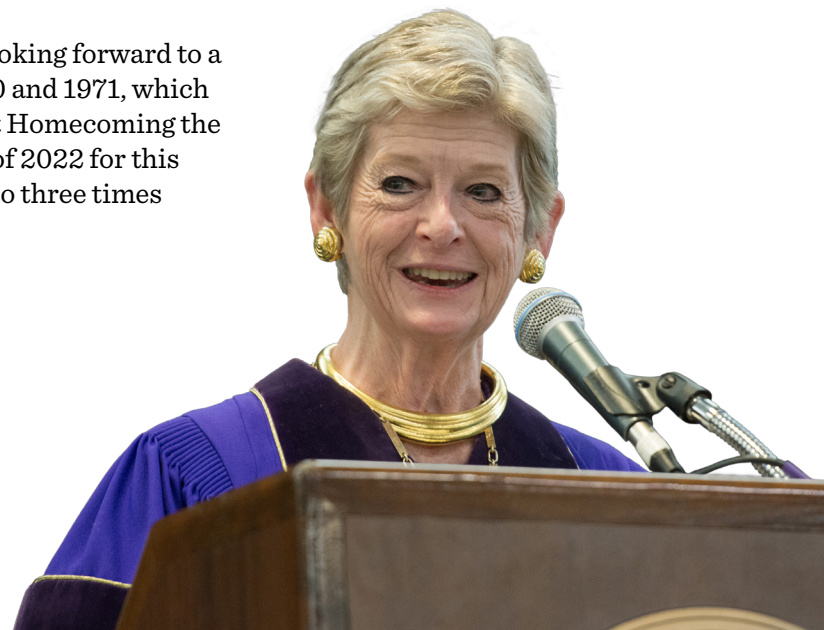
Faculty members are also developing exciting new programs for the future. Two very different projects, for example, both seek to address issues of equity. A team of faculty from sociology, psychology and chemistry are developing a minor in criminology. This is a field of considerable interest among today's students, and the IWU interdisciplinary offering will focus particularly on issues of equity in the policing and judicial systems. At the same time, the physics department is excited about developing a program in computational physics. This is a discipline not yet commonly taught at the undergraduate level, and our faculty believe it may attract a more diverse group of students into the emerging field.

While the development of new programs is exciting, I should also mention existing strengths at Illinois Wesleyan that have garnered important recognition recently. A collaboration between the biology department and the education program has received a grant from the National Science Foundation of up to \$600,000 toward training science teachers for underserved communities. In the School of Music, our chorus was recently honored to participate in concerts with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, featuring our own graduate, Kate Tombaugh '07. Professor of English Joanne Diaz was the recipient of the Richard S. and Julia Louise Reynolds Poetry Fellowship. Byron S. Tucci Professor of Hispanic Studies Carolyn Nadeau was awarded a Biruté Cipliauskaitė Fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Finally, I would be remiss not to note that we are looking forward to a unique “trifecta” event this spring. The classes of 1970 and 1971, which were unable to hold their 50th reunion celebrations at Homecoming the past two years due to COVID, will join with the Class of 2022 for this year's Commencement celebration. We look forward to three times the excitement!



S. Georgia Nugent
Illinois Wesleyan University President



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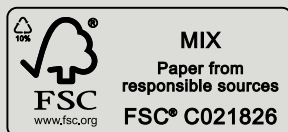
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Inside IWU

FEATURED NEWS, EVENTS AND VIEWS FROM THE IWU CAMPUS

IWU Receives Grant for STEM Education Workforce

A grant from the National Science Foundation will support Illinois Wesleyan's efforts to increase the number of students pursuing careers in STEM education.

Illinois Wesleyan is the recipient of a Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program award from the National Science Foundation for a grant titled "Authentic Research in STEM Educator Preparation for Issues of Culture, Justice and Equity."

The proposal was authored by Miner Linnaeus Sherff Endowed Professor of Botany **David Bollivar** and Associate Professor of Educational Studies **Maggie Evans**.

The program will provide up to \$600,000 in scholarships over the course of five years, in addition to paid undergraduate research opportunities and mentorship for at least 20 Titans each year who are studying to earn dual degrees in secondary education and a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

"The Noyce Scholars will engage with research relevant to the community with the support of IWU faculty members. They will bring that knowledge and experience back to the community as they teach the next generation of STEM leaders," said Bollivar.

During their undergraduate studies, students will learn by observing and teaching in STEM classrooms at local schools, including McLean County Unit 5 and Bloomington Public Schools District 87. Each scholar will be paired with two IWU faculty mentors to enhance their time in the program. The mentorship will continue for two years after graduation as the new teachers work in under-resourced schools.

A primary goal of the program is to create a pipeline for students in McLean County to become STEM teachers in their own community.

"Local schools are full of talented, intelligent students who can become amazing STEM teachers," said Evans. "IWU will provide a pathway to their STEM teaching career, particularly for students in McLean County."

In the process of recruiting students to enter the program, the University will make an effort to encourage and support prospective students of color to apply, with the goal of creating a more diverse teaching force for future STEM classrooms.

"IWU is excited to invest in a diverse group of students from McLean County who are passionate about becoming STEM teachers for social justice," said Evans.

Prospective high school students and currently enrolled undergraduate students are eligible to apply for this scholarship program. More information is available at www.iwu.edu.



Biomedical Researcher William Murphy '98 Presents Founders' Day Convocation Keynote Address

Health and innovative thinking were the focus of this year's Founders' Day Convocation at Illinois Wesleyan University, presented virtually on Jan. 12, 2022, amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Illinois Wesleyan **President S. Georgia Nugent** spoke of the motives that led to the founding of the University in 1850 and their relevance today, as well as the annual intellectual theme of "Health, Healing and Humanity."

"A theme that obviously could not be more relevant today, as we see these three inextricably intertwined in the context of the coronavirus pandemic," she said.

Biomedical researcher **William Murphy '98**, a physics and math double major at IWU, gave the keynote address titled "Mimicking Nature to Create New Technology." Murphy spoke about how his experience as a Titan helped shape his future career in biotechnology. He shared examples of his research efforts to create regenerative medicine based on materials already found in nature.

"You are fortunate to be enrolled at a 'yes, and' institution," said Murphy. "You don't have to choose to become only a physicist, or only a chemist, or only a business student. You can also be a baseball player or a musician. One can engage in all of these opportunities at once to build what will become the foundation for your life's journey."

He reminded students that every course of study can make an impact on the world.

"I hope I've convinced you today that there is so much more to discover and leverage in nature, and that all disciplines can contribute to the future of biotechnology," he said. "Your IWU education is preparing you wonder-



(Above) **William Murphy '98**, a biomedical researcher and University of Wisconsin-Madison professor, provides the keynote address at the annual Founders' Day Convocation.

fully to make breakthrough discoveries and turn them into real-world products."

The program included an invocation given by University Chaplain **Walt Wiltschek**, remarks from President Nugent, and an introduction of the keynote speaker by Provost and Dean of Faculty **Mark Brodl**.

Murphy is the Harvey D. Spangler Endowed Professor of biomedical engineering/orthopedics & rehabilitation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He also serves as the principal investigator of the Murphy Group Bioinspired Materials Laboratory, which seeks to build innovative biomaterials to address significant challenges in biology and medicine. His research has produced 180 journal publications and 23 patents. He also has an additional 30 pending patents and has founded four startup companies. He continues to innovate in the field of bioinspired materials and regenerative medicine, exploring ideas such as using mineral-based materials that can deliver proteins, DNA and RNA to potentially combat a range of human diseases.

Murphy was previously featured in the Spring 2018 edition of *IWU Magazine*.

DECEMBER GRADUATES



(Left) Illinois Wesleyan students completing work on degrees are recognized at the annual December Graduate Dinner, including **Nicole Brennan '22** (center), pictured with IWU Professor of English **Joanne Diaz** (left) and **President S. Georgia Nugent** (right).

Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25 Presents to United Nations Panel

First-year economics student **Victoria Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25** represented women in the field of science while presenting on global disparities in water economics at a United Nations panel on Feb. 11, 2022.

In recognition of International Day of Women and Girls in Science, the virtual event was hosted at the U.N. Headquarters and was titled “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Water Unites Us.” Discussion centered around how water contributes to sustainable development, economic prosperity, social justice and environmental integrity.

Ballesteros-Gonzalez’s remarks on water economics played during a high-level panel titled “Investing in Water for Sustainable Development: Reshaping Water Economics for Inclusive Green Growth.” She also participated in a live conversation with the president of the General Assembly during the closing ceremony.

Ballesteros-Gonzalez illuminated how economics and language barriers are related to global water inefficiencies. Her goals were to bring awareness to the inaction surrounding the water crisis — despite affordable technologies being available, such as collecting rainwater — while addressing how English monolingualism limits global conversation.

“I hope to use my passion to be a bridge between the international community and those affected by the problems we will be discussing. I look forward to using my experience and liberal arts education to face the challenge and pressure of this diplomacy situation,” she said.



(Above) **Victoria Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25** presented to a United Nations Panel on the inequities of water economics.

Summer Term Courses Offered to Students, Alumni, Community

Anyone interested in broadening their education or deepening their connection with Illinois Wesleyan is invited to enroll in 2022 Summer Term courses.

Available in June and July, select courses are open to current Illinois Wesleyan students, alumni, current high school juniors and seniors, and community members.

Brush up on language skills with an elementary Spanish course, advocate for change with the civil rights and social justice course, or boost problem-solving with introduction to computer and data sciences.

All 17 courses are taught by Illinois Wesleyan faculty and provided in an online format. Some courses will be offered in a HyFlex format, meaning students can fully participate either in-person or remotely, and switch modes as needed.



“With a focus on engaging, online instruction, the Summer Term not only allows current college students to make progress on their degrees from any location, but also allows alumni to reconnect with their alma mater and prospective students to sample an Illinois Wesleyan education,” said Associate Provost **Becky Roesner**, who helps organize Summer Term.

For more information about Summer Term, including course descriptions and registration details, visit www.iwu.edu/summer-term.



MLK DAY AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN

(Right) IWU Director of Track and Field **Chris Schumacher** provides the keynote address, “My Life in Black and White,” to faculty and staff as part of a day of professional development on Jan. 17, 2022, to kick off a week of programming that also included the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Teach-In on Jan. 19, 2022.

Kendall Sosa '21 Named 2022 NCAA Today's Top 10 Award Recipient

Former Illinois Wesleyan women's basketball standout **Kendall Sosa '21** was named one of 10 former student-athletes recognized as 2022 NCAA Today's Top 10 Award winners, the NCAA announced Jan. 10, 2022.

"I'm incredibly honored to receive this award and be recognized among many distinguished recipients," Sosa said. "Through all the challenges of the past couple of years, I'm proud to represent Illinois Wesleyan women's basketball and the Bloomington-Normal communities, and the impact they have made in my life. A huge thank you goes to my support system — my family, teammates and coaches, for believing in me and motivating me to excel in all aspects of life."

The Today's Top 10 Award recognizes former student-athletes for success in their sport, in the classroom and in the community. Recipients were recognized at the NCAA Convention in Indianapolis on Jan. 19, 2022.

"We are so proud of Kendall, not just for her athletic accomplishments, but for who she has grown into as a person," Illinois Wesleyan Athletic Director **Mike Wagner** said. "Kendall truly exemplified what it means to be a Titan and a Division III student-athlete. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to watch her compete during her time at IWU, and I am grateful to the NCAA for recognizing her with this special award."

Honorees are selected by the NCAA Honors Committee, composed of representatives of NCAA member schools, conferences and distinguished citizens, including past awardees.

"Kendall is a top-10 all-around person, not just an all-around athlete or basketball player," IWU Head Women's Basketball Coach **Mia Smith** said. "Her skills on the basketball court were amazing and her highlight reel is one that I can watch over and over again — especially the 47-point performance at Millikin. As



(Above) **Kendall Sosa '21** (right), joined by IWU Athletic Director **Mike Wagner** (left), accepts the NCAA Today's Top 10 Award on Jan. 19, 2022.

much as she brought to the court, what she brought unrelated to basketball was even more impressive."

Since graduating from Illinois Wesleyan in May 2021, Sosa has become the marketing coordinator for a construction company in Denver.

Jim Ott '91 named to GCAA Hall of Fame, tabbed as Team USA coach for Palmer Cup

Illinois Wesleyan Head Men's Golf Coach **Jim Ott '91** was inducted into the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame on Dec. 6, 2021. Ott was additionally named to the Team USA coaching staff for the 2022 Arnold Palmer Cup, to be held at Golf Club de Genève, in Vandœuvre, Switzerland, July 1-3, 2022.

A three-time GCAA Dave Williams Division III Coach of the Year selection, Ott guided Illinois Wesleyan to consecutive Division III Championships in 2019 and 2021. Ott's teams have won 17 College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin Championships since 2000, including the past nine in a row. The Titans have made 14 consecutive NCAA Division III Championships appearances, racking up seven top-10 finishes.

An eight-time CCIW Coach of the Year pick, Ott has coached 33 PING Golf All-Americans and 18 Cleveland Golf All-American Scholars. IWU has been honored as a GCAA All-Academic Team seven straight seasons.

The Palmer Cup is an international competition featuring men and women collegiate golfers. The event is supported by the Arnold & Winnie Palmer Foundation, which aims to provide a platform for perpetuating Arnold Palmer's commitment to youth character development and the growth of amateur and collegiate golf.



(Above) Illinois Wesleyan Head Men's Golf Coach **Jim Ott '91** (right) was named to the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame.

Women's Volleyball wins CCIW Titles

IWU's women's volleyball team won CCIW regular-season and tournament titles to propel the team into the NCAA Tournament. The Titans finished the season with an overall record of 19-13, including a 7-1 mark in CCIW play. **Madi Corey '22**, **Courtney McAuliffe '22** and **Jessica McCall '21** were selected to the All-CCIW First Team, while **Ava Porada '25** and **Faith Washko '24** garnered second team selections. Corey was named CCIW Player of the Year and **Kim Nelson-Brown** was selected as the CCIW Coach of the Year. **Annika Altekruze '24** received the CCIW's Elite 25 Award. McCall garnered CoSIDA Academic All-District honors, and McAuliffe was named AVCA All-America Honorable Mention.



Madi Corey '22

Women's Soccer Co-Champs in CCIW

The Titan women's soccer squad finished the season as CCIW regular-season co-champions with an overall record of 9-8-1 and a league record of 7-1. **Caelyn Steffens '22** was named CCIW Offensive Player of the Year for the second year in a row, and she joined **Lauren Shanks '23** and **Anny Mitra '24** on the All-CCIW First Team. **Rachel White '22** earned second team distinction. Steffens and Shanks were additionally included on the United Soccer Coaches all-region team.



Caelyn Steffens '22

Women's Golf Runner-Up at CCIW Tourney

Illinois Wesleyan's women's golf team concluded the fall season ranked No. 21 nationally after finishing runner-up at the CCIW Championship on the strength

of four top-10 finishes. **Lexi Onsrud '24** placed second individually, while **Emma Thorman '24** tied for fourth, **Jacque O'Neill '25** tied for seventh and **Macy Ludwig '25** took ninth, all en route to All-CCIW honors. Onsrud also earned the CCIW's Elite 25 Award for having the highest GPA of any player competing in the tournament.

Four From Football Earn All-CCIW Honors

Jake Buhe '22, **Zack Tencza '22**, **Charlie Hamilton '23** and **Conor Murphy '23** earned All-CCIW Second Team nods as the Illinois Wesleyan football team posted a 3-7 record in 2021. Tencza, Murphy, **Anthony Marre '22** and **Skyler Metzger '22** were named to the D3football.com Team of the Week throughout the year.

Men's Soccer Duo Earns All-League Honors

The Titan men's soccer team finished its 2021 season with an overall record of 6-9-1, and a 5-3 record in the CCIW. **Zack Kokes '22** and **Dane Hoare '23** earned All-CCIW Second Team honors. **Logan Servin '22** and **Trevor Martin '22** were honored on the CoSIDA Academic All-District team.

Women's Cross Country Fourth at CCIW Championship

Lexie Dorsey '22 and **Rebekah Harden '22** earned All-CCIW honors, placing ninth and 14th, respectively, while the IWU women's team captured fourth place at the CCIW Championship. Harden later placed 27th at the NCAA Midwest Regional to earn all-region honors.

Men's Cross Country Eighth at CCIW Meet

The IWU men's cross country finished eighth at the CCIW Championship. **J.D. Barrett '23** posted the highest finish for the Titans, taking 26th place.

Women's Tennis Team's Poehls wins RESPECT Award

Maria Poehls '22 earned the CCIW's RESPECT Award for the IWU women's tennis team, which compiled a 3-9 overall record and 2-6 league mark.



2021 Women's Volleyball



2021 Women's Soccer

BOOKS

The latest novel from **Hal Graff '69**, *Assassination in Ketchum*, is an action-adventure thriller and the first story in a new series. In *Assassination in Ketchum*, the only thing standing between a Russian assassination team and an American president is hunting outfitter and former Navy SEAL Wes Oakley. The book is available on Amazon.

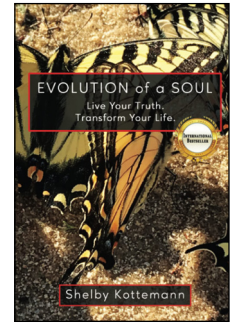
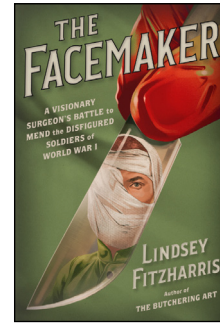
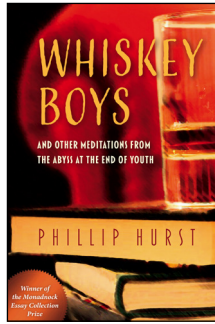
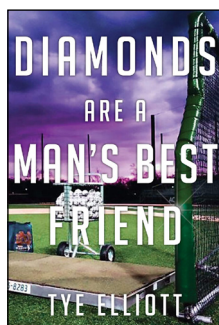
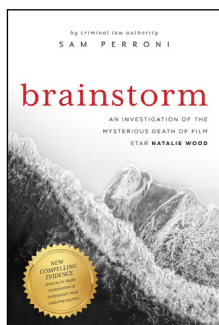
Sam Perroni '70 conducted six years of exhaustive research before publishing *Brainstorm: An Investigation of the Mysterious Death of Film Star Natalie Wood*, a thorough investigation of the death of the Hollywood actress more than four decades ago. A retired trial attorney, Sam was inspired to launch his own investigation when, in 2012, the Los Angeles County Coroner amended Wood's cause of death from accidental drowning to "drowning and other undetermined factors." Sam presents his findings in *Brainstorm* in painstaking detail, through interviews with individuals connected to the case, and supplementary photos, sketches and diagrams. Having made his case, as he did in so many courtrooms before, Sam leaves readers to make their own conclusions. *Brainstorm* is widely available.

David A. Petreman '70 is the translator of *Between Good-Byes and Nostalgia & Distances and Solitudes*, two collections of poetry by Chilean writer Marino Muñoz Lagos. David is a professor emeritus in Latin American literature at Wright State University, and has published several books on Chilean literature, and translated the works of several writers and poets. *Between Good-Byes and Nostalgia & Distances and Solitudes* can be purchased at the Dos Madres Press website.

Tye Elliott '86 is the author of *Diamonds are a Man's Best Friend*, a tale of three generations of a baseball family. Baseball is more than a game for the Elliott family — it has bonded them, taught valuable life lessons, provided lifelong relationships, and been a foundation for success in other endeavors. *Diamonds are a Man's Best Friend* is available on Amazon.

Mark Yakich '92 is the author of *Football*, an installment in the *Object Lessons* series of books about the hidden lives of ordinary things, published by Bloomsbury Academic in January 2022. In *Football*, Mark weaves in his own experiences through celebration and scrutiny of the sport commonly known as soccer in the United States. *Object Lessons* is published in partnership with an essay series in *The Atlantic*. *Football* and other books in the series are available on Amazon.

Phillip Hurst '01 penned *Whiskey Boys: And Other Meditations from the Abyss at the End of Youth*, a collection of literary essays published by Bauhan Publishing. The content for Phillip's first book comes from his own life; he estimates the essays cover 15 years of his life, including



his abandoning of a legal career to pursue writing, and traveling the American West. *Whiskey Boys* was the winner of Bauhan Publishing's 2021 Monadnock Essay Collection Prize. It is available at the Bauhan website and on Amazon. Phillip has a second nonfiction book, *The Land of Ale and Gloom: Discovering the Pacific Northwest*, and a novel, *Regent's of Paris*, forthcoming in 2022.

Lindsey Fitzharris '04 is the author of *The Facemaker: A Visionary Surgeon's Battle to Mend the Disfigured Soldiers of World War I*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and set for release on June 7, 2022. *The Facemaker* is Lindsey's second book, following *The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine*, which won the PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing in 2018. *The Facemaker* examines the life and work of pioneering plastic surgeon Harold Gillies, who dedicated himself to restoring the faces of a brutalized generation. At a time when losing a limb made a soldier a hero, but losing a face made him a monster to a society largely intolerant of facial differences, Gillies restored not just faces, but identities and spirits. *The Facemaker* is available for pre-order now. Lindsey was previously featured in the Spring 2018 edition of *IWU Magazine*.

David Varel '05 is the author of *The Scholar and the Struggle: Lawrence Reddick's Crusade for Black History and Black Power*, published by the University of North Carolina Press, which won a 2021 Colorado Book Award, presented by Colorado Humanities & Center for the Book. The work was also recognized by the African American Intellectual History Society as one of its "Best Black History Books of 2020." In addition, David's earlier book, *The Lost Black Scholar: Resurrecting Allison Davis in American Social Thought*, published by the University of Chicago Press, prompted the University of Chicago to organize an annual symposium in honor of Davis, with future plans to endow a professorship and postdoctoral fellowship in his name. The book's TV and film rights have additionally been purchased by AMC Studios. An affiliate faculty member at Metropolitan State University of Denver, David has additionally published articles in *The American Historian* and *Perspectives on History* reflecting his work in the areas of Black scholarship and history.

Shelby Kottemann '14 is the author of *Evolution of a Soul: Live Your Truth. Transform Your Life*. Published in October 2021 by Willow Tree Press, *Evolution of a Soul* follows protagonist Allie, whose story may inspire readers to discover wisdom in their hearts and the power of faith. *Evolution of a Soul* is available on Amazon.

All submitted content received by Feb. 13, 2022. The submitted content deadline for the Summer/Fall 2022 issue of IWU Magazine is May 23, 2022. Submissions may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.

ARTICLES, ESSAYS AND PAPERS

Ethan Schrum '99 published an essay, "The Prophet of Academic Doom," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, in October 2021. Written on the 50th anniversary of the publishing of Robert Nisbet's *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma*, Ethan argues Nisbet's analysis on the higher education landscape and trends 50 years ago have accurately forecasted the challenges higher ed faces today. Portions of the essay were adapted from Ethan's 2019 book, *The Instrumental University: Education in Service of the National Agenda after World War II*, published by Cornell University Press. Ethan is an associate professor of history at Azusa Pacific University.

Assistant Professor of Biology **Richard Alvey**, Miner Linnaeus Sherff Endowed Professor of Botany **David Bollivar** and research students published an article in *PLOS One* titled "Genomic diversity of bacteriophages infecting *Rhodobacter capsulatus* and their relatedness to its gene transfer agent RcGTA." Co-authors with IWU connections are **Jackson Rapala '22**, **Brenda Miller '14**, **Maximiliano Garcia '18**, **Megan Dolan '19** and **Matthew Bockman '12**.

Visiting Assistant Professor & Academic Success Coordinator **Mark Halx** and co-author Young Hyeo Joo, an associate professor at South Korea's Gyeongsang National University, had an article accepted for the open access, peer-reviewed academic journal *Sage Open*. The article is titled "The Subtle Power of Global Governance and its Ongoing Influence on Korean Education Policy."

Instructional Professor and General Biology Lab Coordinator **Libby Haywood** co-authored an article in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* in November 2021. The article is titled "Insertion-trigger residues differentially modulate endosomal escape by cytotoxic necrotizing factor toxins."

ART

Three paintings from **Renee McGinnis '84** (A) were on display at Zg Gallery's pop-up space in Chicago this winter. The works included in the group show were "Aviator," "Song of the Siren" and "Three Suitors at the Crack of Dawn." "Aviator" (right) later appeared in Zg's main gallery for another group show.



Works by **Laura (Cavallari) O'Connor '04** (B) were on display at the Blue Moon Gallery in Grayslake, Illinois, from Nov. 20, 2021 through Jan. 2, 2022. The show, *Embroidery as Testimony and Dissent*, featured a collection of embroidery and cross-stitch pieces that primarily focused on society's treatment of women and the use of embroidery as resistance.



Artwork by Illinois Wesleyan Instructional Professor and Gallery Director **Carmen Lozar** was featured in the fall 2021 edition of *Glass*:

The UrbanGlass Quarterly. An article by Paul J. Stankard, titled "The Fabulist," dissected Carmen's "depths of feeling and fluidity" to create works that are "at times autobiographical, other times universal, and often both."

MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

Charles D. Prokopp '72 has purchased and renovated a 120-year-old church in Atchison, Kansas, which he has renamed The Green Man Theater. Charles plans on an opening this spring, with the first offering to be *Spoon River Anthology*. Performances of Clive Barker's *The Magician*, Michael Chesden's *Lugosi*, and a one-man show recreating M.R. James' Christmas tradition of reading his ghost stories to fellow Cambridge faculty members, are planned in the near future.



Elizabeth Laidlaw '93 performed in *When Harry Met Rehab* at Chicago's Greenhouse Theatre Center, Dec. 5, 2021, through Jan. 30, 2022. *When Harry Met Rehab* chronicles in a humorous yet poignant way how Harry, an alcoholic on the edge of clueless annihilation, ended up in the hands of a magician whose greatest trick was making his denial and excuses disappear. A comedy that takes sobriety seriously, the story is based loosely on the real-life experiences of Chicago sports radio personality Harry Teinowitz. Based in Chicago, Elizabeth is an actor, producer, director, and the founding artistic director of Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre.

Illinois Wesleyan Associate Professor of Music **Ilia Radoslavov** performed during an evening of Bulgarian music at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville's Dunham Hall Theater on Nov. 12, 2021. The program featured works by Bulgarian composers and showcased the unique rhythms and harmonies of Bulgarian classical music. Prior to the concert, Ilia offered a piano master class, free and open to the public, on SIUE's campus. Ilia repeated the performance and master class on the campus of the University of Tennessee on Nov. 21, 2021.

Illinois Wesleyan Recruitment Coordinator and Adjunct Instructor in the School of Theatre Arts **Lauren Warnecke** collaborated on music released on streaming platform Bandcamp in January 2022. *Selected Music for Movement, Vol. 1* is a collection of moods and meters composed for dance technique class, composed by Tim Russell/Avoidancepolicy. The collection is a response to the dearth of recorded music for dance class in complex and uncommon meters. Tim and Lauren have worked together previously as co-curators and producers of *PRODUCE*, an experimental dance and music series blending found source material, improvisation and audience participation. *PRODUCE* ran from 2011-15 in Chicago.

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

Story by MATT WING

Timeline by KATIE GONZALES

As Title IX turns 50, the Illinois Wesleyan women's athletics community reflects on the progress that's been made and the work that still needs to be done.



Pamela Jacklin '66 gazed out over a raucous Shirk Center crowd, nary an open seat to be found. Cheering fans muffled the sound of a bouncing basketball. The smell of popcorn wafted through the air.

The Illinois Wesleyan women's basketball team was in a battle with visiting Marietta College. An opening round game of the 2018 Division III NCAA Tournament on the Titans' home floor was playing out before a rowdy crowd of supporters on hand to back the nationally ranked IWU women's team.

In town for the annual Council for IWU Women's Summit, Jacklin made an unplanned stop at Shirk that night before heading back to her hotel room.

She couldn't help but pause to think how things had changed.

"It made you think about those who made a difference," Jacklin said. "It made you think of everyone who worked so hard to bring that change about."

Women's basketball at IWU looked a little different in the 1960s when Jacklin was a student. IWU didn't have anything resembling the squad that took the floor for the 2018 national tournament. Instead, there was a loosely organized group of women students interested in the sport. Jacklin was one of them. They practiced together occasionally in anticipation of what were then called "play days," informal gatherings of teams from regional



(Right) Pam Jacklin '66, speaking at the 2019 Council for IWU Women's Summit, played a leading role in the implementation of Title IX. **(Above)** Jacklin (second row, far left) was a member of an IWU extramural women's basketball team.



schools, usually hosted by a larger school, such as the University of Illinois. With few if any resourced teams competing, a small school like Illinois Wesleyan was on equal footing with the big schools.

The games themselves were also quite different. Teams played with six players a side. Players were limited to a maximum of two dribbles per touch. Additional rules governed movement. Three players designated as guards were restricted to the backcourt; three forwards were limited to frontcourt play.

"The popular thinking was girls weren't strong enough to run up and down the court," Jacklin said,

laughing. "They thought they were protecting us!"

Athletics was only a small part of Jacklin's time at IWU. She was active in Student Senate, the debate team and Model United Nations, all while majoring in political science. After leaving IWU with a bachelor's degree, she earned dual master's degrees in law and diplomacy from The Fletcher School at Tufts University, where she focused on international law and human rights. While teaching political science and international relations at Bowie State College, she became active in women's causes. She was involved in grassroots women's groups for

Illinois Wesleyan begins intercollegiate competition in women's basketball

Title IX signed into law by President Richard Nixon

Women's volleyball plays first season

Women's tennis plays first season



1971-72



1972



1974



1975-76

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

several years before landing a job at the Federation of Organizations for Professional Women (FOPW).

Although she wasn't a lawyer at the time, her study of human rights law intersected with her dedication to women's issues and, when Title IX was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on June 23, 1972, Jacklin was at the forefront of implementing the landmark piece of legislation. Her work with the FOPW brought her into contact with individuals working on the Association of American College's Project on the Status and Education of Women. It was there Jacklin found herself surrounded by trailblazers and changemakers. Foremost among them were Bernice "Bunny" Sandler, popularly known as the "Godmother of Title IX," and her colleague and right-hand woman, Margaret Dunkle.

"I was learning at the knee of geniuses," Jacklin said. "It was less than a year that I worked there, but it was incredibly important for me and taught me a great deal."

Jacklin went on to a job at Washington State University where she was tasked with putting Title IX into practice. She conducted studies and developed plans to eliminate sex-based discrimination in all of the university's various departments and programs.

Athletics was a part of Jacklin's work, but certainly not the primary focus at first.



(Above) Jacklin (right) reunites with Title IX trailblazer Margaret Dunkle (left).

"One thing forgotten about Title IX was that it was not initially aimed at athletics. Athletics was an afterthought," Jacklin said. "Title IX was primarily motivated by the desire to provide equal educational opportunities for women at all levels, but with particular emphasis on graduate and professional programs. Without change, women's career opportunities were stunted from day one."

But athletics quickly became one of the most visible areas for application of Title IX. At Washington State, Jacklin studied student interest in the school's athletic offerings. Women students were polled, and the results were stun-

ning. "At every level, women wanted far more opportunities to participate than what was available," Jacklin said, noting she was particularly surprised by women's interest in intramural football.

So began work to expand programming for women's athletics, ranging from a broader spectrum of physical education classes, to intramural offerings, to club sports, to intercollegiate programs. Jacklin's work at Washington State continued for more than three years as she addressed issues both in and out of athletics. It culminated with the presentation of a report evaluating university compliance with Title IX, with recommendations to remedy the extensive inequalities delivered to the university president.

"I had this wonderful playing field to try to implement the lessons that I had learned from Bunny, Margaret and others on how to implement Title IX," Jacklin said. "I'm happy to say that at WSU we were able to do a really, really good job, primarily by recognizing that you must approach everything like an academic — after all, we were at a university — and so that's what we did. The research and analysis made a compelling case for change."

Jacklin went on to serve as a Title IX specialist as part of a federally funded program at Portland State University, where she provided Title IX training for K-12 schools throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Softball plays first season

1977

Women's track and field competes in first season

1978

Terri (Friedman) Masuda '82 named Academic All-American, the first of 36 IWU women to earn All-America status (a combined 50 times)

1981

College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin first sponsors women's athletics

1986-87

She consulted with and undertook Title IX investigations, and served as a contributor to a widely used manual for Title IX implementation.

Jacklin earned a law degree at the University of Idaho, where she was a consultant to its president on Title IX. Her work then moved inside courtrooms as an attorney and behind-the-scenes player advancing anti-discrimination efforts. She was involved in litigation against her former employer, Washington State University, based on the Washington State Equal Rights Amendment and Washington State's anti-discrimination law, commonly referred to as "Little Title IX," which ended with a substantial victory for girls and women wanting real opportunities in athletics.

Jacklin later represented plaintiffs with Title IX complaints against schools in Oregon, including the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, both in court and through administrative proceedings, invoking federal law and Oregon's version of "Little Title IX."

She continued to serve as a trusted consultant on Title IX and anti-discrimination matters and, although her pro bono work later took her in different directions, she remained committed to civil rights and equity in education throughout her career.

"It was a very fascinating period

of my life because it was meaningful, challenging and rewarding," she said. "I'm thrilled at the progress we've made these last 50 years, while cognizant that more needs to be accomplished."

Even so, Jacklin often thinks of the changemakers who advanced the movement.

"Any important social change takes many, many people from many



(Above) Seeing her granddaughter Addi (center) celebrate after winning a soccer match reminds Jacklin her Title IX work was well worth the effort.

different positions and many different approaches to bring about real progress," she said. "It takes time, but it can happen, and it's really important to remember that we can have an impact even if we're not seeing it in the present."

Jacklin does, however, see that

impact today. She saw it that night at the Shirk Center, not only in the athletes themselves, but in the crowd — men and women, young and old — all there to cheer on women athletes, something unfathomable a half century earlier.

Most recently, Jacklin saw the impact while attending one of her granddaughter's soccer matches.

"We live in the Pacific Northwest, so of course it's rainy and muddy here all the time, and we were at a game where it was just pouring and there were mud puddles everywhere," Jacklin recalled. "My granddaughter was maybe 9 or 10 years old at the time, and she was the star of the team, and she was so happy at the end of the game because they had just won their last game of the season.

"After the game, she was just so thrilled, and I watched her grab two of her friends, and she hugged them and they twirled around, and then she signaled to them to follow her, and they all ran toward the biggest mud puddle they could find and threw themselves into it. They all got up and they were just grinning from ear to ear.

"I snapped a photo of them and, at that moment, I just thought to myself that seeing her then made everything I did worth it."



When Barb Cothren arrived at Illinois Wesleyan in 1979 as

Women's swimming and diving competes in first season

Women's cross country competes in first season

Titan softball captures IWU's first CCIW championship in women's athletics, the first of 62 league titles won by IWU women's teams

Shirk Center opens and women's soccer plays first season

1989-90

1990

1991

1994

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

a women's athletics coach and administrator, Title IX had been in place for nearly seven years. Illinois Wesleyan had added several inter-collegiate women's programs and was generally on par with its peers in offering opportunities in women's athletics, if not ahead of the curve.

It was a drastic change for Cothren, who had spent the previous 18 years as a teacher and coach at Tri-Valley High School in nearby Downs, Illinois.

Everything was a struggle back then.

Practice times? Whenever the boys weren't using the gym. Schedules? Good luck. Budgets? Nonexistent.

"I can remember going into closets and finding the old boys' basketball undershirts with numbers on them, and we put them on over our P.E. clothes," Cothren recalled. "That's what we wore for our uniforms."

Things were better at IWU, for certain, but there were still challenges and inequality in those days. The men's basketball team played in Fred Young Fieldhouse, while the women's team played in the old Memorial Gymnasium (now the Hansen Student Center).

One facility was notably better than the other.

"It was very difficult to recruit when a student came on campus and you showed them Memorial Gym, and then they'd tour campus and see



(Above) Barb Cothren served as an Illinois Wesleyan women's athletics coach and administrator from 1979-2001.

Fred Young Fieldhouse," Cothren said.

But things evolved. IWU added sports and participation in athletics increased. Both men's and women's teams outgrew facilities and, thanks to a generous gift from the Shirk family, the Shirk Center was built to serve as IWU's athletics hub, home to all of its teams.

The Shirk Center was a game-changer, Cothren said.

"As the women's program evolved and improved, it became clear that we needed to provide a better facility," she said. "When they built Shirk, it totally changed

everything. It was big enough to fit everybody, there was practice time for everybody, and just look at all the sports we have now."

Cothren retired in 2001 having left an undeniable imprint on the women's athletics program at IWU. In the years since, she's witnessed even more positive change from her preferred Shirk Center seat, where she can regularly be found cheering on the Titans.

Things have come a long way since her days of digging through closets for old uniforms.

"You don't really think about it until people start asking about it," Cothren said. "But it is really amazing to think of all that we went through and how we ever got it all accomplished."



Incumbent coaches have the luxury of an entire offseason to prepare for their next campaign. Kim Nelson-Brown had all of two weeks to plan for her first season as Illinois Wesleyan's head volleyball coach.

While staffing a volleyball camp at Notre Dame during the summer of 1996, Nelson-Brown got a call from her former college coach alerting her to the opening at IWU. Nelson-Brown called then Athletic Director Dennie Bridges '61 to indicate her interest. The two set a time to meet. She was named head coach a week later.

How did the young coach

Women's golf competes
in first season

Nicki Frank '98 wins NCAA
Division III outdoor long jump
title, the first of 19 track and field
national titles won by IWU women
and women's relay teams

Women's track and field wins NCAA
Division III indoor and outdoor team
national championships, the first
team national championships in IWU
women's athletics history

1996-97

1997

2008

respond? She led the Titans to a school-record 27 victories.

"I was thrown in feet first," Nelson-Brown said. "And the rest is history."

In the 25 seasons since, Nelson-Brown has helmed a team that's won five league titles and played in six NCAA Tournaments. She's coached 12 All-Americans, one of them her daughter and now assistant coach, Tyler Brown '19. The longtime IWU head coach won her 500th match with the Titans this past fall.

She's seen plenty of changes at IWU in the past quarter century, including a closing of the equity gap.

"Within a couple of years of being at IWU, I started to see a shift of



(Above) Kim Nelson-Brown has won five conference titles and guided the Titan volleyball team to six NCAA Tournaments in 26 years at the helm.

emphasis on our women's sports," said Nelson-Brown, now an associate athletic director and senior women's administrator at IWU, in addition to her coaching duties. "I would never say we were neglected; I just started to see that our voices mattered and we were involved in more decisions.

"It was important to Coach Bridges that our women were treated equally to our men. All of our women's sports benefited from this shift, and our current athletic director, Mike Wagner, has continued to make sure all of our teams feel appreciated, valued and treated equally."

Nelson-Brown knows, however, there is still work to do. For every sign of progress, there is too often a corresponding reminder of inequality. She points to the highly publicized disparity in accommodations between the men's and women's basketball teams competing at the NCAA's 2021 Final Four events as an example.

Speaking up and calling out such instances is vital, the coach said.

"Over my time at IWU, I feel I've learned to use my voice to fight for our women and what we needed and deserved," Nelson-Brown said. "My hope through all of this is to encourage our female student-athletes to use their voices, too."

Nelson-Brown is proud of all the on-court accomplishments of her team over the past 26 years. But that

pales in comparison to the pride she feels when she sees IWU volleyball alumni serving in leadership roles and inspiring the next generation.

"Knowing that these women are out in the community making a difference, using their voices and leading in these roles is ultimately what we try to create here at IWU," she said.



Gianina (Taylor) Baker '04 can remember countless pressure-packed moments during her time as a student. Her organic chemistry oral examination, leading student organizations in a time of rapid change, and her doctoral dissertation defense spring to mind.

But nothing compares to the nerves she felt before running the second leg of the women's 4x400-meter relay at the 2004 NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships as a member of the Illinois Wesleyan track team.

"When faced with a challenge, I often think back to that time and how I used those nerves to move forward and compete at my highest level," Baker said. "Those experiences have absolutely shaped me, helped me grow and see what's possible."

Despite competing in the 'B' final — or "slow" final, as it's often referenced — Baker and her 4x400 teammates clocked the fastest time

Women's track and field wins NCAA Division III outdoor national championship

2010

Women's basketball team wins NCAA Division III team championship

2012

IWU adds women's lacrosse

2013

Women's track and field wins NCAA Division III outdoor national championship

2016

to claim the national title. “We were laser-focused on our goal, trusted our training and were empowered by Coach (Chris) Shoe(macher) to execute,” she recalled.

It was a memorable moment, though just one of many for a former IWU student who was highly engaged during her time on campus. Baker was president of the Black Student Union, co-president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, a resident advisor, student ambassador, and member of the student group Sisters Actively Visualizing Vitality through Intellect.



(Above) A national champion in the 4x400-meter relay at IWU, **Gianina (Taylor) Baker '04** was most recently named *Central Illinois Business Magazine's* 2020 Woman of the Year.

The multitude of experiences provided the foundation for a successful career. She is currently the associate director of evaluation, learning and equitable assessment at the Office of Community College Research and Leadership, a research and resource-development organization, dedicated to documenting, advocating, and facilitating the systematic use of learning outcomes assessment to improve student learning. Her work has been recognized often; she was most recently named to *Central Illinois Business Magazine's* “Forty Under 40” class and its 2020 Woman of the Year.

Opportunities in women’s athletics played a vital role in preparing her for such a career, Baker said.

“I certainly took pride in working hard and formed some amazing friendships with strong women who also participated in athletics,” Baker said. “We pushed our bodies to their limits, of which our ancestors would be proud.

“We also understand the pressure put on us as we look to keep such opportunities open to younger generations of women and the advocacy role needed to do such.”



Carol Willis '68 never got to be the star player. She never even got to be on the team.

Growing up in a time when opportunities for girls to participate in high school athletics were

somewhere between scarce and nonexistent, Willis had to watch from the sidelines.

Fast forward 50 years and Willis is finally part of the team.

Through her support of women’s athletics, Willis is as familiar a figure in IWU athletics as anyone else these days. You’ll find her in the stands, watching practice, or visiting coaches and support staff in the Shirk Center.

“This has given me purpose in life,” Willis says, tears welling up in her eyes.

Willis’ support of IWU athletics started when she learned of a need for new women’s locker rooms. When she connected with IWU Athletic Director Mike Wagner to discuss the project, she learned Wagner was in possession of funds to refurbish the men’s locker rooms, but refused to move forward until he could also begin work on the women’s locker rooms.

“I got a little emotional when Mike told me that,” Willis said. “Because that’s one thing I can say for sure: there is 100% equality between men’s and women’s athletics here at Wesleyan.”

Willis’ connection to IWU athletics has only grown as she’s gotten to know the coaches, staff and student-athletes. She’s been particularly supportive of the Titan softball team and played a leading role in funding a new pitching and hitting facility adjacent to the

Meg Stanley '17 wins NCAA Division III title in 500-yard freestyle at national swim meet, IWU's first women's individual national title in the sport

2017

IWU adds women's bowling

2019

IWU renovates and renames softball field Inspiration Field at Carol Willis Park

2020

Kendall Sosa '21 becomes first woman in IWU and CCIW history to earn NCAA Today's Top 10 Award

2022

50th Anniversary of Title IX

2022



(Above) Carol Willis '68 waves to the crowd attending Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 Homecoming football game. Willis has provided opportunities for IWU students through support of women's athletics.

field, and later, a renovation of the field itself.

Her support was recognized when the field was rechristened as Inspiration Field at Carol Willis Park in 2021, in a moment Willis calls "one of the highlights" of her life.

"Carol is a trailblazer in terms of providing first-class opportunities for women and girls involved in sport," said IWU Head Softball Coach Tiffany Prager. "Every student-athlete, coach and athletic administrator within the footprint of our campus community has been positively affected by Carol's generous heart."

Willis takes no greater joy in life than seeing the smiles on faces of young women participating in athletics. Providing opportunities she didn't have gives her purpose.

"You get to an age where you ask yourself what you are going to do with the rest of your life," Willis said. "It's not often you really get the opportunity to impact lives, but I have, and this will be my legacy."



Fifty years after Title IX was signed into law, its impact is still being felt.

"I am fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to discuss Title IX extensively as a part of the softball team. We have met to talk about its roots and its impact on our lives as female student-athletes," said Madison Moore '23, a junior outfielder and biology major. "Society does not always treat women with the full dignity and respect they deserve, but Title IX has been very impactful as a step in the right direction towards a more just and equitable society."

"It has afforded me the privilege of being a part of Titan athletics and on a team that is equally supported by our athletic department and Titan community."

Moore is an important part of that Titan community. The native of Madison, Wisconsin, is the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee's director of community service, and active in the Fellowship

of Christian Athletes and IWU's Pre-Health Club.

She's a key member of the softball team as well, sharing the team lead in hits in 2021. She's grown as a player during her three seasons as a member of the team, but she's grown as a person, too.

"It has been a blessing to be a part of this softball family that truly supports me in all facets of my life, even outside of softball," Moore said. "I have received so much support from my professors, coaches and the IWU community during my time here, and this is truly what makes being a Titan so special."

Moore recognizes that the work of Title IX continues, and she's committed to doing her part. She's inspired by people like Carol Willis '68, the namesake of IWU's softball facility.

"She is a phenomenal example of a female leader and role model that we can all look up to," Moore said. "As a woman in sports, Carol inspires me every single day to challenge myself to break the glass ceiling and leave my mark on the world." ❖



(Above) A member of the Illinois Wesleyan softball team, Madison Moore '23 is thankful for opportunities created by Title IX, but also aware of the work that remains.



MADE TO FLY

Story by MATT WING

Propelled by an entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to improve life in his home country of Nigeria, Babawande Afolabi '10 founded Green Africa Airways, a startup providing affordable air travel in Africa's most populous country.

When Babawande Afolabi '10 hears the roar of an airplane engine above, he reflexively tilts his head upward. His curiosity always wins out.

"You think about how we as human beings were able to get those heavy machines up there," he says with more than a hint of nostalgia. "It speaks to the ingenuity of humankind. It's beautiful."

Even today, Afolabi remains fascinated by aircraft and air travel, and the perspective one gains while gazing out a window 30,000 feet above sea level.

"The houses and mortgages that we're working every day to pay off, the cars we're working to pay off ... everything becomes so minute," he said.

The allure of it all has become

central to Afolabi's professional journey. A winding path that began with four years at Illinois Wesleyan has also included stops at Stanford University, Morgan Stanley and American Airlines.

And it's all led him to his most ambitious endeavor yet.

Afolabi is the founder and chief executive officer of Green Africa Airways, a startup value carrier based in Lagos, Nigeria, his home country's most populous city. Green Africa emphasizes safety, reliability and affordability — nearly all of its one-way flights cost the U.S. equivalent of \$50 or less — as it offers air travel to a broader base of customers.

A firm believer in former Illinois Wesleyan President Minor Myers Jr.'s iconic "do well, do good" advice, Afolabi saw an opportunity to do

both with Green Africa. Nigeria's emerging market provided fertile soil for business growth, and the service would unlock a previously inaccessible world to its clientele.

After years of developing the concept, Afolabi officially founded Green Africa in 2015 with the ambitious goal of beginning operations in one year. Little did he know the processes of fundraising, certification and hiring — let alone unforeseen challenges, such as a pandemic — would require years of painstaking work and a delay in the realization of his dream.

But on Aug. 12, 2021, Green Africa commenced operations with a 90-minute flight from Lagos to the Nigerian capital of Abuja. Afolabi was on board to experience a moment that seemed both a symbolic finish line and starting gate.

"I had to remind myself many times along the way why I was doing this in the first place, which was using what I care about and what I have interest in, to be a force for good and a force for creation," Afolabi said. "And I never forgot that."



A knock on the door of the President's House late one night during the first week of fall classes felt like the work of student pranksters.

It was not.

When Illinois Wesleyan First Lady Pat Wilson opened the door that evening in August 2006, she found a soft-spoken student who needed help. His name was Babawande Afolabi and, although he had been on campus for only a week, he feared he would soon have to leave.

Pat Wilson called her husband from another room. The three sat down to talk. Afolabi politely declined the first lady's offer of a glass of water.

"As you might expect, not many students arrive in the evening unannounced at the President's House," former IWU President Richard Wilson said. "For that reason, I have a very distinct memory of Babawande's visit."

A main source of Afolabi's financial aid had fallen through, he explained, and with no backup plan,



(Above) Babawande Afolabi '10 visits Hansen Student Center in January 2022, near where he once presided over Student Senate as the first international student to serve as its president.

(Opposite page) Afolabi poses beside one of the aircraft in the fleet of Green Africa Airways, the airline he founded.

he had nowhere else to go but home.

Only in the second year of his presidency, Wilson admits he was still new at the time to handling special appeals from students. But after only a few minutes, he was able to confidently come to a decision.

"Babawande's careful assessment of his situation and determination to find a solution to this problem convinced me that we should do whatever we could to help him," Wilson said.

Afolabi's determination in meeting the challenge that presented itself during his first week on campus would define his time at IWU. He became a high-achieving student, a double major in business administration and economics. He was inducted into a prestigious honor society. He was chosen for highly selective internships. He served as a resident assistant in Dodds and Pfeiffer halls. He ascended to the role of student manager in his campus job with Sodexo.

Afolabi was active in student government, eventually becoming the first international student to become president of IWU's Student Senate. That role brought him into frequent and close contact with University administration, where he regularly made positive impressions.

"Babawande's leadership role gave me an opportunity on a regular basis to interact with him on issues of concern to students and the University," Wilson recalled. "I looked forward to our conversations because of his engaging personality, his keen interest in learning from every experience, and his desire to become an effective leader."

Experiences positively impacted the young Afolabi, but it was his interactions with people he found most meaningful. Even more than a decade after his last final exam, Afolabi has instant recall of a mental Rolodex of individuals — classmates, professors, staff members, Sodexo coworkers and others — who played both major and minor roles in his IWU story.

"When I think about my time at Wesleyan, I think it comes down to relationships," he said.



Born in Ibadan and raised in Ilé-Ifè, Afolabi left Nigeria for Illi-



(Above) Afolabi speaks during his presentation, “From IWU to Airline Startup: The Journey of an Entrepreneur,” on Jan. 20, 2022. The event was sponsored by the Hart Career Center and open to all students, with both in-person and virtual attendance options.

nois Wesleyan knowing he would one day return.

“I always knew that I would be going back to Nigeria to do something,” he said. “I just didn’t know what *it* was.”

What *it* would become evolved over a period of time and series of experiences that allowed him to sharpen his business acumen while he figured *it* out. And while *it* initially took different forms, *it* always was fueled by a desire to improve the quality of life for Nigerians.

It may have all started with his father, whom he describes as a “serial entrepreneur,” who did everything from farming to baking to business. His father’s experience of being denied a small loan to pursue a business opportunity inspired Afolabi to seek a coveted internship opportunity with banking giant Morgan Stanley, which later became a full-time job. His work there afforded exposure to the transportation industry. He learned of the low-cost airline business model, and he saw

firsthand the success of the model in the developing world. He wondered if *it* would work in Nigeria.

The question stuck with Afolabi as he enrolled in graduate school at Stanford. Still curious, he sought out work at American Airlines to learn the ins and outs of the industry.

“I had to remind myself many times along the way why I was doing this in the first place, which was using what I care about and what I have interest in, to be a force for good and a force for creation.”

— BABAWANDE AFOLABI '10

“If someone had asked me then if the idea of trying to start an airline was already there, I would not have been bold enough to actually admit it,” Afolabi confessed. “At that point, there was just this need to learn more, to know more.”

By the end of his time at American, Afolabi launched the Green

White Group, the initial platform to explore the idea of a low-cost airline in Nigeria. He reached out to mentors he had along the way for counsel; some, like former American Airlines chairman and CEO Tom Horton, became early investors and joined Green Africa’s board of directors. Funding the startup became a full-time job for Afolabi, but his mental Rolodex proved useful; former classmates and colleagues from Illinois Wesleyan and Stanford were among some of Green Africa’s initial investors.

Afolabi worked day and night for years to get the venture off the ground. “It wasn’t just a job to the founding team,” he said.

Hiring personnel and navigating a seemingly never-ending certification process were expectedly challenging. Unplanned challenges complicated matters. Green Africa initially announced a letter of intent for 50 Boeing 737 MAX 8s in late 2018, just months before that particular aircraft was grounded after two fatal crashes caused by recurring failures. A year later, Green

Africa had to face the reality and associated challenges of commencing operations in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The compounding challenges raised doubts. There were times when Afolabi questioned his future ... and the future of Green Africa Airways. But each time those doubts



(Above) Afolabi poses in a Green Africa Airways promotional photo. The company completed its first commercial flight on Aug. 12, 2021.

surfaced, he thought of the people he'd be letting down. He thought of the journey and the motivation to create Green Africa.

"I didn't have a Plan B. If I was going to fail, I didn't want to fail because I had a backup plan," he said. "I was very fortunate to be surrounded by incredible people, and that is one thing I will say about my story: I've been very fortunate to meet incredible people at different phases of my life."



Babawande Afolabi was miles above the ground when it hit him. It wasn't until his airplane had reached its cruising altitude that he had gained the perspective.

The day had offered occasions to reflect prior to that particular moment. Pictures at the festively decorated desk at the airport, handshakes and congratulations from local officials who had come to see him off, even a mid-flight speech he

made to Green Africa's first paying customers.

But not until after that speech on Aug. 12, 2021, flying somewhere between Lagos and Abuja, did Afolabi fully realize what had been accomplished.

"Up until then, I'm not sure I was feeling anything. But when I got back to my seat after that speech, I think I finally had the emotion of, 'Wow, this is actually happening,'" Afolabi recalled. "Then we landed, we had another small ceremony, we had a cake, the regulator and airport authority came out, and even some competitors came out to congratulate us. It was a good day."

Six months later, Green Africa Airways is growing. The company boasts a fleet of three ATR72-600 aircraft, though it plans to deploy up to 15 aircraft by the end of the year. Green Africa operates out of eight Nigerian airports currently, with an average of 22 daily flights.

The company employs over 260 individuals as members of its "gTeam."

Afolabi likes to think of the future. He often plans five, sometimes 10 years ahead. It's burned him before — he laughs now thinking of his naive expectation of commencing flights one year after Green Africa's founding — but goals not set are goals not reached.

The goal, Afolabi says, is to grow the company and connect Nigeria with the greater African continent, and to bring the majesty of air travel to communities that have never before had the access or experience.

"Our hope and our plan is to build Green Africa into a pan-African carrier that will make it much, much easier for African countries to be more connected with each other," Afolabi said. "Our hope is that for anyone wishing to visit the African continent, Green Africa can make the trip a little bit easier." ♦



(Above) Green Africa Airways employs more than 260 individuals as members of its "gTeam." The airline operates out of eight Nigerian airports and is currently averaging 22 domestic flights a day.

Illinois Wesleyan's Parent Fund supports enrolled students who lose a parent to death or permanent disability and has served as a beacon of hope to both current and former students by providing assistance during times of need.

Andrew Apel '18 awoke to his darkened bedroom illuminated by blinking red and blue lights.

When Kathie Apel woke her eldest son in the wee hours of the morning of July 23, 2015, he instantly knew something was wrong. His mother told him there was a police car in the driveway. A peek through the blinds confirmed it.

After rousing younger brother Adam, the Apels answered the door together. Two police officers stood outside. They asked if they could come in.

"You might want to sit down for this," one of them said.

The officers explained that Scott

Apel — Andrew and Adam's father, and Kathie's husband — had been reported missing. Away on a business trip at Wisconsin's Delavan Lake, Scott Apel had reportedly been thrown from a boat and never resurfaced.

The Apels quickly readied themselves for the 90-minute drive to Delavan Lake. They were joined by Kathie's parents, and Scott's sister and brother-in-law. They reminded themselves of the possible outcomes that weren't the one they feared. Maybe he swam to shore? Maybe another boat picked him up?

The Apels arrived at the Delavan Police Department a couple hours

(Below) Andrew Apel '18 (second from right) received Parent Fund support after the death of his father, Scott (far right).

LENDING A HAND AFTER LOSS

Story by MATT WING

later. Although the search for Scott Apel was ongoing, there was no news to report. The family had nothing to do but wait and worry. A few hours later, an officer approached them. A body had been recovered from the water.

It was determined Andrew Apel would identify the body.

"He was wearing the same family chain that my brother and I wear," Andrew Apel said. "So, yeah, I knew it was him."



Tucked away in the home office of Dr. David '02 and Laura (Harris) Besley '00 is a box of letters.

A new one arrives every year. Sometimes two or three. When the lid is lifted to add another, messages from letters past come spilling out.

The letters are from recipients of Illinois Wesleyan's Parent Fund. Since 2006, the Besleys have supported the fund, which offers tuition assistance to enrolled IWU students who suffer the loss or permanent disability of a parent.

The Besleys' connection to the fund comes from personal experience; Laura Besley lost her father while she was in high school.

"The experience of losing a parent at a young age shaped my life," she said. "If a student has to go through that and also face the prospect of losing Wesleyan and the community they have there, we thought we could be part of their story in a positive, supportive way, in the midst of something so terrible."

The Besleys have built a happy life. After starting their family in North Carolina, they relocated to Madison, Wisconsin, a little more than a decade ago. David Besley has a dental practice. Laura Besley stays busy as a full-time mom and volunteer pastor. The Besleys often think

"Illinois Wesleyan and the Parent Fund are always going to be a part of me and part of what drives me to be successful in my life."

— ANDREW APEL '18

of their time at IWU and the foundation they built then.

Then they think of what it would have been like to have had it taken away.

"There's the whole compounding loss aspect to it," David Besley said. "It's already such a tragedy to lose a parent, but to compound that by losing your community? That's a tragedy, too."

The Besleys founded the John Justus Harris Memorial Scholarship in 2009 to honor Laura's late father, and their connection to the Parent Fund has only grown over the years. It's strengthened every time they receive a call, email, text — or handwritten letter — from a Parent Fund recipient.

One recent letter stood out to Laura Besley.

"The student was really sharing from her heart, and it was neat to know that our lives — even though we had never met — had intersected, and she received our support the way we wanted it to be received," Laura Besley said. "She felt it was a gift."



No matter how busy the Apel family was, there was always dedicated family time.

"Dinner was always a big thing for us," Andrew Apel said. "No matter if my brother or I had a practice, or if my dad had to work late, we always sat down, the four of us, and had dinner together every night."

After Scott Apel's death on July 23, 2015, the empty chair at the dinner table was symbolic of the

hole in their lives.

"My dad was my hero. It was really hard not getting to say goodbye," Andrew Apel said. "But pretty quickly, everything became about keeping the family together, because if there was one thing we knew, it was that he would have wanted that."

The tight-knit family became even tighter, but Andrew Apel received support from other sources, too. Among them were his football coach, Norm Eash '75, teammates, fraternity brothers and friends. As members of that support system came through the receiving line at his father's visitation, he was struck by the thought that he might be seeing some of them for the last time.

"At that point, I was done with football. I was done with college," he said. "I had already decided I needed to stay home and find a job to help take care of my mom."

But Apel remembered how his father encouraged him to attend Illinois Wesleyan, a place he could continue his football career while also receiving a top-notch education.

And then he learned about the Parent Fund.

"I had started looking at community colleges and more local options to save money, and kind of patching my college experience together," Apel said. "Thankfully for the Parent Fund, I didn't have that stress."

Support from the Parent Fund allowed Apel to stay at IWU, a place he now calls a "second home."

"Wesleyan was somewhere that not only did I feel comfortable, but somewhere my mom knew that I would be cared for, and a place that

LENDING A HAND AFTER LOSS

provided the opportunity for me to continue to develop,” Apel said. “And because of the Parent Fund, I didn’t have to take a massive step backward because of something that was completely out of my control.

“To this day, I’m just so grateful and thankful.”



When Norb Gross suffered the loss of his father the week after he graduated from high school, he inherited a grand total of \$45 from his father’s checking account.

Gross and his two younger brothers had lost their mother years earlier and, with plans to enroll at Notre Dame that fall, he was truly on his own. But the resourceful young man worked a summer construction job to fund his education. He also took out loans, and his late father’s Social Security benefits provided additional assistance.

“There weren’t too many people like Norb at Notre Dame,” said Linda Gross, his wife.

Although he was admittedly a “fish out of water” in South Bend, Norb Gross earned his degree and went on to a successful career in the pipe manufacturing industry. Linda worked as a guidance coun-

selor in Naperville, Illinois, where the Grosses made their home and started a family.

One of their two daughters visited IWU on a college tour, and when the guide mentioned the Parent Fund, Linda Gross’s ears perked up. She knew she had to tell her husband.

“It resonated because that’s what I’d gone through,” Norb Gross said. “I didn’t have that kind of support back when I was a student.”

Lindsay Gross ’08 enrolled at Illinois Wesleyan and her parents began their long-term support of the Parent Fund. In 2016, they created the Norbert and Linda Gross Endowed Parent Fund Scholarship.

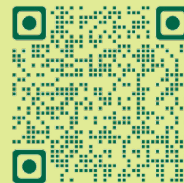
“Another piece to our support is that we love Illinois Wesleyan because our daughter loved it so much,” Linda Gross said. “She had such a great experience there.”

Norb and Linda Gross have been regular attendees of Illinois Wesleyan’s annual Scholarship Benefactor Dinner, which brings together donors and scholarship recipients. Being able to meet students receiving their support has only strengthened their connection to the fund.

“You see your contributions at

SUPPORT THE PARENT FUND

No matter the amount, your gift to Illinois Wesleyan’s Parent Fund will allow us to continue to help students in need. Visit www.iwu.edu/parent-fund to make your gift today.



work,” Linda Gross said. “It’s really nice to meet the person and to see the impact of what you’re doing.”



Four years removed from his Illinois Wesleyan graduation, hardly a day passes when Andrew Apel doesn’t think about his alma mater.

He lives in Chicago’s Lincoln Park neighborhood and works for DocuSign, the electronic agreement management company.

Apel acknowledges the trajectory of his life was forever changed on July 23, 2015, but insists the support of the Parent Fund provided a stabilizing influence during the most turbulent time of his life. He notes the impact was felt by others, too.

“It went way beyond just me,” he said. “My entire family is thankful for the Parent Fund.”

Apel says no amount of thanks will sufficiently express his gratitude. He reckons the best way to do so will be to return the kindness.

“Illinois Wesleyan and the Parent Fund are always going to be a part of me and part of what drives me to be successful in my life,” he said. “I hope to be half the man my dad was, and I hope that I can be successful enough in life that I can provide the same kind of support that I received while I was at Wesleyan.” ❖



(Above left) Norb and Linda Gross (center, second from right) have supported the Parent Fund since daughter Lindsay Gross ’08 (far left) attended IWU. **(Above right)** David ’02 and Laura (Harris) Besley ’00 have supported the Parent Fund since 2006.





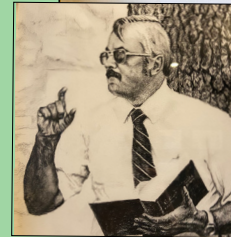
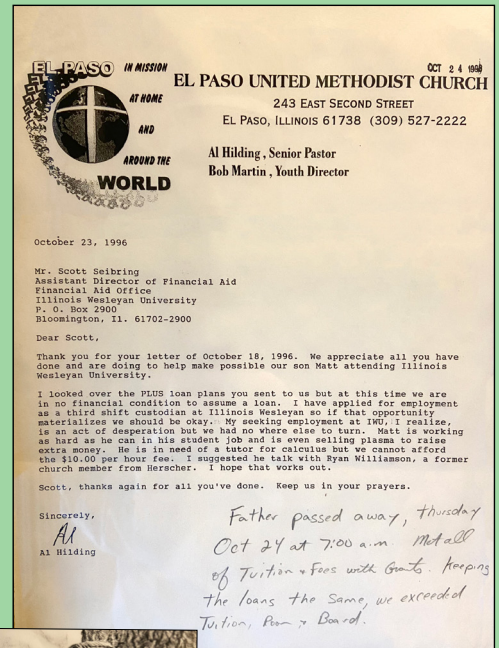
MATT HILDING '00

"This letter and picture hang in my office to this day. The letter was written by my father to Director of Financial Aid Scott Seibring '85 the night before my father passed away. The handwriting at the bottom of the letter is from Scott. He informed me of the Parent Fund at my father's wake after learning I was going to drop out of school due to lack of financial resources.

With eight kids, ranging in ages from ages 2 to 22, my parents were stretched thin as it was. But the loss of my father compounded our family's financial challenges, and as we prepared for the funeral, I had all but settled in my mind that I would drop out of school and take a job in the construction industry.

Then came a conversation I'll never forget. Standing in line at my father's visitation, a familiar face approached me. It was Scott. He had learned of my plan to leave IWU and wanted to talk with me. Scott told me about the Parent Fund and said it was established to assist students in situations like mine. The Parent Fund assisted students with their tuition in the event of a catastrophic financial loss resulting from the death of a parent.

It's been 25 years since that conversation, but I remember it like it was yesterday. When I talk to my boys about their grandfather and my experience of his death, I always say the same thing: "It was the worst thing that ever happened to me but also one of the best things." The worst part is pretty obvious, but how is there a best part? It takes a little explanation, but I think of the many friends, family and IWU staff members who helped get me through it. The perspective about what's important in life is something I gained at age 18 and value to this day. As the saying goes, "it takes a village."



(Above) A letter penned by his father, pastor Al Hilding (left), reminds Matt Hilding '00 of the importance of the Parent Fund.



KATE HALFORD '19

"When I was a junior at Illinois Wesleyan, my dad passed away from cancer eight years after his initial diagnosis. As my family and I grieved the loss, school remained the one thing that continued to give me structure and purpose. My father had

been a professor at SIU School of Medicine for a decade, and education was paramount to both him and me. There was no question in my or my mom's mind that I would continue in spite of my circumstances to earn my degree. However, the reality of my new financial situation quickly became apparent: I could not afford two more years of school. Then, IWU's Financial Aid Office informed me I qualified for a grant from the Parent Fund. The generosity of donors I had never met alleviated almost the entire financial burden of my senior year and allowed me to graduate on time. My education was a gift to me — especially at that point in my life — and I will forever be indebted to the donors who allowed me to keep that gift."



JOHN CAMARDELLA '03

"In the spring of 1999, my senior year of high school was going incredibly well. My grades were up, my basketball team had just completed a successful season, and I had committed to Illinois Wesleyan to study history and play for the Titans. Everything was

progressing as planned until my father died a month before I was set to enroll at IWU. As my mother and I were adjusting to a new reality, we quickly realized we could no longer afford the tuition, and I began to entertain other options. I was devastated at the loss of my father, but also felt genuine sadness at the thought of losing Wesleyan. As I was planning to contact local community colleges, we received news that altered the trajectory of my life — the IWU Parent Fund would cover a substantial amount of my tuition. Words fail when I try to convey my feelings, and I can only hope that my life demonstrates the immense gratitude I have for this gift all those years ago."

Alumni Update

NEWS, WORKS AND CELEBRATIONS OF IWU ALUMNI & FRIENDS

1960s

Richard Muirhead '66 and **Eldridge "Skip" Gilbert Jr. '67** shared memories of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1966 speech at Illinois Wesleyan, and IWU Archivist & Special Collections Librarian and Associate Professor **Meg Miner** added context, in a story in *The Pantagraph* that ran the week of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

1967

Robert M. Bicket and **Nancy Brown Bicket** remain active in retirement in their community of Naples, Florida. Rob is president of the Southwest Florida Graduate Chapter of Phi Gamma Delta. The chapter provides social and educational activities for members and supports scholarships for FIJI collegiate members in Florida. Nancy, a Sigma Kappa alumna, serves as president of the Greater Naples Alumnae Panhellenic, a social and philanthropic organization affiliated with the National Panhellenic Conference. The Naples group awards five scholarships annually to NPC sorority women at Florida universities. Nancy is a former winner of Illinois Wesleyan's Loyalty Award.



Jayne Halsne Abrate '77

1977

Jayne Halsne Abrate was awarded the prestigious Ordre des Francophones d'Amérique by the Conseil supérieur de la langue française for 2020. The annual award is presented to seven individuals who have dedicated themselves to the preservation and promotion of the French language in America. The ceremony for 2020 and 2021 recipients took place Oct. 27, 2021, in Quebec City, Quebec. Jayne has been executive director of the American Association of Teachers of French since 1997 and is also a commander in the French Order of the Academic Palms.

Thomas Cunningham was selected to serve as chief judge of Illinois' 21st Judicial Circuit, beginning Jan. 1, 2022. Thomas earned his Juris Doctor from the John Marshall Law School and was admitted to practice law in 1981. He began his legal career as Kankakee (Ill.) County assistant state's attorney. He later had a private law practice for 30 years before appointment to courts. He was previously appointed an associate judge in 2011 and elected as a circuit judge in 2018.



Nancy (Jenkins) Johnson '78

Carlina Tapia-Ruano was selected in October 2021 by Illinois senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth to serve on a screening committee for the appointment of a Federal District Court Judge in the Northern District of Illinois Eastern Division. Carlina is the principal and founder of the Chicago office of Tapia-Ruano & Gunn PC. She has practiced in the field of immigration law for over 40 years. She is a former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and former chair of the Chicago Bar Association Section on Immigration Law. She is a past adjunct professor at Chicago Kent School of Law and DePaul University College of Law.

1978

Nancy (Jenkins) Johnson was named Greater Tucson Leadership's 2021 "Tucson Woman of the Year." The award recognizes someone who has contributed significant time, energy and spirit in fields outside her professional life without regard to personal gain, contributed to the quality of life for all residents, demonstrated excellence in leadership and inspired others. Nancy is the chief executive officer of El Rio Health, a healthcare system



Krishna (Drummond) Lynch '95

providing medical, dental and behavioral healthcare for over 115,000 patients annually in Tucson, Arizona. She is an adjunct assistant clinical professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, and serves on the Southern Arizona Leadership Council, Pima Community College Foundation, Arizona Alliance for Community Health and Arizona Complete Health Boards.

1980

Mike Mason, a retired executive with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and telecommunications conglomerate Verizon, made headlines in October 2021 when he pitched in to help address a national shortage of school bus drivers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Mike's service to the Chesterfield County, Virginia, school district caught the eye of local and national media alike, as he was featured in *The Washington Post* and *New York Post*, and on *CBS News* and *Full Circle with Anderson Cooper*, among other outlets. Mike is a former Illinois Wesleyan trustee and the recipient of IWU's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2007. His work with the FBI was chronicled in a 2004 story in *IWU Magazine*.

1986

Vic Wagner retired as vice president of engineering and technology, within BAE Systems' platforms and services sector, in January 2022. After earning his bachelor's degree at Illinois Wesleyan, Vic earned a master's degree in engineering mechanics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has since worked at Hughes/Raytheon Missile Systems, MacNeal Schwendler and Aerojet Rocketdyne. Vic served as an engineering and program team leader for vehicle, missile, and payload design and development.

1987

Nancy Wood completed work on her school nurse professional ed-

ucator licensure at the University of Illinois Chicago in December 2021. Nancy is currently employed at Woodland District 50 in Gurnee, Illinois, where she oversees 1,300 students, managing their chronic health conditions, individual education programs and medical plans.

1990

Karla Bailey-Smith announced in November 2021 her intention to seek Illinois' State House 91st District seat in the 2022 general election. The newly drawn district has no incumbent and includes Bloomington-Normal, and areas west, including Carlock, Goodfield, East Peoria and Washington. A small business owner in Bloomington, Karla previously ran for the 88th District seat in the 2020 election.

1991

Dr. Tim Pritts was elected president of Central Surgical Association, an organization of surgeons from the central United States and Canada dedicated to furthering the practice of surgery, and the study and investigation of surgical problems. He is serving a one-year term that will end June 4, 2022. Tim is currently professor of surgery and chief of the section of general surgery at the University of Cincinnati, where he leads programs providing care for trauma, general surgery, bariatric surgery, emergency general surgery and surgical critical care patients for the UC Health system. His clinical practice includes trauma, general and acute care surgery, and surgical critical care. Tim is also president of the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. He is a recipient of the UC College of Medicine's Research Service Award, as well as the College of Medicine Excellence in Mentoring Award. His research



Scott Rosenberg '96

seeks to advance care for injured and critically ill patients, with a focus on resuscitation strategies and blood product improvement.

1993

Catherine Lawry joined the Illinois Wesleyan staff as an administrative specialist in support of the registrar, academic advising and student accessibility, in October 2021. Catherine previously worked for the COUNTRY Financial family of companies for the past 23 years.

1995

Sara (Wible) Guido made a career change and joined Vanguard as a high net worth client consultant and senior associate. Sara joined the company in July 2021 after spending nearly 12 years at the Greater Philadelphia YMCA-Phoenixville branch, first as a personal trainer and most recently as health and wellness director.

Krishna (Drummond) Lynch was recognized among *Insurance Business America Magazine's* "Hot 100 2022." Krishna is a regional manager for casualty risk engineering and thought leader on healthcare issues at Zurich North America. She is also an adjunct



Tami (Hill) Dean '98

faculty member at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and Olivet Nazarene University, and president of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Windy City Chapter, an organization of mothers dedicated to raising the next generation of African American leaders, while enhancing the lives of all children.

1996

Bob Hitchcock was among those recognized in *Insurance Business Magazine's* "Hot 100 2022." Bob is the chief technology officer at Brightway Insurance.

Scott Rosenberg is the chief financial officer for Travel Nurse Across America, a healthcare staffing firm headquartered in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Scott was featured in *Arkansas Business's* "CFO of the Year" series in October 2021. Scott is responsible for Travel Nurse Across America's areas of finance and administration. He helps provide strategic oversight and direction for the financial processes, such as analysis, reporting, budgeting and planning efforts. He has over 20 years of financial and operational leadership experience, as well as experience across the healthcare, staffing, technology, retail and supply chain sectors.



Sarah Fincham '98

1997

Corey Schieler, a director of venture capital investments at State Farm, was recognized in November 2021 as the recipient of the Make-A-Wish Illinois 2021 Volunteer of the Year Award. Corey previously received Make-A-Wish Illinois' Exceptional Creativity Award, for "bringing exceptional creativity to boost wish children's spirits," in April 2021. Corey has been a volunteer wish grantor since 2011 and has helped grant over 30 wishes for kids fighting critical illness.

1998

Tami (Hill) Dean was promoted to executive director of partner success at engage2learn, an educational services company striving to create cultures and systems to prepare today's learners for tomorrow's world. Tami also serves as a coach at engage2learn, helping equip educators with the tools they need to engage students. Tami previously served on the faculties at Austin College and the University of Northern Iowa.

Sarah Fincham was recently promoted to clinical associate professor at Washington State University, where she is a faculty member in WSU's Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner program in the College of Nursing.



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,

Family, friends, work, social, geographical or industry — connections are important to our own well-being and often our successes. Illinois Wesleyan is no different! As the pandemic continues, it has become even more important for us to find new ways to connect and engage, whether it is checking in on a loved one, seeking assistance, visiting college campuses, or meeting with a company prospect or customer.

As I was recently waiting to board a connecting flight back to Central Illinois Regional Airport, and literally finishing the opening lines of this letter, a very proud parent of a current Titan student-athlete connected with me on social media. She shared his and her love of IWU, and that she has another son who is a sophomore in high school and also interested in attending IWU.

In my business, talent and customer acquisition are highly dependent on referrals, quality references, success case studies and nurtured industry connections. IWU is no different. I'm just one of our 20,000-plus alumni who can trace in recent years my own IWU connections to family members, fraternity brothers' children, a former co-worker's nephew, and two customers' sons who joined our ranks as IWU alumni.

We may not have the largest alumni network, but I'm confident we have one of the best! It is imperative for each of us to share our IWU success story — with our families, friends, co-workers and customers!

Wear your IWU Titan apparel out and about (I have found the IWU-branded mask during travel makes for a great conversation starter), make your IWU story part of your professional and personal social media profiles, and stay connected to IWU! These are all low-cost and low-risk tactics that can have a high rate of return for IWU in admissions, career and graduate school placement, and philanthropy.

Throughout this issue, see how our alumni have created connections or explore an idea or new way for you to share your success story and reconnect with IWU!

Go Titans!



Dirk Behrends '87
President, Alumni Association
Board of Directors



Tune in for Titan Talks

Titan Talks is a webinar series featuring IWU alumni, friends, supporters, faculty and staff who are leaders in their field presenting research, insight or updates from their respective areas of expertise. Titan Talks are a lifelong learning and engagement opportunity for the Illinois Wesleyan community. Recent talks included **Alan Fisher's** "Crypto: 21st Century Gold or Just Fool's Gold?" as well as Director of Esports, **Cora Kennedy's** "Illinois Wesleyan University Esports: A focus on Competition, Community and Career" and **Kara (Rocheleau) Lazarus '95** and **Margo Christou's** "A Roadmap to Flexible Work." Visit www.iwu.edu/titan-talks to register for upcoming Titan Talks, or to view past Talks on demand.



Save the Date!

Make your plans now for Illinois Wesleyan's 2022 Homecoming and Family Weekend celebrations, Sept. 23-25, 2022.



Connections are Coming Back!

Illinois Wesleyan plans to resume in-person Connections events as soon as it is safe to do so, and we're coming to a city near you soon! We are planning in-person events in the locations below in 2022, with more events to be announced soon. Visit www.iwu.edu/alumni/events for more details.

Champaign (Ill.)	Phoenix
Chicago	Seattle
Denver	St. Louis
McLean County	Springfield (Ill.)
Naples (Fla.)	Washington, D.C.



50th Reunion Celebrations

Illinois Wesleyan will celebrate 50th reunions for the Classes of 1970 and 1971, previously postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during Commencement Weekend, April 29 through May 1, 2022. Two of Illinois Wesleyan's 2021 alumni awardees will be presenting their "Back to College" classes: Distinguished Alumni Award winner **Dr. William Farrar '71** and Loyalty Award winner **Kathleen Larey Lewton '70**. Stay tuned to IWU alumni channels for additional details.



Andrew Baldock '99

1999

Andrew Baldock was named "2021 Prosecutor of the Year" by Alaska's attorney general for his continued outstanding achievement and commitment to the citizens of Alaska. He is supervisor of the special victims unit for the district attorney's office in Fairbanks, Alaska. Andrew was featured in the Spring 2021 edition of *IWU Magazine* for his pursuit of climbing the world's tallest mountains. In the past year, he's climbed the highest peaks in six states, bringing his total to 48 of the 50 states; he plans to summit the final two this year. In January 2022, he climbed Argentina's Aconcagua (22,841 feet), the highest peak in South America. He has now climbed the highest peak in three of the seven continents. Next up is Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro.

2000

Sharon Chung announced her candidacy for Illinois' 91st House District seat in February 2022. Sharon is a professional classical musician and private instructor based in Bloomington, and also serves as an adjunct professor at Millikin University. Sharon has served on the McLean County Board since 2018. She will seek the nomination in the June 28, 2022, primary election.

Jonathan Musch joined Hilgers Graben PLLC, a litigation boutique based in Lincoln, Nebraska, as a partner in 2022. Jonathan was previously employed by St. Louis-based firm Thompson Curn LLP for 18 years, including the past 10 as partner. Jonathan is a litigator and counselor with an emphasis on strategy and management of cases.

Michael Sorich was appointed president of the Marist Law Association, a social and professional support network for graduates and members of the Marist High School community. Michael is a Marist alumnus and veteran trial attorney who has obtained more than \$70 million in verdicts and settlements for clients. He is a partner at Chicago-based Cavanagh Law Group. The former prosecutor has expertise in every facet of personal injury law and boasts extensive experience in trucking, wrongful death and medical malpractice cases.

2001

Dena (Spurgetis) Jalbert was featured in *Orlando Magazine's* "Faces of Orlando" series in October 2021. Dena is the founder and CEO of Align Business Advisory Services, a mergers and acquisitions advisory firm focused on lower-middle-market businesses, located in Winter Park, Florida. Dena has worked in M&A for 20 years. She founded Align in 2017 with the mission of breaking the mold of the traditional M&A advisory firm by providing superior service and compiling an industry-leading network of prospective acquirers and investors. Dena has previously been named a "Rising Star of M&A" by *The M&A Advisor*, as well as one of the "Top 50 Women in Mid-Market M&A" by *Mergers & Acquisitions* magazine.



Michael Sorich '00

Dr. Michael Pulia will lead a \$2.4 million, five-year research grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Michael's research team will measure the impact of COVID-19 on overall and condition-specific antibiotic prescribing and bacterial resistance patterns in the acute care setting using data from a diverse, nationally representative group of hospitals. Then, using a systems engineering-guided approach, the team will interview frontline healthcare providers and stewardship teams to characterize the factors underlying observed hospital antibiotic prescribing patterns and trends. Results will be used to develop an implementation toolkit for hospitals outlining effective strategies to enhance antibiotic stewardship resiliency during operational upheaval. Michael is an assistant professor and director of the Emergency Care for Infectious Diseases Research Program in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2002

Megan (DeSerf) Davidson was appointed chief people officer at Crowley, a government, maritime, energy and logistics solutions company serving customers in domestic and international markets. As a member of the company's senior leadership team, Megan is



Dena (Spurgetis) Jalbert '01

responsible for advancing Crowley's reputation and status as an employer committed to dynamic employee experience and talent development. Megan previously served in human resources roles at BP and Deutsche Bank.

Justin Lee was named the Illinois High School Association's state-level nominee for the National Federation of High Schools' Outstanding Music Educator Award. Justin teaches K-12 band, chorus, general music and theatre for Heritage CUSD #8, southeast of Champaign, Illinois.

2003

Michael Clark was appointed by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker in November 2021 to serve on the Illinois State Police Merit Board. Michael has served as an account executive with Travelers Insurance Company in Naperville, Illinois, for 17 years. He also serves as president of the NAACP's Joliet (Ill.) branch, a role that has allowed him to substantially increase membership and organizational programming within the community. He also serves as chairman of the African American Business Association of Joliet.

2004

Bethany (Kesselring) Wasik was promoted to acquisitions editor at Cornell University Press in July



Dr. Michael Pulia '01

2021. She is currently acquiring books in the subject areas of classics, archaeology, modern European history and military history. Bethany joined Cornell University Press in 2015 as an editorial assistant to transition into scholarly publishing after receiving her Ph.D. from Indiana University in molecular biology and genetics, and completing two postdoctoral fellowships at Yale and Cornell universities.

Lavanga Wijekoon was elevated to shareholder by global employment and labor law practice firm Littler Mendelson PC. Lavanga handles district and appellate level actions in state and federal courts in Illinois and Iowa, and before agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Illinois Human Rights Commission. He also provides strategic advice and counsel to multinational employers on a wide range of international employment and compliance matters, including areas such as human rights compliance, global mobility programs and expatriate workforces, employment aspects of global M&A deals, general employment advice on workforces in the Asia-Pacific region and more.

2005

Jonathan Charak was among those recognized on *Insurance*



Megan (DeSerf) Davidson '02



Lavanga Wijekoon '04

Business Magazine's "Hot 100 2022" list. He is a vice president-emerging solutions director for Zurich North America, where he identifies emerging risks and evaluates and implements solutions. Jonathan has been employed by Zurich for 16 years. He also serves as an advisor for a startup currently in development dedicated to simplifying road safety.

Angie Glasker was the curator of "Not Alone: Working Together in the Fight Against Human Trafficking," an exhibit on display at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in 2021. The exhibit was organized into five sections, each focused on answering a central question related to human trafficking, and included a series of interviews with survivors and activists. In late 2021, the Bullock Museum announced "Not Alone" would become a traveling exhibit on display at venues across Texas through 2024. Angie has been the curator at Bullock since 2017. Her previous work as a museum curator was highlighted in a story in *IWU Magazine* in 2016.

2006

Dan Smart was a guest speaker to the staff of *IWU Tributaries*, Illinois Wesleyan's student-led literary magazine, on Nov. 11, 2021. A former *Tributaries* staff member, Dan read from his collection of over 2,000 original



Jonathan Charak '05

poems, built through a daily poetry practice on his website since 2013. Dan's poetry has appeared in outlets far and wide: *The Los Angeles Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *The Blue Mountain Review*, *Jabberwock Review*, *Little Stone Journal*, *Red Fez*, *The Legendary*, *Cease Cows Magazine* and *Hooligan Magazine*.

2007

Adam Dickens is the owner of Dickens Candles, a company he founded in 2016 that produces sustainable, handmade candles. Founded while Adam was working full-time as a marketing manager, the company grew and Adam made the leap from his marketing job to become a full-time entrepreneur, candlemaker and dad. Based in Elmhurst, Illinois, Dickens Candles are hand-poured candles in upcycled bottles. With an emphasis on sustainability, the candles are made with 100% renewable American-grown soy wax and cotton wicks, and then shipped in reused packaging paper with biodegradable packing peanuts and plant-based tape. Dickens Candles, sold both in independent shops and at an online storefront, were featured recently on Chicago's WGN Radio.

2008

Dr. Nurman Noor was a contestant on the latest season of *The*



Adam Dickens '07

Great Australian Bake Off, which premiered on FOXTEL's Life-Style channel on Jan. 27, 2022. Nurman was among 12 contestants aiming to be crowned "Star Baker" at the conclusion of the season. Nurman is a general practitioner with Cygnet Family Practice in Tasmania, Australia. He discovered a love of baking at age 8. Having been raised in four different countries — Indonesia, Hong Kong, Australia and the United States — he brings a unique mix of styles and influences to his baking.

2009

Val (Hackett) Hawkins joined Illinois Wesleyan's Office of Advancement staff as director of annual giving in November 2021. Val had served in commu-

nications and marketing roles at COUNTRY Financial since 2015. She previously served in similar roles for OSF HealthCare and Evergreen Senior Living.

Angela (Tomazin) Hesemann is the co-founder of Break-Away Meetings, LLC, a startup company that brings the custom food and beverage experience of in-person conferences and meetings to virtual events. Like many others working in the hospitality industry, Angela and co-founder Kim Carlson were laid off at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the event world went virtual, they noticed a lack of fun and customization in virtual gatherings. BreakAway Meetings allows organizers of virtual events to choose food and beverage packages, customize

HART CAREER CENTER HAPPENINGS

Illinois Wesleyan's Hart Career Center is constantly engaging with alumni and connecting them with current students in fun and enriching ways. 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. Here's how others are getting involved.

Internship & Job Fair

Jacob Bach '14, Jordan Baker '20, Todd Barth '93, Chris Bickett, Cheryl Gaines '77, Brad Hannam '01, Brittany (Kiefer) Huber '11, Sarah (Bull) Hunter '08, Brad Janes '09, Anthony Lunsford '18, Brian Rawlins '01, Jason Richards '96, Matt Robertson '05, Sue (Snapp) Seibring '82 and Mary Tackett '13

Careers in Data Panel

Matthew Culhane '10, Kimberly (Wenger) Diller '15, Suman Gautam '10 and Lisa Skaff '13

From IWU to Airline Startup: The Journey of an Entrepreneur

Babawande Afolabi '10

Career Enhancing Digital Debris: The Power of Personal Branding

Jessica Shull '03

Women in Finance Mentoring Program

Julie Clausing '94, Alexis (Webb) LeFevour '01, Liz Liubicich '13, Alejandra Salinas '16, Aimee (Geiger) Wight '96 and Jill (Misener) York '85

Pre-Health Programming

Dr. Lindsay (Schelling) Brackney '06, Rich Guingrich '21, Sam Gupta '19, Amanda (Hofer) Kemp '03, Dr. Ben Kemp '03, Dr. Daniel Lau '03, Dr. Jen (Prochotsky) LaFlamme '15, Keila Magafas '18, Dr. Henry Moore '97, Alyssa Pisano '19, Dr. Tim Pritts '91 and Dr. George Tomecki '96

Additional Programming

Sean Conroy '96, Elly (Shreffler) Jones '91, Kevin Kalus '00 and Jason Richards '96



(Above) Representatives from Byline Bank, including **Sarah (Bull) Hunter '08** (left) and **Matt Robertson '05** (center), meet with Illinois Wesleyan students during an internship and job fair at IWU's Shirk Center on Nov. 17, 2021.



(Above) Amazon Senior Regional PXT Leader **Todd Barth '93** (right) visits with Director of the Hart Career Center **Warren Kistner '83** (left) at an internship and job fair on Nov. 17, 2021.

their contents to match a theme or focus, and ship packages directly to meetings attendees in advance of their event.

2010

Connie (Margaritis) Mayer was named partner by Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in January 2022. An attorney with Hinshaw since 2014, Connie represents traditional and nontraditional lenders in structuring complex financing arrangements, and concentrates her corporate practice on mergers, acquisitions, and general corporate matters. As trusted counsel, she helps clients navigate a variety of business, lending and commercial transactions.

2013

Kevin Carey married Kari Murphy in an intimate ceremony, downsized due to COVID-19 concerns, with the wedding party and close relatives in attendance, on Sept. 18, 2021. A full reception is planned for June 18, 2022. Kevin is Illinois Wesleyan's associate dean of students.

2014

William Frank joined the Illinois Wesleyan Physical Plant's custodial staff in October 2021, after having been previously a part of the IWU community as a grounds staff member, freelance photographer for the Office of Communications, and one of the collaborating designers of the new IWU athletics primary mark.

Bobby Nash Castillo joined the staff at electric adventure vehicle manufacturer Rivian at the company's Normal, Illinois, plant in January 2022. Bobby is an operator in Rivian's Security Operations Center. He joined the company after previous roles with the City of Bloomington, WGLT and Illinois Wesleyan.



Dr. Nurman Noor '08 (p. 31)

2015

Brexton Isaacs was hired to run the 2022 re-election campaign of Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee. Brexton previously served as the campaign manager for congressional candidates Dana Balter and Betsy Rader. Brexton started working on campaigns while a student at Illinois Wesleyan, where he served as president of Student Senate.

2017

Jessica Smith joined Peak Physical Therapy & Sports Performance's Pembroke,

Massachusetts, clinic in October 2021, where she will develop and implement a specialized rehabilitation program for dancers. The program will focus on injuries and rehabilitation techniques specific to dancers. Jessica earned a doctorate in physical therapy from Belmont University, where she worked with a variety of patients, including dancers, gymnasts, vestibular patients, and general neurologic and orthopedic patients. She also worked with the Nashville Ballet on a research project on biomechanics analysis, and was awarded Belmont's Graduate Student Scholarship



Angela (Tomazin) Hesemann '09 (p. 31)

Award for her academic and research work.

Kenny Tran joined digital health and wellness company Rally Health, Inc., as a full-stack software engineer in August 2021. Kenny previously served as a freelance software engineer at StepLadder, a startup employment marketplace for early-career job seekers.

2018

Erich Lieser joined Illinois Wesleyan's Alumni Engagement team as assistant director of reunion programs in November 2021. Erich previously worked in education, as an English teacher at Lincoln (Ill.) Community High School and an associate director of admissions at Chicago's Mount Carmel High School. He also serves as a second lieutenant-field artillery officer in the Army National Guard.

2020

Cole Churchill was granted a utility patent for a product benefiting transmasculine and nonbinary people, a product he conceived while a student at Illinois Wesleyan. Cole has created the business ALLbulgies, LLC, to sell the product. Cole additionally serves as a quality manager at a healthcare software company in Verona, Wisconsin.



Brexton Isaacs '15

Faculty, Staff and Friends

Professor of English **Joanne Diaz** was named the fourth recipient of the Richard S. and Julia Louise Reynolds Poetry Fellowship, a fully funded residency offered by the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Joanne reported to the residential artist community's Mount San Angelo estate in January 2022. The author of two poetry collections, Joanne spent her fellowship working on a third book project. The fellowship allows recipients access to a private bedroom and bathroom, separate individual studio, and three meals a day in a community of cross-disciplinary artists.

Associate Professor of Philosophy **Andrew Engen** was awarded a grant from the Council of Independent Colleges to support the teaching of philosophy at Illinois Wesleyan University. The grant is intended to extend the impact of participation in the 2021 New Currents in Teaching Philosophy Institute. The institute and the implementation grant are both funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The Illinois Symphony Orchestra elected Professor and Director of the School of Music **Franklin Larey** and Associate Professor of the School of Nursing **Noel Kerr**



Jessica Smith '17 (p. 33)

as new members of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors. ISO Board President **John Kauerauf '83** said, "As the leader of IWU's School of Music, Dr. Larey brings to the Board his wealth of experience in both music performance and music education. Dr. Kerr's election

helps the Board better connect to Bloomington-Normal's academic and medical communities. We are excited and pleased that both have agreed to serve."

Illinois Wesleyan Assistant Professor **Abby Mann**, online learning librarian, was a recipient of an American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Libraries award, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities through the American Library Association. Her grant will fund a summer digital humanities boot camp for students working in tandem with faculty in the humanities and social sciences with a humanistic bent, and will seek to show the ways in which experiential learning in the humanities, led by those who study them, is key in helping students develop the "real world" skills which might seem better served by a professional program.

Tiny Titans

Jennifer (Grodecki) Gill '03 and Chad; Emma Lynn, born April 23, 2021
Amanda (Hill) Donahue '03 and Tyler; Isaiah Cruz, born July 3, 2021
Margaret-Desiree Mug '04 and Sam Merwin; John, born Nov. 24, 2021
Stacey (O'Connell) Gaetano '05 and Stephen; Anthony Stephen, born Nov. 22, 2021
Amy (Sipovic) Boyles '08 and Tom; Charles Paul, born Oct. 20, 2021
Anne Kopf '08 and Daniel Reinhard; Phoebe Joyce, born July 5, 2021
Daniela Stojkova '08 and Jonathan Warren; Zoey Stojkova-Warren, born Feb. 27, 2021
Bevin (Cowie) Choban '10 and Alexander; Oscar Elliott, born Aug. 17, 2021
Jeremy Adams '12 and Misty; Mason Stone, born Oct. 13, 2021
Mike Heaton '14 and Kalene; Chelsea, born Oct. 20, 2020

*All submitted content received by Feb. 13, 2022.
 The submitted content deadline for the Summer/Fall 2022 issue of IWU Magazine is May 23, 2022. All submitted content may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.*



(Above) Carissa Nemmers '09 married Maurits Olsson in an intimate ceremony on Aug. 4, 2020, in White Salmon, Washington. They celebrated with family, friends and IWU alumni on June 26, 2021, in Dubuque, Iowa.



(Above) Katie Witzel '12 married Jason Spencer on June 19, 2021, in Covington, Indiana.

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 **Feb. 13, 2022**. The submitted content deadline for the Summer/Fall 2022 issue of **IWU Magazine** is **May 23, 2022**.

Titan Celebrations



(Above) **A'Kya Adams-White '14** married Deshoun White in Alton, Illinois, on Oct. 23, 2021. The newlyweds later honeymooned in Iceland.



(Above) **Amber (Stringer) Belch '18** married Nathanael Belch on June 20, 2020, in a small ceremony. They celebrated their marriage with friends and family at Illinois Wesleyan University on July 10, 2021.



(Above) **Frank Toland '16** and **Elizabeth Hassett '16** were married Dec. 31, 2021, in Naperville, Illinois, with many IWU friends in attendance.



(Above) **Allen Anderson '67** and his wife Shari Anderson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a luncheon and vow renewal ceremony with family and friends at the Sons of Norway Lodge in Bend, Oregon, in September 2021.



(Above) **Annie Kehler '15** and **Brexton Isaacs '15** were married Aug. 14, 2021, in Wheaton, Illinois, with many IWU friends in attendance. The wedding ceremony was officiated by IWU professor **Greg Shaw**, and a wedding toast was offered by professor **Tari Renner**. Annie and Brexton became engaged to be married on July 9, 2020, during a visit to IWU's campus.

Faculty, Staff and Friends

William Brandt of Bloomington, Illinois, died Oct. 11, 2021. He was 96. William served on Illinois Wesleyan's Board of Trustees from 1978-84. He served in both the U.S. Army (1943-44) and Navy (1944-46). He attended the U.S. Naval Academy, University of Illinois, and the University of Chicago. William was a co-founder and partner in what is currently the Livingston, Barger, Brandt & Schroeder Law Firm in Bloomington. He was a licensed pilot and he loved reading, playing tennis and baking pies. He was active in many organizations and served in many roles. He was a past president of the McLean County Bar Association; chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Jury Instructions; board member for Bloomington School District 87; board member of Victory Hall Boys Home; adjunct professor at the University of Illinois College of Law; the first president of Holiday Swim Club; and he helped establish the Bloomington-Normal Airport Authority. He is survived by three children, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and two siblings.

Robert Donalson died Dec. 22, 2021. He was 87. Bob was a professor in Illinois Wesleyan's School of Music for 30 years; he retired in 1994 with emeritus status. Bob felt the call to become an educator while serving in the U.S. Army in a mobile army surgical hospital during the Korean War. He obtained a master's degree at San Jose State University and a doctorate at the University of Colorado Boulder. He began his teaching career at Pepperdine University before landing at IWU. Bob loved beauty in all its forms — nature, art and poetry among them — but music was his emotional home. He was active in religious life and often shared his gift of music in the church. Bob was always learning and educated himself on subjects ranging from theology and philosophy, to computer science and financial investing, to home repair and carpentry. He enjoyed traveling, sports, his cats and, most of all, his family. He is survived by his wife, five children, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Joanne Moore of Normal, Illinois, died Jan. 28, 2022. She was 91. Along with her surviving husband **Walt Moore '52**, Jo was a longtime supporter of Illinois Wesleyan. The Moores were particularly supportive of IWU's athletic teams, and the press box at Neis Field, the home of IWU soccer, bears their name. Jo was a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She loved sewing and quilting, and made sure everyone in the family had a quilt made specially for their bed. Jo was also known for her compassion and hospitality, and volunteered over 4,000 hours at the Community Cancer Center in Normal. She is survived by her husband, five children, including **Deborah (Moore) Newman '81** and **Conni (Moore) Tipsord '82**, 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, a sister, and many nieces and nephews.

Nancy Schmidgall died Jan. 18, 2022, in Bloomington, Illinois. She was 76. Nancy attended Illinois State University before a 30-year career that included time as an associate in Illinois Wesleyan's bookstore. Nancy was actively involved in several knitting groups and enjoyed various crafts, traveling and spending time with her friends and family. She is survived by her brother and several extended family members.

Alumni

Richard Kenneth Green '51 of Delphi, Indiana, died Oct. 5, 2021. He was 94. Ken served in the U.S. Navy Reserve before attending Illinois Wesleyan. He taught vocal music for two years at an elementary school in Clifton, Illinois. He later served as an industrial engineer for various companies, including Landis+Gyr in Lafayette, Indiana. He

Robert Guenzler '53 '56 of Aurora, Illinois, died Dec. 30, 2021. He was 90. Bob earned a bachelor's degree in music education while studying vocal music and French horn at Illinois Wesleyan. He was drafted into the U.S. Army just one month after marrying **Mary Ann (Hagmeyer) Guenzler '53**, and he later returned to IWU on the GI Bill to earn a master's degree. Bob began his career as an educator in Charleston, Illinois, before spending the majority of his career in Illinois School District 218, where he worked



at Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harold L. Richards and Alan B. Shepard high schools in suburban Chicago. Bob was an active member of the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association. He was a leader in the National Association for Music Education and served as chair of the Retired Music Teachers Association. Bob was a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus for 28 years. In retirement, he continued to perform in regional choruses and played the French horn in community orchestras. He and Mary Ann were members at Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville, Illinois, where Bob sang in the choir. Bob and Mary Ann never lost their love of learning and desire to serve their communities; they registered voters, worked as election judges, and were recognized as Illinois Wesleyan's Loyalty Award winners in 1998. Bob adored his family and could always be found at his children's and grandchildren's sporting events, concerts, school events and family celebrations. He is survived by his wife, daughters **Susan (Guenzler) Getz '77**, **Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78** and **Pamela (Guenzler) DeBoer '82**, six grandchildren, including **Amy DeBoer '15**, and three great-grandchildren.

was a member of the Delphi United Methodist Church and its chancel choir, chairman of the senior adult ministry, and a lay leader for the church. He was also a member of the Carroll County (Ind.) Cancer Association, a board member and former president of the Lafayette Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA), and former volunteer driver with the Carroll County Council on Aging, where he had served on the board of directors. Ken enjoyed camping, photography and attending musical performances. He is survived by three children, two grandchildren, a great-granddaughter and two sisters.

Marian (Goben) Henning '52 died Nov. 21, 2021, in New Berlin, Wisconsin. She was 93. Marian studied at Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan. She worked as a receptionist in the personnel department at State Farm. She met her future husband, **Hugh Henning H'94**, at Wesley United Methodist Church, where they were members for 57 years before relocating to Wisconsin in 2011. Marian was purposeful, poised and kind. Her greatest joy was being a wife, mother and grandmother. She loved hosting family gatherings, creating cross-stitch projects and playing golf with the ladies at Bloomington Country Club. She was active in Alpha Gamma Delta and a 55-year member of P.E.O. Chapter FM. She was preceded in death by

her husband. She is survived by two children, including **Brad Henning '77**, and five grandchildren.

Janet (Lagesen) Bane '53 of Downers Grove, Illinois, died Jan. 15, 2022. She was 90. Janet studied music and was active in Kappa Delta Sorority at Illinois Wesleyan. Her love of music was ever present, as an Interlochen student, music teacher in elementary education, past president of the Riverside (Ill.) Chapter of the Lyric Opera, the director of the Joy of Music Camp and, most recently, a violinist with the Senior Suburban Orchestra. Janet was a longtime member of Riverside Presbyterian Church and later, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Downers Grove, and sang in both churches' choirs. She was active in her community, supporting causes and organizations, including: P.E.O. International Chapter CH; Infant Welfare Society of Riverside; Riverside Garden Club; Boy Scouts; Gloria Dei Leisure Group and Martha Circle; the Downers Grove Area FISH Pantry; and Morton Arboretum. She was the assistant director of volunteer services at Loyola University Medical Center, where she was a Magis Award recipient and the founding director of *Loyola Voices*. She lived out her priorities of faith, family, friends and volunteerism. She is survived by her husband **Harlan Bane '53**, five children, including **Ellen (Bane) Israel '82**, 14 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, two sisters, and many nieces and nephews.

Richard Puffer '53 of Ludington, Michigan, died Dec. 13, 2021. He was 90. Richard majored in business administration at Illinois Wesleyan and met future wife **Alison (Cope) Puffer '52** during their time together at IWU. Richard served in the U.S. Navy from 1953-56, stationed in Hawaii, and it was there that he and Alison began their family. Having earned a master's degree at Illinois State University and a doctorate at Northwestern University, Richard went on to a career in education. He held positions of assistant superintendent of Cook County schools in Illinois, dean of Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and finally president of Black Hawk Community College in Moline, Illinois. Richard and Alison were active in the Quad Cities community; they participated with their children in Quad City Music Guild productions, and Richard was involved in Rotary Club and Boy Scouts. In retirement, the Puffers moved to Michigan, where Richard remained active in the Rotary Club. Even after Alison's death in 2020, Richard enjoyed gazing out his window over Hamlin Lake, watching birds retrieve seeds from his feeders, and having a friendly dog to pet. He is survived by three children and five grandchildren.

Charles Leonard '57 of Casper, Wyoming, died Oct. 23, 2021. He was 87. Chuck's studies at Illinois Wesleyan were interrupted by two years of service in the United States Army, but he returned to campus after his service and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1959. Chuck met his wife, a student at Illinois State University, and they lived in the Illinois communities of Rantoul and Onarga, and later Albuquerque, New Mexico, before settling in Casper in 1969. Chuck pursued many business ventures in Casper. He owned and operated a service station, established a cleaning service, and worked for Casper College. But work was never as important as his faith and family. He was a member of Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church for more than 50 years and served as an elder. He is survived by his wife, four children, nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Karl Tauber '57 of Belleville, Illinois, died Nov. 20, 2021. He was 86. Karl studied business administration and played baseball at Illinois Wesleyan. He later played in the Chicago White Sox farm system. Karl spent his career in banking; in 1991, he purchased and founded Amer-

ican Bank, which became First Mid Illinois Bank and Trust. Among his proudest achievements were being named "Outstanding Banker of the Year" by the Community Bankers Association of Illinois and graduating from the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin. Karl was president of Champaign-Urbana Jaycees, chairman of Illini Industries Development and Corporation, president of the Champaign-Urbana Kiwanis Club and president of the Illini Quarterback Club. He enjoyed community service projects and participated in the Champaign-Urbana Chamber of Commerce. He also was treasurer of the Community Bankers Association of Illinois, and chairman and founder of Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District. He was a member of the Business Education Alliance and treasurer for the Highland Schools Foundation. He is survived by his wife, three children, three stepchildren, six grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Grace (Preisler) Lang '59 of Crystal Lake, Illinois, died Jan. 3, 2022. She was 84. Grace earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and was active in Kappa Delta Sorority at Illinois Wesleyan. She had a career as a social worker before marrying and raising her family. As a stay-at-home mom in the 1970s, she single-handedly built a kit car in her garage to much acclaim. She later went to work in the financial services industry for more than 20 years. In retirement, her lifelong love of learning led her back to college. She took classes at McHenry County College and became a certified personal trainer at the age of 70, and worked professionally at Health Bridge Fitness Center in

Robert Evans '62 of Holden, Massachusetts, died Jan. 20, 2022. He was 81. Bob majored in insurance at Illinois Wesleyan and went on to a nearly 60-year career as an accomplished investment advisor, licensed insurance agent and financial planner. Always dedicated to his career, Bob worked to improve the industry through his membership and active involvement in various organizations, including serving as president of the Massachusetts Association of Life Underwriters.

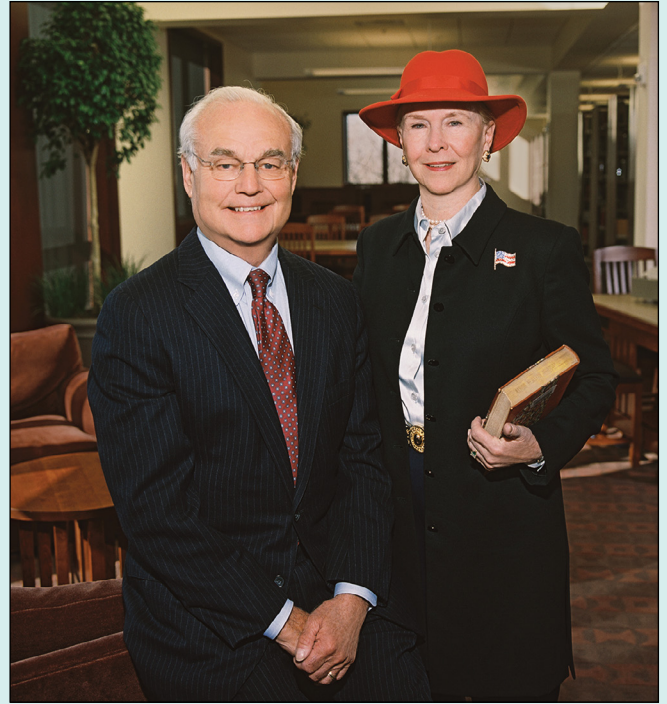
Bob developed lifelong relationships with his many colleagues and clients, and passed his knowledge and experience on to the next generation as a mentor and teacher. Bob was dedicated to his alma mater and served as an active member of its Board of Trustees from 2000-12; he had served as an emeritus trustee since 2012. He was also an active member of his community, serving on the Holden Planning Board, Economic Development Commission, the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, and as a past president of his local chapter of the Jaycees, and board member and past president of Briarwood Retirement Community. Bob was an antique car enthusiast and, before he even earned his driver's license, became the youngest member of the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. Bob cherished time spent with family and friends. He is survived by his wife **Kathleen (Knuth) Evans '62**, three children, five grandchildren, a brother, and many extended family members and friends.



Crystal Lake. Grace had a strong independent spirit, but her proudest roles in life were those of mother and grandmother. She is survived by three children, five grandchildren and a sister.

Barbara (Hamilton) Braner '60 of Beardstown, Illinois, died Jan. 20, 2022. She was 80. Barb studied music education at Illinois Wesleyan and went on to a teaching career in schools in Chandlerville and Concord, Illinois, and at White Sands New Mexico Military School, before a 25-year tenure in the Beardstown school district. Among her proudest teaching moments were helping students qualify for state competitions and earn accolades for chorus performances. Barb served as president of the Illinois District for Music Educators and served on the Illinois Elementary School Board Association. Barb was a charter member and held many roles in Beardstown Emblem Club #474. She was a member of First United Methodist Church in Beardstown, where she played the organ and served as choir director. She liked golfing and reading, and was a fan of University of Illinois athletics and St. Louis Cardinals. She enjoyed time spent with family, connecting with former students, and making new friends. She is survived by a brother, two nieces, a nephew and many extended family members.

Diana (Knoespel) Elder '62 died Jan. 4, 2022, in Urbana, Illinois. She was 81. Diana earned a bachelor's degree at Illinois Wesleyan, a certification in Christian education in the United Methodist Church, and a Master of Divinity at Garrett Theological Seminary. Diana was a lifelong learner and spent much of her adult life as a teacher in Central Illinois. She later served as director of education and programs at First United Methodist Church in Urbana. She was a Sunday school teacher and Bible study leader at many of the parishes where she and her late husband served. Diana became a licensed pastor in 1990 and was ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church in 1996. She served as pastor at United Methodist Church in Cullom, Illinois, and Lovington, Illinois, before retiring in 2002. Diana enjoyed singing, swimming, golf, travel, continuing her education, and spending time with friends.



Joyce "Jay" Eichhorn Ames '49 July 11, 1926 — Nov. 23, 2021

By Ben Rhodes '69

"Suffice it to say, the greatest satisfaction in my life came from being around the whole family and watching how much they enjoyed being together. I realized that no work experience came close to offering the pride and satisfaction that being with family did ... and it is a matter of record that Jay was responsible for all of it."

"I don't think I realized at the time how special Jay's attitude was, her strength and independence. She was a perfect complement to me because she did not SHARE my ambition, but she did SUPPORT it, and she was proud of me."

— B. Charles Ames '50

Jay Eichhorn and Chuck Ames met on the campus of Illinois Wesleyan not long after World War II. Chuck was a business major and Jay was an art major. The two of them used their degrees to excel in their personal and professional lives. They used their skills to complement each other and maintain their own individuality.

"It broadened our horizons immeasurably," Chuck said. "The value that Illinois Wesleyan brought to our lives is, as they say in the Mastercard commercials: priceless."

Not knowing how their first date would be, family legend has it Jay tucked a \$10 bill in her purse just in case she needed to take a taxi back to the Kappa Kappa Gamma house. But, obviously, after that first date, there was no need to worry about taxis. It was the beginning of a lifelong love story.

After graduation and their wedding, the young couple had very little money, and it was Jay who put her art degree to work.



She remembered her art class once being invited to the professor's house for a special discussion about artists and the value art provided to life. She knew the professor did not make a lot of money, but she noticed on that visit that his apartment was so tastefully decorated and artistically arranged. She realized then that it was not how much money you had but what you did with it to make life more enjoyable.

In his memories, Chuck complimented Jay for making every place they lived attractive and comfortable ... a place to call home. When Chuck was accepted at Harvard for his MBA studies, Jay was pregnant and all they had was a new Plymouth convertible and an apartment without furniture. Jay used the little money they had to make the apartment so attractive that their friends always wanted to come to their place for potluck dinners, board games and fun. This was a pattern that would last throughout their lives.

Chuck always traveled for work, Monday through Friday, and spent weekends at home. He would ask Jay what was on the social schedule when he returned home, and Jay always had interesting parties, dinners, household tasks, children's events, and always, ALWAYS, time for Chuck.

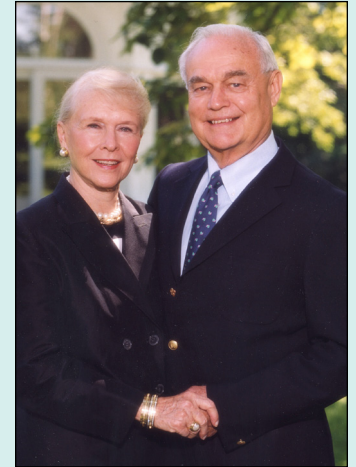
Jay raised the children while Chuck was off working in the business world. He was driven and he was talented. Jay was the same. There was nobody with more style to make you the visitor, the friend, feel comfortable with them. They enjoyed people and did not forget their personal Midwestern values. The family grew strong and loved each other. Even when Chuck would bring home an important business associate, the gathering of family and food was always highlighted with fun conversation. Jay set the standard of hospitality for her family, and it was evident at every meal.

Jay loved art. She taught her children the value of art and how it enriched their lives. Her favorite European city was Florence, Italy. She said she could spend weeks, months, years there enjoying the beauty. But she loved many places that enriched life and made you feel the value of the gift of life.

When Chuck and Jay began to notice the beginning of age, Jay encouraged Chuck to learn how to play bridge. She explained the game and, when friends would visit, often a game of bridge might happen after dinner. On one such occasion, Chuck and Jay partnered and Jay had made the successful bid. Chuck laid down his cards as the dummy, or passive team player for that hand. Jay ran the board and was very successful. After the hand had been played, Chuck asked Jay, "Why did you play such and such card? That did not seem logical." Jay responded without a moment's hesitation. "Bridge is a game of finesse, not always logic," she said. Chuck was very impressed with that response.

(Opposite page) B. Charles '50 (left) and **Joyce "Jay" Eichhorn Ames '49** (right) pose for their official Ames Library portrait.

(Right) Chuck (left) and Jay Ames (center) speak at the groundbreaking for The Ames Library, while former Illinois Wesleyan President **Minor Myers Jr.** (right) looks on, in 1999.



(Above left) Chuck and Jay Ames, attending a Kappa Kappa Gamma formal in 1948, met as Illinois Wesleyan students. **(Above right)** The Ameses remained connected to their alma mater throughout their lives and played leading roles in the construction of The Ames Library and Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art.

One day, a recently retired Chuck called Illinois Wesleyan to inquire about the School of Art. He was thinking of how he might be able to help the University and honor his wife at the same time. After some discussion, Chuck agreed to endow the School of Art and have it named, forevermore, the Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art at Illinois Wesleyan University. On her birthday that year, after all the presents had been unwrapped, Chuck gave Jay a white envelope and said, "I almost forgot to give this to you." Jay was shocked and amazed that the School of Art was named in her honor. A few years later, Jay had a new entry installed with a unique helix sculpture that is lit by night for all to enjoy.

Jay and Chuck enjoyed making charitable gifts but found that to make helpful charitable gifts they needed to refine their philanthropy. After making a charitable gift to Illinois Wesleyan to build a new library, Jay said, "We've been very, very lucky that we have the funds to be able to do things that were our dreams. Some people would rather have a yacht. We would rather have something beautiful on that campus that we helped bring about."

Among the other gifts to help others and improve lives, Jay and Chuck established the Ames Family Foundation. They provided for their children who have been successful in their own right, and their grandchildren, but the largest percentage of their personal wealth went to the Ames Family Foundation to help others achieve. The Ames Family Foundation has provided transformational gifts to the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Ames Family Hospice House at Case Western Reserve, The Weatherhead School of Management, and many other charitable organizations.

About the Author: Ben Rhodes '69 is a former IWU associate vice president for advancement and longtime friend of Chuck and Jay Ames.



and family. She is survived by three sons, six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and one brother.

Kenneth Kling '62 of Skokie, Illinois, died July 26, 2021. He was 81. Ken majored in music education and was active in several music groups and organizations during his time at Illinois Wesleyan. He played string bass in many orchestras and dance bands. He eventually became a band director, and school counselor and administrator. After retirement, he moved back to the Chicagoland area and enjoyed reconnecting with old friends. Ken was happiest when he was planning and preparing meals for family and friends, traveling with his wife, enjoying a martini and listening to his favorite music. He is survived by his wife, two sons, two grandchildren, a great-grandson and a brother.

Doris Stickel '64 of Wakarusa, Indiana, died Oct. 17, 2021. She was 80. Doris studied music and was active in Delta Omicron at Illinois Wesleyan. She later earned a master's degree. Doris was a lifelong teacher and performer of music. Following her teaching career, she worked for ADEC, Inc., in Elkhart, Indiana. She and her late husband were lifelong members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart. Doris was an avid gardener, birder and lover of nature. She was also a voracious reader and worked part-time at a used bookstore in Elkhart. Doris and her late husband loved to travel, especially to national parks by way of their beloved camper. She is survived by two sisters, two stepchildren and many extended family members.

Warren "Twig" Smith '72 of Carmel, Indiana, died Jan. 30, 2022. He was 71. Twig majored in business administration and was active in Sigma Chi at Illinois Wesleyan. He began his financial career at GTE, from which he later retired and began a second career as a loan officer, most recently at First Financial Bank. He was a member of Cornerstone Lutheran Church and also served on many committees and boards in the Noblesville, Indiana, area. Twig's passions included golf, reading and playing cards, but most of all he loved spending time with his family and friends. He is survived by his wife, two children, three grandsons and sister.

Joni (Clark) Milner '80 of Ridgeville, Indiana, died Oct. 15, 2021. She was 62. Joni studied accounting at Illinois Wesleyan and worked as a certified public accountant, most recently for Maul Technology in Winchester, Indiana. She was an upstanding member of her community active in many organizations and charitable causes, and her generosity was passed down to her children and others close to her. She loved life, crafts and gardening. She was preceded in death by her husband. She is survived by three children, four grandchildren, her mother and her boyfriend.

Patrick Hanlon '02 died Dec. 29, 2021, in Chicago. He was 41. Patrick majored in business administration and was a member of Sigma Chi, and Illinois Wesleyan's baseball and football teams. Patrick was a performer, whether it be on athletic fields or courts, playing musical instruments, singing, acting, dancing, songwriting or cracking jokes; he was truly at his best when entertaining others. His musical talents were on full display as the lead singer and songwriter for the band Patrick 'n Swayze, a popular band in college towns throughout Central Illinois. Patrick was able to connect with people from all walks of life, either on stage or through his career in sales. Patrick was always his happiest while surrounded by those he loved, and who loved him back. He is survived by his parents, two brothers, including **Sean Hanlon '00**, two sons, his former wife, two nieces and a nephew.



Deaths Reported

Mary (Nigro) Poor '44; Feb. 1, 2021
Marilyn (Pankratz) Wadington '45; Nov. 28, 2021
Helen (Goodwin) McGranahan '47; Jan. 2, 2022
Faye Cassingham '50; Jan. 15, 2021
Lorraine (Carey) Jamison '50; Nov. 21, 2021
Robert Spriggs '51; July 14, 2021
Thomas Taube '51; Jan. 15, 2022
Phyllis (Kirkpatrick) Lennon '52; Aug. 31, 2021
Stanley Kreider '53; Nov. 30, 2021
Raymond Bassett '57; Nov. 7, 2021
William Polich '57; Sept. 14, 2021
David Franz '58; Jan. 30, 2022
Ralph Steiger '58; Sept. 13, 2021
Darrell Lacock '58; Oct. 6, 2021
Timothy Townsend '65; Dec. 25, 2020
David Morgan '70; Oct. 18, 2021
Larry Shapiro '73; Nov. 19, 2021
John Sollenberger '73; Jan. 7, 2022
Rev. Rebecca "Becki" (Johann) Nunnally '76; Oct. 6, 2021
Ann (Miceli) Trombino '80; Nov. 12, 2021
Kimberly (Morse) Gregurich '85; Dec. 15, 2021
Gregory Tittle '00; Nov. 15, 2021
Kathy Piraino; Oct. 1, 2021

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. Send to *IWU Magazine*, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702, iwumag@iwu.edu, or at www.iwu.edu/magazine.

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light show

School of Art students showcased lamps constructed of cardboard in Illinois Wesleyan's Wakeley Gallery in December 2021.

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