

alumni LIFE
class NOTES

1930s



Miriam Grace (Schnitzer) Wiles, BS '31, MA '31, Burbank, OH, turned 105 years old on July 10, 2021. According to an article in *The Daily Record* in Wooster, Ohio, she was able to celebrate the special day with her family. The Hartsville native graduated from Kent State with degrees in education and taught at several school systems in Ohio. She met her husband of 50 years, **Sylvan L. Wiles, BS '39,** at Kent State, but kept it a secret because at that time you couldn't teach if you were married. However, teachers were needed because of World War II, so she was allowed to continue, even after her father—who was superintendent of the school system—found out. (Her husband died Oct. 1, 1991.) When asked the secret of her longevity, she responded, "Don't worry and eat lots of M&Ms!"

1950s



Elizabeth C. Fesler, BS '52, MED '61, PhD '74, Akron, OH, wrote, "In looking back at my nearly 70 years as both an educator and community volunteer—years during which I learned first-hand the importance of reaching out to make communities better places for more people—I fondly recall an early life experience that set me on this path. "When I was 14 years old, at the bidding of our school's debate coach, my 15-year-old brother and

I walked door to door through our neighborhood of largely first-generation residents. Our mission was to share information with our neighbors about the newly formed United Nations. I still remember my sense of excitement about the idea that if different nations could come together in peace, so many of the world's problems would be solved! "My many decades as an educator and community volunteer started with a KSU scholarship in 1948. [Those decades included] nearly 40 years in the Akron Public Schools, where I held positions ranging from teacher and counselor to principal and psychologist. Fourteen more years followed in the private-school sector, where I was hired as director of the upper school at a well-known Cleveland academy. It was also during this time that I began working with both individuals and families in my own private office as a licensed psychologist. "In closing, it is with a grateful heart that I recall the inspirations from some of the distinguished KSU faculty—Dr. Mona Fletcher, Dr. Popa and Dr. Donald Wonderly." Fesler and her husband, **William Fesler, BA '51,** established the *Elizabeth and Bill Fesler Undergraduate Scholarship in Literacy at Kent State. It is based on her belief that early intervention in reading and language has the most profound effects on children. Many studies have shown that improving children's reading competency by the time they are 8 leads to success later in life and is often the key to eliminating poverty.* **Allan G. Kaupinen, BBA '57,** Alexandria, VA, presented a bust of his former Golden Flashes football teammate, **Jack Rittichier, BFA '56,** to the US Coast Guard in June 2021. The bust will be on display in Florida and will be installed in the future National Coast Guard Museum to be built in Connecticut. During the Vietnam War, Lt. Rittichier was a Coast Guard aviator serving in Vietnam on exchange with the Air Force. On June 9, 1968, he and three Air Force crewmen attempted to rescue a Marine Corps pilot who had been shot down near the Laotian border. During the mission, bullets struck Rittichier's helicopter, causing a fire. As he attempted to set down in a nearby clearing, the helicopter lost altitude and exploded as it hit the ground. Rittichier was the first Coast Guardsman killed in action during the Vietnam War. His remains and those of his crew were recovered in 2002, and he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in 2003. In his time at Kent State, Rittichier was captain of the football and track teams. He is remembered for his 90-yard touchdown run against Bowling Green that propelled Kent State into its first bowl game, the 1954 Refrigerator Bowl in Evansville, Indiana. Kent State University's Golden Flashes football team named the Most Valuable Player award after Lt. Jack Columbus Rittichier in 2009 and has presented a bronze trophy (based on a sculpture titled "Jack's Run") to the team's MVP each year since 2014.

Anne Rankin Mahoney, BA '59, Denver, CO, wrote, "Dr. Oscar Ritchie was my advisor and my best teacher at Kent State. He was my model for the kind of college teacher I wanted to be. I hope I have done him justice over the years. At the end of my senior year, I was awarded the Engleman Creative Writing Award from the English department and the Outstanding Woman in Sociology Award from the sociology department. I pursued both writing and sociology at Kent State and have ever since. I was elected to the Laurels Women's Honor Society, and am also a member of Alpha Chi Omega, Gamma Lambda chapter." Mahoney's new memoir, *Both Career and Love: A Woman's Memoir 1959-1973* (Outskirts Press, Dec. 17, 2020), covers her struggle to achieve her goal of being a sociology professor and having a partnership marriage in which she and her husband both worked and were actively involved with their family. Part women's history, part love story, the book follows her from the time she graduated from Kent State until she was hired as a sociology teacher in 1973 at the University of Denver, where she is now a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology.

1960s



Albert Prazniak, MED '60, Canton, OH, and his wife, Patricia, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on June 30, 2021. During the early years of their marriage, Prazniak's wife helped him earn a master's in school administration from Kent State while they started a family. He started his teaching career in Mineral City, Ohio, and returned to his hometown of Massillon to teach history and physical education at Longfellow Junior High School, where he also coached the junior high football team. He was recruited for a teaching and coaching job in upstate New York and served as an administrator at several districts before retiring in 1981. The couple returned to Ohio, settling in Jackson Township after he became assistant superintendent at Springfield Local School District. The couple agree their greatest accomplishment is raising their five children, who returned home to host a party in honor of their parents' milestone anniversary.



Hector Rodriguez (middle) salutes aside members of Veterans United for DC Statehood in May 2017. Courtesy of Hector Rodriguez

Hector Rodriguez, BA '65, Washington, DC, founder of Veterans United for DC Statehood, was selected by Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District of Columbia, to accompany her at the Biden inauguration. "Hector not only served our country without voting representation, but he has continued fighting for representation for all veterans and Washingtonians," Norton said. DC residents can't vote for representatives or senators and their delegates do not have a vote in Congress.

Rodriguez organized Veterans United in 2017 to advocate for equal representation and voting rights. After graduating from Kent State, where he majored in political science, and commissioning through Army ROTC as a second lieutenant, he became a captain in the US Army Strategic Communications Command. He moved to Washington, DC, in 1968, where he established himself as a political leader and advocate for veterans and Latino Americans.

Barbara Gregorich, BA '64, Chicago, IL, wrote: "I'm happy to report that my first young adult novel, *The F Words*, was published Sept. 1, 2021, by City of Light Publishing. It's a story about the struggle for social and political justice in which the 15-year-old main character, caught spray-painting the F word on the school walls, is required to write two poems a week for his English teacher, each about a word that begins with the letter F.

"Here is a testimonial: 'In *The F Words*, Gregorich's beautifully crafted, diverse characters use the power of words to fight racism and injustice. They tackle today's issues in a take-your-breath-away page turner that teens will want to read in one sitting. I hope this finds its way into every high school classroom.'—Roxanne F. Owens, PhD; Chair, Teacher Education, DePaul University, College of Education; Editor, *Illinois Reading Council Journal*."



Barbara K. Andreas, BA '68, MA '70, PhD '80, South Bloomingville, OH, was inducted into the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame, the state's highest conservation honor, on Aug. 4, 2021. She dedicated more than 40 years of her professional life to the preservation of Ohio's natural lands. While focusing her research efforts on the distribution of mosses, Andreas also conducted plant inventories of public lands and contributed to the overall knowledge of the state's flora and natural environment. She discovered several significant natural areas that later became state nature preserves, including Flatiron Lake Bog and Beck Fen. Her research efforts

also were instrumental in developing the Floristic Quality Assessment Index, now used statewide and federally to assess a site's biological quality. Andreas currently serves on the board of the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association and is a fellow of the Ohio Academy of Science. She is co-founder of the Ohio Moss and Lichen Association, was on the board of the Ohio chapter of the Nature Conservancy for 22 years, was vice president of the Native Plant Society of Ohio, member of the Ohio Natural Areas Council and served several other notable botanical and conservation-related organizations. She has written many papers and four books, including a *Catalog and Atlas of the Mosses of Ohio* (Ohio Biological Survey, 1996) and *The Vascular Flora of the Glaciated Allegheny Plateau Region of Ohio* (Ohio Biological Survey, 1989). Additionally, Andreas has been a leader in conservation at many higher education institutions. At Kent State, she received multiple awards for her work, including the Outstanding Teaching Award in 2008, and she was a keynote speaker at one of Kent State's fall 2018 commencement ceremonies. Andreas is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biological Sciences (1990–2012) and former curator of the Tom S. and Miwako K. Cooperrider Herbarium at Kent State University, which houses many of the specimens she collected and identified in its bryophyte collection. She now lives in Hocking County and is an adjunct assistant professor at Ohio University. Andreas and her husband, **G. Dennis Cooke, BS '59,** Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biological Sciences (1967–2003), established the *Dr. G. Dennis Cooke and Dr. Barbara K. Andreas Scholarship in Biological Sciences at Kent State*.

Emma Lou Buck, BA '69, Ashtabula, OH, a retired Ashtabula Area City Schools elementary school teacher, has been recognized by Marquis Who's Who Top Educators for dedication, achievements and leadership in social studies education, as well as the Humanitarian Award for 2021 Lifetime Achievement. Buck taught from 1969 to 1998 in the Ashtabula schools. She was named Ashtabula County's Senior Citizen of the Year in 2018 and received a resolution of recognition from the Saybrook Township trustees.

1970s

Barry A. Franklin, BS '70, PhD, West Bloomfield, MI, director of preventive cardiology and cardiac rehabilitation at Beaumont Health, Royal Oak, Michigan, was recognized as a "Pillar of Vibrancy: Wellness" by the Bates Street Society in September 2021. The Bates Street Society recognizes donors who make significant charitable contributions to support the work of The Community House in Birmingham, Michigan. Franklin's interests combine exercise physiology with cardiology. As a secondary pursuit, he has studied highly successful people in all walks of life, using the methodologies of a research scientist. He developed a college course, GPS for Success, which he taught at Central Michigan University (2012–2017). He has spoken widely on this topic since the mid-1990s and has given success-related commencement addresses at major universities. He is currently writing his 27th book, *GPS for Success: Behavioral Skills, Strategies, and Secrets of Superachievers*.



Roseann “Chic” Canfora, BS ’76, MA ’87, PhD ’01, Aurora, OH, May 4 activist, joined Kent State’s College of Communication and Information as professional-in-residence in the School of Media and Journalism in fall 2021.

She is an eyewitness and survivor of the shootings at Kent State, where the Ohio National Guard killed four and wounded nine students, including her brother, Alan, on May 4, 1970. A “Kent 25” defendant, she was indicted by an Ohio grand jury, and later exonerated, for activism during a weekend of protests against the invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam War. She has been a regular contributor and speaker at May 4 Commemoration events and is a member of the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee.

Canfora has served for a decade as the chief communications officer for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and has taught high school journalism for more than 20 years. She has taught as an adjunct in Kent State’s School of Media and Journalism since 2006.

She has received the Kent State Alumni Leadership Award, and *Ms.* magazine has recognized her as one of 100 Women of the Century in its millennium issue. She is a stalwart advocate for May 4 remembrance and for the importance of connecting the lessons of the anti-war movement to emerging movements today, including Black Lives Matter and March for Our Lives.

This fall Canfora is teaching two courses: Media, Power and Culture, and Ethics and Issues in Mass Communication. As a professional-in-residence, she will also work with the Office of the President and the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee to plan the May 4 Commemoration and develop future May 4 initiatives. In 2019, the Kent State University Board of Trustees affirmed a commitment from the president’s office to hold the annual May 4 Commemoration as a university-level event and to preserve the important traditions established over the years.

Research Papers, Theses, Dissertations and Manuscripts Related to May 4 collection at Kent State Universities Libraries, Special Collections and Archives, <https://www.library.kent.edu/miscellaneous-research-papers-theses-and-mss>. It is digitized and available in the Kent State Shootings Digital Archive at <https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/8477>.

Thomas Matijasic, MA ’78, Hagerhill, KY, discussed conflicting interpretations of Americans’ collective heritage in a guest column for *The State Journal*, a Frankfort, Kentucky, newspaper in June 2021. He received a doctorate in history in 1982 from Miami University of Ohio and has taught history at Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, since 1983.

David Lucht, BS ’79, MBA ’84, Wilmington, NC, was appointed to the board of directors of Live Oak Bancshares (a financial holding company and parent company of Live Oak Bank) and of Live Oak Bank in February 2021.

Lucht is a founding member of the Live Oak Bank team and most recently served as executive vice president of credit. He retired in December 2020. He joined Live Oak in 2007 and helped design the bank’s approach to identifying and managing credit risk. He also helped shape the corporate culture of the company.

Prior to his career at Live Oak, he served as chief credit officer, executive vice president and director at the \$10.5 billion First Merit Bank in Akron, Ohio, where he led a turnaround in credit culture and performance. Prior to First Merit, Lucht served as senior credit officer of National City Bank.

Larry Rudawsky, BA ’79, Trenton, MI, has been hired as senior counsel at Barrett McNagny LLP, a law firm that serves clients in northern Indiana, western Ohio and southern Michigan.

He had served as an attorney for a New York City firm and as vice president for a multistate trust company. He has a JD from Case Western Reserve University.

1980s

Elizabeth Z. Bartz, BA ’80, MA ’82, Akron, OH, is president and CEO of State and Federal Communications Inc., with offices in Akron, Ohio, and Washington, DC. Founded in 1993, the firm provides government compliance information and consulting to Fortune 500 and other leading companies worldwide. The firm’s in-house staff of attorneys is expert in state, federal and municipal laws regarding lobbying, political contributions and procurement.

Douglas Tulino, BBA ’80, Aldie, VA, a 41-year veteran of the US Postal Service, was appointed deputy postmaster general, reporting directly to Postmaster General and CEO Louis DeJoy, effective May 2021. Tulino also becomes a member of the Postal Service’s Board of Governors and continues in his current role as chief human resources officer.

Tulino will ensure that the organization’s culture, talent, labor relations and leadership development will contribute to the successful implementation of Delivering for America, the 10-year plan unveiled on March 23, 2021, to restore service excellence and financial sustainability to one of America’s most treasured institutions and a vital part of the nation’s infrastructure. He will also play a key leadership role in stakeholder outreach.

Vickie Deane, BFA ’81, Santa Fe, NM, painter and jeweler, moved to New Mexico in the mid-’80s and started making jewelry about 25 years ago, in addition to continuing to paint. Pre-COVID 19, she traveled the country for art markets and fairs. She now sells her work at the Fuller Lodge Art Center in Los Alamos, the Georgia O’Keefe Gallery in Santa Fe, the Fine Arts Museum in Albuquerque and the Harwood in Taos, as well as other venues outside New Mexico. She’s not going back on the road for now but plans to attend local events once they start up again. See www.vickiedeane.com.

Rinku Dutt, BS ’81, Murrysville, PA, ophthalmologist, now provides glaucoma treatment and other services at Luna Vision, an eye care center and medical spa based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dutt is a board-certified member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons, and the Pittsburgh Ophthalmological Society. She has performed over 6,000 LASIK and 5,000 cataract surgeries and has more than 10 years of experience in refractive surgery.

She received an MD from Case Western Reserve Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, interned at the Cleveland Clinic and completed residencies at University Hospitals in Cleveland and UTMB, Texas. She has fellowships in glaucoma from Cornell and cornea and refractive surgery from the Tulane Medical Center. She has been a private practitioner for more than 20 years.



Alan R. Miciak, BBA ’83, PhD ’93, Wexford, PA, is the new president of John Carroll University, effective June 1, 2021. With 28 years of experience in teaching, research and leadership at top colleges and universities in Canada and the United States, Miciak is John Carroll’s 26th president.

He had served since 2018 as dean of the Boler College of Business at the university, where he drove enrollment growth, strategic investment and program innovation. Under his leadership, the business college developed new programs and facilities across its schools and departments, and secured three significant naming gifts, part of \$25 million raised in the college’s *Inspired Lives* campaign.

Craig Koehler, EDS ’84, MeD ’85, PhD ’92, Avon, OH, retired in July as principal at Avon Middle School. Under his leadership the school was named a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education.

With a background in school guidance and counseling, Koehler joined the administrative team of the Avon Local School District in 1994, moving into administration after receiving two master’s degrees in education and an educational specialist degree. In 1988, he began work on a doctorate at Kent State and earned a PhD in educational administration.

Koehler is president of the Board of Directors of the Lorain County Prevention Connection and vice president of the Board of Directors of the Lorain Community Music Theater. His plans for retirement include traveling and writing more books, as well as consulting work.

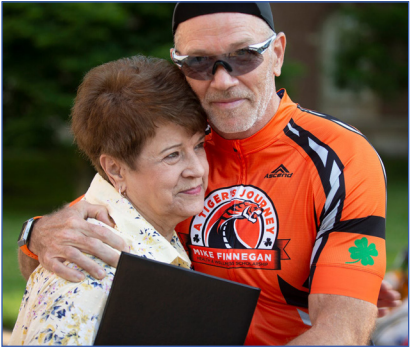
Kerry Schrader, BBBA ’84, MBA ’02, Hoover, AL, is co-owner with her daughter, Ashlee Ammons, of Mixtroz, a networking mobile app that has a new, enhanced version. Mixtroz (the name comes from the combination of the words “mixer” and “introduction”) is an event planning platform that engages attendees and improves event experiences, while collecting data for event hosts—including colleges and universities, enterprise organizations and event planning companies.

Attendees download the app and complete a virtual name tag and survey customized by the organizer. The app matches up attendees and guides them to a group connection experience in real time. After the “mix,” the organizer can use the survey data collected from the interactions to drive future revenue-generating, cost-cutting measures.

The new enhancements allow attendees to access information from past events and re-engage with their contacts through the app. Attendees can use metrics from the app as conversation starters and icebreakers. Learn more at www.mixtroz.com.

Claudia Amrhein, BA ’85, MA ’87, Kent, OH, general manager of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority, has been appointed to the Hattie Larlham Foundation Board of Directors for a three-year term. Hattie Larlham is a nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for more than 1,800 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the state of Ohio.

Amrhein joined PARTA in 2004 as the director of human resources and has served as the organization’s general manager since 2014. She also holds positions on local and statewide boards, including Ohio Public Transit Association, Ohio Transit Risk Pool, the NEORide council of governments, Portage County Transportation Improvement District, Ohio Health Transit Pool, Children’s Advocacy Center of Portage County and Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study. She and her husband, Jack, have two adult sons.



Michael Finnegan, BS ’85, Cincinnati, OH, retired in May after 36 years of teaching. He taught physical education in Cincinnati Public Schools for 33 years, most recently at Withrow University High School in Hyde Park. Finnegan developed Withrow’s fitness program, which now will be implemented in all CPS schools.

He recently created the Mike Finnegan Health and Wellness Scholarship Fund to help vulnerable Withrow students through college. He planned to ride about 500 miles a week to raise awareness and money for the fund during a biking adventure from Santa Monica, California, to Washington, DC, in summer 2021.

As he set off on his cross-country journey (with two friends coming along in a camper van with food and other supplies), Cincinnati Vice Mayor Christopher Smitherman proclaimed Saturday, June 5, 2021, Mike Finnegan Day as members of the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Cincinnati and his friends and family cheered.

Finnegan grew up in Canton, Ohio. A first-generation college student, he paid for his degree at Kent State with the money he earned working weekends, summers and Christmas breaks at a bakery.

alumni LIFE

He started as a physical education teacher at Schwab Middle School in Northside in 1988 and moved to Withrow in 2001.He had served as a coach and teacher in Niger, West Africa, in the US Peace Corps and had a stint teaching English in Tokyo.

He was a physical education teacher, athletic director, fitness instructor and coach of football, basketball and track in the Cincinnati schools.

Rob Gentry, BS ’85, Perrysburg, OH, retired in May 2021 after 34 years as theater director at Perrysburg High School, where he staged 100 shows. He originally planned to be a professional actor and earned a theater scholarship to Kent State, but decided it wasn’t for him. Instead, he switched majors to comprehensive communications with the goal of becoming a high school drama teacher.

Alice Licata, MA ’85, PhD ’88, Dayton, OH, has published her debut novel, *Whitecaps on the Lake* (TouchPoint Press, March 2021). In the book, Licata explores complex human emotions within the context of an adventure to find treasure—bringing readers through the shock and heartache of sudden loss, the despair and hopelessness of a slow demise and the desperate pursuit of happiness under it all. Her unique perspective takes readers on an emotional journey of learning to let go of those we love most.

Licata, a psychologist, spent years teaching in Charlottesville, Virginia, before turning her energies toward raising her two daughters. She wrote *It’s Not Rocket Science: Down-to-Earth Advice on Raising Stellar Kids* (Lulu.com, 2009), hoping to empower other parents.

When her daughters were fully launched, she returned to teaching—now grades 6–12—where she makes it her mission to make sure today’s kids still know how to use an old-fashioned dictionary and tell time on an analog clock. She also has been a high school diving coach for the past 20 years, helping student athletes reach new heights both on and off the diving board.



Keith B. Wilson, Med ’85, Lexington, KY, has received recognition from two national associations in the mental health and rehabilitation counseling field. The American Mental Health Counselors Association recognized him as a fellow in clinical mental

health counseling education and research at its annual conference in June. He also received the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns fellow credential, which honors those who contribute to multicultural concerns in rehabilitation professions through research, education, practice and leadership.

Wilson is a professor of rehabilitation and counselor education in the Department of Early Childhood, Special Education and Counselor Education at the University of Kentucky College of Education. He previously served as an administrator and faculty member at Pennsylvania State University for 15 years and was dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He received his doctoral degree from The Ohio State University.

His research interests center on cross-cultural and multicultural issues among persons in the US with disabilities, and privilege based on phenotype, such as skin color and gender. His current research focuses on improving multicultural competencies through application-based approaches to cross-cultural training in education and health services. He has more than 100 scholarly publications and has given an estimated 170 presentations across the US and internationally.



Eric S. England, BFA ’86, Oxford, OH, displayed his artwork at the Cincinnati Arts Association’s Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery in Cincinnati, Ohio, from July 10 to Aug. 28, 2021, and gave an artist’s talk on July 17. In an exhibit titled *25¢ gods*, England displayed a collection of large-scale sculptures inspired by the comic book heroes of his youth. The individual sculptures inhabited a carnival-like setting in the gallery’s street-level space, suggesting a festive and titanic competition between these superheroes.

He wrote, “The goals of my work are simple: to pass on a love for the history and the medium of the comic—its artwork, its stories, its inspirations, its entertainment, its past and contemporary Masters—to revisit, re-examine

and share the thrills I’ve known and await in the pages, films and games yet to come.” England earned an MFA from Miami University in 2016, and his work has been featured in numerous exhibitions throughout Ohio. He lives and has a studio in Oxford, Ohio.

Mary Jamis, PhD ’86, Mocksville, NC, president of M Creative, was recognized among other Outstanding Women in Business for 2021 by *Triad Business Journal*. Her firm, which specializes in values-driven strategic communication, has helped clients raise more than \$700 million in capital campaign gifts over the last 12 years. M Creative is a certified B Corporation, a designation granted by B Lab to organizations that believe in the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

Alice Ripley, BFA ’86, Long Island City, NY, received a 2021 Mid-Career Artist award from the Cleveland Arts Prize for expanding the role of the arts in the community. She received a Tony Award (Best Actress in a Musical) for her performance in *Next to Normal* as Diana. In her band RIPLEY, she plays guitar and drums, and has produced three albums.



Jyotsna J. Sreenivasan, BA ’86, Columbus, OH, published a debut collection of short fiction, *These Americans* (Minerva Rising Press, May 2021), which won the press’s Rosemary Daniell Fiction Prize. The eight stories and a novella explore what it means to live between Indian culture and American expectations.

Sreenivasan’s short stories have been published in literary magazines and anthologies. She was selected as a Fiction Fellow for the 2021 Sewanee Writers’ Conference and was a finalist for the 2014 PEN Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction. She received an artist fellowship grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Her 2012 debut novel, *And Laughter Fell from the Sky* (William Morrow Paperbacks, June 2012), is a contemporary story about two young Indian Americans trying to find love and their place in the world, while dealing with the confines and pressures of their culture and families. Sreenivasan’s parents are from India, and she was born and raised in northeastern Ohio. She has an MA in English literature from the University of Michigan and has lived in Washington, DC, and Moscow, Idaho.

Carl Williams, BS ’86, MS ’90, Haddonfield, NJ, who teaches computer science at Temple University, has received the university’s Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Instruction Award. He also was recently inducted into the New Internet IPv6 Hall of Fame, which recognizes and celebrates the experts and evangelists of Internet Protocol version 6 who have made extraordinary contributions to the design and large-scale deployment of IPv6 around the world.

At Kent State, Williams majored in computer science and software engineering, and participated in internships at Hewlett-Packard, Digital Equipment Corp. and Firestone Research Labs. After graduation he worked at Sun Microsystems for 10 years, working on the development of IPv6. Internet Protocol provides locations and identifications for computers on networks and routes traffic across the internet.

A significant portion of modern devices still use IPv4, and Williams says a key to the newer version is global accessibility. Around four billion IPv4 addresses have been exhausted, and experts say IPv6 is more efficient, increases security and improves performance.

Jennifer Podnar, BS ’87, Med ’91, New Franklin, OH, a fourth-grade math and science teacher at Sauder Elementary in the Jackson Local School District, was named in *The Repository* as a Walsh University Teacher of the Month for March 2021. She began teaching second grade in the Revere Local Schools in the early 1990s. She has taught fourth grade at Jackson for 10 years and previously was a reading tutor for two years.

In a March 14, 2021, *Repository* article, when asked the most challenging part of her job, she responded, “Before the pandemic, I wasn’t the ‘techiest’ of teachers, but now I can hold my own with making videos, teaching using Google Meet, and creating and uploading material that is accessible to our eLearners.”

She said her students might be surprised to know she was a bus driver for Kent State University while in graduate school. “I needed a job and working for Campus Bus Service, driving a 35- to 40-foot bus, was the best paying job on campus at the time.”



Colleen VanNatta, BS ’88, North Canton, OH, a retired US Air Force lieutenant colonel, and **Justin Speight, BA ’13**, Uniontown, OH, a retired US Air Force Reserve master sergeant, are the new ROTC instructors at Green High

School in the Green Local School District, Uniontown, Ohio. Formerly, they had worked together while at the Youngstown Air Reserve, and they plan to rebuild the high school’s ROTC program and attract additional students.

Pamela R. Anderson-Bartholet, AA ’89, MA ’94, MFA ’12, Munroe Falls, OH, wrote, “I have two more books being published this year: *The Galloping Garbage Truck*, a short collection of poems for children (Kelsay Books/Daffydow Dilly Press, May 2021), and *Widow Maker* (Finishing Line Press, July 2021).

“During the COVID-19 lockdown, I began writing short poems for my two grandsons, and the whole collection took off from there. The title poem, “The Galloping Garbage Truck,” is a whimsical tale of a boy sitting on his front porch, waiting for the garbage man. Children do not have barriers to friendships, and I hope that these poems are good reminders that we all have a place in this world. The cover art and inside illustrations are by my daughter, **Rachel (Lysa) Anderson, BA ’19**, Kent, Ohio.

“Widow Maker is a chronicle of the 2015 sudden cardiac arrest and recovery of my husband, Al Bartholet. I wrote these poems to help make sense of everything that was happening to Al and as one way to honor and thank the many people who worked so hard to save his life. The cover was co-created by my niece **Meredith Balogh, BFA ’09**, Evanston, Illinois, and my daughter, Rachel.” For more information, see <https://www.pamelaranderson.org>.

Michelle Duffy, BFA ’89, Los Angeles, CA, professional actor and vocalist, was featured in the Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce’s eighth annual Evening of Celtic Music, livestreamed from Roxy Theatre in Minerva on March 27, 2021. Duffy has performed professionally for more than 30 years, throughout the country and abroad, from small theaters to off-Broadway and Broadway, as well as doing extensive on-camera work.

Mitch Gruber, BBA ’89, Columbia Station, OH, is the new director of the SCAN Hunger Center food pantry in Berea. He filled the vacancy left by the Feb. 27, 2021 death of his mother, Lona Gruber, who founded the pantry 20 years ago and served as its director. In a *Cleveland.com* article, Gruber says, “In working side-by-side with my mother, I have a great understanding of not only what SCAN meant to her, but her views of what she founded SCAN to accomplish. SCAN will continue to serve the people in need in the communities it services with the respect and dignity they deserve.”

Steve Sosebee, BA ’89, Kent, OH/Ramallah, Palestine, is founder of the Palestine Children’s Relief Fund, a humanitarian NGO that supports children in the Middle East. PCRF’s main office in Gaza was extensively damaged during an airstrike by the Israeli military on the evening of May 17, 2021. No one was in the office at the time, but the organization will have to relocate.

According to a May 2021 interview in The Portager and his bio on the PCRF website, Sosebee, a Kent native, was a junior studying

international relations at Kent State when he was chosen for a three-week human rights evaluation delegation to Palestine in December 1988, a trip which made a lasting impression.

After graduation, he returned to Palestine to work as a journalist and wrote a story about a boy who lost his legs in a bombing in the West Bank. He befriended the boy’s family and in 1990 arranged for free medical care in Akron for him and his sister, who also had been injured. Sosebee worked as a landscaper in the US to earn money and would return to Palestine in the winter to work as a journalist. As word got out, more people came to him for help, and he started arranging free treatment for other Palestinian children in American hospitals.

He married a Palestinian social worker with the YMCA in Jerusalem in 1993 and they had two daughters. They built the Palestine Children’s Relief Fund with many volunteers around the world and sent hundreds of children to the US for free care. His wife died of cancer in 2009, and he built the first public pediatric cancer department in Beit Jala Governmental Hospital in the West Bank in her name.

Sosebee married again in 2016. His new wife is a pediatric oncologist who also volunteers with the PCRF. He has expanded the organization to bring thousands of doctors from all over the world to Palestine to provide medical care on the ground. He continues to run an effective and efficient humanitarian relief organization, funded mostly by private individuals.

1990s

Lorna Hernandez Jarvis, MA ’90, PhD ’93, Spokane WA, was named the first vice president for institutional equity and diversity at the University of Puget Sound, effective July 1, 2021. She previously served as chief diversity officer and associate vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Whitworth University in Spokane. She also served on the Spokane Human Rights Commission, the College Success Foundation Regional Board and the Hispanic Business and Professionals Association.

A cognitive psychologist, Hernandez Jarvis has an extensive background in intergroup dialogue, has conducted and published research in acculturation processes and psychological well-being in adolescents, and is a published author in the field of semantic development in young children, bilingualism and bilingual education.

Brian Schubert, BSE ’90, Bellevue, OH, retired after 16 years as the athletic director at Bellevue High School. His father was athletic director at Bellevue for many years and Schubert, a 1986 Bellevue graduate, was a three-star athlete (baseball, basketball, golf). He went on to star at Kent State in baseball and was the 1990 Mid-American Conference Pitcher of the Year. His professional baseball career was cut short by a shoulder injury. After teaching for two years at Sidney High School, Schubert returned to



ATO group photo, 1970 *Chestnut Burr*, December 1969 (Mike Finnen, front row, holding #47)

Alpha Tau Omega 50th Reunion



ATO group photo, 50th Reunion, September 2021 (Mike Finnen, front row, wearing a purple shirt)

Mike Finnen, BA '72, Jacksonville, FL, wrote: "The first draft lottery [since 1942] was held on Dec. 1, 1969. For men ages 18–26, this event determined the order of call into service for 1970. Student deferments expired at graduation, and every guy on every campus across the country awaited his fate.

"Since the lottery was nationally televised, it seemed like the right occasion to party. At Kent State dorms, apartments and fraternity houses, beer flowed as the numbers rolled. The atmosphere was charged, like the feeling before a big game. At the Alpha Tau Omega party, we tacked a white bedsheet to the wall, ready to list the top 10 brothers whose birthdays were called.

"But the excitement was short-lived. As the birthdays were announced, we took multiple early hits. Two No. 2s, a 10, a 23, a 30, two 35s (twins), a 47, a 59 and so on. And then it was over—and with it the uncertainty of life after Kent.

"A few weeks later, it was time to have our fraternity photo taken for the 1970 *Chestnut Burr*. Since it was just weeks before Christmas, one of our brothers suggested we hold our draft lottery numbers in front of the Peace on Earth sign on Front Campus.

"Little did we know that five months later school would close due to the May 4 shootings. And many years later, when the May 4 Visitors

Center was built [dedicated in 2013], we were surprised to learn that our 1970 yearbook photo was among the artifacts on exhibit.

"During a golf outing in 2016, several of us visited the center and realized that in four years it would be the 50th anniversary. We planned an ATO reunion for the May 4 weekend in 2020, but COVID-19 forced numerous postponements.

"Finally, our fourth attempt was a charm. From across the country, more than 50 brothers, wives and girlfriends descended on Kent on Sept. 17, 2021.

"We kicked off the weekend activities with a 5 o'clock happy hour at Ray's Place. Kent's annual 'Round Town Music Fest also was happening that Friday evening. We were treated

to outdoor music, while inside Ray's our ATO brothers had a hug fest as we greeted each other for the first time in decades.

"Saturday morning, we had a private tour of the May 4 Visitors Center. We posed for photos in front of our lottery number photo and watched the 13-minute film about the events that culminated on Monday, May 4, 1970.

"Then we headed downtown for our luncheon at the Kent State University Hotel. We showed photos from our scrapbook on big screens at the front of the ballroom, sang dirty limericks, toasted the brothers we had lost since graduation and held an open mic for storytelling.

"One of our brothers owns Woodsy's Music downtown, so in the early evening we were entertained there as the trio Bandit played a variety of songs from our era. We spent Saturday night drinking at the bars we'd frequented when we were students.

"After breakfast on Sunday morning, several of us toured the Kent Campus and observed what you'd expect: Some things were unchanged and others were very different.

"During the weekend, one thing stood out for us all—once we reconnected, it was like time had never passed. We just picked up where we left off. And when it was all over, everyone agreed that 50 years was too long between reunions and we should cut it to 25."

Bellevue and taught math. He was promoted to assistant principal before taking over as athletic director.

Melvin J. Gravely II, MBA '91, Cincinnati, OH, a civic leader and CEO at TriVersity Construction Company, published *Dear White Friend: The Realities of Race, the Power of Relationships and Our Path to Equity* (Greenleaf Book Press, July 2021). The book is structured around three critical questions: 1) What is really going on with race in our country? 2) Why must we care? 3) What can we do about it together?

The book is candid yet collegial, thought-provoking yet full of practical solutions and direct without placing blame. At the end, he calls upon readers to ask themselves, *What is my role in all of this?*

He is the majority owner of TriVersity, which is among the largest construction companies in the Cincinnati region. He has chaired the board of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, served on the board of the United Way, was a founding board member of the Cincinnati Regional Economic Development Initiative and was vice chairperson of ArtsWave, the largest community arts fund in the nation. He co-chairs the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee, a group of 100 middle-market CEOs working collectively toward meaningful civic action. He is also a board member of two private companies.

Gravely earned a bachelor's in computer science from the University of Mount Union and a PhD from the Union Institute and University. He has written eight business books. Learn more at www.DearWhiteFriend.com.

David Murray, BA '91, Chicago, IL, recently published *An Effort to Understand: Hearing One Another (and Ourselves) in a Nation Cracked in Half* (Disruption Books, 2021). Murray is a bestselling author, executive director of the Professional Speechwriters Association and editor and publisher of *Vital Speeches of the Day*, an 85-year-old collection of the best oral communication in the US and the world. He has been a prominent commentator on communication issues for 25 years.

In his new book, Murray shares his observations about how Americans could communicate more effectively with family, co-workers and those with political and other differences. The book has been endorsed by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, Gen. David Petraeus, David Kusnet (President Bill Clinton's chief speechwriter) and more.

Mark Nolan, BA '91, Cleveland, OH, launched *The Mark Nolan Show* on iHeart Media Cleveland's Majic 105.7 in March 2021, a revamp of *The Majic Morning Show* that Nolan joined in 2014. The new show broadcasts weekdays, 5 to 10 a.m., and Nolan and his two contributors play classic music from the '70s and '80s, discuss current events and promote all things Cleveland. Nolan has more than 25 years

of broadcast experience, including nearly 20 years as a television meteorologist and anchor. He previously held positions at local television stations WKYC and WOIO. Throughout his career, he has received seals of approval from the American Meteorological Society and the National Weather Service.

John Paxton, MBA '91, Charlotte, NC, was appointed CEO of Material Handlers Industry Association on Dec. 31, 2020. He was named MHI COO/CEO Designate in August 2018. He brings over 30 years of experience, including more than 20 years of executive leadership at Demag Cranes and Components. Paxton previously had been recognized for his volunteer leadership at MHI, including serving as president of the Crane Manufacturers Association, president of the Hoist Manufacturers Institute and as the chairman of the board of MHI. He holds a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from The Ohio State University.

Leandra Drumm, BFA '92, Akron, OH, was honored by Summit Artspace with a 2021 Arts Alive award as Outstanding Visual Artist. She earned a BFA in graphic design from Kent State and has grown her brand, Leandra Drumm Designs, over the past two decades. Her artwork—which includes pewter jewelry and glassware etched with her designs—combines visual storytelling and whimsical imagery with functional purpose.



Candy Coated, BFA '93, Sullivan, OH, (née Candy Depew), multimedia artist and current Akron Soul Train resident artist, exhibited at the Akron Soul Train Gallery from July 14 to Aug. 28, 2021. In *Interwebbing*, she explores the interconnectedness among nature, humans and objects.

Driven to combine many media—including ceramics, fabric, pattern, print, vibrant color and reflective surfaces—she notes, "Such combinations visually and energetically speak about growth, nature, place, metaphysics/alchemy, compassion and issues of being a human(itarian) in these twilight-zone times of our lives."

She was an artist-in-residence over the past several years in Pennsylvania, California and China before the pandemic brought her back to her native Ohio. For more information see <https://www.candycoated.org>.

Ray Gargano, BSE '93, Cincinnati, OH, was named vice president of community investments for ArtsWave, the nation's largest community arts campaign and the greatest source of local arts funding for many organizations. Working closely with businesses, civic and arts stakeholders, Gargano will lead the grantmaking process and help ArtsWave advance its 10-year Blueprint for Collective Action, a strategy used for allocating and evaluating its funding investments.

Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati to become a national draw and regional asset. ArtsWave will manage \$7 million the city has allocated to support performing arts organizations and public performances and invest as part of the American Rescue Plan.

Recently, Gargano was the grants program officer for the city of Sacramento, where he worked to advance cultural diversity, equity, inclusion and access initiatives, including the management and distribution of \$10 million through CARES Act funding.

Lillian Kuri, BS '93, BARC '94, Cleveland, OH, was promoted to the newly created position of executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Cleveland Foundation, effective March 1, 2021. In this role, Kuri, a 14-year veteran of the foundation, oversees day-to-day operations of the foundation's headquarters and development of a new strategic plan, designed in partnership with the community as part of the foundation's upcoming move to the intersection of the Midtown corridor and Hough neighborhood. She also serves as the vice chair of Cleveland's Planning Commission.

Mulatu Lemma, MA '93, PHD '94, Savannah, GA, professor of mathematics at Savannah State University, was honored as a top decorated mathematical researcher by *Marquis Who's Who* in 2021—his 10th award as an educator. His number of publications has now reached 145, and he says his success is a result of his education at Kent State.

According to Lemma, his goal is "to expand research activities by working with my students and encouraging them to go to graduate school. I am highly committed to improve the representation of African Americans in mathematics."



Karen Patterson, BSE '93, MED '95, PHD '03, Jacksonville, FL, was named provost and vice president of academic affairs at the University of North Florida, effective April 17, 2021.

Patterson oversees an integrated academic affairs, student affairs and enrollment management structure as part of UNF President David Szymanski's senior leadership team.

Patterson co-chairs UNF's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. She is a former chair of the Department of Exceptional, Deaf and Interpreter Education and is an Outstanding Teaching Award recipient. She started at UNF in 1999, serving in roles that include associate vice president for faculty development, leading the Office of Faculty Enhancement, dean of undergraduate studies and associate vice president for faculty resources.

Her research focuses on improving practices for underserved students, college students with disabilities, collaborative partnerships and parental involvement for students at risk for failure.

Curtis Searcy, BBA '94, St. Louis, MO, was named president of the Trust and Family Office division of Parkside Financial Bank & Trust. He is responsible for establishing strategic direction, building a high-performing division, attracting top talent and supporting existing team members as they develop their skills and expertise. He also serves on the Parkside board of directors.

Searcy previously served as market leader, senior vice president, for US Bank Private Wealth Management in St. Louis. He earned an MBA from Eastern Kentucky University in 2001 and is a certified financial planner.

Karen Eck, MA '95, PhD '98, Norfolk, VA, assistant vice president for research at Old Dominion University, has been named a 2021 Fellow of the National Organization of Research Development Professionals, in recognition of her significant contributions to their professional mentoring program over the past seven years.

A NORDP Fellow is the organization's highest professional distinction and only 1% of NORDP members are named annually. Eck has been a member of NORDP for 11 years, serving as president from 2018-2019 and co-chair of the strategic alliances committee. In 2020, she helped launch NORDP onto the international stage when it gained membership in the International Network of Research Management Societies.

Heather Gooch, BS '95, Seville, OH, has been promoted to editor-in-chief of *Pest Management Professional* magazine by North Coast Media. Gooch advances from her role as editor of *PMP*, a business-to-business brand she has served for more than 25 years. She joined *PMP* in 1995 as assistant editor and has been promoted three times.

PMP is pest control's leading integrated media brand, encompassing monthly print and digital editions, a website, several e-newsletters, a blog, several social media channels, the industry's premier recognition event (*PMP* Hall of Fame) and an exclusive buyer-seller networking event (*PMP* Growth Summit). Over the past eight years, *PMP* has garnered 53 Azbee Awards of Excellence from the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

Tai (McLemore) Green, BA '95, Mesquite, TX, is the new development officer for the Dallas and East Texas division of Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, which offers foster care and adoption services and assists families in crisis. Green earned a master's degree in human resources management, personnel administration, from Dallas Baptist University, and nonprofit leadership certification from Southern Methodist University.

Willietta Bunch Marbury, AAB '95, Ashtabula, OH, celebrated her 80th birthday in style on April 12, 2021, wearing a gold-colored "80 and Fabulous" sash and crown while being treated to dinner by a dear friend at her favorite restaurant, Olive Garden, in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her children celebrated with her via Zoom.

Marbury, is a retired housing manager at the Ashtabula Metropolitan Housing Association and a retired greeter at Ducro Funeral Services, where she worked until two years ago. She is a substitute aid at Buckeye Local Schools and a substitute lunch aid at Ashtabula Area City Schools. She serves as director of Christian education at People's Baptist Church.

Ron Christy, AAB '96, East Liverpool, OH, was celebrated by Hill International Trucks in honor of 25 years of employment. He was recruited at a Kent State job fair after graduating with an associate degree in business and computer technology. He served in the US Army as a procurement specialist. He has held several positions within the Hill parts department, from counterperson to core and warranty administrator. At his anniversary celebration, remarks by company leadership were followed by an award presentation, with cake and refreshments served to employees and guests.

Kelly Sims Horter, BA '96, Brecksville, OH, celebrated the 11th anniversary of Kelly's Café in May 2021. A native of Cleveland Heights, Horter grew up in the restaurant business; her father owned three restaurants. In a 2010 article in *Cleveland.com*, Horter notes, "My folks sent me to Kent State trying to change my mind about being in the restaurant business. They wanted me to have a normal job, so I have a degree in Spanish and international relations. It didn't change my mind." It did give her a break and the chance to travel, however.

According to a recent article in the *Akron Beacon Journal*, she spent some time living in Europe, but while living in Chicago in the 1990s, she was inspired by all the great savory crepes she discovered in the city. In 2010, she opened Kelly's Café in Brunswick, Ohio, focusing on ice cream and coffee, with 10 crepe choices. The café now offers more than 30 crepe varieties, including sweet, savory and vegan options. The food is fresh and made to order, so it takes a little time. "It's not fast food. It's slow food," Horter says. "I actually love that about my place."

Heath Horton, BA '96, Brecksville, OH, became principal of Kensington Intermediate School on Aug. 1, 2021. Horton has more than 15 years of administrative and teaching experience, including the last four years as an assistant

principal at Rocky River High School. He was an assistant principal at Brooklyn High School from 2012-2017 and taught language arts in the South Euclid/Lyndhurst City Schools from 2006-2012. In addition to a bachelor's in middle childhood education from Kent State, he holds a master's in educational administration from Ashland University and a superintendent's license from Cleveland State University. He is working toward a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Findlay.

Jennifer (Sanftner) McGraw, MA '96, PhD '99, Grove City, PA, has been a psychology professor at Slippery Rock University for 20 years. Her study and research focus on eating disorders, disordered eating and body image. Over the years, she says she's learned that almost all women struggle with body image at some point because we live in a culture that is toxic for women's ability to love and accept themselves as they are.

She is chair of the psychology department and directs the department's internship program. She also is founder and director of the Slippery Rock chapter of the Reflections Body Image Program. McGraw is a member of the President's Commission on Mental Health and is involved with the women's and gender studies work at the university. She recently co-authored the book, *Multifamily Therapy Group for Young Adults with Anorexia Nervosa*, (Routledge, November 2020).

Amy McKenzie, BS '97, Washington, MI, associate chief medical officer of provider engagement for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, was appointed by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to the Certificate of Need Commission. McKenzie will serve for a term that began March 11, 2021 and expires Jan. 1, 2024.

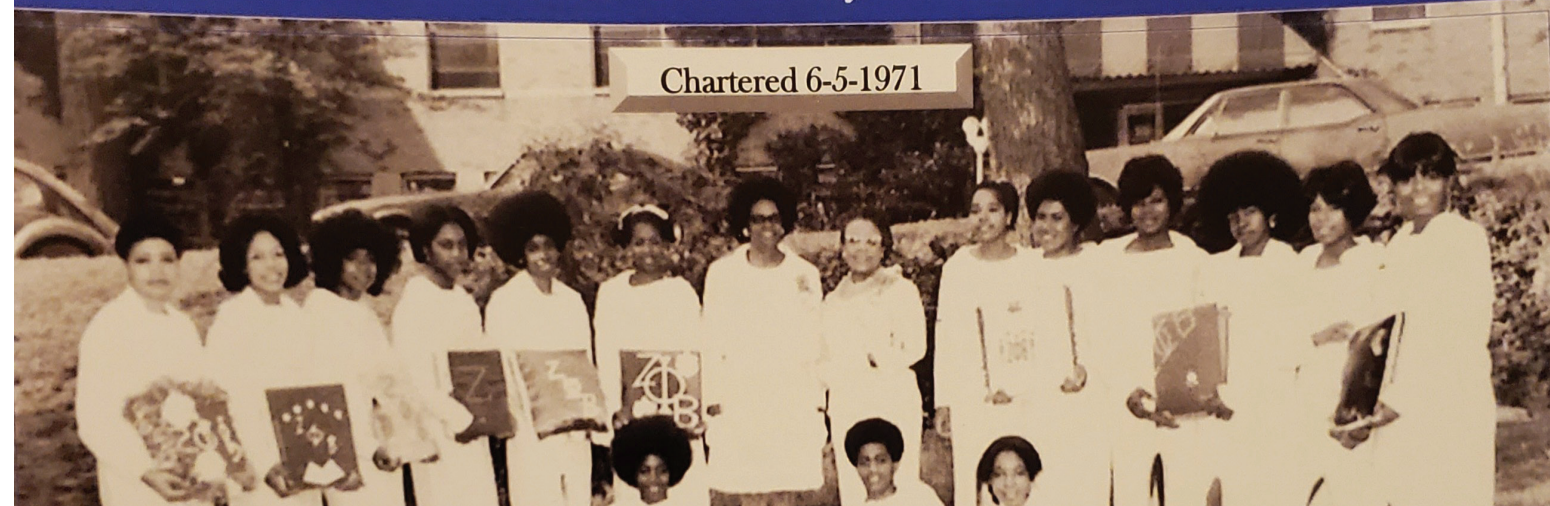
She earned a Doctor of Medicine from Northeast Ohio Medical University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Matthew Welsh, BS '97, Columbus, OH, has been hired as the new athletic director at Madison-Plains Local School District, effective June 15, 2021. After more than 20 years in the corporate world, Welsh went back to school to earn a master's in athletic administration at Ohio University. He holds an MBA from Ohio Dominican University and a bachelor's in health and physical education/athletic training from Kent State. While his position at Madison-Plains will be his first job in education, he has completed internships at some large high schools and says he is ready for the challenge of being a full-time athletic director.

Eric G. Williams, MEd '97, Milwaukee, WI, serves as the assistant vice provost for student diversity and scholarship programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has spent his career improving equity, inclusion and diversity in higher education.

Williams, who received the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment when he was an undergraduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, played a

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. ~ Sigma Alpha Chapter Kent State University ~ Kent, Ohio



The 15 charter members of the Sigma Alpha chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority pose for a group photo on the Kent Campus on June 5, 1971, the day the chapter was chartered. Standing with them are the Zeta Phi Beta's national grand president and vice president at the time. (Oretha (Colston) Carpenter is standing sixth from left, wearing a white ribbon in her hair.)

Zeta Phi Beta 50th Anniversary



Members of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority celebrate the Sigma Alpha chapter's 50th anniversary at a tailgate party during Kent State's Homecoming Weekend 2021. (Oretha (Colston) Carpenter is standing fourth from left, wearing a white jacket.)

Oretha (Colston) Carpenter, BS '73, Cleveland, OH, wrote: "June 5, 1971, will long be remembered as the day the Sigma Alpha chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. was chartered at Kent State University, with 15 charter members. More than 500 Zetas, family and friends traveled from across the nation for the installation of the sorority's newest chapter.

"Zeta Phi Beta was founded in 1920 at Howard University and is one of nine historic Black Greek letter organizations that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council, referred to as 'The Divine Nine.'

"Life takes us many places, but love brought the Zetas back to Kent State University for homecoming and to celebrate the chapter's 50th anniversary. The Sigma Alpha chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority took a ride down memory lane during Homecoming Weekend 2021. Just being on the beautiful Kent Campus was awesome and amazing—and the occasion was filled with excitement, Zeta pride and pure joy!

"Homecoming started out with a bang as the Sigma Alphas marched in the parade, waving to all the sisters smiling on the sidelines. The Zetas wore T-shirts adorned with a big 50 that included the names of all 15 charter members. The excitement continued as we gathered on the front lawn of Oscar Ritchie Hall to take a drone photo that will be placed in the hall. The historic photo will depict the Zetas' legacy at Kent State University throughout the decades.

"We Zetas wore our colors, royal blue and white, as we mingled at our tailgate party at Dix Stadium. We had a blast! People were dancing, talking, laughing, hugging, taking pictures and enjoying delicious food and drinks. The Stepping in the Yard [a type of line dance unique to each Black fraternity and sorority] was more than entertaining—it energized your soul!

"I was the first president of the Sigma Alpha chapter, and I prepared a 50th anniversary souvenir booklet with the history of Zeta Phi Beta, biographies of the Sigma Alpha chapter charter members and photos. One highlight of the tailgate party was when Kent State President Todd Diacon and Randale Richmond, the new director of athletics, came to our tent to greet us.

"The night ended with an old-school dinner dance at Black Wolf Hall in Stow. The

Zetas were honored and celebrated by Silas Ashley, president of the Kent State Black Alumni chapter, and we enjoyed a special champagne toast and a cake iced with a blue and white 'Happy Anniversary' message.

"What a weekend! The Zetas showed up and showed love! We were interviewed by [Cleveland rapper and hip-hop historian] Kevin 'MC Chill' Heard and talked about the history of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and how it got started on the Kent Campus.

"On Sunday, during the Sensational Sigma Alpha Brunch at the One Red Door Restaurant, the charter members were presented with a certificate of recognition for the chapter's 50 years from Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson. We ended our celebration by presenting a donation to the current undergraduate members of the Sigma Alpha chapter, who are grateful to have participated in this historic event.

"Zeta Phi Beta Sorority has brought much joy to my life and a lifetime of friendships. As we move ahead, we will continue to uphold the principles of our great sorority: service, scholarship, sisterhood and finer womanhood. And we honor the legacy and life of Hester Shoto, our first Sigma Alpha chapter advisor, for planting the seed of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority at Kent State University. It has continued on the Kent Campus for 50 years—and is still growing today."

central role in the 1988 founding of VCU’s Office of Minority Student Affairs, today called the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Following his graduation from VCU with a bachelor’s in African American community and cultural studies, Williams earned a master’s in higher education and college student personnel at Kent State and a PhD in educational leadership and policy studies at Virginia Tech. He has served in positions related to equity, inclusion and diversity at Radford University, Virginia Tech and Marquette University.

Williams says he is proudest of improvements in the retention and admission of students of color at the universities where he has worked and improved hiring practices of faculty and staff. He says the establishment of affinity groups at those schools has not only helped students, faculty and staff navigate challenges together, but also has led to better institutional practices.

Jeremy Drummond, BS ’99, BArc ’99, MArch ’99, Media, PA, has joined Formcraft as the company’s design principal. Formcraft is a premier office design and renovation firm based in Center City, Philadelphia. Drummond, a registered architect with LEED Building Design + Construction certification, is a former principal at L2P with more than 22 years of experience in interior architecture, design and management. He has designed more than 4 million square feet of curated workplace environments across several market sectors, including financial, legal, marketing/design, professional services, pharmaceutical and technology industries.

Doug Henderson, BA ’99, San Francisco, CA, recently published *The Cleveland Heights LGBTQ Sci-Fi and Fantasy Role Playing Club* (University of Iowa Press, April 2021). As one reviewer notes, “Henderson has created something special—part *Hobbit* and part *Breakfast Club*—a bittersweet story of love and friendship that tackles big subjects like homophobia, social anxiety and coming out, with a touch of magic.” —K.M. Soehnlein, *The World of Normal Boys*. Henderson won the 2019 PEN/Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize for Emerging Writers and made his short story debut in the *Iowa Review*.

2000s

Aaron Calvert, BFA ’00, Russellville, AR, ceramic artist, is the recipient of an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Arkansas Arts Council. The fellowships are unconditional \$4,000 awards made directly to individual Arkansas artists working in categories that rotate each year. He was honored in a virtual evening program on Oct. 6, 2021.

He also was featured, along with another artist, in an exhibit titled, “Gone to Seed,” which ran from May 14 to Aug. 22, 2021, at Historic Arkansas Museum’s Trinity Gallery. His colorful ceramic figures on display included a raccoon, deer, bear, squirrel and a pair of rabbits. Each is brightly decorated with drawings of patterns, figures, codes and phrases—some of the things he thinks about as he works on the

figures. A similar figure, “Rocket Rabbit,” won the Grand Award in the Arkansas Arts Center’s 2020 Delta Exhibition.

Calvert has a Master of Fine Arts in ceramics from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and teaches art at Henderson State University.

Kelly Harris-DeBerry, BA ’00, Baton Rouge, LA, is an author, poet and digital storyteller. She published a second edition of her collection of poems, *Freedom Knows My Name* (Xavier Review Press, August 2020), which combines the truths of her Midwest upbringing with her adult life in the South, bearing witness to a changing America. The back cover includes a QR code that gives access to free audio versions of select poems, plus bonus content. The book is available at www.kellyhd.com.

Harris-DeBerry received an MFA in creative writing from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has received fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and the Cave Canem Foundation and has been published in numerous journals and magazines. She is a former guest poetry editor for *Bayou Magazine* at the University of New Orleans. A cultural leader with business savvy, she serves her literary community as the New Orleans Poets & Writers’ literary coordinator and on various boards.

Cari Root, BA ’00, MED ’01, EDS ’03, Macedonia, OH, a school psychologist for Solon City Schools since 2003, was named the district’s next director of pupil services, effective Aug. 1, 2021. She was school psychologist at Solon Middle School. In her new position, Root coordinates services for students in special education, gifted and enrichment programs, English as a second language and centralized registration. She also oversees compliance with Ohio’s complex Education Management Information System, a collection and reporting system of financial data and information regarding student demographics, attendance, course offerings and testing results.



Rachel Carosello, BA ’01, MA ’11, Canton, OH, a Louisville police officer, was chosen the 2021 School Resource Officer/D.A.R.E. Officer of the Year by the Ohio School Resource Officer Association. She was honored at the group’s annual conference in June at the Great Wolf Lodge near Cincinnati. According to an article in *The Repository*, the nomination letter included statements written by students and noted, “She builds relationships, she dedicates her time, she changes lives.”

After earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in criminal justice from Kent State, Carosello worked part time for the Victim Assistance Program of Summit County and then full time for Stark County Adult Probation. She was hired at the Louisville Police Department as a patrol officer and has worked there for nine years, eight as the Louisville School District school resource officer. She also serves as the department’s domestic violence officer.

Carosello, who has twin 13-year-old daughters, speaks with students at Louisville schools and St. Thomas Aquinas High School about internet safety, drug prevention and anti-vaping. She participates daily with students in the multiple disability classroom and is part of the Stark County CARE Team initiative, which focuses on struggling children.

Scott Clymire, BS ’01, BArc ’02, Akron, OH, was appointed CEO at Whitacre Engineering. He joined Whitacre in 2013 as chief operating officer. He now directs operations and resources for the 101-year-old company which provides complete rebar services. Headquartered in Canton, Whitacre has an office in Syracuse, New York, and works with customers in Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan and West Virginia.

Amie Cochran, MED ’01, Salem, Ohio, a seventh-grade science teacher at Salem Junior High School, received the 2021 Golden Apple Award from the Salem Rotary Club and the Salem Rotary Foundation for her dedication to her students and teaching. Cochran received the award and \$1,000 in award money during a science class. She graduated from Salem High in 1990 and began her teaching career there in 1994. She is an advisor for the Salem High School Key Club and recently completed a 17-year stint as head coach of the girls track and field team.

Athena Dixon, BA ’01, Philadelphia, PA, is a poet, essayist and editor. She is the author of *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (Split/Lip Press 2020) and *No God in This Room* (Argus House Press 2018). Her work has also appeared in various publications online and in print, including *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 2: Black Girl Magic* (Haymarket Books).

She is a Pushcart Prize nominee (2016, 2017), a Best of the Net nominee (2017), a Callaloo fellow (Oxford 2017), a VONA fellow (2018) and a Tin House Workshop attendee (Winter 2019). A member of the Moving Forewords Memoir Writers Collective, she also has presented at AWP (2013, 2020), HippoCamp (2016–2020) and The Muse and the Marketplace (2019), among other panels and conferences. She is founder of Linden Avenue Literary Journal, which she launched in 2012, and is the co-host of the New Books in Poetry podcast via the New Books Network.

Dixon was born and raised in Northeast Ohio. She was an Oscar Ritchie Memorial scholar while majoring in sociology at Kent State. She has a bachelor’s in English from Youngstown State University (2005) and an MFA in creative writing from Queens University of Charlotte (2008).

Colleen Longshaw Jackson, BFA ’01, MFA ’15, Cleveland, OH, was appointed the city of Shaker Heights’ first chief officer for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), effective June 1, 2021. She previously was the director of community partnerships and programming at Cleveland Play House, where she was part of the team to develop and implement the Compassionate Arts Remaking Education program. She managed community programs such as Say Yes Cleveland and MYCom, which has had a presence in South Shaker Heights. She also performed in the Play House’s last virtual play of the season, *Blackacademics*.

Jackson has worked behind the scenes at Cleveland Play House since 2015, including on DEI-related issues for professional development initiatives.

A certified trauma professional, Jackson also has extensive experience as a facilitator and trainer. She has helped organizations, including the Play House, Kent State and Baldwin Wallace University, with strategic planning around diversity, equity and inclusion.

After graduating from Kent State, she lived and worked in New York City for 10 years. She also earned a certificate in diversity and inclusion from Cornell University.

Amy M. Arbogast, BBA ’02, MBA ’05, Sheffield Village, OH, was hired as the new vice president for finance and administration at Thiel College, following a national search. As vice president, she is a member of the president’s cabinet and will be chief financial and administrative officer. She will provide financial leadership to the campus community and collaborate with other members of the cabinet to accomplish strategic priorities. She will supervise business and account services functions, human resources, maintenance and facilities, and information technology.

Previously, she was chief financial officer and treasurer at Vocational Guidance Services in Cleveland, where she directed financial, budgetary and accounting practices and coordinated its relationships with lending institutions and the financial community.

Arbogast recently earned an executive scholar certificate in nonprofit management from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. A graduate of the Cleveland Leadership Center’s Leadership Cleveland Class of 2019, she is also a member of the finance council for St. Joseph Parish in Avon Lake and is active with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Amanda Clark, AAS ’03, BSN ’11, Jefferson, OH, director of emergency services at Ashtabula County Medical Center, leads the emergency department, nursing supervisors and behavioral medicine unit teams. She is also part of APMC’s hospital incident command team for COVID-19 crisis response, according to an article in Ashtabula’s daily newspaper, the *Star Beacon*.

Clark started her career with an associate degree and worked as a pediatric intensive care unit nurse and in a cardiac catheterization lab. She completed a bachelor’s in nursing at Kent State University at Ashtabula and a master’s in

the science of nursing with a focus on executive leadership at Saint Xavier University in Chicago. She has worked at APMC since 2010.

Scott Maidman, BS ’02, Mt. Lebanon, PA, senior vice president and wealth management advisor at Merrill, the brokerage affiliate of Bank of America, was named to the 2021 Forbes “Best-in-State Wealth Advisors” list. (He also appeared on the list in 2020 and 2019.)

Since arriving at Merrill in 2007, he has become a certified financial planner. He is a qualified portfolio manager who provides traditional advice and guidance and can help clients pursue their objectives by building and managing his own personalized or defined strategies, which may incorporate individual stocks and bonds, Merrill model portfolios and third-party investment strategies.

Maidman earned a bachelor’s in finance from Kent State, where he also played hockey. He interned at Morgan Stanley and Merrill while earning an MBA in corporate finance from Robert Morris University.

Ben Curtis, BS ’03, Kent, OH, former British Open champion, is the namesake of a golf training center, Ben Curtis Golf Academy at The Bunker, which opened in October 2021 as part of the DeBartolo Commons at the reimagined Southern Park Mall in Boardman, Ohio. The Bunker includes a front bar and lounge, family dining and an area for indoor golf lessons and practice. The Bunker’s owner, Jonah Karzmer (who attended Kent State in 1999–2001 and transferred to Youngstown State University as a sophomore), played golf with Curtis for Kent State. (Karzmer is also co-founder and president at The Karzmer Insurance Agency, Youngstown, Ohio.) According to an article in the *Boardman News*, Curtis plans to spend a few days a month at the center and will be available for golf lessons.

Curtis was inducted into the Greater Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame in October 2021. He was inducted into the Mid-American Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2018, Curtis retired from the PGA Tour and launched the Ben Curtis Golf Academy at The Country Club of Hudson (Ohio). He and his wife, Candace, established the Ben Curtis Family Foundation in 2013 with a mission to end childhood hunger in Portage and Summit counties.

Geoff Hagan, BA ’03, Avon Lake, OH, was promoted to vice president of operations at Tecta America, the nation’s leading commercial roofing company based in Rosemont, Illinois, with 70 locations nationwide. Hagan, who earned a degree in justice studies from Kent State, has been with Tecta for nearly 15 of his 25 years in the roofing industry. Starting as a project manager and estimator in 2006 in Central Florida, he was promoted to operations manager and soon started the environmental solutions division. In 2010, he became environmental solutions director and SE regional sales manager. He helped revive the national business unit in 2013 as an account manager and joined the service team in 2019 as director of service.

Charissa N. Walker, BA ’03, Copley, OH, was named by Tucker Ellis LLP as a member of the class of 2021 in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity. A counsel in the firm’s Cleveland office, she is among the 404 attorneys named to the 2021 class of pathfinders, a program to train high-performing, early-career attorneys in critical career development strategies, including leadership and the building of professional networks. Founded in 2009, the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity is a growing organization of more than 350 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners who are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive legal profession.



MBrandee (McClenic) Wilkinson, BA ’03, Akron, OH, is the first Black woman to own a funeral home in Akron, according to a Feb. 21, 2021, article in the *Akron Beacon Journal*. Wilkinson and her husband opened the Wilkinson Funeral Home in April 2019, after buying and renovating a building that had housed the former J.E. Scott Funeral Home before its owner, also a Black funeral director, retired.

During the pandemic, they were one of the first to offer livestreaming of funerals so family members could watch the service without attending physically.

Wilkinson pursued a career in the field after she earned a bachelor’s in psychology and became interested in grief counseling. She earned a mortuary degree from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in 2005. Now a licensed funeral director and embalmer, her experience includes work at Stewart & Calhoun funeral homes in Akron and Cleveland, as well as Newcomer Funeral Home.

Send Us Your Class Note

We’d love to hear from you!

To share your news: Fill out the form at www.kent.edu/classnotes (You may include a high-resolution image in JPEG, GIF or PNG format) or write:

Kent State University Alumni Center for Philanthropy & Engagement
P.O. Box 5190
Kent, OH 44242
Try to limit your notes to 150 words or less, and include your degree(s), class year(s), and city/state of residence. Notes may be edited for length or clarity and published as space allows.

Deadline for submissions:
Spring/Summer January 31
Fall/Winter June 30



Terry Armstrong, BSE '04, Howland, OH, and his daughter, Moira, a Kent State senior majoring in English and US history, recently published *Aerosmith to ZZ Top: A Dad & Daughter's Rock & Roll Journey* (Noodle Salad Publishing, June 2021). The book chronicles their mutual love of classic rock and the memories they've made together while listening to music and attending concerts. He and his daughter have traveled as far as Florida to see a concert and have seen 59 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees perform live.

Armstrong has worked as a teacher, principal, superintendent and administrator in several area school districts and is currently treasurer/chief financial officer for Boardman Local Schools.

According to an article in the *Tribune Chronicle*, **Kimberly Armstrong, BS '96, MA '96**, gave her husband and daughter *The Reading Promise*, a memoir by Alice Ozma, about how her father read to her every night and the books they shared. It inspired the idea for the Armstrongs' book about the music they've shared.

Moira Armstrong, who also has published a chapbook of her poetry, has kept a color-coded spreadsheet of all the shows they've seen, when and where they saw them and which acts have been inducted into music-related halls of fame, which helped the process. They enjoyed writing and reliving their experiences, especially during the pandemic when they couldn't go to shows. The break during the pandemic is the longest they've gone between concerts.

Michael Faehnel, BFA '04, Kent, OH, opened Squirrel City Jewelers in downtown Kent in 2019, taking over the space when the owners of Standing Rock Jewelers retired. The shop features jewelry from local artists, including Faehnel's pieces. He majored in jewelry, metals, enameling and glass at Kent State.

Monique M. Pizzute, BS '04, MBA '14, Copley, OH, was appointed director of franchise support for SarahCare Adult Day Services, a subsidiary of Innovative MedTech Inc., a provider of health and wellness services based in Blue Island, Illinois. SarahCare offers older adults daytime care and activities ranging from daily exercise and medical needs to nursing care and salon services. In this newly created position, Pizzute will also oversee the development and launch of new programs

and ensure that SarahCare franchises comply with changes in state regulations.

Pizzute joins the corporate office of SarahCare after serving as an executive director at its Stow, Ohio, location. She previously served as executive director of Brookdale Senior Living Center in Richmond Heights, Ohio. She has served as an administrator for multiple adult care and nursing homes throughout Ohio since 2004.

Daniel Schlegel Jr., BA '04, Monroe County, IN, is the new director of the Monroe County History Center, effective July 6, 2021. Schlegel is an experienced museum professional with 20 years in the field. The history center is a nonprofit whose mission is to collect, preserve, research, interpret and present the genealogy, history and artifacts of Monroe County and provide an accessible learning environment.

Schlegel earned a master's degree in public history from Wright State University (2009). Following stints in local interpretation, visitor experience, archiving and exhibits in Dayton and at Wright State, Schlegel served as the executive director of the Scurry County Museum in Snyder, Texas, from 2010 to 2018. He comes to Monroe County after serving as the director of operations at the Mines Museum of Earth Science in Golden, Colorado.

Kim Yoak, MA '04, PhD '14, Stow, OH, is a mathematical education consultant and executive director of the Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics. According to an article in the *Akron Beacon Journal*, as a child she played games that involved math (dice, counting, problem-solving or pattern recognition) and developed confidence in her mathematical abilities. Now she works to instill that same confidence in both teachers and students—with the goal of democratizing the discipline and bringing equity into the classroom.

Yoak studied math education at Bowling Green State University and taught at Kimpton Middle School as an eighth-grade math teacher. She earned a master's degree at Kent State and became the Stow-Munroe Falls School District's math specialist, a role she held for 10 years. In 2014, she earned a doctorate in curriculum and instruction/mathematics education and started Summit Mathematics Education Enterprises LLC to help districts and math teachers all over Northeast Ohio reexamine how they teach math.

According to Yoak, data shows that by eliminating tracking (putting students into honors, general and lower levels, where white and Asian students are overrepresented in the honors track and students of color are overrepresented in the lower tracks) and replacing it with a student-focused, equity-centered and reason-based math experience, all students improve.

Sam Harper, BBA '05, Washington, DC, was recently hired as vice president of data intelligence and technology at the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, the Colon Cancer Alliance, is the nation's oldest and largest colorectal cancer advocacy nonprofit organization. According to an article in *Kent Wired*, **Steve Bushong, BS '09**, Tallmadge, OH, senior manager of strategic

communications at the Alliance, contacted Harper before announcing the new hire in a press release. Harper then looked Bushong up on LinkedIn and discovered the Golden Flash connection. The small organization of 45 now employs two Kent State alumni.

Kenneth Johnson, MTec '05, Rosburg, WA, was named chief executive officer/general manager of Western Wahkiakum Telephone Co. by WWest Communications, based in Rosburg, effective June 2021. Johnson spent more than two decades with Conneaut Telephone Co., doing business as GreatWave Communications in Ohio. He worked in multiple roles, including network engineer, product manager and chief executive officer for 10 years. Johnson also served as executive vice president of broadband business at Valley Electric Association in Nevada.

Brandon LaGanke, BS '05, West Orange, NJ, co-directed a feature film, *Drunk Bus*, which debuted in theaters and online in May 2021. The film won both Best Feature and the Audience Award at the 2020 San Diego Film Festival and appeared in the Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque's virtual screening room.

According to an article in *Cleveland.com*, the film taps into LaGanke's past at Kent State University, where as a student he drove a late-night bus that shuttled drunk students to and from campus. Pineapple, the heavily tattooed Samoan security guard who protects the driver in the movie, was LaGanke's actual bodyguard nearly 20 years ago when he drove the campus bus loop. They lived in Dunbar Hall and were in a band together. The film also gives a nod to rock band Devo, which LaGanke credits as a huge influence. "I think Mark Mothersbaugh would probably be like my 'fanboy-can't-talk' moment if I met him."

Aman Ali, BS '06, New York, NY, co-produced a documentary highlighting the experience of Black-American Muslims with his brother, NYU film graduate Zeshawn Ali. According to *Kent Wired*, the film, *Two Gods*, tells the story of Hanif Muhammad, a casket maker and ritual body washer, as he coaches two young boys into his work.

While growing up in the Columbus suburbs, the Ali brothers faced a lack of diverse representation in their community and in the media. They wanted to tell a story that had nothing to do with terrorism or current events and to encourage people to be more prepared when it comes to death.

The film has won multiple film festival awards and is a *New York Times* Critic's Pick. It was shown in theatres nationwide and was available to view on PBS.

Matthew Montgomery, BSE '06, MED '09, PhD '20, Chicago, IL, became superintendent at Lake Forest Schools in a northern suburb of Chicago, effective July 1. He was superintendent of the Revere Local School District in Bath, Ohio, since 2015, after serving more than a year as superintendent of his hometown district, Waterloo Local Schools in Portage County.

Corrie Slawson, MFA '06, Cleveland, OH, visual artist, received a 2021 Mid-Career Artist Award from the Cleveland Arts Prize for expanding the role of the arts in the community. After earning a BFA from Parsons School of Design, Slawson earned an MFA at Kent State. Her work representing environmental and social equities has been featured at the Akron Art Museum and the Toledo Museum of Art. She currently teaches painting and drawing part time at Kent State's School of Art. Learn more about her work at <https://www.corrieslawson.com/>.



Sarah Spy, BS '06, Reno, NV, a major in the Air National Guard, has become the first female flight instructor for the Nevada Air National Guard, after completing instructor pilot school in May. According to a story in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Spy says it took years of training to qualify as an instructor. She completed various pilot training courses and over 4,500 flight hours, served multiple deployments and spent over 750 hours as a co-pilot before upgrading to aircraft commander and now instructor pilot. Delta Air Lines hired her as a pilot in 2019, but she continued in the Guard as well.

Janel (Iden) Blankespoor, BACC '07, MED '12, Wilmington, OH, has been named head coach of the Wilmington College women's basketball program, after serving as the program's interim head coach over the last year. She led the program through an odd COVID-19 season to a 7-7 mark. Prior to that, she was an assistant under head coach Jerry Scheve, who recently retired after leading the program for 30 years. Blankespoor came to Wilmington in 2018 from Georgetown High School, where she served as head girls basketball coach as well as career and college advisor for the 2017-18 academic year. She previously had spent five seasons with the women's basketball program at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, the last three years as acting head coach.

Courtney Gumpf, BA '07, Coraopolis, PA, executive producer and co-owner of Flying Scooter Productions, created a digital experience for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's 125th anniversary season, when it had to shut down during the pandemic. Flying Scooter conceived *Front Row*, a series of hour-long episodes to highlight the artistry of the orchestra's musicians.

The series also was a platform to reach the community and shine a spotlight on other artists, spaces and places around Heinz Hall, the orchestra's home. Subscribers and donors have free access to the series on the orchestra's website, and it streamed for free on Comcast six months following its release.

Heralded as one of the best producers in Pittsburgh, Gumpf has extensive background in feature, small screen and commercial projects. Flying Scooter also was recognized in 2019 and 2020 with Telly Awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze) for its work in partnership with Light of Life Rescue Mission.

Anthony Blanchard, DPM '08, Cincinnati, OH, foot and ankle podiatric surgeon, joined the medical staff of the Adams County Regional Medical Center in June 2021. The ACRMC is a 25-bed public hospital near Seaman, Ohio. Blanchard will practice at ACRMC's outpatient clinic on the main campus, offering podiatric services including diabetic foot care and treatment of fractures, trauma, arthritis, wounds and sports injuries.

Blanchard completed a three-year residency at the Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, specializing in foot and ankle surgery while focusing on emergent diabetic and complex limb deformity correction. He is certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgeons and is a fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Elena Long, MA '08, PhD '12, Rochester, NH, founded LGBT+ Physicists in 2010. The organization is devoted to providing networking, resources and advocacy for gender and sexual minorities in physics. She was a central member of the American Physical Society's Ad Hoc Committee on LGBT+ issues, and she chairs an APS Forum on Diversity and Inclusion—all while continuing to study atomic nuclei as an assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire. Read more about her story in *Symmetry Magazine's* recent article, "A Strong Force for Inclusion."



Mark Mothersbaugh, attended Kent State 1968–1973, Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, 2008, West Hollywood, CA, launched Postcards for Democracy in 2020, with artist/musician Beatie Wolfe, to generate funds for the US Postal Service and reaffirm its value after it was denounced as a vehicle for voter fraud during the 2020 election year.

According to a March 12, 2021, article in *The Austin Chronicle*, participation in the demonstration/collective art project is simple: 1) Buy stamps. 2) Make art on a postcard. 3) Mail the card to Mothersbaugh and Wolfe. The sacks of postcards the duo received were exhibited May 17 to Aug. 8 in an installation at the Bob

Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida Southwestern State College in Fort Myers—but they never set an end date for the project itself.

Mothersbaugh has been devoted to the mail since his Devo days and before. As an art student at Kent State, he would send postcard art to artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and actually get replies. To participate in Postcards for Democracy, mail your postcard to 8760 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90069-2206.



Sharon Ware, BA '08, Canton, OH, graduated from medical school in August 2021. According to an article in *The Repository*, she is among the first class of eight students to graduate as part of the Transitional Care Continuum, a program in Ohio University's School of Osteopathic Medicine. TCC students are part of a six-year accelerated program that allows them to gain experience in a clinical setting and go on to a three-year residency there. She was at Cleveland Clinic Akron General, one of two sites hosting students in the TCC program. (Cleveland Clinic's Lakewood Family Health Center is the other site.)

The program aims to create a new generation of primary care physicians. TCC students complete a special project in addition to studies and clinical work. Ware is working with the Homeless Charity of Akron to implement a street medicine program for homeless individuals in Akron. She will work toward launching the program as she continues her residency at Akron General.

Ware earned a master's degree in biomedical sciences at Rutgers University. She says it's important for people in Black communities to see a doctor who looks like them and who can help address health disparities and implicit bias. The Association of American Medical Colleges and American Medical Association have estimated that only 5% of US doctors are Black.

Anna Kowalska, BA '09, MA '14, Marietta, GA, was hired as the new head coach for the women's basketball team at Life University, Marietta, Georgia, effective June 2021. She had worked since 2013 at West Virginia University Institute of Technology in Beckley, serving as acting head coach for the women's basketball team since 2018.

She developed the team on the court and in the classroom. She led 26 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics all-conference scholar

athletes to two regular season conference championships as well as two conference tournament championships. Kowalska tallied three NAIA national tournament appearances with four NAIA All-Americans and an overall record of 61-26 at the helm of the program. She was named coach of the year twice and the WHoopDirt.com coach of the week on Feb. 25, 2020.

Prior to her coaching days, she played NCAA Division 1 basketball at Kent State, where she won All-America honors and was a first team all-conference student-athlete. She earned a bachelor’s in education with a minor in sports administration, then she stayed on at Kent State in a graduate assistant position while earning a master’s in sport administration.

Jordan Mincy, BBA ’09, Gainesville, FL, was named the 17th head coach of the Jacksonville Dolphins men’s basketball team at Jacksonville University on March 25, 2021, replacing Tony Jasick.

He played college basketball at Kent State for both Jim Christian and Geno Ford. He was part of two Mid-American Conference regular season and conference tournament squads, making trips to the NCAA tournament in 2006 and 2008. He left as the all-time leader in MAC history in games played at 135, and in seventh place on Kent State’s all-time assists list.

Mincy joined the staff at the University of South Carolina as a graduate assistant for one season before returning to his alma mater for a two-year stint as an assistant coach. In 2013, he joined the College of Charleston’s coaching staff for one season before moving on to an assistant coaching spot at the University of Toledo. In 2014 he joined Mike White’s staff at Louisiana Tech and followed him to the University of Florida in 2015 as an assistant coach.

2010s

John Dayo-Aliya, attended Kent State 2009-2010, Akron, OH, was named the 2020/2021 Nord Family Foundation Playwright fellow at Cleveland Public Theatre, a program for playwrights and creators from Northeast Ohio that offers opportunities to develop work through staged readings and workshop productions.

According to an article in *Clevelandmagazine.com*, Dayo-Aliya (formerly known as John W. Burton) will develop *Our Lady of Common Sorrows*, a play about a Black family whose faith is tested when they discover that their youngest member, a 14-year-old virgin, has become pregnant. The Akron native has produced eight plays in the last nine years. As a playwright fellow, he welcomes the opportunity to bring Black voices and urban stories to the stages of CPT and create opportunities for other Black artists, who often face challenges to getting their art seen.

Carlos Mojica, BA ’11, MA ’14, Ravenna, OH, is communications manager with the Columbus Crew, an American professional soccer club based in Columbus, Ohio, and the current Major League Soccer champion.



The co-owners of Bell Tower Brewing Co. (L to R): Jennifer Hermann, Ryan Tipton and Bridget Tipton; Courtesy of Bell Tower Brewing

Ryan Tipton, BA ’10, MS ’14, Kent, OH, **Bridget Adams Tipton, BA ’10, BS ’18, MArc ’19**, Kent, OH, and **Jennifer Hermann, BA ’97**, Kent, OH, launched Bell Tower Brewing Co. this fall in a historic church near downtown Kent, following more than a year’s worth of delays due to the coronavirus pandemic. The three Kent State alumni co-founded Bell Tower Brewing and purchased the property at 310 Park Ave. in August 2020, after the building’s most recent owner, R.W. Martin, moved to a larger space. The building housed the former First Congregational Church from 1858 until the 1940s. R.W. Martin, an industrial laundry equipment company, was headquartered there since the 1950s.

According to a June 18, 2021, *Cleveland.com* article, the trio hope the brewery, with its unique setting and proximity to downtown Kent, will become a neighborhood gathering spot that appeals to both college students and local residents with a mix of easy-drinking beers, shareable menu items and community events. The new brewery can host about 300 people with its patio, main dining area and side rooms (available for reservations).

Ryan Tipton, a user experience designer at Optum, has about 10 years of homebrewing

experience and served as president of the Kent Junior Chamber of Commerce when it brought the first Craft Beer Festival to Kent in 2019.

Jennifer Hermann grew up in Kent, became obsessed with brewing and landed jobs at several brewing companies in Ohio while perfecting her own beer recipes at home. She returned to Kent in 2015 with the dream of running a brewery and connected with Ryan through talks and homebrew demonstrations.

Bridget Adams Tipton, a designer with Paino Architects & Builders, part-time adjunct faculty in interior design at Kent State and a member of the Kent Junior Chamber of Commerce, has transformed the historic building with a new look. The building’s back room, formerly a gymnasium, houses a 10-barrel brewing system with plenty of room for expansion as the brewery grows.

Bell Tower offers gluten-reduced beers to accommodate drinkers with diet sensitivities, as well as German lagers, Belgian farmhouse beers, IPAs and more. Hermann likes to brew beers in the 4.5–5.5% alcohol content range, what she calls “lawn-mowing beers.” On hot summer days, she says, you can drink a few while hanging out with your friends—and still go home and mow the lawn. Learn more at www.belltowerbrewing.com.

Damien Beauchamp, BS ’12, Hillsborough, NC, has been promoted to president of 8 Rivers Capital LLC, a Durham, North Carolina-based firm leading the invention and commercialization of sustainable, infrastructure-scale technologies for global energy transition.

Beauchamp has driven revenue growth, project development and strategic partnerships since joining 8 Rivers in 2016, serving most recently as the firm’s chief development officer and previously as chief of staff. He previously founded two startups—for which he was named to the *Forbes* “30 Under 30” list and featured in *Fortune*—while pursuing a master’s degree in chemistry from The Ohio State University.

8 Rivers is the inventor of the Allam-Fetvedt Cycle, a net-zero power solution that was named “Breakthrough Technology of the Year 2018” by

the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference and is anticipated to form a cornerstone of clean energy transition. The firm also focuses on developing and deploying technologies for clean hydrogen and ammonia, direct air capture, carbon capture, sour gas sweetening and space-based solar power. For more information visit www.8Rivers.com.

Mackenzie Hughes, BBA ’12, Charlotte, NC, competed in golf in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. The Canadian native was tied with fellow Canadian and Golden Flash **Corey Conners, BS ’14**, for 17th at the end of the third round but finished 50th with a -3 overall.

Eric Mansfield, MA ’12, Akron, OH, has partnered with a pair of Ohio theaters to professionally produce his original stage plays for their 2021-2022 seasons. *Love in Reserve*, a love story that chronicles the challenges of a military couple separated during the Iraq war, debuted in November 2021 at Rubber City Theatre in Akron; *Whitesville*, an intense family drama that follows the struggles of a mixed-race family in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, premiers in April 2022 at the Akron Civic Theatre in partnership with the Millennial Theatre Project. *Love in Reserve* was named a national semi-finalist for the Bridge Award by Arts in the Armed Forces.

Currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing-Playwrighting at Kent State, Mansfield is a member of the Dramatist Guild (NYC) and a contributing member of the United State Veterans’ Arts Alliance (Los Angeles).

Mansfield currently works as assistant vice president, content strategy and communications, at Kent State University. Prior to coming to Kent State, Mansfield completed concurrent 20-year careers as a broadcast journalist at WKYC-TV (NBC) in Cleveland and as a commissioned officer with the US Army and Ohio Army National Guard.

Frank Yonkof, BS ’12, Washington, DC, has joined the engineering team at *The Washington Post* as an apps product manager, supporting reader engagement and retention efforts. Since joining *The Post* in 2012 as an editor on the Hub, he has shaped how digital users consume the newspaper’s journalism. In 2019, he was the Hub’s lead editor on apps and part of a team of product managers, designers, engineers and traffic analysts charged with improving the user experience on existing apps and building the prototype for a new one. He played an integral role in the launch of PageBuilder Fusion last fall, providing user feedback, feature ideas and testing the new content management system.

Megan Armbruster, MA ’13, Hudson, OH, screenwriter and poet, collaborated with her husband, Moroccan director Simo Ezoubeiri, on the short film *Speck of Dust*, which screened in the Short Film Corner category at the Cannes Film Festival, July 12-16, 2021. The plot deals with older generations, once necessary and now in need, forced to question their worth in the face of unmet socio-emotional needs: Should our journey, ability or value end with our youth?

Leighann (McGivern) Bacher, BS ’13, Allison Park, PA, created a Facebook group on Jan. 31, 2021, to share COVID-19 vaccine information and tips with Pittsburgh citizens after attempting to secure vaccines for her family members in the early days of the vaccine’s release. She reached out to two women who were also posting vaccination appointment openings to their personal Facebook pages and the three decided a Facebook group would be the best way to connect people with opportunities.

The Getting Pittsburgh Vaccinated–COVID-19 Appointment Tip Page now has about 30 administrators and more than 30,000 members. Bacher and the other administrators plan to continue monitoring it until it’s no longer needed.

Ryan Collins, BS ’13, Cleveland, OH, has been promoted to associate director of admissions at Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio.

Rachel O’Neill, BBA ’13, Cleveland, OH, sales engineer at Segment Inc., was recognized among the “20 in Their Twenties” class of 2021 by *Crain’s Cleveland Business*. O’Neill, who majored in both entrepreneurship and marketing at Kent State, has worked for the company for seven years.

Segment offers a data insights platform that cleanses, categorizes and contextualizes insights from customer financial transaction data.

The company’s co-founder, **Rob Heiser, BBA ’02**, met O’Neill when he was an advisor at Kent State and a faculty member recommended her as “a superstar.” She has been a competition judge and event volunteer for LaunchNET at Kent State.

In June 2021, O’Neill, an active member of the Junior League, also founded the Live & Give Collective, whose mission is to raise awareness and funding for charitable organizations by hosting social experiences that give back to local communities.



Jeewaka Costa, BS ’14, and his wife, **Pradeepa Costa, BSE ’13**, Stow, OH, opened the ManiKitchen Tea Shop 2Health 4Life last September in Akron’s Kenmore neighborhood. The tiny shop, which does not serve tea, sells 120 varieties of its own brand of loose tea, along with custom-made glass teacups and teapots with the

Emily (Cain) Peterson, BS ’13, Rollinsford, NH, showed her paintings at the Exeter Arts & Music Fest in May. She majored in fashion merchandising at Kent State and studied abroad in England, where she met her husband. After their marriage, she was a stay-at-home-mom to two young children. A self-taught artist who began painting in high school, Peterson began painting again in earnest during lockdown—using peeled dried paint, gold foil and modeling plaster to give the abstract artworks 3D texture.

She started an Instagram account to share her paintings. When people began purchasing them, she officially launched Transatlantic Chic Studios. She hopes to have an in-home studio someday and a place where people can view and purchase art and vintage goods from Europe. View her artwork at www.transatlanticchicstudios.com and on Instagram at [transatlantic_chic_studios](https://www.instagram.com/transatlantic_chic_studios).

Victor Searcy Jr., BA ’13, Cleveland, OH, owner of Sauce the City restaurant in Ohio City, was part of a 3News special documentary called “Save Our Sauce: Celebrating Northeast Ohio’s restaurants,” which aired in March 2021 and raised money for the Ohio Restaurant Relief Fund.

Searcy started his sauce business while attending Kent State, according to a story on WKYC Studios. He called it “Vic Fries” and traveled to fairs and carnivals selling French fries with his mouth-watering sauces. He worked as a nursing home administrator until he decided to gamble on himself and build a destination foodie restaurant in what was once the Ohio City Galley.

When COVID-19 shut down restaurants, Searcy changed his strategy to focus on takeout and delivery and he transformed Sauce the City into a super-fast casual restaurant. He also started the “Feed the Nurses Challenge”—which asks users on social media to tag a local restaurant and

ManiKitchen logo, as well as spoon tea infusers and other tea accessories. (The ManiKitchen name is a riff on Pradeepa Costa’s nickname, Manik. She also has a master’s in public administration from The University of Akron.) They bought the property in 2016.

The couple, both of whom grew up drinking tea in Sri Lanka, opened their shop just months after Jeewaka Costa, who has a bachelor’s degree in aviation management, was laid off from his aircraft maintenance job last spring amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Costa, who used to commute to Indiana from the family’s home in Stow and long wanted to do something entrepreneurial, works with a friend of his father who has experience in the tea industry to produce the tea offsite. For years, his family had combined ancient Sri Lankan herbal medicine with infused Ceylon teas made famous by the British Empire. (Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka, gained independence from British rule in 1948.)

Jeewaka Costa hopes to land another job in airline maintenance, but he plans to keep the tea shop and employ someone to oversee it. ManiKitchen’s teas are for sale online at www.manikitchen.com.

challenge them to provide lunch for their local healthcare workers battling COVID-19 on the front lines or have other businesses pick up the tab. #FEEDTHENURSES

Corey Conners, BS '14, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, competed in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. The Canadian native placed 13th in men's golf, which featured a field of 60 competitors. Conners shot par or better in all four rounds and closed strong with a 65 in the final round to finish at -13 for the tournament.

Hattie Tracy, MPA '14, Medina, OH, was named president and CEO of Coleman Health Services (previously known as Coleman Professional Services), effective August 7, 2021. She previously was the senior vice president of clinical operations for Coleman and was chosen by the Coleman Health Services Board from more than 100 applicants in a national search.

Tracy has nearly 20 years of behavioral health and human services experience, with more than 10 years in executive team roles. In addition to her Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from Kent State, she has a Master of Social Work from The Ohio University and is a licensed social worker in the state of Ohio.

Coleman Health Services was founded in Kent, Ohio, in 1978 and offers comprehensive behavioral health, residential, employment and supportive services. In 2021, with Tracy leading the effort, it earned the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic designation from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It is one of 11 such designees in the state, which will allow Coleman to provide fully integrated health services across six Ohio counties.

Joe Chenevey, XAS '15, BTAS '16, Akron, OH, has been promoted to director of technology at Innis Maggiore, a full-service positioning ad agency based in Canton, Ohio. Chenevey, who joined Innis Maggiore in 2015, was a senior web developer at the agency and has built marketing websites and other digital assets for clients.

Anthony Milia, BBA '16, Twinsburg, OH, owner of Milia Marketing LLC, was recognized as one of the "20 in Their Twenties" class of 2021 by *Crain's Cleveland Business*. Milia founded his digital marketing firm five years ago and it has since grown significantly to have a client base that includes Fortune 500 companies. He was the first person from his immediate family to attend and graduate from college.

Jeannette Reyes, BS '16, Washington, DC, broadcast journalist, is an anchor for FOX 5 Morning and Good Day DC. Reyes previously worked at the ABC-owned station in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Prior to that, she worked as a general assignment reporter for the ABC affiliate in Washington, DC, where she covered Pope Francis' visit to the nation's capital, among other highlights. She is a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Daniel Thomas-Dodd, BS '16, MA '18, Kent, OH, competed in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics for Team Jamaica. She finished 13th in women's shot put with a throw of 18.37 meters (60 feet, 3.23 inches), just 0.2 meters short of advancing to the finals. The Westmoreland, Jamaica, native improved upon her performances at the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Summer Olympics by 13 spots.

Reggie Jagers III, BS '17, Solon, OH, competed in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. He took 19th in the men's discus throw. The Cleveland native flung the discus 61.47 meters (201 feet, 8 inches) on his final attempt of the preliminary round.

Ryan P. McNaughton, MA '17, Niles, OH, was named president of the Syracuse University National Alumni Association, effective July 1, 2021. He will also hold a seat on the Board of Trustees during his term. He was previously chosen as president of the Northeast Ohio Syracuse University Alumni Club in 2010.

At Kent State, he earned a master's in public relations and served as the associate director of advancement at Kent State Ashtabula, the associate director of advancement for the Division of Student Affairs, and a career counselor and testing coordinator. He also has a master's in counselor education from Westminster College (2011) and a bachelor's in broadcast journalism from Syracuse University (1996).

With more than a dozen years in broadcasting, he serves as vice president of government affairs for the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber.

Joseph Oteng, MED '17, Columbus, OH, a second-year law student at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University, started producing content on Instagram about social justice issues and anti-racism in response to the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Through infographics and short videos, he explained concepts such as racial battle fatigue, white savior complex and authentic allyship.

With more than 13,000 Instagram followers, he creates a new set of infographics and a video at least once a month and posts content almost every day. Organizations hire him to teach social justice workshops at schools, law firms, fraternities and sororities. He gives between six and 12 lectures a month.

Oteng's "Social Justice: 101" workshop is available free on his website, www.youthful-lifeshots.com. The series includes short videos, infographics, resources and interactive worksheets.

Brenna Parker, BS '17, Washington, DC, has joined the Biden-Harris administration in the White House to lead digital direction and strategy for Vice President Kamala Harris.

Sarah Schlosser, BFA '17, Uniontown, OH, currently an MFA candidate in book studies at the University of Iowa's Center for the Book, was awarded a Fulbright Study/Research grant for 2021-22. The grant will support her research in book arts to study natural dyes in India for eight

months. She will document traditional dyeing practices for textiles and handmade paper and learn techniques by working alongside experts in the craft. To better support her research and learn from the people she'll be working with, she also earned a 2021 US Department of State Critical Language Scholarship for a summer virtual intensive language and cultural program in Hindi.

Abdul Seidu, BA '17, Cleveland, OH, wrote and directed a short film, *Sing Canary, Sing!*, which finished shooting in Columbus, Ohio, in June. The main character, Devon, wants to break out of the cage he grew up in and fly into new surroundings with more opportunities, but he doesn't know how to do it. Does he continue to wrestle, something he hates and only does to please his dad? Or does he follow his heart and chase after his dreams of being a writer?

Seidu played "Micah" in a feature film, *Poser*, directed by Ori Segev and Noah Dixon, that had its world premiere at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and is getting great reviews. The film brings the Columbus indie and underground art and music scene into focus through the lens of a young woman who fakes her past to fit in.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Seidu is a first-generation Ghanaian American. He graduated with a bachelor's in theatre studies from Kent State, where he also competed in track and field. He earned an MFA in drama in the Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Play House graduate acting program. His sophomore film *Crshd* (2019), written and directed by Emily Cohn, also premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival.

John Cornthwait, MS '18, Roanoke, VA, was promoted to partner and vice president of products at Firefli, a full-service digital products and services company based in Roanoke. The firm recently was named one of the "2021 Best Places to Work in Virginia." It works with regional and global clients across industries to develop holistic digital strategies, helping them navigate website design, content marketing, search engine optimization, digital advertising and more.

Chase Johnson, BA '18, Barberton, OH, was the Mid-American Conference Golfer of the Year as a sophomore at Kent State and was named to the MAC First Team three times. Since graduating with a degree in organizational communications, he has continued on his path to the PGA Tour. As a Korn Ferry Tour rookie in 2020, he finished runner-up at the TPC Colorado Championship at Heron Lakes.

He was profiled as a success story for First Tee-Greater Akron, whose mission is to impact the lives of kids in the Akron area by providing educational programs that build character and instill life-enhancing values through the game of golf. Johnson attended the First Tee from age 5 through high school, and he credits the program as key to the opportunities he's had to play collegiate golf, get to the Korn Ferry Tour and prepare for the PGA Tour.

Dominic D. Wells, PhD '18, Sandusky, OH, published *From Collective Bargaining to Collective Begging: How Public Employees Win and Lose the Right to Bargain* (Temple University Press, February 2021). He takes a mixed-methods approach and uses more than five decades of state-level data to analyze the expansion and restriction of rights. In his conclusion, he suggests the path forward for public sector labor unions and what policies are needed to improve employee labor relations. Wells is an assistant professor of political science and director of the Fire Administration program at Bowling Green State University.

Jess L. Callaway, MLIS '19, Decatur, GA, clinical research librarian at The Shepherd Center in Atlanta, was awarded the 2021 President's Award from the Medical Library Association. She has also accepted a 2021-22 Vot-ER Civic Health Fellowship, a 10-month leadership development program that aims to support, teach and train a learning community of Vot-ER users across the country.

Vot-ER is a voter registration effort that's part of a larger movement pushing medical professionals to consider the "civic health" of their patients and tackle the social conditions that make patients sick—like hunger, drug addiction and homelessness. It's taken on new urgency as the pandemic has curbed traditional in-person voter registration efforts and people caught COVID-19 while waiting in long lines to vote in 2020—illustrating the link between public policy failures and death.

Julian Edelman, BIS '19, Boston, MA, former quarterback for Kent State and three-time Super Bowl winner with the New England Patriots, retired in April 2021. When he retired, he was ranked second in postseason receiving yards and receptions and held Super Bowl records for punt returns and first-half receptions in a single game, with seven. He was the receiving yards leader during his victories in all three Super Bowls and was named Most Valuable Player in the last of those victories in 2018.

Samory Uiki Fraga, BA '19, Kent, OH, competed in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics for the Brazil team. He leaped 7.88 meters (25 feet, 10.24 inches) on his first attempt in the men's long jump. The Porto Alegre, Brazil, native placed 16th.

Jeff Franks, MPA '19, CER6 '19, Canton, OH, is executive director of Bridge Point Community Services, a faith-based community improvement organization that is launching learning centers at three sites in public school districts (Canton, Osnaburg and Sandy Valley) to give elementary and middle school public school students access to homework assistance, technology and computers. They are taking referrals from teachers and will do background checks on volunteers who help with schoolwork.

Kripani Patel, MPH '19, Mashpee, MA, was named board member of the Mashpee Board of Health. Patel, who earned a master's degree in public health with a social and behavioral science concentration from Kent State, highlighted her

public health education in seeking the position at age 26. She is a full-time substitute teacher at Mashpee Middle-High School and teaches a medical terminology course.



"Enchantress" by Ray Rodriguez

Ray Rodriguez, BFA '19, Parma, OH, presented the *Wanderer* exhibition from May 29 through June 26 at the Negative Space Gallery at Cleveland's Asian Town Center. He started the series during the pandemic and, according to an article in *Cleveland Scene*, describes it as "a representation of the world I started building while I couldn't fully participate in ours." He says he finds inspiration "in mythology, in the subconscious and in dreams."

A native of Puerto Rico, Rodriguez studied drawing and painting for two years at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce. He moved to the United States and finished his studies at Kent State, where he won a Vincent J. Stark Scholarship.

Ray Spangler, AAB '19, Nashville, TN, was promoted to vice president at Barge Design Solutions Inc. in April 2021. He joined Barge in January 2021 as the firm's chief technology officer after 25 years with Verizon Wireless. Barge is an engineering and architecture firm with diverse in-house multidisciplinary practice areas. The employee-owned company is 400+ people strong and serves clients nationwide from multiple US locations. Spangler is a member of the Greater Nashville Technology Council.

Omid Tavakoli, MFA '19, Cleveland, OH, is a conceptual artist and curator whose work revolves around themes related to identity, gender, media, land use, protest and pop culture. His mother was African American, and his father was born and raised in Iran, so both the Arab Spring and Black Lives Matter protests inspired his artwork.

His most recent series have explored cultural identity and focused on his African American and Iranian roots, given contemporary cultural contexts in both America and Iran from a feminist perspective.

Tavakoli has exhibited throughout the United States and has received numerous juried awards. He recently received The Satellite Fund Emergency Relief Grant, Neighborhood Connections Grant and Collinwood Rising Grant to reopen, design and maintain the Waterloo Sculpture Garden in Northeast Ohio.

In April 2021, he was profiled in Ideastream's Equity in Art series, which aims to amplify the work of artists of color living and working in Northeast Ohio.

2020s

Max Hoover, attended Kent State 2018–2020, Warren, OH, owner of Cockeye Creamery in Warren, Ohio, served his Kent State-inspired "Black Squirrel" ice cream until Sept. 19, 2021, to raise money for Kent State University at Trumbull's Care Closet. Hoover, who uses his background in biology and integrated science to experiment with innovative flavors, combined espresso ice cream, caramel streak and cinnamon streusel to pay homage to Kent State's unofficial mascot, the black squirrel.

Hoover donated 15% of Black Squirrel proceeds to the Care Closet, which opened in the fall. It was created by 2020-2021 Undergraduate Student Government to provide food, personal items and clothing to students in need.



Earlier in the summer, Hoover ran a similar campaign with the limited run "Black Squirrel" flavor. He donated 15% of those proceeds to benefit The Campus Kitchen at the Kent Campus, which provides nutritious food and meals each week for students and Portage County community members struggling with food insecurity. In just a week, he sold more than 20 gallons.

"Giving back to the community is important to my family and me," says Hoover, whose parents also attended Kent State in the early '90s. (**Erik Hoover** and **Stacey Hoover, BS '93**, started Cockeye BBQ in 2015 and later expanded to Cockeye Creamery, which their son owns and operates.) View a video at <https://www.kent.edu/alumni/news/max-hoover>.

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



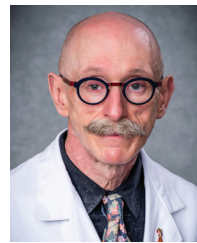
Beverly Laubert has dedicated her career to improving the lives of others, both in her community and across the nation. She has been at the Ohio Department of Aging for 31 years and has led its Office of the State

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."