Participants at the Black Lives Matter protest placed colorful pebbles with painted messages at the base of the Rock. See page 28.

Racism and the Rock
After racist messages appear repeatedly on the Rock, Kent State redoubles its anti-racism efforts.
SEE PAGE 28
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Fall/Winter 2020-21

On the cover: Black students on the Kent Campus protest racist remarks written on the Rock. See page 28. Cover photo: Bob Christy, BS ’95

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46 “I want to have fun with it.” When Emily Duncan, MLIS ’16, was writing her first young adult fantasy novel, she wasn’t worried about pleasing publishers. Maybe that’s why it became a NYT Best Seller and inspires devoted fans who create art in homage to it.

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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 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.
And the Winner Is…

Congratulations to Claire Pressler, BA ‘15, Lakewood, Ohio, who applied to the KSU Fall 2020 ABSN ( Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing) program, so she was back in school fall semester, taking two classes online and two hybrid. (Kent State’s accelerated second degree BSN for non-nurses is created for students who already hold a bachelor’s degree and leads to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in as few as 15 months.)

She wrote, “The package made my day. I love everything. The card is staying on my desk all semester for good luck.” We wish her all the best as she prepares to help medical professionals in a time when the need is dire.

via MAIL

Reflections on May 4, 1970

I was at Kent from the fall of 1962 until the summer of 1970. (Although I was out of town on May 4, 1970.) As I read John Mensch’s letter [spring/summer 2020, “Readers Respond,” page 5], I could not help but think that he and I attended very different Kent States. He wrote of “a few sit-ins” and “a few demonstrations.” And he alluded to at least some by non-students.

I beg to disagree. The first demonstration against the Vietnam War was in the fall of 1964, and they were held weekly from then on. Maybe he didn’t remember that ROTC cadets were no longer required to wear their uniforms once a week. They were getting too much criticism and comments from other students. Also, the weekly ROTC cadet assemblies had to be moved to the football stadium to avoid threatened actions by the SDS. Or maybe he didn’t remember Bernadine Dohrn running around the Williams Hall football stadium to avoid threatened actions by the National Guard cadet assemblies had to be moved to the ROTC building where the SDS got burned; I had an elementary ed class there. We also checked out the hill where the shootings took place. I walked that hill often going to the phy ed building and to and from the ROTC building.

I hadn’t planned to go to college. I graduated from Massillon Washington High School, and I got a good-paying job on an assembly line for Ecko products making pots and pans. After a year, I just got laid off.

I stood on the corner in downtown Massillon with three friends. We were discussing what we wanted to do, and someone said, why don’t we go to college? Someone else said, we could go to Kent State. We did; we hopped in a car and headed to Kent. When we got [to the university] we went to the Office of the President and asked the secretary if he was busy. He wasn’t. [President George A. Bowman] invited us into his office and told us what Kent had to offer. I began the elementary education program that fall. A college education was very affordable. The cost for a quarter was less than $100 and commuting made it work. It was a wonderful experience.

I just finished the spring/summer 2020 issue on May 4, 1970 was very good. Tragedies like the Kent State Shootings can only be made meaningful if they are remembered and publicized through the media. The Silent Majority’s shootings at Kent State. When we got [to the university] we went to the Office of the President and asked the secretary if he was busy. He wasn’t. [President George A. Bowman] invited us into his office and told us what Kent had to offer. I began the elementary education program that fall. A college education was very affordable. The cost for a quarter was less than $100 and commuting made it work. It was a wonderful experience.

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It’s Not a Pagoda

I enjoyed the article on remembering May 4, 1970 [spring/summer 2020, “Memorials of May 4,” pages 14–17]. I did, however, want to bring one small point to your attention. Regarding the concrete structure outside of Taylor Hall on Blanket Hill, the first time it was mentioned in James Michener’s book [Kent State: What Happened and Why], he referred to the structure as a “pagoda.” Then, in the magazine story on page 16 I saw that the structure was again called a pagoda.

I’m not sure where that term came from, but this structure is not a pagoda. Based on a definition, “a pagoda is a Hindu or Buddhist temple or sacred building, typically a many-towered, in India and East Asia.” I have been to Japan and seen several pagodas, and this structure is not by definition nor by architectural design a pagoda.

For reasons of clarity, I wanted to let you know that the structure is in fact a “thin-shell (2 inches thick) steel-reinforced concrete structure, designed with four inverted hyperbolic paraboloids that form a 10-foot square.” The concrete foundation, located 36 inches below grade, is exactly the same structure as above ground.

Not sure this will be of any value, but I just thought after 51 years I could help clarify the matter. I know this information because I designed, engineered and constructed the structure with another architecture student, Robert F. Gressard, BArch ’70 [Streetsboro, Ohio], in the fall quarter of 1969, just months before the shootings took place on May 4, 1970.

I have found my way to an architectural class that day, soon after the shots were fired.

JAMES DONALD JANNING, BARC ’70

Charlotte, NC

Editor’s Note: The now iconic concrete structure has been referred to as the “pagoda” in multiple places over the years. Excited to learn the names of the structure’s designers, I asked Jim Janning for more details. The following is an edited excerpt of our phone conversation:

“I designed that structure with fellow classmate Bob Gressard as a project for a fifth-year structures course with Professor Robert Shively. He looked over the project on the first, on 11th Street. The structure is 10 feet wide. He saw the ‘pagoda’ tag and ‘umbrella’ tag in the Press and I thought, ‘Get the hell out of here.’”

“The campus police came by, and asked what we were doing, and we told them the truth. But they arrested us and took us to the campus jail. We said we had a right to make a phone call, so we called Shively and told him where we were. He talked to the police and they escorted us back to the project, where we continued to dig.”

“The afternoon we were pouring the concrete (Bob knew someone who had a concrete truck), Shively drove up in a station wagon filled with extra rebar he got at the library project that was under construction at the time. So there’s extra steel in the structure because Shively didn’t want to lose his bet with McWilliams.”

“The main structure is only two inches thick; the strength comes from it being a paraboloid, because curves are stronger than straight lines. (My mother was a math teacher and would make mathematical objects out of string or cardboard, so she was probably my inspiration for the design.) I minor in math, physics and art.”

“I finished it up about three months before the shootings. [On May 4, 1970], I had parked across from Taylor Hall and was heading to a 1 p.m. class. I probably arrived about 10 or 15 minutes after the shootings, and I saw broken glass and pools of blood. People were running around screaming, and some girl cried. ‘What should I do? What should I do?’ I said, ‘Get the hell out of here.’”

“I drove home, grabbed my wife and left. Within two weeks I had a job in Cleveland and finished up my courses by mail. When I saw that photo of the structure in Life magazine (photo top left) that’s when it really hit me. The shootings took a lot out of me.

“When I went back to campus for the first time in 2003 for an architecture class reunion (photo top right), it felt strange being there. I thought things would be more familiar, but it felt very different—until we got to Taylor Hall and I saw it still there.

“I don’t think we had any idea that structure would last this long, and I don’t know what kind of shape it’s in now. Anyway, it was built as an inverted hyperbolic paraboloid. Somehow it got the title of ‘pagoda’—if you want to call it an ‘umbrella structure,’ that’s fine.”

“Leading up to the 50th commemoration, the university hired a structural restoration consultant to make recommendations for some needed repairs and to review the structure as a whole to ensure its physical integrity,” notes Jay Graham, interim executive director in the Office of the University Architect, “We will continue to maintain the structure, as it has historical importance for the university.”

For Whom the Bell Tolls

My wife and I enjoyed reading the spring/summer 2020 Kent State Magazine. We would like to call your attention to that on page 15 there is an incorrect description of the Victory Bell. The last sentence reads: “The bell is now rung during May 4 Memorial commemorations—and also for athletic triumphs.”

As stated in the article, the bell was removed after May 4, 1970, but was returned later. However, it was no longer used for “athletic triumphs.” My wife and I talked with President Carverkight to see if it could be placed on a trailer and used at individual athletic events. She indicated that it was to remain on the Commons as part of the historic site.

In 2013 we purchased and donated a trailer and another Victory Bell to the university to be used by the athletic department. The bell is stationed at most athletic events and is rung by the Kent State team if they win. It is also available at KSU graduation ceremonies for those graduates who want to ring it.

BUZZ, B5 61/40, MARVIN B5 71, STARNER

Jackson Township, Ohio

Editor’s Note: There is a lot more to this tragic story than we were able to cover in a couple pages in a magazine. In many years, the university began the long, slow process of memorializing the event and learning how to deal with diverse opinions without dismissing them.

I would encourage you to explore some of the resources now available through Kent State that provide a more complete picture of what was going on at the time. For example, the Oral History Project invites stories from all perspectives: https://omeka.library.kent.edu/kent/special-collections/kent-state-documentary.

Those diverse perspectives have been used to inform several recent projects, which we tried to highlight in the magazine, including the Mapping May 4 app, https://mappingmay4.kent.edu/about, which includes voices from Kent shop owners and residents. And see the Armed With Our Voices Digital Exhibit, https://armedwithourvoices.org, May-4th Voices AtoZ Map, https://map4voices.org, and the Augmented Reality Experience, http://may4thxkent.edu.

Maybe Next Year

I was a freshman at Kent State on May 4, 1970. So glad the issue that had so much about the 50th anniversary was available in print, as it will certainly be valuable to keep. We had our plane tickets, concert tickets, all ready to come back to Kent for the commemoration, when everything was canceled. I was bitterly disappointed. I am hopefully the university will be able to plan something for next year.

MIKE WILT, B5 ’73

St. Helena Island, SC
Editor’s Note: To fairly check your understanding, we recommend you read "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," by Professor M. Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, and Thomas R. Hensley, Emeritus Professor of Political Science, which can be found here: https://www.kent.edu/may4historical-accuracy.

For another concise account, you could visit "The Nine Wounded Are Now." (page 20) is very short and Robbie deserves more, even though the writer couldn’t talk to Robbie since he died some years ago. So I can attest to this: Robbie, as his friends called him, remained a staunch supporter of the university. During the 50th anniversary of the shootings, the university contacts available to reporters, anchoring a media speakers bureau, determined to communicate the truth about May 4.

Editor’s Note: We added this additional information about Robert Stamps to the digital edition of the spring/summer 2020 issue and have included it here, as well.

What an absolutely fitting cover design. I will keep this forever.

JERRY O’RYAN, MPH ’77
Centerville, Ohio

Extra Credit

First, you thank everyone and involved in the virtual commemoration for your efforts under such stressful circumstances. I noticed that the writeup about Robert Stamps [spring/summer 2020] “Where the Nine Wounded Are Now” is waiting for us on our kitchen table in Minnesota. We’ll re-read it when the airports open up again. But this digital edition is magnificent. Upon receiving my BFA from KSU, the 20th-century half of my life was book design and the publishing industry. I certainly remember tight deadlines and the pressure to meet them.

We want to hear from you!

We want to hear from you!

We want to hear from you!

If you’re interested in reading more about the events from various perspectives, there are many books written about May 4, some from firsthand accounts. You can find a recommended reading list here: https://www.kent.edu/may4kentstatesmay4-reading-list, and on an annotated bibliography of all the major publications written on the event here: https://www.library.kent.edu/special-collections-and-archives/kent-state-shootings-selected-books.

Editor’s Note: We ran the copy by Dean Kahler. He is currently stationed with his family in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He is currently stationed with his family in Afghanistan. He is currently stationed with his family in Afghanistan.

I’m interested in the May 4 commemorative edition of the magazine. Having been there, that day, it means a lot to me that you not only write and produce this edition, but that you emailed it to me. It arrived in my inbox exactly when I needed it. Thanks especially for letting us know the stories of the nine wounded.

My wife and I (we met at KSU) are now 3,000 miles away, far off the-grid in Belize, stranded due to the coronavirus. Not such a bad place to be, really. Peaceful. But we had planned on being there today, in Kent, for the 50th anniversary with you and so many of our old friends. I am beyond sad that it will not happen. Life-changing events do continue to happen, don’t they?

Perhaps the print edition of the Kent State Magazine is waiting for us on our kitchen table in Minnesota. We’ll re-read it when the airports open up again. But this digital edition is magnificent. Upon receiving my BFA from KSU, the 20th-century half of my life was book design and the publishing industry. I certainly remember tight deadlines and the pressure to meet them.

What’s all a wheelchair is—a device of efficient mobility. “Bound” is ableist (look it up, it’s like being racist, only toward people with disabilities).

STEVIE WRIGHT, BS ’87
Miami, Fla.

Editor’s Note: We ran the copy by Dean Kahler. He is currently stationed with his family in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He is currently stationed with his family in Afghanistan. He is currently stationed with his family in Afghanistan.

I will wager my life that you have never heard of Robert Stamps. I wrote and produced this thoughtful edition, and you brought a tear to an old man’s eye on May 4. You have gone the extra mile to mark the 50th anniversary with you and so many of our old friends. I am beyond sad that it will not happen. Life-changing events do continue to happen, don’t they?

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STEVIE WRIGHT, BS ’87
Miami, Fla.
The Way I See It

“IT’S NOT LIGHT YET, BUT IT’S GETTING THERE.”

This phrase, a play on the 1997 Bob Dylan song “Not Dark Yet,” lately keeps popping into my mind. It’s not light yet because we know the very real danger of living with COVID-19 will remain for months. But we also have the very real hope of returning to normal life by fall semester 2021. New vaccines make us confident that we will be able to resume much of our traditional on-campus life by fall semester 2021. Kent State is a main tenet of the Kent State global community and members demonstrated that belief in an unprecedented swell of support this year.

As 2020 has shown us, we can never predict what the year will bring. What I do know, though, is no matter what the circumstances, we can always count on our Kent State family to come together, take care of each other and work to change our world for the better. I offer you my best wishes for a happy, safe and peaceful holiday season and new year that will bring us all good health and great success.

Todd A. Diacon, President

Email: president@kent.edu

Instagram: @kstpresdiascon

Pulling Together During the Pandemic

For the past five years, Kent State has ushered in the season of giving with a month-long celebration of philanthropy in November. “Giving back” is a main tenet of the Kent State global community and members demonstrated that belief in an unprecedented swell of support this year.

Despite the economic impact of COVID-19, Kent State’s Giving Tuesday campaign shattered previous years’ records as alumni, friends, faculty and staff raised $2,333,145 to support more than 5,300 students, many of whom are facing financial hardships. This year featured 35 funds that focus on the university’s goal to prioritize student success through scholarships and programs within the key areas of ensuring access, rewarding achievement, enhancing experiences and fostering completion. Through the support of 2,100 donors, more Kent State students will benefit from access, rewarding achievement, enhancing experiences and fostering completion.

We are moved by the generosity of our Kent State community comes together, in good times and bad, to make a lasting impact on our community.”

The Kent State Emergency Grant Fund was the standout fund of Giving Tuesday 2020. With $100,000 in matching money and another $40,000 pledged before the campaign launched, it raised $177,784 to support students in need as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March, nearly 10,000 students have reached out as they attempt to navigate this unprecedented situation. Many have received help through the grant or CARES Act Funding, but more than 2,000 students were still awaiting some form of assistance. The money raised through Giving Tuesday for the Kent State Emergency Grant Fund will help Kent State students succeed in earning a degree.

Golden Flashes around the globe are looking to give back, and the university will continue to offer them meaningful opportunities to do so during Flashes Give Back Week in April.

“Giving back is at the heart of the Kent State community.”

“The numbers for this year’s Giving Tuesday campaign were larger than ever, but what those figures represent is even more telling,” says Danielle Hupp, senior associate director, Special Giving Initiatives. “They show that the Kent State community comes together, in good times and in bad, to make a lasting impact on our community.”

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“The numbers for this year’s Giving Tuesday campaign were larger than ever, but what those figures represent is even more telling,” says Danielle Hupp, senior associate director, Special Giving Initiatives. “They show that the Kent State community comes together, in good times and in bad, to make a lasting impact on our community.”

The Kent State Emergency Grant Fund was the standout fund of Giving Tuesday 2020. With $100,000 in matching money and another $40,000 pledged before the campaign launched, it raised $177,784 to support students in need as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March, nearly 10,000 students have reached out as they attempt to navigate this unprecedented situation. Many have received help through the grant or CARES Act Funding, but more than 2,000 students were still awaiting some form of assistance. The money raised through Giving Tuesday for the Kent State Emergency Grant Fund will help Kent State students succeed in earning a degree.

Golden Flashes around the globe are looking to give back, and the university will continue to offer them meaningful opportunities to do so during Flashes Give Back Week in April.

“We are moved by the generosity of spirit we continue to see among our university community,” says Valerie Vargo, interim vice president of philanthropy and alumni engagement and the executive director of the Kent State Foundation. “Even in times of uncertainty, the Kent State family remains steadfast in its commitment to others. We know that giving back with time, talent and treasure is at the heart of the Kent State community.”

View a message from President Diacon at www.kent.edu/givingtuesday.
Design Innovation Hub Virtual Grand Opening

After six years of planning, design and construction, the $44.5 million renovation of the former Art Building (built in 1972) into the new Design Innovation (DI) Hub was completed fall semester 2020. The adaptive reuse of the 68,000-square-foot space included full interior and exterior renovations and was designed by Domokur Architects in partnership with Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ) and constructed by Gilbane Building Company.

Kent State University students, faculty, staff and community members celebrated the DI Hub's virtual grand opening on Nov. 12, 2020, marking a major milestone in the university’s $1 billion facilities master plan. The building serves as the central point of the Design Innovation Ecosystem, which includes “nodes” (existing makerspaces and resource laboratories) located throughout KSU’s eight-campus system.

In a welcome video on the DI website—which includes remarks by President Daxton and other Kent State leaders, students and special guests—J.R. Campbell, executive director of Kent State’s DI Initiative, invites visitors to take a 3D virtual tour through the DI Hub, where they can explore the makerspaces, studios, laboratories, classrooms, offices, theatre/auditorium, dining facility and other spaces envisioned to support creativity and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

As of spring 2021, DI Hub Memberships will be open to faculty, students, staff and employees for access to the labs and shops, with a charge for use of equipment. Kent State alumni, community and business memberships will be available in the future. See www.kent.edu/designinnovation/become-member.

Dish Cooking Challenge

As part of the DI Hub’s grand opening, three student chefs competed to prepare fall-inspired dishes from a basket of secret ingredients at the Innovation Teaching Kitchen on Nov. 17, in the Fall Dish Cooking Challenge.

The 800-square-foot innovation teaching kitchen, in the heart of the DI Hub, adds another new makerspace to the university’s DI ecosystem. “Kitchens are ultimate makerspaces,” notes J.R. Campbell, executive director of the DI Initiative. It also will support culinary classes for the Hospitality Management program in the College of Education, Health and Human Services. The new kitchen will enable students to use the latest technology and food preparation techniques to compete in culinary competitions and collaborate with their peers. (See www.kent.edu/designinnovation/innovation-teaching-kitchen.)

View the DI Hub Virtual Grand Opening at www.kent.edu/designinnovation/virtual-grand-opening.
When Lisa Strom took over as head coach of Kent State women’s golf in July 2019, she was brought in to lead a stellar team that seemed on track to compete for a national championship after winning the first three tournaments of their season.

The pandemic brought that promising season to an abrupt end, but Strom’s background had prepared her to meet such unusual challenges, even while taking over a new program.

“You bring what you stand for as a coach, and for me that’s an ability to adapt and adjust,” says Strom, a former LPGA Tour member who came to Kent State from Texas State University, where she spent three years as head coach of the women’s golf team and was named the 2019 LPGA Professionals National Coach of the Year.

Her philosophy focuses on the whole person, not just the player. “When team members do physical training, they overcome barriers they didn’t realize they could, which helps them mentally,” Strom says. “We train our bodies all the time, but what are we doing to train our brains?”

She trains players how to do mental training using methods such as meditation, visualization and journaling. With the cancellation of this year’s fall season, instead of playing for spots and traveling for competitions, the team members have remained competitive by playing head-to-head match play within the team and crowning a champion. They are also putting in intense workout hours in the gym. Some of the players have signed up for outside competitions, as competitive by playing head-to-head match play within the team and solving the “wicked” challenges of safely conducting the school’s fashion business work.

Meanwhile, Valentine, who holds the Margaret Clark Morgan Endowed Leadership Chair as director, continues to pursue a fresh vision for the School of Fashion’s future, a “think bigger” opportunity that brought her to Kent State to support a higher international profile through an ambitious initiative aimed at bringing new voices—from different industries and communities—to the conversation.

“What does it mean to lead with inclusivity within fashion for higher education?” asks Valentine. “KSU Fashion wants to be on the forefront of answering that globally significant question.”

She also is focused on continuing the progress of the $7.3 million renovation planned for the School of Fashion’s home in Rockwell Hall, overseeing a brand development for the school and increasing international student enrollment from 5 percent to 13 percent.

Challenging work lies ahead, but Valentine, with expertise in design for change, is up for the task.

As an applied design researcher, with a doctoral degree in designer’s thinking, she studies user needs—emotional as well as practical—and uses that information to design innovative solutions. Her research has focused on how design for business innovation is perceived and communicated, and the value design adds when used as a tool for leadership and performance management in business.

“[Kent State’s] School of Fashion had prepared itself for change,” she says. “And it welcomed transformation by inviting me to be the director. I look forward to leading it in its next stage of development.”

We asked her to tell us more about herself and what she values.

On the value of diversity: One of the things I’ve championed my whole career is having people from different backgrounds in the room to help you solve a problem. Through diversity we can begin to glimpse the significance of imagination and a level of innovation that individuals cannot accomplish on their own. Everyone has something of value to give along the way.

On the value of design: Design is a strategy for the highest levels of innovation, but not just in a product or economic sense. It’s also about what that looks like culturally and socially. It’s as much about how it impacts the individual as it does the organization.

On guiding young fashion thinkers: One of the biggest things is to allow students to find their voice and to understand that their voice is what people want to hear. Not them mimicking other people’s voices.

On fostering focus: As a creative thinker, my mind dances a lot. I purposely choose to be outside to help me think and be creative. One of my favorite things I have ever done is being outside to help me think and be creative.

As part of their mental training, she encourages team members to look beyond the golf course to the community. Last season, Strom introduced them to the Folds of Honor Military Tribute Program, and the players raised $1,100 in scholarship money for the spouses and children of US service members killed or disabled while on duty.

On overcoming setbacks: Woe is me. But a better idea is, “How do we use this time to learn and grow and be prepared for what’s to come?”

—Candace Goforth DeSantis, BS ’94

School of Fashion director Louise Valentine on designing for change.

It has been a year of change for Louise Valentine, PhD. She moved with her husband from her home in Dundee, Scotland, to become director of Kent State’s Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman School of Fashion Design and Merchandising in August 2019. Previously, she had served as professor and chair of design at the University of Dundee’s Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

Six months into adjusting to the new job, home, culture and continent, she found herself presiding over the rapid switch to remote working prompted by the pandemic and solving the “wicked” challenges of safely conducting the school’s fashion business work.

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On His Way

It took a 10,000-mile round-trip journey and four years of living in a poor village in Ghana (Africa) for New York native Divine Asante to begin transforming his life. Now a freshman aeronautics major and Oscar Ritchie Scholar, he aspires to be a professional airline pilot.

But when he was 11 years old, his parents sent him to live with his grandparents in Ghana because of his behavioral problems. “My parents were kind of tired of me,” Asante says. “They wanted me to do better, so they decided I should go to Africa because things are stricter there compared to America. It was a good experience overall. I got to learn more about my culture, and I met some great people and made some great memories. I learned more about myself, and I changed and grew as a person. I became a little more humble; I appreciate things a little more.”

Life in Ghana was eye-opening, Asante says. Not only was the food and environment quite different (he had encounters with snakes, scorpions and lions), but school was a lot stricter than in America. “You end up turning it in late or not at all, if you don’t do your homework and in America. Non-compliance with teachers will whip you,” he says. “They take out their cane and they just beat you. It was scary, especially for someone like me who is not used to that kind of discipline.”

Asante says he came to Kent State because it was affordable and the right distance from his parents’ current home in Cincinnati—not too near and not too far. “Though he struggles, like most freshmen do, with the adjustments to college life (workload, time management, sleep deprivation), he says his experience has been pretty good so far. When he’s not studying, he enjoys playing basketball, working out at the Tri-Rec Center, participating in bible studies with NEO Impact and pursuing his passions in art, drawing and painting.”

“My favorite class so far is psychology,” Asante says, “because of how the human brain works—and human behavior is pretty interesting.” —April McClellan-Copeland

Noteworthy

Kent State is the highest-ranking public university in Northern Ohio on the Top Public Schools and Best National Universities lists in the 2021 US News & World Report Best Colleges rankings.

The university also placed among the top 100 public universities in the nation on the Best Undergraduate Business Programs list and ranked 101 among public universities in the nation on the Top Perfromers on Social Mobility list, which measures how well schools graduate students who received federal Pell Grants.

Wagon Wheel Win

The Kent State Golden Flashes secured the Wagon Wheel for the second consecutive year while taking a 25-24-1 all-time lead in Wagon Wheel games.

Quarterback Dustin Crum led the way, becoming the first player in Kent State history to throw for three touchdowns and rush for two scores in a game. Crum became only the fifth player in school history to account for at least five touchdowns in a game. The Flashes tied school records for most points in a single game (69) and most total yards in a single game (750). It is the first time in school history that the Flashes have scored 60+ points in back-to-back games.

Beginning fall semester 2020, the Kent State at Geauga Campus in Burton has a second Zoom Room to provide remote instruction. Students taking remote courses can be taught via their laptops by an instructor who lectures from one of the Zoom Rooms on campus. This technology has been invaluable in the transition from face-to-face courses to remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zoom Rooms provide cost savings throughout the Kent State system. Students at Kent State Geauga can attend a course offered at another Kent State campus via the Zoom Room, and students at other Kent State campuses can take Kent State Geauga’s Zoom courses.

Funding for the new Zoom Room was provided by a $20,000 grant from the Cleveland Foundation’s Lake-Geauga Fund, half of which is being used for financial support for students experiencing hardships during the pandemic.

“Without the grant support of such forward-thinking partners, we would be less able to prepare for these anticipated needs,” says Angela Spalsbury, PhD, dean and chief administrative officer, who requested funding for Kent State Geauga’s additional Zoom Room last spring. “We are deeply grateful for their commitment to local students’ success during this difficult time.”

Even without fans in the stands, Kent State’s cheerleaders kept up the energy inside a chilly Dix Stadium.

Quarterback Dustin Crum led the way with two rushing touchdowns while passing for three more in Kent State’s 69-35 victory over Akron.
Finding Future Flashes

Each year, thousands of prospective students visit Kent State’s eight campuses to experience what it might be like to be a Flash.

Those typical campus visits came to an abrupt halt in early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced restrictions on mass gatherings. By fall, as application deadlines for the 2021-22 academic year approached, the admissions teams on all the campuses had to find new ways for visitors to view their offerings.

The teams decided if they couldn’t bring prospective students to Kent State campuses, they would bring Kent State to them. Working within the confines of Ohio’s public health orders—no close gatherings of more than 10—they pondered how to show a crowd of prospective students everything Kent State has to offer, while keeping them all safely apart.

Drive-In for Scholars

At the Kent Campus, the admissions team found one answer in the state’s wealth of drive-in movie theaters. As it turns out, Ohio is tied with New Jersey for having the second highest number of drive-ins in the nation. Drive-ins are a throwback to a time when movie theaters were relatively inexpensive and families could visit in the comfort of their own cars.

In mid-November, the admissions team presented KSU2U, an event that brings prospective students to Kent State at drive-in theaters. The first KSU2U event was held at the Twin Lakes Drive-In in Chardon, since it was “practically in our backyard,” says Mary Lynn Delfino, admissions counselor at the Twinsburg Academic Center. “We were happy to share information with a current student and a video tour of the Kent Campus—all on the big screen?”

KSU2U was held on November 14 and 21. As of press time, the events drew a total of 1,140 cars with 3,290 participants. The events also included question-and-answer sessions, during which admissions and financial aid counselors went car-to-car to speak directly with participants. In addition, the teams hosted Instagram live sessions at the end of each event for prospective students to ask any remaining questions.

“The drive-ins proved to be the perfect venue for KSU2U,” says Vince Slomsky, director of strategic communications, enrollment management. “We understood that we had to do this in a safe, socially distanced space—and how cool is it that we could showcase Kent State on the big screen?”

The team presented Admissions 101 information, a video interview with a current student and a video tour of the Kent Campus—all on the massive outdoor movie screens, which attendees viewed from their cars. Participants also were treated to movie-theater snacks and Flash swag, and admissions team staff members monitored the concessions line to ensure safe distances between individuals.

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Kneuss says. “It was a fantastic way for the admissions counselors at each Regional Campus to get to know each other, and it allowed us to lay the foundation for new and exciting ways to collaborate.”

Still, Slomsky says, the successful turnout at the drive-ins did not make up for the loss of the two large on-campus visit days—“Preview KSU”—that would have taken place earlier in the year.

“We know nothing will ever replace the feeling a prospective student gets when stepping foot on our beautiful campus,” he says. “But we are hoping that KSU2U gave them a taste of how amazing we are and will help confirm that Kent State is where they need to be once they graduate high school.”

Tours Via Technology

In addition to the KSU2U events, the admissions teams at the Kent Campus and Regional Campuses have been relying on technology to provide information to potential applicants. They offer videos, virtual appointments and creative opportunities for on-campus services.

Some of the Regional Campuses have been able to continue offering on-campus tours by limiting participants to one prospective student and their guests, keeping within safety guidelines. Others have been able to provide only virtual visits or self-guided tours.

“Throughout these challenging times, the staff have continued to have a ‘students-first’ attitude by adapting to new technologies and methods of providing services in the format (virtual or in-person when possible) that best meets the desires and needs of each individual we are serving,” says Laurie Donley, director of enrollment management and student services at Kent State Tuscarawas.

All of the Regional Campuses collaborated this fall for a virtual college fair. The Virtual College Exploration, hosted by the Ohio Association for College Admissions Counseling (OACAC) in partnership with StriveScan, was open to all Ohio students. Teams from each of the Regional Campuses—including the Twinsburg Academic Center, a satellite location of the Geauga Campus—shared a Google doc to develop and organize the OACAC college fair presentation. The event, which was presented live Nov. 9, was recorded and is available for viewing at https://bit.ly/KSUVirtualcollegefair.

Each campus highlighted its own unique features during the webinar sessions, says Ketura Kneuss, assistant director of enrollment management and student services at Kent State Stark, who coordinated the presentation.

With 28 participants, Kent State’s Regional Campuses session drew the second highest number of registrants of all the sessions held during the second week of the fair. After the event, the admissions counselors followed up via email with the participants.

“The admissions counselors put together a great presentation and did an awesome job of engaging with the prospective students, families and guidance counselors before, during and after the event,” Kneuss says. “It was a fantastic way for the admissions counselors at the various campuses to get to know each other, and it allowed us to lay the foundation for new and exciting ways to collaborate.”

—Candace Geforth DeSantis, BS ’94

Take a virtual tour of all Kent State’s campuses at the links below:

Kent Campus
https://www.kent.edu/admissions/undergraduate/virtual-kstu

Regional Campuses
Ashland
https://www.kent.edu/ashland/visit

East Liverpool and Salem (Columbiana County)
https://www.kent.edu/columbiana/visit-campus

Geauga and Twinsburg Academic Center
https://www.kent.edu/geauga/explore-our-campus

Stark
https://www.kent.edu/stark/campus-tours

Trumbull
https://www.kent.edu/trumbull/virtual-trumbull

Tuscarawas
https://www.kent.edu/tusc/visit-campus
Forging a Path in Finance

When Anne Ritts, senior finance major, first came to Kent State, she was planning to teach math. But her grandfather’s passion for the stock market quickly inspired her own—and she changed her major to finance in the College of Business Administration. There, she immersed herself in academics and joined several finance organizations.

“Being in finance and being the only girl many times, it felt like I was always walking into a room of guys,” Ritts says. “Because of those experiences at Kent State, I’m more confident.”

One of the organizations she joined was Golden Flash Asset Management Group (GFAM), led by Steven Dennis, PhD, Firestone Chair of Corporate Finance at Kent State. GFAM tasks students with managing real money—currently more than $1 million in investments. They create portfolios of investments, which they can enter into competition.

Ritts’ involvement in GFAM provided unique learning experiences, including the Certified Financial Analyst (CFA) research challenge and a visit to the New York Stock Exchange. In 2019, she and the GFAM team took first place with their Fixed Income portfolio at the nation’s largest student finance competition, the Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education Forum.

“Going to New York City and getting to represent Golden Flash Asset Management was something I’ll always remember,” Ritts says. Her accomplishments have inspired other women to participate in GFAM, as well.

Anne Ritts poses with her team’s first-place trophy at the Quinnipiac G.A.M.E Forum.

“If you’re willing to put in the work and put yourself out there, people want to help you.”

—Adapted from an article by Katie Null, BS ’21, that first appeared in Kent State Today, Oct. 5, 2020

Getting out the College Vote

Since 2019, Kent State sophomore Izzy Stewart has helped more than 480 individuals, mostly fellow students, exercise their right to vote and take steps to create political change.

Her drive to increase voter turnout among students began at Elkins High School when she received her first taste of political advocacy following the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018, where 17 students and teachers were killed.

“I learned how to organize a walkout,” Stewart says. “And I realized that many high schoolers didn’t know they were eligible to vote and didn’t know how to vote.”

Orinally drawn to Kent State’s fashion merchandising program, Stewart’s passion to help others and make a difference pushed her to change her major to public relations in the School of Media and Journalism and minor in media advocacy and global communication.

“When I learned how the events of May 4 [encouraged Congress] to lower the voting age to 18, that fueled my fire,” says Stewart, who continues to draw inspiration from the students who took a stand on May 4, 1970, and often speaks to fellow students about how they can make their voices heard, too.

“People our age did something really incredible in 1970 and stood up for themselves, so why can’t we now?” she says. “We’re at the same campus and some of the same things are happening around us. It’s inspiring to see that we can make a difference.”

—Adapted from an article by Katie Null, BS ’21, that first appeared in Kent State Today, Nov. 9, 2020

Stewart’s experience in Kent State’s public relations program has influenced her approach for encouraging people to vote.

“I’ve learned that I can talk to anybody and have an effective conversation with a real outcome,” she says. “I’ve learned tactics that will result in something positive.”

Prior to the pandemic, she helped people register to vote in person, and she walked many through the process via text or FaceTime for the 2020 election. Stewart also volunteers as a poll worker, helping people to vote once they’ve registered.

She encourages everyone to educate themselves down the entire ballot, exploring each candidate’s social media pages and websites to understand their stance on issues—and then vote according to their own views. “No matter what party you’re for, no matter what beliefs you have,” she says, “everyone deserves to have a voice.”

Stewart hopes people her age can look back years from now and see that they were part of making a positive difference in the world.
Kent State University is a world away from the small town in Nepal where international student Saroj Dahal was born and raised. It takes Dahal and his family nearly 15 hours to travel the more than 7,000 miles between Nepal and the United States.

So when his grandparents, who do not speak English, were planning to fly from Nepal to Boston in June 2019 to visit his uncle, Dahal flew to Nepal to accompany them on their journey. Without his assistance, they may have had difficulty ordering food or finding restrooms.

His family’s situation inspired Dahal, a Kent State mechanical engineering technology major, and his teammates when they competed in Kent State’s SkyHack 2019 last fall semester. SkyHack is a weekend-long design challenge for students from any US university to provide solutions to issues related to the aviation industry—presented by the College of Aeronautics and Engineering (CAE) and LaunchNET, with major sponsorship by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation.

Dahal’s team entered the “Improving the Air Traveler Experience” challenge, sponsored by Kent State’s Design Innovation initiative. In response to the challenge, the team created Copilot, a digital application designed to help international travelers navigate through unfamiliar airports—and their “airport travel companion” won the competition’s $10,000 grand prize. “I generated the concept, but each member of the team made contributions,” says Dahal, who is a senior this year.

The Copilot team took their innovation to LaunchNET, where they received suggestions on how to move forward to bring the app to market. Although the teammates have been separated by the pandemic and two of them have graduated, they remain in contact and plan to resume work on the Copilot app.

After participating in SkyHack, Dahal did summer research and began a mechanical engineering internship at Olsträd Engineering Corp., in Kent, Ohio. His responsibilities include working on CAD (Computer Aided Design) and HMI (Human Machine Interface)—a user interface, such as a touch-screen or keyboard, that connects a person to a machine, system or device.

Dahal hopes to get a full-time job at Olsträd or a similar company after he graduates in spring 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering technology and a minor in sustainability. “He is not only a brilliant student, but he has taken advantage of the many opportunities available to him at Kent State,” says Jackie Ruller, assistant dean in the College of Aeronautics and Engineering, who has known Dahal since his freshman year.

“The excellent reputation of CAE is one of the reasons he chose to attend Kent State, Dahal says. He also learned through a college counseling program in Nepal that the university had an impressive number of international students, and he received several scholarships, which made it affordable.

“The Office of Global Education does a great job,” says Dahal, who participates in the office’s Global Ambassador Program, helping Kent State international students from his native Nepal find housing and other resources prior to and during their first semester. “I work to pay forward the help and experiences I have received at Kent State.”

—April McClellan-Copeland

See video at: www.kent.edu/magazine/saroj

In 1947, Walton D. Clarke came to Kent from Springfield, Missouri, where he had worked for three years at KWTO. He was hired to teach "new era" radio courses at Kent State and direct the Radio Workshop, a voluntary organization of students interested in radio broadcasting. The Radio Workshop served as the precursor to the university’s own station. WKSU-AM went on the air with its student staff in 1949. The station applied to become an FM station to increase its broadcast range. And, after the Federal Communications Commission approved the permit, WKSU-FM 88.1 was created as a non-commercial educational station. After months of test pattern trials, WKSU officially took to the airwaves with a student staff and an eclectic mix of programming on Oct. 2, 1950.

In September 1962, WKSU’s frequency changed to 89.7 FM to increase its broadcast range once again. That position on the dial still remains as the frequency for listeners throughout Northeast Ohio. As the on-air staff consisted solely of university students, the station only aired limited hours of radio plays, music, news, and student and faculty interviews. That’s a sharp contrast to today, when WKSU operates 24/7 with a full-time, professional on-air staff.

The transition to a professional public radio news station was gradual. For most of the station’s history, even with its student-produced lineup, the station featured classical music. The switch slowly came to life starting in 1974, when WKSU became an NPR affiliate. This change resulted in the addition of many NPR news programs throughout the years, such as Morning Edition, Fresh Air and All Things Considered.

WKSU officially changed its format to news and information in August 2013 to better serve the region and provide quality journalism.

“As a public radio station, WKSU is not driven solely by the quest for high ratings,” says Andrew Meyer, WKSU news director. Instead, the news team looks to create and share valuable content with the community. “Our goal is to make sure we’re pursuing the stories that are important to our audience, and we want to be engaged and connected with the communities we serve to make sure we are aware of what they need.” Programs like OH Really? help connect the WKSU news team to the community. Through OH Really?, the community becomes part of the journalistic process, submitting and voting on questions online for the reporters to investigate.

It started with one antenna — its signal barely reached the edge of the Kent Campus. Seventy years later, it is an award-winning, NPR affiliated radio station, with the largest public radio service in Ohio. WKSU has continued growing in support, radio innovation, technology and staff since officially taking to the airwaves on Oct. 2, 1950.
In 1980, after 30 years on the air, it was big news when WKSU increased its power to 50,000 watts. This was a huge benefit for its sustaining members—donors who contribute monthly to WKSU.

The staff of WKSU used their tech savvy to safely celebrate the station’s 70th anniversary. With coronavirus safety protocols still in place, WKSU hosted a live virtual presentation from NPR’s Morning Edition host, Steve Inskeep, broadcasting it to an audience watching from home.

The celebration looked far different from the events held in 2000 to commemorate the station’s 50th anniversary. Those events included guests such as Terry Gross from Fresh Air and Robert Siegel from All Things Considered, and a live presentation of A Prairie Home Companion at Blossom Music Center.

However, this year’s celebration wasn’t any less meaningful. “Although we wanted to have a number of events throughout 2020 to celebrate our 70th year, we’ve obviously had to adjust our plans,” says Lindsay Kimm, director of Development.

The virtual event was sponsored by the Friends of WKSU, a nonprofit organization that raises funds to further the impact of WKSU’s journalism.

Fueling journalistic passion in students and graduates will remain a priority in the future, Turner says. “We want to strengthen our partnership with Kent State’s College of Communication and Information to identify, support and train the next generation of public service journalists.”

In that case, the future looks bright for another 70 years of loyal listeners, outstanding reporting, superior technological advances and a passionate staff to continue the WKSU legacy.

From a single antenna to the largest FM station in Ohio

Starting with a single antenna tacked to a 50-foot pole supported by a chimney atop Kent Hall in 1950, WKSU has added multiple towers and transmitters to further its broadcast range. Today, WKSU is heard in more than 20 Ohio counties and parts of Western Pennsylvania.

From years apart to all under one roof

Prior to moving to WKSU’s main broadcast facility at the corner of Summit Street and Loop Drive, the station’s offices and studios were located in various locations in and around the Kent Campus for 42 years. The broadcast staff spent time in the Music and Speech building (now the Kent Center for the Performing Arts). Poor acoustics were a problem for the broadcast studios on the third floor, and a lack of space resulted in makeshift offices in hallways and equipment stored in stairwells.

The administrative staff worked in Wright Hall on the Kent Campus, until the space was needed to house an overflow of students; the administrative staff then moved to the former El Charro restaurant building on East Main Street.

WKSU began raising money to renovate the El Charro building in 1987. While the original plan was to bring the station’s staff together at the former restaurant, an assessment determined that constructing a new building would better accommodate the station’s immediate needs and long-term goals. The private funds collected for the renovation were used to build the $1.2 million facility on the Kent Campus.


Today, the station houses approximately 25 full-time staff members along with part-time staff and Kent State student interns.

See a timeline of WKSU’s history at www.wksu.org/wksu-history. See videos of WKSU's history by Kabir Bhatia, BA ’01, MA ’15, at www.kent.edu/magazine/WKSU-celebrates-70-years-radio-excellence. Anna Garvin, BBA ’22, is a marketing student and WKSU intern. Lauren Green, BA ’21, is a VCO student and WKSU intern.
HAYLEY SHASTEEN KNOWS WHAT IT’S LIKE TO LIVE WITH BRAIN FOG

Now she hopes her research will help bring clarity to others suffering from this cognitive impairment, including COVID long haulers.

By Lyndsey Brennan, MA ’21

Something [like brain fog] blocking that?”

It left her with this realization: “Your cognition is you on a different path.” It was such a cool class,” Shasteen biopsychology class taught by Rachael Blasiman, PhD, set

she on a different path. “It was such a cool class,” Shasteen

people before the pandemic happened. I wish we could have cared about it sooner.”

Because of an incomplete understanding and the many possible causes to consider, healthcare providers are often unable to support patients who experience it.

Now that many coronavirus long haulers are also living with brain fog, there is even more urgency to understand its possible causes to consider, healthcare providers are often unable to support patients who experience it.

“If it’s related to a worldwide pandemic, we’re going to have funding to study it and people are going to care about it,” she says. “But this was a real problem for millions of people before the pandemic happened. I wish we could have cared about it sooner.”

Shasteen first became interested in researching brain fog as a freshman at Kent State University at Salem. She had started out as a pre-nursing major, but taking a biopsychology class taught by Rachael Blasiman, PhD, set her on a different path. “It was such a cool class,” Shasteen recalls. “It was essentially about how the brain helps you perceive the world.”

It left her with this realization: “Your cognition is everything. So what are you supposed to do when there’s something [like brain fog] blocking that?”

Since then, Shasteen has worked on a number of research projects about brain fog with Blasiman as an adviser. In summer 2018, Shasteen conducted a research project she designed in Blasiman class as part of the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE), an eight-week research internship program at Kent State that funds promising undergraduate researchers to engage in faculty-supervised research.

Unlike many studies about lupus that focus on one point in time (which Shasteen says is “unefful because lupus changes every day”), her project examined how subjects’ cognition and physical symptoms changed over time. She won first place in the SURE Research Competition in 2018 and presented her findings at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in 2019.

While Shasteen tells people away from the spotlight, she says the most rewarding part of the research is when it helps people better understand themselves. “Someone I talked to at the conference had lupus and was super interested in what I found. To me, that was more important than the fact that I had a paper published.”

“This was a real problem for millions of people before the pandemic happened. I wish we could have cared about it sooner.”

This past summer, as a Brain Health Research Institute Fellow, Shasteen designed and conducted interviews for a study aimed to develop a working definition of brain fog across conditions. After the Lupus Foundation of America sent Shasteen’s call for participants to those subscribed to its mailing list, her inbox flooded with messages from people eager to share their experiences.

While many of the study’s participants have lupus, 20 other conditions are represented, with several participants reporting multiple conditions. Shasteen notes that “quite a few” participants had never heard the term brain fog before, which suggests to her it’s likely many more people are living with brain fog but don’t have the vocabulary to describe it.

So far, she’s conducted 83 interviews for the study, which she’s capped at 50 participants, and received a grant to cover the transcription cost. Her nearly-minute thesis presentation of the study’s preliminary data won second place in Kent State’s 2020 Undergraduate Symposium.

“Shasteen’s research by awarding her a prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, an honor given to the leading student researchers in the United States. Shasteen says winning $15,000 in scholarship money has been a game-changer; she’s able to devote more time and focus to her schoolwork.

When Shasteen, a first-generation college student, applied for the Goldwater scholarship, she was putting herself through school by working three jobs: as a barista in a coffee shop, a student assistant in an organic chemistry lab and a mentor in Kent State’s Rural Scholars program at Kent State Salem.

During her two years with the program, Shasteen mentored three eighth graders and two tenth graders who had the potential to become first-generation college students but lacked access to resources and guidance. One of the students she mentored is now in college but stays in touch, asking for help with the FAFSA and class scheduling. She once told Shasteen, “You’re one of the biggest reasons why I graduated high school.”

Working with teens was great practice for conducting research interviews, Shasteen says. “Talking with teenagers helped me talk to anyone. They’re tough nuts to crack.”

Shasteen, who is taking online-only courses her senior year due to the pandemic, is set to graduate in the spring with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. She plans to look for work in a healthcare setting or research lab while applying to clinical neuropsychology graduate programs. Although she had been pursuing molecular and cellular biology as a second major, she stopped after deciding to study psychology rather than biology in graduate school.

After graduating in 2016 from Western Reserve High School in Berlin Center, Ohio, Shasteen originally planned to study photography at The University of Akron. But she couldn’t afford it—something that, years later, she is grateful for.

“It’s likely many more people are living with brain fog but don’t have the vocabulary to describe it.”

“Being introduced to different ways of scientific thinking helped me rethink what I could do with my potential,” she says. The opportunity to explore her science-minded side has positioned her to potentially solve problems for those living with chronic illnesses.

“I’m lucky enough that, for now, my lupus and my brain fog aren’t so severe that I’m bedridden every day. There are so many people whose lives are completely destroyed by this one thing,” she says. “I just want to do something about it because I can.”
THE ROCK RACISM RECONCILIATION

RACIST MESSAGES ON THE ROCK HAVE SPARKED A SERIES OF DIALOGUES AMONG MEMBERS OF THE KENT STATE COMMUNITY—PROMPTING ACTION STEPS THAT PROMISE REAL CHANGE

By April McClellan-Copeland, photos by Bob Christy, BS ’95

The “Rock” has resided on the Kent Campus since the 1920s, offering a public canvas for students, organizations and community members who have painted messages on it to promote events, welcome visitors and highlight social issues. It was originally located on a grassy strip between the sidewalk and East Main Street, but when the street was widened in 1976 it was moved to its current location at the bottom of Hilltop Drive on Front Campus.

While standing as a symbol of the Kent State community’s long legacy of free speech, the Rock has also borne the weight of offensive messages that have been painted on it periodically over the years.

During the summer and early fall of 2020, the Rock became a medium for those intent on spreading racist messages aimed at the Black community. The messages, though hateful, sparked peaceful protests, anti-racism discussions and more robust safety and diversity policies at Kent State.

The racist writings on the Rock followed the death of George Floyd, a Black man who, during an arrest for allegedly passing a counterfeit $20 bill, was killed by a white Minneapolis police officer kneeling on his neck. The tragedy, on May 25, 2020, not only ignited passionate protests nationwide but propelled a diverse group of Kent State students to march multiple times in protest of systemic racism and police brutality.

Throughout the summer, Kent State community members met in virtual town halls to address systemic racism by learning, listening and taking action as a collective. At a town hall discussion geared to faculty and staff in June, President Todd Diacon announced plans for a task force to address issues of racism.

Kent State students also painted slogans, such as “Black Lives Matter” (BLM) and “Say Their Names” on the Rock. On Aug. 28, 2020, someone painted over the BLM message on the Rock with “White Lives Matter,”
Hundreds of masked participants in the Black Lives Matter Peaceful Protest on Sept. 10 march through the director of political affairs and grievances for Black United Students (BUS), leads a rally call; an estimated 600 Kent Campus to the Rock, to protest recent racist messages painted on it. Clockwise from top: Gabrielle Blake, hand-written signs and cut flowers to demonstrate the beauty of diversity. protestors fill the lawn of Front Campus; Tayjua Hines, president of BUS, speaks to the crowd; protesters hold members reacted by engaging in “White Lives Matter” messages.

The racist message was painted over but was soon replaced with other messages, the BUS executive board brought the outrage about Floyd to a report on KentWired, students have no home here.”

Voices of Color, told KentWired that “Hate has no home here.”

The Rock became the starting point for substantive dialogue about race equity at Kent State. “The real issue wasn’t the Rock, but the Rock was an example of how racism and racial aggression operates, not just at Kent State University, but also in the nation,” says Amao Gooden. “The students were looking for ways that they could feel supported. And they also wanted the university to acknowledge the impact that racist actions, like those related to the Rock, have on students, faculty and staff on the Kent Campus.”

Kent State has a long and storied history of supporting free speech, including the Rock.”

—President Todd Diacon

were repainting the Rock that evening—with a rainbow background and fist, symbolic of the BLM movement—when a passenger in a car driving by repeatedly shouted the “n-word” at them.

were created with input from Kent State students. Among the demands were: adding an anti-hate clause in the university’s Student Code of Conduct with a reprisal or expulsion for students who violate it; immediate announcements to alert students about racist incidents (in the same manner as sexual assaults); while implementing Flash ALERTS following the announcement; an increase in the number of security escorts on standby; appointment of a faculty member to supervise campus of Pan-African studies to discuss the demands.

From that discussion, the university created a list of Action Steps that incorporated issues from the BUS demands. (See sidebar on page 33.) Progress has been made on many of the action steps and includes: increased lighting on campus and around the Rock, security cameras at the Rock, hiring more security aides with increased hours, and anti-bias training—which approximately 1,000 students and staff have undergone so far.

calls for change

Tayjua Hines, president of Black United Students (BUS), says the recent racist incidents involving the Rock magnified existing racism that Black students and faculty have experienced for decades.

“BUS has been calling out racism since our foundation, and we will continue to demand change for Black people on this campus,” Hines notes in a recent email interview. According to its mission statement, BUS was founded in 1968 “to unify and serve all Black students at Kent State, identify relevant issues and initiate appropriate actions to reduce or eliminate any impediments adverse to students and their continued well-being and matriculation.”

Lamar Hylton, PhD, vice president for student affairs, says the racist messages on the Rock were a catalyst for substantive dialogue about race equity at Kent State. “The

Students, faculty and community members reacted by engaging in peaceful protests and continuing to repaint the Rock. Then on Labor Day, Sept. 7, the Rock was found with its most recent message, “Hate has no home here,” crossed out and replaced with “Blacks have no home here.”

A photo of the Rock with its latest racist message was tweeted out and the response on Twitter was immediate and intense. According to a report on KentWired, students Gooden says she is proud of the collaborative way that the university and students worked to address the concerns of Black students. “Students recognized what the issue was,” she says. “They named it, they labeled it and they asked the
NEW POLICY ON PAINTING THE ROCK
Kent State University is implementing a new administrative policy for painting the Rock. The policy, which goes into effect Jan. 11, is one of the university’s responses to the racially offensive language that was painted on the Rock in early fall semester and aimed at Black students.

“Kent State’s policy does not seek to restrict free speech in any way, shape or form,” says Lamar Hylton, PhD, vice president for student affairs. “There are no ‘hate speech’ policies as pertains to the Rock. We took an approach of looking at the Rock from a broad logistical, health and safety perspective, making sure that we knew, for instance, how much time a painting can remain on the Rock before it’s allowed to be painted over by someone else. These safety, health and logistical matters will make sure that the Rock remains as close as possible to its original intent.”

Kent State’s new policy coincides with Senate Bill 40 recently enacted by the Ohio General Assembly, which includes the “Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act” regarding free speech on college campuses. The law states: “No state institution of higher education, or any of its administrators, faculty or their official capacity, shall prohibit any individual from engaging in noncommercial expressive activity on campus, so long as the individual’s conduct is lawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the institution.” Senate Bill 40 also bans “free speech zones and security fees for speakers.”

See the policy at www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-viewing-painting-rock-located-hilltop-drive.

Lamar Hylton says the response to the Rock opened the door for broader, philosophical conversations around Kent State’s culture in a meaningful, coordinated and transparent way. While challenging, these conversations are very exciting, he adds. “The university is now at a place where we are beginning to have these discussions openly and honestly—and we are beginning to understand how we should, as an institution, move forward.”

In a message to the Kent State community on Sept. 2, President Diac on introduced the new Anti-Racism Task Force—led by Amaasoa Gooden, Lamar Hylton, and Melody Tankersley, PhD, senior vice president and provost—which will explore all facets of racism at Kent State. It will begin its work with a focus on Black racism and later expand to examine all areas of racism on Kent State’s campuses.

“Kent State has a long and storied history of supporting free speech, including the Rock,” notes President Diac on. “This task force’s work will further our commitment to free speech by providing a platform for open dialogue, without allowing free speech to be used as a blanket to cover the featureshadows of racism and hate.”

Students organized another peaceful protest—Black Lives Matter at Kent State—on the afternoon of Sept. 10, and hundreds of protesters marched from Risman Plaza to Oscar Ritchie Hall and then gathered at the Rock. They were invited to bring cut flowers to share with the students to show the beauty of diversity. Later that day, in another move towards unity and understanding, Black United Students (BUS) met with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion hosted a virtual town hall called “Strategizing for Change: Revising the Rock.” Participants discussed how to support community members who have been hurt by these racist actions and how everyone can contribute to a better future.

On Monday, Sept. 14, President Diac on and members of the campus and city police forces participated in the March for Unity—sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. and BUS—which included hundreds of students, staff, faculty and community members. The march started on the “K” in Risman Plaza, where President Diac on thanked the members of BUS for providing guidance and positive solutions to what has been a painful situation.

“I began to wonder about how to square our core values with this painful reality, and I sort of got lost,” Diac on told demonstrators, according to KentWired. “But this summer I have met with leaders of Black United Students and the membership of Black United Students provided us with the light.”

Diac on made a commitment to the Kent State community: “You have my pledge that we will continue to act until all people experience our university as a place that fosters diversity, equity and inclusion for all.”

Then the group reassembled at the Rock, where President Diac on and others again addressed the crowd and answered questions.

After the March for Unity, President Diac on released an email to students, staff and faculty: “Today I had the meaningful opportunity to take part in the March for Unity sponsored by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and supported by the Black United Students (BUS) on our Kent Campus. Today’s march and the two other marches last week in support of a town hall meeting of the Anti-Racism Task Force on Dec. 10, 2020, 14 subcommittees reported the progress of work on various issues, including: campus safety, recruitment and retention of Black faculty and staff, and examining academic curriculum. President Diac on began the town hall meeting by thanking the 170 faculty, staff and students who are members of the task force for engaging in the important work of ensuring that Kent State University provides equity for all.

“Learning, examining and understanding in and of themselves will not get us to where we want to be. We will not have lasting change unless we act.”

—President Todd Diac on

of the value of Black lives, represent the very essence of the Kent State spirit and the values this university holds dear: exercising our right to free speech and claiming loudly and clearly that hate has no home here,” Diac on made a commitment to the Kent State community: “You have my pledge that we will continue to act until all people experience our university as a place that fosters diversity, equity and inclusion for all.”

He added that the university must examine, learn and understand why racism persists at Kent State University, but there must be action to address anti-racism as well. “Learning, examining and understanding in and of themselves will not get us to where we want to be. We will not have lasting change unless we act.”

Kent State’s Anti-Racism efforts: www.kent.edu/antiracismefforts/

KENT STATE’S ANTI-RACISM ACTIONS

Soon after Black United Students (BUS) submitted its list of seven demands in response to the racist comments that appeared on the Rock on the Kent Campus, university administrators began to work on the following action steps that incorporated many of the BUS recommendations.

**ACTION STEPS (FALL 2020)**

- Installation of security cameras
- Increase lighting around the Rock
- Hire more security agents and expand hours for student escort services, including providing these services during the day
- Promote and enlist the support of Black United Students to enhance the recruitment and retention of students
- Provide anti-bias training for faculty, staff and students
  - Create incentives for faculty through Center for Teaching and Learning focused cohorts (diversity focus)
  - Require anti-bias workshops for all new Kent State employees
  - Conduct a formal review of the Student Conduct Code
  - Implement policies and procedures for painting the Rock
  - Explore the creation of a platform for notifying students, faculty and staff about hate speech
  - Create a website/platform for anti-racism statements, announcements and actions of the university
  - Explore off-campus and on-campus police relationship

Progress has been made on all the action steps, including adding security measures and an increase in campus lighting, a website for anti-racism statements and actions of the university, and anti-bias training for about 1,000 students and staff.

Kent State’s Anti-Racism Action Steps: www.kent.edu/antiracismefforts/ action-steps
You may recall those days when you were getting ready to head to work or run errands and you thought to yourself, I wish I could just stay home today. How times have changed. Thanks to COVID-19 restrictions, most of us are spending a lot more time at home and keeping our social circles small in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus and not overwhelm the healthcare system.

Back in March, when many of us were suddenly thrust into new ways of living and working, little did we realize that staying at home, working remotely and limiting our social interactions would present so many new challenges.

Beginning with those first few weeks—and continuing over these many months—Kent State experts have created resource guides for the university’s website, written insightful articles, shared research findings, and given advice on webinars, video conferences, podcasts and more.

We’ve compiled and condensed some of their wise words to help us cope with challenges we face today. The following topics contain tools and strategies to put into practice.

**RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF STRESS IN CHILDREN**

Children feel the same stresses as adults; however, when they are anxious and stressed it often is displayed differently. Here are some signs to be aware of:

- **BEHAVIOR REGRESSION:** Children may display behaviors you thought they had outgrown. Look for unusual behaviors, such as needing a special toy for comfort, bed-wetting or baby talk.

- **CHANGES IN EATING AND SLEEPING:** Children will show either a sharp increase or decrease in appetite. Your child may experience difficulties falling asleep, sleeping longer than usual or nightmares.

- **ACTING OUT:** Your child may start pushing boundaries, displaying aggression, not following directions or arguing with family members.

Consult your child’s healthcare provider to determine the best steps for addressing these behaviors.

—School of Psychology program, College of Education, Health and Human Services

**KEEPING YOUR CHILD’S BRAIN ACTIVE**

Boost your child’s literacy and cognitive development with these easy, fun tips. Children and adults can enjoy these activities together while sharing experiences and making memories.

- **READ:** Read anything from cereal boxes, candy wrappers, comic strips, maps and, of course, books! Play word games like Boggle or Scrabble.

- **TALK:** Ask questions, ask for more information, ask for an opinion, discuss ideas, put on puppet shows, tell stories, sing or tell jokes.

- **WRITE:** Write stories, poems, lists and letters. Draw, paint and chalk with at-home art supplies. Observe and record the world around you.

—School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies; College of Education, Health and Human Services
Despite known drawbacks, empathy is an emotion state that has the potential to benefit the giver as much as the recipient. Here are some tools to help us learn to imagine what it is like to be someone different from ourselves. TREAT EMPATHY AS A LEARNED SKILL. The good news is, empathy is not an innate trait or a moral disposition, but a skill that can be cultivated. Simply believing empathy is a skill rather than a fixed trait increases the likelihood that people will work harder to empathize. We can seek out tools to engage in perspective taking, arguably the core component of empathic engagement. An ‘empathy wall’ is when we’ve reached a point where we simply cannot understand another’s perspective. When this happens, people tend to distance themselves from their adversaries, thus deepening the divide. We can break through this wall by observing our own behavior, abandoning assumptions, practicing deep listening and asking questions to understand the other person’s actions and beliefs.

APPLY SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION. At its core, the concept of the sociological imagination asks us to imagine the circumstances of an individual’s behavior in the context of societal structures and realities. This means not only consider someone’s background and how that could affect their opinions, but also what’s going on in their community, the country or the world. As a tool, the sociological imagination allows us to more readily appreciate the reality of another person, a key step in the cultivation of empathy. It manifests as a willingness to ask questions about why someone acts or believes as they do and then seek out reliable information to answer those questions—information that can be gleaned from educators, journalists or even from those in question. It takes work and commitment and a willingness to hold judgment in abeyance as we seek greater understanding of the context that informs a person’s life. Knowing their history will help us learn where they’re coming from, even if we don’t agree with them. If we really want to practice empathy, not merely tout its virtues, we must embrace tools like those above. Only then can we transcend the insidious empathy walls that separate our communities.


MANAGING UNCERTAINTY AND DISAPPOINTMENT

In the wake of COVID-19, many of us are facing uncertainty and disappointment. The good news is that there are research-supported best practices for managing uncertainty (expectations in general) and disappointment (when expectations are not met). To tackle both issues, here’s a simple, four-point checklist.

1. REVISE YOUR EXPECTATIONS. The first thing to ask yourself when facing uncertainty or disappointment is: What am I expecting/what did I expect? The fact is, you need to be ready for a variety of potential outcomes. To revise your expectations:
   • Think back on history. What are some examples that apply to the current situation? What led to one situation going differently from another?
   • Set up reasonable expectations. When facing a new situation, be prepared for the good, the bad and the neutral. When imagining a “bad” outcome, focus on realistic consequences—not some end-of-the-world scenario—and how you could move forward in that situation.

2. INCREASE YOUR TOLERANCE. The context of COVID-19-induced isolation, a lot of people feel like their “energy to deal with stuff” cup is running on empty. We need to learn how to refill that cup and how to make it bigger—so it takes longer to drain.

   • Practice mindfulness meditation. Try the Koru Meditation classes offered by KSU or any meditation app.
   • Sleep regularly and long enough.
   • Drink enough water and eat regular, healthy meals.
   • Don’t immediately distract yourself when you experience a negative emotion. Take at least 5 minutes to process what happened and how you’re feeling before running away from it.

3. REEVALUATE PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOR. Don’t miss the learning opportunities that negative situations offer. You can still be upset—but after you’ve felt those feelings, come back to the situation. Reframe and reevaluate what to do now. You’ll feel better with a reasonable, specific plan of action. Don’t set nebulous goals like “get better at drawing”—instead, plan to practice sketching for 10 minutes a day after you eat dinner. To practice reevaluating perceptions and behavior:
   • Think back on disappointments you’ve experienced that panned out okay. Practice reframing your perceptions and make a retroactive (or current) plan of action for how you could improve.
   • Talk through these experiences with your friends, following the above steps.
   • Come back to disappointing/uncertain situations after taking a break (see below).

4. TAKE A BREAK. Sometimes you just need to step away from a situation to clear your head. Make sure you come back to the situation—leaving it unattended to will only make it worse in the end—but it’s okay to refill your cup and try again later. While you probably know your favorite way to take a break, here are a few recommendations:
   • Take a hot shower.
   • Chat with a friend/loved one.
   • Go for a walk (outside if you can).
   • Try some simple stretches.
   • Drink some water and take a nap.
   • Try enacting just one of these strategies today—your future self will thank you for it.

—Kent State of Wellness Ambassadors: Samantha Nissui, MA ‘20, doctoral candidate in sociology; and Muhammad Hassan Bin Afzal, doctoral candidate in political science.
It is that time of year when many of us begin to focus on what we are thankful for. This year, things might look different, but it is important to find even small things to be extra grateful for. According to Psychology Today, being grateful can improve one’s physical and mental health, increase empathy, reduce aggression, improve sleep and bolster self-esteem.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- **KEEP TRACK OF WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.** Write what you are grateful for on a slip of paper and place it in a gratitude jar to take out and reflect on later. Or start a gratitude journal where you write what you are thankful for in a notebook.

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Sometimes the small things in our lives are the best things. So when practicing gratitude, it is okay to remember and reflect on the little things.

- **BE KIND TO YOURSELF.** In the beginning, you may struggle to come up with things you appreciate in your life. You may also have a bad day where it seems impossible to express gratitude. In these moments, remember to be kind to yourself.

- **CONSIDER A GRATITUDE BUDDY.** Engage in a gratitude activity, such as the jar or journal, with someone you are close with—maybe a close friend, significant other, or roommates.

- **GIVE BACK.** This may not be as possible as it once was, but if the opportunity arises and you are able, consider giving back to others or volunteering as a way to express your gratitude.

—Bethanie Mauerman, BA ’15 (psychology and sociology), MEd ’18 (clinical mental health counseling), licensed professional counselor and doctoral candidate in health education and promotion

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**COOKING WITH KIDS**

Getting kids to eat something other than their preferred foods (like chicken tenders and mac and cheese) may be difficult, but getting them involved in the planning and cooking process helps open their minds to try something new. Here are some ideas to implement at home:

- **GET THEM INTERESTED:** Have children read recipes with you and help create shopping lists. Explore new cultures by selecting recipes from around the globe.

- **KEEP THEM SAFE:** Teach them the importance of hand washing and cleaning as you go, so foods are not cross-contaminated. Clarify the dangers of raw ingredients and explain how to safely use a knife (start with plastic)! Be sure to talk about the dangers of hot surfaces and how to properly use appliances.

- **GET THEM INVOLVED:** Children can help with mixing, kneading and other hands-on tasks. They can also help add ingredients as you are cooking. Use the time to talk about what is happening to the ingredients when you apply heat.

—Chef Anthony Hamilton and Chef Andrew Eith, Hospitality Management program, College of Education, Health and Human Services

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**EATING HEALTHY ON A TIGHT BUDGET**

Even though home-cooked meals are the best option to stay on budget, the amount of money you spend in grocery stores can add up. Here are some tips to eat healthy on a tight budget:

- **SHOP SMART:** Create meal plans and grocery lists ahead of time and be sure to eat before you head to the grocery store, as shopping when hungry can increase unnecessary food purchases. Be sure to watch for coupons and discounts to reduce your grocery bills.

- **PICK LESS EXPENSIVE PROTEINS:** Try less expensive cuts of meats such as chicken thighs. Cut up, portion into several containers and freeze. Thawing and refreezing reduces meat quality. Keep shelf-stable proteins on hand like canned beans, tuna and nuts.

- **STOCK UP ON CANNED AND FROZEN FOODS:** Frozen fruits and vegetables can last for months or years. Canned goods can be stored without being refrigerated. Be sure to drain excess water and wash off produce to reduce sugar and salt content.

—Nutrition and Dietetics program, College of Education, Health and Human Services

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**PRACTICING GRATITUDE**

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Here are some ideas to consider:

- **KEEP TRACK OF WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.** Write what you are grateful for on a slip of paper and place it in a gratitude jar to take out and reflect on later. Or start a gratitude journal where you write what you are thankful for in a notebook.

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Sometimes the small things in our lives are the best things. So when practicing gratitude, it is okay to remember and reflect on the little things.

- **BE KIND TO YOURSELF.** In the beginning, you may struggle to come up with things you appreciate in your life. You may also have a bad day where it seems impossible to express gratitude. In these moments, remember to be kind to yourself.

—Bethanie Mauerman, BA ’15 (psychology and sociology), MEd ’18 (clinical mental health counseling), licensed professional counselor and doctoral candidate in health education and promotion
While many people struggled to maintain an active lifestyle prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, now even more factors contribute to a sedentary lifestyle: work and school have transitioned online causing increased screen time, fitness facilities and parks have closed or reduced their operating hours, and social interaction is limited due to physical distancing guidelines.

A group of Kent State University professors, Jacob Barkley, PhD, Andrew Lepp, PhD, and Ellen Glickman, PhD, from the College of Health and Human Services, joined with current and former Kent State doctoral students (now at other universities) to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on physical activity and sedentary behavior. They published their findings in the International Journal of Exercise Science.

In a before-and-after pandemic comparison of more than 400 university students and employees, they found that those who were most active prior to the onset of COVID-19 were the most negatively affected. Those who were not highly active before the pandemic were able to increase their physical activity, perhaps because of time saved by eliminating the daily commute. But all participants in the study reported a significant increase in daily sitting, which is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes—and even a greater risk of dying earlier.

With coronavirus cases on the rise, we can expect current social distancing measures and limited access to recreational facilities to continue. Here are three ways to maintain positive health behaviors and stay active through the winter months and beyond:

1. MINIMIZE SITTING FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. Many people are still working from home and spending an inordinate number of hours sitting in front of their computer each day. Minimize the amount of time spent sitting by investing in a standing desk or taking breaks to stand, stretch and move around throughout the day.

2. EXERCISE OUTSIDE OR AT HOME. If you can’t make it to the gym, or don’t want to, there are other ways to exercise at home. Outdoor activities like biking and hiking or an online workout class are great ways to get moving. Even light activity, like a walk, can help reduce stress and get your blood flowing.

3. INCORPORATE ACTIVITY INTO YOUR ROUTINE. Scheduling Zoom meetings has become part of our daily lives, so why don’t we schedule time for activity, too? Before, during or after work, set aside some time for physical activity. It will not only be better for your physical health—it can improve your cognition and productivity, too.

SECURING YOUR DEVICES AT HOME AND WORK

2020 has shifted most of our home, school and business lives online. The devices you use that connect to the internet collect tons of personal data and could threaten your online security if not secured. Information including your home address, email address, phone number, personal ID numbers and date of birth is like gold to a cybercriminal.

Internet of Things (IoT) devices may include your home thermostat, smart refrigerator, smart watch, baby monitor or a smart TV. These devices may be connected to the internet constantly. Protect IoT devices by connecting to a secured network—and be careful not to place them in areas where you have private work or family discussions. Most home wireless networks (Wi-Fi) are controlled by your internet router or a separate dedicated wireless access point that broadcasts wireless signals. Those signals can extend way beyond the walls of your house or apartment. If you share your Wi-Fi password with friends or guests, they can connect anytime they pass by—and gain access to your home network.

Here’s how to protect your technology and secure your personal/ work data:

• USE EFFECTIVE PASSWORDS. In addition to a strong Wi-Fi password, use strong passwords on all your devices and apps. Make them at least 12 characters long, use numbers, symbols and capital and lowercase letters. Make the passwords unique to only that network, device or app. Never share your passwords or store them physically (such as on a sticky-note or in a notebook).

• SECURE YOUR ACCOUNTS. Set up multi-factor authentication on any account that allows it and never disable it.

• SECURE YOUR HOME WIRELESS NETWORK. Change your router login’s default username and password, as they are easily found online. Always keep WPA2 enabled to ensure the best security for the devices on your network. Use a strong Wi-Fi sign-in password. Update your router’s firmware regularly to ensure you have the latest security updates.

• SECURE OLD DEVICES. If you lend, give, sell or throw out an old device, return it to factory settings to prevent your data from being accessed after you no longer have control. Remember to back up or transfer any important information on the device.

• AVOID OVERSHARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA. If you share things like pet names, schools you attended, links to family members and your birthday, you give a scammer all the information they need to guess your password or answer your security questions.

• DON’T FALL FOR CLICKBAIT SCAMS. Don’t click on links, attachments or anything else in an unsolicited email or text message asking you to update or verify account information. Look up the company’s phone number or customer service email address on your own and call or email the company directly to ask if the request is legitimate.

In 2021, the Kent State University Division of Information Technology issued the following update on protection:

• KEEP SOFTWARE UP TO DATE. Updates include important changes that improve the performance and security of your devices.

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Three Kent State alumni find personal revival and community in the power of podcasting.

By Michael Blanding

SO HELP ME POD

Three Kent State alumni find personal revival and community in the power of podcasting.

By Michael Blanding

BECOMING BETTER

TREY KAUFFMAN, BA ’09, COLUMBUS, OHIO, THE MOSAIC LIFE

Following graduation from Kent State, Trey Kauffman spent six years bouncing around a succession of sales and marketing jobs, feeling uninspired.

“I would always get bored at a job,” he says. He spent evenings drinking too much and putting off any meaningful change, such as starting his own company or writing a book. “I always made excuses—that was one of the most toxic aspects of my life.”

The best moments of his day were those spent commuting in his car, listening to podcasts such as Tim Ferriss and Kevin Rose interview inspirational entrepreneurs. “I realized things weren’t going to magically change for me overnight,” Kauffman says. “I had to put in the work.”

In 2016, he started doing just that, quitting his job to start a web design company, 237 Designs, meditating, reading up on the ancient philosophy of stoicism and launching a humor podcast of his own.

In fall 2019, he and a friend, Ernie Welsh—who had met at a leadership event—launched a new podcast called The Mosaic Life, asking a question that has become an important one for Kauffman: What does it mean to be happy? “We see people who struggle with being overwhelmed and anxious, especially when it comes to the workplace,” Kauffman says. “They need resources to find happiness and contentment, to know they have the capacity [to find that] within themselves.”

His friend left after a year, and Kauffman has continued the podcast, bringing on guests from the realms of business, philosophy and psychology to glean insights into how we can all get closer to the lives we wish we had.

In one recent episode, he interviewed Nw Igual, bestselling author of Indistractable, about how to stay focused in the hyper-media landscape. In another, he spoke with Ashley Mead, a former marketing exec with Amazon who now consults on creating “psychologically safe” workplaces. In still another, he spoke with Lauren Lauandi, a yoga instructor who started her life over personally and professionally at age 36.

“I’m continuing to stay in contact with these people to make sure they’re growing—and I’m growing as well.”

For his part, Kauffman has developed a personal mantra—“Do better”—and asks himself each day what he can do to improve his own life. A year ago, he quit drinking and challenged himself to read a book a week for a year. “We all have the capacity to do better in our lives so we can help others—and help ourselves,” he says.

Kauffman traces his creativity to the influence of his mother, who worked for Akron and Canton. Extremely shy while young, he came out of his shell at Kent State as a deejay for the internet-based Black Squirrel Radio, where he started a humor show with some friends; soon he was webmaster and marketing director for the station.

While there, he learned to have naturally flowing conversations with guests, following a practice he continues to this day. “I don’t want to over prepare for interviews, because I don’t want to be rigid, but I want to be informed enough that I can talk intelligently about whatever subject the guest is bringing.”

His relationship with guests doesn’t end with the podcast, however. To keep the conversations going, he created the Mosaic Life Co-op, a private Facebook group for his guests to connect with and learn from each other. “It’s never a one-off,” he says, “I’m continuing to stay in contact with these people to make sure they’re growing—and I’m growing as well.”

Eventually, he hopes to write a book distilling the wisdom he’s collected, reaching others who might also be yearning to make changes in their lives, but not quite knowing how.

“If I can inspire one person to make a change in their life—to scale back on their ego or spend a couple hours a week working on their book or startup,” he says, “that makes it all worthwhile.”

Listen to The Mosaic Life at https://www.onemosaic.life/
FINDING FAMILY

KERI RICHMOND, BS ’17, WASHINGTON, DC, FOSTERSTRONG

You don’t have to search too hard to find negative images of foster care, says Keri Richmond. “You look at Law and Order: Special Victims Unit, and the kid who was in foster care is always the one who goes on to become a serial killer running around the city wreaking havoc,” she says, Richmond, who was raised in foster care and an adoptive family herself. She was pleasantly surprised, then, when she saw the 2018 film Foster Family starring Mark Wahlberg and then, when she saw the 2018 film Instant Family herself. She was pleasantly surprised, raised in foster care and an adoptive family

“At the heart of the effort is a podcast, Overcoming Odds, creating a venue for children to share experiences,” says Richmond, now the organization’s executive director. “Our mission is to tell our raw and authentic stories, not tokenizing the trauma, but showing the resilience and strength embodied by somebody who goes through the system.”

“Far too often in life, we are told to only listen to experts,” he says. “But these ‘ordinary’ people are also experts in their own lives.” Instead of coming with a list of questions, he goes into each interview with an intention to listen and “share the space,” allowing people to tell their stories in their own way. Often, in fact, he starts by asking subjects what question they are seeking an answer to in life. “The beauty of it is that every single question has its own meaning of life.”

“WHAT STANDS OUT IS THAT ONE INDIVIDUAL OR A COUPLE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE CONSISTENTLY SHOWING US LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT. THAT, AT THE END OF THE DAY, IS WHAT FOSTERING IS ABOUT,” Richmond says. “We champion the belief that every child deserves to be loved by somebody, and anyone is capable of being that somebody.”

Listen to Overcoming Odds at www.overcomingodds.today

CREATING SPACE

OLEG LOUHEED BA ’16, AUSTIN, TEXAS, OVERCOMING ODDS

There were many moments while growing up that Oleg Louheed looked around at his life and asked, “Why me?” Born in Russia, Louheed’s mother was an alcoholic and his father was in prison. By age 9, he was in an orphanage, and at 12, he was adopted by a family on the other side of the world in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was unable to speak the language. “I would immediately go to the place of silence. ‘I can’t believe this happened to me,’” Louheed says. “No matter how much he felt sorry for himself, however, it didn’t change his situation. ‘I realized it wasn’t a productive mindset,’ he says, “because it didn’t give me any additional insight to move forward.” Eventually, he started subtly changing his viewpoint to ask, “Why not me?”—wondering what his experiences had to teach him. “It changed my relationship with adversity completely,” he says, “and made me realize I could be of service to others to help them see their own adversities through a different lens.”

Last year, he founded the organization Overcoming Odds, creating a venue for himself and others to share their experiences dealing with difficult situations. At its core is a weekly podcast in which Louheed interviews ordinary people who have struggled to overcome situations including racism, cancer, sexual assault and COVID-19. “This felt like something people were desperately needing,” he says, “a place to be heard, to be appreciated and to be understood.”

“THE first thing I often hear is, ‘I’ve never been asked such a question before,’” he says. “It also gets people curious about their own lives and routes—after a moment of silence, they begin to realize how rich their life has truly been.”

Beyond the podcast, Overcoming Odds also hosts paid events such as “Survive to Thrive: A Parent’s Journey,” which brings together parents to share their stories along with national experts in the parenting field.

In addition, every Saturday morning, Louheed’s organization hosts a free weekly conversation over Zoom called “Courageous Conversations,” in which anyone can show up to discuss topics including the value of suffering and the meaning of life: “The beauty of it is that every single person gets the opportunity to share their own perspective,” Louheed says. “That is the heart and soul of the work.”

Listen to Overcoming Odds at www.overcomingodds.today
Advice for new writers

Remember that publishing is about money: “There’s a danger of romanticizing writing; I tell young writers, ‘You have to be pragmatic. Don’t get too emotionally invested in the business side of things or it’s going to chew you up. If publishers pay attention to another author instead of you, it’s because they think they can make more money with that book. That’s just how it is.”

Remember why you write: “Try to write for reasons outside of having your book in a bookstore. Keep the spirit of why you’re writing, without getting bogged down in the ‘being published’ aspect of it, because otherwise it’s easy to get demoralized and give up. Before Wicked Saints, I’d worked on a book for 11 years, and when I queried it, I only received form rejections.”

Remember to have fun: “When I started writing Wicked Saints, I didn’t think I was ever going to get it published. I just wanted to write something fun, play with a lot of the tropes that were happening in YA books and do them differently. I think that’s part of why it worked so well—because I wasn’t worrying. ‘Is this going to be something that a gatekeeper will like?’ I thought, I don’t care. I want to have fun with it. At the end of the day, you have to have fun.”

“I love art that builds off of other art. I love the collaborative aspect of it.”

of fan art created in homage to her characters, which she features on her website. “I love art that builds off of other art. I love the collaborative aspect of it.”

The library reopened its doors in late June, but Duncan has seen few students since then, which she says is an “extremely weird” departure from what her job looked like at the beginning of the year.

She’s currently doing one last read-through of the final book in the trilogy, Blessed Monsters, which is scheduled for release April 6, 2021.

Duncan, who has begun work on a new project, says she hopes she was able to end the trilogy in a way that satisfies each of the characters’ arcs but leaves them open enough that if she has the opportunity to write another book in the series, she can.

She won’t know for sure if she’s succeeded until she hears from readers next April.

“I want to have fun with it.”

Best-selling YA author Emily Duncan isn’t getting bogged down by the business side of book publishing.

By Lyndsey Brennan, MA ’21

Before the pandemic closed the Hudson Library & Historical Society this March, the teen room was popular with the junior high crowd. After school and on weekends, students flocked to the space to browse the stacks, take part in Dungeons and Dragons campaigns and play computer games with friends.

The book, the first in a proposed three-book series, was a success by all standard metrics—Duncan sold the trilogy to her publisher for six figures, Wicked Saints debuted at #8 on the New York Times Best Seller list and a devoted community of fans sprang up on social media. But it takes more to impress some teens at her library.

“Some of them do not care at all. You have a book? Cool. I don’t know how to read,” Duncan says, laughing. “But then I had a teen come up to me and say, ‘I read your book. It’s very good. You should write another one.’ And I was like, ‘Oh, did you think I ended there? Don’t worry!’”

The second book in Duncan’s Something Dark and Holy trilogy, Ruthless Gods, released in April 2020. Although it didn’t hit the NYT Best Seller list—Young Adult (YA) publishers promote debut novels more heavily than other books in a series—it topped the children’s series list of the Great Lakes Independent Booksellers Association the week it came out.

Many of the initial responses to Ruthless Gods were positive, unlike the polarized reactions she received to the first book. Because Wicked Saints had been marketed as a dark fantasy, readers weren’t expecting its horror elements, she says. “But if you read it through Wicked Saints, you know it’s only going to get more horrific.”

The idea for the first book came in 2013, when Duncan was a junior English major at Malone University. She had been playing the video game Skyrim and was struck by the game’s sprawling forests, ramshackle villages and menacing, walled cities. I could set a book in a place like this, she thought.

She attempted to write the book twice during her undergraduate studies, but after getting stuck in the same spot both times, she put the manuscript away.

Then, in 2015, Duncan enrolled in Kent State’s Master of Library and Information Science program and began working in the Kent Campus library at the reference desk. Between serving students and professors, she pursued the OhioLINK and SearchOhio catalogs, ordering obscure books about Slavic folklore she thought might inspire her to solve the problem she was having with her book.

The research did the trick, helping her transform a setting that had been “amorphous and fluid” in her mind into a concrete place. Once the setting clicked, the characters followed. She wrote the book in 2015, graduated in 2016 and secured her agent and book deal in 2017.

No one could have predicted Wicked Saints would become a bestseller, Duncan says. She attributes the book’s success to her publisher, Wednesday Books, an imprint of Macmillan that focuses on YA and adult coming-of-age titles. The staff championed the book, designing and distributing bound manuscripts a year in advance in order to build natural buzz.

For Duncan—who mined her interest in illustration and mixed media art as an underdog—one of the most exciting parts of being an author is seeing the hundreds of pieces of fan art created in homage to her characters, which she features on her website. “I love art that builds off of other art. I love the collaborative aspect of it.”
Golden Flashes worldwide shared their blue and gold pride for Kent State’s first-ever virtual Homecoming, Oct. 5-10. Although we missed seeing everyone in person, 1,790 alumni and friends—over half were first-time attendees of an alumni event—took part in more than 15 virtual Homecoming events and activities.

Participants represented class years 1949 to 2020 and celebrated from 43 states, as well as the Armed Forces, Puerto Rico, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates. John Grimaldi, BBA ’49, Nework, Del., was the oldest graduate, at age 96, to celebrate KSU’s Homecoming this year!

The weeklong celebration offered daily opportunities for the Kent State community to connect on social media by tagging #KentHC—with observations about our connection to life and navigation enter into the final chapter of the resource, and its recovery from the early 1990s’ environmental legislation. Quality of life and navigation enter into the final chapter of the resource, and its recovery from the early 1990s’ environmental legislation. Quality of life and navigation enter into the final chapter of the resource, and its recovery from the early 1990s’ environmental legislation.


Sheldon “Shelly” Brooks, BBA ’84, MBA ‘70, Beachwood, Ohio, is recently retired and has filed in the gap between 1904 and 2000—his favorite years—while serving as a U.S. Navy supply officer, President and CDO Clevelad Clilford Stearns Company, CEO of the Warder Clilford Management Company and part-time adjunct faculty at Case Western Reserve University, Ursuline College, Cleveland State University, Cuyahoga County College. He has been married to Beverly for 54 years, and they have two adult children.

Yale Wingley, BS ’65, MEd ’71, PhD ’71, Columbus, OH, wrote, “My memoirs, titled ‘Our Famous Home’ which was inspired by the author, Theodore Roosevelt, and was published in 1910, appeared in our weekly Friendly Village Update. After Kent State, I went on for a career as an elementary principal in Ashtabula, Ohio, Washington, DC, and Boardman, OH. I was also one of the five founders of the Ohio Elementary School Administrators lobbying arm and was VP until I retired. I looked for the students (if they don’t get a good start, the rest may be difficult).”

Brent Miller, P&G LGBTQ Global Equality Leader; LGBTQ+ activist and former Procter & Gamble (P&G) employee, appears in the short film They Will See You: LGBTQ Visibility in Advertising, created by P&G in partnership with Great Big Story. The film explores the history of LGBTQ+ advertising and highlights the inspirational people whose lives have been impacted by seeing their stories represented on screen. (See http://bit.ly/TheyWillSeeYou)

Mike Hathaway, BA ’93, Owosso, Mich., wrote, “My book, A History of the Shesowee River, was published in May 2020. It covers the geology, and geographic influences that fostered Native American life and early Euro-American enterprise based on water power. This history proceeds to the use of river water for industry, the degradation of the resource, and its recovery from the early 1970s’ environmental legislation. Quality of life and navigation enter into the final chapter with observations about our connection to history. After a career in urban planning, the Shesowee River has consumed my retirement, with volunteerism for improved water quality and recreational access.

David Dula, BS ’61, Cooper City, Fl., was elected to the Board of Directors of the International Swimming Hall of Fame in May 2019.

Terrence O’Donnell, BA ’68, Rocky River, OH, has joined Bruno McDowell, a business law firm based in northern Ohio, in an Of Counsel capacity focusing on alternative dispute resolution and appellate matters. Justice O’Donnell served on the Supreme Court of Ohio from 2013-2018 and is one of OH’s longest-serving justices. At the time on the Court, he led stakeholder efforts to promote integrity and professionalism in law, leading to the creation of a nationally recognized Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program. Justice O’Donnell also served on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court for 14 years and the Eighth District Court of Appeals for eight years.

Barry Lubetkin, PhD ’69, New York City, is the director and founder of The Institute for Behavioral Therapy in Manhattan. He is Board-certified in both clinical psychology and behavioral psychology, and he is the author of numerous academic and popular articles, as well as two popular self-help books: Bailing Out and Why Do I Need You to Love Me in Order to Like Myself? He also recently released the popular insomniaca treatment CD set “Dr. Barry’s Sound Asleep.” His article, “COVID-19 Will You Feel Guilty? That You Did Nothing?” was posted on PsychologyToday.com in May. (See http://bit.ly/LubetkinCOVID-19党史学习).


Carter Strong, BS ’73, MEd ’79, Shaker Heights, OH, is a partner in the law firm Tucker Ellis, and was selected chair of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs (CCWA) Board of Directors effective July 1, 2020. He is a member of CCWA’s education committee and a long standing participant in CCWA’s programs. CCWA’s mission is to inspire engagement in international affairs and world cultures through education, citizen diplomacy and civic dialogue.

Daniel Gallik, MEd ’74, Chagrin Falls, OH, recently had his second novel, live on Blue Waves, published by H&J Press. The book, which explores what love is really about, takes place in the Buckeye section of Cleveland in the 1940s. His novel, A Story of Daily Fate, is about a child with disabilities who lived in the same neighborhood. Both novels are for sale on Amazon. Gallik once attended seminars and poetry readings at the kiva.

Michael N. Oser, BA ’75, Columbus, OH, is proud to announce that, after 30 years as a divorce attorney, he is also known as Marriage Mike, the publisher of Marriage Mike Books 2001, with the intent of helping people avoid marital disharmony and follow a positive path toward happiness. Although his career as an attorney practicing criminal defense, juvenile and family law includes terminating marriages, he is now reflecting on what he has learned about keeping harmony in marital relationships from sociology professors at Kent State, professional experiences, his first marriage and divorce, and his current marriage of 35 years. He is working on an e-book, A Guide to an Irish Wedding. If you have pictures, articles or stories of an Irish wedding—yours or someone else’s—please email him at marriagekikbluebooks2001@yahoo.com.
Donald Funk, BFA ’79, Canton, Ohio, wrote, “In October 2019, KSU Architecture Class of 1979 held their 40th Class Reunion in Kent. Events included a campus tour conducted by Marti Ring, a reception and Alumni Architecture Class of 1979 held their 40th Class Reunion in Kent. Events included a campus tour conducted by Marti Ring, a reception and

Pamela R. Andersen-Bartholet, AA ’83, MA ’84, MFA ’92, Homer Falls, Ohio, wrote, “My new poetry chapbook—Just the Girls: A Kaleidoscope of Butterflies, A Drift of Honeybees—was published by The Poetry Box Press. These poems celebrate women and what it means to be connected to the female body. The book cover image was created by my niece, Meredith Balogh, BFA ’09, Evanston, Ill., and daughter, Rachel (Lynas) Andersen. BA ’92, Canton, Ohio, took second place out of more than 500 submissions in the international All Author Cover of the Month contest in October.”

José González-Talabón, DBA ’81, Caguas, Puerto Rico, wrote, “August 13 marked the 50th anniversary of the day in which I entered a classroom for the first time as an instructor. This 50-year academic career includes almost nine years teaching accounting at KSU, as well as brief teaching experiences in Spain and the Dominican Republic. At the University of Puerto Rico I have served as chair of the Accounting Department for seven years and dean of the College of Business for three years. Having fulfilled my dream of a 50-year career, I look forward, God willing, to continue educating future accountants to fulfill the profession and society’s need. Ageing is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity.”

Thomas Kenneally, 83, Mass., Ohio, was promoted to full professor and appointed director of the Media and Early Childhood Education program at Xavier University, where he has taught for the past 17 years. After a 15-year career in public schools, Kenneally earned a doctorate from the University of Cincinnati in 2001 and previously taught at Miami University and the College of Mt. St. Joseph. He also published his first book in 2000, Controlling Our Children. Hegemony and Reconstructing the Passive Behavioral Intervention Support Model. Peter Lang Publishing. He is married to Christine (Cigilla) Kenneally, ‘83, and they have three children, Aaron, Olivia and Ally.
KENT STATE MAGAZINE

Beverly Laubert, BA '54, Lewis Center, Ohio, State Long Term Care Ombudsman writes, “I was selected from over 1,400 applicants to serve on the 25-member Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes. The independent commission is tasked to identify and recommend best practices in infection control and care delivery and identify opportunities to leverage new sources of data to improve infection control policies and enable coordination across systems.”

“My Kent State education in gerontology launched a rewarding career through which I have had the chance to interact with older adults and engage with long-term services and supports. Participation in this commission will allow me to contribute these experiences to important public policy dialogue and decisions.”

Michael E. McFarland, BFA '84, BA '97, Twinsburg, Ohio, received degrees in marketing and graphic design from Kent State and honors veteran with his artwork. He makes print-on-nylon murals, which he calls “WallWarriors,” for VA Medical Centers and intends to create 50 murals worldwide. While the Veterans Administration outprocurement of artwork in 2015, they accept donations of murals, so McFarland is trying to acquire donors for the murals. For more information, contact your local VA center or http://mcfarlandstudio.com.

Stephen Saracino, MFA '84, Buffalo, NY, professor of design (metal smithing) at SUNY Buffalo State, gave a virtual artist and scholar lecture at KSU’s School of Art on Oct. 9, 2020. Saracino has been an educator and exhibiting artist for three decades. His (often satirical) narrative pieces reflect personal or political concerns and have been featured in more than 50 exhibitions throughout the US and Japan. His work was recently featured in the exhibition Constructed Answer at the Center for the Visual Arts Gallery at Kent State, which coincided around the 50th commemoration of the May 4 shootings. See https://stephanssaracino.com.

Golden Flash Quilt

From making her mark on campus during Destination Kent State to joining the recreational skaters team, Marissa Belock, a junior biology major, has created many memories during her college career so far. Thanks to her mother, Laila (Donihoo) Belock, B.S.Ed. ’96, Dublin, Ohio, those memories are now wrapped up in a beautiful quilt of blue and gold T-shirts. “I first saw a post on social media about a T-shirt quilt, and I thought, ‘I can do that!’” Belock says. “I’m so glad that I did, and I can’t wait to show off my quilt.”

Belock proudly wears her Kent State gear—sometimes of which she says is too precious to cut up. “I think about all the memories I’ve had while I visit one of the national parks with her family. ‘It’s fun to reminisce with other Flashahs we meet at our national reunions.’

-Ashley Whiddle, BS '86, MS '72

Golden Flash Quilt

Barbara F. Schlieman, MA '93, PhD '96, Stow, Ohio, and her son, William Schlieman, BS '89, Mantua, Ohio, co-authored A Century of Flight at Patton Field. The story of Kent State university’s Airport and Flight Education (The Kent State University Press) mark the airport’s centennial in 2020. Notable aviators and events marked the airport’s early years when it operated as Stow Field. The pre-war and wartime federal government brought collegiate aviation to Kent State and led to purchase of the airport in 1946. Andrew Paton’s vision for a university-run aeronautics program that made educational use of its airport was fully realized in 1966. Today, the airport is the longest surviving, public-use airport in Ohio.

Karlin Boessler, BA '97, Fairview Park, Ohio, was featured in the spring 2020 issue of The Circle, a publication of Omicron Delta Kappa Society. She was one of the few Kent State students profiled in the magazine’s “The Actors’ Range” by Tara Singer. Boessler shared some highlights from her years at Kent State University and in the broadcast news industry, where she received Emmys for two community service/news reports about victims of violence that she produced and was featured in at WAER-TV in the 1990s. In 2015, she began working in film and has not only notable actors as John Travolta, Matthew McConaughey and Kate Bosworth. Films in which she has appeared include Criminal Activities (2015), The Land (2016) and White Boy Rick (2018).

Jeff Richmond, who attended Kent State from 1980 to 1988, New York, NY, is the executive producer of Netflix’s Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt. Schmidt—its lead, played by Tituss Burgess—was created and written Richmond who produced for the Showtime series White Boy Rick (2018). Richmond received an Academy Award for work as a composer on Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt and 30 Rock, as a producer on an Emmy Award-winning series Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt and 30 Rock, and as a writer for the Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special. Richmond is also the composer for the Moonlight Musical and was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Original Score.

Regenes’ Teaching Excellence Award for faculty in regional and state universities. He was additionally named a distinguished professor of Savannah State University in 2010, Georgia Professor of the Year in 2019 and was one of the most awarded professors in the state of Georgia in 2015.

Dr. Lema has held the position of a mathematics professor at Savannah State University and has published more than 100 research papers. In 1991, after three years of investigation and more than 13 theorems, he introduced the Lema Numbers (named after him) to the mathematical community and to the world. The Lema Numbers are an integral sequence of numbers with distinct mathematical properties and patterns comparable to Fibonacci and Lucas series.

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alumni LIFE

Valley, Youngstown. She was also previously employed by The Toledo Blade, as manager of human resources.

Tammy Joann Andryshko, BSE '91, Swayne, Pa., Quaker Valley School District superintendent, received the 2020 Empowered Superintendent of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology. The award is given to a superintendent who serves as a true empowered leader, leveraging and championing technologies in the classroom and throughout the district to transform their school district.

John Yehl, BBA '93, Louisville, Ky., published his first book, Can You Sell It?, available on Amazon. He says his book is relevant to anyone, whether they are just starting out in sales or seasoned veterans. It also applies to professionals in fields other than sales, such as sales management and marketing. His book was inspired by his first book, Can You Sell It?

Ryan Edward Edwards, BBA '99, Lynchburg, Va., was unanimously elected president of the chapter of the chapter of the chapter and is the assessment liaison for the college and is the assessment liaison for the college. He previously served in fundraising roles at Rise Against Hunger.

Scott Michael Haws, BBA '99, Canton, Ohio, joined Crum & Forster Pet Insurance Group in the capacity of developing and leading their project management organization in May 2019. Crum & Forster Pet Insurance is a part of Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited. In January 2020, he was elected president of the Ris. Robert Schultz, MEd '99, PhD '03, Watahilla, Ohio, is one of 33 people named a Fellow of the American Council on Education (ACE) for 2019-20. Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing faculty and staff for senior positions in college and university administration through its distinctive and intensive nominator-driven, cohort-based mentorship model. Schultz has been a faculty member at The University of Toledo since 2001, where he is currently professor of gifted education and curriculum studies and chair of early childhood, higher education and special education at the Judith Herb College of Education. In addition, he serves as director of the Honors Program in the college and is the assessment liaison for the university-wide Visual Literacy Consortium. He is also a member of The University of Toledo Leadership Institute Class of 2018.

Diana Al-Haddad, BA '03, BFA '03, Brooklyn, New York, is a widely exhibited and internationally known multimedia artist. Her work includes video, installation, and mixed media. Her work has been exhibited in numerous venues across the United States and internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She has been featured in numerous publications, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Vogue.

Making Art in a Material World

A native of Aleppo, Syria, who grew up in Canton, Ohio, Al-Haddad typically uses a mix of materials, including both traditional (brass, steel, wood, plaster, charcoal) and non-traditional (resin, polymer, fiberglass) to produce large-scale sculptures, panels and works on paper. She wields power tools and uses techniques such as welding, drilling, pouring and controlling depth to bring into physical form concepts of the past, present and imagined future—often inspired by a study of art history.

As of 2019, her piece “A Way with Words,” measuring close to three stories, is featured in the atrium of the new patient tower on Summit Health’s Akron City Hospital campus (image 1). The large, mixed-media sculpture is made of steel, fiberglass, polymer gypsum and paints using a technique she describes as “a mix between fresco and tapestry.”—Based on a photo she took in Lock 3, a section of the Ohio and Erie Canalway located in the heart of Akron’s downtown.

Al-Haddad’s works of art have been featured in both group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally for more than a decade. In 2016, her major solo exhibition at the NYUAD Art Gallery (at New York University Abu Dhabi) was titled Phantom Limb, which is also the name of the exhibit’s central work, a crowning sculpture of a female bust atop a cascade of stacked draping pedestals evoking a mountainous— and referencing a 15th-century painting, “Allegory of Chastity” by Hans Memling (images 3 and 4). Kent State awarded her the Outstanding Young Professional Alumni Award in 2019 and the Distinguished Honors Alumni Award in 2014.

http://www.dianaalhaddad.com

Jamie Holcomb, BM '00, Stafford, Va., has been appointed vice president of institutional design and innovation for Escoffier and Triumph Higher Education Group by Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts, a leading accredited provider of online and campus-based culinary training and education. Previously, Holcomb held faculty positions at Southern New Hampshire University, Vitrobo University, Ocean County College, Park University and Walsh University. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership at Liberty University.

John West, BBA '01, Austin, Tex., has been appointed vice president of trading and chief commercial officer at The Energy Authority (TEA), a public-power-owned portfolio management, energy trading and advanced analytics company headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., with an office in Bellevue, Wash. Previously, he served as managing director of trading and commercial strategies at TEA. In this new role, he is responsible for all energy marketing and trading within the organization, across all markets and all commodities, including natural gas, environmental and renewable assets, and related products. He leads efforts focused on the identification and execution of commercial strategies to optimize assets, the development of commodity risk management strategies, and the execution of financial and physical transactions used to hedge client portfolios.

Scott Michael Haws, BBA '99, Canton, Ohio, joined Crum & Forster Pet Insurance Group in the capacity of developing and leading their project management organization in May 2019. Crum & Forster Pet Insurance is a part of Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited. In January 2020, he was elected president of the Ris. Robert Schultz, MEd '99, PhD '03, Watahilla, Ohio, is one of 33 people named a Fellow of the American Council on Education (ACE) for 2019-20. Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing faculty and staff for senior positions in college and university administration through its distinctive and intensive nominator-driven, cohort-based mentorship model. Schultz has been a faculty member at The University of Toledo since 2001, where he is currently professor of gifted education and curriculum studies and chair of early childhood, higher education and special education at the Judith Herb College of Education. In addition, he serves as director of the Honors Program in the college and is the assessment liaison for the university-wide Visual Literacy Consortium. He is also a member of The University of Toledo Leadership Institute Class of 2018.

Diana Al-Haddad, BA '03, BFA '03, Brooklyn, New York, is internationally known multimedia artist, was on the cover of Vogue ital, as one of the “100 covers, 100 people, 100 stories” highlighted in the March 2006 Vogue ital (image 1). This issue featured 100 models, actresses and artists, showcasing a diverse range of people with unique stories to tell.

In early March 2020, she and her husband, Jon Lott, architect and assistant professor of architecture and the Master of Architecture I Program at Harvard University, won The Trailblazer Award at the Tria Museum of the Arts Visionary Gaia Gala. (See video at http://bit.ly/Al-HaddadTrailblazer to learn more about their art and architecture.)
Writing a book was a way to wrap together a lot of my interests. I was interested in telling the story of an entire market cycle as if I had experienced it in a way that would be impossible to experience in a single lifetime, and that would make an entry into the business, which is an excellent side hustle for people like me who wish to be reporting for a long, long time.

Kristine Haag, BFA ’02, North Hollywood, Calif., was nominated for a Television Academy 2000 Primetime Emmy Award in the Outstanding Contemporary Costume Design category for her work as assistant costume designer on Netflix’s hit series Grace and Frankie. Starring Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, Haag was nominated for her work on the season 6 episode “The Tank.” She was previously nominated in 2009, as well for her work on Grace and Frankie.

After graduating from Kent State, Haag earned an MFA in costume design from the University of California, Irvine. Her credits include costume design work on National Geographic/Disney’s upcoming The Right Stuff, ABC’s The Fox, TVLand’s Nobodies, NBC’s Good Girls, Netflix’s Gilmore Girls, The Legacy and Batwoman. Superman: Dawn of Justice

Edmund A. Rossmann, III, MLS ’05, Cleveland, has retired from Shaker Heights Public Library. A cancer survivor, he recently released A Gay’d A Guide to Thompson, Dool & Dorry for Recovery (Christian Faith Publishing). As a library manager, he has seen his patients and their caregivers battling any illness.

Samuel “Bíblí” Bazawade, BFA ’04, Brooklyn, N.Y., Ghanaian born filmmaker and musician, recently co-directed Beyoncé’s Destiny’s Child documentary, Homecoming: The Live Album, with the pop star and Emmanuel Adjei. He helmed the South African shot of the project, which screened at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival and Warner Bros. musical film The Color Purple, based on the Tony-winning Broadway musical of the same name.

Francisca B. Ugalde Z., BFA ’06, Hudson, Ohio, is a curator at the Institute for Human Science and Culture at The University of Akron, which is devoted to hands-on education and research in the history, preservation, documentation and interpretation of the human experience through cultural materials and from multiple perspectives—psychological, anthropological, artistic and historical.

Ugalde Z., who earned a master’s degree in arts administration in 2012 at The University of Akron, manages The Jim and Vanita Oelschlager Native American Ethnographic Collection, a large collection of Native American artifacts and art; she oversaw the design and implementation of the collection’s new gallery spaces at The National Museum of Psychology at The University of Akron, Nicholas and Dorothy Cummins Children’s Museum-Center for the History of Psychology, which opened in September 2019.

Jennifer Hallows, BFA ’07, Wadsworth, Ohio, is a freelance photographer, writer and multimedia producer. Hallows, who earned an MFA in photography and printmaking at The University of Akron and is an adjunct professor at Kent State University, has been a stringer for the Associated Press, has managed and monitored tax controversy at federal, state and local levels. She is involved in a number of activities, including co-founder and director of Women in Film and Director of Peace by Peace, a nonprofit organization in the Youngstown area dedicated to connecting families affected by autism with available local resources. She also teaches tax classes as an adjunct professor at Hiram College.

Describe your background.

Elizabeth “Liz” Camn’12, MLS ’15, Cleveland, recently received the “25 under 35” award from her high school, Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland. She works at Kent State’s Special Collections and Archives as the May 4 Archivist and assistant professor with a focus on student engagement and research, as well as overseeing the May 4th event the day after their aftermath. Camn’12 says she is honored to be entrusted with the stewardship of this historic period, knowing it can result in a better understanding of the tumult, grief and healing the nation went through. She also demonstrates commitment to building a strong community of law librarians through her work with the Archives. As a team leader for the Archives, she has founded several initiatives aimed at creating an open and welcoming environment.

What is your academic/professional history?

While in law school, I worked for two years as a caseworker, which propelled me forward in becoming a librarian with a focus on law. After graduation, I moved to Alaska and worked for the judiciary in Kodiak as a law clerk. Then transitioned to a staff attorney position for a nonprofit organization in Anchorage. I moved back to the Cleveland area closer to my alma mater through AmeriCorps at our local food bank while earning my MLS at Kent State in 2015. I was given the amazing opportunity to join the Law Library of Congress as its librarian-in-residence.

How would you describe your job to other people?

What is your most interesting fact you’ve learned about the Law Library of Congress?

Our foreign law collection is so large and comprehensive that foreign governments sometimes ask us to share copies of their laws when they need to do primary source research. That is pretty cool

What is something your co-workers don’t know about you?

During undergrad I played bass and keyboards in several acid-rock and reggae style bands. I still play the piano occasionally, but I am way out of practice.

Excerpted from a post by Annie Price that first appeared Oct. 14, 2020 on the blog in Custodia Legis. Used with permission.
How Jenna Palek Got Her Dream Job

When searching for a job in her final semester at Kent State University, BFA ’20, realized that few companies would be hiring during a global pandemic. Undeterred, she kept applying, reminding herself that “I was capable of finding not only a job, but a great one.”

One day after the first phone call, she was offered a job—six days after the first phone call. “I lived that I was able to utilize the platform in such a unique way, and innovation is amazing! Then I conduct sales calls with different clients.”

STEP 2: FIND A PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT WITH GOOD INTERNET CONNECTION AND LIGHTING.

“TikTok has become such a big part of my day-to-day life, that I wake up two hours early in order to get to work.”

STEP 3: CHECK IN WITH TEAM.

“I present a sales pitch about why TikTok is amazing! Then I conduct sales calls with different clients.”

STEP 7: HELP MANAGE ACCOUNTS AND ORGANIZE our sales. “I think it’s important to get out of my apartment—and I like to work on my building’s internet.”
Kent State Softball Player Has Short, but Distinguished, Senior Season

Before her graduation in May, Maria Cegledy, BS '20, Pataskala, Ohio, looked forward to participating in senior day and enjoying her final softball season with her teammates.

"We had plans to win the MAC regular season, win the MAC tournament and go on to the NCAA tournament like we did my freshman year in 2017," she says. "COVID-19 altered those plans, and we did not play any conference games or have either tournament."

During her abbreviated senior season, Cegledy started all 19 games for the Golden Flashes in center field. She was second on the team in doubles (5) and third in runs scored (9) and RBIs (7). A student-athlete with a 4.00 grade point average, she received numerous academic and sports accolades, including the MAC's Medal of Excellence Award and being named an Academic All American in 2019 and 2020.

In addition, she was named one of two recipients of the 2020 Bob James Memorial Scholarship Award by the Mid-American Conference Faculty Athletics Representatives. The $5,000 post-graduate scholarship recognizes students with a 3.50 GPA or over who have displayed good character, leadership and citizenship.

Cegledy, whose undergraduate degree is in exercise science, is now a student at Ohio University in the physical therapy program and looks forward to becoming a physical therapist.

While at Kent State, she found time to volunteer at the King Atlanta Center preparing peace baskets during the holidays and serving as an advocate for the softball team's annual "She Will" game, dedicated to promoting girls and women in sports.

During her final semester, she had to adapt to the new normal of online classes and keeping a safe distance from her teammates. She kept her classes at their normal times to maintain some kind of schedule, and she looked forward to doing something different each day—"whether it was working out, running, reading, cleaning or starting a new show on Netflix."

Cegledy has words of wisdom for athletes in the class of 2021: Appreciate and take advantage of the opportunity to play and compete. "Things might not always go as planned, but it really is about the journey and the people standing next to you through it all," she says. "Enjoy your time at such an incredible place filled with the most amazing people. Flashes Forever!"

—April McClellan-Copeland

WEDDINGS

Natalie M. Amato, MUS '18, and Alex Czyzka, BS '09, Chagrin Falls, Ohio, were married in a private ceremony on May 1, 2020, despite COVID-19 postponing their wedding plans.

David Hravat, BS '14, married Natalie Rosmarin, BA '15, Highland Heights, Ohio, on June 27, 2020 in Westlake, Ohio. He works for Cleveland's WKYC-TV as senior producer, brand & marketing, and received the Sharon Marquis Friend of JMC Award from the School of Media and Journalism, in September 2019, for his dedication to the school and its students. She is an English teacher at Lake Ridge Academy’s Upper School in North Ridgeville, Ohio. Their wedding plans needed to be revised several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but postponing the wedding was never once considered. Instead of visiting Italy, the couple honeymooned in Ohio, staying at several resorts. However, these proud Golden Flashes spent the first night of their honeymoon in Kent. Though they did not meet until after graduating, the couple love KSU and the community and visit often.

Robin (Pertz) Unger, MUS '13, and Nathan Unger, BBA '04, AA '04, Washingtonville, Ohio, were married on Sept. 1, 2019 at the Kingswood Center Gardens in Mansfield, Ohio. She is the library, history and records supervisor at the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, and he is a regional sales rep for Jeld-Wen. "Wedding photographs were taken by Rami Daud, BA '20, new media specialist at Kent State.)
LIFE

2020 Alumni Awards

Sponsored by Kent State Alumni Association, the Alumni Awards are the university's most prestigious honors given to alumni. The association is proud to recognize this year's esteemed recipients.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Judge Annalisa Stubbs Williams, BA ’77, Akron, Ohio

In her role as the administrative judge of the Akron Municipal Mental Health Court, Judge Williams shows compassion and provides encouragement for people with mental health issues. In 2015, she created the Peace of Mind program, which helps female defendants dealing with trauma.

“If you want to live a positive life, you can’t have a negative mindset. I have learned that you can always achieve more than you believe is possible.”

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Timothy F. Felts, MD, BS ’71, Asheville, NC

Former Pediatric Professor and Senior Vice Chair, The Ohio State University and Nationwide Children’s Hospital

Dr. Felts has been a pioneer in advanced pediatric cardiology, a visiting professor and lecturer in more than 30 countries, and he has authored more than 80 peer-reviewed manuscripts and chapters. For nearly 20 years, he was a pediatric professor and senior vice chair at The Ohio State University and Nationwide Children’s Hospital, prior to his retirement in July.

“I was able to pursue my passion at Kent State, and my educators supported me at a time when I questioned my own abilities.”

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Terese Volk Tuohey, PhD ’93, Marion, Ohio

Associate Professor Emerita, Music Education, Wayne State University

In her role as the administrative director of the Kent State Alumni Association, Dr. Tuohey taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in instrumental music education at public schools and other colleges. Her Kent State dissertation, A History of Multicultural Music Education in the United States, 1900-1990, is still a benchmark for educators studying multiculturalism, world music, and diversity in the music classroom. She has written several books and published papers on historical research and ethnomusicology, which has been presented at state, national and international conferences.

“Having a PhD gave me a lot of credibility. It helped a lot at the many conferences I attended.”

GOLDEN FLASH AWARD

Kayla Marker, BA ’21, MPH ’22, Palmistry, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Cinema, Television & Digital Media Studies and Psychology, minor in Forensic Anthropology; Master of Public Health in health policy and management

After her graduation, she hopes to work for Child Protective services and start a nonprofit in mental health or go into mental health legislation. She is also a Kent State of Wellness Student Ambassador, leader of the Student Mental Health Coalition and undergraduate research assistant in the Center for Public Policy and Health. At Kent State she started a chapter of Active Minds, a nonprofit national organization dedicated to raising mental health awareness among college students. It’s your opinions to understand yours, stick to your morals and stay true to yourself. Find something you truly believe in and advocate for that.

KENT STATE ADVOCACY AWARD

Stephanie Swayne, BS ’01, Canton, Ohio

Assistant Director, Stark County Hunger Task Force

In addition to her full-time job fighting hunger, Swayne also volunteers with many organizations. She is the vice president of Kent State’s Stark County Alumni Chapter and founded the North Royalton Community Peace of Mind program, which helps female defendants dealing with trauma.

“If you want to live a positive life, you can’t have a negative mindset. I have learned that you can always achieve more than you believe is possible.”

OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Judy Gisslow, BS ’16, MBA ’18, Marc ’18, Lakewood, Ohio

Director of Operations, DS Architecture

In his full-time role at DS Architecture, Gisslow oversees two studio directors and a production staff and facilitates continued growth of the firm. In addition, he serves as the Chief Design Officer for a medical device startup, Case MD, and volunteers with the Kent Junior Chamber of Commerce.

“[Having a PhD] gave me a lot of confidence.”

KENT STATE ADVOCACY AWARD

Ruth E. (Wilms) Dlwgosh, BS ’68, June 10, 2010

Mary Dorothy (Wollard) Kline, BS ’67, December 20, 2019

in MEMORY

Howard Ledby, BBA ’70, May 11, 2019

Nora Mastrod, BS ’70, May 25, 2018

Margaret Morton, BFA ’70, June 27, 2020

Barbara Nauska, BA ’70, December 14, 1999

Fern Storer, BA ’70, May 10, 2000

Larry Eaton, MD ’71, January 2, 2020

Michael Scheezer, MEd ’71, March 24, 1984

Glamora Thurston, BS ’71, October 7, 2019

Ulysses Jenkins, Jr., BBA ’72, March 25, 2020

Shirley Boyes, BS ’72, December 18, 2019

Cecil Chamberlain, BS ’74, August 18, 2019

Virginia Grunley, B.S ’74, February 2, 2000

Christopher Porter, M.D. ’74, January 7, 2020

Richard McIff, B.S ’75, September 22, 2018

Carrie Ball (Lee) Tarver, BS ’75, M.Ed ’70, May 30, 2019

Victor Osagie Aimeouw, PhD ’76, November 14, 2017

Gary Mordhorst, BBA ’76, January 19, 1999

Diana Uklits, MLS ’76, March 31, 2000

George A. Gatta, BS ’77, July 12, 2002

Gene Harbrecht, attended Kent State from ‘72 to ‘77, July 30, 2020

Patricia Uhl, BS ’77, November 29, 2018

Michael Erbachslo, MS ’79, September 23, 2019

Karen (Leete) Boyd, AA ’79, August 10, 2019

IN MEMORY

See full bios and videos of the 2020 Alumni Award recipients at https://www.kent.edu/alumni/alumni-awards.
A Century of Flight

“Kent State University ownership of the airport has had its ups and downs,” state the co-authors in the preface of A Century of Flight at Paton Field: The Story of Kent State University’s Airport and Flight Education (The Kent State University Press, 2019). “Fortunately, there were individuals who provided vision and leadership to set an early course.”

Aviation enthusiasts William D. “Bill” Schloman, BS ‘78 (graduate of the Kent State flight program, former airline captain and current flight simulator instructor at Kent State) and his mother, Barbara F. Schloman, MA ’78, PhD ’98 (professor emeritus and former associate dean of University Libraries at Kent State) highlight many of those visionary leaders in their extensive history, which was researched and written over five years and published in time to celebrate the airport’s centennial in 2020.

“As we uncovered stories of a rich and varied past, we also determined that the airport’s longevity establishes it as the longest-surviving public-use airport in Ohio,” note the co-authors.

“It is worth reflecting, too, on the thousands who experienced aviation on the airport’s property over its hundred-year history. Some were in the crowds at the aerial exhibitions. Many others had their first airplane ride. For flight students, the memories of learning to fly at this field are indelible. This story underscores Andrew W. Paton Field’s rich legacy.”

A Century of Flight at Paton Field: The Story of Kent State University’s Airport and Flight Education is available at The Kent State University Press, kentstateuniversitypress.com and on Amazon.

Send us YOUR Flashback: Share your memories from Kent State and they may appear in a future issue of Kent State Magazine. Email your stories and photos to magazine@kent.edu.