

Out for a Spin!

Flash cruises the Kent Campus on an electric bike. One of many electric bikes and scooters available on campus and in the city of Kent through the university's new partnership with SPIN, it provides a convenient way for users to get to class and run errands—while reducing traffic and greenhouse gases. *Learn more about Kent State sustainability initiatives on page 12.*



IS TIME RUNNING OUT FOR THE PLANET?

As panic over the pandemic recedes, the climate change crisis is reclaiming the headlines. Kent State academics, advocates and activists are taking action to address global warming now.

See the special section on climate change beginning on page 12.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2022

On the cover: We're already experiencing the deleterious effects of global warming—and time is running out to prevent further damage to people and the planet. See the special section on climate change, starting on page 12.

COVER ART BY JASON ZEHNER, BS '04, BA '11

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Squirrel Search

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

When you find them, send an email to 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. Good luck!

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GROWING UP

I met my former husband, **Fredrick "Rick" Wilson, BA '64, MA '70**, when I was a freshman in 1962. I worked and went to classes part time, as I supported him through graduate school. During our years on campus, I had several jobs, which included working as a secretary for Dr. Linnea Henderson, the College of Arts & Sciences and The Kent State University Press. I considered the campus our home, and our life continued there through my husband's graduate studies and until my graduation in 1970.

The fateful day of the May 4 massacre, I was in Spanish class when we heard the shots ring out. We laughed, assuming it was a car backfire. After class, I walked toward the Commons, planning to join the demonstration, when I was stopped by an officer who said the area was shut off. As I walked back from campus, listening to the radio, my heart stopped. For the first time in my life, the news was real and personal. And I grew up that day.

At the time, I was working as a secretary for The Kent State University Press. After the massacre, the campus was shut down, but I was able to continue working because the Press was off campus. My best friend, Jo Zupan, was editor and she invited me to index one of the publications.

After graduation, my husband and I moved to Virginia for his first job after he earned a master's degree in history. He got an offer to teach in a community college in Chester, Virginia, because he had been at Kent State and was, therefore, an expert on the Vietnam War and related events. [Fredrick Wilson died on Sept. 28, 2012.]

All in all, I am grateful for my education and my years at Kent State University.

JOYCE TRICKETT, BA '70
Auburn, NY

We want to hear from you!

Respond to magazine content or comment on topics related to Kent State by writing:
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or magazine@kent.edu.
Responses may be edited for style, length, clarity and civility.

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AND THE WINNER IS...

Congratulations to **Bryant Rogers, BA '13**, Kent, OH, the winner of the random-generated drawing from correct submissions to the magazine's Squirrel Search contest. When we found out he is the Flash technology manager at the Kent State University Bookstore on the Kent Campus, we decided to surprise him by delivering the box of squirrely gifts in person. Later, he sent us a photo taken at home as he posed with his prizes from McKay Bricker Framing & Black Squirrel Gifts in downtown Kent.

The three black squirrels can be found on page 16 on the illustration at the bottom left corner, on page 35 on the lower left side of the photo of the "K" formation and on page 62 on the grass in the photo of our much-missed Nick Moore.



Bryant Rogers, BA '13, poses with his prizes.

LIFE IMPACT

I matriculated at Kent State in 1973 and majored in psychology. (Truth be told, I needed prompting at the onset of my junior year to declare a major as graduation was fast approaching. I deduced from courses I'd already taken that I "must be" a psych major. Life makes decisions for you sometimes.)

In my volunteer role as a counselor at the Townhall II Crisis Center in Kent, I witnessed the full palette of emotions still reverberating in people's lives three years after the May 4 shootings. And I came to appreciate the depth and complexity of the impact that the tragedy had on so many lives and the multiple supports needed for those still reeling from it.

Now, in my 60s and a retired mental health professional, that appreciation has only deepened as I reflect on the profound shaping that historical events have upon one's life.

MICHAEL SCHOENBERG, BA '77
East Longmeadow, MA

GOLDEN DREAM TEAM

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 2001-2002 Kent State men's basketball team's great run to the NCAA Tournament Elite Eight, which put Kent State on the college basketball map!

I have written a book about that run, *The Golden Dream: The Story of the 2001-2002 Kent State Men's Basketball Elite Eight Season* (available on Amazon). It captures that magical season, 20 years later, by going behind the scenes to show how this team was built, how it rallied after a bumpy start to the season, how it came together for one of the greatest runs in college basketball history, and how it brought the entire community together.

I am a former marketing director and play-by-play announcer for Kent State's men's basketball and football from the mid 1990s to early 2000s. In my career, I broadcast well over 1,000 basketball and football games, including the 2001-2002 men's basketball "golden dream" season. A native of Northeast Ohio and an avid sports fan, I am on the board of directors for my local chamber of commerce.

STEVE SEFNER
Columbus, OH

Focusing on a Sustainable Future

One of the best parts of my job as president of Kent State University is sharing all the remarkable accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff—and this semester has exceeded all expectations.

I am proud to share the news that during the 2022 Spring Semester, Kent State was awarded the esteemed R1 designation for research from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

As the highest recognition that doctoral universities can receive, it affirms Kent State's place as a prestigious research institution, in the company of Yale, Harvard and other top-tier research universities in the United States. Only 146 universities in the nation have achieved this designation, and Kent State is proud to be among just five universities in Ohio to receive this award.

This recognition underscores the excellence and breadth of research and scholarship at Kent State. This is an amazing accomplishment and a testament to the hard work of our faculty, staff and university leadership. It is, along with attaining a record-high graduation rate on our Kent Campus and the growing diversification of our student body, one of three signature achievements of the last decade.

Kent State's well-established research institutes continue to spark innovation, produce groundbreaking discoveries and attract federal funding to support their efforts. Perhaps most important, our institutes provide fertile training

"The issues of climate change and environmental sustainability are intrinsically intertwined with life on our campuses."

grounds where our undergraduate students can learn and our graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and faculty can pursue their investigations and scholarly inquiry.

In this issue's special section on climate change, numerous faculty members—many of whom collaborate with our Environmental Science and Design Research Institute—reflect on how their research relates to global warming. Climate change is impacting areas such as weather patterns and water quality, but its effects also extend to mental health and social inequality, too.

As we marked Earth Month and Arbor Day in the spring semester, I was reminded of how the issues of climate change and environmental sustainability are intrinsically intertwined with life on our campuses, including faculty research, student activism and the efforts of our facilities staff to make operations at Kent State more "green."

This semester, we began the process of formulating a sustainability strategic plan. We are looking ahead 10, 20 or 30 years to determine what the best practices will be in the future and what steps we can take now to ensure that we are



ready to implement the changes needed to achieve carbon-neutral status on our campuses.

Achieving this level of efficiency is an ambitious goal, but one we believe is required to protect our earthly resources and our most precious resource of all—our people. Moreover, our sustainability efforts will guarantee a future where Kent State remains a vital research institution, where we continue to seek solutions to the ongoing challenges of climate change and where we are solving tomorrow's problems today.

Todd A. Diacon
President



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THE POWER OF OUR
VOICES
MAY 4, 1970 - 2022
Annual Commemoration

For the first time since 2019, Kent State University remembered May 4, 1970, with an in-person annual commemoration. The public was invited back to the Kent Campus to honor the four students who were killed, the nine students who were wounded and the countless others whose lives were forever changed when the Ohio National Guard fired on Kent State students during an anti-war protest.

Here are some photo highlights from the 52nd annual commemoration.

1 CONCERT TO COMMEMORATE MAY 4, 1970

The Glauer School of Music and special guests perform “Stories of Peace, Protest and Reflection” at Severance Music Center in Cleveland on May 2, 2022.

The concert featured ensembles from across the School of Music performing a diverse array of genres including classical, jazz, gospel and world music. It also featured collaborations with the School of Theatre and Dance, the Wick Poetry Center and guest clarinetist David Shifrin, who was a student at the Kent Blossom Music Festival in summer 1970. Each work explored social justice, civil rights and the complex emotions felt before, during and after tragedy.

“Today we face many of the same challenges that led to May 4,” says Kent McWilliams, School of Music director and professor. “Through art, we can gather as a community to continue to learn and face them together.”

To help him develop the expansive program, McWilliams assembled a team that included Amitai Vardi, artistic director and professor of clarinet; Ricardo Sepulveda, logistics coordinator and director of the Kent Blossom Music Festival; and Marla Berg, opera director and associate professor of voice.



2 KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

Kendra and Michael Pacifico, BA '74, stand in front of the “Armed With Our Voices” exhibit on display in the Kent Student Center.

The interactive exhibit—developed by the Wick Poetry Center and partners—also has been displayed on the Stark, Geauga and Twinsburg campuses. It encourages visitors to explore the history of student protest and themes of peace and conflict transformation.

The Pacificos—who were introduced by the late Alan Canfora, BA '72, MLS '80—have been key supporters and organizers of the May 4 Candlelight Walk and Vigil for decades, along with the May 4 Task Force student organization.

Anti-war and political activists, they see the walk and vigil as a time when people can put their politics aside to honor those who died and were wounded on May 4, 1970. This year they are passing on their responsibilities to successors who will take over the staging of the event.



3 JERRY M. LEWIS MAY 4 LECTURE SERIES AND LUNCHEON

Jerry M. Lewis, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sociology since 1996, speaks during the inaugural lecture series, which was created to honor his legacy and advance the scholarship of May 4, 1970, and the Vietnam War era.

Lewis taught at Kent State University from 1966 until 2013. Serving as a faculty marshal in 1970, he witnessed the May 4, 1970, shootings firsthand, and has since devoted time to researching, memorializing and lecturing on the events of May 4. He remains an active leader and voice for the legacy and study of May 4, 1970.

The luncheon included a special recognition of the faculty marshals and all faculty members whose heroic efforts prevented more bloodshed on May 4, 1970, and enabled students to complete their studies.

Tammy Clewell, professor of English at the Kent Campus, was the honoree for this year’s lecture. Her talk, “Remembering the Contested May 4 Memorializing Process,” focused on the controversial and protracted efforts to build Kent State’s May 4 Memorial, which was dedicated in 1990.

The lecture series honoring Lewis was made possible through a generous donation from Michael Solomon, BBA '74.



1 CANDLELIGHT WALK AND VIGIL

Participants hold the stained-glass candleholders used by those standing vigil during the annual event that has become a cornerstone of the commemoration.

The candlelight walk and vigil were established in 1971 by Jerry M. Lewis, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, with the help of students. Each year since 1971, students, faculty and others gather at 11 p.m. on May 3 to take part in a candlelight procession around the perimeter of the Kent Campus.

Following the walk, a vigil begins, with people positioned on the spots where four students—Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer and William Schroeder—were killed. The vigil continues until 12:23 p.m. on May 4, the time of the confrontation between students and the Ohio National Guard.

In 1975, the Kent State University administration stopped sponsoring and supporting the annual commemoration program. In October 1975, the May 4 Task Force (M4TF) was founded by Kent State students and victims of the May 4 shootings to raise awareness, continue the search for truth and ensure that the lessons to be learned from the tragedy would be part of a continuous and living history. In the years since, the M4TF student organization has planned events for commemorations and conducted the annual candlelight walk and vigil.

On March 6, 2019, Kent State’s Board of Trustees passed a resolution that committed the university to assume responsibility for the annual May 4 commemoration and ongoing educational events through the Office of the President, beginning with the 50th commemoration in 2019-2020 and continuing from that time forward.



1

2 DEDICATION OF WOUNDED STUDENT MARKERS

President Todd Diacon poses with five of the wounded survivors from the May 4, 1970, shootings. (L-R) Back row: Donald Scott Mackenzie, BBA '71; John Cleary, BArch '74; Thomas Grace, BA '72; Diacon; Joseph Lewis; Front row: Dean Kahler, BS '77

The nine students who were wounded on May 4, 1970, were honored during a dedication ceremony for the markers placed at each spot near Taylor Hall where the students were shot 52 years ago. Each marker features the name of the person wounded, along with the distance in feet they were from the National Guard at the time of the shootings.

Five of the nine survivors attended the ceremony (named above). Douglas Wrentmore did not attend and Alan Canfora, BA '72, MLS '89, James Russell, BFA '79, and Robert Stamps, BA '72, MA '96, MA '99, are deceased.

“Having a visual reminder of where those students were when they were shot is so powerful,” President Diacon says. “You realize how quickly violence gets out of control.”

Planning for the new markers began four years ago—called for by Alan Canfora; Rod Flauhaus, BS '86, May 4 commemoration project manager; and other wounded students—so they would be in place for the 50th commemoration. The markers join the memorials for the four students killed on the Prentice Hall parking lot, which were dedicated in 1999.



3



2

3 RINGING THE VICTORY BELL

Thomas Grace, BA '72, PhD, one of the nine students wounded on May 4, 1970, rings the bell in memory of the victims of the Kent State and Jackson State shootings during the May 4, 2022, commemoration on the Commons.

Originally rung for athletic triumphs, the bell was later used to call together political protests. After the events of May 4, 1970, it was removed from the Commons, but returned after students voiced strong support for the bell. It is now rung during May 4 memorial remembrances.

For commemorative purposes, Kent State students and university administrators established a tradition in 1971 of ringing the Victory Bell 15 times to acknowledge the dead and wounded of Kent State as well as the two students killed at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Grace had previously rung the bell for that purpose on May 4, 1972.

4 MAY 4 COMMEMORATION

Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian, delivers an address at the 52nd annual May 4 commemoration on the Commons at noon.

Meacham, whose knowledge of politics, history, religion and current affairs makes him one of America’s most prominent public intellectuals, also delivered the keynote speech on the evening of May 4 for Kent State University’s Presidential Speaker Series, where he compared today’s political climate to the events that took place on May 4, 1970.

Other remarks at the noon ceremony were given by Tiera Moore, BA '21, graduate student member of the May 4 Education Committee; Todd Diacon, president; Amy Reynolds, dean of the College of Communication and Information; Roseann “Chic” Canfora, BS '76, MA '87, PhD '01, presidential advisory and commemoration chair; and Melody Tankersley, senior vice president and provost. Performances by the Kent State University Chorale, conducted by Scott MacPherson, PhD, opened and closed the program.

A sign in front of the stage read, “Long live the spirit of Kent and Jackson State,” acknowledging the two students—James Earl Green and Phillip Gibbs—killed May 14, 1970, at Jackson State in Mississippi. Over the years, their deaths were “underreported and overlooked because of a legacy of racism that devalues the lives of Black Americans,” wrote Thomas Grace, BA '72, PhD, in a reflection printed on the commemoration program.

5 THE POWER OF OUR VOICES

Students join the crowd listening to the remarks at the noon commemoration.

“What makes planning for the commemoration so special each year is not only collaborating with people whose connection to May 4 spans more than 50 years, but also working with students today who are as committed as we are to remembering Kent State and Jackson State,” says Roseann “Chic” Canfora, BS '76, MA '87, PhD '01, May 4 witness, professional-in-residence in the School of Media and Journalism, and chair of the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee.

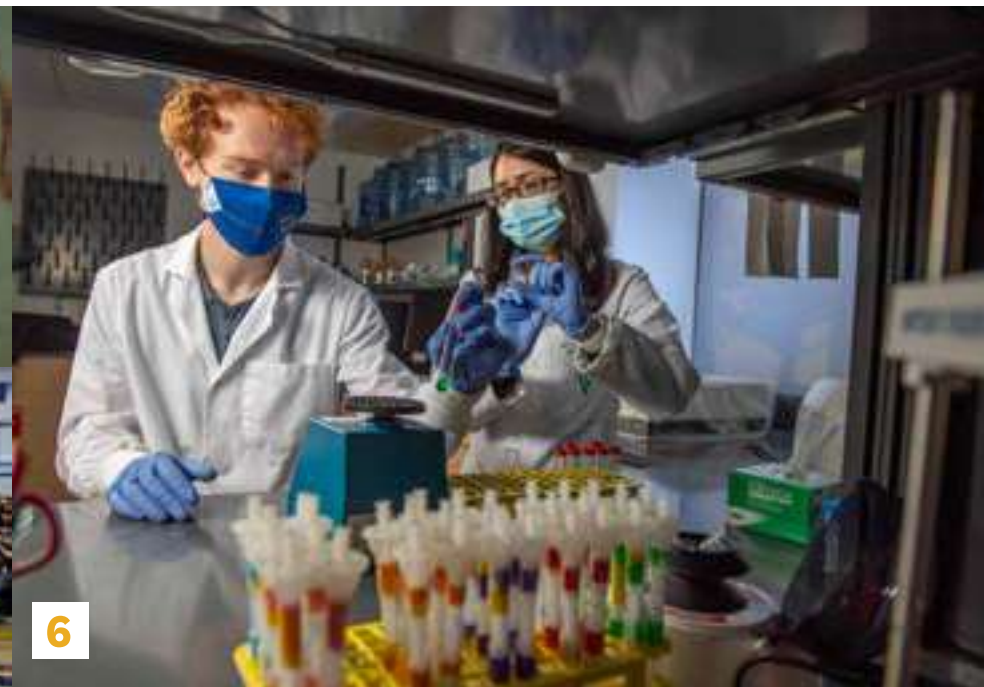
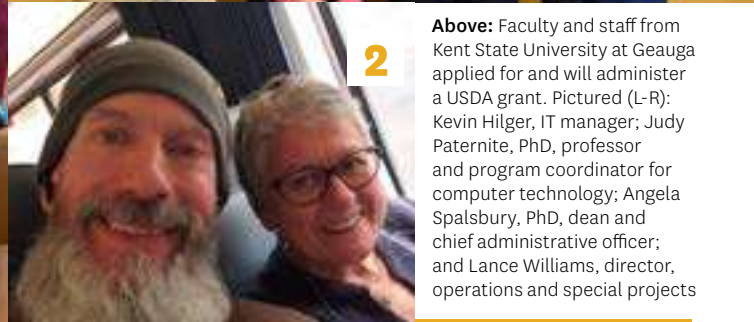


4



5

Learn more at www.kent.edu/may4.



Above: Faculty and staff from Kent State University at Geauga applied for and will administer a USDA grant. Pictured (L-R): Kevin Hilger, IT manager; Judy Paternite, PhD, professor and program coordinator for computer technology; Angela Spalsbury, PhD, dean and chief administrative officer; and Lance Williams, director, operations and special projects

GIFTS

1 Team LeBron had a big win in the NBA All-Star Game in February 2022—and an enormous win for Kent State’s I Promise Scholars, a program that provides higher education opportunities for underserved students in Northeast Ohio. The competition among the NBA’s top players raised \$450,000 for the I Promise Scholars program, which will help support current and future Kent State University I Promise students.

The funds raised by Team LeBron will help with important educational expenses such as books, supplies, and room and board that are critical to the success of I Promise students residing on the Kent Campus.

In 2020, Kent State University provided the opportunity for a college education to all eligible students in the LeBron James Family Foundation’s oldest I Promise Network class by guaranteeing four years of tuition, and one year of room and meal plan.

2 Neuroscientist Earl K. Miller, BA ’85, PhD, and his wife, Marlene M. Wicherski, have pledged \$2 million to support research programs and students in Kent State University’s Brain Health Research Institute. The BHRI focuses on cross-disciplinary research and education

to understand the influences that impact brain health across the lifespan, using the knowledge gained as a window into the prevention and treatment of brain disease.

The gift will help create an endowed directorship to accelerate BHRI’s effort to recruit and retain top leadership and support an undergraduate fellows program for first- and second-year students interested in pursuing careers in neuroscience research, education, healthcare or related areas.

Miller, who received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Kent State in 2020, was the keynote presenter during the Brain Health Research Institute grand opening lecture in November 2021.

GRANTS

3 Kent State University’s Geauga and Ashtabula Regional Campuses were awarded a \$585,046 joint grant from the US Department of Agriculture in January 2022 for a distance learning project to help rural communities connect to each other—and to the world. It promises to help bring Geauga and Ashtabula counties on par with the latest technological advancements in education, medicine and workforce development.

For example, connectivity enhancements

can link teachers and medical service providers located in one area to students and patients in another. Locally, this project will expand educational opportunities for middle and high school students who take college-level courses that count toward their high school diploma and college degree. It will also enable adult residents to enroll in degree programs aligned to regional employer needs.

Kent State University at Geauga also received a \$2,500 grant from the Geauga Hunger Task Force as part of a new partnership to help local students in need. This grant complements a Geauga Campus-sponsored fundraiser that generated more than \$780 for students. More than 80% of its 2,200+ students receive Pell grants or some form of scholarship or grant aid. The new grant funds have been used to purchase gift cards to ALDI grocery stores.

HONORS

4 Mary Ann Raghanti, PhD, professor of biological anthropology and chair of Kent State’s Department of Anthropology, has been elected a 2021 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society and publisher of the journal

Science. Raghanti also serves as a faculty member in Kent State’s School of Biomedical Sciences and a member of the executive committee of the Brain Health Research Institute. She was recognized for her unique and distinguished contributions to biological anthropology and the knowledge and understanding of the origin and evolution of human and primate behavior.

AWARDS

5 Kent State University received the 2022 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from NAFSA: Association of International Educators (formerly called National Association of Foreign Student Advisers). Named after the late Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois, the honor recognizes Kent State for overall excellence in integrating international education throughout all facets of the university and its campuses. Kent State’s global reach has been expansive, with educational centers in Florence, Italy, and Curitiba, Brazil, and outreach centers in China and India. It also boasts more than 200 education-abroad programs.

The university’s commitment to internationalization is embedded in its mission and strategic plan and is entrenched in the university’s

identity through competitive research, comprehensive education-abroad programs, international curriculum and robust international student and scholar programs. Kent State was the only US university to receive this award in 2022.

RANKINGS

6 Kent State University received R1 status for research from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in February 2022. The highest recognition that doctoral universities can receive, the prestigious designation affirms Kent State’s place as an elite research institution and puts the university in the company of universities such as Yale, Harvard and the University of California-Berkeley.

Kent State became one of five universities in Ohio to be designated R1, joining The Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati, Case Western Reserve University and Ohio University. Institutions with the R1 designation are considered to have “very high research activity.” Only 146 universities in the nation have R1 status. Kent State, Ohio University and the University at Buffalo are the only Mid-American Conference schools to carry this esteemed designation.



BETTER TOGETHER: WKSU AND IDEASTREAM PUBLIC MEDIA

Last fall, WKSU and Ideastream Public Media announced plans to join forces and expand coverage for the region. The next step in aligning their services took effect at the end of March:

- On March 28, WKSU 89.7 FM became the primary NPR news and information station for Northeast Ohio. WCPN repeats WKSU programming on 104.9 FM. This change increases access to NPR news and information for the region.
- Also on March 28, WCLV 104.9 FM changed its position on the dial, moving to 90.3 FM. This move gives access to classical music to a million more people in the region.

Learn more about these changes at www.ideastream.org/together.

Brain Health Research Institute Grand Opening



The Brain Health Research Institute celebrated the grand opening of its new lab spaces in November 2021 with an afternoon of activities that included a keynote presentation by cognitive neuroscientist Earl Miller, BA '85, PhD, a dedication of the space, tours and student research demonstrations.

Located on the lower level of the Integrated Sciences Building on the Kent Campus, the new space features interdisciplinary research facilities called “collaboratories.” With state-of-the-art equipment and flexible lab space, the institute’s collaboratories enable researchers from diverse disciplines to bring their collective talents to bear on important unresolved questions about the brain and brain diseases.

The institute is a nationally recognized effort that taps passionate faculty and staff from across the university—not just in science-based departments—to work together as they solve brain-related challenges. Research topics include how hearing and listening change across childhood, reprogramming the brain with exercise, recovery from chronic spinal cord injury, new treatments for common forms of infertility, the effects of poetry on brain health and many more.



Kent State University officials and donors to the Crawford Hall project officially break ground for the new building. Pictured (L-R): Valoree Vargo, vice president, Kent State Division of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement; Shawn Riley, chairman, Kent State Board of Trustees; Todd Diacon, president, Kent State University; Ambassador Edward F. Crawford; Deborah Spake, dean, Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship; Robert Archer, MBA '61; John Brinzo, BBA '64; and Steffany Matticola-Larkins, BBA '92

Crawford Hall Groundbreaking

Kent State officially broke ground on Crawford Hall, the future home of the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship, on March 8, 2022, in a ceremony attended by more than 400 people, including university officials, donors, alumni, students, elected officials and special guests. Construction on this state-of-the-art building is expected to be completed in 2024. Crawford Hall will support innovative instruction, leading research and

student support services for thousands of business majors, minors and others taking business courses across the Kent State system.

The Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship and Crawford Hall have been named in honor of Ambassador Edward F. Crawford and his family, who provided the largest single philanthropic gift in Kent State history to enable the construction of this building.



Doctoral Student in Computer Science Receives AAUW International Fellowship Award

The American Association of University Women has awarded a 2021-22 International Fellowship to Racheal Mukisa, a Ugandan native who is currently pursuing a PhD in computer science at Kent State’s College of Arts and Sciences.

With an aim to tackle barriers women face in education, the International Fellowship is for women who are pursuing full-time graduate or postdoctoral study in the United States, but who are not U.S. citizens. For the 2021-22 academic year, the AAUW awarded a total of \$5 million through fellowships and grant programs to 260 scholars, as well as to community projects and programs that promote education and equity for women and girls.

“The 21st century brought enormous advancements in computing and technology, yet women are still underrepresented in this field,” Mukisa says. “One of the reasons for undertaking an advanced career in computing is to build a sustainable pipeline for empowering more women into technology.”

Through this fellowship, Mukisa plans to leverage cutting-edge computational techniques to address prevailing challenges in developing countries. Prior to pursuing a PhD in computer science, she worked for a decade in information technology-related functions, including building spatiotemporal models for biosurveillance (using smartphones) of crop transmittable diseases in Uganda while earning her Master of Science in data communications and software engineering at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

Her current research is geared towards managing cardiovascular diseases by building machine intelligence in echocardiography (ECG), a field where sound waves are used to capture heart images for diagnosing cardiac conditions.

“Recent advancements in ECG have led to the generation of complex multidimensional echo data, which exceeds the capabilities of current statistical tools,” Mukisa says. “Applying machine learning is useful to analyze heart ultrasound data using signal processing, and such algorithms provide opportunities for developing automated echo analysis and interpretation systems. The automated approach can significantly assist in decreasing the variability and burden associated with manual image measurements.”

“We’re proud to support the work of these outstanding scholars,” says Gloria Blackwell, executive vice president and chief programs officer at AAUW. “This year’s recipients are making valuable contributions in a wide range of fields, but with a common goal of improving life for all of us. We’re impressed by what these scholars are doing and excited about the great things they’ll accomplish throughout their research and careers.”

—By Jim Maxwell, BS '00, MS '11

Learn more about the Department of Computer Science at www.kent.edu/cs.

KENT CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY TOUR

Follow along as Melanie Knowles, manager of sustainability, shares some recent Earth-friendly initiatives on the Kent Campus.

BY JAN SENN



PHOTO BY BOB CHRISTY, BS '95

On a warm but windy April day, about 40 faculty and staff gather at the squirrel statue near the Kent State University Library for a noontime “Wellness Walk & Talk” tour organized by the Employee Wellness office and led this day by Melanie Knowles, Kent State’s manager of sustainability. We expect to get some exercise and learn about recent sustainability initiatives on the Kent Campus.

“A couple locations are going to require you to use your imagination, because some things don’t always happen on schedule and other things are inside buildings,” Knowles says, as she sets out at a brisk pace.

Providing Alternative Transportation



Heading past Risman Plaza along the Lefton Esplanade, Knowles points out a stand for eBikes and eScooters—although there’s only one bike left at this spot as the rest have been checked out. They are part of the Department of Recreational Services’ new partnership with SPIN, a leading micromobility company that operates dockless electric scooters and bikes on campuses and in cities across North America and Europe.

The program launched in March with 100 eBikes and 100 eScooters on the Kent Campus and within the city of Kent for use by students, faculty, staff and the community. The goal is to reduce traffic volume, connect riders to local businesses and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The scooters and bikes provide a convenient way for users to get to class and run errands—and they’re a fun recreational activity for the community. Participants can download the SPIN app, view the safety videos and take a safety quiz to earn a \$5 ride credit and a free helmet.

“We’re always working to make the campus more bike friendly so people can get where they need to go without having to own or use a car all the time,” Knowles says. “I’m not taking anyone’s parking pass away, but we want to make it easy and convenient to use alternative transportation as much as possible.”

So far, one month after the launch, she says there have been “20,900 trips on bikes and scooters, more than 5,000 individual users, 23,545 miles traveled—and 75% of the checkouts are for the scooters.”

Charging Electric Vehicles



Kent State currently has five electric vehicle charging stations for electric cars and trucks on the Kent Campus, located in the parking lots of Harbort Hall, Heer Hall, the Center for Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, the DI Hub and the Kent Student Center visitor lot.

“We received a grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to add six more charging stations, but thanks to COVID-19 and supply chain issues they don’t have the computer chips that go into the stations,” Knowles says. “The new charging stations are already roughed in, so we are hoping to have them in operation by the end of the calendar year. The new locations will be here [she points to a spot near Bowman Hall], behind the Liquid Crystal Institute and by the Center for the Performing Arts.”

Turning Food Waste Into Renewable Energy and Fertilizer



Knowles stops outside the DI Hub for another “use your imagination” talk. “One of the things we have at the DI Hub is the Grind2Energy system,” she says. “For years we’ve been looking at how to divert food waste on the Kent Campus away from the landfill. I’m not talking about unused food that can be eaten; if we can feed people, that is our first priority. I’m talking about kitchen scraps and leftovers from people’s plates.

“For the Grind2Energy system, all those food scraps go into bins,” she adds. “Throughout the day, staff members take the organic material in the bins to a processing table, which is basically an industrial size garbage disposal made by InSinkErator. It grinds up the food waste, mixes it with a little water and that slurry goes directly into a holding tank inside the building. It’s contained so there is no odor. When that tank is full, a liquid waste hauler from Quasar Energy Group transports the slurry to a local anaerobic digestion facility in Collinwood.”

Anaerobic digestion—a process in which bacteria break down organic matter in the absence of oxygen—creates two main products. One is natural gas that can be converted into electricity by a turbine or used for vehicle fueling stations—so the truck that picks up the waste is fueled by the waste. The other product is a nitrogen-rich fertilizer—so nutrients from the food waste restore nutrients in the soil to grow more food.

The Grind2Energy system recently was added to the Eastway Dining Facility through a grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. “Between these two facilities, so far we have diverted more than 80 tons of food waste from the landfill,” Knowles says. “That translates into reducing our carbon impact in a way that’s equivalent to 134,000 miles *not* driven in a vehicle and it produces 4.6 tons of fertilizer.”

“We’re always working to make the campus more bike friendly so people can get where they need to go without having to own or use a car all the time.”

Connecting with Farmers



Before leaving the DI Hub, Knowles adds, “I will plug the Kent State Farmers’ Market that’s being held in the DI Hub this semester. You should definitely check it out.”

Kent State University has partnered with Haymaker Farmers’ Market to provide students with opportunities to learn about local farmers, select fresh produce and connect with the broader Kent community. In addition to food, the market includes crafts, educational workshops related to food, and performances (music, dance, theater).

Relocating Trees to Maintain the Tree Canopy



Pausing at the Crawford Hall construction site, Knowles acknowledges that the view has dramatically changed with the removal of Terrace Hall. “But don’t worry, 28 trees in that area were relocated around the campus,” she says. “Kent State has been designated a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation every year the designation has existed (since 2008). Our Tree Advisory Board, which includes people on campus and off, is always looking at how to maintain and expand our tree canopy.

“Moving trees is a big part of that because we don’t want to stop progress. But if you cut down a mature tree and plant a tiny tree, the canopy takes a big hit. So it’s important to us that we maintain the existing trees as much as we can.

“The company we work with, Busy Bee Services in Novelty, Ohio, uses a special tool called an air spade that uses high pressured air to remove soil from around the roots without damaging root tissue. That allows the tree to keep its tiny roots, which helps trees have more success when they’re transplanted elsewhere.”

Knowles heads behind Dunbar Hall to show the group two of the transplanted trees. “The one closest to me is an *Amur maackia*, which is a member of the pea family with showy white flowers for pollinators and appealing bronze bark that adds winter interest,” she says. “The one further away is a dawn redwood, a deciduous conifer that is part of a Planting Partnership memorial for a residential services staff member—and we take special care of the trees that are part of that program.”

“If you cut down a mature tree and plant a tiny tree, the canopy takes a big hit. So it’s important to us that we maintain the existing trees as much as we can.”

The Planting Partnership is a tree sponsorship program offered by University Facilities Management that gives donors the opportunity to dedicate a tree as a gift or memorial. They can choose from a wide variety of trees and ornamentals that have been selected according to guidelines of the Kent Campus Landscape Master Plan. A \$2,500 donation pays for the cost of purchasing, planting and maintaining the tree—as well as replacing it if it should die.

Aiming for Zero Waste



Stopping at Eastway Center, home of the other Grind2Energy system on campus, Knowles takes the opportunity to talk about Campus Race to Zero Waste, which used to be called Recyclemania. The competition, in partnership with the National Wildlife Foundation, is a tool to help colleges and universities across the United States and Canada advance campus recycling and waste reduction efforts.

“We just finished the competition, so I don’t have the results yet for this year, but last year Kent State won in two categories,” she says. “One was the ‘most electronics recycled’ category. This year we collected 33,904 pounds of electronics for recycling in 30 days. The other category we won last year is called a ‘zero waste’ category. It’s not the whole campus; we picked three buildings and measured all the waste coming from them to see which had the smallest waste per square foot. It was exciting to see Kent State recognized for the work we’re doing in those areas.”

Planning for the Future



Looping around Manchester Field and returning to where we started, Knowles says, “There’s always so much more to talk about than we have time for.” And she reminds the group that in January Kent State embarked on its first comprehensive campus sustainability plan. “There have been a couple opportunities for the general campus community to provide feedback, but there will be more,” she says. “So please keep an eye out; I’m trying to make sure they’re always in FlashLine Alerts. We also have a great advisory group of experts on campus contributing to that effort as well.

“Thanks again everyone for coming out and walking with me. Have a great day!” ⚡

Learn more about Kent State’s sustainability initiatives at www.kent.edu/sustainability/initiatives.

Learn about upcoming “Wellness Walk and Talk” tours at www.kent.edu/hr/wellness/current-wellness-offerings.



Left: Pollinator-friendly native plants border the solar array at the College of Podiatric Medicine. Right: Solar array at the College of Podiatric Medicine in Independence, Ohio.

KENT STATE EXPANDS SOLAR INSTALLATIONS

Kent State continues to establish itself as a leader in sustainability and environmental stewardship with solar installations—to attract students in environmental studies and research, to help our planet and to save money.

The university’s first solar array was installed through a power purchase agreement on the roof of the Field House on the Kent Campus. A third-party developer owned the solar array but sold the power to Kent State. Upon completion in summer 2012 it was the largest roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panel electrical system within the University System of Ohio. Kent State now owns the solar panel system. Electricity from the panels provides about one-third of the power required for the combined Field House and Dix Stadium facilities.

With renewed interest in solar energy by Kent State’s leadership, in 2020-21 Kent State added solar arrays at six of its regional campuses (Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Geauga, Salem, Stark and Trumbull) as well as at the College of Podiatric Medicine in Independence, Ohio. The new arrays increased the university’s solar energy capacity to 4.24 megawatts-DC and produce about 5,281,000 kWh of electricity. This is enough electricity to power 445 homes each year. While contributing the environmental benefits of solar power, these arrays also are projected to save the university over \$3 million in electric cost over 25 years.

Native perennials attractive to pollinators are planted near the ground-mounted systems to help preserve and promote beneficial bees and insects, slow down rainwater runoff and reduce mowing and its associated air pollution.

Every year, the solar PV arrays are projected to reduce Kent State’s carbon footprint by 4,125 tons of CO₂, the equivalent to removing 806 cars from the roads or not burning 421,127 gallons of gasoline, says Bob Misbrenner, project manager II of sustainability, energy conservation and commissioning in the Office of the University Architect. He and Melanie Knowles, manager of sustainability at Kent State, recently published an article about Kent State’s new solar arrays in *Facilities Manager* magazine.

Misbrenner points out that the cost of solar energy has dropped by nearly 70% in the past decade. “Solar panel efficiency is also always improving, along with battery storage,” he says. However, there are current demand, supply chain and federal regulatory issues that are causing difficulty obtaining panels and batteries, delaying projects and eroding some of the prior cost reductions.

Solar energy dashboards are also active for many of the solar arrays (Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Geauga, Salem and Trumbull). Check out the dashboards linked under their sections on the National Solar Tour page of the Kent State Sustainability website. (Kent State was part of the American Solar Energy Society’s National Solar Tour and the society’s local “Ohio Wish You Were Here” tour in fall 2021.)

The university plans to have up to an additional 3.5 megawatts of ground-mounted solar PV panels installed on a vacant site just east of the Kent Campus. This system, which will include a 1.54 MWh battery storage system, is currently planned to be operational by late fall 2023. ⚡

Learn more at www.kent.edu/magazine/kent-state-expands-solar-installations.

SURVIVAL of the Trees



Volunteers from the tree advisory board, the grounds department and the Herrick student organization meet to maintain the Climate Change Grove during an Arbor Day/Earth Day event on April 22, 2022.

area and treating it with herbicides and pesticides. It's a beautiful stretch of land; the idea was maybe we could try to reforest it."

Davis is researching which tree species could best survive climate change in partnership with the biological sciences department, the Kent State University Tree Advisory Board and facilities management. The research also will help Berryhill's groundskeeping team maintain the landscape of the Kent Campus, which has received repeated "Tree Campus USA" designations from the Arbor Day Foundation in recognition of the university's tree planting and conservation efforts.

The grove was planted by students from biological sciences, many of whom are members of the Herrick Conservatory and Sustainability Club, which Davis advises, as well as faculty, staff, alumni and volunteers. Davis says little work was done during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, so a joint Arbor Day/Earth Day event took place on April 22, 2022, when members of the tree advisory board, the grounds department and volunteers from the Herrick student organization cleaned up the grove and assessed how the trees are faring.

The grove holds species native to Northeast Ohio, as well as others that typically require warmer climates to thrive.

"Climates have been changing throughout geological time frames," Davis says. "The problem now is climates are changing so fast, species cannot adapt quickly enough—and that is when we will lose species."

Climate change models are as dynamic as climate change itself, Davis adds. "That's why I thought it would be interesting to test the models in a real-world application."

Research from the US Forest Service already suggests some startling examples of what trees will be winners and losers as Ohio's climate changes. While earlier models for the sugar maple predicted substantial habitat decline in southern Ohio under harsh climate change, recent models rate the sugar maple as highly adaptable—although under persistent drought or other stresses, it could still decline.

Among the losers would be two native species: black cherry and the Ohio buckeye. Davis says often people don't understand what is at stake.

It's not too late, though, for the global community to take steps to reverse climate change and save native species from extinction, she says. "A place like Kent State University that fosters education can do this outreach and become a part of this effort." ⚡

—Lisa Abraham

Imagine a day when Ohio's environment is unable to sustain native trees like the sugar maple, which produces the sap distilled into Ohio maple syrup—or the Ohio buckeye, our state tree.

Research underway at the Climate Change Grove on the Kent Campus is shedding light on what may happen to native tree species if we don't address the carbon emissions that are causing global warming.

The tree grove, which sits on a parcel of land behind the Warren Recreation and Wellness Center, was established in 2018 through a partnership between University Facilities Management and the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences. The grove serves as a living laboratory for teaching biological sciences and conducting climate change research, as well as a reforestation effort.

Melissa Davis, BS '04, MS '10, horticultural facilities director for biological sciences, says she came up with the idea for the grove after attending a US Forest Service presentation on climate change.

"The idea was that, as the climate changes, the flora would either have to be able to adapt or would perish," says Davis, who immediately thought of trees. "Trees are so special in our world. They clean the air we breathe, they're a source of food (fruits and nuts) and shelter (building materials). They provide shade, help cool our homes and reduce our energy costs."

Davis thought the open space behind the recreation center would be the perfect spot for planting a variety of trees to see which could adapt as the climate warms.

Rebekkah Berryhill, BS '02, grounds manager for facilities management, says the grove represents a win for the university on several levels.

"We're always looking for partnerships to help students learn and to grow our canopy cover," she says, noting that previously the land was wasting resources. "We were using fuel to mow the

COMING TOGETHER TO Communicate Climate Change

Concerned about the dire crisis facing their generation, Kent State students are drawing attention to the causes of climate change and demanding action.

In spring 2021, several students from the College of Communication and Information helped found Project Citizen: Climate360, a collaboration of students from Kent State University, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge and Morgan State University in Baltimore.

The group brings together student communicators, journalists, filmmakers, researchers and others to report on climate change, foster civil conversations about global warming and seek solutions.

Grace Springer, a second-year student majoring in journalism with a minor in media advocacy, is the executive producer of Climate360 at Kent State. She reports and writes stories about climate change for the Climate360 news site, posts the work of other student content creators and manages the organization's social media.

"We are dealing with an issue that is going to define a generation," says Springer, who has been involved with Climate360 since its founding.

"There's a responsibility for journalists to cover climate change in a way that fosters discussion and action so that we can bring about a better future. Practically every news story has a climate angle, and it can feel very scary at times to face the harsh realities of climate change. But as journalists, we have to be the ones to find hope and turn that hope into solutions that could lead to real change."

In collaboration with LMU content creators, Springer worked on a documentary for Climate360, "Planet Based: Fighting Climate Change One Plate at a Time," which is expected to be released at the end of spring semester. Micah

Beck, a freelance videographer and Kent State first-year student majoring in digital media production, helped with the film.

"Our upcoming documentary is about defining what a climate-friendly diet means," Springer says. "We will be taking a closer look at what we eat and seeing what impact different diets have on the planet."

In addition to contributing to the Climate360 news site, Springer is a member of Sunrise Movement Kent State. It is one of more than 400 chapters of the Sunrise Movement, a national group of young people and allies who, since 2017, have advocated for the Green New Deal and other climate justice initiatives.

In November 2021, the group led a demonstration and march around the Kent Campus to bring awareness to climate change and to support environmental policies. The protesters carried signs displaying the age each will be in the year 2046, the year global warming is projected to have increased by 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, which means irreversible climate damage, Springer says. The protest was timed to coincide with the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (aka COP26, the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties), which brought world leaders

and diplomats together in Glasgow, Scotland, to address climate policy.

Springer says the Sunrise Movement has been on hiatus at Kent State recently, but the group intends to reconvene for the 2022-2023 school year. The plan is to continue climate activism with protests, marches and demonstrations, as well as calling and writing legislators to encourage them to support progressive climate policies. ⚡

—Candace Goforth DeSantis, BS '94



Grace Springer, a second-year journalism student, collaborates with students from other universities to cover climate change issues.



PHOTO BY GRETA BELL, BS '22

TAKING ACTION to Protect the Planet

Environmental activist Justin Thompson is working to make the world a better place for future generations.

BY JAN SENN

“Let Our Powers Combine!” If you’re a millennial—or watched children’s TV shows in the early 1990s—that expression may ring a bell. It’s a catchphrase from *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (also known as *The New Adventures of Captain Planet*). The animated series featuring an environmentalist superhero ran for 113 episodes from 1990 to 1996.

The brainchild of entertainment mogul and environmental philanthropist Ted Turner, the series was created as a way to teach children about real-world

environmental crises like deforestation, oil spills, pollution, global warming and nuclear waste. It features five teens from across the globe who unite their powers to summon Captain Planet and defend the Earth from environmental devastation. The popular cartoon influenced a generation of millennials to care about environmental causes.

One of those millennials is 31-year-old Justin Thompson, AS '20, a first-generation, nontraditional student who earned an associate degree at Kent State Ashtabula and is now at the Kent Campus doing a double major in environmental

studies and political science with a concentration in public policy and triple minors in geology, geography and urban studies. He recently was accepted into the McNair Scholars Program, which prepares first-generation and underrepresented students for doctoral study.

“Ted Turner saw a need to educate youth on the environment and to fight pollution and polluters—and it worked,” says Thompson, who credits the cartoon series and a childhood struggle with seasonal allergies with sparking his interest in air and water quality, as well as other environmental issues.

Involved in many community organizations and programs related to the environment, Thompson is president of Kent State’s Future Environmental Professionals Club. It aims to create a better understanding of environmental consulting and its role in protecting the environment and community. The club recently invited Carolyn Harding—host of the GrassRoot Ohio radio/podcast and a progressive candidate for the Ohio House of Representatives—to speak on Zoom about environmental and civic podcasting and why it’s important to elect officials who stand up for the environment.

“I wanted students to see that podcasting, films and other forms of media are also areas they could go into as an environmental professional,” Thompson says. “And we need more people who care about the environment to run for office.”

However, Thompson—who is graduating in December with Departmental Honors from the Honors College—isn’t interested in running for office himself. “I don’t want to be on stage, that’s not me,” he says. “But I have no problem helping others get elected and helping them work on policies to enact.”

In addition to his classes at Kent State, on weekends he’s recently completed a two-month Campaign Staff Academy through LEAD Ohio, a comprehensive training program for current and future campaign managers and staff. He also participated in a 10-month Environmental Justice Academy in the Miami Valley through the US Environmental Protection Agency, which helps participants cultivate skills to address local environmental concerns.

Thompson, who is the environmental climate justice chair for the NAACP in Ashtabula, has been working with the organization on legislation for Ohio regarding the regulation of fracking waste. He addressed the topic in his senior honors thesis—“Is Ohio Violating the Great Lakes Compact?”—which investigated the water depletion that results from oil and gas exploration throughout the Great Lakes Basin. His research suggests there may be evidence to support civil litigation and/or the proposal of new regulations to protect

this source of fresh water, which provides drinking water to more than 40 million people in the US and Canada.

This summer, in an internship through Kent State, Thompson will work with the NAACP to identify Ohio legislators who may be receptive to sponsoring legislation that would regulate fracking. They will also consider when best to introduce it. “Fracking is not the best topic to introduce just before an election because it’s so polarizing,” Thompson says. “We recognize that with the makeup of Ohio’s Legislature, we’re never going to be able to ban

fracking. So that’s not what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to make it safer—to protect the water, to protect the people.”

Through his years of volunteering for environmental organizations, Thompson says he’s realized that it is the larger state actors that effect real change. “If you want to make a difference in the world on a large scale, it’s the policies that need to be changed,” he says. “You can incentivize people to do things individually, but the individual contribution in terms of pollution and climate change is fairly small in comparison to the systemic polluters. And once you do something on

a large scale, it affects the individual as well.” So Thompson—who also is on the executive committee of the Ashtabula County Democratic Party—encourages people who are concerned about climate change to vote for officials who prioritize the environment and to vote with their dollars when it comes to making consumer and investment decisions. “For example, we should be looking at the supply chains to see if companies are following sustainable practices,” he says. “We could negotiate with our energy providers to purchase energy from renewable resources as opposed to coal and natural gas. And if we’re investing in the stock market, we should see if those companies get their energy from fossil fuels or through wind and solar.

“Recently Gen Zs and millennials are calling for institutions to divest from companies that are invested in fossil fuels,” he adds. “Instead of just looking at the bottom line of profit, we want institutions to look at the triple bottom line: people, planet, profit. That’s something we could do at Kent State, too. Students can advocate for that change to happen. But it’s not going to happen if nobody calls for it.”

No doubt, Captain Planet would agree. ⚡

“If you want to make a difference in the world on a large scale, it’s the policies that need to be changed.”

on LAND & at SEA

How two Kent State researchers are trying to understand climate change.

BY JILLIAN KRAMER, BA '06

In their shared Biogeochemical Oceanography and Soil Science (or BOSS) laboratory at McGilvrey Hall, married couple Timothy Gallagher, PhD, and Allyson “Allie” Tessin, PhD, both assistant professors of geology, are studying the Earth from two perspectives—on land and at the bottom of the sea—to better understand climate change.

Gallagher, a biogeochemist and sedimentary geologist, digs into the land, quite literally, to study how terrestrial environments have responded to climate change. He’s cataloging what human intervention has done and might continue to do to the Earth’s soil.

Tessin, a biogeochemist and sedimentary geologist with an interest in paleoceanography, recently spent two months at sea to study the relationship between the marine carbon cycle and climate change. On a research vessel that’s been drilling into the Earth at the bottom of the ocean, she analyzed the core samples collected to see how carbon has been stored in layers of sediment in the seafloor.

Together, their research promises a more complete understanding of climate change.

“People studying climate change on land and at sea don’t necessarily ever talk to each other. And we do—even if it’s over a beer at the end of the day.”

—Allyson Tessin, PhD

The couple, who wed in 2015 and earned PhDs from the University of Michigan in 2016, didn’t have an opportunity to work together until they came to Kent State University in August 2020 and launched their BOSS laboratory.

“We’re working on similar questions with similar motivations—but in slightly different ways,” says Gallagher. But working side by side, communicating on various projects, “helps give us a slightly wider perspective—a diverse way of thinking about some of the problems we’re thinking about,” he says.

Tessin concurs. “People studying climate change on land and at sea don’t necessarily ever talk to each other. And we do—even if it’s over a beer at the end of the day,” she says. “There are a lot of things that happen on land that also happen at sea, in a different way. And so [those conversations and collaborations] kind of push my brain outside of my own community.”

Here’s a look at their research—and the mark they hope to leave on the larger body of climate change research and discussion.

Timothy Gallagher on land

Examining soil can reveal much more than whether your garden has enough moisture to thrive.

Soil is a mixture of minerals, organic matter, gas and water—and, as an example, one of the minerals it contains is calcite, or soil carbonate. By studying soil carbonate, researchers can understand how climate and environments changed in the geologic past, millions of years ago, Gallagher says. The presence—or lack—of this one mineral can help reveal the Earth’s temperature, the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and when mountain belts first rose.

In other words, studying soil carbonate can create a “really useful archive of past clues about Earth’s climate system, going back millions of years,” Gallagher says. And that archive of Earth’s past can help scientists better predict Earth’s future as the climate changes.

How? Climate change is dominated by rising temperatures and increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Scientists often rely on physics-driven computer models to predict how the climate will respond to higher temperatures and more carbon dioxide, Gallagher says.

By studying soil carbonate, researchers can understand how climate and environments changed in the geologic past.

But by going back into the geologic past, researchers can “provide both context and test-case scenarios” for climate modelers, he says, which can help them understand how the Earth behaved millions of years ago, when it was hotter and had more carbon dioxide.

“I started looking at modern soils to try to understand things like how and when does [soil carbonate] form in the soil to improve the accuracy of our past reconstructions,” Gallagher says.

He has excavated soil in Texas (where he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas at Austin) and throughout Ohio,

including in Ravenna and at the Huff Run Watershed near Mineral City. From sites around Ohio, he scoops up soil with a hand shovel and transports it in zip-close plastic bags back to his laboratory. He stores the soil in glass bottles, in a refrigerator, until he’s ready to test it. (Keeping the soil cold helps slow any changes.)

In one experiment, Gallagher adds sugar to bottles of soil to better understand how the microbes in the soil eat the sugar and breathe, and how that process changes over time. He might sprinkle water on top of some soil samples to mimic rainfall and withhold water from others to mirror a drought. ▶



PHOTO BY BOB CHRISTY, BS '95



Left: Dr. Gallagher wires a monitor at the long-term soil monitoring station.



Below: The long-term soil monitoring station is at the University of Texas at Austin's Stengl Lost Pines Biological Station.



Above: Doctoral student Kyle Smart, MS '21, works on repairs and installs new features at the long-term soil monitoring station.



PHOTO COURTESY ETIENNE CLAASSEN

Above: Science party from Expedition 392 on the JOIDES Resolution



Right: Sunrise over the JOIDES Resolution derrick in the south Indian Ocean

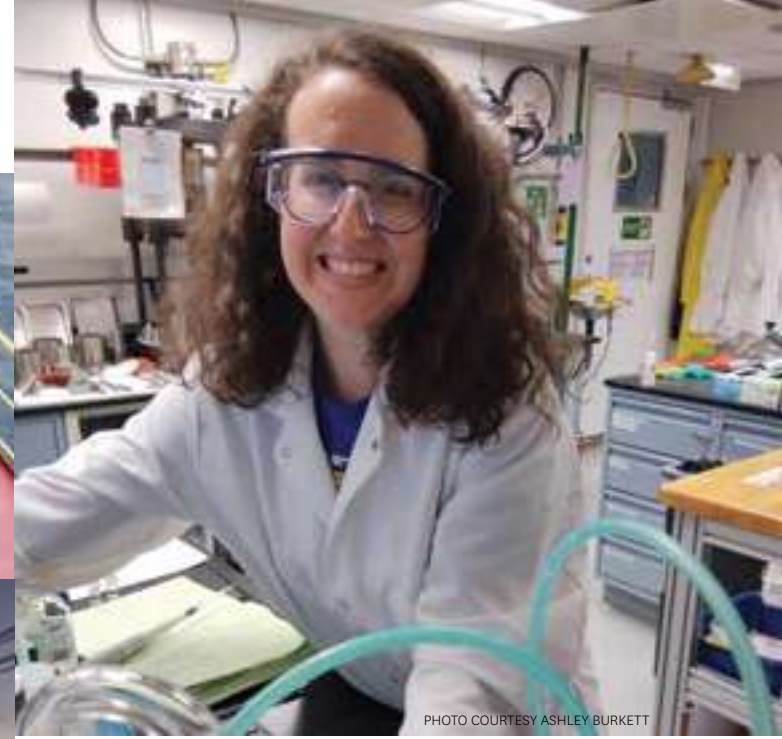


PHOTO COURTESY ASHLEY BURKETT

Above: Dr. Tessin prepares a water sample to measure alkalinity, which provides information about carbon cycling within sediment water.

“Then I watch how the organisms respond,” he says, “and how quickly and at what sort of rates and ratios they breathe.”

The experiments help Gallagher build a fundamental understanding of what controls “soil respiration,” or the measure of the carbon dioxide the soil releases.

“We can explore things like: How does temperature affect that respiration rate in the lab?” he says. Those laboratory readings act as a guide for scientists in the field, who are trying to understand in real time how soil respiration is responding to climate change.

Gallagher also plans to place monitoring equipment in Ohio soil, mimicking a set-up he first established at UT Austin’s Stengl Lost Pines Biological Station, which he still monitors. Over spring break Gallagher and Kent State doctoral student Kyle Smart, MS ’21, traveled to the Texas site to repair and upgrade the monitoring system.

By burying equipment with physical environmental sensors in the soil, Gallagher can measure the soil’s moisture and temperature at any given time. Eventually, he will measure soil gases the same way in Ohio as well: Gas analyzers with pumps suck in air from the soil, then measure the amount of both oxygen and carbon dioxide and relay the data to a computer program.

In his laboratory at Kent State, Gallagher uses a high-precision gas analyzer to look at differences in oxygen and carbon dioxide “and try to interpret what that gas signal means,” he says.

“We are trying to improve our understanding of both modern soil carbon cycling and the archives that we use to reconstruct climate variables in the geologic past,” he says, noting that the research often leads to more questions he and his students must try to answer.

But he’s hopeful that his studies will help uncover some of the fundamental processes of soil respiration and what controls it. That could help climate change modelers develop more precise predictions of future climate change.

“Hopefully my work can help make [those predictions] more accurate,” Gallagher says.

Allyson Tessin at sea

The fundamental concept of climate change is that carbon is being added to the atmosphere, Tessin says. But instead of focusing on how that carbon gets there, she wants to look at what happens to the carbon once it’s touched the ocean.

“The surface of the ocean is in direct contact with the atmosphere. You see that when you stare at the horizon,” she says. “Which means that if we put carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, a lot of it is just going to sink right into the oceans.”

Tessin studies what happens when that carbon dioxide makes it to the seafloor. For example, her research asks: Is it preserved? Is it buried for millions of years? How is it buried in the floor?

The seafloor’s sediment preserves the record of carbon dioxide like pages in a book: Each year or decade or millennium, sediment is laid down, Tessin says, “providing this opportunity to turn back each layer of information.”

In February, Tessin boarded the JOIDES Resolution, an international research vessel (operated by Texas A&M University on behalf of the International Ocean Discovery Program) that drills into the ocean floor to collect and study core samples. She departed from Cape Town, South Africa, with more than two dozen other scientists (from Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK and the USA) and a slew of onboard staff and crew for a two-month-long journey.

Tessin and the other members of Expedition 392 traveled to the southwestern Indian Ocean to take

samples from several sites along the Agulhas Plateau, a large oceanic plateau about 500 kilometers (about 310 miles) south of Africa, which rises up to 2,500 meters (about 1.5 miles) above the surrounding seafloor. The scientists were interested in analyzing drill cores to figure out when the plateau was formed, what the environment was like at the time and how it changed over the years.

With a drill that uses a piston core, the team collected samples from as deep as one kilometer (approximately 3,280 feet) below the seafloor. Tessin likens the process to pushing a straw into a layer cake: If you cap the straw and pull it up slowly, you’ll come away with a sliver containing every layer of the cake.

“The simplest kind of sediment retrieval that we were doing is basically a very expensive version of that,” Tessin explains. “We were just pushing a tube into soft sediment and pulling up those layers in a way that hopefully preserves them.”

Each sample was 10 meters (about 32.8 feet) long. The scientists gathered at what’s called the “catwalk,” a covered portion of the ship, where they sliced each sample into meter-and-a-half (about 4.9-foot) sections. Then each scientist took sections for experiments.

Tessin’s job on the ship was to pull water from collected samples, then examine the chemical composition of the rocks, sediments and water. To do that, she placed what she calls a “baby” section of core into a human-sized plastic bag, which she filled with nitrogen to prevent the core from being altered by oxygen.

Reaching into the bag she would cut the core down until what remained was only the part that had not been in contact with modern seawater or oxygen on deck. Then she placed that little nugget in a hydraulic press that pushed down on the core with 30,000 pounds of force, until the water came out of the rock, and she could slurp it up with a syringe. That way, she says, she could study the sediment and the water, too.

From the depth of sediment the drill reached, Tessin is able to look back as many as 100 million years—to a time when dinosaurs roamed the Earth, the oceans were a lot hotter and there was a lot more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, she says. “It’s a way to see how the oceans reorganized, and what changed in response to big inputs of carbon dioxide.”

In other words, Tessin says she is “trying to reconstruct what happened in past climate events—past carbon addition events—to see what happened to ocean chemistry.”

According to the ship’s log, one of the mission’s notable successes was the recovery of a core that shows evidence of a mass-extinction event of 66 million years ago, when an asteroid hit the planet, ending the Cretaceous period.

Tessin says she’s still in the early stages of making sense of all she’s found so far in her core samples. But she says, “I think there are going to be really cool, large-scale implications for climate change that come out of it.” ⚡

See more photos at www.kent.edu/magazine/land-and-sea.



A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Climate change is a complex problem with no easy answers—and everything at stake. As global temperatures continue to rise, Kent State faculty reflect on our ability to mitigate and adapt to a changing planet.

By Kat Braz and Jan Senn

When the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report in April 2022, IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee described it as “powerful evidence that we have the potential to mitigate climate change. We are at a crossroads. ... Climate promises and plans must be turned into reality and action, now. It is time to stop burning our planet and start investing in the abundant renewable energy all around us.”

The Working Group III report, prepared by 278 scientists from 65 countries, is the third installment of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which will be completed this year. “It’s now or never if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F), says IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Jim Skea.

“Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible.” But there are options in all sectors to at least halve emissions by 2030.

The Working Group II report, released in February 2022, warned that global warming exceeding 1.5°C will lead to “additional severe impacts, some of which will be irreversible” and “would cause unavoidable increases in multiple climate hazards and present multiple risks to ecosystems and humans.”

While mitigating actions would substantially reduce projected losses and damages, it’s impossible to eliminate them all. Even to slow climate change, the world is running out of time.

In the IPCC’s first AR6 installment, released in August 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres characterized the situation as “a

code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable.”

Human influence has warmed the climate at a rate unprecedented in at least the last 2,000 years. However, Guterres also noted that “Inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health are possible for all, if we respond to this crisis with solidarity and courage.”

Despite the dire warnings and the daunting statistics, faculty at Kent State—

designated an R1 research university in February—remain hopeful about opportunities to mitigate and adapt to our changing climate in the coming years. To better understand and address the climate crisis, we asked several faculty members, most of whom participate in Kent State’s Environmental Science and Design Research Institute, for their perspective on this existential challenge.

“Inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health are possible for all, if we respond to this crisis with solidarity and courage.”

UN Secretary-General
António Guterres

ANOMALOUS WEATHER PATTERNS

Terms describing severe weather patterns like “El Niño” and “polar vortex” get bandied about on the nightly news without much context or definition. Understanding climates and how extreme weather and climate variability manifest and affect life on Earth helps put rising temperatures and mild winters in perspective.

“We are seeing fewer really extreme cold days,” says Scott Sheridan, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Geography, who published a study of abnormal weather patterns in the *Journal of Geophysical Research* in 2019. “Winter weather has gotten more irregular across the hemisphere but even in a warmed world, that doesn’t mean cold weather is going away.”

Although the term polar vortex was popularized in recent years, the winter weather condition is nothing new. In stable polar vortex conditions, the cold air forms a dome that circulates in the Arctic. When changes in the jet stream disrupt the polar vortex, it forces unusually cold weather south from the pole. As the Arctic continues to warm, it leads to more chaos in the atmosphere and more wild weather.

The extreme cold wave that swept through Texas in February 2021 brought record-low temperatures, overloading the power grid and bursting pipes. The temperatures were severe, but cold weather in winter is expected. What interests Sheridan are the weather events that are unusual relative to the season.

“In the spring of 2012, we had the warmest outbreak in the history of the Eastern United States for the month of March,” he says. “We think nothing of highs in the 80s in summer, but a week of highs in the 80s in March is unusual. This false spring caused trees to bloom early. When normal weather returned a few weeks later, the frost killed all the tree buds.”

This kind of mismatch, where the weather pattern doesn’t align with the season, can lead to widespread losses, particularly for tree fruits. Less fruit to harvest results in higher prices at the grocery store. Unusual weather can also trigger birds and

insects to migrate before food sources are sufficient in their destinations.

“There are a lot of ways in which our lives can be impacted by weather,” Sheridan says. “You only need to look at places like California or the Southwest United States to see what happens to water resources when you have anomalous conditions year after year. There’s a

“WE’RE GOING TO HAVE TO PREPARE FOR CHALLENGES TO THE WAY WE LIVE IF IT’S WEATHER DEPENDENT.”

potential for a lot of the systems that we’ve relied on for so long to suddenly not work the way that they had before. We’re going to have to prepare for challenges to the way we live if it’s weather dependent.”

A larger, global push to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is the most critical step necessary to slow the warming of the planet. But even if greenhouse gas emissions were reduced tomorrow, the climate system wouldn’t return to normal immediately. Regions that rely on precarious water sources will need to figure out how to adapt in the coming decades regardless.

“The thing to focus on is what sort of society do we want to have?” Sheridan says. “Realizing that if the climate system is going to get more chaotic, there will be a lot of negative impacts. We still have a role to play in trying to minimize them and help make the environment and our natural systems more resilient as best we can.”

Other climate-related research from Kent State geographers includes:

Weather Whiplash: Cameron Lee, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Geography, received research funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Program office to explore long-term changes in shorter-term climate variability. He published a paper in the *International Journal of Climatology* in 2021 examining trends in rapid temperature changes—sometimes within 24 hours—and how they relate to the warming climate.

Ecosystem Disturbances: Timothy Assal, PhD, also an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, studies the effects of disturbance (e.g., drought, fire and insects) on forest and shrubland ecosystems, typically by measuring the rate and pattern of environmental change. Of his most recent collaborative project, funded by the Northwest Climate Adaption Science Center, he says, “Our primary goal is to provide sound science to both resource managers and policy makers to help shape ecosystem management and conservation as we move into an uncertain future.”



WATER QUALITY

The Great Lakes hold 20% of the world’s surface fresh water and supply drinking water for more than 48 million people. This vital resource is threatened by harmful algae blooms that damage the freshwater ecosystem. Not all algae are harmful and identifying toxic ones (such as cyanobacteria) apart from other algae can be challenging. Joseph D. Ortiz, PhD, professor in the Department of Geology (soon to be the Department of Earth Sciences), developed a methodology using satellite remote sensing to identify different strains of algae in Lake Erie.

“The blooms in Lake Erie are predominantly driven by cyanobacteria,” Ortiz says. “Cyanobacteria are among the most ancient of living organisms on the planet. They date back billions of years and thrive in warm waters that have a high nutrient content.”

Those conditions exist in the western basin of Lake Erie. High amounts of nutrient runoff from agricultural fields result in perennial algae blooms. Differentiating among the potentially toxic algae provides essential information for public health decisions regarding water safety.

“In the Midwest, we’re seeing future predictions for wetter conditions for our environment,” Ortiz says. “More rain will carry more nutrients, more fertilizer from farms into streams and creeks and eventually the rivers that feed into the lake. If climate change is going to make the environment wetter, we can expect that one of the potential consequences of climate change in our area will be worse harmful algae blooms.”

“IF CLIMATE CHANGE IS GOING TO MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT WETTER, WE CAN EXPECT THAT ONE OF THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN OUR AREA WILL BE WORSE HARMFUL ALGAE BLOOMS.”

Graduate student Israel Olaoye modeled the impacts of urbanization and climate change on the area’s water quality in a study at Old Woman Creek, which is west of Cleveland. Although only a modest increase in urbanization is predicted for the region through 2100—about 4%—the projected climate-related increase in precipitation would result in much higher nutrient runoff.

“Our best estimates tell us that we need to drop the amount of nutrients getting into the lake by about 40% in order to get these harmful algae blooms to a point where they’re manageable,” Ortiz says. “And that’s with the current precipitation. If we go a few decades into the future, with more CO₂ in the atmosphere and higher precipitation rates, the amount of nutrients flowing into the basin is going to increase.”

Mitigation efforts to reduce nutrient runoff include planting vegetation along the riverbanks rather than farming up to the water’s edge. The forest strips that develop along the banks also help stabilize the soil and reduce erosion.

“Many of the climate change issues we’re facing are having increasingly negative impacts not only on the environment but on society, particularly among the most vulnerable populations such as Indigenous communities or subsistence farming,” Ortiz says. “That’s a real challenge because we’re seeing negative impacts occurring faster than previously anticipated. But there’s also opportunity. Every bit of emissions we reduce is one less tenth of a degree of global warming that will help mitigate potential problems coming down the pipeline.”

SCIENCE EDUCATION

Bridget Mulvey, PhD, associate professor of science education at the School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies, can relate to a natural disaster’s effect on education. In September 2003, during her first weeks of teaching Earth science at a K-12 school in Williamsburg, Virginia, Hurricane Isabel slammed into the coast.

Many people were evacuated and school was canceled for about a week. When classes restarted, students asked her if assignments were due that day. “I said, ‘No, this is a natural disaster; first we’re going to make sure we’re all okay!’” Mulvey recalls. “We shifted that year’s curriculum to start with hurricanes—and we didn’t just look at them through a science perspective. We also created newspapers in collaboration with the English teacher to share our stories and those of others in the community.

“Giving students the space and support to process the varied perspectives on that event and what it means for science and for their lives was essential,” she says. “I listened to their stories, their questions, their fears—and I shaped learning experiences around what I was picking up from the students.”

That empathetic approach to education is central to what Mulvey does: “In general, my work is trying to help teachers and students not only learn more about science but also to connect it to their lived experiences and their decision making.”

During the pandemic, Mulvey worked with the Wick Poetry Center and its director, David Hassler, to have students in teacher training programs reflect on themselves and science education using model poems in Wick’s Earth Stanzas project. “Poetry is an amazing way to support children and older students, to share their voices and try to make a difference in this world,” she says. “Children’s voices can be powerful agents of change. They move people in a way that data often doesn’t. As adults and teachers, we can help inform students and then amplify their voices.”

However, teaching students to trust in science and scientists can be challenging in today’s polarized environment. Mulvey has been working with Lisa Borgerding, PhD, a fellow professor in the School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies, on socioscientific issues—controversial, socially relevant, real-world problems that are informed by science and often include an ethical component—like pandemics and global climate change.

“We need to help students come to their own conclusions, rather than tell them what to think,” Mulvey says. “Besides helping students and the teachers who work with them understand the science behind the complex issues we’re facing, we also need to help them communicate with others about science in ways that aren’t judgmental. Genuinely caring about the other person’s perspective—asking questions to learn more about why they believe the way they do—can be a powerful way to empathize with others and perhaps spark a discussion.”

“CHILDREN’S VOICES CAN BE POWERFUL AGENTS OF CHANGE. THEY MOVE PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT DATA OFTEN DOESN’T.”



Mulvey recommends three picture books to help children (and adults) consider varied perspectives:

We Are Water Protectors, written by Carole Lindstrom and illustrated by Michaela Goade (Roaring Brook Press, 2020), 2021 Caldecott Medal

Written in response to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, the book tells the story of an Ojibwe girl who fights against an oil pipeline to protect the water supply of her people.

“I use this book when asking teachers about the implications of the word ‘resources,’” Mulvey says. “Resources aren’t just things to be mined for human use. We need to consider different perspectives and the marginalization of different groups of people and species.”

Mulvey recommends pairing this book with informational texts (which inform readers about the natural or social world without using characters) to consider emphases, omissions and accuracy. See Xochitl Bentley (@dispatches_b222 on Twitter) for guidance on using picture books to begin an inquiry.

They All Saw a Cat, written and illustrated by Brendan Wenzel (Chronicle Books, 2016), 2017 Caldecott Medal and Honor Book

This book explores what a cat might look like from various animals’ points of view.

“It’s a way for almost any age group to think about the perspectives of others and how our background knowledge and experiences impact our perceptions and actions,” Mulvey says. “Teachers can use it to discuss what it means to have empathy and to consider the complexity of who has power, whose perspectives are being valued, and what that means for our own decision making.”

Mulvey recommends using this book to set the stage for critical considerations of issues that involve science and society.

Old Enough to Save the Planet, written by Loll Kirby and illustrated by Adelina Lirius (Harry N. Abrams, 2021)

This book shares real accounts of children taking action to protect the planet.

“It aims to foster people’s respect for themselves, others and the world—and to empower people to take informed action to positively impact the local and global,” Mulvey says. “The real-world examples can inspire children to develop their own action plans.”

As with the other books, Mulvey recommends critical examination of the text and pairing it with more in-depth texts that examine varied perspectives and evidence.

ROOF GREENING

Around 56% of the global population lives in cities. In North America, the number jumps to 84%. With increased urbanization comes a focus on environmentally friendly building design. Performance-based design, such as the US Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system, provides a means of measuring a building’s performance standards and energy usage.

Kent State has 14 LEED-certified buildings on its campuses. The John Elliot Center for Architecture and Environmental Design on the Kent Campus received the university’s first LEED Platinum recognition in 2018. It features a green roof, an element of living architecture—using ecosystems and biology to inform building design—that offers benefits for both the structure and the environment. Although the installation costs are higher than a traditional roof, green roofs prove to be an excellent investment over time.

“A green roof will double or triple the life of the building’s waterproofing membrane,” says Reid Coffman, PhD, professor in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, who is a leading figure in the area of living architecture. His research and publications have helped establish the global understanding of green roofs as constructed urban ecosystems.

“Right now, the US roofing industry generates around \$14 billion annually just to tear off roofs and replace them with the same traditional roofing materials that come from the carbon petroleum industry,” he says. “When the roofing membrane is extended from 20 years to 60 years, that changes the carbon footprint and the economy of the industry quite a bit.”

Green roofs absorb peak precipitation and help dissipate runoff, provide insulation for the building and help keep energy costs down. Both large urban structures and small residential properties can benefit from green roofs. The theory of biophilic design posits that building occupants are healthier and happier when they connect with the natural environment.

“The cities we build are destroying habitats and other living organisms,” Coffman says. “We can design buildings that cooperate with their environment and give life to other organisms besides people.”

While people have been slow to adopt green roofs on a massive scale, it may be due to the limitations of our imaginations. For most, a green roof means an array of plants. Instead, Coffman advocates for the concept of roof greening. A project could encompass different applications depending on the needs of the occupants and the environment.

“Habitat roofs can be used to reintroduce endangered or threatened plants,” Coffman says. “But we can also have recreation roofs or agricultural roofs, such as community gardens. There are roofs being developed that incorporate vegetation and photovoltaics, called biosolar roofs. Hospitals could be building roofs that are oriented toward health and wellness. There are so many roof greening opportunities, things we haven’t conceptualized yet.”

“WE CAN DESIGN BUILDINGS THAT COOPERATE WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND GIVE LIFE TO OTHER ORGANISMS BESIDES PEOPLE.”



SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

The typical passenger vehicle emits 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide every year, with the number varying based on the vehicle’s fuel, fuel economy and the number of miles driven per year. And that doesn’t include the carbon dioxide produced by the vehicle’s manufacture, upkeep and eventual disposal.

Carbon dioxide is one of the main greenhouse gases (along with methane and nitrous oxide) that trap energy in the atmosphere and result in widespread temperature increase. So we need to drastically reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming from rising further.

If you’ve been on the Kent Campus over the past six years, you may have seen the ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicle) driven along the Esplanade or parked on Risman Plaza on Earth Day, as it was this year. The ZEV is a repurposed golf cart with an electric engine powered by three sources: a fuel cell, solar panel and batteries. The experimental vehicle converts solar energy to electricity (to directly charge the battery) and to hydrogen (for energy storage).

“It’s one way to educate people about renewable energy,” says Yanhai Du, PhD, professor in the College of Aeronautics and Engineering and team leader and principal investigator of Kent State University’s fuel cell program. It is also a way to get students interested in engineering and sustainability. Du has worked with an interdisciplinary team of students to develop the vehicle since 2016 through the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) program. The three-phase project, led by students, is now in its second phase. The goal is to run the cart with zero emissions for its life cycle.

“This zero-emission golf cart is just one example of how we can do something to make a difference,” Du says. However, even if we stopped emitting greenhouse

“WE DEMONSTRATED THAT UAVS INTEGRATED WITH OUR ONBOARD HYBRID FUEL CELL BATTERY/CAPACITOR COULD DO MUCH MORE THAN JUST CARRY AND DELIVER A SMALL CAMERA OR A PIZZA.”

gases today, these gases can remain in the atmosphere for different amounts of time, ranging from a few years to thousands of years after being released. Their warming effects on the climate persist over a long time and will affect both present and future generations. That’s why it’s important to develop new technologies to help bring global temperatures back to safer levels.

And that’s why Du, an expert on the solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC), continues to work toward enabling the fuel cell industry to replace conventional power sources. He believes that fuel cells are uniquely positioned among power generation systems to effectively provide clean, reliable, quiet power.

He is just wrapping up a project to develop a hybrid fuel cell battery/capacitor that may extend flight time and load capacity for drones, aka unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Kent State University led a team that included several other universities, federal agencies and a company that designs and manufactures drones. Funded through the Ohio Federal Research Network, the project ran from January 2020 to May 2022.

“We demonstrated that UAVs integrated with our onboard hybrid fuel cell battery/capacitor could do much more than just carry and deliver a small camera or a pizza,” Du says. “With our technology, UAVs could carry much heavier weight and fly in a

continuous operation in a lab setting for 12 hours. That’s a long duration for a drone.”

The 12-hour flight time also offers huge benefits for military and commercial users. “For example, Amazon and other commercial drones can fly for 20-30 minutes in a single flight. Normally, they deliver a package, then go back to their base to pick up the next package and then deliver it to another customer,” Du says. “If we create power cells that enable the drones to fly far and high, as well as carry several packages at a time, it could be more efficient and effective. So, our focus with this project is to increase flight time/distance and the weight that UAVs can carry.”

Other potential uses for the technology include surveillance, inspections and emergency response. “The Department of Homeland Security could watch the US Border 24/7 by using two drones that can fly for 12 hours each. This can make the task efficient without having to use helicopters and personnel,” Du says. “On the commercial side, a lot of inspectors use drones to do housing and bridge inspections. In California, inspectors might use drones for wildfire inspection. This new technology could potentially be used to deliver medical supplies and other emergency needs after disasters.”

Having met most of its goals for the project, Du’s team is preparing for a flight demonstration and applying for additional federal and state funding to advance the hybrid fuel cell battery/capacitor technology. They’re also looking forward to bringing new products or services to market based on this technology.

In addition, Du is working with the Ohio Clean Hydrogen Hub Alliance to establish a national hydrogen energy hub in Ohio. “Hydrogen can store more electricity than conventional batteries,” he says. “And it holds that energy in a more efficient way.”

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Although climate change affects everyone regardless of socioeconomic status, a recent report by the US Environmental Protection Agency shows that its highest impacts will affect communities that are least able to anticipate, cope with and recover from adverse climate events like air pollution, extreme temperatures and flooding. Those at highest risk in the United States include individuals in one or more of the following categories: low income, minority, no high school diploma or equivalent, and ages 65 and older.

“Those themes are similar whether you’re talking about global communities or strictly within the United States, says Kathryn Wilson, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Economics. Her research focuses on poverty, inequality and social mobility. “Climate change happens to all of us, but that doesn’t mean it affects all of us equally. Climate change affects the most vulnerable much harder. They’re more exposed to it, they’re more susceptible to damages from it and they don’t have sufficient resources to be able to cope with and recover from those damages.”

Wilson says she would be hard pressed to find any economist who thinks that markets are going to work well given climate change. “Basic economic theory recognizes that there are times when markets won’t give us the outcome that’s best for society,” she says. “One of those times is when something called an externality happens. It basically means that there’s an impact outside of the people involved in the transaction.

“For example, if a company pollutes, if I pollute when driving my car, that pollution is felt by everybody, particularly those

who are low income and living in dense urban areas. But the company and I don’t have to pay the cost for that, so we end up with more pollution than is socially efficient. For economists, the solution to an externality is to get the parties involved in the transaction to internalize that cost—perhaps to take that cost into consideration through things like government regulations or imposing a carbon tax.”

“CLIMATE CHANGE HAPPENS TO ALL OF US, BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN IT AFFECTS ALL OF US EQUALLY. CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS THE MOST VULNERABLE MUCH HARDER.”

Another aspect of climate change is related to social mobility: How much does the family you were born into influence where you end up? “We have this idea of the American dream, but research into social mobility has found that Americans don’t have much social mobility,” Wilson says. “If you’re born into a wealthy family in the United States, you’re much more likely to be wealthy when you grow up. If you’re born into a low-income family in the United States, you’re much more likely to be low income when you grow up. That’s true to some extent in other countries, but it is truer in the United States than in other developed countries we compare ourselves to.

“From society’s perspective, that understanding comes with a greater social

responsibility to help alter the trajectory for children who are from low-income families. For example, if you look at asthma rates in children and tie that back to climate, as we see more extreme climate events I expect that we will see higher rates of asthma, especially in areas of high population density. That helps me understand that sense of social responsibility.”

So what can we do to become socially responsible? When Wilson teaches an intro class in principles of microeconomics, she talks about externalities, efficient outcomes and various theorems about ideal economic conditions. And then she throws in the Ruth Anne Principle. (Ruth Anne is her mother.)

“Maybe when we make decisions, we think about other people as well, because that’s certainly what Ruth Anne taught me that I should do,” Wilson says. “She always was aware of what others were feeling. So maybe on an airplane I look to see who’s sitting behind me before I decide whether to put my seat back or not. Is it a little child with plenty of leg room or someone who’s going to be uncomfortable? What I’m ultimately doing, in economic language, is internalizing that externality. I am thinking about the impact on somebody else when making decisions.

“When it comes to climate change, we can still do that. In thinking about what car we’re driving or how much food we’re wasting, we can think about how our decisions may impact others. My individual decisions aren’t ultimately going to change the climate, but collectively a lot of those individual decisions potentially can. Internalizing the impact of our decisions is something all of us could do.”



CLIMATE-POSITIVE AGRICULTURE

Individuals can adopt many sustainable practices that add up to make a big difference in mitigating climate change, but those efforts need to be done in concert with policy changes at the institutional level. Sarah E. Eichler, BS '00, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and the horticulture program, based at Kent State University at Salem, develops policy recommendations for sustainability efforts in agriculture/horticulture, food systems and climate mitigation.

“Looking at broad-scale solutions, we have to pull in many different seemingly unrelated aspects of our life, our work and our community to make progress toward sustainability,” Eichler says. “We’re not just talking about planting an environmentally friendly vegetable garden, we’re talking about a landscape that is managed to foster a healthy community, healthy local economy and a healthy environment.”

While researchers have studied the agricultural industry’s effect on climate change for years, farmers are understandably hesitant to take on unfamiliar practices that require new management skills or equipment

investments, despite long-term improvements to their bottom line. When speaking with local farmers, Eichler tries to convey how climate-positive practices can benefit the environment and farmers alike. Reduced tillage is one example of a climate-positive farming practice that’s been widely adopted over the past 30 years. US Department of Agriculture incentive programs have helped encourage farmers and ranchers to implement such newer methods to minimize impacts on the environment.

By tilling the ground less frequently, farmers allow the soil to stay in place, carbon stays in the soil and provides better absorption and fewer nutrients wash away. The carbon in the soil also dissipates more easily. And, because less fuel is used, it saves energy and money. Some farmers use cover crops to help control erosion and improve soil fertility while reducing the leaching of nutrients—and this means better water quality in rivers and lakes, including major drinking-water sources.

“We’ve known for years that carefully managing nutrient inputs can be a huge climate positive,” Eichler says. “But with recent increases in the price of nitrogen fertilizer and some of the chemical pesticide controls, it now has much larger economic benefits for farmers, too.”

In her current research, Eichler is looking at how managing agricultural fields could affect *albedo*, a surface’s ability to reflect solar radiation back into the atmosphere. Increasing the amount of reflected energy

helps to counterbalance global warming because the Earth absorbs less heat.

“We’re exploring whether practices like reduced tillage and winter cover cropping might increase the amount of energy reflected back,” she says. “We don’t know enough about it yet to know if it could be a significant climate impact or perhaps an opportunity for farmers to earn better global warming mitigation credits in some future carbon market.”

Eichler emphasizes that when it comes to mitigating climate change, personal choices and individual actions can combine to influence business practices. For example, Ohio dairy producers did not readily convert to offer organic milk initially. But when more consumers started buying organic products, farmers realized there was a market and organic dairy products grew from a niche offering to a grocery-store staple. Some climate-forward producers face additional challenges in getting their distinctive product to market. Our purchasing decisions—even the brand of milk we buy—have a real impact on many of the family farmers in our region.

“In terms of policy, it matters who we vote for not just on a national level but on a local level, too,” Eichler says. “We can also be thoughtful about the foods we consume. What impact would it have if we purchased more local foods directly from growers? If we consumed one less serving of meat per week and made sure to use those left-over meals? Educating ourselves on the impact of our purchasing decisions is one step towards more sustainable habits.”

SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION

When Noël Palomo-Lovinski, MFA '09, professor and associate director of the School of Fashion, began designing clothes in the 1990s, few in the industry were talking about sustainable fashion. Now, she teaches a course on sustainable concepts and practices in the fashion industry, which is often cited as the second largest polluter after fossil fuels.

“Once you start thinking about the connections between fashion and the environment, you realize how much of an influence designers have on the industry and all the various connected aspects,” Palomo-Lovinski says. “And you begin to see that designers need to design differently. As an industry, we are so atrociously unsustainable there’s not a single part of the supply chain right now that does not contribute to climate change.”

Some consumers focus on the type of material, thinking that buying only natural fabrics and avoiding synthetics is more environmentally friendly. But there are pros and cons to every choice. It’s not just the difference between polyester or cotton, which are the two most popular fibers.

“If we did it right, you could indefinitely recycle a synthetic fiber,” Palomo-Lovinski says. “Plastic bottles could become sweatshirts, which could become packaging and then perhaps turned back into plastic bottles. We need to think about how we can extend the life of a material so that we no longer rely on digging up fossil fuels.

“Relying too heavily on natural fibers, we run the risk of exacerbating the problems inherent in producing those textiles. The cotton plant leaches nutrients out of the soil, which then requires more nitrogen and chemicals to be applied. That pollutes the water. Cotton is also a monocrop, which means it excludes other plants from growing easily. Many natural fabrics are coated with finishes that are essentially plastic. There are just a lot of different problems.”

Water is used throughout the textile production process—spinning, dyeing, printing and finishing fabrics. But some of the most intensive water and energy use occurs once a consumer brings a garment home. Many laundry soaps contain pollutants. Laundering synthetic fibers releases microplastics into the water. Modern washing machines and detergents

do a perfectly good job of cleaning clothes with cold water, while hot water consumes more energy and wears the fabric out more quickly. And where do our cast-off clothes often end up? In landfills, where plastics take 500 years to decompose while leaching chemicals into the soil.

“I teach my students that the designer has a responsibility to know where clothing is going after it leaves our hands and gets to the customers,” Palomo-Lovinski says. “We have a responsibility to follow it all the way through. We’ve put this out into the world, we need to make sure we know what becomes of it.”

While there are several industry governance organizations gathering metrics on water and energy use and making efforts to systematically reduce the impact, ultimately consumers drive the industry. The impulse to buy fast fashion at cheaper prices leads manufacturers to produce more, which depletes resources and makes clothing more difficult and expensive to produce.

“I tell my students to stop and think before they make a purchase,” Palomo-Lovinski says. “Is this something I really need, or do I just impulsively want it at this moment?”

Be Fashion ‘Smart’

Emissions from textile manufacturing alone are projected to rise 60% by 2030. Through UN Climate Change’s Fashion Charter, more and more businesses (everyone from Adidas to Chanel) are committing to reducing their emissions with the aim of producing net-zero emissions by 2050. As consumers, you can buy fewer clothes and make them last longer, choose local manufacturers who engage in sustainable practices and recycle (and upcycle) your existing clothes.

—Excerpted from “8 Ways You Can Take Climate Action Right Now”

“WE’VE PUT THIS [CLOTHING] OUT INTO THE WORLD, WE NEED TO MAKE SURE WE KNOW WHAT BECOMES OF IT.”

“WE’RE TALKING ABOUT A LANDSCAPE THAT IS MANAGED TO FOSTER A HEALTHY COMMUNITY, HEALTHY LOCAL ECONOMY AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.”



MANAGING ANXIETY

For many, the uncertainty surrounding climate change can be summed up with the looming questions of "How bad? How soon?" It's easy to feel overwhelmed in the face of such daunting issues, especially when it feels like individual actions won't have much impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale. Anxiety can manifest when faced with uncertainty in the context of elevated stress. The key is not to let anxiety become so pervasive that it gets in the way of daily living.

"Emotions help us navigate the demands of life," says Karin Coifman, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences. "Emotions have very clear functions: fear when we encounter something threatening; sadness when there's a loss; joy in moments we share with others. Emotion processing refers to our ability to flexibly change our emotions depending on the circumstances and our needs."

Emotion-related disorders such as depression and anxiety commonly feature a tendency toward rigidity or an inability to regulate emotions relative to circumstances. A person with an anxiety disorder might exhibit a fear response even when there isn't an explicit threat. When a threat is ambiguous, a fear response can be very costly and have negative physiological and psychological consequences.

"Fear responses trigger changes to the cardiovascular system that increase your heart rate, changing blood flow," Coifman says. "Fear also shifts your focus, narrowing

"WORRY ON SOME LEVEL IS APPROPRIATE WHEN FACED WITH A REAL THREAT. IT'S BETTER TO ACTIVELY MANAGE THAT WORRY THAN TRY TO DENY IT OR SUPPRESS IT."

your attention to improve your ability to respond. Your body and mind are poised and ready. This is very functional in the short-term, in response to a real threat. But if you remain at this level of constant activation it starts to wear on your system. Your body is not designed to be in that state of readiness all the time."

Physiological symptoms of anxiety include muscle tension, headaches, difficulty sleeping and digestive issues. A sustained state of readiness makes it difficult to concentrate and focus on anything other than all-consuming worry. The American Psychology Association defines eco-anxiety as "the chronic fear of environmental cataclysm that comes from observing the seemingly irrevocable impact of climate change and the associated concern for one's future and that of next generations."

Younger generations are more prone to experience eco-anxiety, partly because they've been raised within the context of environmental concerns. There is

also a demonstrated psychological phenomenon that as people age and gain greater perspective, they tend to be less reactionary to negative circumstances. Regardless of whether people are worried about experiencing the effects of climate change during their lifetime or have concerns about what future generations will face, ongoing anxiety over the unknown can be distressing.

"When it comes to climate change, that is a legitimate worry," Coifman says. "The threat to humanity is explicit. The ambiguous part is not knowing how quickly it will impact our lives. Worry on some level is appropriate when faced with a real threat. It's better to actively manage that worry than try to deny it or suppress it because that often leads to backlash."

When faced with an enormous problem that feels out of control, finding little things we can control can help manage anxiety. Activities such as composting, growing your own produce, planting native species or installing rain barrels may offer comfort and reassurance that you are doing your part to mitigate climate change.

"Sometimes you can feel overwhelmed by negative information or a feeling that things aren't changing fast enough," Coifman says. "It may help to pivot toward focusing on your own behavior and your own actions, the things you can control, because you can't control the bigger picture."

Students' advice on how to cope with climate anxiety:

- **Recognize your feelings. It's OK to feel bad about climate change.**
- **Write down your anxieties in a list. Cross off any you can't control.**
- **Find things that calm you down when you are distressed. It could be a song, exercise or meditation.**
- **Try to find something—small or big—that you can do. Commit yourself to it.**

—Excerpted from "Climate change: Don't let doom win, project tells worriers," *BBC News Climate & Science*

Act Now

Everyone can help limit climate change. From the way we travel, to the electricity we use and the food we eat, we can make a difference. The United Nations suggests we start with these 10 actions to help tackle the climate crisis.



Save energy at home

Much of our electricity and heat are powered by coal, oil and gas. Use less energy by lowering your heating and cooling, switching to LED light bulbs and energy-efficient electric appliances, washing your laundry with cold water or hang things to dry instead of using a dryer.



Walk, bike or take public transport

The world's roadways are clogged with vehicles, most of them burning diesel fuel or gasoline. Walking or riding a bike instead of driving will reduce greenhouse gas emissions—and help your health and fitness. For longer distances, consider taking a train or bus. And carpool whenever possible.



Consider your travel

Airplanes burn large amounts of fossil fuels, producing significant greenhouse gas emissions. That makes taking fewer flights one of the fastest ways to reduce your environmental impact. When you can, meet virtually, take a train or skip that long-distance trip altogether.



Choose eco-friendly products

Everything we spend money on affects the planet. You have the power to choose which goods and services you support. To reduce your environmental impact, buy local and seasonal foods, and choose products from companies which use resources responsibly and are committed to cutting their gas emissions and waste.



Change your home's energy source

Ask your utility company if your home energy comes from oil, coal or gas. If possible, see if you can switch to renewable sources such as wind or solar. Or install solar panels on your roof to generate energy for your home.



Reduce, reuse, repair and recycle

Electronics, clothes and other items we buy cause carbon emissions at each point in production, from the extraction of raw materials to manufacturing and transporting goods to market. To protect our climate, buy fewer things, shop second-hand, repair what you can and recycle.



Eat more vegetables

Eating more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and less meat and dairy, can significantly lower your environmental impact. Producing plant-based foods generally results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions and requires less energy, land and water.



Throw away less food

When you throw food away, you're also wasting the resources and energy that were used to grow, produce, package and transport it. And when food rots in a landfill, it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. So use what you buy and compost any leftovers.



Speak up

Speak up and get others to join in taking action. It's one of the quickest and most effective ways to make a difference. Talk to your neighbors, colleagues, friends and family. Let business owners know you support bold changes. Appeal to local and world leaders to act now.

—Source: United Nations



ART OF ECOLOGY

The Cuyahoga River has played a significant role in the history of ecological understanding in the United States. It is famous for having been so polluted that it caught fire in 1969, setting off a movement that eventually led to the founding of the Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Water Act. While the Cuyahoga River is in much better health ecologically today than in the 1960s or '70s, it remains a significant point of interaction between humans and the environment.

Taryn McMahon, MFA, associate professor and co-area head of print media and photography in the School of Art, explores the interactions between the human and nonhuman via

“THE HUMAN AND NONHUMAN CANNOT BE SEPARATED AND ARE CONFLATED AND INTERTWINED IN THE FACE OF UNPRECEDENTED ECOLOGICAL CHANGE.”

Northeast Ohio’s waterways in her recent print series, *A Series of Entanglements*.

“I began by walking along the shores collecting objects such as consumer plastics and abandoned fishing supplies, in addition to naturally occurring objects such as algae and stones,” McMahon says. “The silhouette of each object is translated into a stencil and then printed and layered in different highly transparent colors to create unique prints that weave together the

manmade and natural. This results in visual environments that reiterate the entanglement of the current state of ecology, a state in which the human and nonhuman cannot be separated and are conflated and intertwined in the face of unprecedented ecological change.”

McMahon is inspired by artists such as Anna Atkins, a British botanist and photographer in the 1800s who used cyanotype—an early photographic process that is both printmaking and photography—to record the ecology of her time. “My works on paper capitalize on the unique potential of print to record objects faithfully while also allowing for artistic license in choice of color, layering and material exploration,” says McMahon, who received a New Faculty Outstanding Research and Scholarship Award from the University Research Council in 2020.

“Within Western art, most depictions and understandings of nature include untouched landscapes or animals or plants and exclude humans or human-generated objects,” McMahon says. “That is because we do not see ourselves as fundamentally a part of, and dependent upon, the natural world. This worldview leads us to interact with the world in a dominating and often destructive way.

“My recent artworks—which intermingle plastic water bottles, netting and chunks of Styrofoam with native plants, rocks and bark—forgo a romantic view of “nature” and “landscape” as things separate from ourselves, in order to visually reimagine ourselves as interdependent and reliant upon our surroundings.”



Taryn McMahon, *A Series of Entanglements 1*, 2021. Monotype, 30” x 22”



Taryn McMahon, *A Series of Entanglements 6*, 2021. Monotype and graphite, 30” x 22”



Taryn McMahon, *A Series of Entanglements 11*, 2021. Monotype, 30” x 22”



Taryn McMahon, *A Series of Entanglements 5*, 2021. Monotype, 30” x 22”



Taryn McMahon, *A Series of Entanglements 3*, 2021. Monotype, 30” x 22”



Climate Change Resources

If you'd like to learn more, here are some resources to explore.



ALUMNI CLIMATE ADVOCATES

Feeling overwhelmed when it comes to the global challenges we face? These fellow Flashes have found ways to help build a more sustainable future—and you can, too.

BY JILLIAN KRAMER, BA '06

Climate change is affecting all of us in one way or another, and its impacts will only increase in the near future. It's a daunting problem that will be difficult to solve but we cannot give in to discouragement or despair.

Millions of people throughout the world are dedicated to building a clean, green, healthy, sustainable and just planet. They are developing solutions. And when people and organizations work together, we can put those solutions into practice at a global scale. Yes, we need to discuss the devastating challenges we're facing; we also need to stop doomscrolling and do something about them.

We highlight five Kent State alumni who have decided to take action, in big ways and small, to help make a difference—right now.

Food for a Sustainable Future

Climate change affects food systems around the world. Rising temperatures, increasing rain, droughts, fires and more extreme weather events often harm crops and livestock.

Chris Vogliano, MS '12, PhD, RDN, saw how devastating climate change can be to a food system when he conducted research a few years ago as part of a PhD program at Massey University in New Zealand. Traveling to the Solomon Islands, he saw people facing challenges to grow food as stronger cyclones and rising sea levels impact their country. At the same time Indigenous Solomon Islanders are relying more on ultra-processed foods imported from the West that are low in nutrients, including white rice, instant noodles, biscuits and sugary drinks.

Working with the community to identify and scale up local foods that contain essential nutrients missing from their diets—such as a bright orange banana that contains 100 times more vitamin A than a typical banana—Vogliano says simple solutions could help protect the villagers from chronic disease and climate change.

That trip informed his philosophy on how we should produce and eat food. For a 2021 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on *Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change*, Vogliano co-authored a case study on the food system of the Solomon Islands. The study advocated for agrobiodiversity (the biodiversity found within food systems) and preservation of indigenous and traditional knowledge about food.

Today, as a technical advisor of food systems at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID Advancing Nutrition), Vogliano helps people in both low- and middle-income countries better understand how to improve their local food systems and, ultimately, their health.

About 60% of our global calories come from just three staple crops:



At right, Chris Vogliano worked with a professor and registered dietitians from Solomon Islands National University who helped conduct focus group discussions and data collection focused on nutrition and climate change.

rice, corn and wheat. It's not smart—from a nutritional or climate-change perspective—to rely mainly on just three crops, he says. Instead, he encourages people to embrace more diverse regional foods, as was done in the past. "I don't want to idealize the past and say it was perfect," he says, "but there is an opportunity for us to diversify our food systems based on regionally available foods."

For example, while wheat dominates many diets, other grains—such as farro, millet and sorghum—are more nutritious and climate-friendly, Vogliano says. He notes that millet can be grown in "very drought-ridden areas" and is extremely nutrient dense.

And the more diverse foods we eat, the better protected we'll be from climate change, as well as from the escalating problems of obesity and malnutrition, Vogliano says. He encourages people to make more diverse dietary choices—for instance, occasionally swapping out white pasta for millet or farro.

"There's an illusion right now that we're eating a diverse diet because there are so many types of foods in our grocery stores," he says. "But most of them are packaged and most of them are made from the same few ingredients. I want to see our diets become much more diverse."

To help promote that diversity, Vogliano has co-founded Food + Planet, a 501c3 nonprofit with a mission to empower 1 million health professionals to advance sustainable food systems by 2025.

We asked Vogliano what we can do to make our diet healthier and more sustainable.

Prioritize plants.

Plants are the missing ingredient in the majority of the world's diet pattern. Eating more fruits and vegetables are better for us and the planet. Research indicates that eating more whole plant foods can improve our well-being, from our mental health to our gut microbiome.

Waste less food.

It may seem harmless on an individual level, but collectively (7.4 billion people) food waste is a leading driver of greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and water overuse. Luckily, there are simple ways we can reduce our food-waste footprint.

Eat a climate-friendly diet.

Climate-friendly eating doesn't mean you have to give up your favorite foods. People who follow climate-friendly diets consume meat responsibly, opt for more plant-based foods and aim for ingredients that are sourced responsibly.

"There is an opportunity for us to diversify our food systems based on regionally available foods."

Learn more at foodandplanet.org.

Water Equity Leader

You could say that a fishing trip changed the life of Crystal M.C. Davis, BA '04. As a legislative liaison for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, in 2007 she sponsored a fishing trip for 100 local youths in Akron. That daylong trip, Davis says, “ignited my passion for exposing people to the outdoors and for really understanding the environmental justice aspects of some of this environmental work.”

After a stint as federal relations director for Kent State’s Office of Government and Community Relations in Washington, DC, where she established the university’s office on Capitol Hill, Davis went to work for the Alliance for the Great Lakes at its Cleveland office in 2016. She serves as vice president of policy and strategic engagement—a job that entails advocating for improvements to water quality in the region.

People may not think about water quality or access to clean water as a climate change issue, but Davis says it absolutely is—it’s about climate justice and equity for all.

“When you talk about climate change, you’re talking about more frequent heavy rain and storm events,” Davis says. “If my house flooded, I would be able to pay for a plumber to come out tomorrow and clean it up. But for a lot of people, especially in this pandemic, that’s just not their reality.

They don’t have the disposable income to have water remediation in their homes.”

Also during the pandemic people were told to frequently wash their hands and face masks but “many people didn’t have water at home because it had been shut off due to inability to pay,” she says.

It’s an aspect of climate change that people don’t often talk about. “Who wants to be the poster child for unaffordable water?” Davis says. “These are people who are suffering in the shadows. There’s just no face for this important issue.”



“The power to solve complex water challenges lies at the intersection of authentic community engagement and public policymaking.”

Last September, Davis received a Great Lakes Leadership Award from the Great Lakes Protection Fund for her efforts to raise awareness of environmentalism for the people who rely on Lake Erie for drinking water. The award recognized her focus on fair and equitable access to the benefits that come with clean drinking water and the removal of toxins from the lakes and surrounding waterways.

The Alliance for the Great Lakes and its partners embarked on a listening tour in 2017 to hear from people of color in some of Northeast Ohio’s most economically and politically marginalized areas. Davis led the development of the 2018 report, *Shut Up and Listen*, which shares what they learned from those conversations. It also serves as a guide for others who want to listen to community concerns and tailor programs to meet those needs.

“The power to solve complex water challenges lies at the intersection of authentic community engagement and public policymaking,” Davis says.

In 2020 Gov. Mike DeWine appointed Davis to a three-year term on the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. Davis and the Alliance for the Great Lakes also partnered with environmentalists of color in Ohio to discuss inequities in environmental policy during a virtual forum held in November 2020. The forum developed a first-of-its-kind statewide environmental justice policy platform that lays out policy recommendations in the areas of water, land, air and energy to address Ohio’s environmental justice issues.

And she has led a study about water affordability in Ohio.

But she doesn’t want to stop there; Davis wants climate justice for all people: “I’m hoping to reorient environmentalism so it’s not only for one segment of the population.”

Learn more at greatlakes.org.



Time to Protect the Oceans

Brad Baumeister, BA '16, developed successful entrepreneurial skills through Kent State’s LaunchNet program, which helps students turn business ideas into reality. Then, in 2021, he launched Tropiq Watches, a watch brand with a mission for outdoor lovers.

The company is about more than fashion: Baumeister has partnered with the Marine Conservation Institute and its Blue Parks initiative, which recognizes outstanding protected marine areas and helps set a science-based standard for marine conservation. A portion of each Tropiq watch sale helps support endangered sea life and sustainable marine conservation practices around the world.

We asked Baumeister to share more about his company and how it’s helping protect the world’s oceans.

Q: What is your vision for Tropiq Watches?

A: Before Tropiq, my experience with watches wasn’t great, and my friend and former business partner had similar issues. We’ve dealt with broken straps, water damage, bad designs. And we realized the need for a watch that performs well in all types of activities without sacrificing its design. We wanted something that could handle the outdoor elements but also look good in a formal setting—and didn’t break the bank. And we couldn’t really build a watch that promotes outdoor activity without helping to conserve our planet.

“We couldn’t really build a watch that promotes outdoor activity without helping to conserve our planet.”

Q: Why did you choose to partner with the Marine Conservation Institute?

A: We had discussions with multiple organizations, and we really liked the mission and story of the Marine Conservation Institute and its Blue Parks program. It aims to help protect 30% of the world’s oceans and its playgrounds by 2030. That’s a pretty strong mission.

Our aim is to empower our customers to stand up for similar ocean conservation. The Marine Conservation Institute is funding ocean cleanup and preservation, and those are goals we really align with. We believe our customers have a similar idea—they want to leave each outdoor space better than they found it and to protect it for future generations. Our goal right now is to donate a portion of our proceeds to the Marine Conservation Institute to help with this effort.

Q: Why are you passionate about marine conservation?

A: You see in the media a lot of devastation of the oceans and coral reefs. And I’ve visited beaches littered with plastic and waste. When you look at the data on the amount of garbage that ends up in the ocean, it’s enough to make your stomach turn. We felt that our brand fit well with ocean conservation, and it gave us the ability to not only create a brand but to promote ocean cleanup and protection at the same time.

Learn more at tropiqwatches.com and on Instagram: [@tropiqwatches](https://www.instagram.com/tropiqwatches).

A Clean Start in the Solar Field

Solar is the future, says Emilie Oxel O’Leary, BS ’93. That’s why in 2016 the Marietta, Georgia, resident started Sunshine Solar, which has become one of the largest mechanical solar companies in the United States. The company has installed solar-powered systems for some of the world’s best-known brands—including Amazon, L’Oréal, Target, Perry Ellis and Blue Cross Blue Shield—to help support their goals of being sustainable companies.

But as the business grew, Oxel O’Leary watched something else grow: the trash the company was contributing to landfills. “We were building these massive, beautiful, energy-efficient systems,” she says. “But on the back end, we were accumulating tons of cardboard, metal, broken solar panels—and we didn’t know what to do with any of it. So, we were putting it in containers and hauling it to landfills. And I just thought, ‘This is crazy.’”

So Oxel O’Leary, who had sold Sunshine Solar in January 2020 but remained CEO until January 2022, stepped away from the company. In February 2022, she launched another woman-owned company, Green Clean Solar. It specializes in the removal and disposal of waste and recyclable materials accumulated during the construction phase of commercial solar sites in the Southeast and East Coast regions.

With just a few months under its belt, Green Clean Solar and Oxel O’Leary have already done big things. In her third project, she worked with a client to haul and recycle more than 2,500 broken or leftover solar panels from a large-scale utility project. The panels weighed a total of 157,500 pounds. That’s 79 tons that would have ended up in a landfill, she says, but instead was recycled to be reused around the world.

“That shows there is a solution for these broken panels,” says Oxel O’Leary, who notes that she has “always had an entrepreneurial spirit.”

She graduated from Kent State with a degree in fashion merchandising, and later pursued a master’s degree in business with a concentration in e-commerce before founding her own consulting business. While working with a client on solar projects, she realized the value of solar power and soon decided to start her own business in the solar field.

“I knew I was doing a good thing for the Earth by building these massive solar systems,” Oxel O’Leary says. “We were producing electricity through the sun, through the panels. But now I’m taking it a step further, where I’m trying to eliminate the footprint that we’re leaving here on the Earth by recycling all this solar waste material. So, it creates a win-win situation.”

As she reflects on what she wants her climate change legacy to be, she thinks of her three teenage daughters, one of whom has decided to become an environmental engineer. Oxel O’Leary wants to influence young people to make the world a better, cleaner place—to have a bigger impact than her generation has had.

“Through my affiliation with Girl Scouts of America, I can instill the benefits and science of solar in young girls,” she says. “It gives me great joy to empower future generations of solar enthusiasts.”

“I feel like I can influence the younger generation to say, ‘Hey, we can really focus on recycling. We just have to put the pieces of the puzzle together.’”

Learn more at greenclean-solar.com.

“I’m trying to eliminate the footprint that we’re leaving here on the Earth by recycling all this solar waste material.”



“I’m a big believer that if people can make a small change in their own life, those changes matter.”



Better Body, Better Earth

Ryan Andrews, MS ’05, MA ’05, had been a nationally competitive bodybuilder for five years before he earned graduate degrees from Kent State in nutrition and exercise physiology. After completing his training to become a registered dietitian at Johns Hopkins Medicine, he worked as a dietitian, movement/exercise coach and yoga instructor—and he wrote his first book, *Drop the Fat Act and Live Lean*, focused on weight loss and healthy nutrition.

During that time, however, he also became increasingly concerned about the harmful treatment of animals and farm workers, the poor health outcomes people experience from eating fewer nutrient-dense foods and the way the planet suffers from how Americans produce food. “I felt I needed to spend more time on bigger food system issues,” Andrews says.

He pivoted his career toward educating people about sustainable food systems, teaching classes at SUNY Purchase and volunteering at sustainable farms and nonprofit food recovery organizations. In 2021, he wrote and self-published an e-book, *Swole Planet: Building a Better Body and Building a Better Earth* (swole being an informal adjective for having a physique enhanced by bodybuilding exercises).

We asked Andrews what we can do to benefit our bodies and the planet.

Walk with a purpose. We spend a lot of time at gyms walking on treadmills, riding bikes and things like that. And I think that’s great. I’ve done it. I’ve recommended it. But what if we could incorporate more walking and biking that’s purposeful? So, walking or biking to get around—to get to work, to get to the store, to go grocery shopping, to go to the movies. That would benefit our health. And that would require less fuel for transportation. That’s a win-win.

Eat more beans. The average adult in the United States eats nearly 180 pounds of meat each year, compared to 10 pounds of beans. And the majority of farm animals are raised in conditions that are catastrophic for their health, farmworkers and surrounding communities. If we collectively increase our bean intake while at the same time decreasing our meat intake, it would have a ripple effect helping animals, ecosystems and our own health.

Volunteer for an environmental cause. Volunteerism can have a big impact on your health and the Earth. What if you could spend one day a week—or even one day a month—helping at a farm? You’d be getting some physical activity, because you’re moving your body in ways that it’s not used to: You’re lunging, you’re twisting, you’re pushing, you’re pulling, you’re getting outside, getting fresh air, getting in the dirt, getting around people who are like-minded. All these different things are good for our overall health and positively impact the planet.

It’s OK to start small. I’m a big believer that if people can make a small change in their own life, those changes matter. For anybody who can give a little more thought or energy or time to these things, any small change matters and adds up. I’m not confident that we’re going to see a lot of big, top-down legislation to make things better. I think it has to start with people and communities making small changes, and hopefully it spreads and becomes the social norm over time. ⚡

Learn more at ryandandrews.com.



Shining a Light on Unsolved Crimes

With the Porchlight Project, true crime author James Renner, BA '00, has turned from writing about murders to helping solve them.

BY MICHAEL BLANDING

The case of Barbara Blatnik had always stuck in James Renner's mind. A pretty high school senior from a suburb of Cleveland, Blatnik had gone out partying a few days before Christmas in 1987. The next morning, she was found, naked and strangled, in a wooded ditch a half-hour outside Cuyahoga Falls. Police identified her body by an inscription in Blatnik's class ring, but they never had a suspect. "It was such a weird case," says Renner. "She went out partying with her friends, and then the next morning she's found naked and murdered in the country. How could that happen?"

As a true crime writer, Renner has been asking similar questions for almost two decades to get to the bottom of some of Ohio's most intractable cold cases. In fall 2019, however, Renner decided to try a different tack. Contacting the Cuyahoga Falls Police Department, he told them about a nonprofit he'd recently launched called the Porchlight Project. It uses the new tool of genetic genealogy, matching DNA evidence to massive databases to help identify suspects and victims. The previous year, it had been used in California to catch the notorious Golden State Killer. Now, Renner proposed they use the technique to identify Blatnik's unknown assailant.

Police agreed to provide a sample, and the nonprofit paid the expense for laboratory analysis and genealogical sleuthing. Several months later, in May 2020, Renner got a

call from Barbara's sister Donna. She told him police had made an arrest.

That moment was the culmination of a lifetime spent investigating unsolved murders. When Renner was 11 years old, growing up in the Cleveland suburb of Rocky River, he saw "missing" posters on telephone poles for Amy Mihaljevic, a girl about his age who had been abducted from nearby Bay Village. "My first thought was if she was in my sixth grade class, she'd be the girl I'd be sending notes to," he remembers. "I became obsessed with solving the case as this kind of Encyclopedia Brown boy detective."

He rode his bike to the malls and scoped out crowds, looking for men who might fit the composite sketch created by police. "It was this moment I realized that we live in a dangerous world," Renner says. "If this could happen to somebody that I could go to school with, it could happen to anybody."

Police found Mihaljevic's body in a field a few months later, but her killing remained a mystery that Renner never stopped wanting to solve. At Kent State, he majored in English and began writing for *The Kent Stater* student newspaper, deciding by graduation that journalism was his calling. He soon got a job as a staff writer at the alternative weekly *Cleveland Scene*, where his first major story was an investigation into Mihaljevic's killing.

"It was very surreal," he says. "Suddenly I had permission to ask questions and meet the detectives involved and Amy's

family." His investigation grew into a book about the case, *Amy: My Search for Her Killer*, published in 2006; by that time, he had written about more than a dozen unsolved crimes.

"It's a drive to solve a complicated puzzle that nobody has solved before," he says of his fascination. "The only person who sees the whole puzzle is the killer who did it. It's a battle of wits—are you smarter than the killer or is he going to get away with it?"

In all his reporting, however, he'd never succeeded in identifying a murderer. By the time he was investigating the disappearance of Maura Murray in 2011, the work had begun to take its toll. As he describes in his book *True Crime Addict: How I Lost Myself in the Mysterious Disappearance of Maura Murray*, published in 2017, he found himself threatened by some of the men involved in the case, which in turn put stress on his marriage and family. He eventually entered therapy to deal with the trauma.

Around the same time, however, he first heard about the new tool of genetic genealogy when the Golden State Killer was arrested in 2018. In it, he saw a potential means to overcome his frustrations about solving cold cases. "I realized right away this was going to change everything," Renner says. Unlike previous forms of DNA testing, in which police could only compare samples with the thousands of convicted criminals in state offender databases, the

advent of widespread genetic testing has created commercial databases with millions of records. Even a near match can lead investigators to a family member of the perpetrator, who may then be identified by family tree research. "It works like a genetic fingerprint," Renner says.

Despite the technology's potential, testing is prohibitively expensive for most police departments. Renner put out a message on Facebook asking for help; it was answered by Alexa Doutt, a director of advancement at Kent State. The two met at a coffee shop in West Akron—and the idea of the Porchlight Project was born.

"I was always a fan of James's work, and this was a way for me to make a difference," says Doutt, who handled the back-end legal work of setting up the nonprofit and began fundraising. The two assembled a board, which includes graphic designer Dan Marks, BA '99, a friend from Renner's Kent State days, and Phil Trexler, BS '90, a 3News investigative producer whom Renner knew from *Scene*.

Starting with the Blatnik case, the Porchlight Project paid \$6,000 to sequence the DNA found under her fingernails, which required a complex procedure to separate Blatnik's DNA from that of her attacker. A genetic genealogist matched the resulting DNA to a 67-year-old Cleveland man named James Zastawnik; police confirmed the match with a fresh sample.

Renner was ecstatic when he got the call from Blatnik's sister that Zastawnik had been arrested. "That moment is right up there with my marriage and the birth of my kids," Renner says. "Rarely does something work out so perfectly." Although Zastawnik died of cancer before he could stand trial, for Blatnik's family his identification put an end to more than three decades of uncertainty. "Her family was able to have some closure, which is the most important thing," Doutt says.

Just as importantly, the outcome showed that the Porchlight Project's model worked.

For its second case, the Porchlight Project took on the identification of 72 human bones found wrapped in newspaper in a barn in New London, Ohio. Renner was particularly excited since it was located near the home of one of the suspects in the Amy Mihaljevic murder. What the project found when it tested them, however, was more bizarre.

A genetic genealogist traced them to a schoolteacher named Hallie Armstrong, who died in 1881. While Armstrong was ostensibly buried more than 150 miles away in Clinton County, research by genealogist Val Bogart revealed that the home was once the residence of a prominent physician; Armstrong may have been a victim of an epidemic of grave robbing to obtain bones for medical research. While in this case the project may not have solved a murder, it did solve a mystery. "We were able to give [Hallie Armstrong] her name back," Doutt says. "She can be laid to rest as she was meant to be."

Fresh off this success, the project is currently at work on identifying victims in two other cold cases. In one, a man's body was found inside a barrel in Cleveland in 1969. He had been shot and dismembered. In another, a young woman's body was found partially decomposed on the shores of Lake Erie in Sandusky in 1980.

In both cases, Renner is hopeful that the identity of the victim can generate leads. "There are a lot of John and Jane Does in Ohio that need to be identified, and to me that's just as exciting as catching a killer," he says. "We have to identify the victim before we can even figure out where to start with potential suspects."

Recently, the Porchlight Project received a major gift of \$25,000 from Ashley Flowers, host of the Crime Junkie podcast, that has allowed it to start an endowment to fund its work. Renner figures it has the funding to take on another two cases right away. He also hopes it might soon be able to take on higher-profile cases, such as that of the infamous Cleveland Torso Murderer from the 1930s—and perhaps even the Amy Mihaljevic case, which recently has seen some new developments. "I think genetic genealogy could solve the Mihaljevic case and hopefully one day the Porchlight Project can help," Renner says. "If I could choose to solve any case in the world, it's this one."

Ultimately, Renner hopes the project can serve as a model, shining a light to illuminate long-dark cases and laying mysteries to rest at last. "There are so many cases in Ohio, we don't need to branch out," he says. "But there is a need for nonprofits like the Porchlight Project in every state."

Such an army of investigators could truly be a game changer in solving cold cases nationwide, bringing long-awaited closure to victims' families. "The technology is so good that if you left DNA at a crime scene, you might as well turn yourself in," Renner says. "It's only a matter of time before you will be caught." ⚡

Learn more about the Porchlight Project at <https://porchlightonline.org/> and read about James Renner's podcasts and other projects at <https://jamesrenner.com/>.

THE BOROWITZ COLLECTION: CENTURIES OF TRUE CRIME

Over the last few years, the appetite for true crime stories has seemed insatiable. Podcasts and documentaries devoted to dissecting cases—the more chilling the better—are among the most “binge-worthy” programming being created.

However, since 1989 visitors to the Department of Special Collections and Archives (on the 12th floor of the Kent State University Library) have had ample opportunity to obsess over some of history’s most fascinating and disturbing criminal cases.

The Borowitz Collection’s books, artifacts and ephemera (things meant for short-term use such as pamphlets and postcards) document the history of crime from ancient times to the present day, mostly in the United States, England, France and Germany. Donated by Albert Borowitz and Helen Osterman Borowitz, the collection features materials related to some of the most notorious criminals and their crimes, including the Lindbergh baby kidnapping and murder, outlaws of the American West and Jack the Ripper.

“One of the highlights (of the collection) is a ‘penny dreadful’ publication called *The Whitechapel Murders or The Mysteries of the East End*, which was published in 1888 while the Ripper murders were still occurring,” says Cara Gilgenbach, head of Special Collections and Archives, acting university archivist and associate professor. “It’s described in the collection’s inaugural catalog as a ‘mixture of fact and fantasy.’ But I find it fascinating to see something that was printed and sold during the time of what would become one of the most infamous unsolved serial murder cases in history.”

Albert Borowitz and Helen Osterman Borowitz, of Cleveland, spent decades accumulating their collection. He had started it at age 12 when he asked his father, a business executive and book collector, to buy him an edition of the complete Sherlock Holmes stories. Albert Borowitz went on to Harvard University, where he earned a BA in classics, an MA in Chinese regional studies and a JD. Although he practiced corporate (not criminal) law as a partner in an international firm, in his personal time Borowitz studied true crime incidents and their influence on the arts, literature, culture and society.

By the time he retired, he and his wife, a Radcliffe-educated art historian with literary interests, had amassed a library of more than 12,000 primary and secondary sources on crime as well as works of literature based on true crime incidents. Albert Borowitz also has written a number of true crime essays, articles and books (both fiction and nonfiction), some with his wife (who died in 2012). He received the 1981 Cleveland Arts Prize for Literature.

In 1988, the Borowitzes were looking for a permanent home for their collection when Albert Borowitz met Dean



The Whitechapel Murders or the Mysteries of the East End (London. G. Purkess, 286 Strand. W.C., 1888), engraved title page inside double frame, 149 x 215 mm. The Jack the Ripper murders were still occurring when this publication, a mixture of fact and fantasy, appeared.

Keller at a dinner hosted by a mutual friend. At the time, Keller was associate director of Kent State University Libraries and founding curator of the Department of Special Collections. He invited Albert Borowitz to the Kent Campus, and the following year, the Borowitzes began donating their true crime and sheet music collections to the Kent State University Library.

Since then, the collections have continued to grow through acquisition and donation. Today, the Borowitz Collection is an international source for crime historians, film documentarians, museum curators, novelists, antiquarian book dealers and producers of some of those “binge-worthy” programs.

“I am fond of saying that even if you think you aren’t interested in true crime, the Borowitz Collection will make you a convert,” Gilgenbach wrote in the collection’s 25th anniversary exhibition catalog. “There’s truly something for everyone in this collection, and I know it will offer countless researchers material to discover and explore for generations to come.” ⚡

—Candace Goforth DeSantis, BS '94

See selections from the Borowitz Collection at www.kent.edu/magazine/borowitz-collection-centuries-true-crime.

Special Collections and Archives is creating a digital archive of some of the material from the Borowitz Collection. In-person research with the collection is available by appointment.

To schedule a visit, call 330-672-2270 or email specialcollections@kent.edu.

CRIME STORIES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Kent State University Press, which publishes two journals as well as 20–30 books each year, is known for a variety of fields including history, literature and regional studies—and a series of current books about true crime history for both a general and scholarly audience.

The spark for developing the True Crime History Series was Albert Borowitz’s *Blood and Ink: An International Guide to Fact-Based Crime Literature*, which The Kent State University Press published in 2002. His 586-page annotated bibliography provides a broad selection of true crime accounts from the 17th through 20th centuries, as well as literary works based on true crime incidents. It includes books from his extensive personal library, which he and his wife, Helen Osterman Borowitz, began donating to Kent State in 1989.

In 2003, the Press engaged Albert Borowitz as its true crime history editor, and the first books in the series were published in 2005.

Susan Wadsworth-Booth, director of The Kent State University Press, says the Press has a reputation for publishing books that are highly researched and well documented, including those devoted to true crime. That reputation and a surge in the general public’s interest have raised the publisher’s profile among fans of the genre.

Books in the True Crime History Series often are featured on the popular literary website CrimeReads. They also have been featured on true crime podcasts, and a few have been licensed for film or TV rights. One of the series’ authors, James Badal, has appeared on Court TV to discuss cases in his books.

Wadsworth-Booth says the Press has become known among writers for publishing books on intriguing and thought-provoking crime cases. That has resulted in an increase in book proposals, not all of which meet the publisher’s standards. “We don’t want to publish books that are just sensational or ‘ripped from the headlines,’” she says. “We are committed to true crime stories that are genuinely significant in historical terms—those that have important context in cultural, psychological, sociological, political or legal areas.

“I believe that these stories, in part, show us both the best and worst of human nature, and we can all identify with that in some way,” she adds. “I also think we all want to understand mystery. What are the cultural and sociological factors that fed into this act of violence, or what factors led to someone being accused or prosecuted? What can we learn about our systems of justice, of checks and balances, that can help explain our current culture? And, of course, are there people in these stories with whom we sympathize? That’s the part that most captures my imagination.”

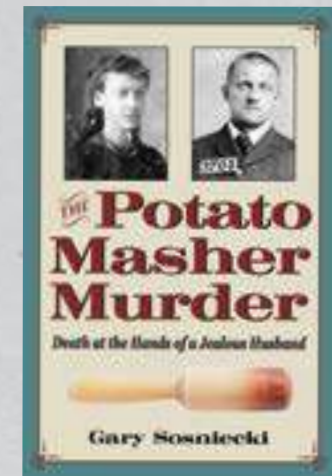
—Candace Goforth DeSantis, BS '94

Two recent publications from the True Crime History Series:



Queen of the Con: From a Spiritualist to the Carnegie Imposter by Thomas Crowl (The Kent State University Press, Oct. 26, 2021) tells the true story of Cassie Chadwick, a successful swindler and “one of the top 10 imposters of all time,” according to *Time* magazine. Posing as the illegitimate daughter of philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, she borrowed \$2 million (approximately \$50 million today) throughout

northern Ohio, Pittsburgh, New York and Boston. When the fraud scheme collapsed in 1904, it was a nationwide sensation. The book leads readers to consider aspects of gender stereotypes, social and economic class structures, and the ways in which we humans can so often be fooled.



The Potato Masher Murder: Death at the Hands of a Jealous Husband by Gary Sosniecki (The Kent State University Press, June 30, 2020) is the true story of a murder that took place in 1906 and was front-page news throughout northern Indiana for much of a year—but was never spoken of by the family for several generations. It was written by the murdered wife’s great-grandson, an award-winning journalist

who uncovered the family’s dark secret. As he discovered, wife beating was commonplace in the early 20th century, and his book unearths the full story of two immigrant families united by love and torn apart by domestic violence. ⚡

1950s



Mildred "Millie" Grossman, MA '54, Waverly, OH, turned 100 on October 27, 2021. She celebrated with her brother, **Mel Grossman, BS '55**, Bellbrook, Ohio, and his wife, Shelley.

Millie Grossman majored in Latin, English and social studies at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, and graduated in 1943. She taught high school in Magnolia, Ohio, and Edinburg, Ohio, (one year at each) and then at LaBrae High School in Leavittsburg, Ohio, for 12 years.

When Kent State began offering a library science curriculum in 1946, she began taking summer classes and received a master's degree in 1954. Her last teaching assignment was at Glenwood High School (now GlenOak) in Canton, Ohio, where she applied her library skills for 21 years. She also volunteered to help three elementary schools in Alliance, Ohio, enhance their library programs.

Her brother, Mel, notes: "Years of post-retirement volunteering in a host of community and church activities in Alliance (her hometown) kept her active and vital."



Jersey presentation: (left to right) Sean Lewis, Lou Holtz and Randale Richmond

Lou Holtz, BS '59, Honorary Doctor of Law '94, Orlando, FL, was the guest speaker at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Breakfast as part of the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl in Boise, Idaho, on Dec. 20, 2021. About 70 Kent State players and coaches joined a similar group from the team's bowl opponent, the University of Wyoming, along with hundreds of other patrons, to hear Holtz share stories of the gridiron and about his faith. Sean Lewis, Kent State's head football coach, and **Randale Richmond, MS '06**, Kent State's athletic director, presented Holtz with a Kent State jersey. The next day, the Wyoming Cowboys beat the Kent State Golden Flashes 52 to 38.

1960s



Sugar Cemented Slavery from "Why Reparations" lino print series

Charles "Chuck" Miley, BS '65, Maplewood, NJ, exhibited work from two of his series ("Why Reparations" and "Black Lives Matter Martyrs") in a special installation celebrating Black History Month. The exhibit was part of Fresh Air Montclair Exhibitions, a township-wide initiative to promote and support art and artists in public spaces while enlivening empty storefronts for community enjoyment. The "Why Reparations" lino print series will become an art-made book illustrating the series of prints.

In his artist statement, Miley wrote, "Slavery, the original sin of our country, has left a poison in our society. As an artist, my art is my voice; I must use my art to draw attention to this hate and injustice. Picasso said, 'Painting (art) is a weapon.' Therefore, I 'say their names' in my 'Black Lives Matter Martyrs' series of woodblock prints. I honor those men's and women's lives and their memory."

He later wrote, "I also have been awarded a Fellowship Grant from the New Jersey State Council of the Arts in printmaking. I guess this goes back to around 1962 in the Introduction to Printmaking course in old Van Deusen Hall at KSU. My work at Kent State and my graduate work at Rutgers University and Pratt Manhattan have brought me to this point in my career where I am gathering benefits."

Josef Sekon, BA '68, Aptos, CA, artistic director of Aptos Keyboard Series, enjoyed the world premiere of his most recent work, the Aptos Sound Project, in the Kaleidoscopes concert in Santa Cruz, California. The concert, by the Santa Cruz Symphony under the direction of Daniel Stewart, was on April 30, 2022, at the Civic Auditorium. The following day, it was performed at the Mello Center in Watsonville, California.

A longtime music teacher at Cabrillo College in Aptos, Sekon hosted concerts in his home and other local venues for the past several years. When the concert series outgrew a "house

concert" size, he partnered with the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist to present the Aptos Keyboard Series at St. John's, with the mission to promote gifted young pianists and offer them the opportunity to perform in a concert setting.

1970s

James Ellor, BS '73, McGregor, TX, arrived at Kent in fall 1970. During his time at Kent State, he initiated the McElrath/Skeels Rehabilitation Group and served in the University Year for Action and Volunteers in Service to America (now AmeriCorps VISTA). He went on to McCormick Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago to become both a social worker and Presbyterian minister. He earned a DMin. and PhD while working at the University of Chicago to bridge religious and spiritual concerns of older adults.

He taught at National Louis University for 21 years and at Baylor University for 17 years, recently retiring from Baylor as the Dorothy Barfield Kronzer Endowed Professor Emeritus in Family Studies at the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has written 10 books, more than 150 juried articles and is an internationally known speaker on the topic of religion and aging.

Ellor has been the general editor of the *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging* for the past 23 years. He is currently the co-general editor of the new *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying* (Routledge Press).

His work with the local community in Ravenna, Ohio, started him on a 50-year career to serve people in communities and churches, training students on these topics and filling gaps in the literature. In his retirement, he continues to offer counseling for first responders and to support churches with ministries for older adults.

M. Scott McBride, BM '76, MM '78, DuBois, PA, retired as chancellor of Penn State DuBois, effective July 1, 2021. He received a Nittany Lion statue from the DuBois Educational Foundation board members in recognition and appreciation of his service. Under his direction, Penn State DuBois raised more than \$12 million, mostly in support of student scholarships. The funds also helped establish the North Central PA LaunchBox, one of 21 entrepreneurial centers the university has founded across the state to promote economic growth in the region.

Before coming to Penn State DuBois in March 2017, McBride was dean of the Caudill College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Morehead State University in Kentucky, beginning in 2008. Prior to that he was chair of the department of music and a professor of music at Morehead State. In 1990, he earned a doctorate in philosophy of music education from the University of Oklahoma.

SUPERHERO ALUMNUS

Jefferson "Jeff" Pierce, BSE '69, Cleveland, OH, was a Golden Flash before he became DC Comics' Black Lightning. A Cleveland native, he enrolled at Kent State in pursuit of a teaching degree. Pierce's athletic abilities landed him a spot in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, where he won gold in the decathlon. After this feat, he returned to Kent State and completed a Bachelor of Science in education. Upon graduating, he became a teacher and later principal of Garfield High School in the south side of Metropolis.

Pierce instilled a sense of purpose in his students, pushing them to realize their full potential. But it became increasingly difficult to teach in a town riddled with violence and crime, so he took matters into his own hands. Born with metahuman abilities to manipulate and generate electricity, Pierce had suppressed that side of himself until the time came to use his talents to protect his students and his town. His crime-fighting alter ego, Black Lightning, served justice wherever he was needed most.

He later became one of the cofounding members of the Outsiders superhero team, and he also served as Secretary of Education under then-US President Lex Luthor. After resuming his life as a teacher/vigilante, Pierce continues to aid his fellow neighbors in the fight against criminals and villains looking to bully and take advantage of others.

BEHIND BLACK LIGHTNING:

Jefferson Pierce (aka Black Lightning) was created by Tony Isabella, who has always been a lover of comics and aspired to write them himself. While he currently resides in Medina,



Cover of *Black Lightning*, Vol. 1, Issue 6 (1978)

Ohio, he grew up on the west side of Cleveland, which was quite segregated at the time. During his teen years, he was involved in a comic book club and soon realized that his Black friends weren't well-represented within the stories they loved.

"I always thought it was unfair that my Black friends didn't have more characters like them. So, I told myself that if I got into comics I would try to work on, and create, characters of color," Isabella says. "It was one of the things I wanted to do with my career."



Black Lightning, Vol. 1, Issue 6 (1978), featured the panel that revealed Jefferson Pierce was a Golden Flash.

He eventually found his way to comic writing while working at *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland. His industry connections led him to an opportunity at Marvel, one of the biggest comic book publications. He got his start writing for some of Marvel's most renowned characters including Spider-Man, Ghost Rider, Moon Knight, the Avengers, Daredevil, the Fantastic Four, Black Goliath and Luke Cage.

Isabella later moved to DC Comics where he created the character of Black Lightning, who has been an icon in Black history and pop culture since his debut in 1977. Isabella chose Kent State as his character's alma mater because he wanted Pierce to be from Cleveland, Ohio, and he thought Kent State was an Ohio school everyone would recognize. However, his character's lightning symbol and powers had no connection to Kent State's Golden Flashes.

He wrote Black Lightning's short-lived 1970s and 1990s series and returned to the character in 2017 with the publication of the limited series *Black Lightning: Cold Dead Hands*. A *Black Lightning* TV series ran for four seasons on the CW Network, from 2018-2021. Isabella and artist Trevor Von Eeden received creator credit on each episode.

While Isabella has written for characters in many comics, he says Black Lightning holds a special place in his heart. "There are very few comics I've written where I haven't liked the character. But Black Lightning is always my favorite."

Read more about Black Lightning and creator Tony Isabella at www.kent.edu/today/news/kent-states-superhero-alumnus-black-lightning.



Debra Lew Harder, BS '85, Gladwyne, PA, was appointed the new host of the Metropolitan Opera's live radio broadcasts, the longest-running classical music program in American radio history. A pianist and former practicing physician, she is just the fifth host of the 91-year-old broadcast series. While attending medical school at NEOMED, Lew Harder was mentored by Tung Kwong-Kwong, who taught piano at the Kent State University School of Music, along with her husband, Ma Si-Hon, a professor of violin. Read her 11/24/10 blog post about Mr. and Mrs. Ma, "A Life Worth Living," at <https://debralewhardermusic.com/blog/tag/2010>.

Rick Haines, BBA '77, MBA '89, North Canton, OH, was named president and CEO of Aultman Health Foundation as of July 1, 2021. He previously was president and CEO of AultCare, the Aultman Health Foundation's affiliated insurance company, since 2001. AultCare has been named among Best Insurance Companies by *U.S. News & World Report* over multiple years for its Medicare Advantage Plan. Haines' volunteer work includes past board chairmanships with the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce and Kent State University at Stark.

Annalisa Stubbs Williams, BA '77, Akron, OH, was selected to serve on the Kent State University Alumni Association's National Board of Directors, effective July 1, 2021. The 21-member volunteer board meets quarterly.

In May 2022, she was honored as a Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio, and she received the University of Akron School of Law's Outstanding Law Alumni Award.

After graduating from Kent State with a degree in political science, Williams earned master's and law degrees from The University of Akron. She was elected to the Akron bench in 2003 and has started and presided over several programs in the court, including the Mental Health Court.

1980s

Beth Cunningham, BS '82, MA '84, PhD '87, Hyattsville, MD, of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), has been named a fellow of the American Physical Society. The number of APS fellows elected each year is limited to no more than one-half of 1% of the membership. It is a prestigious recognition by her peers of her outstanding contributions to physics.

She became executive officer of AAPT in 2011 and has worked with the association's leadership, committees and staff to increase the focus on excellence in physics education with particular emphasis on improving the educational and occupational opportunities for women and historically marginalized groups within the physics education community.

Cunningham's professional contributions have included numerous refereed publications,

workshops and presentations. She has helped lead important faculty development projects, including the Project Kaleidoscope Summer Leadership Institutes, the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Transformations Project and the US delegation to the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics International Conference on Women in Physics. With funding from the National Science Foundation, she co-produced the 2014 video *HERStories: Words of Wisdom and Encouragement from Women in Physics*. Leading a committee of women educators in physics and astronomy, she developed the eAlliances Project in 2017, and she is currently the principal investigator of the Physics and Astronomy SEA Change pilot project.



Dean L. Seavers, BBA '84, Chestnut Hill, MA, has been appointed a new member of the Board of Directors of AMETEK Inc., effective Feb. 24, 2022. AMETEK is a leading global manufacturer of electronic instruments and electromechanical devices, with 2021 sales of \$5.5 billion.

Seavers most recently served as president and executive director for National Grid, a leading provider of electricity, natural gas and clean energy solutions. From 2015 through 2020 he led an impressive transformation at National Grid, including leading its clean energy and decarbonization initiatives. Previously, he served as founding president and chief

executive officer at Red Hawk Fire & Security, the second largest independent fire and security platform in the US, and at GE Security, a \$2 billion product and technology group. He has also held leadership positions at United Technologies Corp. and Tyco International, and he serves on the board of directors for Pacific Gas and Electric Co., Albemarle Corp. and James Hardie Building Products.

After graduating from Kent State, Seavers earned an MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

Michael Loderstedt, MFA '85, Cleveland, OH, Kent State Professor Emeritus of Art (2006-2016), was named a 2022 Artist-in-Residence in poetry and visual art by Akron Soul Train Gallery. Part of the residency includes an artist-led community engagement program. Learn more at www.akronsoultrain.org.

1990s

Jan Jumet, BBA '91, Darlington, PA, founder and chief executive officer of Jumet Financial, announced the opening of his national headquarters in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, in August 2021.



The Sabatose family: (left to right) Lori, Gabby, Adam, Chuck

Lori Sabatose, MA '93, Brockport, PA, and her family were named the 2019/2020 Allegheny Mountain District Family of the Year by the United States Tennis Association. The designation honors the family's contribution to tennis, on a local and/or section basis. The Allegheny Mountain District includes 24 counties from Erie, Pennsylvania, to West Virginia. The Sabatose family was honored at the USTA Middle States AMD Awards Ceremony on Oct. 16, 2021, at Mount Lebanon Tennis Center in Pittsburgh.

Sabatose, who taught tennis at Kent State as a graduate student from 1992 to 1993, has taught tennis at Penn State DuBois, and has coached high school, college and international teams. She is certified by the Professional Tennis Registry and serves on the leadership council for the United States Tennis Association. In 2020 she started a nonprofit, DuBois Regional Tennis Association, which offers free clinics for the community. To help support tennis, contact duboiscta@gmail.com.

Danielle Dixon, BA '95, Cleveland, OH, was named a 2022 Artist-in-Residence in poetry and visual art by Akron Soul Train Gallery. Part of the residency includes an artist-led community engagement program. Learn more at www.akronsoultrain.org.

Bard Fulton, BS '95, MBA '98, Cleveland, OH, has been promoted to vice president of Fortney & Weygandt Inc., as of Feb. 1, 2022. He will be responsible for continuing to drive the growth of the company's general contracting service nationwide. In his new role, Fulton will focus on project development, operational efficiencies and streamlining internal business processes. He will continue with his active role in multi-site project management and project estimating.

Fulton began his career at Fortney & Weygandt in 2001 as a project manager overseeing various multi-site rollout programs and soon began leading the department. He has worked with retail, restaurant and commercial clients on national projects with varied scopes, and he looks forward to getting involved with more projects and managing from a corporate level.



Thrity Umrigar, PhD '97, Cleveland Heights, OH, a Distinguished University Professor of English at Case Western University, recently published her latest novel, *Honor* (Algonquin Books, January 2022), which was an Indie Next List pick and Reese's Book Club pick for January 2022.

"A few years ago, I read a series of articles about the misogyny endured by women in rural India," says Umrigar. "I lived in India until I was 21, but as an urban kid, some of the 'traditions' and rituals I read about—most of which are rooted in iron-clad beliefs about caste and religion and patriarchy—shocked me. I began to conceive of a novel where a woman exercises basic human rights—the right to employment, to love and marry whoever she chooses—and is brutally punished for her courage. I wanted to explore her inner life, the source of such bravery. And then I thought of a second character, one who has had the advantages of wealth and education, but who has also been wounded by the divisions in Indian society. I wanted to see these two

women in conversation, to see whether they could inspire the other."

Umrigar is the bestselling author of eight novels, including *The Space Between Us*, a finalist for the PEN/Beyond Margins Award, as well as a memoir and three children's picture books. Her books have been translated into several languages and published in more than 15 countries. She is the winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize, a Lambda Literary award and the Seth Rosenberg Prize. A former prize-winning journalist and recipient of a Niemen Fellowship to Harvard in 1999, she has contributed to the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *Huffington Post*.

Jamy Bechler, MA '98, Barberton, OH, recently published his fourth book, *The Captain: Inspiring others is about more than just a title* (MH Book Services, November 2021). In the month after its release, it became Amazon's No. 1 new release in children's football books and in the College Student Life section, among others. *The Captain* is a fictional story about a star quarterback turned hot shot fighter pilot. Despite always being talented and having positions of leadership, the main character never really understood what it meant to be a real leader. He plays his best game—the blame game—when he has a training accident. This failed mission eventually brings him face to face with the realization that leadership is about more than just individual talent, power or status.

Bechler spent more than 20 years as a college basketball coach and high school athletics director before starting his own leadership company. He now works with high-level organizations and sports teams helping them maximize their potential in leadership, culture and teamwork.

He began his coaching career working with the men's basketball team at Kent State as a graduate student from 1996-1998. He was also a teaching assistant in the Physical Education and Sports Performance program.

"I loved my time at Kent State and have many lifelong friendships as a result of going there," wrote Bechler. "That includes meeting my wife, which is a really good thing. I am indebted to all of my professors, mentors and coaches during my time there. I would not ever have been the coach and leader I was without the experiences I had at Kent State. There is no doubt they had a profound effect on my life and made me want to give back and try to make a difference in someone's life like they did for me. I try to write books and provide positive insights to help today's athletes better understand how they can make a difference on their teams and in their communities."

To learn more about Bechler's other books, as well as his insights on leadership, culture or teamwork, visit www.JamyBechler.com or Twitter @CoachBechler.

Martha Bledsoe Post, BA '99, Hilliard, OH, was named the executive director of On Our Sleeves, a movement for children's mental health

created by Nationwide Children's Hospital. In this newly established role, effective September 2021, Post leads strategy and operations for the organization. Its goal is to ensure that every community in America has access to free, evidence-informed mental health resources to break stigmas and start conversations about building mental well-being for children. She oversees a team dedicated to advance programming, fundraising and national visibility for this vital cause.

2000s

Jennifer Weed, Med '01, Chicago, IL, was named the new president of the University of Dayton Alumni Association Board in July 2021. She will serve a three-year term. Weed is the vice president of education at CCIM Institute. Formerly known as Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute of the National Association of Realtors, it is the professional certification and educational resource for commercial and investment real estate. Her professional experience includes roles with the Strategic Account Management Association, the American Bar Association, DePaul University and Xavier University. She earned a law degree from Loyola University Chicago.

Jason Dorfman, BGS '02, Aliso Viejo, CA, is the chief business officer of Betterbrand Inc., founder of the W Supplements Company and co-founder of CanDo, maker of the Keto Krisp line of protein bars. He and his family live in Orange County, California.

Kimberly (Crowley) Patton, BA '02, Cleveland, OH, has been promoted to associate director of clinical services at the Summit County Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services (ADM) Board, as of September 2021. In this role, Patton facilitates planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of contract agencies' clinical and support services across Summit County.

Previously, Patton was the addiction, treatment and training coordinator for the board, where she monitored both substance use disorder treatment and prevention programming. Before joining the ADM board, she worked at Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare for 11 years, her most recent role as its director of social services.

In addition to a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Kent State, she also holds a Master of Science in social administration from Case Western Reserve University and an advanced chemical dependency certification from Columbus State Community College.

Christine M. Rich, BA '02, Hudson, OH, wrote, "Did you know that 80% of people living with autoimmune disease in the US are women? As one of those women living with an autoimmune disease since I was 17, I found this statistic staggering. My debut memoir, *Chronic* (New Degree Press) was published on August 30,

2021, about my experience living with a chronic illness called Crohn's disease. I decided to write this book because I spent many years trying to hide from and deny the fear, anger and sadness I felt because of my illness. Through raw and personal stories and insights, I candidly share my journey of living with and eventually learning to befriend my less-than-glamorous, oftentimes invisible, chronic illness.

"Those insights include how women insist they're 'fine' even when they aren't, why physicians should consistently discuss mental health with their chronically ill patients and what the power of radical acceptance and self-love can provide. *Chronic* encourages readers to shift their perspective of chronic illness from one of shame and fear to one of acceptance and love. My hope is that by sharing my story other women feel empowered to share their own and realize they're not alone." See www.christinemrich.com.

Caryl Church Jesseph, BA '03, MA '06, Willoughby, OH, joined Mind Body Align as curriculum and education developer and mindful educator. Mind Body Align teaches mindful social emotional learning (SEL) and workplace programs. Mindful SEL improves learning for 90.5% of students including 70% of at-risk students. Mind Body Align also provides mindfulness education to businesses as part of employee resources.

Along with 15 years of experience in public schools as a K-12 art educator, Jesseph is also a certified yoga teacher, published writer, exhibited artist and winner of the Northeast Ohio Outstanding Art Educator award and the Carrie Nordlund award. She complements her work with modalities rooted in storytelling, visual art, movement, play and ecological connection. Learn more at www.mindbodyalign.com.

Jennifer Smith, BS '03, Hilliard, OH, was selected as chief operating officer for Lifeline of Ohio, effective July 2021. Lifeline of Ohio is an organ procurement organization serving 78 hospitals throughout 38 counties in Central and Southeastern Ohio and two counties in West Virginia.

Smith began her career as a medical technologist in transfusion medicine at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, followed by two years of service as a laboratory technologist II in quality control for the American Red Cross in Columbus. Since 2007, she has served as manager and then director of Lifeline of Ohio's quality and regulatory affairs department, establishing herself as a leader for regulatory guidelines and compliance standards on both a state and national level.

She has extensive experience in quality auditing with regulatory agencies and serves on numerous quality councils to shape industry best practices.



Three generations tenured at Kent State: Left, Byron Dressler, director of the university's first Computer Center, pictured sitting at one of the computers in Kent State University *Summer News*, Aug. 12, 1965. Right, Jane Dressler, Professor Emerita of Voice, and Ginnie Dressler, digital projects librarian and associate professor at Kent State University Libraries

Virginia "Ginnie" Dressler, BA '01, MLIS '07, Kent, OH, digital projects librarian and associate professor at Kent State University Libraries, received tenure in summer 2021. Dressler, who began working at the Kent Campus in April 2014, is the third generation in her family to be tenured at Kent State.

Her mother, Jane Dressler, DMA, Professor Emerita of Voice, was tenured in the Glauser School of Music, where she taught voice (soprano) and music theory from August 1987 to June 2020. She served as interim director of the school from August 2017 through June 2019 and retired as a full professor in 2020.

Her grandfather, Byron Dressler, taught in the mathematics department from fall 1948 to January 1978 and earned tenure in 1954. He also was director of the university's first Computer Center, which was established in 1962 or 1963 and located in Merrill Hall.

"He died in 1981, when I was a year old, so I don't really remember him," Ginnie Dressler says. "But I have often wondered what he would have thought about my career path. It's been a joke in our immediate family that there has been a Dressler on the books at Kent State since the late 1940s."



Warrior Saber Event: (Left to right) Staff Sergeant Rodney Wentz, Sergeant Harold Wentz, Shawn Wentz, Sergeant Rachel Dillon, Robert Jones, corporal, Portage County Sheriffs Association

Shawn M. Wentz, BS '03, Denver, CO, director of Warrior Saber, assisted the Kent State gymnastics team at their Military Appreciation Meet on Jan. 28, 2022. Warrior Saber is a 501c3 organization with a mission to locate veterans who are still serving their community and to honor them in front of others.

At the meet, he presented the Warrior Saber Award of Merit and a saber to Rachel Rydbom Dillon, a Northeast Ohio veteran who served in the US Marine Corps, for her service to the Portage County community as a corrections officer for the past 21 years.

Wentz, a former Kent State student-athlete, says it was an honor for him to celebrate all veterans (including two family members, pictured, who served in Vietnam), in front of student-athletes at the event.



Randi Woods, BA '03, Akron, OH, established a small-batch product line, Goods, in 2016, which has grown into a successful small Black-owned business primarily through word-of-mouth. Goods offers an array of organic plant-based products, including body creams and butters, natural deodorant, beard and skin oils made for all skin and hair textures, tooth powders, bug repellent and a clay detox mask, among other products. All are free of toxic ingredients and fillers. Learn more at www.goods-here.co/.



Haynes family: (front row, left to right) sons Dallas, Devon, Dre Jr.; (back row, left to right) Tierra and DeAndre Haynes

ADVENTURES IN HISTORY AND LIFE

During the pandemic, **Tierra Haynes, BA '06**, wrote *The Adventures of Us: Getting to Know Guion Bluford Jr.*, a 2021 self-published children's book about the first African American person in space. In the book, three brothers (modeled after Haynes' three young sons) use their imaginations to take a trip to space. There they meet Bluford, a NASA astronaut whose first mission was on the crew of the space shuttle Challenger in 1983. On their journey, the boys also learn the importance of brotherhood, perseverance and imagination.

Haynes says her sons, who were interested in space at the time, helped create their characters. And she brought in illustrator Morgan Jennings to immortalize them and Bluford on the book's cover and pages.

The idea for the book came to Haynes when her younger children were repeatedly watching a movie about a boy and his dog who travel back in time to visit historical figures. Haynes wondered, *Why do these characters rarely meet anybody who is Black?* Then her eldest son, DeAndre Jr., felt uncomfortable when his third grade classmates looked to him during discussions about Black History Month. Haynes thought about writing a children's book so kids could learn more about prominent Black people in American history.

However, a busy life and frequent moves left her little time to bring her idea to life. Her husband, **DeAndre Haynes, BBA '06**, whom she met at Kent State, is a college basketball coach whose career has moved their family from Ohio to Illinois, Michigan, Maryland and Wisconsin in the span of 10 years. When COVID-19 hit and things slowed down, she was able to



pursue her book project.

While her sons (Dre Jr., Devon and Dallas) come from a sports family and are surrounded by basketball players, Haynes wants to expand their worldview and help them discover careers that focus on their interests, whatever those may be. She hopes to publish a series of books to highlight the achievements of Black people.

During her family's travels, Haynes also began an online community for mothers to support each other as they navigate life and motherhood. She increased her social media presence, changed her Instagram handle to @Mommyonthemove, and began a blog by the same name, as well as a podcast. The community she created has blossomed, but her goals for the community remain simple: to empower busy moms and help them find their inner strengths.

The Adventures of Us: Getting to Know Guion Bluford Jr. is available at mommyonthemove.info and on Amazon.

Kent State awarded Dr. Bluford (who compiled more than 688 hours in space before his retirement in 1993) an honorary Doctor of Sciences degree in 1995. Two scholarships have been created in his name: the "Dr. Guion S. Bluford, Jr. Minority STEM Scholarship," established by Friends of Kent State University at Trumbull, and the "Dr. Guion S. Bluford, Jr. Minority Aeronautics Scholarship," established by Friends of the College of Applied Engineering, Sustainability and Technology. Both were established to support Dr. Bluford's interest in assisting minority students to pursue a degree in a STEM discipline.



Jonathan Junker, BS '04, BArc '05, Bainbridge Island, WA, designs upscale homes in the Seattle, Washington, area since moving there after graduating from Kent State. He also branched out into custom lighting for hotels, museums and office buildings around the world as the co-owner of Graypants, a company with offices in Seattle and Amsterdam. Junker and a former partner established the company in 2007 to produce laser-cut lamps from corrugated cardboard.

While at Graypants, he collaborated on transforming an old, abandoned garage on Vashon Island into a glowing lakeside cabin, which earned him the American Institute of Architects Honor Award for Washington state.

He also won the Millennial Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2016 from the US Small Business Administration, in recognition of his achievements at Graypants and its partnership with the Dutch government for product distribution.

In 2019 he sold his share in the lighting studio and now works in his own creative office on Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound.

Ryan D. Andrews, MS '05, MA '05, Harwich, MA, is an advocate for sustainable food systems, a dietitian, yoga instructor, and strength and conditioning specialist. He self-published a new e-book, *Swole Planet: Building a Better Body and a Better Earth*. It is a guide to help people build a body that's functional and fit, while building a planet that's more sustainable and equitable.

Andrews was a competitive body builder from 1996-2001. His graduate degrees from Kent State are in nutrition and exercise physiology, and he completed his training to become a registered dietitian at Johns Hopkins Medicine. He studied sustainable food systems at Columbia University and volunteers on sustainable farms and with nonprofit food recovery organizations. He's been teaching at SUNY's Purchase College since 2018. For details, see www.ryandandrews.com. Discounts on the book are available for farmers, teachers, dietitians or those in the nonprofit sector.

James M. Hill, MLIS '05, Chillicothe, OH, director of the Chillicothe and Ross County Library, has been named the 2021 Librarian of the Year by the Ohio Library Council. This prestigious award honors a librarian whose recent accomplishments have impacted the library profession and library service to the community.

During the pandemic and under Hill's leadership, the library developed a check-in program to monitor elderly and isolated individuals. He added Chromebooks for patron checkout, extended Wi-Fi access and created a telehealth room at the Main Library. He and his staff also developed an expansion of the outreach department and a new bike-lending program, among other projects.

In response to the drug epidemic in Ross County, Hill forged a partnership with other county agencies to bring a peer recovery supporter to the library. This person provides

an essential service to the county, helping people navigate treatment options and finding resources to help.

In addition, Hill has assisted six staff members in obtaining their Master of Library and Information Science degrees and/or professional certifications.

Stephanie Sweany, BS '05, Canton, OH, was appointed executive director at Stark County Hunger Task Force. She has been with the organization since 2017, most recently as assistant director. Founded in 1981, the nonprofit serves 34,000 Stark County residents each month through a network of about 40 food pantries and 12 Backpack for Kids programs.

Sweany is engaged in various community activities, including the Canton Kindness Coalition, which she founded in 2018. She is the vice president of Kent State's Stark County Alumni chapter, and she received the Kent State University Alumni Association's Advocacy Award in 2020.

Kate (Leishman) Yancho, BFA '05, Kalamazoo, MI, was appointed to a three-year term at the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in September 2021. The MCACA is Michigan's key conduit for arts and cultural information, grant funding and more. Yancho continues to serve as the executive director of Wellspring/Cori Terry & Dancers, a 501c3 nonprofit professional modern dance company celebrating its 41st anniversary in Kalamazoo.

Darren Byler, BA '06, New Westminster, British Columbia, published *Terror Capitalism: Uyghur Dispossession and Masculinity in a Chinese City* (Duke University Press, February 2022). Byler, a sociocultural anthropologist and assistant professor at Simon Fraser University's School for International Studies, based his book on two years of ethnographic fieldwork among Uyghur and Han internal male migrants.

In the book, he theorizes about the contemporary Chinese colonization of the Uyghur Muslim minority group in the northwest autonomous region of Xinjiang, showing how it has led to what he calls *terror capitalism*—a configuration of ethno-racialization, surveillance and mass detention that in this case promotes settler colonialism. He focuses on the experiences of young Uyghur men—who are the primary target of state violence—and how they develop masculinities and homosocial friendships to protect themselves against gendered, ethnoracial and economic violence.

Theodore Ferring Jr., MArc '06, MUD '06, Cleveland, OH, was promoted to senior associate at Bialosky Cleveland in 2020. A member of Crain's Cleveland Business 2019 Forty Under 40 class and a recipient of the AIA Ohio 2021 Emerging Professional Award, Ferring is a licensed architect and recognized community leader. In addition to advocating for equitable design excellence through numerous

WORKING AT "THE MOST MAGICAL PLACE ON EARTH"

Disney was a big part of childhood for **Meghan Caprez, BS '15, MA '17**. As she grew up in the 1990s, not only did she watch just about every Disney film (accumulating a vast knowledge of Disney trivia) but the theme park earned a special place in her heart during a family trip.

"I took my first trip to Walt Disney World when I was 8 years old," she recalls. "It was a difficult time for my family because my younger brother had just started losing his hearing, but the cast members went above and beyond to make sure we all had a great time!"

Her journey to becoming a cast member herself began when, as a senior in high school, she learned about the Disney College Program (a national internship program operated by the Disney Programs division of The Walt Disney Co.).

"I walked into my first academic advising appointment during Destination Kent State and told my advisor that I would absolutely, without a doubt, be taking a semester off to do the program," Caprez says. "I did just that, working as a character attendant my sophomore year. After completing the program, I really caught the Disney bug and knew I wanted to end up back with the company."

Caprez, who majored in public relations as an undergrad and earned a master's degree in communications studies, later completed a second Disney College Program in food and beverage, and a professional internship in executive communications at Disney World.

She is now a communications manager for the Walt Disney World Resort, handling internal and external communication and strategy for Disney Resort hotels, transportation, security and more. Prior to that, she served as a public affairs manager for the company, helping ensure a seamless integration of communications and public affairs for major events, including some of the lead-up to Walt Disney World's 18-month-long 50th anniversary celebration (which began in October 2021 and ends in 2023).

We caught up with Caprez to learn more about her love for Disney.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? The people. We have 70,000 of the very best people working at Walt Disney World. They are leaders in hospitality, themed entertainment, culinary arts, product development, engineering, guest services and more. I get to work with them every day and help them assist our guests, as well as share stories about their talents and accomplishments.

Could you tell us a favorite Disney story? We have very passionate fans at Walt Disney World who enjoy hearing about our history and heritage. I was able to share a moment of that history when we invited a group of 50-year cast members to open a time capsule at Disney's Contemporary Resort as part of Walt Disney World's 50th anniversary celebration. Seeing them look through the items—some of which they remembered being added in—was a really cool moment. I then got to share that story with our fans on the Disney Parks Blog!

Is there an area of the park or a ride you enjoy most? I love the whimsy of the Magic Kingdom Park. It's full of charm, nostalgia and extra pixie dust right now because we're in the middle of celebrating its 50th anniversary! My favorite attraction is probably a toss-up between The Haunted Mansion and the Monsters Inc. Laugh Floor.

If you could be a Disney character, who would it be and why? Kermit the Frog. He's a passionate leader, a good friend, and even though it's not easy being green, his banjo skills are incredible!



community boards, he has served his profession through the American Institute of Architects at the local and national levels, notably as the AIA National Associates Committee Chair in 2016. His projects include Cleveland Metroparks Edgewater Beach House, the Schofield Building Restoration and the co-located Cleveland Public Library Walz Branch/Karam Senior Housing project. He is an active member of the Kent State University Alumni Association.

Tamie J. Jovanelly, PhD '06, Rome, GA, is the award-winning and bestselling author of *Iceland Geology: Tectonics, Volcanics, and Glacial Features* (Wiley, 2020). Her book captures the island's natural beauty and enhances it with detailed descriptions linking the relationships among structure, process and time to the island's evolution. Jovanelly, a geologist, translates peer-reviewed scientific literature to provide the reader with the most up-to-date research discussing interesting, and sometimes debated, geological theories regarding an island splitting in half due to plate tectonic motion.

Sarah Shendy, BA '06, Cuyahoga Falls, OH, was nominated as a Top Cop in recognition of her dedication as a Copley police officer to Copley and to Summit County. The office of Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh nominated her.

Shendy, who serves as the administrator for Ohio's Office of Law Enforcement, was asked to write about recruitment for Police's 22 on 2022: *A police leadership playbook*. The playbook offers solutions from law enforcement and criminal justice experts for 22 ongoing and emerging issues facing police leaders and officers in 2022.

Shendy also coordinated a Women in Law Enforcement Roundtable event for the Office of Law Enforcement Recruitment on March 8, 2022, at Cuyahoga Community College. The free event was a public forum where women leaders discussed opportunities and challenges in law enforcement careers.

Patricia Lovell, MLS '07, Canton, OH, presented a short film, "Miles to Go," on June 10, 2021, at the Lions Lincoln Theatre in Massillon, Ohio. The film—which she wrote, directed and produced—was inspired by her own running experiences. It notes the inequalities between men and women who jog for recreation and fitness or who run in competitions. She hopes to enter it in the Cleveland International Film Festival, as well as other festivals. She also plans to post it on YouTube.

An avid runner, Lovell started Girls on the Run of Stark County in 2010 and served as director for five years. The group's goal is to inspire young girls to be happy, healthy and confident while creatively incorporating running into the program.

Lovell taught high school English for eight years, then worked as a librarian for GlenOak High School and later Marlinton High School before retiring at age 62.

Hallie Crouch, BS '08, MArc '09, Akron, OH, has been promoted to associate principal at Bialosky Cleveland and is the first nontraditional practitioner to hold the title. She contributes and advises on many dimensions of the practice, including business development, marketing, strategic planning, HR, brand identity, firm culture, policies and programs. She has presented on the topics of equity and alternative careers at design schools and architecture conferences, including the 2019 National Women's Leadership Summit. She is a frequent juror of student work at her alma mater.



Emilia Sykes, BA '08, Akron, OH, stepped down in December 2021 after three years as leader of the Ohio House Democratic Caucus. In January, she announced her candidacy for Ohio's 13th Congressional District, writing on Twitter, "I'm running for Congress to advocate on behalf of Ohio's families. I've made it my mission to keep jobs in our state and to expand opportunities for all in NE Ohio—not just the wealthy and well-connected." Learn more at www.emiliasykesforcongress.com/.

Sheila R. Feaster, DPM '09, Huntington, WV, a board-certified, fellowship-trained podiatrist, has joined Marshall Health and Cabell Huntington Hospital, a member of Mountain Health Network. She will also serve as an assistant professor at the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Prior to joining Marshall Health, Feaster served as a provider for an OSF Medical Group specialty clinic in Monmouth, Illinois. She specializes in foot, ankle and wound care.

Jordan Hamrick, BBA '09, TT '09, Atwater, OH, was recognized as a 2021 NextGen to Watch by *Family Business Magazine*. He represents the third generation of leadership at Hamrick Packaging Systems, a manufacturer of secondary, or end-of-line, packaging equipment. Its clientele includes companies as large as Kraft, Heinz and Coca-Cola and as small as craft breweries.

He began working summer shifts at what was then known as Hamrick Manufacturing while in high school, mopping floors, cleaning toilets and picking up parts from local distributors. After graduating from Kent State with degrees

in business management and marketing, he started working full time in the family business in 2010. His first role was in marketing, then sales and he is now president.

"Since I started, we've gone from 22 employees to 49 and have strengthened every aspect of our operation," Hamrick says. "I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish as a family-owned-and-operated business for the last 46 years, and even prouder that we're doing it in the right way."

Paul Rossetti, BS '09, MArc '11, MBA '11, Kent, OH, has been promoted to associate at Bialosky Cleveland. A veteran of the US Air Force Reserve, he joined the firm in 2016 as an architectural designer with specialties in virtual reality and building information modeling. Notable projects include MAGNET, Centric and the Belle Oaks mixed use development.

2010s



John Hickman, Cert. '11, Cleveland, OH, who earned a post-baccalaureate certification in paralegal studies from Kent State, has worked with several Kent State paralegal interns over the last eight years at Gallagher Sharp LLP, in Cleveland. He recently supervised Kent State senior **Chelsea Appling, XAA '20**, from August to December 2021. At Gallagher Sharp, Appling, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in pre-law studies at Kent State, had the opportunity to apply what she's learned during her studies. She looks forward to growing in the profession.

Hickman works in several areas of civil litigation at the firm and welcomes the opportunity to help future professionals step into the practice.

Eric Mansfield, MA '12, Akron, OH, premiered his play, *Love in Reserve*, at Rubber City Theatre in November 2021. It was recently named Best New Play by a Local Playwright by the Cleveland Critics Circle. His original crime drama, *The Confession*, ran Feb. 10-12 at convergence-continuum in Cleveland as part of the NEOMFA new plays festival. His full-length drama, *Whitesville*, which examines the struggles of a mixed-race police family in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's murder, ran March 31-April 2 at the Akron Civic Theatre via the Millennial Theatre Project. Other works of note

Shaun Minko, BA '11, and **Danielle Novotny, BA '11, MA '14**, Myrtle Beach, SC, were engaged on Dec. 25, 2018. Having their initial wedding plans postponed due to COVID-19, they finally were married on June 19, 2021, in Sandusky, Ohio. They met at Brewhouse Pub in January 2009 and have been together for more than 12 years. Today, Minko is an area manager-large format sales for Better Brands Inc. and Novotny is the branch manager for the Horry County Legislative Delegation office, both in Myrtle Beach. They continue to cheer for Kent State and their other favorite Ohio sports teams from afar! Members of their wedding party included four other KSU alumni: **Johanna (Novotny) Wilson, BS '06; Molly (DeMattio) Baker, BA '10, MA '12; Greg Sikora, BA '12; and Devon Baker, BS '15**. They made sure to show their KSU pride in the wedding photos!



include a military-themed play, *The Board*, included in the Fringe Festival in Cleveland at the Mid-America Theatre Conference in February 2022, and a short piece, *The Black Dress*, which was picked up for a workshop at Millersville University in Pennsylvania.

Mansfield works as assistant vice president, content strategy and communications, at Kent State.

Charmae Cottom, PhD candidate since 2013, Columbia Station, OH, wrote, "I am the director of the Miss Greater Cleveland Scholarship Program, celebrating 100 years of competition. The Miss America Program is the oldest and largest single source of scholarship money for women in the US. We had our 100th competition on Feb. 12, 2022, at the Berea-Midpark High School Auditorium. I am also a high school English teacher at Pioneer Career and Technology Center in Shelby, Ohio, and an English adjunct at Lorain County Community College.

"I have been participating in the Miss Ohio America program since 1980, when I was a college coed. Thanks to the scholarship money that I earned, I have completed two bachelor's degrees at Baldwin-Wallace College and, as a lifelong learner, I have completed an MA in English literature at John Carroll University and now I am completing a PhD in literature at Kent State. The Miss America Scholarship Program is a wonderful program for talented, community focused women."

Kyra Kelley, BA '13, Akron, OH, was named a 2022 Artist-in-Residence in theater and performing arts by Akron Soul Train Gallery.



Above, the wedding party. Left, the Zips and Golden Flashes in the wedding party have a friendly face-off.

Part of the residency includes an artist-led community engagement program. Learn more at www.akronsoultrain.org.

Jonathan Holland, BS '14, MArc '16, MBA '16, Cleveland, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an architect in 2021. He is an active member of the local chapters of the American Institute of Architects and the National Organization for Minority Architects. His projects include A Place for Me and the Beaumont School renovation.

Dayshawnda Shuelana Ash, AA '15, BFA '16, Cleveland, OH, played a character referred to as "The Journey" in a workshop production of India Nicole Burton's play *Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation*, which was held outdoors at Cleveland Public Theatre in July 2021. Her character comes to a sacred place to ask her ancestors to show her the meaning of being a Black woman.

Ash has performed, taught and written at Western Reserve Playhouse in Bath Township and is a teaching artist and site coordinator at Cleveland Public Theatre.

Christopher Persons, BS '15, MArc '16, Cleveland, OH, has been promoted to associate at Bialosky Cleveland. He joined Bialosky in 2015 and earned a merit award in 2016 from AIA Cleveland for his student graduate project, Drydock No. 2. Other notable projects include Library Lofts, Progressive Insurance Alpha North Annex and the Physician Assistant Building at Ursuline College. He is registered as an architect with the American Institute of Architects.

Ethan Rothermel, BS '15, MArc '16, Canton, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an architectural designer in 2021. During his studies at Kent State, he participated in a study-abroad program in Florence, Italy. He came to the firm with a strong interest in digital fabrication and parametric/computational design and a portfolio that included architectural projects, studio work and CNC furniture design. His current projects include Library Lofts, The Pearl, Cleveland Public Library's Walz Branch and Karam Senior Housing.

Katelyn Walker, BA '16, Cleveland, OH, was promoted to associate at Bialosky Cleveland in 2020. She is an accredited interior designer and WELL accredited professional with a specialty in healthy building and materials. She joined the firm in 2016. Her projects include Kent State University's Visual Communication Design, The City Mission and Lorain County Public Health. She has participated in and led firm initiatives to support strategic planning; wellness; and equity, diversity and inclusion.

SEND US YOUR CLASS NOTE!

Fill out the form at www.kent.edu/classnotes or write: Kent State University Alumni, Center for Philanthropy & Engagement, P.O. Box 5190, Kent, OH 44242

Try to limit your notes to 150 words or less, and include your degree(s), class year(s), and city/state of residence. High resolution photos may be included. Notes may be edited for length or clarity and published as space allows.

Deadline for submissions:

Spring/Summer—January 31; Fall/Winter—June 30

Kaitlyn Boniecki, BS '19, MARC '21, MUD '21, Cleveland, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an architectural designer in 2021. She was honored with a citation at the AIA Cleveland Design Awards for her thesis, "Designing for Dystopia," in 2021, marking her second AIA award for student work. She is active in her design community, particularly in AIA Cleveland's Women in Architecture Committee and The Architecture Lobby. Notable projects include the Lincoln Heights Townhomes, the Hawthorne School rehabilitation and renovation, and the Euclid Waterfront facility.

Kemet Floyd, BS '19, Youngstown, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an architectural designer in 2022. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture and a minor in sustainability. He is pursuing a master's degree in architecture at Kent State, after starting the program at Boston Architectural College. His work is exhibited through the national online catalogue, SAY IT LOUD, accompanied by a physical traveling exhibit of prominent diverse designers. He has designed brand identities for several small businesses during his emerging career. He is an active member of the local chapters of the American Institute of Architects and the National Organization for Minority Architects.

2020s



Spring Ashmore, BA '20, Uniontown, OH, an operations technology professional (OTP) for locally owned Tomtreycy McDonald's, headquartered in Uniontown, won the Marty Ruby Award for OTP Pro of the Year. This award recognizes one McDonald's employee annually for executing operational excellence and driving growth through technology.

Ashmore joined McDonald's in 2007 as a crew member at the Hartville, Ohio, restaurant, and since 2011 has managed an operations technology professional team that ensures that all register, computer, headsets, music, telephone, internet and camera systems are working across Tomtreycy's 48 McDonald's restaurants.



Brianna Gordon, BA '20, Cleveland, OH, is a Centennial Plaza programming assistant and hospitality facilitator at the Pro Football Hall of Fame, as well as a Ross Xpression and Blaze operator. Recently, the president of the hall of fame asked her to update the video archives so they have individual videos of every Hall of Famer's football career, including speeches and pictures from their playing days. Gordon graduated with a degree in digital media production and a concentration in television from the School of Media and Journalism.

The Marty Ruby Award was created in remembrance of California McDonald's operator, Marty Ruby, who passed away in 2019. Ruby was passionate about the OTP program and worked tirelessly to improve it.

Kelly Deak, BS '20, Cleveland Heights, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an architectural designer in 2021. She is pursuing certification as a green roof professional. She has volunteered for the ACE Mentorship program, which exposes high school students to the fields of architecture, construction and engineering. With an affinity for sustainability, she aims to create architecture that acts as a working system with the environment, rather than against it. Her conceptual works have appeared in digital architectural publications,

including Dezeen, SUCKERPUNCH and The Archiologist. Notable projects include Fairfax Market mixed use and space planning for the Westlake Porter Public Library.

Sarah Contos-Holden, BA '21, Lakewood, OH, joined Bialosky Cleveland as an interior designer in 2021, after her semester-long internship with the firm. With strengths in interior design and marketing, she brings value to both design projects and social media/marketing efforts at the firm. She volunteers for the ACE Mentorship program, which allows high school students to explore the fields of architecture, construction and engineering. She is on the design team for the James M. Ashley and Thomas W.L. Ashley US Courthouse in Toledo, Ohio.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars! Homecoming 2022 is Oct. 1.

We are looking forward to having alumni join us on the Kent Campus for one of our biggest blue and gold celebrations! Make memories and reminisce with fellow Golden Flashes, check out the exciting changes on campus and enjoy many favorite Homecoming traditions this fall.

Stay tuned for details! Information will be provided at www.kent.edu/homecoming/alumni as plans are finalized. And be sure to follow us on social media to stay up to date on #KentHC plans!



Note: An * before a name means the alumnus was a faculty or staff member, too. So they are also listed under Faculty/Staff on the next page.

1940s

Opal Pearl (Wigner) Boffo, BS '42, MA '48, December 8, 2021
***Richard James "Dick" Kotis, BS '48,** November 21, 2021
Bernard "Bernie" Rickelman, BS '49, MED '52, June 26, 2021

1950s

William G. Ansley, BS '50, April 20, 2020
Charles H. Shadel, BS '50, May 4, 2021
Paul E. Powers, BS '51, October 17, 2021
Richard G. Eilers, BA '53, July 7, 2021
Edward H. Yursky, BS '54, May 15, 2020
Robert F. Evans, BS '55, MED '61, October 26, 2021
Ming C. Lee, BS '55, May 8, 2021
Jack R. Cordier, BS '56, MED '56, August 17, 2020
Thelma M. Wise, BS '56, April 23, 2021
James A. Pastore, BBA '57, November 17, 2020
Robert Wick, BFA '57, January 13, 2022
Ruth Enold, BSE '58, February 7, 2021
Janet L. Fencl, BS '58, September 29, 2021
Francis E. "Frank" Quine, BS '59, October 31, 2021

1960s

Phillip W. Hosmer, MED '60, December 24, 2020
Joseph H. Reed, BBA '60, October 22, 2021
John W. James, BSE '62, August 10, 2021
Laird Brown, BS '63, November 29, 2021
John J. Cogan, BS '63, August 15, 2021
Jerry Bals, BS '64, July 14, 2021
Richard Douglas "Doug" Cowan, BBA '64, December 3, 2021
Martha J. Cox, MA '64, June 12, 2021
Leonard E. Frick, MED '64, October 2, 2021
Ann C. Greiner, BS '64, MA '78, November 13, 2021
Gary W. Huber, BS '64, July 6, 2021
Janet H. Mather, BS '64, September 18, 2021
Alice L. Staman, BA '64, March 30, 2020
Leslie A. Barta, BBA '65, January 18, 2022
Kathleen E. Miller, BA '65, PhD '82, September 23, 2021
Mary Jo Ruggieri, BS '65, March 11, 2020
Lysle Burky, BS '67, MBA '68, March 3, 2020
Gary D. Fair, BS '67, July 4, 2021
Daniel R. Koch, BA '67, May 12, 2020
Stephen L. Reid, BS '67, MED '78, November 2, 2021
Frances J. Ritz, MED '67, November 29, 2019
Peter Stilton, BA '67, December 11, 2020
John M. Strefeler, BS '68, September 26, 2021
Chi Chen, MA '69, April 1, 2020
George Ferencz, BA '69, September 14, 2021

1970s

Leona W. Farris, MA '70, February 27, 2022
Gerald A. "Jerry" Johnson, BArC '70, July 6, 2021
Linda (Gibson) Klein, BS '70, July 27, 2021
Robert T. Pickett Jr., BA '70, January 18, 2022
Harold C. "Hal" Walker, BA '70, June 21, 2021
Laurence Clisby, BS '72, February 27, 2021
Stanley R. Miller, BBA '72, September 9, 2021
Ivan M. Welch, BS '72, MED '75, January 4, 2022
William G. Arthrell, BS '73, January 31, 2022

Michael A. Carroll, BA '73, December 11, 2021
Stephen R. Sheil, BBA '73, September 3, 2021
William Buttermore, MED '74, June 2, 2021
James R. Erwin, AAS '74, April 8, 2021
Linda Thompson, BA '75, June 20, 2020
Barbara Commins, MM '77, February 13, 2020
Rudy G. Donatelli, BS '77, January 9, 2022
Robert L. Albright, PhD '78, September 18, 2021
Roy E. Allen, BBA '78, July 17, 2021
Shirley R. Terrass, MED '78, PhD '83, June 29, 2021
Nancy Birk, BA '79, MLS '82, October 16, 2021
Michaela "Mike" Cox, AA '79, February 19, 2021
Allan Macdonald, MS '79, May 28, 2021

1980s

Karen Franklin, BA '81, August 25, 2020
Janice R. Niepert, MLS '81, August 1, 2021
John C. Decker, BBA '82, May 10, 2021
Judson C. "Jud" Logan, BA '82, January 3, 2022
Michael Conto, DPM '83, July 9, 2021
Louis J. Rodgers, BBA '86, August 14, 2021
Paula Sheets, AAB '86, May 8, 2021
Thomas E. May, BA '88, March 19, 2021

1990s

Malinda Gavins, MED '93, December 25, 2020
Craig A. Rice, BA '93, December 6, 2021
Joy Kimpel, AAB '94, October 22, 2020
Amy Christine Franjesevic, BA '95, December 1, 2021
Geoff D. Lambert, BA '96, August 21, 2021
Christina McDonald Smith, BSN '96, February 10, 2021
Edson A. Knight Sr., MED '97, June 19, 2021
Shawniese L. Harmon, AA '98, May 24, 2020
Randy L. Eppinger, BS '99, July 31, 2021
Amy L. McRoberts York, AAS '99, September 14, 2020

2000s

Richard Harden, BA '00, February 24, 2020
Carmel J. Katich, AAS '00, BA '02, June 12, 2020
Bonnie L. Chapman, AAS '02, June 10, 2021
William "Bill" Ebert, MA '03, August 28, 2021
Terrance J. Melville, BBA '04, May 20, 2020
James A. "Jim" Baughman, AAB '07, BS '09, October 16, 2021
Sean Conroy, BBA '07, February 26, 2021

2010s

Michael F. Boland, BBA '10, August 13, 2021
Adrienne Hailey, BSN '12, September 8, 2020
Hannah Baldwin-May, BSN '15, October 12, 2017
Vincent J. Saluppo, BBA '15, February 17, 2020
Devante M. Strickland, BS '15, July 26, 2020
Rhys Daniel Winter, BA '17, December 10, 2021
Luke Grandjean, BS '18, April 20, 2021
Brian W. Wessels, BBA '18, November 13, 2021

See page 60 for Faculty/Staff listings.

FACULTY/STAFF

Sue (Gambaccini) Briers | former secretary and administrative assistant at Kent State (1943 to 1977), January 23, 2022

She lived her entire life in Kent and died just days from her 100th birthday. She worked for Kent City Schools and Kent State University in several roles, including secretary and university treasurer of the Board of Trustees. She said she especially loved her time as secretary to the president of Kent State, Robert I. White (1964 to 1971).

David R. Brunton | assistant professor at JMC, now the School of Media and Journalism (1982-1988), December 26, 2021

"He came to Kent State from the private sector and taught advertising courses, including Advertising Copywriting and Advertising Campaigns. He was faculty advisor of the KSU Ad Club (student chapter of AAF, the American Advertising Federation), and he had a biweekly column in *The Plain Dealer* called "Marketing and More." After Kent State, he taught at Lakeland Community College and had a small advertising agency. He was an engaging teacher, a great advisor and a good friend."

— *Phil Soencksen, BS '89*

William F. Dollard III | former KSU director of alumni and development (1980 to 1982), February 19, 2022

"He led the development of the Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman School of Fashion Design and Merchandising during his tenure at Kent State. He and then-President Brage Golding worked tirelessly to bring the fashion design school to KSU. Mr. Dollard was well known for his charming personality and his love and appreciation for classical music, fine wine and gourmet cooking. He was 93 years old."

— *Gerald Canton, BS '79, MEd '98*

Richard James "Dick" Kotis, BS '48 | former KSU assistant football and basketball coach (1951-1957), November 21, 2021

He played varsity football for Kent State from 1946 to 1948 and later was appointed as an assistant coach for football and basketball, serving from 1951 to 1957. He then joined the Fred Arbogast Co., became president in 1959 and retired in 1991. A legend in the sport fishing world and a founder of the Fish Ohio program in 1980, Kotis was inducted into the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame in 2010. He was a lifetime member of the Kent State University Alumni Association, a member of the President's Club, and a member of the Blue and Gold and Varsity "K" clubs. He was named Varsity K "Person of the Year" in 1997. There will be a celebration of his life in spring 2022.

Myron Julius "Mike" Lunine | former KSU Honors College dean (1968-1972), May 4, 2020

"Dr. Lunine, along with Glenn Frank and Seymour Barron, worked to convince Gen. Robert Canterbury not to open fire a second time on students who had massed on the Commons soon after the shootings. Film footage of the day shows Dr. Lunine doing all that he could to avert an even wider slaughter. Another alumnus called Dr. Lunine one of the 'unsung heroes of May 4th.'"

"In addition to the irony of his death date, Dr. Lunine, even at his advanced age, had been prepared to return to the campus for the 50th commemoration. The pandemic, and his death, intervened."

— *Thomas M. Grace, BA '72*



Roseann "Chic" Canfora, BS '76, MA '87, PhD '01, May 4 witness and professional-in-residence in the School of Media and Journalism, places a black flag on the marker showing where her late brother, **Alan Canfora, BA '72, MLS '80**, was standing when he was shot on May 4, 1970. One of nine students wounded that day, he had waved a black flag in protest of the Vietnam War—a moment captured in a now-iconic photo by **John Filo, BS '72**.

Planning for the markers, which were installed in 2021 and formally dedicated during the 52nd commemoration, began two years before the 50th anniversary of the shootings, with the idea of having them in place for that commemoration. (Markers commemorating the four students who were killed on May 4, 1970, were installed in the Prentice Hall parking lot where they died and were dedicated on Sept. 9, 1999.)

"My brother and **Rod Flauhaus, BS '86**, and some of the other wounded students had advocated to also mark where the wounded students fell so that people throughout history would see how far those bullets had to travel to reach their targets," says Canfora, who also chairs the May 4 Presidential Advisory Committee to oversee the university's May 4 commemoration plans.

Her brother, Alan, died Dec. 20, 2020.

ROBERT "BOB" WICK, BFA '57

March 27, 1935 – January 13, 2022



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN LABELLE



"Seated Earth," a living bronze sculpture by Bob Wick, is a focal point of the Wick Poetry Park on the Kent Campus.

Transforming Grief into Gift

It never took long, once you were pulled into a conversation with Bob Wick, to feel changed—to feel inspired by his creativity and care, touched by his generosity of spirit. Bob Wick had that effect on people, especially on every student and young poet he met.

Out of the unspeakable loss of his son, Stanley, and his brother Walter's son, Tom—who died in separate car accidents—Bob and Walt created the Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Scholarship for Kent State students in 1984. Over time, the seed of that initial generosity grew, through passionate engagement and financial contributions, transforming their grief into the gift of the Wick Poetry Center.

I first met Bob and Walter Wick in 1994 at the Wick Poetry Center's 10th anniversary celebration. I had just won Wick's Ohio Chapbook Prize for a collection of poems that gave voice to my childhood grief over my mother's death. Maggie Anderson, the center's founding director, seated me between Bob and Walter during a celebratory lunch. I was immediately struck by the knowledge and energy both men showed for their different passions. Walter was a bibliophile who loved language and to play with words. Bob pulled out a paper napkin and started sketching a house. He said he was often at a loss for words and instead thought visually. And he told me about a teacher in Kent State's art department who had inspired his passion for sculpture.

Bob loved to talk with students. He would share his passion for creating what he called

"living bronze sculpture"—and then would listen to them, drawing out their interests in any form of creative expression. Each summer he and his wife, Estellean, opened their beautiful home in the Mule Mountains outside of Bisbee, Arizona, to a group of six to eight Kent State students for a weeklong writing workshop. The couple opened their hearts as well, each night gathering with the students around the dinner table for delicious food and creative, far-ranging conversation.

Blending his interest in Eastern philosophy and religion with Western science, Bob fed the holy with his art. His living bronze sculptures (including the stunning "Seated Earth" in the Wick Poetry Park) remain a creative expression of his belief in the interconnectedness of all things. One summer he showed a group of students at his home how he planted cactus and desert trees in the pockets of soil he placed in his sculptures. "Until you can grow a tree from your own heart," he told them, "you'll never understand the oneness of all things."

Bob's heart was large, his spirit limitless—he was always open to the curious and questing student, always open to new growth. He never stopped his own exploration. Several months before he died, he told me on the phone that he felt as productive as he had ever been. Bob was a living poem, his creative and caring life a work of art.

Thanks to Bob and Walter's vision and generosity, the Wick Poetry Center remains deeply rooted in our community and continues to be nourished by the passionate engagement

of their children and by so many others. As a vital, living program, our outreach keeps their gift in motion, transforming the lives of students and community members, welcoming all into the ever-expanding Wick family of poets.

—*David Hassler, director of the Wick Poetry Center*



Walter and Bob Wick stand in front of the "Seated Earth" sculpture in the Wick Poetry Park.

JUDSON “JUD” LOGAN, BA ’82

July 19, 1959 – January 3, 2022

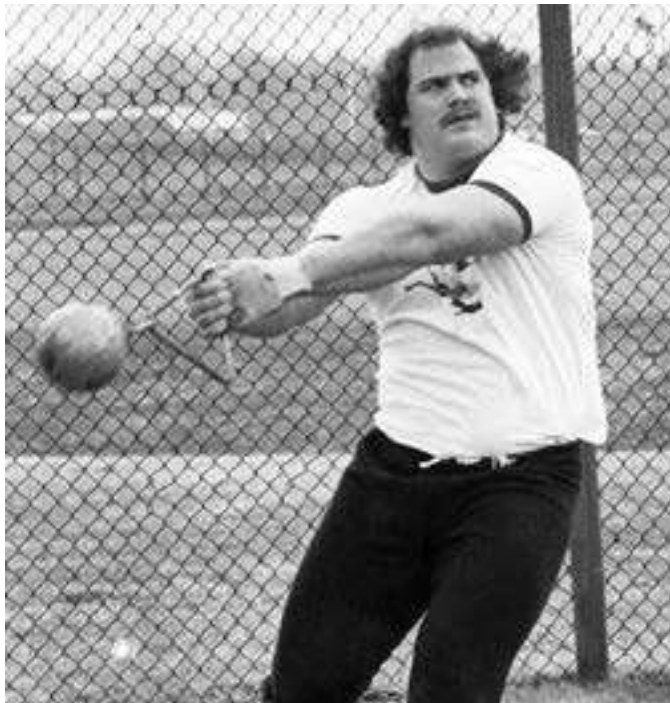


Photo courtesy of Tom E. Puskar, Times-Gazette.com

Light Giver

Judson Logan, four-time Olympian and Varsity “K” Hall of Famer, left a great legacy when he passed away from COVID-19–related pneumonia in January 2022.

He came to Kent State on a divided athletic scholarship, part football, part track. A four-year letter winner in track and field (1978–81) and one-year letter winner in football (1978), Logan qualified for the NCAA Track and Field Championships in 1980 after being selected as the Mid-American Conference Outstanding Athlete. He also captured three individual MAC titles, winning the hammer throw in 1979 and 1980 and the discus throw in 1980.

He had trained in the hammer throw with Kent State’s track coach, **Al Schoterman, BS ’73**, who was a five-time All-American in the hammer throw for the Golden Flashes and had competed in the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. At the end of his senior year, when Logan went to Schoterman’s home to thank him, Schoterman asked if he wanted to be in the upcoming 1984 Olympics. He promised to help turn Logan into an Olympian over the next two years. Instead of an ending, it was a new beginning.

Logan earned a spot on four US Olympic teams (in 1984, 1988, 1992 and 2000), serving as captain of the 1992 team in Barcelona, Spain. He also represented the US as a competitor in the Pan American Games, Goodwill Games and World Championships. Logan won a gold medal in the hammer throw at the 1987 Pan American Games in Indianapolis. He was the US record-holder in the hammer throw for several years and currently holds the record for the third-longest throw of all time.

“Al Schoterman changed the course of Jud’s life,” says Logan’s youngest brother, Andy. “Al saw more light in him than Jud saw for himself. Just this past August, Jud talked to the Kent State football team about being a light giver. He’s been that for thousands of people.”

Logan was sought after as a speaker. He often discussed overcoming obstacles and encouraged listeners to find a light giver—someone who sees more in you and helps light the path that you may have never seen or believed you could take—and then to become one for others.

At the time of his passing, Logan (who was treated for leukemia for two years prior to his death) was in his 17th season as head track and field coach at Ashland University where, among other accomplishments, he led the men’s team to three consecutive NCAA Division II national championships and was a five-time US Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association National Coach of the Year. A 1990 inductee into the Kent State Varsity “K” Hall of Fame, he also was a 2002 inductee of the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame and a 2015 inductee of the National Throws Coaches Association Thrower’s Hall of Fame.

“Jud will be remembered for far more than just coaching, trophies and All-Americans; he was my friend, a mentor and an inspiration to many,” says Nathan Fanger, Kent State track and field associate head coach. “He was always there for me as a young coach when I needed direction or advice. I will miss his energy, his passion and the way he could command a room wherever he went. He will forever have a place in my heart, and he will forever be part of the Kent State track and field family.”

Logan stayed connected to Kent State and returned to the Field House for track and field meets each season. His voice could be heard loud and clear, especially during the final home indoor meet, which was previously named the Kent State Tune Up. Every year at that meet, Logan coached his own student-athletes and offered encouragement to throwers from other schools who were aiming for a big mark to qualify for the national meet.

In February 2022, Kent State renamed this final meet the “Jud Logan Memorial Tune Up.” This name will be used for the final meet each season from now on.

In addition, family and friends have established the Jud Logan-Al Schoterman LIGHT GIVER Scholarship endowment, in memory of Jud Logan and in honor of Al Schoterman. This gift enables Kent State to award scholarships to student-athletes who compete in throwing events. To contribute to the endowment, please contact Brian Grubich, associate director of athletic advancement, at 330-672-8399 or bgrubich2@kent.edu.

Olena Riabushenko (Galushko) and husband, Alex Riabushenko.

A DEATH IN UKRAINE

BY DAVID E. DIX

“Happiness is to love silence” ... I have always tried to abide by this principle ... because I was very comfortable and safe with my husband!!!

Now my happiness is gone. I don’t want to and I can’t believe it, let alone accept this fact!

I was strong and calm because of him ... thanks to the understanding that I have him ... My entire universe is just destroyed by this war right now!!!

Do you know what my 8th grade son is looking for on the Internet — does his soul die after he dies????!!!! How scary is this!!!

Sixteen years we built our family and happiness ... now I just don’t understand where and how to move next????

My heart is torn out and they say hold on, you can make it????

I look at people going on with their usual lives and I just don’t understand why?? If this is some higher God’s plan, I don’t understand it at all now!!!

Our children were left without a loving father for whom they were the meaning of life ... he helped them to be born and held them first ... tried all of my free time with them (even when I got tired of doing it, he always wanted them to do something and grow) ...

I have a feeling that he left ... and he must come back ... his smile “stands” in my eyes ... I can’t even say “rest in peace” right now! ... I wish this was a dream so I can wake up ... and near was he ... how hard this all is.

—Olena Riabushenko (Galushko)



Olena Riabushenko (Galushko), a high school English teacher, was a scholar with the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program at Kent State University during Spring Semester 2021. Secondary school teachers from Eastern Europe and Central Asia participated in a six-week professional development program focused on media literacy and learned how to help young people in their countries distinguish fake news from verifiable reporting.

Olena would tell us how proud she is of Ukraine, her country, and its economic progress as well as its progress in becoming a functioning democracy. A resident of a community about one hour’s drive west of Kyiv, the country’s capital, she is a teacher and her husband, Alex, a career officer in the Ukrainian armed forces.

“I don’t like it, but that is what he wanted to do,” she said.

It was a time of peace and no one dreamed of the horror that was soon to commence.

The [Gerald H.] Read Center for International and Intercultural Education at Kent State has a “Friendship Family” program through which local families volunteer to show the Fulbright scholars around, mostly on weekends, but occasionally at midweek special events and outings during their stay at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center.

As one of several local families who volunteer, Janet and I were assigned to Olena, and what a pleasure it was to spend time with her. She was unselfish, appreciative of whatever we provided, and sweet. She and her friend Tonya, another Ukrainian on the program, came to our home and cooked Ukrainian borscht soup for us. It was tasty! We provided transportation for them to events that the Read Center staff scheduled. We visited Cleveland: a concert in St. Stanislaus Church, the Cleveland Museum of Art and other places. We took in events on the KSU campus although these were limited by COVID-19 restrictions.

I remember during our visit to the remarkable dinosaur exhibit at Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Museum of Natural History Olena snapped a photo of a dinosaur with her phone and sent it to her young son back home. Fascinated by dinosaurs, the boy responded to his mother within minutes, proudly identifying the dinosaur in that photo.

Olena and Tonya (who resides in southern Ukraine near the Black Sea), both started emailing us after Russia invaded Ukraine last month. I felt guilty telling them about normal life in America because of what they are enduring with Putin’s totally unprovoked war. Both replied that reading about normal life in America was reassuring. Both asked for America’s help.

“People need to see that this war is against all Ukrainians ... against our children and our future ... it’s a war for our existence.”

—Olena Riabushenko (Galushko)

Olena, in a recent email, wrote that she was worried sick about her husband, Alex, fighting in eastern Ukraine. She had heard nothing for two days.

On Sunday, this past week, I saw her heartbreaking post on Facebook. This fine lady, a good teacher, a good mother and a loving wife, does not deserve what has happened. Whatever we Americans can do to help Ukraine, I support.

For God’s sake, let’s stand up to the murderous, deceitful bully in the Kremlin!

Used with permission. This article originally appeared on Record-Courier.com: “Along the Way: Fulbright scholar at Kent State from Ukraine loses husband in war,” April 3, 2022.

David E. Dix is a former publisher of the Record-Courier and a former trustee of Kent State University. He and his wife, Janet Dix, BS ’71, MEd ’76, PhD ’92, received the 2020 Distinguished Service to EHHS [Education, Health and Human Services] Award. David Dix also serves on the Read Center’s Professional Advisory Board.



The official Kent State University Seal, adopted in 1964, includes a soaring chimney swift.



Biology professor Ralph Dexter, PhD, releases a chimney swift. His decades of research on the swift led to its inclusion on the university's seal.

For the Birds

A silhouette of a bird soars above the sunburst on the Kent State University seal—but it's not just any bird, it's a chimney swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). Once a common sight in Kent, chimney swifts were the subject of decades of research by Ralph W. Dexter, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Biological Sciences, a well-known authority on the chimney swift during his tenure at Kent State. (He taught from 1937 to 1982 and died in 1991).

Dexter, a native of Massachusetts, focused his research on the ecology of marine communities, including mollusks, crustaceans and birds. Coming to Kent State, he also studied the chimney swifts that nested and roosted in the chimneys and air shafts of older buildings on the Kent Campus. He banded and compiled data on thousands of swifts to understand their habits.

Chimney swifts spend most of their time in the air and can eat up to 12,000 flying insects a day. Only landing to nest and rest, they use their spit to "glue" the nests to the walls of chimneys and shafts. Among the many papers Dexter wrote is one about the breeding history of a single male swift (Swift No. 42-188523) that he banded as a nestling and followed for 13 years (published in *The Ohio Journal of Science* in November, 1968).

When Kent State adopted a new university seal in 1964—it had previously used Ohio's state seal—it included the chimney swift, "because it is a distinctive part of the campus" and "because of its

seemingly interminable flight, the swift is a symbol for leadership," according to the minutes of a Board of Trustees meeting on Nov. 19, 1964.

Chimney swifts usually arrive in Ohio in April and leave by October, congregating in the hundreds as they migrate to the Amazon Basin of Peru for the winter. They used to nest and roost in hollow trees but began losing their natural habitat to deforestation and development. The swifts adapted by moving into building chimneys and expanding their range, protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. However, as old buildings with brick chimneys are torn down, the swifts once again face



The new Chimney Swift Tower, built by the city of Kent to provide habitat for chimney swifts displaced by development.

habitat loss—and their population is steadily declining.

When Rhonda Boyd, a senior engineer for the city of Kent, learned that the demolition of Kent's old police station would displace a large colony of chimney swifts residing in its brick chimney, she became their champion. Spearheading a campaign to build the birds a home of their own, she secured funding through grants, community outreach and donations from local citizens.

Two years later, a 20-foot chimney swift tower, designed by Metis Construction, stands between the new Kent Police station and the Lefton Esplanade extension, across Haymaker Parkway from the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center. At its base is a garden of native plants that attract pollinators. The brick tower also features handmade ceramic tiles depicting chimney swifts, pollinators and native plants by local artist Emily Ulm.

"We're also looking to add more houses," says Boyd, who received the 2021 Portage Park District Foundation Award for Environmental Activism. "They won't be as fancy as this, but you can make them out of wood." She's looking for volunteers to help build the additional nesting structures, which the city plans to place throughout the parks and along the river. ⚡

Learn more about chimney swifts and how to construct a tower at www.chimneyswifts.org.

Let Them Not Say

Let them not say: we did not see it.
We saw.

Let them not say: we did not hear it.
We heard.

Let them not say: they did not taste it.
We ate, we trembled.

Let them not say: it was not spoken, not written.
We spoke,
we witnessed with voices and hands.

Let them not say: they did nothing.
We did not-enough.

Let them say, as they must say something:

A kerosene beauty.
It burned.

**Let them say we warmed ourselves by it,
read by its light, praised,
and it burned.**

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