

Antonio Williams, BIS '20, Chicago, IL, is one of four US-born basketball players on the Tallinna Kalev/TLU roster in the Korvpalli Meistriliiga league—the highest tier level and most important professional basketball league in Estonia. (Tallin, Estonia's largest city, is located 55 miles south of Helsinki, Finland, across the Gulf of Finland.) Williams is a starting point guard and has led the team in scoring, averaging 17.8 points per game as of late April.

During his 2019-2020 senior year at Kent State, Williams led the Golden Flashes in scoring (14.7 points per game) and assists. The team finished 20-12 and had a chance to make it to the NCAA tournament, but the season was cut short by COVID-19. They were sent home midway through the Mid-American Conference tournament because of the virus.

Nadim Boukhdhir, MArch '21, Tunis, Tunisia, wrote about his experience as a Fulbright Scholar at Kent State, which was shared on the Office of Global Education website and on the College of Architecture and Engineering's Twitter account. He was awarded a fellowship from Kent State to travel to Finland to continue research into innovative learning approaches and educational strategies.

Sara Haidet, BA '21, Louisville, OH, was hired as media coordinator at Innis Maggiore, a full-service positioning ad agency based in Canton, Ohio. Her responsibilities include researching and organizing media plans as well as managing media budgets. She majored in communication studies at Kent State University at Stark and was a project management intern at the agency before being hired full time.

Grace Irvin-Dillard, BA '21, BBA '21, Bedford, OH, launched a body care company as part of an Entrepreneurial Experience class in 2019. Since founding the company, Touched by Grace Body Care, Irvin-Dillard has recorded more than 4,600 sales. According to a July 30, 2021 article in *Cleveland.com*, she reached "six figures" in sales in 2020 alone. In addition to degrees in entrepreneurship and Pan-African studies from Kent State, she also received a diploma in natural skin care formulation from the School of Natural Skincare. For more information see <https://tbgbodycare.com>.

Lauren Sasala, BS '21, Sylvania, OH, was born and raised in Northwest Ohio but says she feels most at home in the mountains. She graduated from Kent State with a bachelor's in journalism and recreation management and now is a missionary guide for Creatio, a youth evangelization program. It aims to guide young adults to experience beauty and goodness and to encounter the presence of God in creation through missions, outdoor adventures and care for creation. See <https://creatio.org>.

2021 Alumni Awards

Eight remarkable alumni were honored on Thursday, Sept. 30, 2021, during a Welcome Home Reception at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center. The Alumni Awards are the highest honors presented to Kent State University graduates for outstanding contributions to their chosen profession and the university.

"The nominations we received were truly impressive and represented the diversity and success of our graduates," says **Barbara Smith, BS '84**, president, Kent State Alumni Association National Board of Directors. "These eight award recipients epitomize the Golden Flash spirit, and each one has made a profound impact at Kent State and in their communities."

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Beverly Laubert, BA '84, Lewis Center, OH



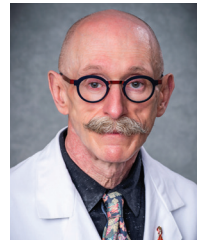
Beverly Laubert has dedicated her career to improving the lives of others, both in her community and across the nation. She has been at the Ohio Department of Aging for 31 years and has led its Office of the State

Long-Term Care Ombudsman for 27 years. As an advocate for older adults and those with disabilities, she influences public policy to improve their access to quality care. In 2020, she was selected to serve on a 25-member nationwide Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in nursing homes. She was responsible for recommending best practices in infection control and care delivery and for identifying opportunities to improve infection control policies. She and her husband established the Delaware County Student Assistance Scholarship in 2017 to support students from the Columbus area as they pursue degrees at Kent State.

"I believe that each of us has a responsibility to make an impact, whether through our vocation, volunteer endeavors or other contributions."

DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD

James Luther Raper, BSN '79, PhD, DSN, CRNP, Birmingham, AL



In addition to serving as a professor, senior scholar and senior scientist at the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB), James Raper directs the UAB 1917 HIV Outpatient, Dental and Research Clinic, which treats more

than 3,600 patients annually and provides compassionate and comprehensive healthcare for those living with HIV and AIDS. The clinic's first non-physician director, Raper serves as a mentor, advisor and educator to the many graduate students who work there. During his career, he has secured more than \$75 million in grant funding, which supported research and medical advancements that have touched communities across the globe. Recently, he committed to a principal gift, creating endowed funds in Kent State's College of Nursing to support a professorship as well as a research and innovation fund.

"In providing direct patient care as a nurse practitioner and participating in HIV health services and outcomes research as senior scientist, I have participated in many scientific advances and their application to improve and extend the lives of people living with HIV."

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Retired Col. David H. Carstens, BA '88, Bucharest, Romania



Retired Col. David H. Carstens gained his first military experiences in the Kent State ROTC program and went on to command US Army units at echelons up to brigade. As a highly accomplished military intelligence officer and counterintelligence special agent with 32 years of experience, he has served in locations around the world through peacetime, contingency and wartime operations. He was awarded the German Army Cross of Honor in Silver for



strengthening US and German security partnerships. He currently serves as chief of the military coordination office for the US Embassy in Bucharest, Romania. He also is a member of the board of trustees for the American International School of Bucharest, where he helps develop policy and infrastructure improvements.

"Good deeds are contagious; when we pay it forward, we motivate others to do the same."

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Richard E. Breedon, BS '77 PhD, Davis, CA



Richard E. Breedon is a physicist with a focus in experimental high energy particles and is the author or co-author of more than 1,200 scientific papers. His work in experimental physics began in the Kent State mass

spectrometry lab, where he designed and built a readout system to collect data from the analog mass spectrometer. He analyzed the data using a minicomputer he programmed and maintained. He found a mentor in Professor Wilbur Franklin, a liquid crystal transport theorist. Breedon has conducted research and experiments at Fermilab in Illinois, KEK in Tsukuba, Japan, and CERN in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was a founding member of the CMS experiment that led to the discovery of the Higgs boson particle in 2012. He also teaches at the University of California, Davis, and Yale-NUS College in Singapore.

"I was inspired by the respect and confidence that Professor Franklin had in me as a mere undergraduate student and appreciated the invitation to his discussions and unique research endeavors."

KENT STATE ADVOCACY AWARD

Michael John Gallagher II, BA '19, Lake Zurich, IL (Deceased)



On Dec. 10, 2020, Kent State University and communities around the world lost a vibrant, creative and kind individual when Michael John Gallagher II died in a car accident two days after celebrating his 24th birthday. He graduated

magna cum laude with a degree in communications in 2019 and joined the Peace Corps, teaching English to children in Benin, West Africa, before he was evacuated due to the pandemic. In June 2020, he was accepted into the American University in Paris to pursue a master's degree in global communications. Before his tragic death, his travels had taken him to countries in Asia, Europe and Africa, and he left a lasting impact on the people he met. His family has established the Michael John Gallagher II Memorial Scholarship in his honor.

"In his short and remarkable life, Michael built camaraderie and community across four continents. He represented Kent State with enthusiasm and integrity during his many travels."

KENT STATE ADVOCACY AWARD

Robert E. Ross, BBA '70, Lake Forest, IL



Robert E. Ross, who worked in the financial services industry before retiring in 2014, has served on the Kent State University Foundation Board since 2003. He leads the Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement Committee, and his dedication to the

university is exemplified through the many connections he has fostered with alumni and donors over the years, while strengthening their ties to Kent State. His work helps lessen the financial burden on students and empowers donors who support them. He also has supported several university funds, including the Last Dollar Scholarship and the Kent State Emergency Grant Fund.

"The confidence and connections I gained at Kent State helped me immensely. That's why I think it's so important to give back to places and organizations that strike a chord with you."

OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Gordon Stumpo, MA '16, New York, NY



While working for Naeem Khan, a designer and fashion house, Gordon Stumpo created many stunning outfits worn by high-profile celebrities such as Mariah Carey, Katy Perry, Taylor Swift and Oprah. He now works

in New York for Proper Cloth, the country's largest custom shirtmaker. As the company's first in-house technical designer and patternmaker, he manages the digital pattern department and is creating the first pattern archive. He helped launch new product categories, including custom chino pants, sweatshirts, T-shirts and highly rated face masks. He also mentors fashion students from schools across the country, including Kent State.

"I believe that if you learn the minimum, you do the minimum, so I have a tremendous drive to advance my experiences and expertise."

GOLDEN FLASH AWARD

Tiarra Monae' Reddick, BS '21, MPH '22, Willowick, OH



For Tiarra Reddick, the journey to earning a college degree was filled with challenges. Despite once being placed on academic probation, the fashion merchandising and marketing alumna worked diligently to achieve academic

success. She also excelled in extracurricular and on- and off-campus activities. She is passionate about helping others and inspiring students to be authentic and confident in themselves, an important lesson she learned during her time at Kent State.among college students.

"I came to Kent State to get a good education. I wasn't going to let anything get in the way of graduating, so I worked hard to get to where I am today."