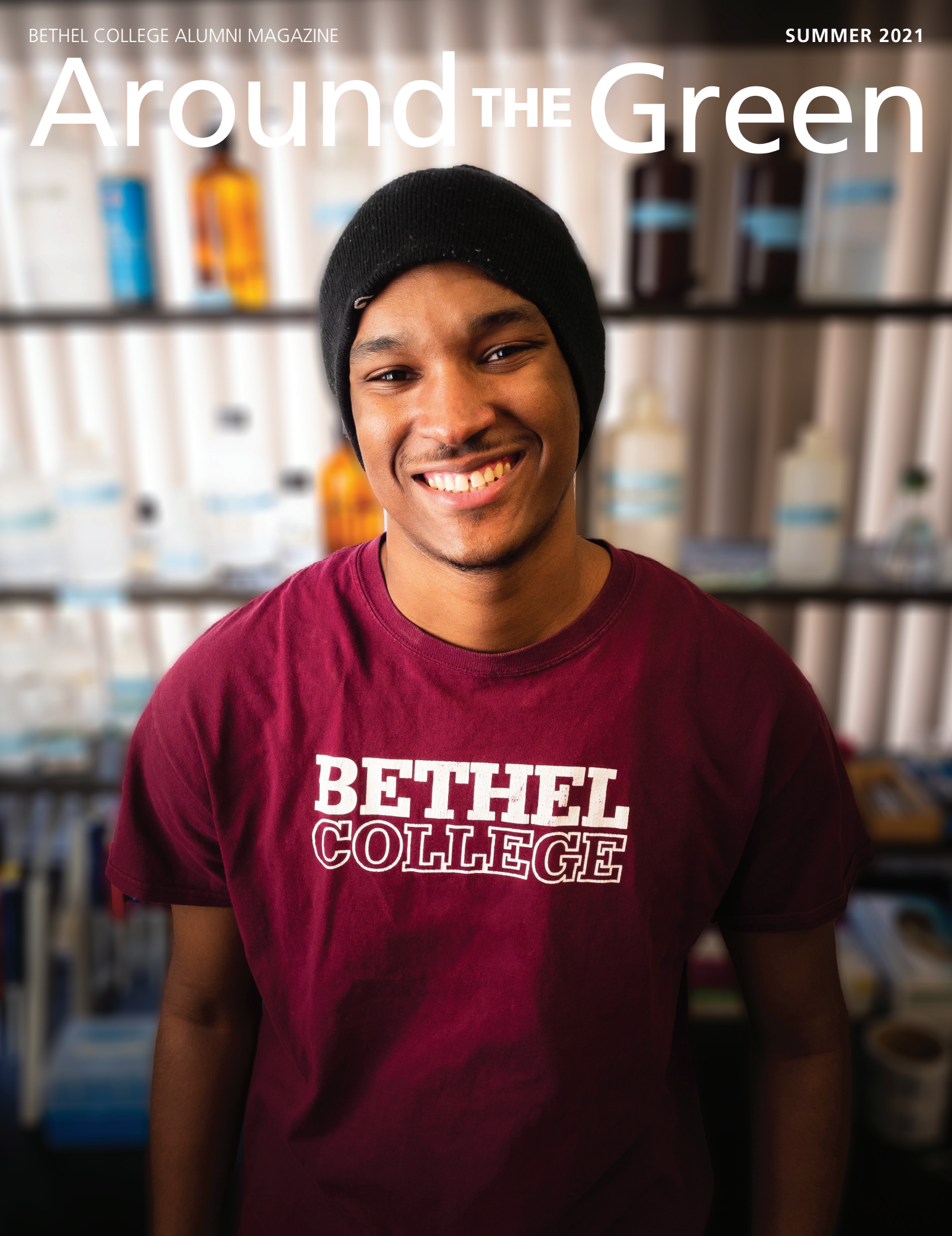
BETHEL COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2021

# Around THE Green



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Ahmed Fall, Class of 2021, came to Bethel to study science, graduated summa cum laude in biology on May 16, and plans to go to medical school.

PHOTO BY JIM TURNER

***Around the Green***
**SUMMER 2021**
bethelks.edu

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Bethel College
300 East 27th Street
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Published two times a year
© 2021 Bethel College

*Printed on FSC® paper*

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# BEHOLD, THE NEW HAS COME!

Dear Alumni and Friends of Bethel College,

I was greeted by a distinct sense of optimism as I walked from the Administration Building to the Goerz House at the conclusion of a work week earlier this spring. It was a beautiful, sunny day, but the weather and weekend alone could not account for my smile. I paused, eager to listen to what my soul and spirit were telling me. The thoughts fluttered into my consciousness:

> *Those students were smiling and laughing. There are no coronavirus cases on campus. We will end the year with a budget surplus. The athletic teams won and performed with character. The accreditors were impressed with our work. We are teaching classes in person. The program has been approved. The meetings were joyful and productive. Several colleagues had expressed gratitude. Our last two incoming classes have been the largest in 30 years.*

I realized that the college was experiencing a transformation. Our community had become more attuned to the needs of others during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a #ThresherKind initiative designed to recognize acts of kindness on campus. We had also become better stewards of time and money; the pandemic demanded efficiency. Although we recognize the enormous pain and suffering that COVID-19 has wrought worldwide and in our communities, the truth is that we have also transformed our institution in many positive ways because of the pandemic.

I also recognized another layer of transformation, an unmistakable cultural shift driven by demographic changes in our country. Our growing student body is the most racially diverse in the college's history, at 41% non-white. We are a campus of pluralistic religious beliefs, with non-denominational Christians, Baptists, and Catholics growing in representation each year. Just over half of our students are from Kansas, and about 7% come from international destinations. Bethel College is a microcosm of our broader society, and the foundational beliefs of Anabaptism are being heard and considered by more students than ever before.

As I continued to the Goerz House, I remained optimistic for the future. Bethel's current strategic plan – *Extending our Heritage, Expanding our Impact* – was designed to conclude between October 2020 and 2022. It yielded many achievements for the college: a human resources office; an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; vetting processes for athletic and academic programs; and a new brand identity and marketing strategy, to name a few. I and a Strategic Planning Committee are currently working on how to carry out the next "Strategic Priorities" of the college. I hope you will join us for one of our virtual listening sessions this summer or simply share your input at **www.bethelks.edu/about/who-we-are/strategic-plan**

Later, in the quiet hours of the evening, I reflected on permanence amidst the transformation. I recalled a passage from 2 Corinthians:

> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (5:17)*

The Scripture on the seal of Bethel College still reads: "Other foundation can no one lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Although we live in a time of rapid (and sometimes difficult) transformations, it is helpful to remember that Jesus is both foundational and transformational. What a joy to know!

Yours on the journey,

Jonathan C Gering

Jon



**JON C. GERING, PH.D.**
**President**

# TAKE NOTE




JOSH BOOTH

» Bethel had **two basketball players named NAIA All-American**: Abby Schmidt, graduating senior from Newton (3rd Team), and junior Jaylon Scott (1st Team). Schmidt wraps up her four years with a pile of honors, including Top 5 in the NAIA for rebounds and blocks, three-time Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Year, first CoSIDA Academic All-American in program history, and rebounding and blocking numbers that put her on top of all current KCAC member institutions. The women's team made its first-ever appearance in the NAIA National Tournament. Scott was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches' NAIA All-America team, one of only 12 honorees, and Schmidt and Scott were the George Rogers III '69 Outstanding Athletes of the Year.

» Men's tennis claimed **three specialty awards** from the KCAC at the end of the season. Graduating senior Zach Shima, Topeka, Kan., received the Sportsmanship Award. Junior Nolan Schrader was named Scholar-Athlete of the Year, and Gabe Johnson '19 Coach of the Year.

Bethel's men's basketball team made a visit to the "Sweet 16" of the NAIA for the first time in program history.

The Threshers went to Kansas City March 16 riding a five-game postseason win streak, including a 73-72 win over Oklahoma Wesleyan for the KCAC title.

The championship earned KCAC Coach of the Year designation for head coach Jayson Artaz '05. He was also named the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association's Four-Year Men's College Basketball Coach of the Year, the first time ever for a Bethel coach. Bethel's 21 victories for the season were the most since 1955-56.

Seeded #2 in the Wichita bracket, Bethel faced #3 Voorhees College in their first national championship tournament game in 18 years. A 29-point, 17-rebound effort from junior Jaylon Scott led to the Threshers' first-ever NAIA National Championship victory, 82-79.

Bethel then defeated the #1 seed, Northwestern College, to advance to the Round of 16, where they fell to the eventual national champion, Shawnee State University.

Scott in particular was a team leader during this spectacular postseason run, averaging 18.4 points and 15 rebounds per game, added to 27 assists and 17 steals. He finished the season as both KCAC Defensive Player of the Year and overall Player of the Year.

Also in the postseason, junior Clifford Byrd II led the team with 20.4 points per game, shooting better than 48% from the floor. For the season, Byrd II matched the single-season steal record of 2020 Hall of Fame inductee Frank Flores '03 with 88 on the year.

**JOSH BOOTH**

» Bethel College has been accepted to the next Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center Institute by the American Association of Colleges and Universities for June 22-25 as **the only Kansas higher education institution** that is part of this year's program. The goal of TRHT is to dismantle belief in a racial hierarchy based on skin color, physical characteristics and/or country of origin, and thereby eliminate racism.

» On May 9, the Threshpys, Bethel's annual athletic awards night, included recognition of athletic and academic achievement. **Some of the special awards given**: Threshpy Athlete of the Year, male and female – Zach Esau, football, and Abby Schmidt, basketball; male and female Best Individual Performance – Kemroy Cupid, KCAC Indoor Track & Field Championships, and Kendall Michalski, basketball vs. Southwestern; male and female Breakthrough Athlete of the Year – Cliff Byrd II, basketball, and Katy Ponce, soccer; Unsung Hero – Zach Shima; Game of the Year, football vs. Southwestern, Nov. 7, 2020; Team of the Year – men's basketball; Douglas Penner '69 Champions of Character – Trae Gehring, golf, Charlie Gibson, competitive cheer, and Katey Wilhelm, volleyball; Gerry Sieber Service Award – Geri Tyrell '08, director of nursing; and Loren Reusser '59 Spirit Scholarships – Landon Barnes, Natalie Graber, Drannon Lenox and Kayla Newman.

» Thresher football **set a program record** with 26 individual conference honors, including four specialty award winners and nine 1st-Team selections. Graduating senior Zach Esau, Hesston, Kan., was selected KCAC Player of the Year. With more than 1,400 yards of total offense (24 touchdowns – 14 passing, 10 rushing), Esau guided the Threshers to their first KCAC championship since 2007 and first national postseason berth since 2006. Senior Josh Seabolt was named Defensive Player of the Year, defensive coordinator Paul Kempf Assistant Coach of the Year, and head coach Terry Harrison Head Coach of the Year. In his third season at the helm, Harrison led Bethel to a 9-1 regular-season record, tied for the most single-season wins for the program.

» For **only the third time in program history**, a men's cross-country runner competed in the national championships. Freshman Arran Kearney was the first Thresher to qualify since Julio Martinez in 2017.

» Alayna Wallace, graduating senior from McPherson, Kan., had her research on anxiety in dental patients chosen for the National Council on Undergraduate Research's prestigious Posters on the Hill event for 2021, **one of only 60 students selected** from several hundred applicants nationwide. Students would normally present their posters at a conference in Washington, D.C., but this year did so virtually on April 28.

» Junior Linda Moyo is the recipient of the 2021 **Seth Dunn Memorial Award**, given "for identifying areas of needed change on campus, challenging others and taking action to make a difference in the Bethel community." The award honors the life of Dunn, who died in an accident in 2011 right before the start of his senior year.

» Seven students received **2021 summer research grants**: URICA – Annie Carlson and Sandy Dao in biology, Bethany Powls in literature and Natalie Graber in natural sciences; RICHE – Jerod Kaufman in math; Mennonite Contributions Fund – Emma Beachy in history; and Eldon Rich '38 Fund – Hanna Watts in biology.

» Men's indoor track and field boasted **four KCAC champions** this season. The three athletes all set meet records: freshman Isaiah Bartel in the 1,000m, graduating senior Kemroy Cupid, Sans Souci, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in the 200m and 60m, and graduating senior Austin Cheatham, Newton, in the shot put.

» The English department gave four **scholarships that annually honor** Dorothy Wedel Kaufman '45 to sophomores Stephany Meyer and Allison Weaver, and juniors Bethany Powls and Jessie Thomas.

» The Department of Business and Economics gives **two awards each year**. Graduating senior Abby Schmidt received the J. Lloyd Spaulding Award, honoring the long-time Bethel business professor, and sophomore Julianna Schrag was the winner of the Ray '48 and Betty Funk '48 Prize for Entrepreneurship.

» Students annually select a **Community Assistant (CA) of the Year**: for 2020-21, Viviana "Vivi" Rodriguez, graduating senior from San Antonio, Texas. "A great role model" and "super cool" were just some of the accolades Rodriguez received.



CHRISTINA LIU

» **Freshman Josie Epp (above) won the spring 2021 competition for the Frances A. Wallingford Memorial Piano Performance Scholarship, awarded to collegiate pianists and sponsored by the Wichita Metropolitan Music Teachers Association, the local chapter of Music Teachers National Association. The award comes with a $500 prize.**

» Junior Jerod Kaufman is the recipient of the Gerald Schrag '60 **Award in Mathematics**, given for love of math, excellent scholarship and commitment to service.

» The Center for Academic Development recognizes **excellence in English and writing** with a Writing Fellowship, awarded for 2021-22 to junior Karl Bottorf.

» The Department of Nursing gives **several awards to seniors** each spring. Madison Prager, was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society and also received the Iota Chi Excellence in Nursing Scholarship Award for the highest GPA in the rising senior class. Other awards, to graduating seniors: Rebekah Tonn, Newton, the Doris '54 and Menno Schmidt Award for Excellence in Nursing; Renee Thompson, Wichita, the Jubilee Award; and Elizabeth Tran, North Newton, the Janlee Blosser Maternal/Child Nursing Award.

» The John O. '38 and Esther Schrag '38 Helping Hand Award goes annually to a faculty or staff member who has a **significant impact on a student** beyond the person's job description. Graduating senior Ahmed Fall's essay led the judges to give this year's award to Samuel Haynes, vice president for student life and dean of students.

# KNOW BETTER, DO BETTER

by MELANIE ZUERCHER

Two new board members have plenty of experience being "the first," and want to help their alma mater face challenging times.




Faith Allen, 1977




Cynthia Alexander, ca. 1976

Breaking new ground might or might not have been on the life goals list for Bethel's two newest board members. No matter – that's exactly what they did.

Cynthia Alexander and Faith Allen both graduated from high school in the mid-1970s, Cynthia in Newton, and Faith from a Kansas City metro high school which was (a change from the small town of Wrightsville, Ark., where she lived until she was a young teenager).

As a Newtonian, Cynthia knew about Bethel from things like summer theater camp and college knowing students who were Big Brothers/Big Sisters. "I wasn't dead set on any one college," she says, "but I wasn't interested in a big university setting like Wichita State, where my brothers went. My dad was in the Air Force when I was younger, so we [moved around] a lot. I was not necessarily wanting to go away from home [for college]."

That made Bethel seem like a good fit, as did "the mission of Bethel, the emphasis on local and global service," she says. "When I was growing up, my mother [long-time Bethel supporter Sylvia Kelly] was active in the church, the community and politics. I didn't know you had the option not to be involved."

Faith, on the other hand, had never heard of Bethel before she went to a college fair as a high school student.

Other students crowded around the tables for the larger schools, and Faith noticed there was no one at the Bethel table. "So I went over and said hi. It was Jim Robb '74, a former Bethel basketball player. I took the card he offered.

"And then later, when it was time for me to decide what school, I looked at the card I had stuck up on my mantel, picked it up and decided to apply. I was accepted and, as they say, the rest is history."

As a high school senior, one of Faith's favorite classes was "with a really good English teacher who later became a good friend. One day, I said, 'I want to be an English teacher [like you].'

"I came to Bethel majoring in English. There were not many Black students doing that. When I chose a college, I wanted to go someplace where nobody would know me, and Bethel fit that bill. I wasn't in the popular crowd in high school, although I had friends. I was 'the quiet one, the smart one,' and at Bethel, my leadership skills were able to come forth."

> I didn't have anyone trying to fit me into a mold or put me in a box. I could do what I was drawn to."

While Faith was making her name in the English and forensics departments, Cynthia was concentrating on athletics, though both ended up studying to be teachers as well (Cynthia's degree is in health, physical education and recreation).

The mid-1970s was just on the cusp of Title IX, which began to open up access for women in athletics.

"I was a good athlete," Cynthia says. "Most people don't think of good female athletes going to Bethel. Athletics for women wasn't really on the radar."

She played some basketball, but is best known – and was inducted in 2004 into the Athletic Boosters Hall of Fame – for her award-winning performances as a volleyball and track and field athlete (she was an All American in both).

In her senior year, 1976-77, Thresher volleyball went 26-0. Cynthia completed her track and field career holding part or all of 13 KCAC women's track records, some of which still stand.



FILE PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

Left: Cynthia Alexander competing in the high jump as a Bethel student-athlete, ca. 1977.

Above: Cynthia (Alexander) Doyle Perkins today

"Barbara Graber and Jolly [George Rogers III '69] were coaches then, and things changed while I was there.

"Before I went to Bethel, I'm not even sure the volleyball team had ever even won a match. I was used to being an aggressive athlete, and I like winning.

"Barb came from Colorado, and [was able to recruit] enough skill from the area. "

> We played hard, and trained, and it changed the expectations for women in athletics.
>
> "

"Back then, in women's sports, all athletes competed in the same categories. There were no 'divisions.' When Bethel athletes went to nationals, it was against the universities."

Cynthia and Faith overlapped several years at Bethel – those days saw only a handful of Black students and other students of color, as compared to 41% in 2021, so the so-called minority students all knew each other. Both would go on to help establish Bethel's African-American Alumni Association.

After graduation in 1978, Faith began "trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I got an offer [to teach] from a small school in Kansas, but I wasn't ready for a small town. This was a time when the teaching field was very strong, and it was hard to get a position in Kansas City then. I ended up getting a job at the *Kansas City Star* in their library, which I did for 22 years.

"I did teach for a few years, but the whole teaching and classroom ball game had changed. While at the *Star*, I received my calling to preach, about 10 years in. I was appointed to my first church in 1995. I was pastoring and working at the *Star* and going to theology school." She earned a Master of Divinity degree at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City.

The call came from Faith's home church, Jamison Memorial Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church in Kansas City, Mo. She served as an associate minister there from 1990-95, before moving on to St. John CME Church in Richmond, Mo., for 9 years. "Being at Bethel helped me [adapt to] being in a much more rural area," she notes – Richmond, though in the Kansas City metro area, has a population around 5,000.




Above: Rev. Faith Allen today

Right: Several members of the Bethel Gospel Choir, ca. 1978, from right: Faith Allen, Irene Green '80, Victor Simmons '78, Hope Mosley (Lee) '80 and Harold Pringle '80.




In July 2004, Faith was appointed the 20th pastor of the Carter Metropolitan CME Church in Detroit, where she made history as the first woman in the role. While there, she also served as president of the Detroit CME Ministerial Alliance and director of Christian education for the Michigan-Indiana Region. She completed a Doctor of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

In 2014, Faith made more history when, at the 38th General Conference of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, she was elected General Secretary of Evangelism and Missions, the first woman in denominational history to be a departmental secretary. That year, she also returned to Jamison Memorial as pastor.

As a Bethel student, Cynthia met Jerome Doyle '76. Jerome returned home to Texas after graduation. Cynthia followed, and they got married. Needing to get certified to teach in Texas, Cynthia decided she might as well get her master's degree at the same time.

She had jumped into coaching right away, with "inner-city girls who had no clear path to college. I saw that guidance counselors were so inundated with other responsibilities. The [highest] goal was just to finish high school. I decided to study guidance and counseling, just to help out my students." She ended up earning her master's in that from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

"Then I was asked if I'd ever thought about being a school administrator. I hadn't, because coaches have blinders on, and we live and die for our sport. I was asked to step in for an administrator who had taken long-term disability leave. I did it and liked it."

She began working toward a Ph.D. in educational administration. But then Jerome got sick, and he died, leaving her to raise their two young daughters, Kendra and Kaitlin, alone.

Cynthia took a job with the University Interscholastic League (UIL) in which she oversaw interschool competition (mostly in athletics but also academic and music championships) across the state. "It was an amazing opportunity," she says, "and I was the first Black female in that position." She and the girls relocated to Austin.

Kendra was entering high school and Kaitlin middle school. Cynthia kept working on her doctoral degree. "I was ABD," she says. "People told me, 'You can't stop now,' but I said, 'Yes, I can.' I knew I needed to spend time with them and all their activities."

In her position at UIL, part of her work involved addressing access to sports for girls and women. "Title IX is complaint-driven," Cynthia says, "so unless someone brings charges, things don't change.

"It took changes to the institution without lawsuits and charges to start making those things happen. People [tried to] put [Title IX] into play, but there wasn't a lot of direction. Equity and equal are not the same. Part of the work I did in Texas was helping schools address the inequities in sports for women."

This helped get her a job offer from the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHSS), which she initially turned down because it involved moving to Indianapolis, and she wouldn't uproot her daughters.

Then Kendra went to college – first on a track scholarship to the University of Southern Mississippi. But it wasn't a good fit. Kendra decided to move literally next door to her grandmother Sylvia and attend Bethel. Kendra, a math major in the Class of 2003, became the second generation of award-winning Bethel athletes in the Alexander-Doyle family – earning her own All American honors, setting her own records in track and field, and being named to the Athletic Boosters Hall of Fame in 2017.

Cynthia and Kaitlin made the move to Indianapolis, where Cynthia was again a ground-breaker as a Black woman at a high level in the NFHSS.

She met and married her second husband, James Perkins Jr. "Bethel embraced him and he embraced Bethel," Cynthia says. "He loves being on campus, and doing the things families do there.

"A few years ago, the Bethel president was traveling and called to see if we wanted to have dinner. James was amazed – he went to Indiana University-Purdue University and the president would never have called him. This is one of the pleasures of going to a small liberal arts college."

Through James, Cynthia also reconnected with Faith. "My husband is a CME church member, and his pastor was a mentor to Faith. She came three years to preach a revival [in Indianapolis]."

In her role at NFHSS, Cynthia helped high schools across the nation handle everything from Title IX enforcement to transgender athletes to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. She was editor of multiple sport rule books, and was responsible for advances that increased safety measures in a variety of high school sports, including diving and pole vaulting.

As much as she loved the job, Cynthia's first vocational love has remained teaching. In 2005, she moved back into the public schools in Indianapolis. She has spent most of the past decade at Lincoln Middle School, where she is vice principal.

Faith says, reflecting on her own Bethel experience, "I never thought, when I was at Bethel, that I would be a pastor. Even though my father was, I just didn't think about it.

"There were not a lot of female pastors when I was growing up in the CME, or when I took my first call. Women have been breaking that glass ceiling [in recent years].

"The name of my book is going to be 'A Life of Firsts.' I have been the first female pastor in every church I've been assigned to. The church in Richmond was founded in 1877. The church in Detroit is the second-largest CME church, with an 80-year history. And now I'm the first at Jamison Memorial – now I'm my mother's pastor!

"Progressive bishops have helped, and I've been blessed. When I first talked to my father about my call, he was not one who was against female pastors. I am thankful to God for that.

"My father's mother was uncertain – but after I preached my first sermon, my grandmother was with me from then on. My church has been with me and supported me. At the Detroit church, I pastored women in their 70s and 80s who had heard God's call but had not been encouraged in it by the pastor and leadership. The culture is changing."

Faith is also on the board of another college, an HBCU (historically Black college/university).

"After all the racial unrest of the past year [in the United States], when I received the call from Bethel, I wondered about it. I wondered what I could bring to the Bethel board. I had a long talk with [President] Jon Gering '94, and [I feel] this was the time for it. I see change taking place in students, at this time in history.

"I was amazed and excited to learn some of the things taking place at Bethel, parallel to what's taking place in churches and denominations.

'For such a time as this' – it's how God is working in our world. I want to be a part of Bethel moving forward. I have evolved, and I know what I'm able to bring. Bethel has been paying attention to what I've been doing."

> Bethel is a great school [and] a hidden gem. I'm excited now to be a part of bringing it out to more visibility. It's a great opportunity to see how we're shaping minds and sending them out into the world. You don't realize at the time [you're a student], but now I see how much Bethel did for me.

Cynthia brings a length and breadth of experience in the structures of education in the country. "People don't want to change," she says, "maybe especially in education."

She has seen the resistance and gradual openness to "having minorities as keynote speakers or even to lead a session [at conferences] – just putting minorities on platforms where they get to show their expertise.

"Those things are still going on. Nothing is finished. It's a process we're going through. You have to take the victories you can. I'm lucky in my school – we have a lot of opportunities [to showcase the history and accomplishments of People of Color]. It takes everyone working together to move us forward, despite what you hear in politics.

"[The need for us all to work together is] an overlooked part of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. It's often ignored because people keep using the same soundbites.

"Black kids need to feel like they are part of the system. They have to be engaged in order to want to uplift it and make it better. That's what Black History Month is about.

"The Bethel Board is going in a little different direction in some of the expectations of students, and I believe that's a good direction. Many people graduate from college and still don't know what they're going to do. The focus at Bethel on more job experience and on vocations is good.

"Everybody wants to do better. I hope I can help challenge Bethel on that."

# MAKING A MARK – AHMED FALL

by MELANIE ZUERCHER




How did a kid from Staten Island, N.Y., make his way more than 1,000 miles west to small-town Kansas? Three words: "basketball," "brothers" and "science." Former assistant men's basketball coach Jake Myers recruited Ahmed Fall. Ahmed liked Bethel's strength in the sciences. And because two of his brothers went to Southwestern College in Winfield, Kan., Bethel didn't seem as far away as it might have.

Ahmed played basketball for two seasons before being injured. As a junior, he was a team manager. In his last year, said the biology major, he decided to concentrate on his senior research – but he certainly took time to cheer on his former teammates as they advanced to the NAIA Sweet 16 for the first time in Thresher history.

Ahmed was actively in involved in the Student Government Association (SGA), serving as chief of staff for the past two years, where he focused on issues of health and safety, as well as being responsible for keeping tabs on student clubs and organizations in general as the SGA rep to the Registered Student Organization (RSO) Council.

"Ahmed easily stands out not just because of his height but because of his personality and character," said his academic adviser, Francisca Méndez-Harclerode, Ph.D., , professor of biology. "He is the kind of student who will challenge peers and professors alike, but is also quick to admit when he is wrong and apologize.

"I have always found him to be upright, almost to a fault. He [does] his best to respond in positive ways. Even in the face of oppression, he tries to see circumstances as a learning opportunity, instead of a personal attack, even when the circumstances clearly bother him."




Left: Ahmed Fall in the biology lab

Right: Ahmed Fall consults with Francisca Méndez-Harclerode, professor of biology.

PHOTOS BY JIM TURNER

***What brought you from the East Coast all the way out here?***

When Coach Myers recruited me, I couldn't physically come for a visit, so I did it virtually. I spoke to professors and to [potential] teammates. Bethel offered me a basketball scholarship, and I had brothers at Southwestern. I didn't know at first that Southwestern was in Bethel's conference and I got a hard time from my teammates once when I wore a Southwestern shirt to practice!

I knew I wanted to be pre-med, in biology, so I looked at the sciences at Bethel and saw the high acceptance rate for [Bethel graduates] applying to medical schools. I thought, there has to be a reason for that. My interest in [medicine] is because of feeling like I want to help people. I was raised to help those around me. I won't ever forget when I was about 8 or 10 years old, on a visit to Africa, I saw a young girl out walking around late at night with no shoes, and her mom had too much to carry to hold her. They were also fasting for Ramadan, or at least the mother was. That started me on the road to want to serve other people.

One thing that led me to stay here at Bethel was how close I became to professors and students. It's a tight family atmosphere.

***What are some things you'll remember about your Bethel years?***

One highlight was being chief of staff for SGA. I have done a lot with SGA. I helped get the new laundry machines in the residence halls, which is important because the need for hygiene is greater than ever with the pandemic. Another has been getting the blue-light safety tower installed [at the end of the fall semester, near the northeast corner of Haury Hall] and picking the location for the next one.

SGA has made an investment in campus outdoor lighting – we've been putting "samples" around to figure out what we want. We have looked at traffic patterns and where most people would be at certain times. The first ones helped make the point that we all care about safety, and we're spreading them into corners of campus where more light is needed.

The SGA chief of staff is in charge of finances, overseeing student organizations and committees, and leading special projects – like the water bottle refill stations. I'm a scientist, and the environment is a huge concern for me. I didn't want people to keep buying and wasting plastic water bottles. The Will Academic Center, Krehbiel Science Center and Goering Hall were the first targets, last year. This year, a donation let us add more – outside the weight room, in Warkentin Court and in the library. There's now one in almost every building on campus, which is around 15,000 refills [per school year].

***Did you help to start the Interfaith Prayer Room last year?***

I was not directly involved in starting the Interfaith Prayer Room. That is one of Jalal's [Gondal '20] legacies. I do keep an eye on it for Jalal, because he is a close friend. It's meant to be a diverse place for a lot of people to come and practice their religion. For Muslims, it's hard to find access to a mosque, especially during Ramadan. I don't drive, so it has been hard to go to the one in Wichita. A room where we can practice our faith makes the college better and more attractive to students like us, and I'm very grateful to Jalal for taking the initiative.

The Caf at Bethel has done a good job to accommodate the religious dietary restrictions and add options like turkey sausage. It's a new experience for me, maybe not as diverse as I might like, but it makes me see new perspectives. I was excited to come here from Staten Island. It was a complete change of culture. Early on, I thought I could just walk over to Subway [about a mile from campus, in Newton], because my urban brain processed it as a 2-minute walk down the block.

***What are you thinking about for the near future?***

I want to take a gap year after graduation, to prepare for and take the MCATs and then go to medical school.

My parents came to the U.S. from West Africa, from Conakry, Guinea. I'm first-generation. My parents wanted better futures for their kids. They did a fantastic job. My mom was pregnant when she came here, and she worked at Burger King and was a full-time college student. She's now the CEO of a credit union. My dad started out as a taxi driver and is now a CEO, too. That's one reason why I'm driven to do better. I have four brothers and a sister, and I'm the youngest. One brother died before I was born. He was Ahmed, so I'm his namesake, and I have to do well for him.

> My goal since high school has been to make a mark, to make a difference in the world. I want Bethel to be a better place, and I feel like I've accomplished that.

# ALUMNI AWARDS

by MELANIE ZUERCHER

## Jennifer Scott Koontz: Health and community
## OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS AWARD


COURTESY PHOTO

Jennifer Scott Koontz, M.D., MPH, has always had a heart for the community, which the past 18 months of pandemic have only emphasized.

Koontz will receive the 2021 Outstanding Alumnus Award, given on the basis of character and citizenship, service to church/community or college, or other outstanding achievements, honors and recognition.

She will receive the award at the Alumni Banquet, which has been moved to Fall Festival and will be held Oct. 3.

Except for briefly considering a missionary career as a first grader, Koontz has always wanted to be a doctor.

She volunteered at a nursing home as a high school student in Nickerson, Kan., and graduated from Bethel in 1998 with majors in psychology and natural sciences.

Right after graduation, Koontz spent two years with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Hamilton, Ontario. At the North Hamilton Community Health Centre, she coordinated the breakfast program for school children and worked as a camp counselor for adults and children living with HIV.

She then began her studies at the University of Kansas, where she earned a master's degree in public health (2001) and her M.D. (2005).

While at KU Medical School, Koontz founded and led the JayDoc Free Clinic, a student-run clinic for the uninsured in Kansas City, Kan., in 2003, and two years later co-founded the JayDoc Community Clinic in Wichita.

She completed a residency in family medicine at Via Christi in Wichita, where she was chief resident during her last year. By 2009, she was board certified in both family medicine and sports medicine, and began practicing with Pinnacle Sports Medicine and Orthopaedics, Newton and Hutchinson, Kan.

She has also served as team physician and medical director for athletic training and student health at Bethel since that time.

It isn't by accident that Koontz has been able to combine medicine and sports, since she loves both and was captain of the volleyball and women's basketball teams as a Bethel student.

Sports medicine, she says, covers whatever helps people stay healthy and lead an active lifestyle – it can include treating anything from an injured shoulder to asthma to chronic knee pain to depression.

Since 2012, Koontz has practiced family medicine and sports medicine, and served as medical director for cardiac rehabilitation, at Newton Medical Center, recently renamed NMC Health.

Koontz was Bethel's Young Alumnus Award winner in 2009. In 2017, she was one of three Women of the Year in Harvey County.

At that time, she told *The Newton Kansan*, "[Getting the MPH] expanded my view of what health means. I know it's not just a one-on-one visit in the exam room with me. Health is community work and I think health is about being connected with others in the community."

Koontz currently serves in a number of leadership positions, including president of the Harvey County Medical Society (HCMS), member of the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative board of directors, and chair of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine Sexual Violence Task Force, among others.

But it has been her work to educate the public about COVID-19 and public health and safety measures surrounding it that have pointed out her dedication to community most clearly.

For months, she read everything she could find, and then distilled it into daily COVID-19 updates ranging from Harvey County to the world, which she put on her Facebook page, shareable to anyone.

"I am a fierce believer that facts and education are important to address any challenge," she said. "Facts help us understand how to protect our communities and can keep us calm in times of great uncertainty."

As HCMS president, Koontz coordinated a group of physicians that gave input into the county's re-opening and testing plans, advocated for adequate testing and contact tracing programs, and tirelessly promoted frequent handwashing, physical distancing and wearing face coverings in public spaces.

In the early months of the pandemic, when face masks for the general public were in short supply, Koontz organized a group of volunteers to sew masks and distribute them through the schools and other avenues.

Her efforts earned her an "Ad Astra Star Award" from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Kansas, a recognition created to particularly note those "embodying the strength and resilience of Kansas" at this time.

When Koontz was nominated as a Harvey County Woman of the Year in 2017, the nominator called her a "servant leader."

The award was "a nice recognition from the community, but it mostly serves as a reminder for me to continue to be community-minded and continue to be a servant leader," Koontz said. "It's just a great reinforcement to continue to serve the community."

Koontz lives in Newton with her husband, Matt Koontz '98, and their three children.

# Steve Friesen: Writer, interpreter of history

# DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD


COURTESY PHOTO

Steve Friesen has seldom met a museum he didn't like or vice versa.

Friesen, of Littleton, Colo., will receive the 2021 Distinguished Achievement Award, which acknowledges character and citizenship, achievement in a chosen profession or vocation, and work of benefit to humanity.

The award will be presented at the Alumni Banquet, which has been moved to Fall Festival weekend and will be held Oct. 3.

Friesen graduated from Bethel in 1975 with a B.A. in history and social science, then earned an M.A. in American folk culture from the Cooperstown Graduate Program of the State University of New York at Oneonta.

He came back to his native south-central Kansas as director of Kauffman Museum, 1976-77, and then spent a year with the Office of Museum Programs of the Wichita Public Schools, 1977-78, before moving on to direct educational programs at the Littleton Historical Museum, in the Denver area, for the next four years.

After two years in Baton Rouge, La., as a service worker with Mennonite Central Committee, Friesen moved to Lancaster, Pa., to be the director of the 1719 Hans Herr House, until 1990.

He then returned to Colorado as superintendent of museums for the City of Greeley, and later became director of the Molly Brown House in Denver.

In 1995, Friesen took the directorship of the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave in Golden, Colo., from which he retired in 2017 after serving in the position for 22 years.

In 2018, he was inducted into the Jefferson County (Colo.) Hall of Fame.

Following retirement from the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Friesen joined forces with his wife, Monta Lee Dakin, to create Friesen-Dakin Museum Consulting, a part-time business.

The two have a combined 80 years of experience in the museum profession (Dakin has worked at Mount Vernon, the home of George and Martha Washington; the Smithsonian; Strawbery Banke in New Hampshire; Gadsby's Tavern in Virginia; Colorado Preservation, Inc.; and most recently as executive director of the Mountain-Plains Museums Association).

Friesen and Dakin have provided consulting services to Aspen Historical Society, Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society, Hastings Museum, Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum, and The Hermitage, the Andrew Jackson home, in Nashville, Tenn.

Friesen's first book, *A Modest Mennonite Home* (Good Books, 1990), dealt with the 1719 Hans Herr House in Lancaster County as well as early Pennsylvania German life.

His second book, *Buffalo Bill: Scout, Showman, Visionary* (City and County of Denver, 2010), was a finalist for a Colorado Book Award and received Best Museum Publication of 2011 from the Mountain-Plains Museums Association.

*Lakota Performers in Europe: Their Culture and What They Left Behind* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) won a Western Heritage Award from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum and Best Illustrated History 2017 from the Western History Association, and was a finalist for the Western Writers of America Spur Award.

Friesen has provided chapters for several books on museum management, and has written numerous historical articles and book reviews for academic and popular publications. In 2021, he began writing a regular column for *True West* magazine. He is an active member of Western Writers of America.

Friesen and Dakin are the parents of two (including Elizabeth Friesen '10) and have one granddaughter.

In addition to writing and reading, Friesen enjoys travel and cooking which, combined with his years of studying Buffalo Bill, has resulted in his latest book in progress, *Galloping Gourmet: Eating and Drinking with Buffalo Bill.*

Friesen is a member of Beloved Community Mennonite Church in Denver and continues his lifelong connection to Bethel College as a member of the Kauffman Museum board.

# Joel Gaeddert: Challenges into opportunities
## YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD


COURTESY PHOTO

Joel Gaeddert's life since college has centered on turning challenges into opportunities, which has yielded a successful business in a niche market.

Gaeddert will receive Bethel's 2021 Young Alumnus Award, which recognizes character and citizenship, achievement or service rendered, and honors and recognition received. The recipient must be 39 years of age or younger.

The winner of this award gives a presentation to students, faculty and staff in a Bethel convocation, which will likely take place sometime next fall.

Gaeddert came to Bethel after having grown up in the Kansas City and WIchita metro areas, though familiar with both the college and North Newton from visiting grandparents there.

He graduated in 2006 with majors in natural sciences and mathematics – but he already knew that neither medicine nor medical research was for him.

Gaeddert met his wife, Crystal (Enz) '04, at Bethel and they got married right after he graduated. Crystal was clear she wanted to live and raise a family in the Newton area.

After growing up in a large urban/suburban area and rejecting the career path he had once figured on, Gaeddert's challenge now, he said, was "how to make an interesting living in Newton, Kansas."

When Chuck Regier '81, curator of exhibits at Kauffman Museum, whom Gaeddert knew through his roommate, Regier's son, Abe Regier '07, offered him a job, Gaeddert took it. He helped Regier complete the museum's most recent permanent exhibit, "Mennonite Immigrant Furniture."

After two years at Kauffman Museum, Gaeddert combined what he had learned in design with his longstanding fascination with computers and the technical skills in coding he had gained while still in college and started Flint Hills Design (FHD) in February 2008.

Initially, the business was custom-built websites. Interest was immediate and the business grew quickly. Gaeddert hired Abe Regier, and then a second former roommate, Joel Krehbiel '06.

Within a year, Gaeddert was offered the opportunity to build a museum exhibit. That invitation came by way of Chuck Regier, and it began an exhibit-building collaboration between FHD and Kauffman Museum that went on for the next several years.

That first exhibit was "The Bison: American Icon," which was also the start of a relationship with Mid-America Arts Alliance that continues to this day.

To date, FHD has designed and fabricated more than 30 permanent and traveling exhibits, on subjects from Willa Cather to climate change, the Pikes Peak Hill Climb road race to American Indian boarding schools, John Brown to Johnny Carson, Frida Kahlo to Kansas folk artist M.T. Liggett.

In 2015, Gaeddert launched Upland Exhibit Systems, building off-the-shelf exhibit furniture. As of the end of 2020, Gaeddert could say that between FHD and Upland, his business has reached more than half the states in the country, with clients that include the National Archives in New York City and the Library of Congress.

The latest venture is Overland Traveling Exhibits. Four FHD exhibits – with plans to expand that number – are available for museums to rent at a price that includes transportation, installation and tear-down.

While Krehbiel and Abe Regier no longer work for Gaeddert, he currently has several Bethel alumni employees, including his brother David Gaeddert '13, principal and lead developer, who has spun off a business, Dropseed.io, from a product originally designed to manage an internal process at FHD. Mark Schmidt Andres '83, Graham Unruh '11 and Jocelyn Wilkinson '14 also work for FHD.

The third brother, Aaron Gaeddert '11, has also worked with the company and still does occasionally, but spends most of his time managing Prairy Market, a natural foods grocery in Newton, co-owned by the brothers and their parents, Greg Gaeddert '83 and Terri (Preheim) Gaeddert '83.

Gaeddert's interests and involvement reflect his care for the community and region. He is on the board of trustees for the Central Kansas Community Foundation (he completed a two-year term as chair in 2020) and the board of directors of the Harvey County Economic Development Council.

Flint Hills Design quickly outgrew a home office location, so Gaeddert bought the former Mennonite Central Committee Central States warehouse in North Newton, and then the adjoining office building after the financial planners who were there moved out. And a recent business milestone has been the purchase of land for further expansion.

"The pandemic hit us hard," Gaeddert said, "but as with lots of other companies, it accelerated change that needed to happen anyway. So we fast-forwarded through those changes and are coming out on the other side leaner and stronger than ever."

Joel and Crystal Gaeddert live in North Newton with their two sons.

# CLASS NOTES

Information received as of April 26, 2021

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF:**
ALUMNI EVENTS: **bethelks.edu/alumni/events** | ATHLETICS: **bethelthreshers.com** | FINE ARTS: **bethelks.edu/calendar**

## 1960–69

**Laurel Gugler** '65, North Newton, created a picture book, *Circle of the Seasons*, with artwork by Elizabeth Schmidt '81 and her mother Wilma Schmidt, both of North Newton.

**Paul "Jackie" Loewer** '64, Branch, La., was inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction.

## 1970–79

**Gregory Gerstenberger** '76, Newton, retired after 25 years coaching high school athletics.

**Karen Klassen Harder** '79, Bluffton, Ohio, retired from Bluffton University as professor emeritus of business. At Bluffton, she taught in the undergraduate and MBA programs. In addition, she was on the faculty for the Collaborative MBA, a joint program of Bluffton, Goshen (Ind.) College, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Karen's 20 years at Bluffton followed 11 on the Bethel faculty, 1990-2001.

## 1980–89

**James Bonds** '82, Virginia Beach, Va., was selected in 2020 to serve a two year-term on the governing body, as a board member, of the Virginia African American Cultural Center in Virginia Beach.

**Rachel Waltner Goossen** '82, Topeka, Kan., had two scholarly articles published: "Repent of the Sins of Homophobia: The Rise of Queer Mennonite Leaders" in *Nova Religio* 24 (February 2021), and "The Rise of LGBT Mennonite Leaders" on the Anabaptist Historians website.

**Roseann Penner Kaufman** '85, Prairie Village, Kan., was ordained Nov. 22, 2020, in a service at Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., where she serves as minister of music and worship.

**Darrel Knoll** '87, Hillsboro, Kan., this spring led the Hillsboro High School boys' basketball team to their fourth 2A state championship of his tenure there.

**Kathy Neufeld** '83, Caldwell, Idaho, coordinated a project to make desks for students who needed them for home study during COVID.

**Sandra Nickel** '83, Chexbres, Switzerland, has published two children's picture books: *Nacho's Nachos: The Story Behind the World's Favorite Snack* (Lee & Low, Aug. 2020) and *The Stuff Between the Stars: How Vera Rubin Discovered Most of the Universe* (Abrams Books for Young Readers, March 2021). Her third release, in fall 2021, is, *Breaking Through the Clouds: The Sometimes Turbulent Life of Meteorologist Joanne Simpson* (Abrams Books for Young Readers). Learn more about the books at sandranickel.com

**Doug Tuck** '87, Erie, Kan., was interviewed by Sports Kansas on his 600th career win, this past January, as head girls' basketball coach at St. Paul (Kan.) High School.

**Mark Wedel** '81, Salina, Kan., was recognized by Forbes as one of the best-in-state wealth advisors in Kansas for 2021.

## 1990–99

**Becky McKay** '92, Boulder, Colo., was selected one of the state's outstanding assistant elementary school principals for 2021. She was recognized for her work to increase Latinx representation on the Alicia Sanchez School Accountability Committee, and for leading the charge to design and launch the Alicia Sanchez Family Support Team during the pandemic.

**Byron Rupp** '93, Andover, Kan., was awarded Certified Fund Raising Executive in November 2020, becoming one of just over 7,400 professionals around the world to hold the CFRE designation. It is only granted to individuals who have successfully passed a rigorous examination that tests their knowledge, skills and abilities, and met a series of standards set by CFRE International, including tenure in the profession, education and demonstrated fundraising achievement for not-for-profit organizations.

**JOIN THE BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

Support other Bethel alumni by using these amazing products and services. If you are a small business owner and a Bethel alumnus and would like to join our Alumni Business Directory, **SCAN QR TO SIGN UP.**

## WHAT IS NEW?

**Alumni are invited to submit recent news of interest to others**—marriage, job change, addition of a child, award, promotion, graduate school, retirement, and so on—to the **Office of Alumni Relations. Mail to 300 East 27th Street, North Newton, KS 67117**, e-mail to *alumni@bethelks.edu* or submit via the Bethel website at **www.bethelks.edu/alumni-update**.

Please model your information after the current listings below, beginning with name, class year, city and state.

Anyone who earns 24 or more credit hours is a Bethel alumnus, whether a graduate or not. When reaching alumni status, they are assigned a "class year" (later replaced by "grad year" if they graduate).

The year behind each name below is the person's class year, often the same as the grad year unless the individual has told the alumni office that they wish to associate with another reunion year (as in the case of a five-year program, study overseas, etc., that delays graduation).

For additional activities of Bethel faculty and staff who are alumni of the college, go to **www.bethelks.edu/news-events/news-room/facstaff-achievements.**

## 2000–09

**Amelia Brandt** '06, Baltimore, passed her dissertation defense with honors in October 2020. Her topic was "Rumors: Evolution, Influencing Factors and Response during the 2014-16 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Pandemic in West Africa."

**Robin Linscheid Janzen** '00, Fresno, Calif., was elected to the board of the California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) as their District VI director, overseeing family physicians in eight California counties. She also became a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians. She works part time with the Fresno County Department of Public Health as their primary care liaison helping with the COVID response, and posts a weekly public Facebook update on local and national changes related to COVID-19. She was recently featured in the CAFP magazine.

**Megan Nagel** '05, Newton, has been named principal of Northridge Elementary School in Newton.

**Chelsea Vaught** '07, Henderson, Neb., became pastor of worship and congregational care at Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson.

## 2010–19

**Mayra Brooks** '18, Concordia, Kan., has joined the staff at the Family Care Center in Concordia as a family nurse practitioner.

**Leland Brown III** '16, Indianapolis, started as program director of diversity, equity and inclusion with USA Swimming.

**Mekale Chapple** '16, Oklahoma City, works as a registered nurse in OKC and turned to art when she needed a way to express her feelings about the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. She creates large-scale chalk portraits.

**Nicholas Preheim** '19, Hutchinson, Kan., received a 2021 Kansas Horizon Award, which recognizes first-year teachers for their outstanding teaching skills. Nick teaches first grade at Hutchinson STEM Magnet School at Allen.

**Elizabeth Ratzlaff** '19, Moundridge, Kan., received a 2021 Kansas Horizon Award, which recognizes first-year teachers for their outstanding teaching skills. Elizabeth teaches English Language Arts at Moundridge Middle School.

**Jared Regehr** '14, Halstead, Kan., received the Ascension Via Christi Resident Physician of the Year award for 2020. He will complete his residency in family medicine this summer.

**Alyssa Schrag** '12, Castelveccana, Italy, has started a masters program in archaeology at the University of Pavia, Italy.

## 2020-21

**Kelsey Potter** '20, El Dorado, Kan., received the 2020-21 Distinguished Classroom Teacher Award from Wichita Public Schools. Kelsey teaches 7th grade science at Stucky Middle School in Wichita.

## marriages

**Abigail Phillips** '18 and William Quinlan, Longview, Wash., Feb. 22, 2020

**Alyssa Schrag** '12 and Gionata Bianchi, Castelveccana, Varese, Italy, May 29, 2020

## births and adoptions

**Mattison (Hiebner)** '17 and **Josh Booth** '16, North Newton, a son, Copeland Robert, Feb. 19

**Rebecca Froese** '09 and Beau, Inman, Kan., a son, Gunnar Jude, adopted Sept. 2020

**Emily (Kliewer)** '10 and **Jordon Regehr** '09, Andover, Kan., a son, Holden Lawrence, Feb. 18

**Kylie (Jantz)** '12 and **Jacob Weber** '14, Manhattan, Kan., a son, Watson Allen, Dec. 24, 2020

## remembrances

**Rosalind (Enns) Andreas** '63, North Newton, March 15

**Elizabeth (Schmidt) Andres** '60, Ferndale, Wash., Sept. 18, 2020

**Harold Bartel** '50, North Newton, Dec. 5, 2020

**Elizabeth (Frazer) Cain** '48, Halstead, Kan., Nov. 3, 2020

**Leo Driedger** '54, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Dec. 28, 2020

**LuVerna Duerksen** '60, Sedgwick, Kan., Nov. 11, 2020

**Egon Enns** '68, Winnipeg, Oct. 28, 2020

**Donald Epp Jr.** '76, Beatrice, Neb., Dec. 9, 2020

**Joyce (Loewen) Franz** '55, North Newton, Oct. 17, 2020

**Ruby Friesen** '48, Mount Angel, Ore., Nov. 14, 2020

**John Gaeddert** '50, North Newton, Nov. 12, 2020

**Donald Graber** '51, Wichita, Oct. 12, 2020

**Mary Graber** '56, Goessel, Kan., Jan. 28

**Larry Goering** '71, Moundridge, Kan., April 25

**Lorene (Penner) Goering** '52, Newton, Jan. 13

**Elma (Goertzen) Goertz** '46, Goessel, Feb. 7

**Elinor (Friesen) Hall** '50, Newton, Oct. 12, 2020

**Rosanna Hamman-Hartkop** '10, Lima, Ohio, Nov. 1, 2020

**Dorothy Harder** '54, North Newton, Nov. 4, 2020

**Marvin Holck** '88, Hesston, Kan., Nov. 1, 2020

**Cale Hudson** '64, Chanute, Kan., Dec. 27, 2020

**Warren Kennedy** '62, Valley Center, Kan., Feb. 12

**Noah Larson** '21, Wichita, Dec. 28, 2020

**Judith Loganbill** '75, Wichita, Dec. 19, 2020

**Lynn Loucks** '67, North Newton, Nov. 22, 2020

**Myrtle (Mendel) Lundin** '57, Milbank, S.D., March 13

**Joanna (Krabill) McCreedy** '55, Littleton, Colo., Nov. 21, 2020

**Levi Minkevitch** '13, Peabody, Kan., Feb. 17

**Bruce Mueller** '58, Sioux Falls, S.D., Feb. 9, 2020

**Bruno Penner** '50, Mountain Lake, Minn., April 10, 2020

**Ruth (Fast) Reather** '51, Tulsa, Okla., Jan. 30, 2020

**Donald Schierling** '59, Denver, Feb. 12

**Allen Schmidt** '58, Marion, S.D., Oct. 19, 2020

**Archie Schmidt** '74, Peabody, Jan. 17

**Wilbert Schmidt** '55, Goessel, Feb. 6

**Anna Belle (Goering) Schmucker** '55, Boston Heights, Ohio, Feb. 21

**Elaine (Kroeker) Schroeder** '66, Goessel, Feb. 3

**Dorotha (Huebert) Sundquist** '57, Independence, Iowa, Nov. 4, 2020

**Carl Thieszen** '57, North Newton, Dec. 2, 2020

**Bruce Toews** '85, Inman, Kan., Oct. 26, 2020

**Ruth (Goossen) Unger** '53, Abbotsford, British Columbia, March 12, 2020

**Erlene (Boese) Unruh** '51, Goessel, Jan. 8

**Robert Unruh** '51, Goessel, Sept. 21, 2020

**Benjamin Voran** '64, Kingman, Kan., Aug. 13, 2020

**Ellen Ruth (Lohrentz) Voran** '50, Hesston, Nov. 22, 2020

**Irvin Voth** '60, Goessel, Jan. 22

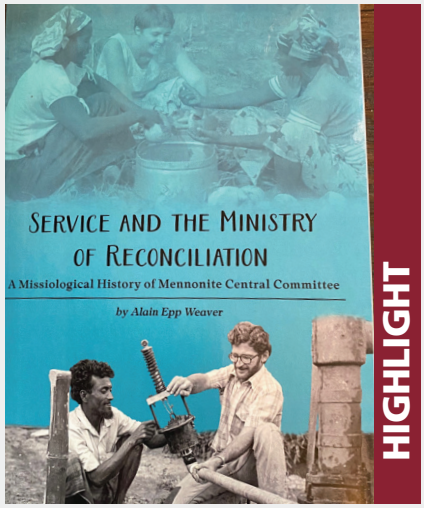
**Barbara (Burdette) Waltner** '64, Mulvane, Kan., March 7

**Kenneth Wedel** '56, Minneapolis, Kan., March 13

**Clarence "Gene" Whittle** '64, Enterprise, Kan., March 14

**Maurine (Neufeld) Woods** '55, Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 29

**Fredrick "Federico" Zerger** '71 Albuquerque, April 27




## ALUMNI LECTURES ARE LATEST VOLUME IN WEDEL SERIES

In January, the Mennonite Library and Archives released the 21st volume in its C.H. Wedel Series. *Service and the Ministry of Reconciliation: A Missiological History of Mennonite Central Committee* is the adapted and edited version of the 2019 Menno Simons Lectures that Alain Epp Weaver '91 delivered in anticipation of MCC's centennial in 2020.

The book comprises five chapters: the sermon Epp Weaver preached at Bethel College Mennonite Church before the first lecture, and the four lectures themselves.

*Service and the Ministry of Reconciliation* "dissect[s] and analyze[s] the shifts, tensions and persistent themes in how MCC has understood its mission [over a century], paying attention to how … service unfolded within and was shaped by specific landscapes," Epp Weaver writes in the Introduction.

Epp Weaver graduated from Bethel with a B.A. in philosophy and Bible and religion, and earned M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago.

The author of four previous books and editor of five, he currently works in strategic planning for MCC at its Akron, Pa., headquarters. He and his spouse, Sonia Weaver '91, spent 11 years with MCC in the West Bank and Gaza.

The book is available through the MLA (mla@bethelks.edu).

# FROM BLESSED TO BURNT OUT AND BACK



COURTESY PHOTO

by MELANIE ZUERCHER

## A variety of experiences has helped a social work alumna learn to center self-care.

Life has taught social work graduate Je T'aime Taylor '08 that you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others.

Je T'aime made a virtual visit to campus in the first week of March (National Social Work Month) to give the first Ada Schmidt-Tieszen '74 Lecture virtually on March 1, and engage in a question-and-answer session a few days later.

The lectureship was established to honor Ada, who taught social work at Bethel for 35 years, upon her retirement at the end of the 2019-20 school year.

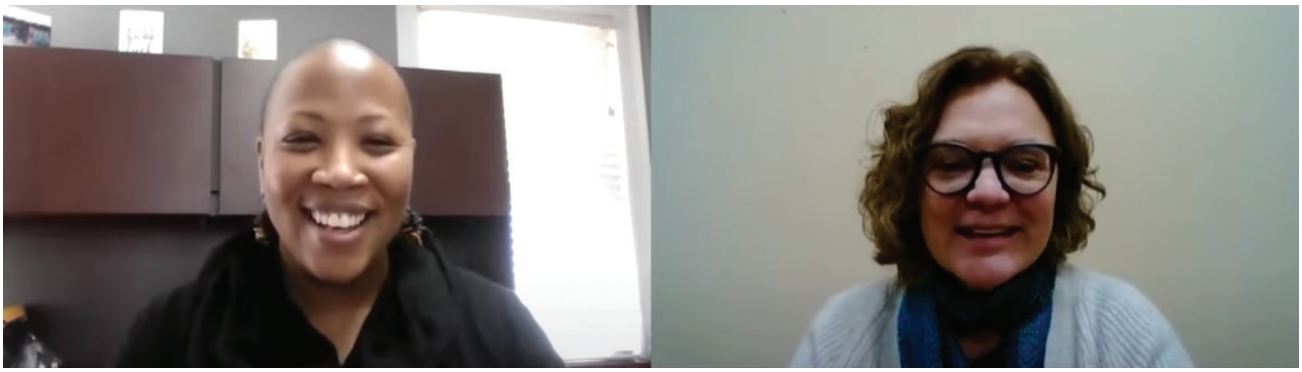
Je T'aime recently became executive director of the Front Porch Alliance, which provides education services for young children (ages 0-5) and parents, in east Kansas City, Mo.

Her first job after graduating from Bethel was as a program administrator with Mennonite Central Committee Central States, with offices adjacent to Bethel's campus on the north. A 16-state geographic area and programs located from the extreme rural of the Northern Cheyenne nation in Montana to the other end of the spectrum in post-Katrina New Orleans meant Je T'aime pretty much lived out of a suitcase during her MCC years, she says.

In addition to opportunities to travel "all over North America, including Canada and Mexico," being in MCC introduced Taylor to Mennonites in-depth.

Raised Baptist, she says, "I had never been in a church with four-part harmony [singing] before. I liked the emphasis on simplicity and simple living.

"The Mennonite ideals of service [also] drew me in. My family had taught me that. I have always had a sense of community [from] my grandmothers and my mother: 'We have to do our part. We are only as good as the least of these.' It was embedded in me before I even knew what 'social work' was."



Je T'aime Taylor, left, and Ada Schmidt-Tieszen engage in a Q&A following Taylor's March 1 convo presentation.

There were darker sides, too. "I began realizing there are things in Mennonite culture you don't talk about – such as the relationship to the land grab in Kansas and Oklahoma. While I was at MCC Central States, Canada was going through their reckoning with the boarding school scandals.

"In a lot of ways, Mennonites and the Mennonite Church are very forward-thinking in their responsibility to the community and the world. But they also need to process what it means to have been Europeans coming to the United States – fleeing persecution, and then buying into it on another hand."

Even after leaving MCC Central States, Je T'aime stayed connected to Mennonites by taking her next job with the Rosedale Development Association, a nonprofit with strong support from Rainbow Mennonite Church, which was then located in the Rosedale neighborhood of Kansas City, Kan.

Je T'aime started as executive director of Front Porch Alliance in November 2020, well into the pandemic and with a lot of thought about lessons she had learned in her study of social work but only relatively recently started to take seriously: to listen to herself and her own body and mind.

The two previous positions had left her with both blessings and burnout.

"This is something you learn in social work – even though all through my 20s and the majority of my 30s, I didn't [do it]. The wisdom that comes with age is telling me [now] that I have to – because your body will tell you, by either tapping your shoulder or screaming. I would prefer the tap to the scream.

"[During my years with MCC] I was fighting systems, trying to change them. Being the first person of color in that [program administrator] role was a lot to carry. In so many ways, the way the structure was set up, whether intentional or not, it pitted folks against each other.

"I don't know if the institution could see it, but I could. Five years in, I was burned out with having to coach people and try to [help them see] what I saw.

"Now that I'm in my 40s, I don't have it in me to be the one out there in front. I'm realizing that it can't always be me – even though my grandmother would always say, 'If it's not you, then who?' and I would tell myself, 'You can do this. If you don't do it, who will?'"

During the Black Lives Matter protests in Kansas City last summer, following the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota in May 2020, Je T'aime chose to stay home and take care of children to allow others to be on the front lines.

"We have to choose how we show up in the world," she said in her convocation lecture. "Do we address issues or hide from them? Or something in between?

"I had to say: 'I can't be out protesting.' I had to sit back and rest and rejuvenate so that I had enough of me to share with the movements I believe in."

And after spending more than half her life working with and organizing communities, she says, "You start to realize that everything you've experienced and taught has affected the kids you worked with. It's enabling them to take over, to do the work."

> This year [2020] has caused me to slow down and look around and realize: 'You have trained your replacements.' You see the people you've taught are standing alongside you. It's beautiful and it's eye-opening. And now I say: 'I will support you and stand alongside you and it's time for me to go.'

The Ada Schmidt-Tieszen Lecture will be given each March, National Social Work Month, on a topic related to one or more core values of social work (service, social justice, dignity, integrity, competence, human relationships).

A committee representing family and current social work students and faculty will pick the speakers. For the first one, the committee was Tina Graber '07 and Alison Schmidt-Tieszen '11 (Ada's daughters, both Bethel social work graduates), Jennifer Chappell-Deckert '96, Ph.D., associate professor of social work, and graduating senior Amondr'e Schumpert-Street, De Soto, Texas.

In addition to personal gifts, two memorial funds, honoring Professor Emeritus of Social Work Larry Friesen '67, who taught in the department for 28 years and died in August 2020, and pastor and artist John Gaeddert '50, who died in November 2020, have contributed to the lectureship.

CAMPUS
# NEWS

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## CONCERT CHOIR GIVES A HOOT FOR RURAL AUDIENCE





MELANIE ZUERCHER

Student conductor Trae Gehring leads the Bethel College Concert Choir, singing in a amphitheater made of hay bales.

Unusual times call for unusual venues – which is why the Bethel College Concert Choir found itself this spring singing to a pair of young Great Horned Owls.

They were at the Klingenberg farm in rural Marion County, Kan., April 13 at the invitation of Derek Klingenberg.

While raising cattle and crops with his father and two brothers, Klingenberg also finds time to put mostly humorous videos on his "Farmer Derek" YouTube channel.

In late winter when a pair of Bald Eagles built a nest in a large tree on Klingenberg land, Klingenberg installed a 24-hour "eagle cam" – which picked up the drama of the adult owls driving the eagles from their new roost.

Klingenberg dubbed the owl pair Bonnie and Clyde. They subsequently hatched two owlets, Tiger and Lily.

In September 2018, Klingenberg invited William Eash, Bethel's director of choral activities, to bring the Concert Choir out to the farm to sing in a newly erected grain bin. The resulting video became one of Farmer Derek's most popular, garnering more than 2 million views.

Klingenberg has been working to find another reason to get the choir back, and he came up with one: lullabies for the owls.

He stacked hay bales to form an amphitheater, set up a second camera and recording equipment on the back of a truck, and invited Eash to bring the choir.

A small human audience, comprising mostly Klingenbergs and extended family, gathered to listen to Susan LaBarr's "The Wisdom of the Moon" and two traditional lullabies, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and Brahms' "Lullaby."

The latter two had new words, written by choir member Jessie Thomas. "Sleeping, sleeping, tiny owls, rest in fluffy springtime down," began the erstwhile "Twinkle, Twinkle." The second song started with "Lullaby, and goodnight, in the night you'll be screeching."

The concert closed as every Bethel Concert Choir performance does, with "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," for which choir alumni Carol Klingenberg '69 and Brett Klingenberg '03 joined the group.

You can see the Concert Choir singing to the owls by way of Bethel's Facebook page or by finding Farmer Derek on YouTube.

**MELANIE ZUERCHER**

# LIVING UP TO 'IDEAL AMERICA' MEANS TAKING IT SERIOUSLY, SPEAKER SAYS

Although Leonard Pitts Jr. doesn't hold out much hope for the future of the United States, he hasn't given it up, either.

The author and syndicated columnist presented the KIPCOR Peace Lecture at Bethel April 25, a few months shy of four years after giving one in September 2017.

KIPCOR, the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, is celebrating its 36th year, as one of the oldest peacebuilding institutes in the United States.

In 2017, Pitts offered some words on "America in the Age of Donald Trump."

"I made an argument," Pitts said, "that, thanks to gerrymandering making it all but impossible to unseat certain congresspersons, thanks to conservatives undermining the credibility of news media and news media doing far too little to fight back, and thanks to the Republican Party embracing an agenda of what I call 'anti-fact,' America had gone, and I quote, 'bat-crap crazy.'

"At the time, that seemed like a pretty harsh indictment. Four years later, it turns out to have been an understatement.

"I now find myself wishing the nation was *only* bat-crap crazy. Unfortunately, we have reached whatever level of insanity comes after that. … And the question of the moment is, can we ever find our way back home again?"

Pitts returned to Bethel to speak on the topic "Is America Possible?"

The so-called American Dream, Pitts said, stems from some words a young Thomas Jefferson wrote 245 years ago, approved by the 56 delegates of the Continental Congress, that created the first nation ever founded on the "incendiary idea" that "all men are created equal" and have the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"I wonder sometimes if Jefferson himself believed what he wrote," Pitts said, "or truly understood what he wrote or if, perhaps, he wrote more than he meant to."

Jefferson, after all, was a slave owner.

"But in a very real sense, it doesn't matter if Jefferson really understood, believed or knew what he wrote. The bottom line is, he wrote it, … they signed it and people here and around the world took … America at its word."

Most are familiar, he said, with Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous speeches, "I have a dream" and "I've been to the mountaintop."

"For me," Pitts said, "one of his most … poignant statements wasn't particularly eloquent or stirring at all but was, rather, the plaintive cry of a man frustrated with this nation's failure to live up to what Thomas Jefferson wrote.

"'All we say to America,' said King, 'is, be true to what you said on paper.' That's the manifesto of every freedom movement in American history, distilled down to 14 words.

"King said this on April 3, 1968, the night before he was killed by a sniper. And 53 years later, here we are, still waiting on this country to be true to what it said on paper.

"That's why the question resonates: Is America possible? Can the ideal be put into effect? Or will Americans screw up America?

"Indeed, I submit to you that America is as near to perfect as anything ever created by human hands. But Americans repeatedly fail to live up to it. Mainly because they simply refuse to take it seriously."

He listed examples from a mob beating of German, Irish and Catholic immigrants trying to vote in Kentucky in 1855 to the 2016 presidential election.

"In these ways and thousands more, Americans have refused to live up to America.

"You will say 'not all Americans' and certainly, you'll be right. And yet, there never seems to be enough of a critical mass of Americans to make a difference, never enough who oppose the defilement of our national ideal to do anything about it.

"We are reactionary creatures," he continued. "So people are much more readily moved to fight what they fear than defend what they're for. Fear is a powerful motivator. Indeed, it has frequently moved many to campaign against their own best interests."

However, Pitts said, the number of people willing to "defend what they're for" is greater than the other.

This or that group of people is not "the problem," Pitts said.

"Ignorance is the problem. Fear is the problem. And the ideal to which Jefferson committed the United States was not made for fearful people. To the contrary, that ideal demands courage.


VADA SNIDER

Leonard Pitts gives his Peace Lecture in Mem Hall in 2017.

"Americans have never been short of physical courage or the courage to endure. But we've never quite had the courage to believe what we say we believe and to act accordingly. We've never had the backbone to be true to what we said on paper.

"It is time to show some guts. Americans must do this. Because America is worth it."

In response to an audience question, Pitts further noted, "I like to think [the sharp increase, after the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, in white people] engaging in antiracism training and analysis reflects a realization by white people that this is a problem they have to fix and only they can fix.

"Racism is not a Black problem. The effects of it are. Racism is not my problem to fix. That's been a difficult place for white people to get to mentally.

"We need to see more white people taking it seriously and being involved. It's the only way it's going to change, [the only way] we're going to save our country – put aside our fear and live up to our founding dream."

**MELANIE ZUERCHER**

# PRO ATHLETE TURNED SPEAKER TELLS AUDIENCE: 'HAVE THE COURAGE TO TEACH'

At 18, Chris Singleton of Charleston, S.C., thought his life was going pretty well. He had wrapped up his first season of college baseball with his coach telling him he had a shot at the major leagues if he kept working hard and playing as he had been.

Singleton, now 24, was the featured speaker Jan. 18 for Bethel's annual celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. An inspirational speaker who travels the country, Singleton brought his message of "Love is stronger than hate" to the Krehbiel Auditorium stage for one of the first in-person events since the pandemic shut-down began in March 2020 (there was also a livestream option, and the presentation can still be viewed on Bethel's YouTube channel).

Andre Bradford of Austin, Texas, a spoken-word artist who performs as S.C. Says, opened the program with a live virtual presentation. Before Singleton spoke, a short video played of the aftermath of the shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on June 17, 2015, in which a young white man murdered nine people, all of them Black.

One was Singleton's mother, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, a speech therapist and track coach.

As a freshman starter for Charleston Southern University's baseball team, Singleton quickly picked up the ritual of writing the same Scripture verse on his wrist before games, Proverbs 24:10: "If a man falters in the day of adversity, he is a man of little strength."

"I figured God gave me that Scripture for baseball, [for the] adversity in my sport," Singleton said. Three months later, when he received the phone call that led him to a hotel near his church to identify the body of his mother, "I realized why I was given that Scripture, and it had nothing to do with baseball.

"The unthinkable for me was telling my 12-year-old brother and 15-year-old sister that our mom was gone forever. No more kisses on the cheek. No more hugs after a ball game. No more screaming from the stands. All because someone was misinformed to hate me and the color of my skin."

Singleton says at least part of the answer is education.




Chris Singleton

"What are we teaching, with the influence we have over our friends, our dorm-mates, our cousins, our little brothers and sisters, our significant others? You can either bring people together, or you're not doing anything, and it's actually tearing people apart."

Singleton said that a life-altering quote for him came from Charles Swindoll: "The longer I live, the more convinced I become that life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it."

"I had it rough," Singleton said. "My dad was alcoholic. He died of liver disease about a year after my mom died. My mom [was] shot because of hate in [a man's] heart and [because of] a chemical in our skin. But that's only 10 percent.

"The 10 percent is we had an alcoholic father. The 90 is my brother and me promising each other we'll never become alcoholics.

"My 10 percent is my mom was murdered while she was praying. The 90 is speaking all across this country every single opportunity I get, reminding people, because some forgot, that we didn't choose our skin color, our first language, where we were born.

"So why would I ever hate you, or you hate me, because of things neither of us can choose? If only someone would have taught that to my mother's killer.

"People say, 'I don't see color, Chris.' Why don't you see it? Colorblind? You should see it! Celebrate it! Just because you're different doesn't mean I automatically assume certain things, because I remember, hey, I didn't choose things about my life, either.

"I do see that you're different than me. I can learn from you, so then I can teach others. There are so many stereotypes around people that are false. If only we had people to teach us, and the courage to teach others – I think my mom would still be here."

Singleton finished his talk with a quote from baseball great Jackie Robinson.

He uses it because of Tywanza Sanders, age 26, the youngest person killed at Mother Emanuel Church in June 2015, who tried to talk down the shooter. Some believe that Sanders' mother and niece, who were also in the church, survived unharmed because of Sanders' effort.

"The same day he was murdered," Singleton said, "Tywanza posted on his Instagram this quote from Jackie Robinson: 'One life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.'

"Go out and teach. Save a life. Make an impact. And maybe the next Chris Singleton can have his son meet his grandma."

**MELANIE ZUERCHER**

# NEWEST VP TAKES ON UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION




Heidi Hoskinson, Ph.D., began Feb. 22 as vice president for enrollment management at Bethel College.

Her position on Bethel's administrative cabinet fills that occupied previously by the vice president for admissions (most recently Andy Johnson, with Eric Preheim '16 serving as interim director for admissions since Aug. 5, 2020).

The new title reflects a reorganization of the VP job description to emphasize student retention equal in importance to recruitment.

Hoskinson has spent her career in higher education, in an array of different roles. She comes to Bethel from Rogers State University, Claremore, Okla., where she was VP for enrollment management and registrar since 2015.

Hoskinson's credentials include a B.A. in economics from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., an M.S. in educational leadership from Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, and a Ph.D. in adult and higher education with an administration emphasis from the University of Oklahoma at Norman.

She is no stranger to Kansas or to Bethel and its peer schools.

Her dissertation at OU investigated increased funding for athletic programs as a driver for enrollment changes in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC), of which Bethel is a member.

In addition, she spent 10 years at Friends University, Wichita, 2005-15, as associate VP for academic affairs with one year as interim VPAA, 2014-15.

From 1994-2003, Hoskinson held diverse positions at three different institutions of higher education in Honolulu, Hawaii.

She was director of student services and a residence hall director at Chaminade University; director of admissions and student services at Argosy University; and director of student life and development at Honolulu Community College.

From 2003-05, she was vice president of administration at Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, before coming to Friends in 2005.

Hoskinson has also been an instructor at DeVry University in Oklahoma City.

"During her campus interview, Heidi demonstrated a deep and thorough understanding of the forces that are shaping higher education, and the corresponding actions that we must take to grow enrollment and increase retention," said Bethel President Jon Gering '94.

"Heidi's references spoke to her collaborative and effective work style, her fondness for higher education in a residential setting, and her past successes. Most importantly, Heidi conveyed to me that her 'heart is at Bethel.'"

"What an honor to join the Thresher community at a time of profound challenge and rewarding opportunity for higher education," Hoskinson said.

"The values inherent in a Bethel College education resonate as deeply today as they have for over a century. I know I am at the right place at the right time to make a valuable contribution to the life of an exceptional institution and its students."



# HAYNES JOINS NONPROFIT CLINIC BOARD


TAYLOR BROWN

Samuel Haynes, vice president for student life and dean of students, has been appointed to the board of Health Ministries Clinic (HMC), Newton.

Haynes' presence on the board marks a relationship between HMC and the college that has been growing over the past several years.

HMC is a private, not-for-profit community health center that serves Harvey County and surrounding communities, by providing primary medical, dental and behavioral health services, along with ancillary services like in-house lab, diagnostic imaging and pharmacy services.

The clinic began through the efforts of local physician Tim Wiens '77, who was seeking ways to get access to medical care to the underserved. He enlisted other local health-care providers who donated their time in the clinic's early years.

In addition to accepting Medicare, Medicaid and most major commercial medical insurance, HMC uses a sliding fee scale to ensure access to everyone, no matter their income or insurance coverage.

Earlier this school year, HMC began an on-campus walk-in clinic, two half-days a week.

"HMC is always looking at outreach opportunities," said CEO Matthew Schmidt '94. "Bethel College approached us regarding how we might partner to enhance access to health-care services for their students.

"As a result of those conversations, Health Ministries Clinic agreed to set up an outreach clinic on campus. Once students establish care [on campus], they are also able to access the main clinic. Sam was highly involved in the efforts to get this project off the ground."

College students often aren't the first group to come to mind when thinking of "the underserved" in a community, Schmidt added. "But here they are, away from home, away from the familiar, including their own health-care providers."

HMC is governed by a 12-member board of local directors, selected to represent constituencies that include clinic users as well as other community stakeholders.

"One of the hallmarks of a health center board is having directors that are able to represent various and diverse perspectives and viewpoints within your community," Schmidt said.

"The board was very excited Sam was willing to accept an invitation to serve the clinic and the community in this way. Not only does this help strengthen a connection with Bethel College, but Sam also has a reputation for his willingness to engage both people and issues in a thoughtful and constructive way."

"I'm thrilled about the opportunity to serve on the Health Ministries board," Haynes said. "It brings two of my passions together – my love and affinity for the college and the campus community, and my concern and care for public health and access to care for all people.

"This is a terrific opportunity for me. It gives me a focus beyond the college into the wider community, while also creating a partnership, a bridge, between it and Bethel College."

HIGHLIGHT


COURTESY PHOTO

From left, Joe Smucker '84, Brad Schmidt '88 (director of alumni engagement), Becki Dick '78, Garrett Whorton '07 (director of development), Gary Dick '79, Allen Whorton, Glen Ediger '75, Scott Erb '86, Blair Loganbill '95, Darrel Schmidt (custodian) and Wayne Schrag '75

After 2020's virtual Alumni Motorcycle Ride, this year's group was more than happy for a beautiful spring day and an in-person adventure.

Eleven alumni and friends met at Centennial Plaza in front of Mem Hall for coffee and donuts on the morning of May 8 before taking a leisurely ride to Augusta, Kan., for a visit to the Twisted Oz Motorcycle Museum.

The museum features more than 70 vintage motorcycles and many historic artifacts.

"We got a tour from the owner [Kelly Modlin]," said Joe Smucker '84. "He has had some amazing experiences and loves to tell stories about his rally rides on antique motorcycles. He told us about riding with a group from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon."

Smucker has participated in the rides since they began in 2018 – including taking a ride with a friend last May and sending photos to the Bethel alumni office in order to earn his 2020 Alumni Motorcycle Ride T-shirt.

Next year's Alumni Motorcycle Ride is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2022.

# KERSHNER TAGGED AMONG WOMEN LEADERS IN EDUCATION

Megan Kershner, Bethel's director of career and leadership development, has been named by the *Wichita Business Journal* as one of 21 "Women Who Lead in Education."

Half of the women, like Kershner, work in higher education, from universities to private colleges, in the south-central Kansas region.

Kershner graduated from Bethel College in 2008 with a B.A. in music. In 2009, she began as volunteer coordinator for Schowalter Villa, a retirement community in Hesston, Kan.

That was where, Kershner says, she found her "love for working with people and connecting them with opportunities that aligned with their interests.

"I decided to advance this passion by diving right into human resources work. After a few years of interviewing candidates and looking over resumes, I realized I wanted to help better prepare people for the workforce. Now, at Bethel College, I am able to incorporate past experiences into assisting students develop professionalism, both in person and on paper."

In 2014, Kershner moved to Prairie View Mental Health Services in Newton as a human resources specialist, and in 2016, she began working at Bethel as director of career services, a student-focused position.

In 2018, she added the role of director of human resources, which meant working with different aspects of job placement and college employee services.

In 2020, Kershner assumed a new position, director of career and leadership development.

In addition to working with students on the nuts and bolts of campus employment, she is also tasked with helping them prepare for the workforce after graduation, and has played a key role in Bethel's process toward becoming a federally recognized Work College.



CHASE DEMPSEY

Megan Kershner, right, with student Hailey Hill

"I help students prepare for their career by providing resume or CV guidance, job search strategies, interview prep, salary negotiation tips, and so on.

"Navigating career readiness can quickly become overwhelming to any college student and I try to help eliminate that stress. There is no better feeling than helping a student not only discover what career they want to pursue, but also the path that may help them get there."

Kershner noted that working under COVID-19 conditions has been challenging but also brought new opportunities.

"I found new ways to reach students. Virtual appointments became a must and thankfully, students were still responsive and reaching out for guidance.

"This [was also an] opportunity to help prepare students for virtual networking [and] interviewing, and having a professional screen presence."

Kershner earned her MBA at Kansas Wesleyan University in 2017.

At Bethel, she currently serves on Bethel's Strategic Planning, Title IX and URICA committees. She is a member of the Newton Chamber of Commerce board and the Harvey County Human Resources Cohort, and has held past board positions with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Harvey County RSVP and Hesston Intergenerational Community Childcare.

"Working with students and watching them grow professionally is truly rewarding, and I am thankful for the part I get to play in that development."

# HLC APPROVES MAJOR IN SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Bethel's accrediting body, has approved the college's application to begin a Bachelor of Science in software development. The program is set to start in August 2022.

"The major is the natural outgrowth of a history of effective computer science education at Bethel," said Robert Milliman, Ph.D., vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty. "The program was developed by the faculty in consultation with a group of alumni who are experts in computer-related fields.

"The Bethel degree will give students a competitive advantage that comes from a liberal arts education," Milliman added. "Graduates will develop the ability to think critically and to gain leadership skills that will help them to succeed and advance in their careers.

"The new software development major will prepare students for a career in a computer-related field that is experiencing phenomenal growth in the region and throughout the nation."

# MIDDLETON TAKES NEW ROLE IN ATHLETICS




Stacy Middleton '95 has resigned as head volleyball coach to take a new appointment as athletic operations administrator.

"I appreciate everything Stacy did for Bethel volleyball over the past four years as head coach," said Director of Athletics Tony Hoops '05. "She poured her heart and soul into a program she loves."

Middleton spent the past four seasons coaching Thresher volleyball, beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

In her four seasons with the program, the team qualified for the KCAC postseason tournament twice.

The Threshers had five players earn All-KCAC honors, 20 selected as KCAC Scholar-Athletes and nine as NAIA Scholar-Athletes.

The team was designated a "Scholar-Team" by both the KCAC and NAIA in all three prior seasons, with a fourth designation likely this season.

"Following the completion of the [2020-21] season, Stacy and I met and we concluded that a change in leadership was needed within the program," Hoops said. "I respect her greatly for continuing to have the best intentions for Bethel College volleyball and its future going forward."

Middleton was the founding coach for Thresher softball in 2011. Beyond coaching, she has served as KCAC and NAIA Champions of Character liaison, member of the Assessment and Chapel Committees, interim Host Family Program coordinator and basketball game day administrator.

"Stacy has a unique skill set that impacts not just our athletic department but the entire campus," Hoops said.

Middleton will assume the new role of athletic operations administrator, with responsibilities that include overseeing specific athletic fundraising and helping with the department's efforts in compliance, game day administration, Title IX and special events.

The need for this position comes hand-in-hand with rapid growth in the student-athlete population, due to coaches reaching the designated institutional roster expectations, Hoops said.

"This has increased the need for fundraising, and administrative oversight of an increased number of competitions on campus. The position will enhance the student-athlete experience and retention efforts of the college."

"I am ready to play a bigger role in athletics as a whole," Middleton said. "I'm excited for this challenge and the opportunity to have a greater impact with our Bethel students, alumni, donors and community."

**JOSH BOOTH**

# MCCORD MOVES FROM INTERIM TO PERMANENT COACH

Kiley McCord, interim coach for competitive dance, has moved into the permanent position.

McCord stepped in to lead Bethel's newest athletic program at the end of the fall semester, following the resignation of Ashley Davis.

"I'm extremely excited for the future of Bethel College dance with Kiley now in a permanent role," said Tony Hoops '05, athletic director. "She did an outstanding job, taking over during a tough time right at the beginning of the competitive season."

The team saw individual progress, with Meya Green becoming the first All-KCAC athlete in the program's history, named to the KCAC 2nd Team, and Edel Miller and Evelyn Manresa designated KCAC Scholar-Athletes.

As the interim coach, McCord led the Threshers to four top-three finishes, including 2nd place at the NAIA Southwest Regional Qualifier to cap off their year.

McCord has been a dance instructor and coach in the Newton community for more than 20 years. She is currently the owner of and an instructor for High Street Dance, Newton, a studio comprising multiple competitive dance teams.

Before opening High Street Dance, McCord spent seven years, 1997-2004, as dance coach at Newton High School.

She has also participated in competitive dance, as a student at Newton High School and Cowley College, Winfield, Kan.

McCord holds an A.A. degree from Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College and a bachelor's degree in marketing from Wichita State University.




"Kiley's leadership, organization, passion and expertise in dance [points] to a very bright future for Bethel competitive dance," Hoops said.

**JOSH BOOTH**

# AWARD-WINNING COACH TAKES OVER THRESHER VOLLEYBALL

Adriana Leake has been appointed head volleyball coach at Bethel, the 9th since 1973.

"Adriana rose to the top of a very strong candidate list," said Bethel Director of Athletics Tony Hoops '05. "She was well referred from the beginning of our search and exceeded expectations during the interview process."

Leake comes to Bethel after spending the past two seasons as head volleyball coach at Wichita Northwest High School. The Grizzlies won a Kansas 5A Sub-State Championship this season, with Leake named the Wichita Area Co-Coach of the Year by the *Wichita Eagle*.

"I am honored to be named head coach of a program with a history as rich as Bethel volleyball's," Leake said. "When I walk into the gym and see those banners from years ago, I'm excited about the opportunity to breathe new life into the Bethel College volleyball program."

She continued, "There's work to do, but I know we can build a program that the community and alumni will be proud of."

Leake has previous experience with the KCAC, both as a coach and a player. Originally from Texas, Leake became the all-time record holder for career assists at Sterling (Kan.) College with 4,264 from 2009-12. She was a four-time All-KCAC player during her career, including a 1st-Team appearance her senior season.

After graduating from Sterling in 2013, Leake joined the staff as an assistant coach during the 2013-14 and 2015-16 seasons. She also spent time as an assistant at Friends University, Wichita, during 2018-19.

"Adriana is very familiar with small-college volleyball and has connections all across the country," said Hoops.

"Her work at Northwest speaks for itself. We believe she is a rising star in the volleyball coaching profession and we are extremely fortunate to have her lead Bethel College volleyball going forward."

Leake also brings connections to Bethel on the club volleyball circuit. She is currently part of the Wichita Legacy club organization, helping develop players at all age levels.


COURTESY PHOTO

"Adriana's demeanor is very similar to past legendary coaches who served as the foundation of Bethel College volleyball," Hoops said. "Her confidence, knowledge, communication and professionalism make her the perfect fit for the proud Bethel volleyball [tradition]."

Leake has a B.S. in business administration from Sterling College and an M.S. in education from Fort Hays State University.

**JOSH BOOTH**

# BOARD APPROVES NEW SPORT TO START IN 2022

The Bethel Board of Directors held its regular spring board meeting via video conference April 8-10, with one of its actions being to approve the college's 19th varsity athletic program.

Women's flag football will begin with the 2022-23 school year. The search for a head coach begins in July, with the 2021-22 school year used to build the program before Bethel declares as a full-fledged member of the NAIA and begins competing in 2022-23.

Bethel will become the fourth full-time member institution of the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC) to field a varsity women's flag football team, joining Kansas Wesleyan University, Ottawa University and University of Saint Mary along with associate members Midland University and Cottey College, whose teams competed in the KCAC's inaugural season this year.

"Bethel is excited to be at the forefront" of the growth surrounding the sport, said Athletic Director Tony Hoops '05.

"This will not only increase the number of female student-athletes on our campus but also allow for a more diverse population on campus comprising athletes from the southwest and southeast parts of the country where women's flag football is very popular already in high schools," he added.

In other action, the board approved a presidential evaluation process, and a recommendation for promotion to full professor for Rachel Epp Buller '96, Ph.D., visual arts and design.

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# TWO FACULTY AWARDS GIVEN IN 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR




The first Franz Community Service Award since 2012 has been presented to Geraldine Tyrell '08, DNP, director of nursing and associate professor of nursing.

This award, named in honor of Julius '67 and Agatha Dyck Franz, recognizes a faculty member judged to have made an especially important contribution to the college community through achievements and service beyond classroom teaching and scholarship.

In his citation, Robert Milliman, Ph.D., vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, said, "With this award, the college recognizes Geri's leadership in guiding the Bethel community through a year of living and working on a college campus during a pandemic.

"Daily, Geri donned protective gear to check on our students even as she taught and led in the nursing department. She has cared for isolated and quarantined students, given hundreds of COVID tests, arranged for vaccinations and attended countless meetings with the Harvey County Health Department and the Bethel College Emergency Response Team.

"Geri has been involved in every aspect of providing care for the Bethel College community, [ranging] from consistent communication with administration and employees to personally disinfecting all the door knobs in the campus office buildings one day."

Tyrell joined the Bethel nursing faculty in January 2008. In addition to her BSN from Bethel, Tyrell earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, Tulsa, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in educational leadership from American Sentinel University.

During commencement on May 16, Milliman announced the Ralph P. Schrag '37 Distinguished Teaching Award, which was given to David Long, professor of visual arts and design, in absentia because he was attending the graduation of his son, Aaron Long '19, from an international affairs master's degree program at Penn State University on May 16.

This award recognizes a Bethel faculty member who has made an outstanding contribution to teaching.

Observations and comments from teaching colleagues are one factor in determining the Schrag Award recipient.

"For example," Milliman noted, "one of his colleagues stated, 'I've been impressed both by his hands-on teaching style and with his patience with students in helping them learn difficult creative processes.

"'Most of his courses contain a mix of art majors and students looking for arts and humanities [general education] credit, which are sometimes quite different populations. David has learned well how to teach to different levels of students, helping each of them achieve their best work.'"

Another factor is student evaluations. "Comments [from these evaluations] reveal how valued [David's] teaching is," Milliman said.

"One student wrote, 'Professor Long was a very patient and welcoming teacher. The arts are not my strong suit but he made me feel that step-by-step I could make some pretty cool projects.'

"Bethel College is fortunate to have such a gifted instructor, artist and colleague in our midst," Milliman concluded.

Long began teaching at Bethel in 2001 and is currently the chair of the department. He has an M.A. in ceramics from the University of Colorado, an M.A. in art history from Arizona State University and an MFA in ceramics from Wichita State University. He frequently exhibits both ceramics and photography locally.




SAVE THE DATE!

CORNERSTONE DAY
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**THE 2ND ANNUAL CORNERSTONE DAY IS OCT. 12, 2021.**

Take this opportunity to band together in support of the Bethel College Fund, or your favorite academic department or athletic team.

**#ThreshersUnite**

# SCIENCE STUDENTS HONORED WITH THRESHER AWARDS

Two students in the sciences are the recipients of 2021 Thresher Awards.

Bethel's highest academic award is given to graduating seniors who have made a "truly outstanding and sustained contribution" in a performance area (e.g., music, visual arts, drama) or a "truly outstanding creative achievement" in the applied sciences, or have completed "a truly outstanding and substantial project" in any academic discipline.


LINDSEY PFANNENSTIEL

Alayna Wallace, McPherson, Kan., received a Thresher Award in psychology, presented by department chair Bradley D. Celestin '03, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology, and Professor Emeritus of Psychology Dwight Krehbiel '69, Ph.D. Wallace graduated May 16 with a double major in natural sciences and psychology.

Among other things, the Thresher citation noted her multi-year research project that worked at developing "knowledge at the intersection of psychology and dentistry."

Wallace looked at the effects of dentists' interactions and procedures on patient anxiety and satisfaction, and how likely they were to continue treatment.

Her research was chosen for the competitive Posters on the Hill event sponsored by the National Council on Undergraduate Research, which took place virtually in April this year.

"Her professionalism, enthusiasm, communication ability and good-natured spirit make her easy to work with," Celestin and Krehbiel wrote in the citation, "and her leadership as the head of research groups and student organizations [Wallace served two years as student body president] … has allowed her to grow and shine."

Adam Sigwing, Halstead, Kan., received a Thresher Award in biology, presented by Professor of Biology Jon K. Piper, Ph.D. Sigwing graduated May 16 with a major in biology.

Piper noted that he knew Sigwing as a student interested in science even before college, when Sigwing attended Bethel's Summer Science Institute for high school students.

Sigwing entered Bethel with a clear interest in studying biology, having been awarded a competitive STEM Science Scholarship for his four years.

In addition to successfully completing his biology major, Piper noted, Sigwing has been involved in Bethel's Environmental Action Club, spearheading a successful native plant sale fundraiser for the group, and has helped manage the prairie restoration at Kauffman Museum.

He has worked as a summer field assistant to Piper and gone a half-dozen times with Professor of Biology Francisca Méndez-Harclerode, Ph.D., and groups conducting small-mammal surveys in Oklahoma.

But Piper's main reason for giving the Thresher, he said, comes from the fact that "never during my nearly quarter-century as a faculty member at Bethel have I been aware of another student who has devoted three academic years, including summers, to a thesis project. This, in particular, is what makes Adam an extreme rarity as an undergraduate."

When Sigwing was a sophomore, in 2018, he began working as the student assistant to Piper in a two-year, multisite study in cooperation with researchers at the University of Kansas and funded by the National Science Foundation to examine the role of soil microorganisms in maintaining plant biodiversity within tallgrass prairie.

The original goal was to complete the study in the summer of 2020 – and then COVID-19 threw a huge monkey wrench, extending what was designed as a two-year project into a third year.

"As a result," said Piper, "Adam – who has invested a colossal amount of time and energy in this research year-round – will graduate before he sees it to come to its final fruition, and the study will be handed over to a successor to complete."

Sigwing started an internship soon after graduation with the Scientists in Parks program operated by the National Park Service and the Geological Society of America, assisting in the collection of field data for the Grassland Monitoring Project.

"I expect nothing but greatness from Adam in the future," Piper said, "and anticipate the day when he will become an important contributor within the field of environmental conservation."


LINDSEY PFANNENSTIEL

# CAMPUS SNAPSHOTS, SPRING 2021



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PHOTOS BY LINDSEY PFANNENSTIEL AND JIM TURNER

**1. Bubbert Awards** (student films), May 7; **2. Students on the Green**; **3. Casino Night,** March 26; **4. Students in the classroom**; **5. Nurse Lamplighting,** Feb. 6; **6. Commencement,** May 16; **7. Commencement,** May 16; **8. Threshpy Awards** (athletics), May 9; **9. Commencement,** May 16


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## VIRTUAL CORPORATION ANNUAL MEETING

**Members of the Bethel College Corporation**
**Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, 7:30 p.m. (CDT) by Zoom**

- Welcome and invocation
- Call to order and chair's remarks
- State of the College report
- Corporation business (elections if applicable)
- Closing remarks

FALL FESTIVAL 1970-2021

# SAVE THE DATE

## SEPT. 30-OCT. 3

For event updates, visit **bethelks.edu/fall-festival**

THE THRESHER CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT IS MOVING TO A NEW DAY AS AN ADDITION TO FALL FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS.

CALL YOUR BUDDIES, GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER AND CIRCLE FRIDAY, OCT. 1, 2021, ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

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