“Access, diversity and degree completion are in our institutional DNA.”

– Todd Diacon, PhD
President, Kent State University

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Squirrel Search
In each issue, we hide an image of a black squirrel on three pages (not counting the Table of Contents). If you find all three, you qualify for a drawing to win a squirrel-themed prize. Each squirrel will appear like this: (shown actual size and will not be distorted or rotated).

When you find them, send us an email at magazine@kent.edu, listing the three page numbers and places they appear, plus your name and mailing address. For rules and eligibility requirements see www.kent.edu/magazine/rules.

Fall/Winter 2021-22
On the cover: Embracing Access for All. As Kent State expands on its founding principle that education should be available to every citizen, the university is committed to dismantling barriers that inhibit access and hinder degree completion for a diverse student body.

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And the Winner Is...

Congratulations to Drew Cate, BBA ’84, MBA ’95, Talmadge, OH, the winner of the random-generated drawing from correct submissions to the Squirrel Search contest. He received a box of squirrel-themed swag from McKay Brickner Framing & Black Squirrel Gifts in downtown Kent. Check out the gifts he’s showing off in the photo he sent in (at right). The black squirrels can be found in the spring/summer 2021 PDF on page 4 (the mass vaccination site at the Field House, in the lower right corner), page 2 (in front of Verder Hall, in the lower right corner), and page 43 (next to the Rock, at the right). (This time, we’ll tell them to head in different directions!)

Last issue’s winner, Cindy Dalton, MBA ’92, Gahanna, OH, also sent in a photo that shows her modeling her gifts. “I am enjoying my black squirrel stuff,” she writes. “And I am getting compliments on it when I wear it!”

Although we didn’t receive her photo in time for it to appear in the spring/summer 2021 issue, we’re sharing it in this one. (We noticed that the last two winners earned MBAs in the ’80s!) For a chance to win some squirrelly stuff, check out the PDF of the print layout, which will be available for download on the digital edition Dec. 15. Happy squirrel searching!

Lost in Time: Can You Help Us Solve This Mystery?

Stephen Hanzely, BS ’62, Youngstown, OH, retired Youngstown State University professor of physics and astronomy and former Fulbright Scholar, shared some stories about his favorite Kent State professor in a Story Worth post (Story Worth publishes keepsake books, which are compiled over the course of a year by sending weekly prompts to the person who wants to share their story with others.)

In the post, he mentioned, “There is a curious footnote to [Kent State’s] semicentennial celebration. In honor of the event, a time capsule was ceremoniously prepared, sealed and buried somewhere on campus in 1960 to be opened during the university’s centennial year. However, when it came time to open the capsule in 2010, NOBODY COULD REMEMBER WHERE IT WAS BURIED! To my knowledge, it has not yet been found as of 2021.”

If you happen to remember the location of the 1960 time capsule, please contact magazine@kent.edu!

The Rest of the Story

Many Kent State alumni have heard the story of how Grounds Superintendent Larry Wooddell and former Dawn’s employee “Biff” Staples relocated 10 black squirrels from Canada to the Kent Campus in 1961.

Sargent Aylies, BS ’81, Sanford, NC, president of the Class of 1961, called to fill us in on who paid for that endeavor.

As a senior class gift, the Class of 1960 left trees and some audio equipment for the library. The gifts were officially presented to President George A. Bowman at the commencement ceremony, to be placed on the Kent Campus.

However, Aylies says that after graduation he received a call from Mark Anthony, assistant dean of men, telling him there was money left in the fund class after the bench project was completed.

“Mark Anthony told me that Wooddell had the idea of bringing the black squirrels to Kent and asked if the Class of 1960 would like to use their remaining monies to buy the 10 squirrels,” Aylies recalls. “I thought it was a great idea and told them to go forward with the project.”

And the rest is history. So the next time you see black squirrels running around the Kent Campus—and it won’t take long—remember you have the Class of 1961 to thank for them.

Extending Our Reach

I want to share some exciting news for Kent State University—our Kent Campus now has the highest six-year graduation rate of any public university in Northern Ohio. Our record 67.5% graduation rate surpasses our prior record of 65% and is the fifth highest among all of Ohio’s public universities, behind The Ohio State University, Miami University, University of Cincinnati and Ohio University.

The fact that we reached this achievement during a global pandemic is a testament to the true grit and determination of our students and the outstanding efforts of our faculty and staff. It also reflects our commitment to welcoming students as they are, from wherever they are, and providing them the needed support to get them to degree completion.

Kent State has received 12 national awards in the last six years for our exemplary student support services and is consistently recognized for its innovative programs that get students to the finish line.

Our high graduation rate also reflects our commitment to offering the promise of higher education to a wide and diverse group—those who never thought college was a possibility because they didn’t have the advantages of some.

Even before they attend classes at Kent State, we assist them as they explore programs and go through the application process. We provide first-year experiences to help them connect to campus, register for classes and meet their peers—all while assuring them, “Yes, you can!” From enrollment through graduation, we continue to stand by students to ensure that their dream of a degree becomes a reality.

“We are extending our reach to continue to stand by students to ensure that their dream of a degree becomes a reality.”

Access and diversity have been at the core of Kent State’s mission since our inception, as you’ll read about in this issue’s cover feature on access (“Creating a Community of Belonging by Embracing Access for All”)

Now we are primed to expand college access even further. This means enrolling more students with high financial need, more first-generation students, more nontraditional students and more students from regions with low rates of college education.

The goal of helping students is the driving force behind our Power Brighter campaign, which has a goal of raising $350 million to support student success, expand university initiatives and build for the future. You can read more about the campaign in this issue (“A Campaign of Brilliant Proportions”) and at the campaign website www.kent.edu/powerbrighter), where you will find many ways to give.

Please know that your generosity will help Kent State remain true to its core responsibility as a community-based university system, to meet our students where they are and to offer them the bright future that higher education will provide—not just for the fortunate few, but also the meritorious many. These students aren’t lacking the ability to succeed; most of the time they are just lacking the money.

Kent State’s commitment to access and student success is in our institutional DNA. It’s who we are, it’s what we do and what we will always do. Most importantly, it’s the right thing to do.

Todd A. Diacon, President

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We want to hear from you!

We’re happy to read your responses to our content or on topics related to Kent State by writing Kent State Magazine P.O. Box 5190 Kent, Ohio 44242-0001 or magazine@kent.edu. Responses may be edited for style, length, clarity and civility.

Visit us online www.kent.edu/magazine

President Todd Diacon congratulates a Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine graduate at the spring Commencement ceremony.
Kent State University business students, faculty, staff and alumni will soon have a new building to call home on the Kent Campus. Thanks to a generous gift from Cleveland businessman, entrepreneur and former US ambassador to Ireland, Edward F. Crawford, the capital campaign for the new business building is now complete. The Kent State Board of Trustees approved the building construction on behalf of the college in a special meeting held Friday, Oct. 22.

In gratitude to Crawford and his family for what Kent State says is “the largest single gift” in its history, the university will name the new building Crawford Hall and has renamed the College of Business Administration to the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship.

The Crawford family gift is a cornerstone of the recently announced Forever Brighter $350 million comprehensive fundraising campaign.

“Crawford Hall will be instrumental in how we prepare students for modern business careers,” says Deborah Spake, PhD, dean of the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship at Kent State.

“This new building—which will be one of the largest buildings on any Kent State campus to house an academic program—and its enhanced technology will continue to bolster our reputation for both international business and entrepreneurship education. We anticipate a continued increase not only in domestic enrollment but also for international students seeking a top-tier education. With this gift and new building, the future is bright for the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship.”

South facade of Crawford Hall, the new home for the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship at Kent State University. (Rendering courtesy of The Collaborative Inc. in partnership with Perkins + Will)
Kent State University’s College of Aeronautics and Engineering Is Growing in Students and Square Footage

Kent State University’s College of Aeronautics and Engineering is the only college in the country that combines the disciplines of aeronautics, engineering and engineering technology in one cohesive college, enabling cross-disciplinary synergy in academic programs and research. Programs such as mechanical engineering, cybersecurity engineering and unmanned aircraft systems flight operations are unique in Ohio, providing much-needed expertise in these emerging technical disciplines.

Enrollment growth in the college has exploded, with a 53.6% increase in enrolling first-year students and 21% percent enrollment growth college-wide since 2018. To support current and future enrollment growth, the university will construct a 44,000-square-foot expansion to the Aeronautics and Engineering Building that will include collaborative spaces, state-of-the-art classrooms and research laboratories, and office space.

“Kent State recognizes the importance of virtual education in this rapidly changing landscape of higher education,” says Christina Bloebaum, PhD, dean of the College of Aeronautics and Engineering. “The expansion’s two new classrooms, as well as teaching laboratories, will be equipped to enable virtual delivery in a streaming, synchronous mode, which will also support larger classes, student competitions, and K-12 outreach and other community-oriented events.

“The Timken Foundation is proud to honor Henry and Louise Timken, pioneers in flight, through this gift,” says Ward J. ‘Jack’ Timken, president of the Timken Foundation of Canton (a private, nonprofit, family foundation). At its quarterly meeting in December, the Kent State University Board of Trustees voted to designate the atrium as the Henry and Louise Timken Atrium, in honor of Henry H. Timken Jr. (son of Henry H. Timken Sr., founder of the Timken Foundation of Canton in 1934) and Louise Timken, who were both aviation enthusiasts. Louise Timken was among the first women to earn a jet pilot’s license and, in 1965, she became the first woman to be type-rated in a Learjet. This association underscores the college’s priority to encourage greater female participation in STEM fields (16.2% female students as of September 2021).

“The successful completion of this project, as part of our master plan, will support Kent State’s ability to produce the highly qualified STEM graduates needed for the state’s and region’s manufacturing and engineering sectors,” says Kent State President Todd Diacon. “The longstanding relationship between the college and The Podiatry Foundation has been instrumental in Kent State’s recognition as a leading college in the important field of foot and ankle medicine. We are very grateful for their visionary support.”

Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine, one of nine accredited podiatry colleges in the United States, is a four-year, graduate-level medical college, granting the degree of Doctor of Podiatric Medicine. The college’s mission is to educate students to be highly competent doctors of podiatric medicine who will excel in residency training.

“We must be able to support these high-achieving future doctors through scholarships to ensure our field has enough qualified practitioners in the future,” says Allan Boike, DPM, FACFAS, the college’s dean. “Additionally, the support for our foundation, whose purpose is to serve and nurture education and research in podiatric medicine. Since its inception, the foundation has assisted many national, state and local podiatric medical organizations as well as students and residents in the Greater Cleveland area.

“This gift is the culmination of several years of dialogue between the foundation and the university,’’ says David Nicosianti, PhD, executive director of The Podiatry Foundation. “It will help to secure the financial strength of this important local institution.”

Founded in 1916 as the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine, the college has graduated more than 6,000 podiatrists who have made outstanding contributions to the field and study of podiatric medicine. Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine has regional and national affiliations with more than 50 hospitals worldwide and more than 300 private practitioners nationwide that provide externship training to the college’s students. Currently, the college maintains an average four-year enrollment of 425 students and typically graduates 85-100 podiatrists each year.

Students walk from the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine in Independence, Ohio.

A gift of this magnitude is transformational to the future education of our podiatry students, not only through our ability to award more scholarships, but also because of the increased credibility that will come from our enhanced research and continuing medical education, “says Kent State President Todd Diacon. ”The longstanding relationship between the college and The Podiatry Foundation has been instrumental in Kent State’s recognition as a leading college in the important field of foot and ankle medicine. We are very grateful for their visionary support.”

Kent State’s College of Podiatric Medicine Is on a Secure footing

The Podiatry Foundation, in Independence, Ohio, has made a $10 million donation to Kent State to fund scholarships, research and continuing medical education programs within the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine. The foundation recently approved a lump-sum gift of $5 million and has pledged $250,000 annually for the next 20 years to support the college.

In recognition of this gift, the current clinical space located on the first floor of the college in Independence will be named the Podiatry Foundation Foot and Ankle Clinic. Any auxiliary spaces associated with the clinic, including the clinical space in Cleveland’s MidTown neighborhood, will also bear this name.

Research and continuing medical education allows us opportunities to grow our national reputation as a best-in-class medical research and educational institution. At least one of the scholarships created through this gift will be named the Thomas V. Melillo Scholarship. Thomas Melillo, DPM, was president of the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine (now the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine), from 1984 through 2012, when the merger with Kent State took place.

In July 2012, as part of the merger, a foundation was established for charitable and educational purposes. Since 2013, the foundation has done business as The Podiatry Foundation.
Pursuing a Passion for Research

How a Seventeenth-Century Woman Artist Inspired a Twenty-First-Century Award-Winning Thesis.

By Jan Senn

Kent State University Honors College graduate Sarah Hagglund, BA ’21, was named a 2021 Portz Scholar by the National Collegiate Honors Council in September. She is one of four honors students from across the country selected to compete in the most excellent undergraduate thesis in several academic areas. Hagglund, who majored in history and anthropology, received this year’s Portz Prize in the Humanities and is the 10th honors student from Kent State to become a Portz Scholar since the national competition began in 1990.

However, months before she began conducting research into the thesis topic that would earn her this distinction, Hagglund was simply writing a final paper for a course on Baroque art and history. In the process, she was introduced to a seventeenth-century Bolognese artist, Elisabetta Sirani, who died in unexplained circumstances at age 27. “In the 10 years or so she actually worked, she still produced around 150 works of art (that we know of), which is a testament to not only how popular she was, but how skilled she was to be able to make art so quickly,” notes Hagglund. “Because she was basically supporting her family through her work, it is thought she likely died from an ulcer, based on the symptoms reported and because she worked constantly. Despite all this, she found time to start a school for women artists and educate them about various kinds of art processes. She was incredible!”

“I was immediately struck by her work,” Hagglund says. “And I was really excited to have the opportunity to research a topic I could choose and explore on my own.”

“Exploring this topic allowed me to combine my diverse academic interests — such as art, history, culture, literature and women’s studies — and use an interdisciplinary approach,” she says. “I think having a broader perspective and using different disciplines is key to understanding the experiences of women in the past. And it helps to expand our knowledge of history for all underrepresented groups.”

A week or two after she’d been in touch with the two thesis advisors who had agreed to help her with the project — Matthew Crawford, PhD, associate professor in the Department of History, and Gustav Medicus, PhD, associate professor in the School of Art — the pandemic hit. It made her research more challenging than she had expected.

“Being locked down for a long time, so for a while I was just waiting to be able to order books,” Hagglund says. “Thankfully, the Honors College had some scholarship funds, and my advisors were able to help me as well with gathering research materials and purchasing books. But a lot of what I could gain access to was digital. Gaining access to Italian sources was particularly difficult, and I was not able to access as many primary sources as I initially hoped. But at the end of the project, I felt I had been able to conduct some really thorough research, especially when considering the circumstances.”

Hagglund’s work with thesis advisors Crawford and Medicus took place over three semesters, beginning her junior year — and because of the pandemic they did not have a single in-person meeting until after her thesis was complete and her defense had taken place. “I had many supporters throughout the thesis process, but Dr. Crawford and Dr. Medicus both sacrificed so much time and energy into helping me succeed,” says Hagglund, who graduated in May from the Honors College with university honors and distinction in history. “They championed my voice but also challenged me to produce a thesis I would be proud of. Although I am so honored to be recognized for this award, I really would not have made it through the process without their guidance and support. They stuck with me through it all.”

“Having a broader perspective and using different disciplines is key to understanding the experiences of women in the past. And it helps to expand our knowledge of history for all underrepresented groups.”

Hagglund participated in a 20-minute presentation of her thesis at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Orlando, Florida, in October. “I was able to fly down, with the support of Kent State’s Honors College, to present my research alongside two of the other three Portz Scholars and accept my award,” she says.

“Presenting at the conference was a rewarding experience but getting to meet the other Portz Scholars and hear about their research was the highlight of the trip for me. Our research interests overlapped, and I was so inspired by their projects. And getting to present in person and engage with other students and educators meant a lot to me, given most of my research was undertaken in quarantine last year.”

Currently, Hagglund is a master’s student in Baroque art at Boston University’s Department of History of Art & Architecture. “I hope to continue this research in grad school,” she says. “At the very least, I want to continue focusing on the women artists of the Baroque period. But my program encourages interdisciplinary studies, so I am hoping to continue my approach with that as well. I have a passion for this research, so I will try my best to continue it in some capacity.”
Local government plays a key role in our daily lives—and the pandemic has made that role more challenging. We asked the three Ohio mayors on Kent State’s Board of Trustees for their perspective on the path forward for their cities and the university.

The pandemic has exposed deficiencies in the nation’s infrastructure, healthcare system, housing, economy and more—deficiencies that put into sharp focus the importance of local governments in maintaining a good quality of life for residents.

Despite the added pressures and problems, the three mayors who sit on Kent State University’s Board of Trustees have chosen to lean in. They face challenges, to be sure, but they also see opportunities for their cities and the university to help people adjust and thrive in the post-pandemic world.

We asked these mayors—Don Mason, mayor of Zanesville; Pamela Bobst, mayor of Rocky River; and Ann Womer Benjamin, mayor of Aurora—to tell us about their hopes for the future of their cities, their community’s relationship to higher education and their involvement as trustees.

Here are some highlights.

*Responses have been edited and condensed for clarity.

### Transitioning to a new economy

**MAYOR OF ZANESVILLE**

*Don Mason, JD*

Board of Trustees member through May 2029

Zanesville; Pamela Bobst, mayor of Rocky River; and Ann Womer Benjamin, mayor of Aurora—to tell us about their hopes for the future of their cities, their community’s relationship to higher education and their involvement as trustees.

Dealing with the educational divide: We’re still working on a lot of what I’ll call “social-economic issues” that affect the city. Some people are able to get an education and have good-paying jobs. But we have a lot of people who are being left behind—with low-paying jobs and sometimes more than one job to make ends meet. We continue to see a large divide between those who end up being educated and going to college, and those who fall out before they get to their senior year in high school.

Putting people first: I always try to think about what the public needs on a day-to-day basis. When I go to Kent State board meetings, I’m really pleased that the university is focused on the student experience—on making sure the students don’t have artificial obstacles in front of them. Once a person begins that first year of college, we are committed to trying to help that student get their degree so the money they’re borrowing—or the money they’re working for in a part-time job—isn’t wasted. We’re trying to make sure it’s invested in their education so that in four or five years they’ll be able to be well employed.

### Managing growth

**MAYOR OF AURORA**

*Ann Womer Benjamin, JD*

Board of Trustees member through May 2028

### Aligning education with business

A lot of our high school students take college-level courses through May 2030

### Dealing with the educational divide: We’re still working

**Womer Benjamin, mayor of Aurora**

To tell us about their hopes for the future of their cities, their community’s relationship to higher education and their involvement as trustees.

“...make sure it’s invested in their education so that in four or five years they’ll be able to be well employed.”

Aurora was founded in 1799, so it’s a very old and historic community. We have residents who have been here for decades; we also have newer residents moving here from the suburbs, and they bring a different set of expectations. Reconciling those changing demographics and divergent interests can be challenging. I’m trying to implement ideas and programs that will appeal to the entire community. Actually, I’ve found that decision making for a large community and responsiveness to various constituencies are similar for a mayor and a university president, although perhaps on different scales.

Managing growth: As a very desirable community in Northeast Ohio, we are growing. And that growth is something we want to control and manage. We have been buying up green space to preserve it and to help control development. In addition, though, with growth you have to look at infrastructure—which you will need down the road to accommodate not only the increasing numbers of residents, but also of our visitors.

I want to continue to maintain a beautiful, desirable community with 21st-century amenities while preserving our small-town charm—despite the growth that will undoubtedly occur. We also have some recreational opportunities; we have parks and green spaces across our city, and we need to develop a plan to link all of those. We need trails to provide the opportunity to traverse the city through our parks.

Connecting people with jobs: We are a highly educated community. Many of our residents have their own businesses or are entrepreneurs, or they work in big companies in Northeast Ohio. We have a vibrant manufacturing and industrial sector, however, that is struggling to find employees. I think some of it is a result of the pandemic. We are working closely with local and regional institutions of higher learning to make connections for our employers and find people willing to work on a manufacturing line who also have the technical skills—and in some cases, the computer and mathematical skills—necessary for the jobs.

### Appealing to all

**Pamela Bobst, mayor of Rocky River**

Board of Trustees member through May 2028

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**Pamela Bobst, mayor of Rocky River**

Board of Trustees member through May 2028

Putting people first: I always try to think about what the public needs on a day-to-day basis. When I go to Kent State board meetings, I’m really pleased that the university is focused on the student experience—on making sure the students don’t have artificial obstacles in front of them. Once a person begins that first year of college, we are committed to trying to help that student get their degree so the money they’re borrowing—or the money they’re working for in a part-time job—isn’t wasted. We’re trying to make sure it’s invested in their education so that in four or five years they’ll be able to be well employed.
CREATING A COMMUNITY OF BELONGING BY EMBRACING ACCESS FOR ALL

Established on a principle that education should be available to every citizen, Kent State is committed to breaking down barriers that inhibit access and hinder degree completion.

BY KAT BRAZ

Kent State boasts a legacy of inclusivity that traces back to its first full academic year on the Kent Campus in fall 1913. With a class of 138 women and six men, Kent State Normal School began as a school for working adults, educating women at a time when many universities enrolled very few—if they were admitted at all.

Years later, baby boomers—primarily first-generation children of immigrants to Northeast Ohio and African American migrants to Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown—enrolled in large numbers on the Kent Campus and at the university’s Regional Campuses. This diverse enrollment trend led to the founding of Black United Students and the first celebration of Black History Month—established at Kent State in February 1970 by students and faculty in Pan-African Studies, preceding the national holiday established at Kent State in February 1970 by students and the first celebration of Black History Month. This diverse enrollment trend led to the founding of Black United Students and the first celebration of Black History Month—established at Kent State in February 1970 by students and faculty in Pan-African Studies, preceding the national holiday established at Kent State in February 1970 by students and faculty in Pan-African Studies, preceding the national holiday designation in 1976.

As Kent State University President Todd Diacon puts it, “Access, diversity and degree completion are in our institutional DNA.” And as the university looks to the future, it remains committed to being a place of belonging where all students can cultivate their talents and create a brighter tomorrow. “Universities are driven by foundational cultures and histories—and Kent State is no exception,” Diacon says. “Broad accessibility and a diverse student body have been ever-present at Kent State.”

Today, embracing a new wave of access and diversity at Kent State means enrolling more underrepresented students as well as first-generation students, nontraditional students and students with high financial need. Historically, these populations have lower rates of attending and graduating from college. Often there are intersections across these populations. Understanding the barriers to access and dismantling them are the first steps toward further increasing graduation rates.

Read on to learn how Kent State continues to expand on its commitment to the founding principle that education should be available to every citizen.

Affordability Is Paramount to Expanding Access to Education

The university hit a record graduation rate this year, with 67.5% of first-time, full-time freshmen who enrolled in fall 2015 earning their bachelor’s degrees within six years. Ten years ago, the graduation rate for the Kent Campus was 49%.

“Our data shows that students who fail to earn a degree at Kent State, particularly at the Kent Campus, drop out because they cannot afford college,” Diacon says. “We need to crack this nut of affordability for roughly 20% of our Kent Campus students with the highest levels of financial need and the lowest rates of graduation.”

The threat of chocking off access to a college degree due to the rising costs of higher education led Kent State to introduce the Flashes Go Further Scholarship Program earlier this summer. The ambitious effort reallocates 3.3% of the annual university budget—about $20 million each year—to help eligible students cover the costs of tuition, general fees and books. It was established to help those students stay in school and get to graduation with as little student loan debt as possible.

“We recognize the power of education to reshape a person’s trajectory, not just for themselves, but often also for their family,” says Sean Broghammer, PhD, interim vice president for enrollment management. “Social mobility can be positively impacted by a degree from Kent State, but one of the primary barriers for students to gain access to the university is cost.

Students qualify if they are taking at least 12 credit hours on the Kent Campus and their expected family contribution (EFC on the FAFSA) is $10,000 or less. This applied to about 20% of the first-year entering class this fall 2021. For these students, Flashes Go Further will cover the difference between the cost of tuition and the amount of grants and scholarships a student receives. Students do not have to apply to the program, they only need to file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Financial need is determined by the results of the FAFSA and Kent State automatically makes the award.

“Flashes Go Further provides an avenue for students who otherwise might not think completing a college degree is a possibility for them because of the cost,” Broghammer says. Learn more about the Flashes Go Further Scholarship Program at www.kent.edu/financialaid/flashes-go-further-scholarship-program.

“Social mobility can be positively impacted by a degree from Kent State, but one of the primary barriers for students to gain access to the university is cost.”

—Sean Broghammer, PhD, Interim vice president for enrollment management

How is Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculated?

A student’s EFC is an index number that college financial aid staff use to determine how much financial aid a student receives. The EFC is calculated using information reported on the student’s FAFSA such as the family’s tax income and untaxed income, assets and benefits (e.g., unemployment or Social Security). Also considered are family size and the number of family members attending college during the year.

—U.S. Department of Education

Flashes Go Further Scholarship By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>Number of students who received an award for fall 2021 as of 9/29/21</td>
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<td>Average scholarship award for fall 2021</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Number of semesters new freshman may receive the award</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number of semesters incoming transfer students may receive the award</td>
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Learn more about the Flashes Go Further Scholarship Program at www.kent.edu/financialaid/flashes-go-further-scholarship-program.
A Sense of Belonging Begins With Equitable Access

C onnect may be the single biggest barrier to student access, but economic challenges extend beyond dollars and cents. Other factors, such as access to social capital and resources, must be considered as well.

“Social capital includes the social network of students,” says Amoaba Gooden, PhD, vice president for the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). “Do they have mentors who might guide them down a particular path? Do they have school counselors who talk to them about scholarship applications? Do they have individuals in their lives who will support them in their decision making, in filling out their applications?

“When it comes to access, we have to think beyond traditional students and include nontraditional students who might have some of those same challenges. They may also be caregivers of additional family members. Do they have the resources within their community or their network that they can tap into to achieve their dream of attending an institution of higher learning?!”

From a DEI perspective, much of the work to become a student-ready college—one prepared to welcome and support all types of students entering the institution—hinges on ensuring that policies, procedures, processes and programs are equitable.

Coming Together for Conversations About Social Justice Issues

The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) began hosting a series of town hall events titled “Shaping a Better Future: Dialogues and Strategizing for Change” in 2020. Forums included the Black American Experience, the Asian American Experience and the Trans Experience, among others.

“The town halls bring the university together to provide an environment where we can grapple with social justice issues,” Gooden says. “Students, faculty and staff are willing to be vulnerable in this space and share their personal experiences. These are powerful conversations that build knowledge and understanding.”

This fall, in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, DEI announced a continuation of last year’s series. Titled “Empowering Kent State: Valuing the Strength of Diversity,” this series expands the conversation, covering topics such as (dis)ability, critical race theory and intersectionality, and international and immigrant experiences.
“I chose to be an LGBT Studies minor because my major didn’t address the unique needs of LGBTQ people in health. After graduating, I want to go into LGBTQ cultural competency in healthcare and continue pursuing the study of gender and sexuality in graduate school.”

— Kent State student

Complex Questions
Courses within the School of Multidisciplinary Social Sciences and Humanities cover a range of complex questions within their curricula. Here are some examples:

- Black Lives Matter became a global call for action. But the organizing was very local. How and why do local anti-racist movements gain traction around the globe?
- The celebration of lived experiences, both those of the past and those wished for the future, is often visible in the art, literature and communal practices of immigrants. What can we learn about the migration experience from these cultural expressions?
- Pride parades have evolved from declarations of freedom that entailed great personal risk to incredibly popular events with very little risk to participants. How does this evolution happen? Who leads the shift in social “norms”?
- Why and how does anti-Semitism persist? Are hate groups increasing in number? Who is funding them? What can communities and governments do to combat anti-Semitism?

Subsisting on Instant Ramen Shouldn’t Be a Badge of Honor

There’s an outdated narrative that persists among college campuses and their alumni about the disheartening situations previous generations toughed out as students. Ericka Shoaff, BA ’11, inaugural director of the CARES Center, has heard it all before: “I lived paycheck to paycheck.” “I didn’t have an apartment and crashed on people’s couches.” “I survived only on ramen when I was in college; it’s no big deal.” Except, it is.

“Some of these narratives have been normalized,” Shoaff says. “But we can see that these are issues of basic needs insecurity and of lack of access to resources. If a student doesn’t know where their next meal is coming from or if they don’t have a stable place to sleep, it’s incredibly challenging to maintain their academic pursuits much less thrive.”

The CARES Center, which stands for Crisis, Advocacy, Resources, Education, Support, opened this fall in the Kent Student Center. The idea emerged from students who participated in the 2018 kaizen event hosted by the Great Place Initiative. (“Kaizen” is a Japanese word that essentially means “change for good.”) It relates to a business philosophy of continuous improvement. In its first semester, the center received more than 100 referrals for its case management services.

“The fact that the idea of the CARES Center came from student voices is really inspiring,” Shoaff says. “A few years ago, it was an idea on paper. Now it’s an actual physical space with services and a mission. It’s a testament to Kent State’s willingness to listen to student voices and implement real change. That’s very meaningful.”

The CARES Center, under the Division of Student Affairs, acts as a centralized resource hub where students can connect with service providers, both on campus and off, for assistance in four main categories: food security, stable housing, financial sustainability and mental well-being.

Kent State CARES
The four priority areas of the CARES Center are:

- Food security: The Flashes’ Food Pantry at the center provides access to nutritious food. Case workers can also help eligible students sign up for SNAP benefits.
- Housing stability: When emergency homeless situations arise, the center facilitates the intake and finds temporary housing while connecting the student to community agencies that help secure long-term housing. Case managers can help students look for available housing options and find resources for utilities.
- Financial sustainability: The center offers emergency aid for basic needs and can connect students with other emergency grants and funding available on and off campus for a variety of needs. Case managers can help students develop financial skills such as creating a budget.
- Mental well-being: Although the CARES Center does not offer clinical therapy directly, its case managers are licensed social workers who can guide students to the resources and services available on campus and in the community.
No One Should Face Discrimination Based on Sex or Gender

The Office of Gender Equity and Title IX, recently reorganized under the Division of Student Affairs, is one of many groups in the university dedicated to fostering a sense of belonging, inclusivity, well-being and safety. “Kent State has a legacy of collaborative partnerships working together to keep our campuses welcoming, inviting and safe,” says Tiffany Murray, JD, director of the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX, and Kent State’s designated Title IX coordinator.

Murray points to Kent State’s national recognition as a “Great College to Work For” (Chronicles of Higher Education, 2020) and one of the “30 Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs” (American College Personnel Association, 2021) as evidence of the work being done to create an inclusive campus. The university also was ranked the safest campus in Ohio in six of the last 10 years (FBI Uniform Crime Statistics).

The Office of Gender Equity and Title IX is tasked with maintaining and enforcing university policies and compliance efforts regarding gender equity and Title IX, including reports involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking. Title IX’s sexual harassment prohibitions apply to all students, faculty, staff and visitors. Previously, these functions were implemented by the Division of Human Resources. Murray and her staff—now located in the Kent Student Center in Room 250—also implement ongoing prevention initiatives across Kent State’s eight-campus system. “We’re not just the office that investigates matters,” Murray says. “We proactively work to prevent these violations from occurring in the first place. We do this by educating staff and students on the university community standards and our commitment to inclusion and refraining from engaging in unwelcomed and unwanted contact.”

Learn more about the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX at www.kent.edu/studentaffairs/genderequity-titleix.

Why the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Was Reorganized:
• To strengthen university partnerships and bring together student-facing resources.
• To streamline operations and improve resolution response strategies related to discrimination and harassment.

Title IX Defined
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law enforced by the U.S. Department of Education that requires all federally funded institutions (such as Kent State) to operate free of discrimination based on sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

It’s Not About Meeting a Quota; It’s About Genuine Representation of Experiences and Identities

Lamar R. Hylton, PhD, senior vice president for student affairs, knows firsthand about the transformative power of education. He was born the summer before his mother started her senior year in high school. His father was already in the workforce. Hylton, the first Black person in the university’s history to hold the title of vice president for student affairs, is a first-generation college student.

“I watched my parents climb their way up,” Hylton says. “It’s hard to do that on a high school education. When I had the ability to go to college, I needed scholarships and financial assistance. I needed help navigating this new environment. My parents weren’t positioned to help me financially.

“My immediate family’s experience is very different than what my lived experience was growing up, in a very good way. I firmly believe that the changing catalyst for me was obtaining a college degree and, eventually, my PhD. It’s exactly the reason why I feel so strongly about the way we position a collegiate education because it can be transformational, particularly for those students like me who did not come from means or experiences that would indicate opportunities to be successful in a university setting.”

Putting more emphasis on the resources available to underrepresented or marginalized students helps break down the stigma surrounding barriers to access. Hylton, who was promoted to senior vice president for student affairs at the start of the school year, embraces a student-focused approach to leadership that equips students with the resources and support they need to succeed academically.

“It’s an approach that’s gained him local and national recognition. In recent months, Hylton has been named the recipient of the NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) Region IV-East Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Senior Student Affairs Officer for 2021, named to Crain’s Cleveland Business Forty Under 40, selected as a recipient of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Diamond Honoree award and is a member of the 2022 class of the NASPA Pillars of the Profession award.

“Our student experience is the way that we begin to open the doors and remove the barriers to accessing an education.”

Lamar Hylton, PhD

“I firmly believe in centering the student experience and acting in the best interest of the students we are called to serve,” Hylton says. “Our student experience is the way that we begin to open the doors and remove the barriers to accessing an education. I’m proud that our campus community is not only thinking more broadly about the ways in which we remain as accessible as possible to everyone and anyone who would want an education from Kent State but also how we are taking action to implement real change.”

Learn more about the Division of Student Affairs at www.kent.edu/studentaffairs.

Call to Action

Although the university has made significant progress in its goals to expand access and increase rates of completion, there is more work to be done. Lamar Hylton describes his appointment as the first Black vice president of student affairs as a double-edged sword.

“Instead of looking at this position on its own, I think we need to be thinking about the transformative power of education in a broader sense,” Hylton says. “If we are committed to a sense of belonging as an institution, a part of that belonging is seeing others who look like you.”

“It’s no secret that people of color, more specifically Black or African American identifying students, have given voice to being the ‘only’ in their class. Being an ‘only’ can negatively impact your academic experience. Whether it’s the only Black person, the only woman, the only LGBTQ+, the only differently-abled, it’s hard.

“It’s wildly important for us to make sure that our campus represents a diverse spectrum. Not just racially or ethnically, but across all categories. I don’t want the university to meet a quota. I want us to have some genuine representation of people and experiences and identities that make Kent State University the best place it can possibly be. And that starts with ensuring equitable access for all.”

Learn more about the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX at www.kent.edu/studentaffairs/genderequity-titleix.

Tiffany Murray, JD

“...and Title IX Was Reorganized:
• To strengthen university partnerships and bring together student-facing resources.
• To streamline operations and improve resolution response strategies related to discrimination and harassment.”
Spend even five minutes with state Sen. Vernon Sykes (D-Akron) and you’ll probably come away knowing more about how state government works and the significant role it plays in your life.

“In order for people to get the very best government, a government that works for them, they have to understand it,” Sykes says. “Government is so mystical to a lot of people that they refuse to engage in it. They say, ‘Politics has nothing to do with me.’ But that’s not true at all.”

Sykes, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Kent State, brought that philosophy to bear as the inaugural director of Kent State’s Columbus Program in State Issues. Since 2001, the semester-long intensive program has aimed to open students’ eyes to the workings of state government—even if, Sykes says, those students thought they had no place in it.

The program paused in 2020 amid the pandemic, and Sykes stepped down as director after 19 years in June 2020. The university is seeking a new director and plans to restart the program in fall 2022.

With more than 30 years in politics, Sykes considers himself a trustee: someone who will do what is in the best interest of his constituents, even if some decisions are unpopular. And the more people know about how decisions are made, he says, the better they can see how the process affects them and where they might find a place in it.

That’s where the Columbus Program, as it is known, comes in. The program has welcomed about 24 students each fall to Ohio’s capital to explore state government in three ways: via classes, through on-site briefings (with elected state officials, state agencies, lobbying firms, think tanks and nonprofit policy/advocacy organizations) and in individualized internships that exposed students to the facets of state government.

Each Monday and Tuesday morning, students gathered in a hearing room of the Ohio Statehouse for class. Ohio Rep. Jamie Callender (R-Concord)—an adjunct professor at Kent State for more than 12 years, whom Sykes brought in as an instructor—for a few hours.

Brands. A journalism major could gain valuable reporting experience with an internship at the Columbus Dispatch. And an accounting major could just as easily crunch numbers at the state auditor’s office as at an accounting firm.

The internships were often life-changing for the students, Sykes says. It has a hand in everything from issuing business licenses to entrepreneurs to funding school, prison and healthcare systems. Given that, he says, everyone “should be exposed to the big actors—to the stakeholders, the administrators, the planners” in their home state—even those who don’t plan to work in government.

Still, Sykes believes that revealing government’s inner workings encourages citizens to participate, says Sykes’ youngest daughter, state Rep. and House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes (D-Akron), BA ’06, who participated in the Columbus Program in 2006. “So it’s not really shocking that he would have gone to great lengths to put together a program like this,” she says. “It’s just another way he’s encouraging participation.”

“As he spoke in classes across Kent State’s eight campuses to recruit for the Columbus Program, Sykes often heard students lament that they had no place in a government-focused experience because they weren’t political science majors.” They “would just shut off and think, this is not for me,” he says. But he was “able to spark their interest” in the program by showing how they could tailor participation to each student’s interests.

The internships were Sykes’ chance to convince students they had a place in the program. He would ask them what they wanted to do and where they might want to intern to find the best match, says Kathleen Loughry, administrative assistant for the Columbus Program since 2004. “We would sometimes research what was available, but they would have to submit their resumes and schedule interviews.”

“A fashion merchandising major could benefit from the experience, Sykes reasoned, by learning how corporate taxes and regulations affect retailers, so he helped secure an internship in the government relations department at the corporate headquarters of what was then known as Limited Brands. A journalism major could gain valuable reporting and government experience with an internship at the Columbus Dispatch. And an accounting major could just as easily crunch numbers at the state auditor’s office as at an accounting firm.

The internships were often life-changing for the students, Sykes says. Loughry, who helped the students navigate the program from start to finish. “Maybe when they went in, they didn’t know what they wanted to do,” she says. But “sometimes when they left, they were completely committed to another direction because of what they saw and what they experienced over their internship.”
ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE
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DR. SYKES IS THAT LIFE WILL
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KNOW THAT IT CAN CHANGE
FOR THE BETTER."
—Lubna Najjar, BA ‘08

MATAR GUEYE, BS ‘11

Madar Gueye and his Columbus Program classmates had a nickname for Sykes: A Cool Breeze. While the 2010 cohort chose the phrase because of Sykes’ stylish attire and “shiny car,” Gueye says, the moniker held another meaning for him. In Sykes, Gueye saw a man who could do it all: “It blew my mind that he was a state legislator and a professor.” Gueye decided he wanted to be like that. Today he is the digital attire and “shiny car,” Gueye says, the moniker held another meaning for him. In Sykes, Gueye saw a man who could do it all: “It blew my mind that he was a state legislator and a professor.” Gueye decided he wanted to be like that. Today he is the digital campaigns manager of BlueGreen Alliance—a nonprofit coalitions of labor unions and environmental groups pushing for a cleaner environment and a clean, thriving economy. He balances managing multiple social media campaigns with crafting communications that go directly to legislators. On a recent day, Gueye helped draft a “Build Back Better” fact sheet sent to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer’s office, urging the politician to support investing in the manufacturing of clean vehicles and energy. It’s a busy, demanding job. But Gueye says Sykes and the Columbus Program prepared him for it.

In the program, Gueye learned everything from how to send a professional cold email—a skill he used in President Barack Obama’s 2012 reelection campaign—to the power of networking. He was so engrossed in the program, he says, that he got straight As for the first time in his Kent State career. And that was no small feat: “Nothing gets past Vernon Sykes,” Gueye laughs now. “He didn’t give anyone any breaks. He held everyone to account.”

MADISON LISOTTO WHALEN, BA ‘11

You could say Madison Lisotto Whalen owes her career path to the Columbus Program. She certainly says it.

Whalen is a partner at CHW Advisors in Columbus, a full-service government and political affairs firm that helps clients navigate the regulatory and political landscape. She co-owns the firm with Matthew Carle and Melissa Hoefiell. Whalen interned for Hoefiell, an attorney, during the Columbus Program. And she credits Sykes for the placement. After exploring Whalen’s interest in law during a pre-interview program, he introduced her to Hoefiell and set her internship up.

“It’s kind of amazing that, 11 years later, I’m still working with her,” says Whalen, who graduated from Capital University Law School in 2015. “And it was thanks to that connection that he [Sykes] made when I was explaining what my interests were.” It’s also thanks, in part, to a Columbus Program lesson that Whalen took to heart as she met government officials, lobbyists and stakeholders. Sykes “talked a lot about how far you can go with connections and, if you need a job, that you’re often going to get it through a connection,” she says. “You hear that a lot when you’re an undergrad, but in the program, you could actually see it come to life.”

At CHW Advisors, Whalen focuses on lobbying the state legislature, a career she learned about in the Columbus Program. “The Columbus Program teaches you about state government and lobbying, and how to work with legislators, and that’s exactly what my job is,” she says. “I was very influenced by the program; it changed the trajectory of my whole career path.”

LUBNA NAJJAR, BA ‘08

Politics may seem far removed from fashion, but for Columbus Program graduate LubnNA Najjar, working within government helped launch a successful fashion label, which she has since sold, and later, her Columbus-based women’s fashion business development firm, IL Moda.

Her fashion label’s biggest customers, Najjar says, were the legislative aides, lobbyists and attorneys she met through the Columbus Program. Today, when IL Moda hosts industry mixers, city council members and the mayor often attend. As Najjar says, the business succeeds in Columbus in part because of her government work.

The Columbus Program launched Najjar into a series of government jobs—including legislative aide in the Ohio State House of Representatives and policy analyst for the Ohio Board of Regents—that ultimately helped her launch her clothing business career. And it all began with an internship at Homeland Security that wasn’t sufficiently challenging—and a life lesson from Sykes.

When Najjar told Sykes she was not challenged enough by her internship, he suggested she volunteer with the Ohio Democratic Party. There, she canvassed for the reelection campaign of Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman. She gained a mentor in the mayor, and new insight.

“One of the most valuable things we learned from Dr. Sykes is that life will continue to evolve—that you should focus on the moment you’re in but also know that it can change for the better,” she says. “If you’re not happy in this exact moment, there are people who will help you.”

DESMOND BRYANT, BA ‘11

After attending a class at the Kent Campus that allowed him to explore the ins-and-outs of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Desmond Bryant knew he had to go into politics. And then he ran into his friend, Emilia Sykes, in Bowman Hall.

He told her about his newfound interest. She told him about the Columbus Program. “The rest,” he says, “is history.” Bryant entered the program, where he scored an internship with the governor’s (Gov. Strickland) administration. There he met government officials, lobbyists and advocates for small and large businesses throughout Central Ohio. He also works as a government affairs consultant for Thomas Ingram Law Group.

While his work is nuanced, Bryant, who earned a master’s degree in education policy and administration from the University of Dayton in 2015, sums things up this way: “I build and cultivate relationships with elected officials to work in influence policy.”

Knowing what that is worth, though, is something he can trace back to the Columbus Program and Vernon Sykes.

Sykes was excellent at “drawing out greatness from within us,” Bryant says. “Some folks have it in them, but they don’t know how to express it, or how to carry themselves in a room. Dr. Sykes was able to help me with knowing my worth. He would say to me, ‘You’re in this program for a reason, so carry yourself in that way. Work the room. Meet as many people as you can. And tell people what you want to do and what you want to become, because folks will help you do it.’”
By Mark Oprea, BA ’15

A

fter years of reading The Plain Dealer, in January 2020 I was finally about to be published in its pages. A freelance journalist with five years of experience, I drove proudly to its headquarters in the Cleveland suburb of Brooklyn, shook hands and signed a freelance contract. “Hey, if this goes well,” then-editor George Rodrigue told me on Jan. 8, “we could bring you on monthly.” To say I was elated would be an understatement. In February, I learned that Rodrigue was leaving the paper after accepting a role as editor-at-large that Rodrigue was leaving under an understatement. The Plain Dealer, its parent company of Advance, announced plans to lay off employees—and my contract was scrapped. The reason is strictly financial,” new editor-in-chief Tim Warsinskey explained in a letter to the public. “The industry revenue model has changed, and print newspapers have struggled to overcome deep losses in subscriptions and advertising. More people access the news on digital platforms than ever before.” Initially gathering material for an article on newsroom turmoil” to pitch to possible employers, I had a newsroom of 372, Ben Wolford, BS ’11, was devising a remedy of his own. It was February 2020, and Wolford, a go-getter media prodigy from Randolph, Ohio, was searching for a freelance project to keep him occupied during the economic slowdown brought about by the pandemic simply sped up print journalism’s steady decline.

PD had a newsroom of 372 in 2006, now it had fewer than 20. A week later, more staff losses left just four in the PD newsroom, and they soon signed on with cleveland.com. The economic slowdown brought about by the pandemic simply sped up print journalism’s steady decline. According to a June 2021 report by the Pew Research Center, “Since 2008, newspaper employment has plummeted at U.S. newspapers while increasing in the digital publishing sector.

Newspaper newsroom employment fell 57% between 2008 and 2020, from roughly 71,000 jobs to about 31,000. At the same time, the number of digital-native newsroom employees rose 144%, from 7,400 workers in 2008 to about 10,800 in 2020.”

In Greater Cleveland, cleveland.com assumed responsibility for local news coverage that appears in The Plain Dealer, but its news staff is much smaller than the staff in the newspaper’s heyday. Local coverage of many Northeast Ohio communities is bolstered online and in the paper by Sun Newspapers, a chain of weekly papers also owned by Advance. Even so, with a pandemic and the spread of misinformation on the internet, providing local readers with pertinent, timely news is more important than ever. Research shows that communities with diminished local news sources have higher taxes, more political polarization, less civic engagement and worse economies. As alarming as these findings are, there is hope. Digital media circulation and digital advertising dollars are stronger than ever—the former up 27% in 2021—as news startups and Silicon Valley-funded experiments seem to be announced in every weekly media newsletter. However, creating community-focused coverage with sustainable business models for local news remains a challenge. Ideas abound—and some are being generated by members of the Kent State community. Highlighted below are several efforts that boost local news coverage in parts of Northeast Ohio—and may signal a path forward for other communities as well.

The economic slowdown brought about by the pandemic simply sped up print journalism’s steady decline.

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Their conversation was revelatory. Pages had been reduced, subscription costs had increased, and local organizations couldn’t get information about their events published in the paper.

“I hung up the phone and thought, ‘This isn’t just a story, this is a market opportunity.’” Wolford recalls. So instead of reporting the news of local journalism’s decline, he decided to do something about it.

Wolford assembled an advisory board, talked with local Portage County residents, crafted a business plan and opened a MailChimp account for $50. On March 25, 2020, he sent out the inaugural issue of his email newsletter, The Portager, to an initial list of 285 people who had expressed interest. “At the time, I didn’t feel like I was ready, but the pandemic had just set in and I was scared,” Wolford says. “They needed good, local information.”

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“The economic slowdown brought about by the pandemic simply sped up print journalism’s steady decline.

PD had a newsroom of 372 in 2006, now it had fewer than 20. A week later, more staff losses left just four in the PD newsroom, and they soon signed on with cleveland.com. The economic slowdown brought about by the pandemic simply sped up print journalism’s steady decline. According to a June 2021 report by the Pew Research Center, “Since 2008, newspaper employment has plummeted at U.S. newspapers while increasing in the digital publishing sector.

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Mike Beder, BS '00, a Kent-based entrepreneur (who owns Water Street Tavern, Venice Café and Kent Sportsbar), says Wolford’s deal him sold him on The Portager in summer 2020. A frequent newsletter advertiser, Beder joined Wolford’s advisory board. He cites his fear of news deserts and his trust in Wolford’s mission. “Ben has so much integrity,” Beder says. “I haven’t second guessed it since. Also, he’s been very transparent. His email and phone number are at the end of every newsletter. I mean, who else does that?”

Since March 2020, Wolford has published an email newsletter every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. He’s hired a full-time reporter and some part-time staff—his sister, Natalie Wolford, as managing editor, and a part-time reporter—plus freelancers, including former Record-Courier sports columnist Tom Harrlsey. In March 2021, he built and launched a website, ThePortager.com, which has grown to approximately 80,000 page views per month. He currently has more than 5,600 subscribers, with about 10% of them paid. Readers can sign up for free or start a paid subscription; Wolford even offers a “pay what you can” option. Advertisers increased during the election cycle, and he hopes to eventually hire a business development officer to target prospects and increase ad revenues.

Although he recently was able to start paying himself, Wolford has other jobs to help make ends meet. He works for his father’s marketing firm, Wolford Communications, and edits the English edition of il manifesto, an Italian daily newspaper.

“In some ways, the pandemic was a catalyst for making The Portager even possible.” —Ben Wolford

Wolford and his family have been based in Brasilia, Brazil, since last July. He travels back to Portage County as much as he can, but he’s basically running a hyper-local news publication from 7,000 miles away. “In some ways, the pandemic was a catalyst for making The Portager even possible,” Wolford says. “I don’t think I would have been able to start this and run it as effectively if the whole world hadn’t transitioned to a kind of virtual, global arrangement where you can be anywhere and still be local. I’m even a member of the Rotary Club of Kent—it’s first foreign member.”

Is The Portager sustainable for the long run? Wolford remains optimistic. “We’re in constant feedback with our readers, finding out what they like, what they don’t like, and trying to meet their needs. If they don’t like the way we’re paying for it, they’ll stop paying for it. Of course, 90% of startups fail. But I’m happy to report that our funding is sustainable, and we’re doing well.”

COLLABORATIVE NEWSLAB AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

As COVID-19’s devastation reached universities, Maria McGinnis somehow maintained her composure. Holding editor positions at KentWired, The Burr and 4 Magazine, McGinnis, BS ’21, knew she couldn’t let lockdown doom and gloom alter her career path. Last April, she watched as internship opportunities fell away or went remote, as COVID effectively ended in-person reporting and shut down in-person classes. “I think it’s really heavy,” McGinnis said at the time. “The feeling is, ‘Oh wow, all these things are changing, my internship [is now] remote. How will that change my experience?’”

As students filed campus and returned home, Susan Kirkman Zake, professor in the School of Media and Journalism and faculty advisor to the student-run news outlets, was polishing her antidote to McGinnis’ anxieties. By June 2020, Zake had created the Collaborative NewsLab at Kent State University, an experiential learning environment that connects student reporters with outside professional partners. Using a private donation and a $7,500 grant she secured from the Scripps Howard Foundation, she and Kevin Dilley, director of student media, would pay seven hungry— and COVID-depressed—student journalists, including Maria McGinnis, to write in-demand news stories for outside sources while earning internship credit. Some students already had earned the required hours in a previous semester; others are eligible to apply for internship credit via their NewsLab work. NewsLab would also help new digital publications like The Portager.

“I am a student broker,” Zake says about her role. “I’m trying to find good professional outlets or good professional partners so that my students can do a higher level of work.”

In addition to Zake’s senior-level practicum course, where students typically work on semester-long multimedia projects with area editors, NewsLab offers an alternative to entry-level duties such as fact-checking, writing news briefs and redirecting phone calls to editors. Instead, Zake says NewsLab is a “pipeline builder,” a way of working with local editors, instead of just working for them. “It’s a way of getting the students more job ready before they actually apply for their first real jobs.”

With a senate shift in work formats, more journalists are freelancing than ever before. (The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a 2% drop in the freelance unemployment rate since 2014.)

“Decades ago, it was just editors and reporters making pitches,” Turner says. “It was always, ‘The newsroom decides what the public needs to know.’ Now, we’re more like, ‘Let’s ask our audience what they want to know.’”

Turner’s role changed in October 2021, after Kent State University entered into a public service operating agreement with Ideastream Public Media for the management and operations of WKSU and its sister stations. (Kent State University still retains FCC licensing for the WKSU stations.) Under the agreement, Ideastream Public Media assumed operations for WKSU on Oct. 1, 2021. In 2022, WKSU will become the sole NPR and information station in northeastern Ohio, while Ideastream Public Media’s WCIN will shift to expand classical music service.

“This partnership is building on decades of award-winning journalism from two of the region’s leaders in news and information,” Turner wrote in an email to WKSU staff. “It will allow us to serve more than 3.5 million people in the community. The decision to pursue this agreement was reinforced by an analysis supported by the Corporation for Public

WKSU AND IDEASTREAM PUBLIC MEDIA

It is indisputable. Ever since the presidential election of 2016, more Americans have less trust in their news sources. In June, the Pew Research Center confirmed this decline: 18% fewer adults trust national media than did five years ago. And 7% fewer trust local media.

So how does a public radio station like WKSU handle such issues of trust? Put some seeds of story creation in the hands of listeners, says Wendy Turner, former general manager and executive director of WKSU, who was recently named the first general manager of Ohio public media services for Ideastream Public Media.

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—Sue Zake

Though Zake isn’t teaching the School of Media and Journalism’s new class on freelancing in Spring Semester 2022—professor Jacqueline Marino, BA ’94, will teach that—she encourages NewsLab hires, like McGinnis and senior Zaria Johnson, to make the most of their work relationships. Johnson, a recent editor of The Kent Student, has turned a NewsLab summer environmental justice initiative with The Land (a local news startup in Cleveland) into a part-time freelancing gig.

McGinnis finished an internship with The Land in June and continues to freelance for other digital media sites like The Portager. Still, out of either her own propensity for work or the demands of the industry, she feels somewhat incomplete. “Even being so busy, I feel like I’m still not doing enough,” she says. “It’s a weird way to feel.”

The NewsLab hired 10 journalism students in summer 2021, with funding from the Cleveland, Gund and Scripps Howard foundations, as well as internal funding from the School of Media and Journalism and the College of Communication and Information, and money from student media’s budget. Two interns were unpaid, since they needed the credit and couldn’t secure an internship on their own—Zake added them into NewsLab so they could stay on track for graduation.

Zake would like to increase the intern base in summer 2022, if they can get additional funding from grant foundations and new donors. She’d also like to increase the current $10-$12-an-hour pay, while making unpaid internships pass by 2023.

“The goal is to keep students from working in fast food,” Zake says, smiling, “and pay them well.”
**Wendy Turner**

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According to the Pew Research Center, while print took a hard hit during the pandemic, interest in public radio increased dramatically. From 2016 to 2020, membership counts shot up from 2.1 million to 2.5 million; the number of NPR affiliates nationwide grew by over 100 stations.

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Wendy Turner, 28

The community.”

Together we will be able to serve more than 3.5 million people in Ohio, working together successfully to serve all Ohioans,” Turner says. “By resourcing the coordination and shared services.”

“Ohio’s public media organizations have a history of decades of award-winning journalism from two of the region’s leaders in news and information. Together we will be able to serve more than 3.5 million people in the community.”

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Broadcasting. That analysis found that working together would result in even stronger public service journalism.”

In her new role, Turner leads the services Ideastream Public Media manages on behalf of all Ohio public television and radio stations. These include The Ohio Channel, the Ohio Public Radio and Television Statehouse. News Bureau and the recently formed statewide news collaborative (which will coordinate with state’s only daily statewide radio and digital news service). She is part of Ideastream Public Media’s executive leadership team, reporting to President and CEO Kevin Martin. Turner’s position aligns with Ideastream Public Media’s efforts to sustain and expand local journalism.

“Ohio’s public media organizations have a history of working together and with all Ohioans,” Turner says. “By resourcing the coordination and administration of these investments, we have the opportunity to greatly expand the reach and impact of our shared services.”

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**MAHONING MATTERS**

**What happens when your trusty hometown newspaper of 150 years suddenly implodes, lays off all remaining 44 staff members, and leaves all coverage to another newspaper 20 miles up the road?**

That’s what longtime readers of the *The Vindicator* in Youngstown, affectionately known as the Vindy, wanted to know when the paper shut down at the end of August 2019. The 50,000 loyal Vindy subscribers were asking: Are we bound to live in a news desert? Where do we source daily information, like sports wins and obituaries? And, most importantly, who is going to keep political forces in check?

The *Tribe Chronicle* in Warren began publishing a daily Mahoning County edition under the *Vindicator* name in September 2019, but Mandy Jenkins, BS ‘02, MA ’04, also stepped in with an alternative answer. A 16-year digital media jack-of-all-trades, Jenkins had been hired as the general manager of the Compass Experiment, an all-digital news laboratory funded jointly by newspaper group McClatchy and Google three months before the Vindy closed. The three-year project aimed to replenish three handpicked U.S. news deserts, while testing revenue stream models to serve as examples for other startups.

“It was pure outsiderism. At least until readers found out that we were all from here originally.”

—Mandy Jenkins

A Zanesville, Ohio, native, Jenkins advocated to have Google’s first venture set in Youngstown. Google agreed: Compass’s breakout news site hit the internet in October 2019, backed by a team of five. Since the site is based in Mahoning County, Jenkins and team named it Mahoning Matters.

As with other startups aiming to fill gaps left by withering papers, Mahoning Matters faced a new-kid-in-town conflict with Youngstowners who doubted its street cred. It’s why Jenkins flew repeatedly from New York City (where she lives) to Youngstown, to reassure skeptics that it wasn’t Google doing the reporting. “A lot of what we heard [at listening sessions] was mostly, ‘How come you come here and do this new thing?’” Jenkins says. “It was pure outsiderism. At least until readers found out that we were all from here originally.”

Since Mahoning Matters’ launch two years ago, it has grown into a reputable source for a range of information. Because of the project’s seed funds and its growing reader base—8,000 email subscribers and 200,000 monthly views as of October 2020—it has a decent chance at surviving the whims of today’s wild digital media environment.

And with a staff of Vindy veterans, like Justin Dennis, Mark Sweetwood and Jess Hardin, Mahoning Matters has, by now, convinced Youngstown that it’s a force to reckon with in terms of watchdog reporting. “If we were an [outside] parachute operation instead? I don’t think this would’ve worked,” Dennis says. “But it just does.”

Or, more accurately, of the work. In February, due to a bankruptcy, McClatchy was sold to new hedge fund owners, who, to Jenkins’ chagrin, decided The Compass Experiment wasn’t as much of an asset as the original owners thought it was. In March, Mahoning Matters was cut off from future Google investment and absorbed into the McClatchy network. Compass’s second startup, The Longmont Leader in Longmont, Colorado, was subsequently sold to Village Media. (The reporters kept their gigs, however).

Like five times before in her 16-year-long career in media, Jenkins once again had to find a job. “It was more personal this time,” she says. “Because I had a hand in making [Mahoning Matters]. It was, well, my baby.”

But Jenkins seldom frets. Now head of product at Factal, a Seattle–based breaking news technology company, she knows that her tendency as a journalistic renaissance woman — “To do everything,” she says, from audience building to UX design—has calmed a lot of overarching fears that plague midcareer media workers.

Such a mentality, Jenkins thinks, will also suit Justin Dennis as he replaces retiring 33-year veteran Mark Sweetwood as Mahoning Matters’ editor. “Justin’s always been very responsible and understanding of both the business-side realities as well as what’s needed from a workflow perspective,” Jenkins says. “And that’s not always the case with reporters. Trust me, I’m married to one.”
Kent State University launched the public phase of a $350 million comprehensive fundraising campaign Saturday, Oct. 2, during a special halftime announcement at the Homecoming football game. Campaign co-chairs Sandra C. and Lawrence B. Armstrong, BS ’79, BArc ’80, joined Kent State President Todd Diacon to publicly unveil Forever Brighter to thousands of alumni, donors and friends.

“We are consistently recognized nationally for our success in graduating more students,” Diacon said. “Our graduation rate is already the highest in northern Ohio and the fourth highest in the state among universities, but we won’t rest until all students we enroll graduate with the skills to succeed in their first jobs, graduate programs and careers they haven’t even dreamed of yet. Philanthropy is key to illuminating a brighter future for our students and their communities.”

To date, more than $311 million has been raised toward the $350 million goal during the quiet phase of the Forever Brighter campaign, which focuses on three key areas: prioritizing student success, expanding university initiatives and building the future. Within each of these areas are specific projects, programs and initiatives to enhance student experiences and elevate Kent State’s reputation as a leader in student support, athletics, research and innovation—both nationally and internationally.

“It is a special time at Kent State University,” Sandra Armstrong said. “For too long, our alma mater had been a hidden gem amongst higher education institutions. Now, our reputation is strong, our rankings are soaring and our students are learning how to harness their passions to find their purpose in life.”

“We are launching into a new era at Kent State, and we are so proud to co-chair this transformational campaign,” Lawrence Armstrong added. “We have been given the opportunity to fund scholarships and new programs for deserving students—and there is no more rewarding feeling for us than changing the course of our students’ lives in a positive and encouraging way. We call on all alumni and friends to join us in this effort to build a brighter future for Kent State.”

This is a campaign for everyone, says Valoree Vargo, Kent State’s vice president for philanthropy and alumni engagement. “Whether you can give $100 to be used for a Last Dollar Scholarship to enable a student to pay their final bill and make it to graduation or you can give millions of dollars to endow a professorship, every dollar is focused on the success of our hardworking and talented students. “Our donors are truly transforming lives of students who need their support now more than ever. Our campaign tagline is ‘At Kent State, what sets us apart is how we come together.’ It’s that spirit that will propel us forward in this effort to leave the university and the lives of our students Forever Brighter.”

Learn more https://www.kent.edu/foreverbrighter

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**HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAMPAIGN’S THREE PRIMARY PRIORITIES:**

**PRIORITIZING STUDENT SUCCESS**

Raising funds to align with scholarship needs enables the university to support students from the day they receive their letter of acceptance to the day they receive their degree. Scholarships assist students by:

- Ensuring access to a Kent State education for all students, regardless of their financial situation.
- Rewarding the highest-achieving students with additional support.
- Providing high-impact experiences and study-away opportunities to elevate career readiness.
- Fostering and supporting students as they complete a degree.

By the Numbers:

- **32%** of the Class of 2024 is first-generation
- **572** is the number of Honors College freshmen
- **82%** of students need financial assistance to attain degrees
- **2X** is the amount our four-year graduation rate has increased in 10 years
- **30%** of first-year students are eligible for the federal Pell Grant
- **Goal:** To raise $100 million to provide scholarship support for students.

“Students from backgrounds like mine are not supposed to make it to college. Some say we are forever bound to the environment we grew up in.”

—JOHN McDERMOTT, BA ’20, accounting major, scholarship recipient and first in his family to continue his education beyond middle school. Since graduating from Kent State, he has completed a master’s degree and is employed as an accountant at Deloitte Cleveland.
I was excited about the biology aspect of integrating biology and fashion for the course because I was not familiar with the world. —NATHAN RITCHIE, mathematics and neuroscience major, Brain Health Research Institute fellow, capstone project: “Increasing Quality of Life for Spinal Cord Injury.”

“This has been a great opportunity to do research, and I plan on having my own research lab once I graduate.” —NATHAN RITCHIE, mathematics and neuroscience major, Brain Health Research Institute fellow, capstone project: “Increasing Quality of Life for Spinal Cord Injury.”

By the Numbers:

**Brain Health Research Institute**

- **Brain Health Fellows**: 25
- **Undergraduate Students**: 1,764
- **Pilot Grant Awardees**: 17

**Goal:** To elevate the profile of neuroscience and bring together people from different disciplines to expand discoveries in preventing and treating brain disease.

Design Innovation

The Design Innovation (DI) initiative focuses on developing solutions by reaching across academic fields and partnering with industry to enhance collaboration, communication skills and creativity.

Design Innovation is an ecosystem of physical, human and intellectual resources to help students become creative, intersectional problem-solvers. Coursework and co-curricular projects, competitions, hackathons and grand challenges bolster this “challenge-based innovation” strategy.

Kent State was recognized in Newsweek’s 2021 list of the Best Maker Schools in Higher Education, an international list that includes some of the most prestigious universities in the world.

“I was excited about the biology aspect of the course because I was not familiar with integrating biology and fashion for the purpose of creating an innovative product.” —JANDA VAN DYK, BFA ’22, Fashion design major, one of a team of Kent State biology and fashion design students that received the Outstanding Science Award from the BioDesign Challenge Summit 2020. The fashion industry currently uses synthetic dyes to create the color black, so the team worked with bacteria to create an eco-friendly replacement.

“By the Numbers:

**Design Innovation Nodes (makerspaces and resource laboratories) across Kent State campuses**: 30

**DI Fellows**: 28

**DI Hub**: 1

**Goal:** To leverage and elevate the entire Design Innovation Ecosystem to create a powerful and diverse community of fearless collaborators in the face of complex problems.

Employee Talent

Kent State University’s rising stature among the nation’s best research institutions depends on the success and achievements of its employees. Perpetual support allows faculty, administrators and staff to advance their work, assist in research, purchase equipment and push the boundaries of the unknown for generations to come.

“This model is an explicit example of how cross-disciplinary work is essential to holistically examine the processes that lead to improved safety outcomes.”

—SARAH SAYRAHMADZADEH, PhD, coordinator of and Elliot Professor in the Healthcare Design Program at Kent State’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design, was awarded a $2.47 million grant to improve efficient care in Level 1 trauma room design. The project brings together a team of researchers from Kent State and Cleveland Clinic Akron General Hospital for the next four years.

By the Numbers:

- **5,000+** employees work across Kent State’s eight campus system
- **12+** is the average for years of service by Kent State employees
- **73%** of faculty members have doctoral degrees

**Goal:** To double the number of endowed chairs, professorships and other positions across the eight-campus system and provide perpetual support for the university’s most distinguished employees and their corresponding work.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Kent State Athletics’ vision is to be a nationally recognized, comprehensive athletics program that inspires communities and transforms lives. The landscape of Division I intercollegiate athletics is changing constantly and the need for resources is at an all-time high. Philanthropy is integral to the program’s innovative mindset in resource management, with a focus on sustainability and sound financial stewardship. More resources are needed to focus on its mission to win championships and graduate student-athletes who are prepared for life after sport.

“My goal is to become an audiologist and work in a hospital setting or work with children in an elementary school. I would not have been able to complete my college journey without my scholarships, and for that, I will be forever grateful.” —Vanessa Vodan, BS ’20

By the Numbers:

- **$6.1 million in scholarships awarded annually**
- **476+** student-athletes
- **81 athletics endowments
- **19 varsity sports
- **19 straight semesters with department grade point averages of 3.0+

**Goal:** To increase the number of athletics endowments by 50%.

Brain Health

The Brain Health Research Institute (BHRI) is a collaborative effort that taps passionate faculty members from across Kent State University—not just in science-based departments, but also in social sciences and humanities—to combine their unique strengths as they collaborate to solve brain-related challenges. The institute is the epicenter of training for undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in an environment that thrives on hands-on access, mentorship, resources and opportunities.

“Expanding University Initiatives

During the last few decades, Kent State has gone from an academic, athletic and economic driver in Northeast Ohio to a thought-starter, fierce competitor and innovation leader at the national and international levels. Research and programmatic additions to the university—such as the following—have elevated the university’s reputation and cemented its place on the world stage:

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- **19 straight semesters with department grade point averages of 3.0+

**Goal:** To increase the number of athletics endowments by 50%.
Kent State’s vision is to be a magnet for talented students who want to change the world and a flagship for faculty and staff who have the talent to lead such a bold initiative. To achieve this, its physical spaces must match the innovative and transformative experiences taking place across its educational system. New and updated facilities for the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship and the College of Aeronautics and Engineering will lay a foundation for what is possible when physical spaces accurately reflect stellar programs.

**AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

This is the home for students who will go on to become global business leaders, transforming their future industries across every aspect of society. It has experienced double-digit enrollment gains since 2010 and is one of Ohio’s largest business colleges. The college’s proposed building, Crawford Hall, will enable teamwork and the use of new technology to prepare students for future careers in business.

“Going to New York City and getting to represent Golden Flash Asset Management was something I’ll always remember.”

— ANNE RITTS, BBA ’21, finance major, member of the GFAM team that took first place with their Fixed Income portfolio at the nation’s largest student finance competition, the Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education Forum in 2019. Her accomplishments have inspired other women to participate in GFAM as well.

**By the Numbers:**

- 8,400+ students enrolled in business classes.
- 3,700 business majors study across the Kent State system.
- 200+ business students who have studied abroad in recent years.
- 40 countries represented by business students.
- 50% more square footage will be added in the new building.

Goal: To continue to attract and retain top faculty and scholars.

**College of Aeronautics and Engineering**

The College of Aeronautics and Engineering (CAE) has grown in both size and stature in recent years. With the addition of notable faculty and related research funding, the college’s impact on future industries will be remarkable. Passionate students experience immersive instruction that will prepare them to compete in a rapidly changing global economy. The college’s academic program is supported by cutting-edge research and state-of-the-art facilities designed to prepare students in the fields of aerospace engineering, mechatronics engineering and cybersecurity engineering, all of which are vital to business, manufacturing and aviation.

“Joining the robotics team had the biggest impact on my career. I had the opportunity to learn and experience so much by being involved with the organization.”

— MICHAEL PARKER, BS ’20, mechatronics engineering/mechatronics engineering technology. As president of the Kent State Robotics Club, he attended the NASA Robotics Mining competition held at the Kennedy Space Center. One of his internships was with The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. doing process development with its innovation team. He has been a mechatronics engineer with Goodyear since graduation.

By the Numbers:

- $2.6 million is awarded in scholarships.
- 83% of students receive scholarships.
- 29% of freshmen are first-generation students.
- 3% is the increase in women enrollment.
- 3% is the increase in underrepresented enrollment.
- 4X is the amount of growth in research.

Goal: To complete projected funding for the engineering wing expansion that will add 44,000 square feet to the existing building. External funding of $12 million has been committed, and $6 million more is needed to reach the total estimated cost of $18 million.

**WHAT SETS US APART IS HOW WE COME TOGETHER.**

There are many ways you can transform the lives of our students with your generosity. Philanthropic gifts enhance academic excellence and innovation, expand breakthrough research and provide contemporary, high-tech facilities for learning, study and research. Together we are a force for the future—and a source for good. Together we will make the world Forever Brighter. Help us achieve our goal of raising $350 million to support our students.

**HERE’S HOW YOU CAN GIVE:**

- Cash, checks, credit card, PayPal
- Gifts of securities
- Real estate
- Gift planning
- Payroll deduction
- Matching gifts

Give Now: HTTPS://FLASHES.GIVETOKENT.ORG/CAMPAIGN/GIVING-TUESDAY-2021/C371525
As a soldier and elite athlete, Maj. Allison J. Brager, PhD ’11, is familiar with pushing herself physically and mentally. But as an Army neuroscientist who studies sleep—particularly in extreme environments and high-stress situations—she also knows how her commitment to sleep has contributed to her success, including in academics and athletics, throughout her life.

“I grew up in a community that prides itself on discipline, grit and the pursuit of excellence through sport,” says Brager, a native of Youngstown, Ohio. She began dance lessons as a toddler; started gymnastics soon after that, and in high school became a formidable competitor in track and field. As a junior, she was one of the first women in Ohio to compete in pole vaulting. Her skill attracted interest from several Ivy League schools, and she chose to pursue an undergraduate degree at Brown University.

“A lot of my family did not go to college,” Brager says. “And so to be pretty much a first-generation college student made me value academics and being a scholar athlete more than anything else.”

But even in college, with demanding course loads and intense training schedules, “I would say my secret weapon—in terms of making sure that I was not just the top athlete in the school, but also the top student—was making sure I got adequate sleep,” Brager says. “It didn’t matter how much homework I had left to finish after training four to six hours a day; I always made sure I got eight hours of sleep.”

Although as an athlete she was interested in both human performance and sleep, it wasn’t until she signed up for a course called The Psychology of Sleep hoping to get an easy A that she discovered the connection between the two—and found an area of study that fascinated her and helped her forge a career path.

“I would say my secret weapon—in terms of making sure that I was not just the top athlete in the school, but also the top student—was making sure I got adequate sleep.”

—Maj. Allison Brager, PhD ’11

After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Brown in 2007, Brager set out to earn a PhD in neuroscience. She wanted to learn more about the relationship between sleep and brain function. And she was particularly interested in circadian rhythms (physical, mental and behavioral changes that follow a sleep-wake cycle and repeat roughly every 24 hours) and how neurotransmitters (such as serotonin and dopamine released during exercise) play a role in sleep.

“I wanted to work with the world’s leading expert; that’s why I went to Kent State,” Brager says. That expert is J. David Glass, PhD, now Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences, who has been with the university since 1983. He ran The Circadian Rhythm Laboratory, which focuses on the neurobiology of mammalian biological rhythms. One aim of his research is to study the effects of ethanol (also called alcohol) on the circadian rhythm timing system. Alcohol use and withdrawal have profound effects on circadian rhythms and sleep.

As a graduate student, Brager was one of the first authors with Glass on several high-impact papers, including a 2009 research paper that reported how chronic alcohol consumption altered nocturnal activity patterns in hamsters and suggested a mode for the disruptive effect of alcohol abuse on human circadian rhythms. This was the basis for her prestigious predoctoral National Institutes of Health research award.

After earning a PhD at Kent State, Brager served as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Neuroscience Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta. During her postdoctoral work, she wrote Meathead: Unraveling the Athletic Brain (Westbow Press, 2015), a popular science book debunking the “dumb jock” myth and focused on using neuroscience to enhance athletic performance and recovery. She also has written more than 30 peer-reviewed papers, numerous op-ed and column pieces for professional societies and has co-authored the first edition of the NCAA student-athlete mental health handbook.

In 2016, Brager joined Walter Reed Army Institute of Research as a National Research Council Fellow. A year later, she became a commissioned Army officer to support sleep

SLEEP SPECIALIST

Neuroscientist Maj. Allison Brager, PhD ’11, wants you to get a good night’s sleep—tonight and every night. It’s how she’s achieved success as an elite athlete, scholar and soldier—and how she’s helping her fellow soldiers survive stressful situations.

By Bethany Sava, BS ’12
and human performance research and development as one of the few active duty neuroscientists. She served as chief of the institute’s Sleep Research Center until June 2019. She also sits on fatigue management working groups for the Office of the Army Surgeon General, the United States government and NATO.

During the pandemic, Brager served as chief of the COVID-19 Response Laboratory at the Javits Center, which had been converted into an auxiliary medical center in the worst of the New York City crisis. She was responsible for securing scarce medical supplies to treat those who fell ill.

Brager currently is director of human performance operations and outreach education for the U.S. Army Warrior Fitness Training Center in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Its mission is to support the elite athletic endeavors of active duty soldiers and future research and development of human performance technology and training programs.

As an Army neuroscientist, Brager studies resilience to environmental stressors such as exercise, jet lag and sleep deprivation, all of which are realities for many soldiers. Her research includes studying why some individuals are resilient and others vulnerable under such conditions.

“In order to develop and test new ideas in the lab, we have to understand what it looks like in real life,” says Brager, who has traveled to collect data in realistic settings for the military. “Basically, what I’m asked to do is to develop tools and technologies—based on the principles of biology and what is known about the biology of sleep—in order to help service people adjust to time zones very rapidly.

“We’re constantly searching for some new function of sleep,” she adds. “It’s also about finding new biological factors that can be tweaked in some way, in order to have humans perform at a higher level under stress in less-than-optimal conditions.”

According to a recent Defense Department report to Congress, active-duty service members suffer from sleep deprivation at a rate roughly twice that of the civilian population. Inadequate sleep (less than seven hours a night) can contribute to mental health disorders, physical illness and compromised military effectiveness. The report describes it as “a reduced ability to execute complex cognitive tasks, communicate effectively, quickly make appropriate decisions, maintain vigilance and sustain a level of alertness required to communicate effectively, quickly make appropriate decisions, maintain vigilance and sustain a level of alertness required to.

While it may seem counterintuitive, Brager’s commitment to sleep hasn’t lessened the drive to compete that has been ingrained in her since she was a child. In fact, it could be what fuels it. In addition to serving as a scientist and soldier, Brager is an elite athlete. In 2019, she competed in the 10th Gay Games in Paris, where she won eight gold medals and one silver medal in track and field—her two-time CrossFit Games competitor and competes regionally as well.

“I try to be as efficient as possible in terms of getting my workout in appropriately,” says Brager, who traveled almost 150,000 miles and stayed in hotels for 264 days in 2019. She credits her continued good health to her commitment to exercise, even on the road—and, of course, to sleep.

“I really do attribute a lot of my success to sleep. Obviously, I’m biased, but sleep is right up there with hydration, food, and all the other basic survival mechanisms.”

We asked Allison Brager about the importance of sleep and how to maximize the benefits of a good night’s rest. Here’s what she had to say.

### Inadequate sleep (less than seven hours a night) can contribute to mental health disorders, physical illness and compromised military effectiveness.

Why is sleep so important?

Very bluntly, if we don’t sleep, we die.

There is a reason why we spend (or should spend; one-third of our lives asleep. Sleep helps us repair, recover and replenish energy stores and refine systems for optimal functioning the next day.

How do you define good sleep?

Objectively, it is about having sleep saturated with more than 30% of slow wave activity (SWA), which is often called deep sleep, as identified from a full electroencephalogram (EEG) montage [a test that monitors and records electrical activity of the brain]. Subjectively, simply asking “Do you feel refreshed or do you feel like you need stimulants to function?” goes a long way.

Is there an optimal time for most people to catch their 7-9 hours—and do they need that much?

Yes! The magic number is 8-4 hours. Like Ben Franklin said: “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

What is the most restorative time period during sleep?

There are two. The deepest stage of non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep (termed slow wave activity) and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Usually, people who have a sleep disorder don’t fully enter REM sleep from NREM or hit the deepest stage of NREM at all.

How about napping? Is there an optimal length or time?

Tactical napping is what the cool kids do. Try for 20-30 minutes in the afternoon when the physiological drive to sleep is (in general) at its greatest.
Homecoming Weekend 2021

The Kent State University community came together both in person and online to celebrate Homecoming Weekend 2021 from Friday, Oct. 1, through Sunday, Oct. 3.

“It was great to welcome alumni and friends home to make new memories and take part in many favorite homecoming traditions,” says Valoree Vargo, vice president for philanthropy and alumni engagement. “Last year, we learned that our Golden Flashes enjoyed the opportunity to participate online from wherever they are, and we were excited to see alumni celebrating both on campus and across the globe once again.”

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Homecoming Weekend 2021:

Here are some highlights from Homecoming Weekend 2021:

Class of 2020 Commencement

1. Sean Joseph Beckwith, BSE ’20, a graduate of the College of Education, Health and Human Services, reveals that he was Flash—with help from President Todd Diacon and Melody Tankersley, senior vice president and provost—at the special outdoor Commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020 held on Manchester Field, Friday, Oct. 1. Commencement for the class was held virtually last spring due to COVID-19 restrictions, but nearly 600 members of the class and their families returned to the Kent Campus during Homecoming Weekend 2021 to celebrate their milestone in person—and about 440 graduates crossed the stage for recognition.

2. Kent State President Todd Diacon addresses the Class of 2020 at the special Commencement ceremony. “You are here today for what I hope and expect will be a one-of-a-kind event in the history of this great university,” Diacon noted. “You will be unique in the annals of Kent State because yours will be the only class to celebrate Commencement and return to campus as alumni at the same time.”

International Homecoming

3. At the International Homecoming Festival, held on Friday afternoon, attendees learn about the diversity of cultures represented at Kent State. They viewed cultural performances and picked up “passports” that were stamped at stations set up on the Student Green adjacent to Risman Plaza and reimbursed for free food. At each country’s station, international students and alumni shared the history and culture of their homeland through posters, artifacts, displays and native foods.

Homecoming Kickoff

4. Members of the 2021 Kent Campus Homecoming court are introduced at Homecoming Kickoff, a new event to mark the start of homecoming weekend. The celebration, held Friday evening on the lawn by The John Elliot Center for Architecture and Environmental Design, included food, fun and music by the Kent State University Marching Golden Flashes. Attendees also heard from Randale L. Richmond, new director of athletics, and Kent State President Todd Diacon.

5. Fireworks light up the sky over Kent following the Homecoming Kickoff event. Kent State invited the community to assemble downtown by the West Main Street bridge for the best view of the fireworks show, which began at dusk on Oct. 1.

Bowman Cup 5K Walk/Run

6. Racers compete in the annual Bowman Cup 5K Walk/Run during Kent State’s homecoming. The race, named after former Kent State President George Bowman, began at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 2, at the university’s Beverly J. Warren Student Recreation and Wellness Center. President Todd Diacon ran in the race dressed as Elvis. His wife, Moema Furtado, came in first in her age group. Those who weren’t able to attend could participate in a virtual walk/race.

Homecoming Parade

7. Members of the Class of 2000 lead the way down Main Street, serving as the 2021 homecoming parade grand marshals. The parade began at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 2 on the corner of Midway Drive and Main Street and traveled west on Main Street into downtown Kent. For those attending virtually, a first-ever livestream was hosted by Kent State students. It featured a coffee chat with President Todd Diacon and a question-and-answer session with Randale L. Richmond, director of athletics, and Melody Tankersley, senior vice president and provost.

8. The Marching Golden Flashes head down Main Street during the homecoming parade. The parade featured dozens of floats, local high school marching bands, the homecoming court, Kent State cheerleaders and athletes, student organizations, local officials and more.

9. Kent State President Todd Diacon and his wife, Moema Furtado, take part in “Kiss on the K” along with other Kent State couples during Homecoming 2021. Couples who feel that Kent State played an important role in their relationship gathered on the K at Risman Plaza (in front of the Kent Student Center) at noon Saturday and kissed when the bell rang at 12:30 p.m.

Flash Nation Tailgate

10. Alumni and students attend the Flash Nation Tailgate at Dix Stadium before the football game. The Black Alumni, Cleveland and Lake County chapters, also hosted tailgates with food and fun in the parking lot outside of Dix Stadium.

11. Randale L. Richmond, M’16, Kent State’s new director of athletics, speaks at the Flash Nation Tailgate. He spent 10 years as a Kent State athletic department staff member prior to accepting the senior associate athletic director position at Old Dominion in 2015. He assumed his new duties on May 1.

Homecoming Game

12. Jatia Caples and Andrew Pitko pose together after being announced as 2021 homecoming royalty during halftime of Kent State’s homecoming football game at Dix Stadium. Caples is an integrated social studies major sponsored by the Women’s Center. Pitko is an environmental conservation major sponsored by Phi Delta Theta fraternity. They are pictured with 2000 homecoming royalty, Annamaria Guta, BSE ’00, and Kent State President Todd Diacon.

13. Golden Flashes who attended the homecoming football game don special gold or blue sunglasses as part of the official Forever Brighter campaign kickoff during halftime.

14. Fifth-year quarterback and grad student Dustin Drum, No. 7, leads the game-winning drive against the Bowling Green State University Falcons. Drum completed 15 of his 26 pass attempts for 184 yards. He had a season-high 93 yards rushing, with one touchdown. “Maybe it’s that engineering degree, maybe he understands angles better than I do,” says head coach Sean Lewis. “He does an incredible job creating and seeing completions.”

15. Kent State Goldena Flashes ring the Starner Victory Bell at Dix Stadium after beating the Bowling Green Falcons 27-20 during Kent State’s homecoming football game on Oct. 2.

16. President Todd Diacon celebrates with the Marching Golden Flashes in the stands of Dix Stadium.

“It was great to welcome alumni and friends home to make new memories and take part in many favorite homecoming traditions.”

—Valoree Vargo
Miriam Grace (Schnitzer) Wilas, 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 Hartville 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 Wilas, BS ’37, 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 in 1959.)

Anne Rankin Mahoney, BA ’59, Denver, CO, wrote, “Dr. Oscar Ritchie was my advisor and my best pathology professor at Kent State. He was my model for the kind of college educator 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 Dr. Oscar Ritchie 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 Laurents Women’s Honor Society, and am also a member of Alpha Chi Omega, Gamma Lambda chapter.”

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 representation but he has continued fighting for representation for all veterans and Washingtonians,” Norton said. DC residents don’t vote for representatives or senators and their delegates do not have a vote in Congress.

Barbara Gregorich, BA ’64, Chicago, IL, wrote, “I’m happy to report that my first young adult novel, The 15-Year Wait, was published Sept. 1, 2021, by City of Light Publishing. It’s a story about the struggle for political and social 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.”

Andrea Gregory conducted plant inventories of public lands and contributed to the Ohio Biological Catalog and Atlas of the Mosses of Ohio (Ohio Biological Survey, 1989). She is recognized by the Ohio Biological Survey as a Key Collector for her work on the Ohio Biological Conservation Region of Ohio (Ohio Biological Survey, 1989). Additionally, Andrea 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. Andrea is a 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.

Barbara K. Andreas, BA ’68, MA ’70, PhD ’80, Washington, DC, was a keynote speaker at one of Kent State’s fall 2018 commencement ceremonies. She was a keynote speaker at one of Kent State’s fall 2018 commencement ceremonies. She was a keynote speaker at one of Kent State’s fall 2018 commencement ceremonies. She was a keynote speaker at one of Kent State’s fall 2018 commencement ceremonies.
extend Cranbrook’s legacy as a leading center for multiple major gifts, completed capital projects, implemented free admission to Cranbrook Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research, in 2012 and retired in June 2020. During his Ford Motor Co., DiMarco started at Cranbrook Following a successful 35-year career with in Birmingham, Michigan. Educational Community, was recognized as a Bloomfield news report on WCPO 9 in June 2021—35 years including her brother, Alan, on May 4, 1970. A “Kent 25” defendant, she was indicted by the president’s office to hold the annual May 4 Board of Trustees affirmed a commitment from the security of the campus. For her efforts, Miciak is a member of the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee to plan the May 4 Commemoration and the May 4 Presidential initiatives. In 2019, the Kent State University Board of Trustees affirmed a commitment to the May 4 Commemoration as a university-level event and to preserve the important traditions established over the years. She hired and mentored many of the staff of attorneys is expert in state, federal and municipal laws regarding lobbying, political contributions and procurement. Miciak is the board chairman, joined the board of the Ohio Lesbian Archives, which maintains and preserves LGBTQ+ history. He and Phoebe Besier (tofounder and president of the OLA) recently spoke to the Duke Energy diversity group. The Duke Energy Foundation gave a $500 grant to the OLA. OLA’s one of the few nonprofit national archives serving not just the LGBTQ+ community, but students, researchers and anyone with an interest in history. For more information, see https://ohiolesbianarchives.wordpress.com. Chanae was also featured in a Points of Pride news report on WCPO 9 in June 2021—35 years during his leadership. The school’s East Wing was completed in 1994, and he was selected as principal and superintendent. The school’s East Wing was completed in 1994, and he was selected as principal and superintendent. Under his leadership, the school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. With a background in school guidance and counseling, Koehler joined the administrative team of the Avon Local School District in 1994, working with students, teachers and administrators to support the academic and social-emotional needs of students. She also holds positions on local and statewide boards, including Ohio Public Transit Association, Ohio Transit Risk Pool, the OHIOdeed 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 Chanan Jr., BS ’75, Cincinnati, OH, a retiree of Procter & Gamble who was featured in a recent university magazine, asked to join the board of the Ohio Lesbian Archives, which maintains and preserves LGBTQ+ history. He and Phoebe Besier (co-founder and president of the OLA) recently spoke to the Duke Energy diversity group. The Duke Energy Foundation gave a $500 grant to the OLA. OLA’s one of the few nonprofit national archives serving not just the LGBTQ+ community, but students, researchers and anyone with an interest in history. For more information, see [https://ohiolesbianarchives.wordpress.com](https://ohiolesbianarchives.wordpress.com). Chanae was also featured in a Points of Pride news report on WCPO 9 in June 2021—35 years during his leadership. The school’s East Wing was completed in 1994, and he was selected as principal and superintendent. The school’s East Wing was completed in 1994, and he was selected as principal and superintendent. Under his leadership, the school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. With a background in school guidance and counseling, Koehler joined the administrative team of the Avon Local School District in 1994, working with students, teachers and administrators to support the academic and social-emotional needs of students. She also holds positions on local and statewide boards, including Ohio Public Transit Association, Ohio Transit Risk Pool, the OHIOdeed 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 36 of his teaching. He taught physical education in Cincinnati Public Schools for 33 years, most recently at Withrow High School. In his 36 years of teaching, he helped students develop a love for the game of basketball and became a trusted mentor to many students. He also served on the district’s athletics committee, which oversaw the implementation of the new athletic program. Michael Finnegan, BS ’85, Cincinnati, OH, retired in May 36 of his teaching. He taught physical education in Cincinnati Public Schools for 33 years, most recently at Withrow High School. In his 36 years of teaching, he helped students develop a love for the game of basketball and became a trusted mentor to many students. He also served on the district’s athletics committee, which oversaw the implementation of the new athletic program.**

**football coach at Withrow High School. Under his leadership, Withrow High School became a competitive team in the Greater Miami Conference and set records for overall wins and championships. Finkler also served as the head football coach at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. He is a member of the College Football Hall of Fame and the Wisconsin Football Hall of Fame. Finkler is also a contributing writer for the Wilson football magazine and a former college football coach.**

**Howard M. Hartz, BS ’82, MA ’83, Cincinnati, OH, is a retired sales executive with Procter & Gamble. Prior to his retirement, he held various leadership positions within the company, including vice president of sales and marketing for the company’s Home Care division. He also served as the company’s chief operating officer. Hartz is a member of the College Football Hall of Fame and the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame. He is a member of the College Football Hall of Fame and the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame.**

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Alumni LIFE

He started as a physical education teacher at Schwaab-Middles School in Northfield in 1968 and moved to Wilkes-Barre in 1985. He has 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, Perryville, OH, retired in May 2021 after 34 years as theater director at Perryville High School, where he staged 100 plus productions. He had previously served as a professional actor and earned a theater scholarship to Kent State, but decided it wasn’t for him.如今, he says he enjoys deepening his communications with the goal of becoming a high school drama teacher.

Alissa Licata, MA ’85, PhD ’88, Dayton, OH, has published four short story collections, debuts on the Lake (Touchpoint Press, March 2021). In the book, Licata explores complex human emotions within the context of an adventure to find treasure—bringers receiving through the shock and heartache of sudden loss, the despair and hopelessness of a slow demise and the devastating impact of a disease.

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 Charlotteville, Virginia, before turning her energies toward raising her two daughters. She wrote it’s a Rocket Science: Down-to-Earth Advice on Raising Doctors, S.A. (2020), hoping to empower other parents.

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

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. The exhibit titled 356 goals, England displayed a collection of large-scale sculptures inspired by the comic book heroes of his youth. The individual sculptures inhabited a narrative exploring how the heroes of the Superman, Spider-Man and Batman are depicted in the world, while dealing with the pressures and pressures of their culture in the world.

He received his BFA in fine arts from the University of Michigan and has had more than 100 scholarly publications and has given an estimated 170 presentations across the US and internationally.

Jyotina T. Sreenivasan, BFA ’16, Columbus, OH, published a collection of short stories and poetry, These Americans (Minerva Press, May 2021), which won the press’s Rosemary Danielson Fiction Prize. The eight stories and a novella explore what it means to live between Indian culture and American expectations.

Sreenivasan’s work has 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 2019 debut novel, and Laughing with Father (Nov. Sky Wallin Mortgage Bankers, June 2019), is a contemporary memoir about two young Indian Americans trying to find love and their place in the world, while dealing with the confessions and pressures of their cultures and their place in the world.

She was born and raised in northeastern Ohio. She has an MA in English literature from the University of Michigan and has been published in Harvard University Press, Ohio State University Press, and University of Chicago Press.

Colleen VanNatta, BFA ’88, North Canton, OH, a sociology instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, received a Public Service Award, the first award presented by the Nevada Institute for the Arts in Washington, DC, and Moscow, Idaho.

Carli 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 was also 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 the computer science and software engineering program and participated in internships at Hewlett-Packard, Digital Equipment Corporation and Foresight Research Labs. After graduation he worked at Sun Microsystems for 10 years, working on the development of high performance parallel systems and locations identifiers 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 new version is global accessibility. Around four billion IPv6 addresses have been exhausted, and experts say IPv6 is more efficient, increases security and improves performance.

Jennifer Podnar, BS ’76, MS ’91, New Franklin, OH, a fourth grade math and science teacher at Sauder Elementary in the Jackson Local School District. She permitted her story as a Walsh University student and has taught a class named The RESTful University Teacher of the Month for March 2021. She began teaching second grade in the River School District in the early 1990s. She has taught fourth grade at Jackson for 10 years and was previously a reading teacher.

In a March 2014, Podnar article, when asked the most challenging part of her job, she responded, “Before the pandemic, I wasn’t the ‘hardest’ 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 learners.”

She said her students might be surprised to know she learned to drive at 16 in her native Canada and that she used a manual car.

She also serves on the Board of Directors of the PCRF and is a member of the PCRF’s Women in Business for 2021 by Outstanding Women in Business for 2021 by Global 100. She is a member of the PCRF.

A pediatric oncologist who also volunteers with American hospitals, she has an extensive background in intergroup dialogue, has conducted and published research on intergroup processes and psychological well-being in adolescents, and is a published author in the field of semantic development in young children, bilingualism and educational technology.

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Center was built (dedicated in 2013), we were surprised to learn that our 300-year photo book 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 2016, 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 with a 3 a.m.-breakfast gathering at Ray’s Place. Kent’s annual Round Town Music Fest also was happening that Friday evening. We were treated to a variety of entertainment outside, including the light 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 Woody’s Music downtown, so in the early evening we were entertained there as the trio Bandy played a variety of songs from our era. We spent Father’s Day 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—since 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 do it every 5 years.”

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 of Trinity 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: “What is really going on with race in our country?” “Do we care?” “What can we do about it together?”

The book is candid yet collegial, thought-provoking yet full of practical suggestions 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 TrinityVL, 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 very much a part of ArtWave, the largest community arts fund in the nation. He co-chairs the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee, a group of 100 middle-marked 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 ’74, Chicago, IL, recently published An Effort to Understand: Hearing One-Another (and Ourselves) in a Nation Crooked in Half (Disruption Books, 2021). Murray is a bestselling author, executive director of the Professional Speechwriters Association and editor and publisher of the journal Practical Speeches of the Day. He’s an 85-year-old editor of the best oral communication in the US and is one of the nation’s leading pop surrealistic poet-speechwriter-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, Gov. David Paterson, David Kusnet (President Bill Clinton’s chief commentator on communication issues and reflective surfaces—she notes, “Such combinations visually and energetically speak about growth, nature, place, metaphysics/alchemy, compassion and issues of being a humanitarian 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 ’73, Cincinnati, OH, was named vice president of community investment at ArtWave, 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 ArtWave 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. ArtWave 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.

Karen Patterson, BSE ’93, MED ’96, PhD ’03, Jacksonville, FL, was named provost and vice president of academic affairs at the University of North Florida, effective April 17, 2021.

To the May 4 shootings. And many years later, when the May 4 Visitors on Earth sign on Front Campus.

brothers suggested we hold our draft lottery numbers in front of the Peace

“A few weeks later, it was time to have our fraternity photo taken for the 1970 May 4 Group photo, 1970 Chestnut Burr, December 1969 (Mike Finnen, front row, holding e4)
Karen Eck, MA ‘95, PhD ‘98, certified financial planner.

Heather Gooch, BS ‘95, gained membership in the International Network of Breastfeeding Professionals.

Jennifer (Sanftner) McGraw, MA ‘96, PhD ‘99, the University of Findlay.

Gretchen Whitmer to the Certificate of Need board of nurses.

Matthew Welsh, BS ‘97, pursued part-time leadership roles in the Hill parts department, and a master’s 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, as a substitute lunch aid at Ashtabula Area City Schools. She served as director of the Office of Faculty Enhancement, dean of adult and continuing education.

Amy McKenzie, BS ‘97, associate chief medical officer for provider engagement for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, she has extensive experience in the field of eating disorders and body image. She is currently serving as the research director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. She has been a key player in the development of the Michigan Institute for Eating Disorders, and is currently leading a multi-disciplinary team that is working to improve access to care for individuals with eating disorders.

Gretchen Whitmer to the Certificate of Need Board of Directors. McKenzie will serve for a term that begins April 12, 2021, wearing a gold-colored “80 and Fabulous” sash and crown while being treated to a “sisterly moment” at her favorite restaurant, Olive Garden, in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her children celebrated with her via Zoom.

Karen Eck, MA ‘95, PhD ‘98, 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 her professional and educational career, including her work on theinaugural Kent State job fair after graduating with an associate degree in business and computer technology. She has served in the US Army as a procurement specialist. He has held several positions within the Hill parts department, as a substitute lunch aid at Ashtabula Area City Schools. She served as director of the Office of Faculty Enhancement, dean of adult and continuing education.

Amelia Gooch advances from her role as editor of PMP, a business-to-business brand she has served for more than 15 years. She joined PMP in 1995 as assistant editor and has been promoted three times.

PMP is past control’s leading integrated media brand, encompassing monthly print and digital editions, a monthly subscriber newsletter, a blog, several social media channels, the industry’s premier recognition event (PMP Hall of Fame) and an exclusive leadership event (PMP Growth Summit). Over the past eight years, PMP has garnered 33 Axia Awards of Excellence from the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

Patterson oversees an integrated academic affairs, student affairs and enrollment management structure as part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. She is former chair of the Department of Exceptional, Deaf and Interpreting Education and is an Outstanding Teacher Award recipient. She started at UWM 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 Scarry, 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.

Scarry 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.

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Colleen Longshaw Jackson, BFA ’01, MFA ’15, Cleveland, OH, was appointed the city of Shaker Heights’ director of student enrichment and inclusion (DEE), effective June 1, 2021. She previously was the director of community partnerships for the city’s Cleveland Play House, where she was part of the team to develop and implement the Compassionate Arts Response Education program. She managed the department’s community programs such as Yes Cleveland and MIRACLES—we have had a presence in South Shaker Heights. She led the Cleveland Play House’s last virtual play of the season, Blackbird, over the summer.

Jackson has worked behind the scenes at Cleveland Play House since 2015, including on Shaker Heights’ new community development projects.

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.

Amie Cochran, MEd ’01, MD ’05, Sheffield Village, OH, was hired as the new vice president for finance and administration at Thiel College, following a market search. Cochran serves as the president of the university’s Board of Trustees and is a former university president and professor. She now serves as the executive director of the college’s Board of Trustees. Cochran is a former university president and professor. She now serves as the executive director of the college’s Board of Trustees.

Cochran is the former co-founder and executive director of the Ohio Association of Multicultural Student Affairs. She was appointed CEO at Whitacre Engineering. He also earned a bachelor’s degree in management science from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Michigan.

Cochran is also the founder of the Black Women’s Leadership Council, a non-profit organization that aims to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Jackson has been with the Cleveland Play House since 2015 and is a leader in the arts community. She has held several leadership positions in the arts, including as the program director for the Cleveland Play House’s Musical Arts Commission.

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Kent State University Alumni Center for Philanthropy & Engagement

3111 Burton Avenue, Suite 200
Kent, OH 44242

Try to limit your notes to 150 words or less, and please include your city/state of residence. Notes may be edited for length or quality and published as space allows.

Deadline for submissions: Spring 2022
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Innovative MedTech Inc., a provider of health and for SarahCare Adult Day Services, a subsidiary of Monique M. Pizzute, BS ’04, MBA ’14, Faehnel's pieces. He majored in jewelry, metals, features jewelry from local artists, including Michael Faehnel, BFA ’04, and reliving their experiences, especially during they've shared.

Howland, OH, and Kent Wired, as a child she

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 Sandusky County Commissioner, who appeared in the movie, was LaGanke’s actual bodyguard and continues to drive the bus in real life.

LaGanke also serves as a co-pilot before upgrading to aircraft command.

In 2016, he began internationally recognizing the Ali brothers faced a lack of diverse representation in their community and in the media. They needed to tell a story that has nothing to do with terrorism or current events to speak about how ordinary childhood activities include burial rites and family traditions were his breakthrough.

The series also was a platform to reach representation in their community and in the orchestra's home. Subscribers and donors view on PBS.

The concert will feature music from the activities the role of the arts in the community. After earning a BFA from Parsons School of Design, Slamon worked as an art director before returning to Arkansas, representing environmental and social equities has been featured at the Akron Art Museum and the Ohio Art Museum. Slamon’s paintings and drawings are part time at Kent State's School of Art. Learn more about her work at https://www.carrieoslawson.com.

Corrie Slawson, MFA ’06, Cleveland, OH, visual artist, received a 2003 Mel Carnier Artist Award in Graphic Arts from the Akron Art Museum. Slawson presents her body of work online through Wkeostatals, located in Rosburg, effective June 2021. Johnson spent more than two years working in Columbus, Ohio, creating business as GreatWaves Business Services. He worked in multiple roles, including network engineer, printer manager and chief technology officer for 10 years. Johnson also served as executive vice president of broadband business at Cablevision of Warren, New Jersey.

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LaGanke also serves as a co-pilot before upgrading to aircraft command. In 2016, he began internationally recognizing the Ali brothers faced a lack of diverse representation in their community and in the media. They needed to tell a story that has nothing to do with terrorism or current events to speak about how ordinary childhood activities include burial rites and family traditions were his breakthrough.

The series also was a platform to reach representation in their community and in the orchestra's home. Subscribers and donors view on PBS.

The concert will feature music from the activities the role of the arts in the community. After earning a BFA from Parsons School of Design, Slamon worked as an art director before returning to Arkansas, representing environmental and social equities has been featured at the Akron Art Museum and the Ohio Art Museum. Slawson presents her body of work online through Wkeostatals, located in Rosburg, effective June 2021. Johnson spent more than two years working in Columbus, Ohio, creating business as GreatWaves Business Services. He worked in multiple roles, including network engineer, printer manager and chief technology officer for 10 years. Johnson also served as executive vice president of broadband business at Cablevision of Warren, New Jersey.

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athletes to two regular season conference championships as well as two conference tournament championships, including her junior campaign. She tied for the NCAA national tournament with appearances in those NCAA national tournament appearances with those NCAA All-Americans and an overall record of 53-14 at the time of the year. She was named coach of the year twice and the WestPointSport.com coach of the week on Feb. 5, 2020.

Prior to her coaching days, she played NCAA Division I basketball at Kent State, where she won All-America honors and was a first team conference all-star student-athlete. She earned a bachelor’s in education and served as an assistant coach, then she stayed on at Kent State in a graduate assistant position while earning a master’s in sport management.

Jordan Miny, BBA ’19, Gainesville, Fl., was named the third head coach of the Jacksonville Dolphins men’s basketball team at Jacksonville University on March 25, 2021, replacing Tony Jaques.

He played college basketball at Kent State for both Jim Christian and Garon Ford. He was part of two Mid-American Conference regular season and conference tournament squads, making trips to the NCAA tournament in 2008 and 2009. He left the all-time leader in MAC history in games played at 155, and in seventh place on Kent State’s all-time assists list.

Miny joined the staff at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte as an assistant coach in August 2011. He became the College of Charleston’s head coach in 2013 for his first season on his own, leading the Cougars to a 12-18 record in 2013 and a 3-20 record in 2014.

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When they discover that their youngest child is tested when they look for a Black family whose faith has been challenged,
challenges them to provide lunch for their local healthcare workers battling COVID-19 on the front lines. In addition to his business, he has volunteered for food banks and schools. He uses his experience in golf, which featured a field of 60 competitors. The Cleveland native finished the discus 61.47 meters (201 feet, 8 inches) on his final attempt of the preliminary round.

Ryan P. McNaughton, MA ‘17, Reggio Jagers III, BS ‘17, Solon, OH, was named president of the Syracuse University National Alumni Association, effective July 1, 2021. He also has held a seat on the board of trustees during his term. He was previously chosen as one of the Northeast Ohio Syracuse University Alumni Club’s “20 in Their Twenties” class of 2021 by websites and other digital assets for clients. His work includes promotion and marketing strategies for clients 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 videos at least once a month and posts content almost every day. Organizations hire him to teach social justice workshops at schools, law firms, universities and corporations. He gives between six and 12 lectures a month.


Brenna Parker, BS ‘17, Washington, DC, has been appointed to the Biden-Harris administration’s 12th in women’s shot put with a throw of 18.37 meters (60 feet, 3.23 inches), just 0.3 meters short of the championship. The Westart of Island Critical Language Scholarship for a summer virtual intensive language and cultural program offered by a network of 10 spots.

Dominic D. Wells, PhD ‘18, Sandusky, OH, published From Collective Bargaining to Collective Rights or: How the AFL-CIO lost and wins 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 NEA’s relationship with 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.

Brenna Parker, BS ‘17, Cleveland, OH, wrote and directed a short film, Sing Conly, which finished shooting in Columbus, Ohio, in June. The main character, a break out sibling, in the cage he grew up in and fly into new surroundings with more opportunities, but he doesn’t know how to do it. He continues to write, something he hates and only does to please his dad. Or does he follow his heart and chase his Olympic dreams?

Seidu played “Micah” in a feature film, Posse, directed by Om Sejog and Noah Dixon, that had its world premiere at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and is getting glowing reviews. The film brings the Columbus indie and music scene into focus through the lens of a young woman who takes her passion to fit in.

In Baltimore, Ohio, Seidu is a first-generation Ghanaian American. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Japanese from Kent State University (1996).

More than a dozen years in broadcasting, he serves as vice president of government affairs for the Youngstown Warren Region 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 explains concepts such as racial battle fatigue, white savior complex and authentic allyship.

Chase Johnson, BA ‘18, Barberton, OH, was the MAC First Team three times. Since graduating with his communications degree, he has continued on his path to the PGA Tour. As a Kent Ferry Tour rookie in 2020, he finished runner-up at the TPC Colorado Championship at Horan Lakes.

He was profiled as a success story for First Tee, an organization the Biden-Harris administration has focused on the lives of kids in the Akron area by providing educational programs that build character and instill life skills. He is the first black golfer in the United States to win a major USGA championship. Johnson attended the First Tee from age 5 through 15 and participated in the Youth on Course program as far as he could to keep up with the competition. As he’s had to play collegiate golf, he got to the Kent Ferry Tour and prepare for the PGA Tour.

Ray Rodriguez, BFA ‘19, Farma, OH, presented the Vanonder exhibition from May 30 through June 5 at the Negative Space Gallery at Cleveland’s Asian Town Center. He started the series during the pandemic and, according to an article in Art in America, describes it as “a representation of the world I started building while I couldn’t fully participate in it.” He says he feels “inspired in mythology, in the subconscious and in dreams.”

A native of Puerto Rico, Rodriguez studied drawing and painting for two years at the Portal Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce. He moved to the United States and studied at Kent, 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.

Earlier in the summer, Hoover ran a similar campaign with the limited line of “Black Squares” t-shirts for only $25 each, which sold out quickly. He said he was inspired by “Black Squares” to generate funding for his favorite charitable causes.

His most recent series have explored cultural identity and focused on his African American and Haitian roots, given contemporary cultural contexts in both America and Haiti from a feminist perspective. Tavakoli has exhibited throughout the United States and has received numerous juried awards. He recently received The Satellite Fund Emergency Grant, Neighborhood Connections Grant and Colliwood Rising Grant to recoup, design and maintain the Waterloo Sculpture Garden on East 110th Street. In April 2021, he was profiled in Idahoan’s Eq and the Arts series, which aims to amplify the work of artists of color living and working in Northwest Ohio.

Noah Dixon, MD ‘13, Franklin, OH, was named Most Valuable Player in the last of Team Jamaica for the 2020 Olympics by 13 spots. He finished 13th in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics in 2021.

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**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 ’74, president, Kent State Alumni Association National Board of Directors. “These eight award recipients optimize the Golden Flash spirit, and each one has made a profound impact at Kent State and in their communities.”

In addition to serving as a professor, senior scholar and senior scientist at the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB), James Rapier directs the UAB 307 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, Rapier 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.

**DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD**

James Luther Raper, BS ’79, PhD, DNS, CBNP, Birmingham, AL

**DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARD**

Beverly Laubert, BA ‘94, Lewis Center, OH

**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD**

Antonio Williams, BS ’20, Chicago, IL, is one of four US-born basketball players on the Tallinna Kalev (TLV) roster in the Kontinental Basketball 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 (17.4 points per game) and assists. The team finished 20-10 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 2020, is a professional basketball league in Estonia. (Tallin, Estonia, where he was born and raised, is the country’s largest custom comforts retailer. As the company’s first house technical designer and pammaker, he manages the digital pattern department and is creating the first pattern archive. He helped launch new product categories, including custom chino pants, sweatsuits, 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.”

**OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD**

Gordon Stumpo, MA ’16, New York, NY

While working for Naemi 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 shrunken.”

When asked what it is about his experiences at Kent State that helped him so much, he said “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.”

**GOLDEN FLASH AWARD**

Tiara Monae’ Reddick, BS ’21, MPH ’22, Willowick, OH

For Tiara 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 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.”
NICK
M O O R E
BFA ‘90

TRIBUTE

October 29, 1960–October 8, 2021

The Nick Moore Memorial Scholarship for Kent State students in the College of Visual Communication and Information (CCI) was established in his memory. This scholarship honors Nick by supporting student designers who grow in knowledge and skill—preparing them to make their own unique mark on the world.

To donate, visit https://FLASHES.GIVETOKENT.ORG/ CAMPAIGN/NICK-MOORE-MEMORIAL-FUND/377702.

in MEMORY

1940s

Hubert A. Howes, BBA ‘48, March 14, 2021

1950s

Cecile Q. Acker, BS ‘51, November 6, 2020
Ellis A. Lewin, attended ‘52-‘55, March 9, 2020
Donald H. Hakey, BBA ‘56, November 17, 2020

1960s

Joseph E. Fattler, MEd ‘61, October 2, 2019
Donald E. Butch, MM ‘63, March 30, 2021
Bernard M. Novak, BSE ‘63, MEd ‘68, December 10, 2020
James M. Schuerger, MEd ‘64, PhD ‘67, January 7, 2021
Francis W. Smowor, BBA ‘64, February 1, 2001
Robert E. Dray Sr., MEd ‘65, April 18, 2020
Donna E. Kern, BS ‘65, MEd ‘82, May 2, 2020
* Richardson “Dick” Worthing, BS ‘65, July 1, 2020
Gary D. Fair, BS ‘67, July 4, 2021
David Mark Lopatich, BSE ‘69, December 10, 2020
Peter Stilten, born Peter M. Szaurski, BFA ‘70, December 11, 2000
David Robert Francinico, BS ‘76, June 11, 2021
Charles Kuntzman, BBA ‘76, August 30, 2019
Paul Zimmer, BA ‘68, March 14, 2021
James S. Eden Jr., BBA ‘69, May 12, 2020
Francis P. Hackett, MEd ‘69, February 17, 2021

1970s

Dolores Bredlow, BS ‘70, MEd ‘74, April 18, 2001
Jean (Schneider) Kreyche, BA ‘70, February 23, 1993
Helen Marie Cusick, BA ‘71, PhD ‘06, October 16, 2019
William E. Hoeger, BS ‘72, May 30, 2020
Mary Beth Mulhauser, BM ‘72, MEd ‘83, December 18, 2020
Max “Mickey” Savickas, BBA ‘72, January 27, 2021
Carol Rudolfsky, BS ‘73, February 16, 1991
Barbara Kay Barnes, BA ‘74, June 30, 2000
Pasquale “Pat” Crisci, PhD ‘74, January 1, 2001
Robert Jamison, BA ‘74, September 3, 2020
Jeffrey Maurice Smith Sr., BS ‘76, MEd ‘97, PhD ‘00, June 3, 2001
Christina E. Barton, MEd ’75, May 16, 2021
Paul A. D’Alessandro, MLS ‘77, May 26, 2001
Cheryl (Swinehart) Darslisha, BSN ‘79, October 30, 2020
Roger Di Paolo, BA ‘77, June 16, 2021
Judith R. Montgomery, MLS ‘77, May 26, 2001

1980s

Kenneth L. Fischer, BS ‘86, December 8, 2020
Robb L. Gladys, BS ‘83, July 9, 2020
Janice L. Forbes, MA ‘84, December 2, 2020
Elizabeth Howard, BA ‘88, April 10, 2021
Joseph L. Ruttledge, MEd ’95, December 11, 2019
John H. Granty, BBA ‘88, PP ‘92, July 18, 2020

1990s

*Nicholas “Nick” Moore, BFA ‘90, October 8, 2021
Laura A. Bushey, BSE ‘91, January 29, 2021
Leonard Viconti, BS ‘92, June 5, 2020
* Terrence “Torry” J. Wray, BBA ‘92, November 1, 2020

2000s

Brian James Barnes, MA ‘75, May 1, 2021
Destiny L. Johnson, BA ‘78, February 6, 2021

faculty/staff

Associative director of the School of Journalism and director of the news bureau, he helped found the Kent State chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, in 1953. He also was a advisor to The Daily Kent Stater, 1954–1966.

Tom S. Cooperrider, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Biology, 1958–1993, July 14, 2021
He was founder and curator emeritus of the Tom S. and Miwako K. Cooperrider Herbarium at Kent State University. A forrest field botanist, his collections and those of his students provided many of the specimens used by his wife (who died in 2018) to build the Kent State University herbarium. After retirement, Dr. Cooperrider continued his research and published books on the Ohio flora in 1986 and 2001; he later published a compilation of botanical essays, a memoir of WWI and a book of poetry. Memorial donations may be made to the Tom S. and Miwako K. Cooperrider Herbarium Endowment Fund.


Thomas R. Henley, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, 1969–2009, April 7, 2021
An expert in constitutional law, he worked extensively on the legal aspects of the May 4, 1970, shootings and published four books and numerous articles on the topic. He and Dr. Jerry Lewis co-founded the May 4 Course, which focused on a range of issues surrounding May 4 and continues to this day, known as “Dr. Tom” by his students. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award, President’s Medal and Ohio Teacher of the Year. The Dr. Tom Henley Endowed Scholarship was established in his honor. Nato: Because of recent COVID-19 developments, the public celebration of his life to be held at the Kent Campus has been moved to spring 2022.

Richard “Dick” Worthing, BS ‘88, PhD, Dean Emeritus of the College of Fine and Professional Arts, 1971–2004, July 1, 2020
He taught music theory, analysis and orchestration and served as coordinator of Kent/Blossom Music Festival. In 1979 he became assistant dean of the College of Fine and Professional Arts, 1971–2004, July 1, 2020

An award winning professor, Dr. Howard also taught advanced classes in Honors and advised many Honors theses. The Elizabeth Howard Honors Scholarship was established in her honor.

John H. Granty, BBA ‘88, PP ‘92, director of business affairs for Kent State Geauga and the Twinsburg Academic Center, July 18, 2020
He served in various roles at several campuses at Kent State University from 1990–2020. The Kent State Geauga Campus in Burton has dedicated a memorial patio in his honor.

Nicholas “Nick” Moore, BFA ‘90, creative director, University Communications and Marketing, October 8, 2021
He served in various design positions at Kent State University from 1990–2021. As graphic designer and design production manager of Kent State University magazine, he helped design university communications throughout the eight-campus system and in the Kent community. He also was an adjunct professor at the School of Visual Communication Design in 2007.

Nick passionately loved Kent State and was a champion of the university’s noble mission. He worked with his team to continuously develop, evolve and maintain the Kent State brand. His designs shaped university communications for nearly every college, division and department of the university.

Nick Moore worked as a designer at Kent State for 31 years, through the administrations of six university presidents. Most recently, he was the creative director of the Department of University Communications and Marketing.

He served in various design positions at Kent State University University Communications and Marketing. As graphic designer and design production manager in the Office of Alumni Relations (1992–2002), he developed the university’s first full-color, glossy alumni magazine, Kent State Alumni, along with hundreds of other alumni communications.

Moving to University Communications and Marketing as a designer, he was art director of Kent State Magazine (2002-2008) and created strategic communications and designs for nearly every college, division and department of the university.

Nick Moore with son, Jake, and daughter, Heather.

The Nick Moore Memorial Scholarship for Kent State students in the College of Visual Communication and Information (CCI) was established in his memory. This scholarship honors Nick by supporting student designers as they grow in knowledge and skill—preparing them to make their own unique mark on the world.
Passing on a Passion for Poetry

Eighth-grader Trevor Daniel wasn’t expecting much out of the eight-week poetry writing workshop his mom signed him up for, but he says, “I just did them because I had to,” he says. “Some poems I did were good and some I did were bad.”

But he wasn’t surprised when one of his poems was selected to appear on a poster designed by a Kent State student from the School of Visual Communication Design—the workshop teacher had repeatedly told him he was a good poet. “And that was clearly one of my good poems,” Trevor says. “What inspired it was my mom. I just think about things when I’m writing, if I’m enjoying it. I just get really down deep into it.”

What did surprise him is that all the students in the class, ages 4 to 14, enjoyed writing poems: “Even my brothers and sisters because they don’t seem like the type of kids who would enjoy doing that.”

The teacher who helped unleash this creativity is Isaiah Hunt, one of the graduate teaching artists at Kent State’s Wick Poetry Center. And he credits the welcoming atmosphere at the center. “The tremendous support from the Skeels-Mathews staff has made this journey possible,” Hunt says. “Each workshop session, I always felt at home and a part of the community.”

His summer residency was made possible by Sandy Halem, enrichment coordinator for Family & Community Services Inc., a large social service agency that operates more than 70 programs in northeastern Ohio, including at Skeels-Mathews Community Center. She facilitated the partnership with the Wick Poetry Center and helped raise money from the community to fund the residency.

“I consider Kent State to be the mother ship for bringing great programs to many of our services in Portage County,” Halem says. “Isaiah helped these students understand what poetry was and—most importantly—that they could be poets. As the weeks progressed, they began to see poems not as a foreign language but as an opportunity to experience different words and to express feelings in a way that was not usually expected from them in their schools. And when they stood to read their poems to the class, Isaiah would coach them: ‘Say it loud and proud.’

“I knew Isaiah had won them over one day when he wasn’t there. Since he had just taught how an ode in poetry can honor and illuminate feelings about someone, the students in the class wrote a poem together called ‘Ode to Isaiah,’ and each expressed their feelings about how he was opening up their minds and hearts creatively.”

A collection of the students’ poems is published in a chapbook compiled and designed by the Wick Poetry Center. Students in the poetry workshop not only learned to write poems but also gained in self-esteem, says Sharon Sanders, who has been running the summer youth program at Skeels-Mathews for 20 years. “Isaiah Hunt is a role model for our African American young males,” she says. “When they are surrounded by so many negative influences on a daily basis, they need to know that this doesn’t have to be their story. They can achieve anything if they can believe in themselves and work hard to achieve their goals. It is important for our children to learn good writing skills and how to express themselves through creative writing and poetry, while building pride in themselves and in their community.”

Trevor understands that this experience may change him and his trajectory. “My mom told me I would,” he says. “Because once I get to high school or when I go on to a good college, I can show them this and get into good places. And I don’t just have to do poetry—but I will still keep doing it.”

—I want to be a Sun bright, shiny, and round I come for the day and leave for the night. I want to be the window you look out every day. I want to be the basketball that you use to win the game I want to be the glasses you wear so you can see your future is clear. I want to be the cup of water to give you a fresh new taste. I want to be the cake that you reward yourself after you win. I want to be your #1 fan when you win or lose. I want to be a spring to spring you on when you are at your lowest.

—By Trevor Daniel, 8th grade Skeels-Mathews Community Center Summer Camp, Ravenna, OH

Design by Jessica Miller ©2021