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Winter 2022

## Volume 31, Number 3, Winter 2022-23

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WINTER 2022-23

# ILLINOIS WESLEYAN

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

## Guardian Angel

TONI TORTORELLA '21





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- CLAY ANDERSON '23



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When IWU nursing student and community leader **Toni Tortorella '21** was diagnosed with cancer, her family at home and school advocated for her health and her academic success. Now she’s a nurse at the hospital that cured her.

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After a summer of storytelling about what makes Illinois Wesleyan a unique gem of higher education, IWU will soon be streaming on Amazon!

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The Tammens have farmed their family’s land for over 100 years. Now two generations of IWU grads are turning the farm into a craft brewery — and a new legacy.

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**Toni Tortorella '21** sports the mark from the surgery that cured her cancer as a symbol of health advocacy and the support she received from family, friends, faculty and staff.

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This has been a full and exciting fall semester. First-year students brought special enthusiasm to campus, with their eagerness about being fully in-person. These students' last "normal" classroom experience was their first year in high school. Illinois Wesleyan faculty are always focused on students' success. This year, we are especially aware that students may need some extra help in re-adjusting to in person learning and campus interaction generally.

The excitement of being able to gather again in person was fully evident at this year's Homecoming. The joy in being together with classmates and friends was infectious, from the Benefactors' Dinner on Thursday evening, when scholarship donors have the opportunity to meet their student, through a thrilling last-minute victory over Carroll on the football field.

This semester is also the occasion for a very important event for the university: our re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. Accreditation is a process of evaluation and quality assurance that provides peer-based accountability. It is also required for any college or university to be eligible for federal student aid. Typically, institutions are accredited on a 10-year cycle. A very thorough self-study is prepared for the site visit of an accrediting team of fellow academic professionals. Our self-study, very capably shepherded by Michael Thompson, IWU's Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, and Jenny Hand, Institutional Effectiveness Specialist, along with faculty and staff colleagues, was carried out over two years and resulted in a 111-page document, studded with countless electronic links to supporting university documents.

In late October, a team of five faculty and administrators, with experience at schools similar to Illinois Wesleyan, visited our campus for one and a half days. Having studied the documents we had prepared, they came with a detailed rubric of questions, concerning all aspects of the institution. Members of the visiting team met with the president, trustees, and staff responsible for particular areas. They also held open fora for faculty, staff, and students which anyone could attend to contribute their thoughts and insights to the process.

After all of those interactions, the visiting team traditionally holds an exit meeting with the senior staff. At this point, the team's report is not yet drafted, so they stress that all they can convey is "first impressions" from their time on campus. Not surprisingly, we eagerly awaited those first impressions. The team leader spoke for the group. He began by saying, "It's very clear that this place is...loved. We experienced it from the trustees to the students and everywhere in between." He added that the team felt, throughout the campus, "a lived and palpable mission, consistent with the values of the liberal arts."

As I write this, I have just received, "hot off the presses," the draft report of the visiting team. While there will be several more steps in the process and several more months before we officially receive word of our status from the Higher Learning Commission, the draft is very positive throughout, and I anticipate good news. The process is demanding, but it's gratifying for the quality of Illinois Wesleyan to be perceived and affirmed by our peers.



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



IWU MAGAZINE STAFF

EDITOR  
*Chris Francis '13*

GRAPHICS EDITOR  
*Ellie Harman*

CONTRIBUTORS

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
*Ann Aubry*

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
*Julia Perez*

WEB CONTENT MANAGER  
*Kristen Buhrmann*

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT  
COMMUNICATIONS  
*John Lock*

VIDEOGRAPHER/PHOTOGRAPHER  
*Nick Helten*  
*Adam Day*

DIRECTOR OF ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS  
*Katie Gonzales*

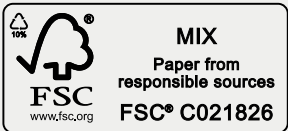
STUDENT WRITERS  
*Maria Harmon '23*  
*MJ Soria '25*

Office of Communications  
(309) 556-3181  
IWU Admissions Office  
(800) 332-2498  
[www.iwu.edu](http://www.iwu.edu)  
*Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*  
[iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu)

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Inside IWU

FEATURED NEWS, EVENTS AND VIEWS FROM THE IWU CAMPUS

IWU Receives Grant to Grow Future STEM Education Workforce

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

Through an award from the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, eligible Illinois Wesleyan students can receive annual scholarships, paid undergraduate research opportunities and mentorship. The program will provide up to \$600,000 in scholarships over the course of five years for at least 20 Titans over the life of the grant who are studying to earn dual degrees in secondary education and a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

The grant proposal "Authentic Research in STEM Educator Preparation for Issues of Culture, Justice and Equity," was authored by Emeritus Miner Linnaeus Sherff Endowed Professor of Botany David Bollivar and Associate Professor of Educational Studies Maggie Evans. With Bollivar's recent retirement from IWU, Associate Professor of Biology, Loralyn Cozy, has joined the project as co-principal investigator.

"STEM, a broad term that includes math, science, technology and engineering disciplines, is fundamental to America. We need scientists. So much so, that this need has been identified as a presidential priority because there are simply too few college students pursuing degrees in these fields," said Cozy. "The U.S. Department of Labor notes that there are more than a million job openings in STEM-related fields, but not enough qualified graduates to fill them. The NSF funded the Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program to recruit, prepare and sustain highly effective elementary and secondary STEM teachers in high-need school districts to help address this shortage."

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 Wesleyan 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.



(Above) Front from left to right are Noyce scholarship recipients **Amanda Wilson '24**, **Seth Albin '24** and **Kate Meyers '24**; with Associate Professor of Educational Studies **Maggie Evans**, back left; and Associate Professor of Biology **Loralyn Cozy**, back right.

(continued on page 4)



(continued from page 3)

On Aug. 31, the inaugural group of Noyce scholars — **Kate Meyers '24**, **Seth Albin '24** and **Amanda Wilson '24** — were recognized during a ceremony at the IWU President's house. Each student is dual-majoring in secondary education and a STEM field. President Georgia Nugent congratulated the future Titan teachers and praised their action through the scholarship as an example of the ways Illinois Wesleyan seeks to provide service in the local community and beyond.



(Above) Provost and Dean of the Faculty **Mark Brodl** speaks with a group of IWU students double majoring in STEM fields and secondary education about the Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and their future careers.

"Sometimes when we think about preparing teachers, people may think of the big public institutions of Illinois. Obviously they do a lot, but the small private colleges like Illinois Wesleyan prepare about 40% of teachers in the Illinois school system," said Nugent.

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. "Our graduates will be exemplary educators who help bridge the opportunity gaps in STEM education."

Prospective high school students and currently enrolled undergraduate students are eligible to apply for this scholarship program. More information is available at [iwu.edu/noyce](http://iwu.edu/noyce).

## IWU Ranked Among Best Colleges by Princeton Review

Illinois Wesleyan University has maintained its ranking among the nation's best undergraduate institutions, according to *The Princeton Review's* 2023 college guide, "The Best 388 Colleges."

Only about 14% of America's 2,700 four-year colleges are profiled in the book based on data it collects annually from administrators at hundreds of colleges about their institutions' academic offerings. *The Princeton Review* also considers data it gathers from its surveys of college students at the colleges who rate and report on various aspects of their campus and community experiences. *The Princeton Review* does not rank the colleges in the book from 1 to 388.

*The Princeton Review's* 85-question survey asks students to rate their professors, administrators, school services, and other aspects of life at their colleges and to report on their campus and community experiences. About 160,000 student surveys were tallied for the 2023 ranking list.

According to one student, "IWU is always trying to give students opportunities that are beyond what most schools can give."

Students also described IWU as "a friendly community where your professors become mentors, your classmates become lifelong friends and you graduate prepared to make a real difference in the world."

Some of the "most popular places on campus" included The Ames Library, Hansen Student Center and the Shirk Center for Athletics and Recreation.

Illinois Wesleyan's no-fee application is now open for the incoming class of 2023 by visiting [iwu.edu/apply](http://iwu.edu/apply).



(Left) *The Princeton Review's* 2023 college guide lists Illinois Wesleyan among "The Best 388 Colleges."

## Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25 Joins UN Panel to Advocate for More Multilingual Conversations

After impressing United Nations panelists with a presentation in February about global disparities in water economics, **Victoria Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25** was elected to moderate a UN segment on Friday, Sept. 9.

The Royal Academy of Science International Trust requested that Ballesteros-Gonzalez, Illinois Wesleyan University economics student, help lead the official opening segment of the First International High-Level Forum titled "Science and Society for Sustainable Development" which was conducted virtually in Spanish from the United Nations Headquarters.

Ballesteros-Gonzalez said panel members discussed the role of multilingualism in geopolitical collaboration, tools that could be used to expand science education, green technology to use in water economics and strategies for more social and cultural integration that could lead to global sustainability.

As a native Spanish speaker, Ballesteros-Gonzalez also joined the closing panel titled "Multilingualism for Stronger Multilateralism: Bringing Everyone Forward for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development" where she served as a speaker and translator. During her last UN participation in February, Ballesteros-Gonzalez advocated for more language inclusion during panel discussions at the international level.

"Discussions about global problems can not be held in just one language for convenience. Language is the basis of communication and excluding some of the conversations equates to knowledge loss," said Ballesteros-Gonzalez. "More than a third of the new scientific manuscripts that are published annually are in languages other than English, therefore important innovations and scientific developments that could enrich sustainable development programs at the international level are being lost and not heard."



(Above) **Victoria Ballesteros-Gonzalez '25** was elected to moderate a United Nations segment.

She added that many non-English speaking regions are affected the most by climate change and that "eliminating them from the conversation leads to a lack of understanding of the issue and most likely not finding great solutions."

Along with gaining professional experience and learning about panel etiquette, Ballesteros-Gonzalez said she was thrilled to hear that the International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly — whom she asked to include more multilingual panels — has committed to including Spanish sessions at future events.

"I hope (United Nations) members learned the importance of adding other languages to the international conversations to achieve sustainable development goals," she said.

## MAX L. STARKEY AWARD

(Right) **Warren Kistner '83** (left) was presented the Max L. Starkey Award by President S. Georgia Nugent on August 22, 2022. For 27 years, Kistner has provided guidance and encouragement for Titans as they explore internships, career opportunities and pathways to graduate school.





## Short Film by Cozette '22 Earns Four Awards at World's Leading Online Film Festival

**Julianne Cozette '22** and her co-star earned four awards in the July Monthly Online Top Shorts Film Festival with her senior capstone short film, "Be Well."

The short film was named Best Drama, while Cozette earned awards for Best Screenplay and Best Actress. **Richard Diamond '22** also earned Best Actor for his role in the film. "Be Well" was also a finalist in the Best Indie Short Film category. Cozette and Diamond both studied acting at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Cozette wrote, produced, and starred in "Be Well" alongside Diamond. Her film tells the semi-autobiographical story of two people who find love in a psychiatric hospital.

"At its heart, it aims to illustrate the unique relationships people often make at the lowest points in their lives, and how those relationships save you, but are ultimately inevitably unsustainable," she said. "It's bitterly ironic yet heartfelt and real."

Associate Professor Tom Quinn directed "Be Well" and helped bring Cozette's vision to fruition.

"Julianne's screenplay is deeply personal, highly intelligent and extremely well written," said Quinn. "In addition, it offered several rich and challenging roles to her classmates."

Cozette said this was her first experience working on a large film project and she found that getting to work with her fellow School of Theatre Arts students made the journey more enjoyable. In the future, she hopes to write more screenplays.

"It's fascinating what kinds of stories are told best through certain mediums, whether that be film, theater, novel, audiobook, poem, what have you, and how all of those mediums will shift how the story is received," said Cozette. "Film has a unique way of making everyday nuances and subtleties extremely clear and critical."



(Above) Julianne Cozette '22 and Richard Diamond '22 star in the short film "Be Well," written and produced by Cozette.

## Riordan '19 to study in Austria as 2022-23 Fulbright Scholar

**Kelly Riordan '19** traveled to Vienna, Austria, in September to study the music of composers who were silenced by the Nazis as a 2022-23 Fulbright Scholar.

She will spend nine months working with the Exilarte: Center for Banned Music at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien.

Exilarte's mission is to "operate as a centre for the reception, preservation, research and presentation of composers, performers, musical academics and theatre artists who were branded as 'degenerate' during the years of the 'Third Reich.'"

Riordan's work will be to study and perform recitals of the previously banned compositions of Jewish composer Robert Fürstenthal, who was forced to flee Europe under the Nazi regime.

"(Fürstenthal) was banned entrance to the MdW (University of Music and Performing Arts), one of the top music schools in Vienna, on account of being Jewish. He fled Vienna on one of the last trains out of Austria and moved to California where he lived for many years. When he left Europe, he also had to leave behind a woman that he loved," said Riordan, adding she looks forward to learning more about Fürstenthal soon.

During her junior year at Illinois Wesleyan University, Riordan spent a semester studying abroad in Vienna where she met music theory professor Gerold Grüber, who founded Exilarte. There, she learned about "entartete musik" or "degenerate music" which was music condemned by the Nazis.

"To those in the industry, it's no secret that discrimination exists in the world of classical music. No doubt, it is present in most, if not all, industries in our society. I'm interested in the ways that we can all take steps towards equity in our own little parts of the world. My current world is western classical singing," Riordan said.

Fulbright Scholarships are awarded by the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Program. This year, 25 scholarships were awarded for people to work in Austria.



(Above) Kelly Riordan '19

## New Book by Fitzharris '04 Makes Best Seller List

Less than two weeks after its release, the latest book by award-winning author and medical historian **Lindsey Fitzharris '04**, *The Facemaker*, launched to a spot on the *New York Times* Best Seller list.

*The Facemaker* follows the story of World War I surgeon Harold Gillies, the man who pioneered plastic surgery. Fitzharris writes about the life and career of Gillies, who lived in a time when there were no textbooks or guides for facial reconstruction. Paired with the expertise of artists, this surgeon not only helped soldiers breathe and eat again but also reconnect with their identities. Through her research, Fitzharris found Gillies to be an inspiring figure.

"When I decided to tackle this subject, I knew very little about Harold Gillies, the pioneering surgeon who rebuilt soldiers' faces during the First World War," she said. "But I did know there was a harrowing, pulse-quickening story there."

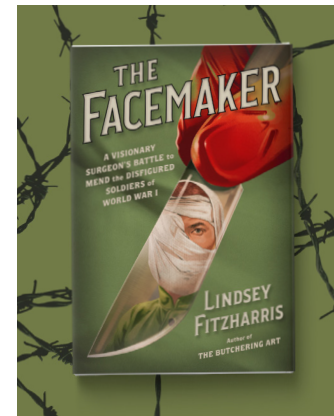
This is Fitzharris' second book, following the critically acclaimed biography *The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine*, which won her the PEN America/E.O. Wilson Prize for Literary Science Writing.

"This book was far more complex than *The Butchering Art* as it wasn't as straightforward in terms of narrative. *The Facemaker* is as much about the disfigured soldiers of the First World War as it is about the surgeon who transformed their lives," Fitzharris said.

In a 2018 *IWU Magazine* feature, Fitzharris said her morbid curiosity about history blossomed at Illinois Wesleyan University under Emeritus Robert W. Harrington Professor of History **Michael B. Young**, who introduced her to the history of science.

A native of Mount Prospect, Illinois, Fitzharris holds a bachelor's degree in history from IWU, and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Oxford.

Released on June 7, 2022, *The Facemaker* can be found anywhere books are sold.



(Above) Fitzharris's *The Facemaker* hit the *New York Times* bestseller list in June 2022.

## Myanmar Paintings Showcased in IWU Galleries

Art exhibits featuring a collection of private paintings from Myanmar were presented at Illinois Wesleyan University galleries from Sept. 12 through Oct. 13.

The exhibit at Wakeley Gallery featured 36 paintings by artists from Myanmar. The exhibit is titled "Power of Place: Painting Myanmar in a Time of Transition." Paintings are also displayed in The Ames Library.

In 2011, Myanmar's long-standing military junta gave way to quasi-democratic rule, only to be suddenly returned to dictatorship 10 years later.

"The paintings in this collection, all produced between 2012 and 2015, touch on the diverse dimensions of contemporary society, reflecting rural and urban life, religious beliefs and practices, disparate ethnic groups and identities and openly political stands. The artists draw inspiration both from traditional motifs and modern artistic styles, demonstrating the power of place and how it evolves over time," said **Abigail R. Jahiel**, professor of environmental and international studies.

Catherine Raymond, the director for the Center for Burma Studies and professor of art history at Northern Illinois University, presented a public talk and gallery walk for this exhibit at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at Beckman Auditorium in The Ames Library.

"Dr. Raymond is an expert of Burmese Art and on Myanmar, more generally," said Jahiel. "Her talk (provided) a historical, political and cultural context through which to better understand a country that Americans generally know little about."

The exhibit and talk were co-sponsored by the School of Art, The Ames Library, and the Asian Studies Program, which is part of IWU's International and Global Studies Program.



(Above) A painting by a Myanmar artist that was on display at IWU's Wakeley Gallery from Sept. 12-Oct. 13.



## Soccer and World Cup Exhibit Highlights Unity of Sport, Cultures

Soccer is the universal thread connecting different cultures of a local club whose stories were featured in a soccer and World Cup exhibit at Illinois Wesleyan University's Hansen Student Center Oct. 15 through Dec. 20.

The exhibit titled "The Beautiful Game: Just Kicking It In Bloomington-Normal" showcased interviews with members of the Park Drag Soccer Club — a group of soccer players in the Bloomington-Normal area — and postage stamp displays from the members' home countries.

The Park Drag Soccer Club was first organized on the IWU campus in 1998, mostly composed of faculty and international students. Soon, word spread to the international students and professors at neighboring Illinois State University and membership grew.

Agbenyega Adedze, associate professor of history at ISU, started playing soccer at a young age "like most African children," he said, and has been part of the local club for around 20 years.

"This is a very relaxed group of dedicated soccer players who have fun at every game. Some consider our game as a place to destress because of the various skill and age levels as well as nationalities and the fun we have playing," said Adedze. "Multiple languages are spoken during the games and there's no fuss about it. Even if you don't understand, we just play soccer."

Adedze said club members share more than a love of soccer — they share meals, life experiences, investment strategies, jokes and support, on and off the field.

Today, the Park Drag Soccer Club includes around 50 members from 30 nations. The group has met at various locations over the years to play, including the detention basin in Normal off Linden Street and Park Drag Lane — thus the club name. Anyone is welcome to join the group to play, no matter their skill level, and can email jsimeone@iwu.edu or adedze@ilstu.edu for play times and locations.



(Above) An example of the international soccer stamps that were on display at the exhibit.

Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Political Science **Jim Simeone** is also a member of the club. He and Adedze are lead organizers of the exhibit on campus.

"Soccer is an international game, but it has strong roots here, too. It promotes healthy exercise as well as camaraderie and community," said Simeone.

The exhibit at Illinois Wesleyan honored soccer and its culture from around the world, featuring large-scale posters of stamps from the 30 countries represented in Park Drag Soccer Club. Adedze considers himself a collector and curator of postage stamps and oversaw the stamp display at the exhibit. His interest in curating this new exhibit came after new stamps were released for the 2022 FIFA World Cup which was held in Qatar from Nov. 20 to Dec. 18, 2022.

Information about the soccer traditions in Bloomington-Normal were also highlighted. This summer, students with Illinois Wesleyan's Summer Enrichment Program took time to interview members of Park Drag Soccer Club. Those video interviews were also displayed.

Normal Mayor Chris Koos and Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe — who is a past member of the club — spoke at the opening reception of the exhibit, along with remarks from Adedze about the featured stamps before the film of interviews was presented.

"I want to emphasize the diversity of a small, midwestern town where people from all over the world, including Americans, are united by a soccer ball," said Adedze. "Furthermore, I want to demonstrate that despite the latent intolerance and discrimination by some people, there is a flourishing community of people from all over the world in Bloomington-Normal who celebrate our diversity and enjoy being together."



(Above) A portion of members from the Park Drag Soccer Club of Bloomington-Normal.

## Ellen Gilbert Named to NCAA Woman of the Year Top-30

Former Illinois Wesleyan University standout swimmer **Ellen Gilbert '22** was named one of 30 semifinalists, one of 10 in Division III, for the NCAA's Woman of the Year award Thursday, Oct. 13. The NCAA Woman of the Year award, now in its 32nd year in existence, will be presented Jan. 12, 2023 in San Antonio, Texas.



Ellen Gilbert '21

Gilbert, who graduated from IWU with a degree in psychology last spring, was a First Team NCAA All-American, three-time College Sports Communicators (formerly College Sports Information Directors of America) Academic All-America honoree, an eight-time College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin individual champion and was twice voted the conference's Swimmer of the Year.

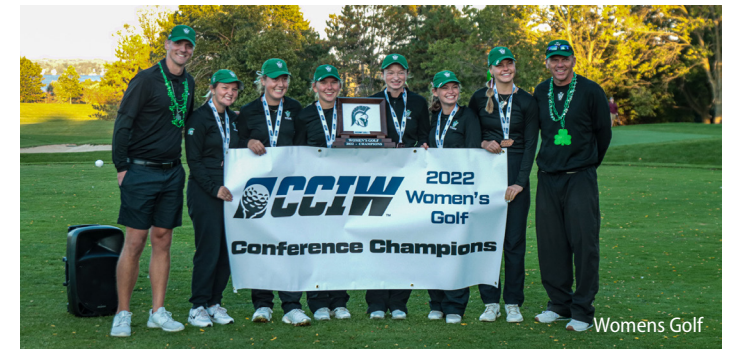
She was inducted into the Psi Chi and Phi Kappa Phi national honor societies in 2021. On campus, Gilbert served on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and was co-president of the Rehabilitation Therapy Club and vice president of the Circle K International club. She also volunteered as a tutor for Teaching Buddies, a nonprofit created to help low-income Chicago students with pandemic-induced learning difficulties.



### Women's Golf Wins CCIW Championship

The Titan women's golf team claimed the program's 17th CCIW Championship this fall behind six all-conference performances. **Lexi Onsrud '24**, the conference's Elite 26 award recipient, earned an individual CCIW title as she became IWU's first medalist since 2016. **Emma Thorman '24** and **Macy Ludwig '25** completed a sweep of the top-three individual spots, finishing second and third respectively. **Jacque O'Neill '25**, **Jadyn Spinks '25** and **Rachel Ducaji '24** also earned All-

CCIW status with top-10 finishes. Head Coach **Patrick Freeman** was voted the CCIW's Coach of the Year after leading IWU to an automatic berth into the 2023 NCAA Division III Women's Golf Tournament.



### Titan Celebrates 50 Years of Title IX

The Illinois Wesleyan Department of Athletics honored the 50th anniversary of Title IX over Homecoming weekend, as alumni, retired coaches and current student-athletes came together in a celebration of women's athletics. The brunch program included guest speakers **Barb Cothren**, **Lila Wagner '82** (basketball & softball), **Kat Mason McCreery '04** (softball), **Gianina Taylor Baker '04** (track & field), **Tyler Brown '19** (volleyball) and **Grainne Kelly '19** (lacrosse).



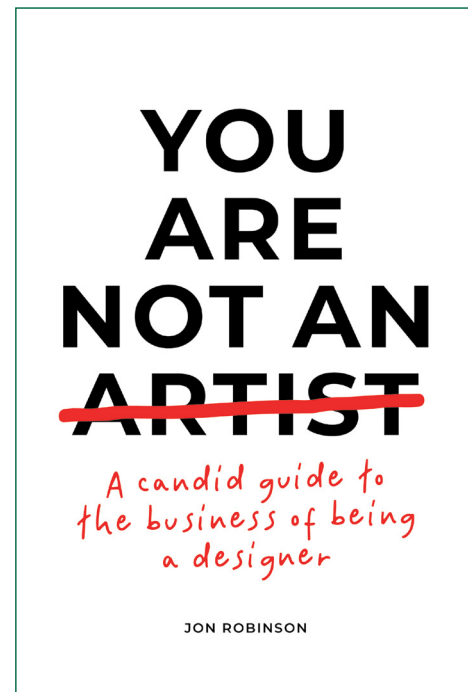
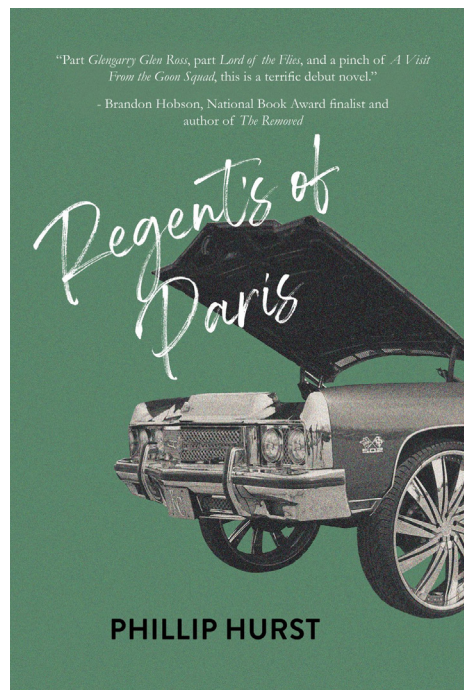
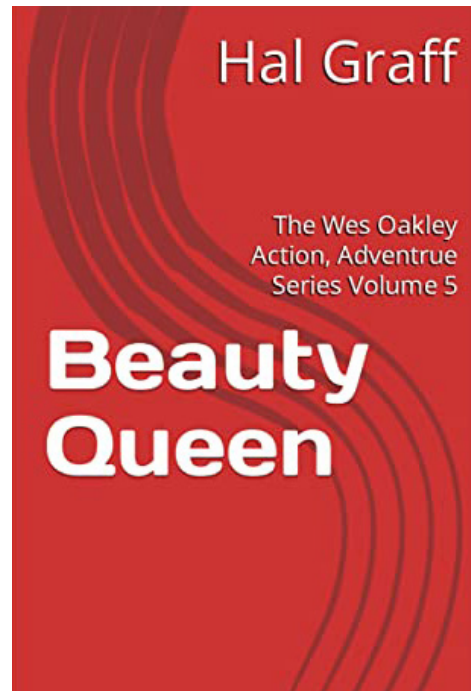
### 2012 Women's Basketball Alumnae Honored at Homecoming

Members of the 2012 IWU Women's Basketball team were honored at Homecoming as part of the 10-year anniversary of the program's first NCAA Division III Women's Basketball National Championship.

### Academic All-Americans of the Year

The College Sports Communicators, formerly known as the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), has recognized an Academic All-America of the Year in 12 different contests throughout the year since the 1987-88 academic year. With the selection of **Matthew Leritz '22** as the Division III Men's Basketball Academic All-America of the Year, Illinois Wesleyan now ranks eighth across all divisions and fourth in Division III with eight Academic All-America of the Year honorees.





## BOOKS

**Hal Graff '69** is the author of *Beauty Queen*, the fifth book in the Wes Oakley action/adventure/mystery series. When Tabitha, the daughter of Joe and Doris Harper and the current Miss Idaho, is abducted by a powerful man known as the "The Collector" of beautiful, young beauty queens, Wes Oakley is asked by the Harpers to solve the mystery and rescue their abducted daughter. Meanwhile, a serial killer terrorizes the women of Boise. Wes must contend with a corrupt governor and the mafia dons who put him in office to get to the bottom of the case. Hal is a prolific thriller author who has self-published over 80 books on Amazon since 2015.

**Phillip Hurst '01** is the author of *Regents of Paris* published by Regal House Publishing on Aug. 16, 2022. The novel illustrates several characters swirling around the drama of a small-town Midwestern car dealership during the 2008 financial crisis. Paul is a burgeoning salesman suffering an attack of conscience, Jennylee is a young mother handling a world tilted against her and Kent suspects that everything he's made for himself as a sales manager and head of the household is being stolen away from him. Phillip previously published *Whiskey Boys*, a memoir in literary essays.

**Jon Robinson '05** is the author of *You Are Not an Artist: A Candid Guide to the Business of Being a Designer*. Jon, Director of Product Design at Pager, writes to help prospective designers understand the vocation as more a matter of strategic problem solving than as a creative expression. While design is beautiful, it is first functional, and, in a world where technology makes it possible for anyone to engage in design, knowing something about how it works is a benefit to any profession. Jon is also a contributor to *97 Things Every UX Practitioner Should Know* published by O'Reilly Media.

## ARTICLES, ESSAYS AND PAPERS

**Judith (Thomas) Hannan '80** co-authored an article, "Improving Hypertension Control and Cardiovascular Health: An Urgent Call to Action for Nursing," published in the February 2022 edition of the nursing journal *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing*. Nearly half of U.S. adults have hypertension, or high blood pressure, and only about one in four of those individuals has their hypertension under control. Hypertension is a preventable risk factor for heart disease, stroke, dementia and kidney failure. "Improving Hypertension Control and Cardiovascular Health" highlights the critical roles for nurses in hypertension control in the form of leadership, education, research, advocacy and evidence-based care. Judy serves at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as senior advisor for Million Hearts, an initiative to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes.

## FILM AND TV

**Richard Jenkins '69** plays Lionel Dahmer, the father of Jeffrey Dahmer in *Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. The show is the first in a Netflix anthology series that explores the serial murders of Jeffrey Dahmer, played by Evan Peters. *Monster* was the most viewed show on Netflix during the first week after its release. Richard is an award-winning actor most famous for his performances in Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water* and *The Visitor*. For both performances Richard was nominated for Academy Awards including Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor.

**Frankie Faison '71** was nominated for a 2022 Film Independent Spirit Award in the "Best Male Lead" category for his work in *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain*, a film based on the real-life police shooting of a 68-year-old Black man. Frankie also appeared in the film *Fatherhood* in

2021 and has several forthcoming projects this year, including a role in *Till*, a film based on the life and death of Emmett Till, and the legacy of his mother who fought for justice for her lynched son.

## MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

**Linda (Fulton) Ferreira's '63 (A)** children's chorus composition "Birdsongs" was performed by the Capshaw Children's Chorus of Cookeville, Tennessee, in June. Linda, who is Professor Emerita of Voice and Music Education at Tennessee Tech University, wrote the composition to support her former students' work and give the Capshaw Children's Chorus music written by a living composer based on a collection of poems by an also-living writer, George Asdel.

**Nick Castellanos '15** performed in a production of Ian Ornstein's *A Virgin Death* in October 2022. The play explores themes of grief as a group of friends attempt to connect years after suffering a tragic death. The production had a limited run at the Athenaeum Center in Chicago.



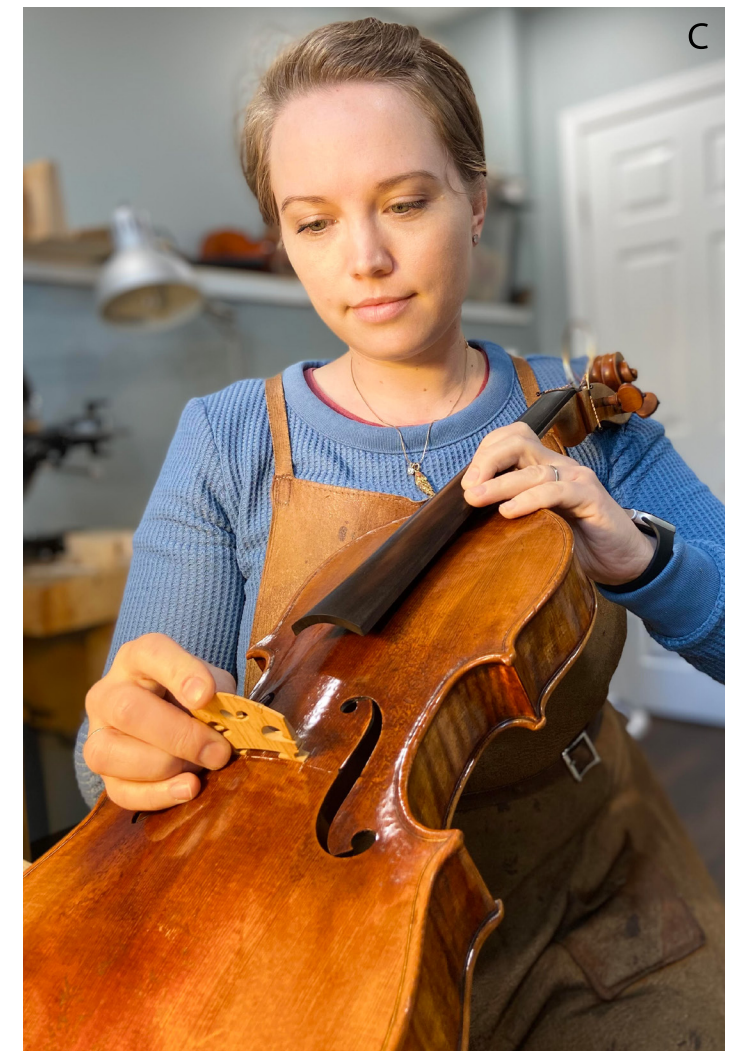
## ART

Watercolor paintings by **Emily Stedman '69 (B)** were exhibited at the NOHO M55 Art Gallery in New York City, New York, from September 27 to October 15. At Illinois Wesleyan, Emily studied art under Bart McNeil, Fred Brian and Tony Vestituto while the school was buying houses adjacent to campus and turning rooms into art studios where Emily could create paintings that she sold at student art shows. Now she is an artist and illustrator based in New York.



The art of **Shelly (Sherden) Rasche's '78** was celebrated with a three-week event and auction at Windsong Acres in Camp Point, Illinois. Shelly used her BFA in art to start a career in illustration after she and her husband **Jeff Rasche '81** resolved to create children's books. Though they never published a book together, Shelly illustrated thousands of products like greeting cards, ornaments, and other children's books throughout her career. WSIU previously featured a tour of Shelly's home and artwork that is available on YouTube.

Handmade violins, violas and cellos by **Kristin (Siegfried) Ballenger '09 (C)** were featured at multiple exhibits and conventions this fall. Her pieces were included in the Celebrating Women Luthiers Exhibit in Atlanta, Georgia; Washington, D.C.; and Burlington, Vermont, and she will have three instruments featured at the Anaheim 2022 Competition and Convention of the Violin Society of America. Kristin restores fine instruments with Reuning and Son Violins in Boston, Massachusetts.



All submitted content received by **October 17, 2022**. The submitted content deadline for the Spring 2023 issue of IWU Magazine is **February 13, 2023**. Submissions may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.



# MEMORIES FROM



More than 1,000 Titans gathered on campus for Homecoming and Family Weekend, September 23-25, 2022. Throughout the weekend, alumni, students and their families participated in over 50 events including class reunions, Titan athletic contests and tailgating, Alumni Awards presentations and much more!



(Above) 2022 Alumni Award Winners pose with President Nugent. (Left to right) Distinguished Alumni Award Winners **Drs. Roger '64** and **Carol '65 Sheldon**, President S. Georgia Nugent, Loyalty Award Winner **Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78** and 2021 Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumni Winner, **Luis Cabrales-Vasquez '15**.



(Above) **Cole Pradel '25** hypes up the fans during the Titans' comeback victory over Carroll University. Titans won 26-21 against the Pioneers.



(Above) **Clayton Anderson '23** and **Zehra Bekirdan '23** are crowned Homecoming royalty during the Friday Night TGOE Fest for students.



(Above) **Amy (Baron) Bozarth '95** enjoys a day of watching son **Zach Bozarth '23** play football for the green and white.



(Above) Female athletes of past and present commemorate the 50th anniversary of Title IX.

SAVE THE DATE!  
IWU Homecoming 2023  
October 6-8



(Above) Members of the Class of 1972 gather for their 50th class reunion celebration.



(Above) Lifelong friends, Class of 1977 and Kappa Kappa Gamma alumni, gather for their 45th reunion. (Left to right) **Sue (Casurella) Michels**, **Barbara (Short) Brown**, **Jeri (Bidle) Collins**, **Cory (Mooney) McCoy** and **Sarah (Plumb) Beck**.



(Above) (Left to right) **Samuel Ocker '25**, **Carla Barnes**, **David Efaw** and **Samuel Okewole '25** gather at the 2022 Benefactors Dinner.



(Above) **William Murphy '98** answers a question during the Petrick Idea Center Panel. He is joined on stage by moderator **Marc Talluto '94**, **Will Jenkins '12** and **Jess Shull '03**.





Toni Tortorella '21 has a guardian angel in her necklace. Both because the necklace, given to her by her grandfather when she was a child, bears a relief of a cherub on a medallion made of gold from Colombia — her grandfather's country of birth — and because it helped save her life.

The necklace bore special meaning for Toni's grandfather as she was his first grandchild, and it has carried new meaning for Toni ever since her grandfather died shortly before she graduated from Maine South High School (MSHS) in her hometown of Park Ridge, Illinois. She wears it almost every day.

It was while completing a nursing clinical on a morning in October 2019 that Toni was playing with her necklace out of habit. Then she felt an odd lump at the base of her neck.

The lump was small and hard, and it didn't move when pressed — everything that Toni's courses and professors had taught her to suspect as signs that something was very wrong.



As long as Toni can remember, she always said she wanted to be a doctor. At least until she realized, "I didn't want to go to school for the rest of my life."

As she explored other options, she discovered that she enjoyed the more personal touch that being a nurse brought to caregiving. It helped that she got a hands-on opportunity to experience nursing as a profession thanks to MSHS, which offers a certified nursing assistant (CNA) course. As a high school senior, she became a CNA during the 2016-2017 school year and discovered that her instincts were correct. She would love being a nurse.

When it came time to decide where she would go to college, the Illinois Wesleyan nursing program was an obvious draw, but she was also interested in continuing to play softball. Where her other options told her that it wouldn't be possible to do both, the IWU softball coaches wanted to recruit her as an infield utility, but they also wanted her to become a nurse, while the nursing faculty wanted her to keep playing. Thanks to that understanding, Toni knew then that she had found her alma mater.

"If I ever had a test our coaches would say, 'Absolutely, study for your test. You can leave practice early,'" she said. Vice-versa, if she had a game that conflicted with a nursing clinical, her instructors would re-schedule it for her to make sure she could join the team.

Not to mention, she was Vice President of Membership at Kappa Kappa Gamma, a nursing lab assistant, and she minored in Hispanic studies. Toni always set high standards for herself, almost a perfectionist, and Illinois Wesleyan made sure she could meet those standards.

"Toni was engaging, not only in the classroom but out on campus. She was seen as a leader among her peers," said Associate Professor Noel Kerr, Toni's fall 2019 clinical instructor.

But what most enabled her was the attention that the nursing faculty gave to her studies and to her as a person buried by responsibilities.

"My freshman year I was struggling very badly, but I still have a picture in my phone of the email I sent to my advisor, Dr. (Amanda) Hopkins. It was 11 o'clock at night, and I told her 'I am struggling. I don't know what to do.' And the very next day she and Dr. (Vickie) Folse '86



(Above) Toni Tortorella '21 with her abuelo, while wearing her necklace gifted by him. (Opposite page) Toni came to visit Stevenson hall while on campus for the 2022 nursing career fair.

met with me, and they told me, 'We know you're putting in the effort and that you care, and we're going to do everything in our power to help you,'" Toni said.

"Every week she showed up enthusiastic, and that enthusiasm helped us be more willing to give her opportunities," said Assistant Professor Lydia Bertschi.

They and Toni understood that nursing is a profession with incredible demands that no one can hope to meet without help. "I was not a straight-A student. I had to work hard," Toni said. She found resilience in her community.



That October morning, when Toni felt a lump in her neck, she was lucky to be in the same room as one of those instructors who had her back. The nursing faculty aren't in a position to diagnose students as their doctors, but when Toni asked Kerr what she thought, Kerr told her to get it checked out.

The doctor she saw in Bloomington wasn't concerned. Toni was told that it was most likely some inflammation that would go away, and she should take ibuprofen to help it along. For a week she took the prescribed doses of painkiller, but the lump remained.

Toni had suspected that this wasn't a simple case of random inflammation, and the failed treatment convinced her even further, so she went back to someone else she trusted. She asked Becky Altic, a retired nurse and former laboratory associate with the School of Nursing, what she thought of the situation. When Becky felt the lump on Toni's neck, the look on her face alone confirmed that Toni needed a second opinion.

The second opinion came from her pediatrician, whom her family had long trusted as a friend who would make time to see Toni during her Thanksgiving break. The pediatrician told her that the lump itself wasn't anything remarkable, but he understood her concern and referred her to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. The specialist there was also not alarmed.

Which, to be fair, Toni explained that, "The first day I felt it, I said to my friends, 'What if I have cancer?' and they told me to not worry. I was just being dramatic. And I am kind of a hypochondriac. It could be cancer, but it would more likely be a thyroglossal cyst. There are just so



When IWU nursing student and community leader Toni Tortorella '21 was diagnosed with cancer, her family at home and school advocated for her health and her academic success. Now she's a nurse at the hospital that cured her.

# GUARDIAN ANGEL

Story by CHRIS FRANCIS



many things in your neck that something like that could be.”

The ENT decided to perform an ultrasound after Toni’s fall semester ended just to be sure. It confirmed that the lump was a lymph node that had perhaps become cystic. But beside the lump was a miniscule spot on her thyroid — not even big enough to warrant a biopsy, but curious enough to prompt the doctor to perform a biopsy on the lymph node before Toni went home to wait for the results.

Around five in the afternoon the day before Christmas Eve, Toni still hadn’t gotten a call, and she had mentally logged that this was closing time for their office. If they weren’t in a rush to give her any news before Christmas, she figured she shouldn’t be worried about whatever they found. So she went to visit her boyfriend and his family about an hour away from home.

After she arrived, she finally got a call. She answered the phone around seven in the evening to hear a doctor



(Above) Toni looks across the IWU softball field where she played as an infield utility while also studying nursing.

“Nothing else matters all that much if you’re not healthy and happy. Being busy with important things and meeting perfect standards isn’t worth it if you don’t have that.”

— TONI TORTORELLA '21

ask if he was speaking to Toni. After she confirmed, he delivered the news.

“It was extremely malignant,” Toni remembered. “I was horrified.” But she had learned through her training as a nurse that the most important question to answer was which of her cells had become cancerous. Was it thyroid cancer? Or was it lymphoma?

The doctor said that they believed it was thyroid cancer that had spread to her lymph nodes, thus creating the lump she felt when playing with her necklace.

“At this point, I didn’t know much about thyroid cancer, but you’re told you have cancer, you’re told it’s spread to your lymph nodes, and you automatically assume you’re going to die,” she said. She was terrified and far from home, but, thankfully, she was close with her boyfriend’s family who knew how to respond to the news. Her boyfriend’s dad had cancer as well. “He was able to tell me that he’s there for me, and we’re in this fight together. Where my parents’ heads probably would have exploded. So, thinking back, everything happens for a reason.”

She did tell her parents that night after she drove home. As for whether their heads exploded, it was a conversation during which Toni, as far as she can remember, blacked out.

The next morning they learned that they wouldn’t be able to meet with the Lutheran General team again until the next week as they were off for Christmas. Toni’s mom was livid, and a team member agreed

to meet with them that day on Christmas Eve.

The cancer was treatable with surgery, they told Toni, and the doctors at Lutheran General were confident they could do it, but, to make sure they completely excised all cancerous lymph nodes, they would need to perform a cut going from the base of one ear, down to the center of the collarbone and returning to her other ear for a full dissection of her neck that would leave a conspicuous scar.

Of course Toni would happily take the scar in place of the cancer, but her time at Illinois Wesleyan had made her acutely aware of the stellar reputation of the operating room at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. If she could choose anyone to perform this surgery, it would be there.

The problem was, so would everyone else, and the waitlist was extensive. They were told that they wouldn’t even be able to get a consultation until March of 2020. But Toni’s mom went to work again, writing a message pleading her daughter’s case as a young woman studying nursing and playing softball at Illinois Wesleyan. The surgeon, Dr. Dina Elaraj, wrote back agreeing to see Toni on December 26.

“The first thing she said to me was ‘you are going to be okay, and you will not have cancer after this surgery,’” Toni said. Elaraj explained the details. Of all the news Toni could have gotten immediately after

the terror of her cancer diagnosis, the specifics explained by Elaraj were a best-case scenario.

Papillary thyroid cancer, compared to lymphoma, is slow-growing and much more treatable, especially since discovering the lump had allowed Toni and her doctors to catch it relatively early. Elaraj suspected that Toni might have had it for as long as two years at that point, but it was still possible to cure her of the cancer through surgery alone.

The hopeful prognosis set Toni at ease, and, even better, she explained that they believed they could perform the neck dissection with only a small incision above her collarbone that would still leave a scar but a much less dramatic one.

“She’s just a badass,” as Toni likes to describe her.

Toni’s surgery took place on February 3, 2020 — just as the COVID-19 pandemic was making its way to the United States. Toni’s parents, who had been with her for every appointment since, slept in the hospital that night as she recovered. Following the surgery, she had no indication of any remaining cancer, and there hasn’t been a sign since. The only mark that remains is a scar at the base of her neck, just above where her childhood gift from her grandfather rests.

When asked if she felt like her grandfather had been looking out for her, she said, “Oh, yes. Absolutely.” There are few people she has trusted to take care of her as much as him.



Toni was able to go from a horrifying diagnosis to a confidently hopeful plan over the course of a Christmas, but that didn’t stop the IWU nursing department from getting involved to give her the support she needed.



(Above) Toni walks across her old softball field while visiting campus during fall 2022. She has learned to take care of her own health and happiness, as well as others’, since her cancer diagnosis.

“Dr. Folse told me that, no matter what happened, they would make sure that I graduated on time with my class,” Toni said. Through softball games, KKG responsibilities, and a cancer diagnosis, she did so in spring 2021, and she was ready to enter her profession.

Ever since she began studying nursing, working at Northwestern was a dream of hers. Now she had come to learn how they care for their patients as if they were family. She had to be a part of it again, this time as a member of the team.

When Northwestern came to the Illinois Wesleyan nursing career fair, she spoke with the recruiters and began building a relationship. It helped that she had a powerful story to tell.

“I made one of them cry. She still remembers that,” Toni said. And when Northwestern was looking for a surgical nurse, she applied.

Normally an operating room prefers not to hire nurses straight out of school, though Northwestern has an OR nurse residency program for new graduates. But Bertschi and Folse made sure Toni was the first

IWU student to have a perioperative senior clinical at BroMenn Medical Center. She had already been in the operating room, both as a patient and as a caregiver, and she was hired as a nurse in the Northwestern surgical department in August 2021.

“I love it. It’s awesome,” she said. “I’m part of some really cool groundbreaking surgeries, and I’m now teaching some new nurses myself, which is really fulfilling and rewarding.” The job is everything she dreamed it would be, as she tells her old instructors.

“Her life is blossoming,” said Kerr. As for what’s next for Toni, “I don’t really know,” she said cheerfully. “When I got sick, I realized that you can’t plan your life. So I’m trying to be where my feet are.”

She would like to go back to school to perhaps become a nurse practitioner specializing in oncology, but post-cancer Toni has come to realize that “nothing else matters all that much if you’re not healthy and happy. Being busy with important things and meeting standards of being perfect isn’t worth it if you don’t have that.” ❖



# A LOVE LETTER TO IWU

Story by CHRIS FRANCIS



## Where to watch The College Tour ▶

- ▶ [iwu.edu/collegetour](http://iwu.edu/collegetour)
- ▶ [thecollegetour.com](http://thecollegetour.com)
- ▶ Starting March 2023



After a summer of storytelling about what makes Illinois Wesleyan a unique gem of higher education, IWU will soon be streaming on Amazon!

Illinois Wesleyan's Director of Marketing Andy Kreiss '86 and Dean of Admissions Kasey Evans '12 don't know how they ended up on the email list of television producer Beth Cohen, but, when their inboxes received promotional materials for the Amazon Prime series *The College Tour* in the spring of 2022, the same idea percolated in both of their brains.

The show had been going for about a year and a half by then, and its team had already profiled 46 colleges and universities in a series of beautifully shot, professionally produced, enthusiastically presented episodes that expressed a unique affection for the schools they featured. Taking the time to at least inquire was an obvious decision that Andy and Kasey came to on the same day.

"Beth must have wondered if we even talk to each other, but it was one of those things we knew we had to look into. It just looked too good to pass up," Andy said. Two months later, the Illinois Wesleyan campus would turn into a film set as *The College Tour* went to work sharing the university with the world.



*The College Tour* series began as a pandemic-era innovation. Series host Alex Boylan, a TV producer whose career was launched as a contestant on *The Amazing Race*, was initially inspired by watching

his niece go through the college search process shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic. After the pandemic hit, suddenly all college and university campuses were closed to the world, and the only way for students to learn about where they might want to go for their bachelor's degree was through online resources.

The question then became, which colleges had invested in online features that could effectively replace



(Above) *The College Tour* crew prepares to film featured student **Emily Gilson '23**. (Opposite page) Host Alex Boylan films on campus for IWU's episode, which is currently available at [iwu.edu/collegetour](http://iwu.edu/collegetour).

the on-campus tour in a time when that was no longer an option? The answers were inconsistent, and Alex realized the value there would be in a dedicated streaming series that brought the same professional attention and care to simulating the college tour experience at each campus.

By the end of 2020, *The College Tour* series began with a profile of Fort Lewis College, a small liberal arts college in Durango, Colorado, that could be viewed for free on Amazon Prime Video.

## A LOVE LETTER TO IWU

*The College Tour* had proven itself. They could make high-quality virtual tours with unique and inspiring interviews, useful facts and statistics and beautiful campus tableaus. And when the IWU admissions and marketing teams spoke with Beth about featuring the Illinois Wesleyan campus, it was a no-brainer.

"The trick was we had to do it now," Andy said.

*The College Tour* was already filming for its next season to air in fall 2022, and interest had only grown since 2020. If Illinois Wesleyan was going to be a school featured that season, they would need to sign the contract that spring and film everything in one week in the summer. That made the IWU team pause.

"We told them that this isn't really a university where we have a lot of students on campus over the summer," Kasey said.

"But they reassured us that that wouldn't be a problem at all," Andy said. "In fact, they preferred filming at schools over the summer since it makes it easier to get access to all the interesting places on campus. Really, they had an answer for everything."

And every question would have to be answered in the seven weeks that *The College Tour* team and the IWU staff had between the day the decision was made and the day filming began.



The most important question would be, which of all the amazing Illinois Wesleyan students would be featured in the show?

*The College Tour* format centers each episode around the personal stories of a handful of current students whose experiences exemplify





(Above) Ellie Reineke '23 shared the story of the overwhelming support she received from IWU faculty when she and her fiancé, Hector Torres '23, were expecting a baby during their sophomore year.

life on campus and the value each school provides for them. The toughest part is deciding which stories to use.

Illinois Wesleyan is a place where the administration, faculty and staff know their students. So the admissions and marketing people knew that there was no shortage of students to ask if they would be willing to share their stories of discovering passions and overcoming obstacles and flourishing on campus. But it wouldn't be so straightforward.

"The tricky thing is that you can only use so many, and you have to use stories that show different parts of what makes Wesleyan great," Kasey said. On top of that, all of the featured students would have to be available for the one week of filming during the summer when, again, almost all of them were gone for the break.

So they opened the opportunity to the whole student body. Emails went out inviting anyone who was interested in sharing their story (and available to do so) to submit a

two-minute video audition sharing why they chose Illinois Wesleyan, what they had gained from their time as a student and what they would want to tell someone thinking about making Illinois Wesleyan their alma mater.

"I have experience with that two-way conversation with people telling them what makes the school what it is and what makes it so special," said featured student and theatre major Ethan Smith '23 in his audition video. "I went all over the country, and I got into schools all over the country, but none of them had the combination of personalities and driven, motivated artists, as well as just good people, that Wesleyan did."

"All of the submissions were great. It was so inspiring seeing how creative and impressive our students are," Andy said. He wishes they could have all been in the episode, but they had to choose a group of 10 students whose stories could each showcase a unique aspect of life on campus.

For one featured student, Josh Reed '24, the audition was a



(Above) Boylan and President S. Georgia Nugent discussed what makes IWU special during "Coffee with the President."

well-trodden hobby. Ever since high school Josh had loved theater, film and technology, and he had completed several of his own video projects. Making a unique production for his audition would just be another fun challenge, so Josh began writing a script.

"I got a couple of friends to join me, and we had fun with it. It was kind of campy and sarcastic, and I thought it would be something interesting and unique," Josh said.

For other students, the idea grew on them more slowly.

"I initially didn't think about submitting my story or potentially starring in the episode. But after looking back at my freshman year through photos and souvenirs, I wanted to represent the community I had met and developed connections with on campus," said Bea Manlapaz '25, who came to IWU from the Philippines. "I wanted to provide a perspective as an international student and as someone very involved with cultural clubs."

The process of choosing students from all the inspiring auditions was

excruciating, but the IWU team was on the clock. Decisions had to be made, so they chose their 10 students who would represent the school in *The College Tour* series, and the campus got ready to film.

When the film crew came, it was small, tight and efficient, and they came with a plan to get the most out of campus in the one week they had.

As small as they were, only having about five crew members on any filming day, "it was big in ways I wasn't expecting," Josh said. He could appreciate the quality equipment and the sharpened skill the team had after featuring dozens of previous schools.

But the IWU staff made sure that one of the most impressive subjects of the episode was the campus itself.

"Everyone came together to make it happen. Especially the grounds crew and physical plant. They were so dedicated to making the campus as beautiful as possible, and they absolutely did it," Andy said. "I think campus has looked better than ever this year because of what they did this summer. Really, everyone came together. Everyone on campus willingly said 'yes' and helped make it work."

Andy and Kasey's concern was never whether the grounds would look beautiful, though. They had worried that it would look like a beautiful summer ghost town. But that's where the film crew and IWU staff got creative.

Sami Curtis '24 was one of the students who auditioned for *The College Tour's* episode but wasn't among the 10 to be featured. But, as a student worker with conference services that summer, she found herself, along with her summer roommate and coworker Nora

Robinson '24, in more of the episode than she might have been otherwise.

"It happened to be a week that we could be spared from the office, so Sami asked me if I would be an extra on set," Nora said, and they were extras for most of the week of filming.

Using subtle costume changes, Sami and Nora, along with other students, staff, administration and even film crew members, snuck into the background and B roll to help the summer campus feel more populated.

"If you were on campus, you had to hide from us to not be in this show," said Andy, who impersonated a professor counseling a student.

"It got to the point that they needed to tell us to not come because they had used us too much," Sami said. But being present for as much of the filming process as they were gave them a unique perspective on the production.

"We got to meet a lot of new people and find out about the interesting things they've been doing at school. And we got to see how the [featured students'] stories represented other stories on campus that didn't get to be told" Nora said.

Even the filming of the episode itself achieved the series' goal as Sami and Nora got an opportunity to explore a campus that they had barely been able to use since they started as first-year students in fall 2020 during the height of the pandemic.

"The whole process really made us fall in love with Illinois Wesleyan all over again. We got to rediscover why we chose to come here and why we still love campus so much," Kasey said.

"Our episode isn't just for prospective students, though," Andy said. "We hope that the alums who see this will fall in love with IWU again too, and that they will use this

show to tell anyone they know who is thinking about college why this is a fantastic place to learn and grow."

On one of the filming days, Andy and Kasey were having lunch with the host and one of the producers on set, Lisa Hennessey. They were discussing the series and its vision.

"Lisa started to tear up when she was talking about it," Kasey said. "She called the show a 'love letter to higher education.'"

If *The College Tour* is a love letter to higher education, it follows that this episode is a love letter to Illinois Wesleyan. As for what's written in that letter, Andy says, "This is a place where you will be challenged and supported by your professors, where you will make friends among students and faculty and staff, and that will launch you into the world with the confidence of success at your back."

Josh has his own interpretation: "If you say yes, you can have the richest experience. There's so much to do here, you just have to pick."

Alumni can find and share the episode at [iwu.edu/collegetour](http://iwu.edu/collegetour).



(Above) Ethan Smith '23 (front) represented the theatre department in his feature on *The College Tour*.





# A NEW LEGACY

Story by CHRIS FRANCIS

The Tammens have farmed their family's land for over 100 years. Now two generations of IWU grads are turning the farm into a craft brewery — and a new legacy.

Among the most prized possessions of Morris Tammen's '75 youth was his classic leather-seated Norton motorcycle. It was the kind of machine he used to make mischief in his hometown of Thawville, Illinois, which is just what he had in mind when riding that motorcycle through the Illinois Wesleyan campus with two other Tau Kappa Epsilon members in tow wearing nothing but cowboy boots and masks — in Morris's case, an oversized devil mask. That's when he drove past his future wife, Linda (Brown) Tammen '76.

Moments later, at an unfortunately timed stop, the bike stalled, a security officer shouted at the young men and Morris's TKE brothers bailed. With several desperate kicks,

Morris revved the engine back up for a last-second escape as Linda and other bystanders laughed and hollered after him.

That story became the inspiration for the signature beer at the Tammen's new family business, Artesia Brewing, in their generational hometown of Thawville. The Streaker is "an eminently sessionable Belgian-Style Single brewed with spices and citrus," as the website describes, brewed by their Illinois Wesleyan alumni children Evan Tammen '09 and Katrina (Tammen) Reber '05 and their children's spouses (with a little age-appropriate help from the grandkids).

Together, the Tammen family runs Artesia as if it has been in the family for generations. For the parents, the brewery is a continuation

of the farm that has been under the care of the Tammen family for over 100 years as they enter retirement. For the children, it's an opportunity to realize a hobby as a profession and carry on the legacy of the family's land. For them all, it's a chance to remake an idyllic life in rural Illinois for the newest generation of Tammens.



Artesia Brewing is a short drive off a long country road, sitting in the middle of a plot of farmland that has been in Morris's family ever since his ancestors were invited to work there at the end of the 19th century. The Lisks, a farming family who previously owned the land, were reliable sponsors of immigrants from Scandinavia looking for a new life in the American Midwest. Two of these immigrants were Andrew Olsen and Katrina Thompsen, Morris's great-grandparents, who worked on the farm together, married and bought the land from the Lisks themselves.

Each generation since has added parcels to the land. Morris's grandparents dug an artesian well on the property. Morris's parents bought a neighbor's farmhouse in which to raise their kids. And when it came time for Morris to decide what path he would take after finishing his schooling, his own dad offered his take with the family's understated humor and love. "You know, farming is not that bad."

Morris had joined the Illinois Wesleyan class of '75, and when he had only a few weeks of college left before returning to the family farm, he decided he might as well find someone to take out on a date. He browsed Linda in the yearbook and gave her a call, but Linda knew of him by reputation.



Morris had plenty of rambunctious childhood adventures. He was known as a playful mischief maker in Thawville, as well as a crack shot with a gun and bow culling the birds infesting farms. And his ability to get up to anything he could with his TKE brothers was an item of gossip on campus. Even now, Morris's family finds themselves having to cut off his persistent reminiscing from his youth before he can reveal too much. So, when Linda found herself talking to him on the phone, she was quick

to turn down the date but happy to let him know that she and a friend of hers had named a dog after him. Not theirs, but a sheepdog that played in a yard near campus that they liked to visit. The name seemed appropriate given their shared personalities.

Charmed and encouraged by his namesake, Morris tried again with only five days left before graduation, when Linda figured that she might as well go ahead with a date given she would never see him again after he left college.

They went on five dates in five nights, the third of which was to his family farm where Linda met his parents for the first time. But the acceleration of their courtship wasn't a problem for Linda. She had grown up on a farm outside of Galesburg, Illinois, and even though Morris had at first thought she was a "cool hippie girl," Linda knew she would want to go back to life on a farm.

"My siblings and I have remarked on how we owe our existence to a sheepdog," said Katrina. Indeed, sister Alison was born as their eldest, followed by Katrina and Evan, after Morris and Linda married in 1977.



(Above) (Left to right) Morris Tammen '75, Evan Tammen '09, Katrina (Tammen) Reber '05 and Linda (Brown) Tammen '76 in front of their new tasting room at Artesia. (Opposite page) Three generations of Tammens pose in front of one of the barns and warehouses they have converted into a brewery.





**(Above)** Ryan Reber uses a hose to sterilize a component of the fermentation tanks. **(Right)** For now, Artesia only sells their alcohol from the tap and in branded growler jugs.



A year into their marriage, Linda happened to find the infamous devil mask that Morris had worn on his bike ride, discovering that he had been the masked motorcycle streaker all along.



The Tammens kids also owe their existence to Illinois Wesleyan drawing Morris and Linda to the same school. Linda and her two siblings were all in college at the same time, and, with each of them paying their own way through college, they decided where to go based on who offered the best financial incentive.

Linda wouldn't have been able to study elementary education at IWU without the advocacy of the recently passed Lynn Nicholson (see obituary on page 36), the original director of the Office of Financial Aid, whose aid package made Illinois Wesleyan Linda's best choice.

"I remember going to his office once, crying, and he told me that 'we're going to work this out,'" Linda said. "Just a wonderful guy."

Morris came to Illinois Wesleyan to study economics, which sent him abroad twice with Professor Campbell Evans to survey businesses and industries in Western Europe. And while he wasn't tearing through campus on his Norton, Morris broke records in the long jump and triple jump under coach Bob Keck.

But both most appreciate what they learned through studying the humanities as general education requirements at Illinois Wesleyan. "It taught us how to live, and how you make your life with each complex choice you have to consider," Linda says.

When it came to the kids, the most natural fit was in music. Musical talent and interest had always been in the family with Morris's mother being a church organist for

more than 50 years, and, although Morris didn't play an instrument, "I provided music for the house with a great record collection," he said. The kids were themselves members of a youth orchestra in Champaign, Illinois, so, when the Tammens children were deciding where to go for their bachelor's degrees, the most natural fit for two out of three was their parents' alma mater.

Katrina followed in her mother's footsteps in educational studies as well as flute, while Evan focused on oboe performance with a minor in English. Alison went to the University of Illinois.

Morris and Linda were thrilled with all of their kids' choices, but, with Katrina and Evan at IWU, they could relive everything that had changed and stayed the same since their own undergraduate years.

"It took me forever to get an A on a paper from Professor (Pamela) Muirhead, so I told Evan that it would be hard to get one when he took a class with her. Then he gets an A on his first paper. I was so mad," Linda said. Meanwhile Katrina lived on the same floor of the same dorm, Gulick Hall, that Linda had lived in for four years.

Katrina and Evan also were able to revisit their own experiences as children of alumni. One of Evan's earliest childhood memories is of chewing on the sleeves of his mom's IWU sweatshirt, and, although Evan was too little to remember, Linda recalls the time he was frightened out of the theater by an IWU performance of Jack and the Beanstalk while Katrina and Alison stayed to watch. But it wasn't all about early childhood for them.

"Katrina and I both had a lot of respect for Steve Eggelston," Illinois Wesleyan's long-time professor of music, Evan said, and the instruction

he received as a music student "made grad school seem easy." But what they both heard from their parents many times was how the humanities had prepared them for life, and that's the most valuable education they could receive from IWU.



"Idyllic" is the word all of the Tammens use to describe their life on the farm.

"It was quiet," Evan said, "It's an easy place to think."

"There were endless opportunities for adventure outside," Katrina remembered.

They were a close family with dogs, cats, pigs, goats, a new house to replace the one Morris's parents had bought (and that was demolished with "The Lark Ascending" playing from one of Morris's records as a bittersweet dirge) and a wide range for the kids to run around. But, as dear as the land is to the family, Morris and Linda were ready to retire, and the kids had other plans for their careers. The Tammens' time farming the land would have to end.

As most farmers find when they retire in such a way, selling their equipment leads to an influx of cash that needs to be reinvested. There were all kinds of options to consider, but they had already spent eight years imagining a brewery.

Evan had taken up small-batch craft brewing as a hobby along with Katrina's husband, Ryan Reber, and they had gotten pretty good at it.

"It's kind of like how every parent thinks their kid is beautiful. Every brewer thinks their beer is something special, but we were confident," Evan said. And, even if they were biased as well, Morris and Linda thought that Evan and Ryan were making drinks that were better

than anything they could get from the store.

They weren't sure they were ready to graduate from a home operation to a full-scale craft brewery, at least not before they retired themselves, but the Tammens parents had an entire warehouse and fleet of farm equipment that needed to be turned into something new, and a professional brewing business fit the bill, whether they were ready or not.

"It was jump-starting our dream," Katrina said.

So the Tammens started making plans to found Artesia Brewing in 2021, named after the well emerging from the center of the property. They turned the pig pen into an outdoor seating and performance venue with live music every weekend, remade a large shed (that still has one of Morris's childhood arrows lodged among the rafters) into an event space, planted an apple orchard, constructed a stack of beehives and built an indoor tasting room in one half of the warehouse to seat about 50 guests.

Filling the other half is a row of fermentation tanks brewing a tap full of original beverages —



**(Above)** Artesia's signature beer on tap is the Streaker, named for Morris's infamous motorcycle ride through IWU's campus.

strawberry cereal beer, German lager, smoked *rauchbier* and mead brewed with their own honey, among others — named with the occasional reference to the family's experience at Illinois Wesleyan. Most notably their original signature brew, the Streaker.

It's an endeavor to which the entire family contributes. Construction, remodeling, brewing, serving and even marketing have all been accomplished by Morris and Linda, their three children and their children-in-law. And they have all taken to it as naturals, even as it was one of the most difficult professional challenges they had faced.

"I told them that we needed to plan on dumping the first three or four batches down the drain, but we didn't," Linda said.

"I tasted the Streaker for the first time, and it was good, and I cried," Katrina said.

Every weekend their tasting room fills with visitors who get to hear the stories behind the beers while Morris's devil mask watches over the bar.

"A patron once told me that he travels to visit breweries, and ours is the only one he's been to where he liked everything on tap," Linda said.

Morris and Linda are proud and happy for what they have all accomplished together in the understated way that life on a Midwest farm will engender in people. And it helps that they never expected anything from their family aside from pursuing their dreams and being happy together.

With two generations of IWU graduates and a new business bringing the kids and grandchildren back to the farm, Artesia Brewing has already become a success that reinvents the Tammens family land for a new generation — a generation that might end up back at IWU too. ♦



# Alumni Update

NEWS, WORKS AND CELEBRATIONS OF IWU ALUMNI & FRIENDS

## 1967

**Robert Hendrick** retired in 2020 after working fifty-four years as an insurance salesman and part-time Spanish teacher. Bob now spends his time giving back, using his “personal ministry” to provide hot stew, books and clothes to those in need. He often collects and donates clothing he finds left behind at local dry cleaners.

## 1972

**Sandullah Epsicokhan** was featured in a WGLT article explaining the initial operation of the James Webb Space Telescope in July 2022. Sandullah studied mathematics at IWU and is a volunteer Solar System Ambassador for NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab.

## 1975

**Debra Burt-Frazier** was recently elevated to the tenure teaching track at Central State University — a historically Black college in Wilberforce, Ohio. The position is a full-time three-year contract teaching freshman academic writing and English literature classes in the College of Humanities. Debra studied English at IWU, earned her master's in English literature from Chicago State University and her doctorate in education from Argosy University. Currently, she is in her sixth year at Central State University.

## 1976

**Ann Stroink** has received the Mayo Clinic's Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes exceptional contributions to medical practice, research, education and administration. After receiving her medical degree from Southern Illinois University, Ann was a resident with Mayo Neurosurgical. Since then, she

has practiced as a neurosurgeon for over 30 years and is a co-founder of the Central Illinois Neuroscience Foundation. Ann studied biology at IWU where she also took voice lessons at Presser Hall.

## 1978

**Albert “A.G.” Webber** retired with **Carol Craig '79** in December 2020. A.G. practiced law for 20 years before beginning service as Macon County Circuit Court judge in 2001. A.G. is now of counsel at a law firm that includes **Carl Tenney '79**. A.G. and Carol divide their time between Central Illinois and Southern California. While returning from California in 2022, they stopped in Tucson, Arizona, to visit **John Heyl**, one of A.G.'s history professors at IWU.

## 1979

**Carol Craig** retired in December, 2020, with **A.G. Webber '78**, from her position as Senior Vice President of Town and Country Bank, Trust and Investment Services. Carol is a part-time administrative hearing officer for the City of Decatur while she and A.G. divide their time between Central Illinois and Southern California.

## 1980

**Stephen Ondra** was named chief medical advisor for MITRE's operation of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Alliance to Modernize Healthcare center in March 2022. In the new role, he will support United States Department of Health and Human Services organizations by providing thought leadership, guiding project teams and building partnerships within the private sector. A former senior health advisor in President Barack Obama's administration, Stephen played an important role in the development and implementation of health reform policies, including health information technology and the Affordable Care Act implementation. A member of Illinois Wesleyan's Board of Trustees, he was named IWU's Distinguished Alumni Award winner in 2008 and provided the keynote address at IWU's commencement ceremony in 2019.

## 1981

**Mark Allen** retired after 40 years as a public school band, choir, jazz band and general music teacher. He taught in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado, as well as three years in Central

Illinois. Allen switched from trumpet to saxophone during his junior year at IWU and now spends his weekends doing solo saxophone shows throughout the Four Corners area.

**Sandra Steingraber** delivered “Designing the Unfractured Future,” a lecture at The State University of New York College at Geneseo on October 5, 2022. The talk covered the challenges of fossil fuels and plastic products as the effects of climate change become dangerously evident. Sandra was previously a distinguished scholar in residence at Ithaca College. She is an environmental activist and renowned biologist featured in the 2017 documentary *Unfractured*.

## 1987

**Rick Bakewell** was named chief financial officer of Modern Campus, a leading engagement platform for higher education, in March 2022. Rick has 25 years of experience in the technology and services industries where he specializes in operational efficiency, financing and capital raising initiatives and mergers and acquisitions. Rick most recently served as chief financial officer at Benefit-express, a cloud-based benefits administration technology and human resources services provider.



Kevin Gerald '96

## 1989

**Jennifer (Scott) Seeling** recently accepted the position of ticket office & showroom manager with Wynn/Encore Las Vegas. In this role, she will oversee the Encore and Wynn Theaters. Jennifer helped coordinate the Wynn theater's renovations to prepare for a new fall 2022 Las Vegas Show. She manages shows featuring performers such as Boy George & Culture Club, Sebastian Maniscalco, Duran Duran, Lionel Richie, Steve Martin and Martin Short.

## 1990

**Mary (Sluiter) Narens** started a new job as director of business continuity and resilience at Abbott in April 2022. Mary majored in physics and minored in math at Illinois Wesleyan and was a member of the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority and Alpha Lambda Delta honors society. Since then, she has advanced her career through business management positions.

## 1991

**Gregg Murphy** retired in July 2022 from 10 years as the regional superintendent of schools for Iroquois and Kankakee counties and 30 years of a career in education. Greg intends to spend more time with his wife Jill as



Beth (Ribble) Duhon '99 (p. 29)

she approaches retirement from teaching as well.

## 1992

**Marla (Talbot) Maloney** was promoted to president of Americas services at Cushman & Wakefield where she has been an employee for more than 25 years and has served in other executive roles. Marla earned her BA in business administration from IWU and went on to receive an MBA from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

## 1993

**Julie Brown** was named senior vice president for human resources of WETA, the flagship public media station in Washington, D.C., in May 2022. Julie previously served as vice president for human resources for PBS Distribution and as president of JBH Consulting, a human resources consulting firm she founded in 2010.

## 1996

**Kevin Gerald** was appointed as director of bands at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign beginning fall semester 2022. He was previously director of instrumental ensembles and professor of conducting at the



Kyle Stern '01 (p. 30)

University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Kevin studied music education at IWU, and he has co-authored and contributed to multiple music textbooks for conductors used by students around the nation.

**Tricia (Dailey) Seifert** was appointed interim dean of Montana State University College of Education, Health and Human Development in May 2022. A professor and head of Montana State's Department of Education, Tricia began her new role in August 2022. She has taught at Montana State since 2014. She previously taught at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

## 1997

**Deon Hornsby** was promoted to the role of underwriting director in the Atlantic zone at AIG's Private Client Group. He will lead the underwriting, sales and distribution functions within the Southeast, where he will be responsible for the growth and profitability of the \$250-million region. He was also named to the board of directors for the Private Risk Management Association in May 2022, where he co-chairs the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Deon was previously an IWU Alumni Association trustee.

**Sarah (Anderson) Perry** was featured in the Piatt County Journal Republican in July 2022. The article details Sarah's new career as the Piatt County state's

In honor of **Lucy Shair '00** after her passing in 2021, a group of her friends created the Lucy Shair Foundation for Women in Finance. Lucy was a successful financial planning consultant who created her own firm in 2018 and was an advocate for women entering the field of finance. To continue her vision, the foundation will offer an annual \$5,000 grant to help women looking to break into finance by helping to cover startup and education expenses. Donations have so far raised over \$65,000 in 2021 alone, which will fund the grant for years to come. Applications for the year are closed, and the foundation will announce a winner of the first annual grant by the end of 2022.



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



My Fellow Titans,

As the season of giving ends, the Alumni Association Board of Directors and our Office of Alumni Engagement are thankful for the many alumni who engaged with our Alma Mater this past year by giving of your time, talent and treasure. Whether you celebrated at Homecoming, attended or streamed a Titan Talk or regional networking event, created internships, recruited prospective new students or employees, or donated to support scholarships and the Wesleyan Fund: we are grateful!

Last year, at the start of the giving season, the Many Hands Giving Challenge was created, providing a giving opportunity focused on first-time donors or donors who hadn't given a gift to the University in recent years. Thank you to the nearly one in four alumni donors who took advantage of this matching challenge! Many Hands do make for lighter work and better outcomes! Because of you, it was not only a success, but has also inspired me to create the "Young Alum at Heart" challenge. This year when a young alum (who graduated in the last 10 years) gives a gift of \$20 or more, it will be matched by \$20 until we reach \$20,000. And the matching amount will go toward creating annual giving scholarships for our students who have the greatest financial need.

As the new year begins, there will continue to be many ways to stay or become engaged with our beloved Alma Mater. Please save the date for a regional networking vent, All In for Wesleyan, or a game, match or performance near you!

Go Titans!

Dirk L. Behrends

Dirk Behrends '87  
President, Alumni Association  
Board of Directors



Connect with IWU Alumni Association on Social Media



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iwu.edu/alumni



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Illinois Wesleyan University  
Alumni and Students

2023 IWU Alumni Award Nominations Are Open!

Every year, Illinois Wesleyan University recognizes outstanding achievements of our alumni with the announcement of the Alumni Awards. The winners will be celebrated during Homecoming Weekend (October 6-8) at the Best of Illinois Wesleyan Awards Ceremony.

Please nominate your candidate(s) before  
March 1, 2023.  
Nomination forms available at:  
iwu.edu/alumni.



Save the Date: Titan Alumni and Friends Golf Outing Monday, May 15

Join fellow alumni and friends for a fun day of golf benefiting The Wesleyan Fund at Mistwood Golf Club in Romeoville, Illinois. Mistwood Golf Club was selected as Golf Magazine's "Renovation of the Year," one of Golf Digest's "Best New Courses," and one of Golf Range Magazine's "Top 50 Public Ranges." Registration opening soon.

TITAN ALUMNI & FRIENDS GOLF OUTING



Mistwood Golf Club  
Romeoville, Illinois

attorney — a position she was elected to in 2020. Sarah studied political science at Illinois Wesleyan and earned her law degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

1999

Beth (Ribble) Duhon presented her clinic "Self-Care for the Music Educator" for several different music organizations including the Texas Music Educators Association. Beth uses guided journaling to help musicians improve their mental health. While at Illinois Wesleyan, Beth was a music education major and the principal horn player for the Illinois Wesleyan wind ensemble and orchestra. She played for many other campus groups including Titan Band.



Rhonda (Pettaway) Ansier '01 and ran an English conversation school after she studied business management and Japanese studies at IWU.

2000

Sharon Chung successfully ran as a Democrat for Illinois' 91st House district, which includes McLean County, in the 2022 midterm election winning 52% of the vote. She will be Illinois' first Korean-American legislator and the first Democrat to represent Bloomington-Normal in the Illinois House of Representatives since 1982.

Renee Davidson has been added to the Monticello High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Renee was a multi-talented high school athlete earning 10 varsity letters among track & field, basketball and volleyball. At IWU she played a guard position during the '97-'98 basketball season while earning her BA in sociology.

2001

Rhonda (Pettaway) Ansier graduated from Lewis University with a MSN-FNP degree and is currently practicing at Suburban Gynecology and Urogynecology in New Lenox, Illinois. Rhonda is also serving on the Naperville Park District Board of Commissioners after being elected in April 2021 to a four-year term.

Matt Glavin was named to a three-year term on the board of the Chicago-based Youth Guidance, an organization that provides social-emotional learning, counseling and educational support for students in the Chicago area. Matt brings his experience as a lawyer specializing in government relations, and having been director of the Illinois' Office of Business Development under Governor Pat Quinn, to help lead Youth Guidance as a board member.

Liz (Lewis) Bennett was named director of the Holston Business Development Center. Liz's new appointment comes after serving for six years as assistant director of the East Tennessee State University Innovation Lab. Before working in Hawkins County, Tennessee, she lived in Japan for 12 years where she owned

Michael Pulia was named a fellow by the Infectious Diseases Society of America, among the highest honors in the field of infectious diseases for which Michael was nominated by his peers in the field. Michael, who studied chemistry and political science at IWU, is now an assistant professor of emergency



medicine and director of Emergency Medicine Antimicrobial Stewardship and the Emergency Care for Infectious Diseases Research Program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

**Shawn Schadle** was sworn in as chief of the Belvidere (Ill.) Fire Department on May 16, 2022. Shawn started his career at the Belvidere Fire Department in 2006, rising through the ranks of lieutenant and captain before his promotion to chief. He is the 15th chief in the department's 136-year history.

**Kyle Stern** was named president of West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571 in Westmont, Illinois and a Vice President of the Illinois Federation of Teachers in June 2022. Local 571 is part of the Illinois Federation of Teachers and represents over 6,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, personnel and retirees in western Cook and DuPage counties. Having transferred to IWU from the University of Notre Dame, Kyle majored in math and minored in education and worked on campus as a basketball manager. He has taught math at Argo Community High School in Summit, Illinois for 22 years where he was an assistant basketball coach for four years.

## 2003

**Sara Ingram** joined law firm Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease

LLP as a partner and member of its litigation group in February 2022. Sara's clients have included industrial product manufacturers, consumer product manufacturers, premises owners and clients in the transportation industries. Since 2015, Sara was named to Law Bulletin Publishing Company's list of Illinois Emerging Lawyers.

**Katie (Wachtel) Kikos** was named assistant principal at M.J. Cunningham Elementary School in Joliet, Illinois where she has served in the local District 86 for eight years. Katie has worked in education for 19 years after receiving her BA in educational studies. She also received master's degrees from Walden University and American College of Education.

**Sara Rodriguez** successfully ran as a Democrat for Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin in the November 2022 midterm election with incumbent Governor Tony Evers. Sara and Governor Evers won with 51% of the vote. She will replace defeated Wisconsin senatorial candidate Mandela Barnes as lieutenant governor.

**Andrew Schneider** was the choreographer of *»remains«*, which was commissioned by Sasha Waltz & Guests and premiered on March 12, 2020, at Radialsystem in Berlin. The show

was only performed once before Berlin theaters were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic but was remounted in August 2021 and March 2022. Based in Brooklyn, New York, Andrew is an award-winning performer, writer and interactive-electronics artist creating original works for theater, dance, sound, video and installation.

## 2004

**Emilie (Klumsmeier) O'Connor** was appointed director of student success for the Wauwatosa (Wis.) School District in May 2022. Emilie brings more than 18 years of experience to the district and will serve in its division of Pupil and Family Services. She previously served the district from 2008-13 as a social worker and positive behavioral interventions and support coach. She was later a program support coordinator in Hamilton (Wis.) School District and, most recently, a technical assistance coordinator at the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center.

## 2005

**Colleen Lawless** was nominated to the Central District of Illinois federal judiciary seat by President Joe Biden. Colleen was one of three candidates recommended by Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, and she is currently awaiting confir-

mation by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Since 2019, Colleen has served as associate judge for the Seventh Judicial Circuit in Sangamon County, Illinois.

**Rachel (Price) Cooper** was appointed assistant professor of theatre at the University of Southern Maine (USM) after recently earning her doctorate in theater from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Before joining USM, Rachel was a visiting assistant professor of theatre history and criticism at Northern Illinois University. She also taught courses at Parkland Community College in Champaign, Illinois.

## 2006

**Debo Olaosebikan** was appointed by the US Department of Commerce to the Industrial Advisory Committee. The committee will advise the Secretary of Commerce on implementing the CHIPS Act of 2022, which invests in the nation's microelectronics industry. The committee is made of national leaders in microelectronics. Debo studied physics at Illinois Wesleyan and went on to found Gigster, a hiring service for developing tech products, out of San Francisco.

## 2008

**Jennifer (Schnupp) Brummet** was named to Association Forum's 40 under 40 in recognition of her work as a non-profit professional, and Jennifer joined the Chicago Council on Science and Technology Auxiliary Board, where she will help the Council facilitate social outreach advocating for science and technology's contributions to the world. Jennifer studied psychology at IWU where she was an honors research student and member of the flute choir, before earning her doctorate in behavioral neuroscience from Michigan State University. Her professional career has been focused on managing grant funding and



Natalie Cummings '10

professional development for researchers studying epilepsy.

**Anne Kopf** and her architectural firm, Quinn Evans, won four awards from the American Institute of Architects' Northern Virginia, Virginia and Maryland chapters and the DC Preservation League. This follows Anne's promotion to Associate this summer. The reveal of her firm's winning submission, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Hall Restoration, can be viewed on the DAR's YouTube channel.

**Caitlin (Ludwig) Pusateri** was named president of the Rockford (Ill.) Chamber of Commerce in April 2022. She previously served as the organization's executive vice president. She also sits on the boards for the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and the Discovery Center Museum. At

Illinois Wesleyan, Caitlin studied business administration and vocal performance.

**Andrew Tharp** was profiled in an article in *The Pantagraph* as a nurse practitioner at OSF Healthcare in Bloomington, Illinois. The profile was in honor of National Nurses Week during May 2022. Andrew has served patients at OSF Healthcare since 2012 and is an instructional assistant professor at Illinois State University.

## 2009

**Caroline Leighton** graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in May 2022 with a master of education in curriculum & instruction focused on mathematics, science and engineering education. Caroline was also inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi honors society. She is currently teaching mathematics at Urbana High School, where she began her career after



Vicki Simmons '12 (p. 32)

completing her undergraduate degree at Illinois Wesleyan, and where she is becoming a local education leader.

## 2010

**Natalie Cummings** graduated in May 2022 from the University of Texas at Austin with a DMA in vocal performance and pedagogy. She also won the Joan Frey Boytim award for independent teachers from the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Natalie majored in vocal performance at Illinois Wesleyan, including studying abroad in Vienna, Austria, where she performed in the IES Vienna Music Performance Workshop.

**Britnee (Ruscitti) Kenyon** is a finalist for the 2022 Golden

Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. Britnee came to teaching after interning with a Chicago director and has been the theater director at Deerfield (Ill.) High School since 2019 after previous teaching roles at Rolling Meadows and Maine West high schools in Illinois. Britnee has also served as a secondary school theater representative for the Illinois Theatre Association.

**Laura Spradlin** accepted a position as the electronic resources & systems librarian at The Ames Library at Illinois Wesleyan. After graduating from IWU, Laura received her master's degree in library and information science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to joining The Ames Library,



Rachel (Price) Cooper '05



Jennifer (Schnupp) Brummet '08



Caroline Leighton '09



## 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](mailto:ccenter@iwu.edu) or (309) 556-3095. Here's how others are getting involved.

### Internship & Job Fair

**Emma Helferich '22, Vi Kakares '20, Ashley Mohr '22, Skylar LeVine '20, Dana Peterson '06, Sue Seibring '82, Tom Kirn '09, Joe Alberts '20, Gia Joyce '21, Coln Cheaney '21, Chris Sawicki '20, Amanda ReCupido '07, Allison Ward '10, Emmett Zima '21, Aaron Simon '20, Juan Bahena '20, Jack Nelson '20, Jordan Baker '21, Joel Castillo '01, Ryan Bull '22, Lesley Ortega '22, Joey Kiper '22, Katie Vogler '22, John Slomba '19, Winona Asher '21, Will Teichman '19 and Andrea Mehrkens '21**

### Careers with the Department of State

**Sean Hantak '98**

### Careers in Investment Banking

**Nick Huskisson '17 and Cole Paraday '22**

### Careers with PwC & BDO

**Rod Adams '95, Jill Jackson '04, Ryan Swift '20, Maddie Gard '17, Halee Stirrat '20, Juan Bahena '20, Aaron Simon '20 and Jack Nelson '20**

### Careers in Law Panel

**Andrew Herrington-Gilmore '08, David Saxe '93, Sara Ghadiri '11, Preslav Mantchev '17 and Rachel Shaffer '17**

### NexSTEM Panel

**Russell Smith '04, Evan Dill '18, Sean Mullins '06, Vanessa Macias '14 and Blair Wright '15**

### Careers in Consulting Panel

**Samantha Dietz '05, Jennifer Ittner '99, Don Tomes '17, Matt Hill '12 and Eunis Wu '12**

### Nursing Career Fair

**Heather Miller '07, Toni Tortorella '21, Nicole LaPapa '21 and Ken Kritikos '14**

### Careers in Government & Politics

**Matt Glavin '01**

### Careers in Technology Panel

**Dan George '09, Moyo Ajayi '16, Maisha Rahman '20, Naing Tun '20 and Hy Nguyen '16**

### Careers with RSM

**Eric Bennes '21, Matt Hill '12, Bradley Goldasich '21, Haley Rojek '20 and Evan Anderson '20**

### STEM Career Night

**Chris Racelis, John Van Fleet '04, Dino Karas '17, Shawn Perrone '00, Doug Dewey, Jason Richards '96 and Brad Janes '09**

### Pre-Health Programming

**Dr. Roger Sheldon '64 and Dr. Carol Sheldon '65**

### Additional Programming

**Paul Guercio '99, PJ Cummings '12, Matt Hill '12, Scott Searles '95, David Rasho '01, Eric Bennes '21, Bradley Goldasich '21, Haley Rojek '20, Evan Anderson '20 and Jason Gregoire '19**

Laura held positions at public libraries, the University of Illinois and Illinois State University.

## 2012

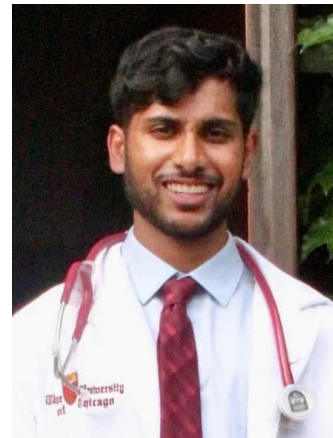
**Ronald Fowle-Grider** graduated from Washington University School of Medicine with a doctorate in metabolism and bio-analytical chemistry on Dec. 11, 2021. Ronald is originally from East Peoria, Illinois, and graduated with honors from Illinois Wesleyan with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He resides in St. Louis, Missouri, where he is employed by the Washington University Graduate School of Medicine Laboratories.

**Natalie Lalagos**, a Spanish teacher at Kealakehe High School in Kailua, Hawaii, was a recipient of the Hawaii Association of Language Teachers Excellence in Teaching Award in 2021. The organization typically recognizes two world language teachers each year. The award is sponsored by the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*.

**Erika (Olsen) Ohlendorf** was named to The Illinois Nurses Foundation's 40 under 40 Emerging Nurse Leaders awards list. Erika is currently the Magnet Program Manager at Riverside Healthcare in Kankakee, Illinois.

**Vicki Simmons** graduated in June 2022 from her residency in general surgery at Ascension St. John in Detroit, Michigan. During the ceremony she was honored with the Anthony B. Chambers Award. Vicki will be continuing her training with a fellowship in vascular surgery at Michigan Vascular Center in Flint, Michigan.

**Shavantay Thomas** was among the 2022 graduates of the Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP) honored in a Facebook live event on April 2, 2022. Shavantay is a retention specialist in State Farm's Customer Care



Manish Pathuri '22

Center. MCLP is the flagship program of the Multicultural Leadership Institute, a nonprofit located on Illinois Wesleyan's campus and recognized among the university's affiliate programs.

## 2013

**Chris Francis** accepted a position as the editor of the Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine in September 2022. Previously, he was an editor in the publishing industry working freelance and at Sourcebooks. He has acquired and developed titles like University of Illinois Professor Bill Hammack's upcoming book *The Things We Make*. At IWU, Chris was an English literature major and religion minor, Editor-in-Chief of *The Argus* and a writing center tutor.

**Elizabeth Johnson** was named to The Illinois Nurses Foundation's 40 under 40 Emerging Nurse Leaders awards list. Elizabeth is currently a pediatric intensive care registered nurse at Advocate Children's Hospital in Oak Lawn, Illinois.

**Anthony Kopp** was named head varsity football coach of the Highland Park High School Giants, where he had been a Giant quarterback himself in high school. This promotion came after serving as an assistant coach with the Giants since 2013. With the Titans, Anthony played

**Brittany Murphy '20, Samantha Berghoff '20, and Lexy Trammell '21** ran the 2022 Chicago marathon and raised over \$6,000 for Girl Up, a young women's advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. All three were IWU softball players looking for new athletic activities after graduation, but the pandemic limited their options until running was the obvious choice. The Chicago Marathon became their new dream goal, so they chose a charity to support and began training. While at IWU, Brittany studied health promotion and fitness management and was an executive board member for IWU's Global Medical Brigades chapter, Samantha majored in international studies and Hispanic studies and interned with the Immigration Project and Lexy Trammell studied biology and was an IWU women's scholarship awardee.



football for two years and baseball for four.

**Whitney Leifheit** ran the seminar "Immigrants Really Do Get the Job Done" for the McLean County Chamber of Commerce on behalf of her law firm, Costigan & Wollrab. The presentation explained how immigration is an important source of workers looking to fill open positions in general and especially those that have gone vacant since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Whitney's firm offers employment law services to clients.

**Liz Wimmer** created and launched the Illinois Green Schools Project in 2020 as an initiative with the Illinois Green Alliance, for whom Liz was a program manager until recently starting a new position as a Sustainability Specialist for the City of Naperville. The Green Schools Project organizes year-long projects for elementary, middle and high school students, teachers and staff to implement no-cost or low-cost sustainable practices. For the 2022-2023 school year, 40 schools across Illinois signed up to join the program.

## 2016

**David Flowers** produced Sarah Kirkland Snider's "Mass for the Endangered" performed by the Shift Orchestra and vocal ensemble Cappella Clausura

at the Emmanuel Church in Boston. The performance used a projector and Snider's arrangements styled after a Catholic mass as an ode to Earth and the natural world. It was reviewed favorably in the *Boston Globe*. David was a music composition major at IWU and is currently Assistant Professor at the Berklee College of Music.

## 2017

**Preslav Mantchev** joined the Chicago office of the Financial Services & Securities Litigation Practice Group at Ulmer & Berne LLP in October 2022. Since graduating IWU with honors and a degree in international studies and political science, Preslav earned his J.D. with honors from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he was admissions editor of *The Elder Law Journal*, and has gained experience as a business litigator in federal and state cases.

## 2019

**Chase Bandalik** opened his own training center in Northbrook, Illinois. Chase Bandalik Training offers both in-person and online training sessions with fully customized training programs to help clients reach their goals. Chase was profiled in a story in the Arlington Heights (Ill.) *Daily Herald* in March 2022.

## 2020

**Jordan Baker** announced that he is running for a position representing Ward 6 on the Bloomington (Ill.) City Council. Jordan studied Political Science at Illinois Wesleyan where he was a student of former Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner. He is currently an aid to Republican State Senator Jason Barickman. The election will be held April 4, 2023.

## 2022

**Manish Pathuri** was accepted into the Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago. He earned his admission to medical school at the same time that the Journal of Visualized Experiments accepted and published his paper, written with Associate Professor of Biology Tyler Schwend, studying the healing of eye wounds during development. Manish was a biology major and religion minor who helped found the Biology Club and Students of Color in STEM, and he was a member of the South Asian Student Association. He intends to use his medical degree to address global health issues and disparities.

**Valeria Viteri-Pflucker** wrote the article "What's a Physicist?" for the website of the National Institute of Science & Technology's (NIST) *Taking Measure* blog. The article shares Valeria's



# Titan Celebrations

**IWU Magazine** considers for publication photos of IWU people at celebrations and reunions of alumni. Please send your Titan Celebration photos to *IWU Magazine* at [www.iwu.edu/magazine](http://www.iwu.edu/magazine), via email at [iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu) or by mail at P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, IL 61702.

All submitted content received by **October 17, 2022**. The submitted content deadline for the Spring 2023 issue of *IWU Magazine* is **February 13, 2023**.



(Above) Kate (Ford) Tun '15 married Ayethaw Tun '15 on August 6, 2022.



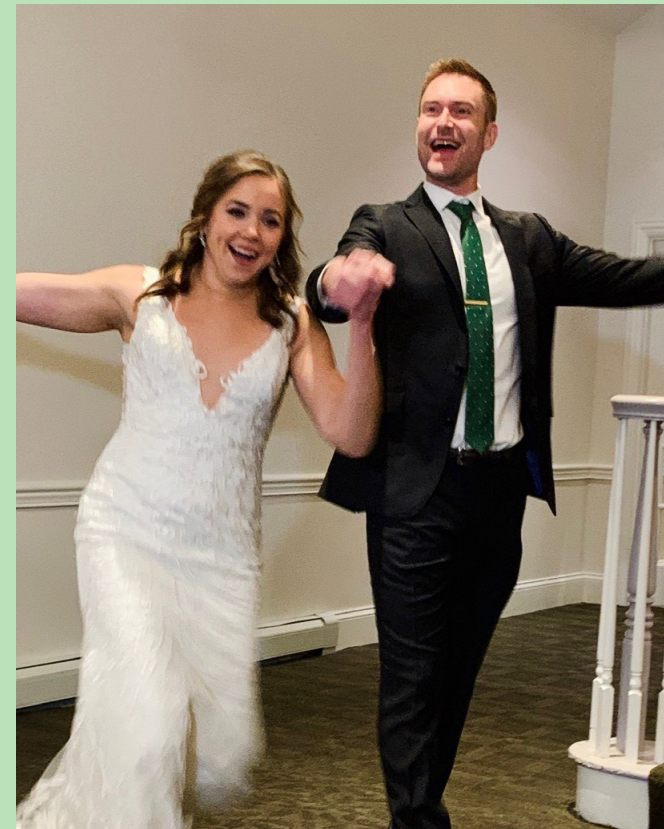
(Above) Illinois Wesleyan alums (left to right) Brenda (Maurer) Dannewitz '77, Jennifer Klafeta '88, Andrew Johnson '20, Elizabeth Williams '20 and Lou Ann Fillingham '78 gathered as members of the Delta Omicron Sigma chapter at the Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, for which Andrew was the conference's Official Accompanist, in July 2022.



(Above) A group of former International House housemates who have occasional reunions got together in Washington, DC, this September to celebrate a daughter starting college in the city. (Left to right) Moaz Rab '91, Hussain Hasan '91, Aziz Shafi '91, Kanwer Dhani '90, Omar Sadeque '92, Zia Rahman and Todd Strong '91.



(Above) Shaun Schaefer '16 married Natalie (Hojjer) Schaefer '15 on July 16, 2022 with family and friends, including several alumni, at the wedding reception.



(Above) Stephanie (Manikas) Worley married John Worley '14 on December 11, 2021 in Lemont, Illinois.



(Above) Grant Ehrhart '18 married Kellie Bender on June 4, 2022 with many alumni from the Phi Gamma Delta Alpha Deuteron chapter in attendance and in the wedding party. Back row (left to right) Jack Moroni '19, Anthony Baik '19, Kyle Murray '19, Gates Ehrhart '19, Kyle Cook '19, Matthew Bomba '19 and Luke Cipich '19. Front row (left to right) Jordan Eldridge '18, Sam Soto '20, Trey Ehrhart '21 and Pat Robertson '19.

experience as a student intern with NIST during summer 2022 where she did original research studying the physics of light. At IWU, Valeria majored in physics with minors in math, religion

and history and was a musician with the wind ensemble, Titan Band and opera pit. She is now working toward her doctorate in optics at the University of Rochester.

## Tiny Titans

**David Zohfeld '04** and Vanessa Ramirez; Emma Zohfeld, born September 2, 2022

**Carissa Nemmers '09** and Maurits Olsson; Etta Ann, born April 6, 2022

**Margaret Kane '09** and Patrick LaClair; Juniper Mae LaClair-Kane, born July 3, 2022

**Trevor '17** and **Maddison (Zimmer) Seibring '17**; Bennett Scott Seibring, born May 2022

**Ewelina (Wojnarowski) Miskiewicz '10** and Jacob; Kaya Miskiewicz, born recently

**Pat Domke '15** and Britt Cooper; Remi Louise Domke, July 4, 2022

**Natalie Cummings '10** and Austin Bradley; Andrew Graham Bradley, born April 30, 2022

**Emilee (Monken) Lieser '18** and Erich; Jack Thomas Lieser, born July 6, 2022

**Laura (Woodsmall) Hardisty '14** and Huntington; Judah Everett Hardisty, born April 8, 2022

**Vicki Simmons '12** and Matt Garrity; Declan Francis Garrity, born August 12, 2021

**Carolyn (Franz) Berger '05** and Joel; Casey James (Berger?), born July 19, 2022

**Tony Gray '98** and Barbara Borst; Caleb James Borst Gray, born July 24, 2022

**Greg Goeden '15** and **Erica Messerschmidt '14**; Miles Goeden, born March 25, 2022

**Katie (McCann) Carlson '10** and Alex; August Thomas Carlson, born April 2, 2022

**Zach '13** and **Alex (Bechtel) Johnson '14**; Archer Owen Johnson, born June 15, 2022



All submitted content received by **October 17, 2022**.  
The submitted content deadline for the Spring 2023 issue of *IWU Magazine* is **February 13, 2023**. All submitted content may be edited, directed to other communications and/or preserved in IWU archives.



## Faculty, Staff and Friends

**Emma Elizabeth (Strain) Stewart** died July 1, 2022. She was 101. Emma was a music teacher at Illinois Wesleyan for four years before marrying her husband with whom she had three daughters. In 1973, Emma was the creator, teacher and conductor of the first orchestra in the Warrensburg (Ill.) public school system. She is survived by her three daughters, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

**Joan Trego Edgren** died Aug. 1, 2022. She was 89. Joan was the house mom for Sigma Alpha Iota at Illinois Wesleyan for 20 years, known as an excellent cook and seamstress. Joan was a graduate of the University of Iowa who worked as a journalist before marrying. She was also a Peace Corp volunteer and recruiter who was a local political activist. She is survived by two children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Everetta J. “Polly” Boehme** died May 15, 2022. She was 87. Polly began her musical career singing in the “Boehme Trio” family band that toured around the Midwest. She received piano lessons from Professor R. Bedford Watkins at Illinois Wesleyan, and she returned to create a Student Recital Series at Illinois Wesleyan and Bradley University. She also served on the board of the Peoria Youth Symphony in the 70s and served as a church pianist and organist. She is survived by three children, nine grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

**Grant Shoffstall** died June 8, 2022. He was 44. Grant was a visiting professor of sociology at IWU during the spring of 2012. He was a world expert on cryonic suspension and the sociology of science who went on to join the sociology department at Rowan University. His last article discussed the boundaries between science and religion and the way that modern society makes religions out of technology. He is survived by his wife, child, mother and grandmother.

## Alumni

**George Richard “Dick” Hewitt ’45** died April 15, 2020. He was 97. Dick was a veteran of World War II and a member of the famous 101st Airborne Division. He was a pianist who originally majored in music at Illinois Wesleyan before he enlisted in the army. Dick fought in the D-Day invasion, joined the battle to liberate the Netherlands and defended the Bastogne in the Battle of the Bulge. After Christmas 1945, Dick returned to Illinois to complete his bachelor’s at Northwestern University. He is survived by three children and six grandchildren.

**Robert “Bob” Levine ’48** died June 21, 2022. Bob was an accomplished surgeon who received his degree from the University of Chicago and served as a flight surgeon for the United States Air Force. Bob and his wife, Margy, moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he became a partner at a surgical practice where he was part of Western Michigan’s kidney transplant program. In retirement, he became an advocate for senior healthcare and a single-payer healthcare system.

**Muriel J. Dawson ’48** died July 29, 2022. She was 96. Muriel was a proofreader and editor for the *Fairbury Blade*, an avid camper with her husband and an enthusiastic Cubs fan. She was also known for knitting sweaters and Christmas stockings for friends and family. She is survived by five children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

**Margaret Loretta Kaczmarek ’48** died August 2, 2022. She was 96. Margaret was a member of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority and an

# In Memory

**Lynn Owen Nicholson** died July 31, 2022. He was 82. Having become an Eagle Scout at 13 years old and winning the 1957 Purdue University science fair, Lynn was nothing if not diligent. He first came to Illinois Wesleyan in 1962 as the assistant dean of students. A year later, President Lloyd Bertholf convinced Lynn to leave his position as assistant dean to create the Office of Financial Aid, serving as its first director. He started with one small office and no staff on the second floor of the newly constructed Holmes Hall. A joke in the family says that, on his first day, he had to walk over to the dean’s office to borrow paper and pencils before getting started on understanding the student body’s financial needs. Originally, Lynn had planned to complete his doctorate and explore a scholarly path in higher education, but President Bertholf persuaded him to stay within Illinois Wesleyan’s administration where he could make the fledgling financial aid office thrive.



Lynn was dedicated to his role supporting students whose potential need not be undermined by financial struggles or life-altering events. He created grants and scholarships as well as employment opportunities for students who needed work, including in the Office of Financial Aid itself or even babysitting his children. His knowledge and passion were known throughout higher education, with his advice informing the College Board and other national and regional organizations on implementing student financial aid. Lynn was also technically savvy, initiating his office’s transition to computers in the 80s. He used his know-how to develop a computerized model that could predict the university’s financial aid grant needs. His attention to detail and way with numbers paid off as the Office of Financial Aid never missed a budget while he was director. Lynn’s dedication to Illinois Wesleyan lasted throughout and beyond his 47-year career. He is well known and loved by generations of students who had a chance to study at Illinois Wesleyan thanks to his work. In 2007 he received the Max L. Starkey Service Award for his extraordinary service to Illinois Wesleyan University. When asked how he wanted to be remembered, Lynn said, “I want to be remembered as someone who always tried to do his best. I value my straight-forwardness and integrity. I value my personal and professional relationships a great deal. I want to be remembered as someone who cared about, and wanted to make things possible for, other people.” Lynn is survived by his wife, three children, three step children and three grandchildren.

English major at Illinois Wesleyan who went on to become the Head of Admissions at the University of Illinois Chicago for 20 years. She was also president of the Hinsdale Women’s Club and a regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She played bridge and danced weekly and traveled extensively in retirement. She is survived by a brother, three nephews and five grand-nieces.

**Jack Moore ’49** died June 17, 2022. He was 94. Jack was a Phi Gamma Delta who excelled as a traveling salesman for hardware companies, driving over one million miles between the United States and Canada. Jack was an award-winning Rotary club member and became his local Club President in 1968. He enjoyed photography, sailing, cars and “just about anything that lights up or moves.” He is survived by his wife, Lyddie, four children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

**Phyllis (Hancock) Gehrt ’49** died July 16, 2022. Phyllis was a lifelong pianist, beginning in childhood, continuing through her major in piano and minor in organ at Illinois Wesleyan and throughout her life as a church organist and accompanist for her church’s children’s choir. She married her college sweetheart, **Dan Gehrt ’48**. She is survived by three daughters, six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

**Richard Van Scyoc ’49** died Aug. 5, 2022. He was 98. Known as “Coach” and “Lefty,” Richard was an avid athlete, earning varsity letters in three sports at Eureka High School. He volunteered to fight in World War II directly out of high school. He returned in 1945 to begin his college career at Illinois Wesleyan where he became a star left-handed pitcher on the baseball team. He became an accomplished high school basketball coach with 826 wins throughout his career. He is survived by four children, seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

**Jeanette Marguerite (Weaver) Stevens ’50** died July 2, 2022. She was 93. Jeanette was a daughter of Lincoln, Illinois, who attended Lincoln College before graduating from Illinois Wesleyan University. She lived and worked in Springfield after graduation.

**Mary (Gooding) Mercier ’50** died Aug. 6, 2022. She was 94. Mary was a descendant of Mayflower colonists, a Kankakee native and a Sigma Kappa at Illinois Wesleyan. She became a floral designer and a volunteer at Brokaw Hospital helping to run their gift shop. She loved crafting and nature, and she had received grants to restore prairies and wetlands around her rural home. She planted over 500 trees. She is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

**Clarene (Makison) McCaughey ’50** died Aug. 6, 2022. She was 94. Clarene was a passionate community member joining Kappa Delta at Illinois Wesleyan, the Cullom American Legion Auxiliary, the Pontiac Elks Lodge and the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. She taught for 28 years. She loved traveling the world and the Cubs, and she had a waiting list for her chocolate chip cookies. She is survived by a daughter and three grandchildren.

**Elizabeth Anne “Betty” (Bowers) Geib ’52** died June 19, 2022. She was 92. Betty earned her graduate degree from Washington University to become a social worker in the school and adoption systems. After finishing school, she married her husband, Rev. Eric Geib, to whom she was married for 47 years. She volunteered at the church where her husband was rector and became an avid bird watcher. She is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

**Rhea Fae Truxell Kerkera ’54** died February 22, 2021. She was 91. Rhea was a lifelong volunteer, for which she won several awards, and a paraprofessional with the Boy Scouts of America providing assistance to scouts with disabilities. She is survived by two children.

**James R. Howell ’55** died Sept. 10, 2022. He was 90. Jim met and married his late wife, **Carlene (Raymond) Howell ’56**, at Illinois Wesleyan. He became the owner of a windshield and glass repair business and remarried in 2015 to his wife Susan. Jim was a lover of sports and played golf himself while not rooting for the Packers and Brewers. He is survived by his wife, five children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Roger Hulett ’56** died July 10, 2022. He was 87. After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan with a bachelor of science degree, he became an accountant for General Electric and married his wife, Nancy. Roger was an active community member joining Sigma Chi, the Masons and the Sons of the American Revolution. He enjoyed playing music, golfing and reading. He is survived by three children and two grandchildren.

**Jack K. Stephens ’57** died July 11, 2022. He was 91. Jack grew up in Normal, Illinois, before attending Illinois Wesleyan to study music education, where he met and married his wife of 60 years, **Joy (Fairchild) Stephens ’62**. He earned a master’s degree in music and an associate degree in electronics, both of which he used as he worked many jobs between education and maintenance, including establishing the Bio-Medical Department at Galesburg Cottage Hospital. Joy passed away the day after Jack on July 12, 2022. He is survived by two children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

**Joyce (Lego) Finkler ’60** died July 21, 2022. She was 85. Joyce was the first of her family to graduate college when she finished her undergraduate degree in Spanish and French at Illinois Wesleyan. There she met her husband, **Robert Finkler ’59**. Joyce was a skilled gardener tending to her home of 55 years, and she was known to read at least three books at a time. Joyce is survived by her husband, a child and three grandchildren.

**Charles “Chuck” William Southard, Sr. ’60** died April 14, 2022. He was 95. Chuck received his master’s in music education from Illinois Wesleyan and became a teacher at Morris Community High School where he met his wife, Dorothy. Chuck spent most of his career working in the Redding (Calif.) high school system. He served the community after retirement by directing his church’s choir and volunteering with many other local organizations. He is survived by two children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Suzanne (Gilbert) Coons ’61** died Sept. 12, 2022. She was 83. Suzanne was the daughter of two newspaper publishers who came to Illinois Wesleyan to study Spanish, where she met her husband, **Ronnie Coons ’59**. She earned her master’s degree from Illinois State University before creating the foreign language department at Minonk-Dana-Rutland High School, now Fieldcrest High School, where she taught for 26 years. In her retirement, she was executive director of the Illinois Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages and served on the board of Cunningham Children’s Home in Urbana, Illinois. She is survived by her husband, two children, seven grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

**Roger Cunningham ’62** died June 21, 2022. He was 81. Roger used his study of music at Illinois Wesleyan to play trombone for the United States Army Band as well as the Peoria Symphony Orchestra and the Peoria Municipal Band. He was an active volunteer at his Unitarian Universalist church where he was a choir singer and managed the baseball team. He also studied Mandarin in his later years.



**Kenneth G. Kling '62** died July 26, 2021. He was 81. Ken studied music at Illinois Wesleyan to become a string bassist in several orchestras and bands as well as a school band director and counselor. He was an enthusiastic home cook and music aficionado who enjoyed a martini at the end of the day. He is survived by his wife, two children, two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

**Joy (Fairchild) Stephens '62** died July 12, 2022. She was 80. Joy studied music at Illinois Wesleyan, where she met and married her husband of 60 years, **Jack Stephens '57**. Joy was a lifelong learner, going back to school in the 80s to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting and again in the 2000s to get her MBA. She used her degrees to work as a bookkeeper, auditor and vice president at different banks. Jack passed away the day before Joy on July 11, 2022. She is survived by two children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

**Stephen Barry '63** died June 30, 2022. He was 81. Stephen was a carpet salesman working between the Carson Pirie & Scott Department Store and Lakeshore Carpet Co. in Highwood, Illinois. His main hobby was to collect antiques and other interesting items from around the Northshore area. He is survived by two children and three grandchildren.

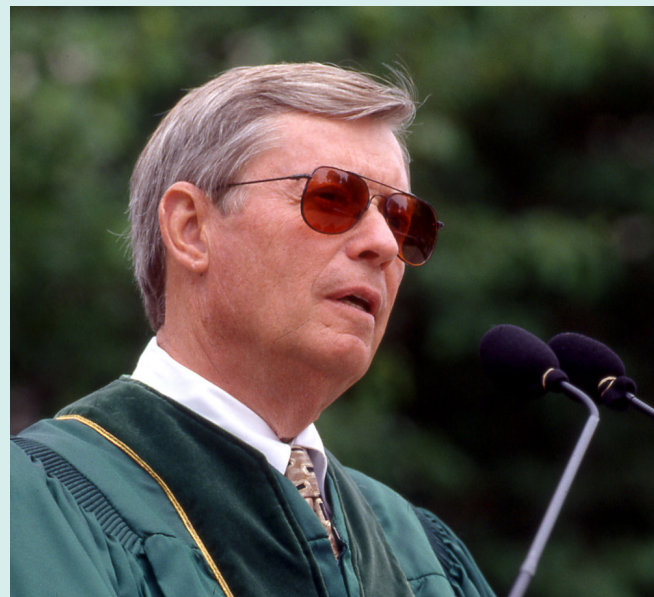
**Susan (Hoad) Walldren '63** died Aug. 29, 2022. She was 81. Susan was the owner of a Merle Norman Studio in Uptown Park Ridge for 28 years. She was a compelling socialite who loved mysteries, gardening, crosswords, Swarovski crystal and decoration. She was a proud descendant of Irish immigrants. She is survived by two children and three grandchildren.

**Terry Smith '67** died June 4, 2022. He was 77. After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan, Terry enlisted in the military to fight in the Vietnam War. He returned to earn a master's degree in urban planning and began his career in government where he met his wife, Susan. Terry was a Mason and Shriner and a member of the Harvard American Legion, Post 265. He is survived by his wife.

**Sharon (Kennell) Wright '67** died June 26, 2022. She was 81. Sharon was a teacher for more than 35 years who earned her master's degree in music from Illinois Wesleyan. She was an accompanist for weddings, funerals and musicals. She is survived by her husband, two children and three grandchildren.

**Robert "Bob" Hageman '67** died Aug. 6, 2022. He was 77. Bob was a member of Phi Gamma Delta at Illinois Wesleyan before being drafted into the Vietnam War where he joined the famous 101st Airborne Division. Bob was awarded three Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart and two Air Medals for his service. Bob enjoyed fishing and wrote a history of his family. He is survived by his wife, a child and six grandchildren.

**Ralph Searles '68** died December 12, 2021. He was 76. Ralph studied music with a trumpet emphasis and was a member of the Phi Mu Alpha fraternity. His passion was serving music educators while representing Trestman's Music and Al's Music. Following his music career, he drove school buses for St. Cloud District 742. Ralph loved developing relationships with students, young and old. He was an active volunteer in Kiwanis, United Arts, Boy Scouts, Chamber Connection and his church. He loved spending time with his wife, Barb, and son. His passions were gardening, fishing, genealogy and playing cribbage. He is survived by his wife and child.



**Craig Crowl Hart**  
Jan. 11, 1934 - Aug. 27, 2022

#### **Richard Wilson, former President of Illinois Wesleyan University**

As we travel through life, we all cherish those occasions when we have contact with someone who embodies a set of values and personal characteristics that we admire: honesty, integrity, fairness, thoughtfulness, creativity, determination and caring. For me Craig Hart was that kind of person.

Craig served on the Board of Trustees for 26 years, with 11 years as its president, and in that role was the person with whom Pat and I had frequent contact during the interview process in 2004. I quickly realized that he was someone I wanted to know better, but he impressed me sufficiently that I accepted the offer with a handshake. You only do that with someone you trust.

Craig told me at the outset that he would remain as President of the Board of Trustees for my first year but felt it was time for a new person to be selected for that position. However, his loyalty to IWU and his desire to help me be successful never waned. When I faced what seemed to be an insurmountable problem, I would seek Craig's advice because of his leadership experience and the fact that I knew he had no motive except to help the University and me be successful. He cared.

Craig made a difference in our lives and in the health and vitality of this community. We celebrate his professional accomplishments, his distinctive service to Illinois Wesleyan and other organizations in Bloomington-Normal, his entrepreneurial spirit, his engaging personality and his commitment to his friends and family. For all of these reasons and more, I feel privileged that Craig Hart has been part of my life for the last 18 years.

#### **Steven J. Wannemacher '73**

Forty-six years ago I received a call that a fellow named Craig Hart wanted to see me about a job. For the next three Saturday mornings I had conversations with Mr. Hart about me joining Bloomington Federal...his expectations and mine.

At those Saturday morning conversations, we talked about business for sure. But we also talked about values, fairness, the need to do the right thing and do the right thing the right way, the importance of serving the needs of a range of people and their finances and doing so without discrimination of any sort.

The team benefited from mentoring by Mr. Hart and enjoyed the camaraderie that resulted. Throughout his career Craig was very skilled at identifying and acquiring talent, then motivating that talent to become a productive part of the team.

As time went on, Bloomington Federal was renamed Champion Federal and continued to prosper. Under Craig's vision and leadership, the modernization of the savings-and-loan business in Illinois was amazing.

In retirement, Craig found the time to devote his considerable entrepreneurial skills to Heritage Enterprises. A very active chairman, he met weekly with an executive committee of the board and was in frequent phone contact with senior management. Today Heritage has over 45 facilities across Illinois and employs over 3500 people. Craig was very proud of Heritage and his role in its success.

Much has been said about the elements of Craig Hart's life. His considerable skills, values and interests merged with his love of family and caring for others came together to make him the man he was. It was a life very well lived.



(Above left) Craig breaks ground for the Ames Library in 2003.



(Above right) Craig delivers an IWU homecoming dedication in 2001.

#### **Benjamin Hart**

Many people remember my father for his acumen as a local business leader, or his commitment to our community. However, something that should be known is that, for as good as he was as a business leader, he was an even better family man.

No matter how busy he was with work or other obligations, he always made time for his family. When we were young, he always showed up at our baseball games or other events, often times in a suit and tie, because he had just left the office. As we got older our dad enjoyed visiting us as we spread throughout the country, whether it be Bruce in Arizona, Brian in San Francisco or Ben in Colorado. Then, as we became working adults he made it a priority that we get together by taking trips together to do things like playing golf in Scotland, or the famous fishing trips in Manitoba, Canada.

As my dad grew older he relished spending time with his grandkids at their birthday parties or events. He particularly enjoyed hosting them at Lake Bloomington where they could enjoy the outdoors and have fun. Over the years, Grandpa Hart also became Entertainer-in-Chief for many grandkids and their friends. He taught them how to fish and waterski and even how to swim.

For those of us who are left behind, we will miss him dearly. But, we take comfort knowing that he loved his family and served as our patriarch. He lived life to the fullest, left no stones unturned and truly lived with no regrets.



(Above) Craig with his wife, Jane, and former IWU president Richard Wilson in 2015.





**Kay (Philipson) Kulfinski '69** died May 5, 2022. She was 86. Kay received her bachelor's in business administration from Illinois Wesleyan before earning a master's in education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She founded her own accounting firm, Kay Kulfinski CPA, in 1985, where she specialized in helping students manage their taxes. She was an active member of the Edwardsville community with her husband Frank. She loved music and travel and climbed the Acropolis in Athens at 78 years old. She is survived by three children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

**Kenneth Giek '69** died July 21, 2022. He was 74. Ken left his home state of New York to attend Illinois Wesleyan. For more than 30 years, Ken owned and ran the Burnett & White Funeral Homes, and he served in the New York State Air National Guard for five years. Ken was a devoted family man who spent over 50 years married to his wife, Karen, and he enjoyed traveling to visit extended family, parties and golf. He is survived by his wife, three children and seven grandchildren.

**Eleni "Lenna" Christine Stropoulos '71** died Feb. 14, 2018. Lenna was a talented and passionate singer. She studied opera at the Milan Opera House and became both a member and soloist in the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and she toured overseas to perform in European Opera House venues. She also loved playing piano on her Steinway grand.

**Tom Brokaw '71** died Aug. 10, 2022. He was 73. Tom came from a farming background and went on to be an agent for State Farm. He was an outdoorsman, handyman and community servant who loved farming, hunting, and teaching kids to fish. He also regularly competed in the standing long jump in the Special Olympics. He is survived by his wife, two children and one grandchild.

**Bruce McClaren '73** died May 26, 2022. He was 71. Bruce devoted his professional life to banking. Beginning as a state bank examiner, his career culminated in becoming the president and owner of the Community Bank of Easton, Illinois for 33 years, which was consistently rated the best community bank in Illinois. Bruce was a loyal fan of the Colorado Rockies and loved collecting, and setting off, various pyrotechnics.

**Annette Elliott '77** died July 20, 2022. She was 84. At Illinois Wesleyan, Ann was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and an art student who met her husband **Dick Bort '57**. Ann was a master gardener and skilled pianist. She is survived by three children and six grandchildren.

**Stanley Hayes '77** died Aug. 10, 2022. He was 66. Stan studied musical theater at Illinois Wesleyan before heading to Los Angeles, California. There he joined 20th Century Fox and Sony. He eventually returned to the Midwest to work at UnityPoint Health Methodist Hospital. Throughout his life, Stan continued to love music, theater, writing and cooking.

**Tamela Rea Alstedt Sagona '81** died July 7, 2022. She was 62. Tammy grew up on a farm and was an animal lover who raised prize-winning Duroc hogs. Professionally, she was a clinical counselor who earned her graduate degree from Illinois State University. She worked for Bridgeway and the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services. She was an avid crafter, photographer and baker who married the ring bearer at her parents' wedding. She is survived by her husband and three children.



**William "Bill" Metzger '86** died June 9th, 2022. He was 58. Bill graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree in business. An accomplished athlete, he was inducted into the Illinois Wesleyan Order of Titans. He was an active community member joining Sigma Pi at Illinois Wesleyan and the Collinsville Rotary Club, of which he became president in 1992. He was also a member of the Collinsville Maryville Troy YMCA Board and was Treasurer for Family Hospice of Southern Illinois. He is survived by his mother and three children.

**Deanna "Dee" Marie Thelen '88** died June 27, 2022. She was 76. Dee studied piano pedagogy at Illinois Wesleyan before earning master's degrees in piano pedagogy and biblical counseling. She used her experience to start the piano pedagogy program at Maranatha Baptist University. She loved crafting, baking and gardening and was married to her husband, Ken, for 58 years. She is survived by her husband, three children, 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

**Nancy Lynne Vanerka '89** died Aug. 19, 2022. She was 55. Nancy studied psychology at Illinois Wesleyan before earning her master's from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Nancy served in administrative roles, including at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center where she had received a bone marrow transplant from her sister. She served in missions going to Europe, China, India, Honduras and Mexico, including six trips to Juarez to create art and help with construction at an orphanage. She is survived by her parents.

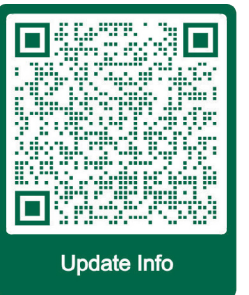
**Michael Clark '03** died Oct. 19, 2022. He was 41. Michael was an account executive at Traveler's Insurance and an active community member. He was president of the NAACP Branch 3018 and a member of The African American Business Association, Illinois State Police Merit Board and the Joliet Chamber of Commerce. He was also a Chicago Urban League IMPACT Fellow. He is survived by his mother and wife.

**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](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu), or at [www.iwu.edu/magazine](http://www.iwu.edu/magazine).

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## *sound of the season*

A powdered-sugar dusting of snow kicked off the 2022 - 2023 winter around Presser Hall.



PHOTO FINISH