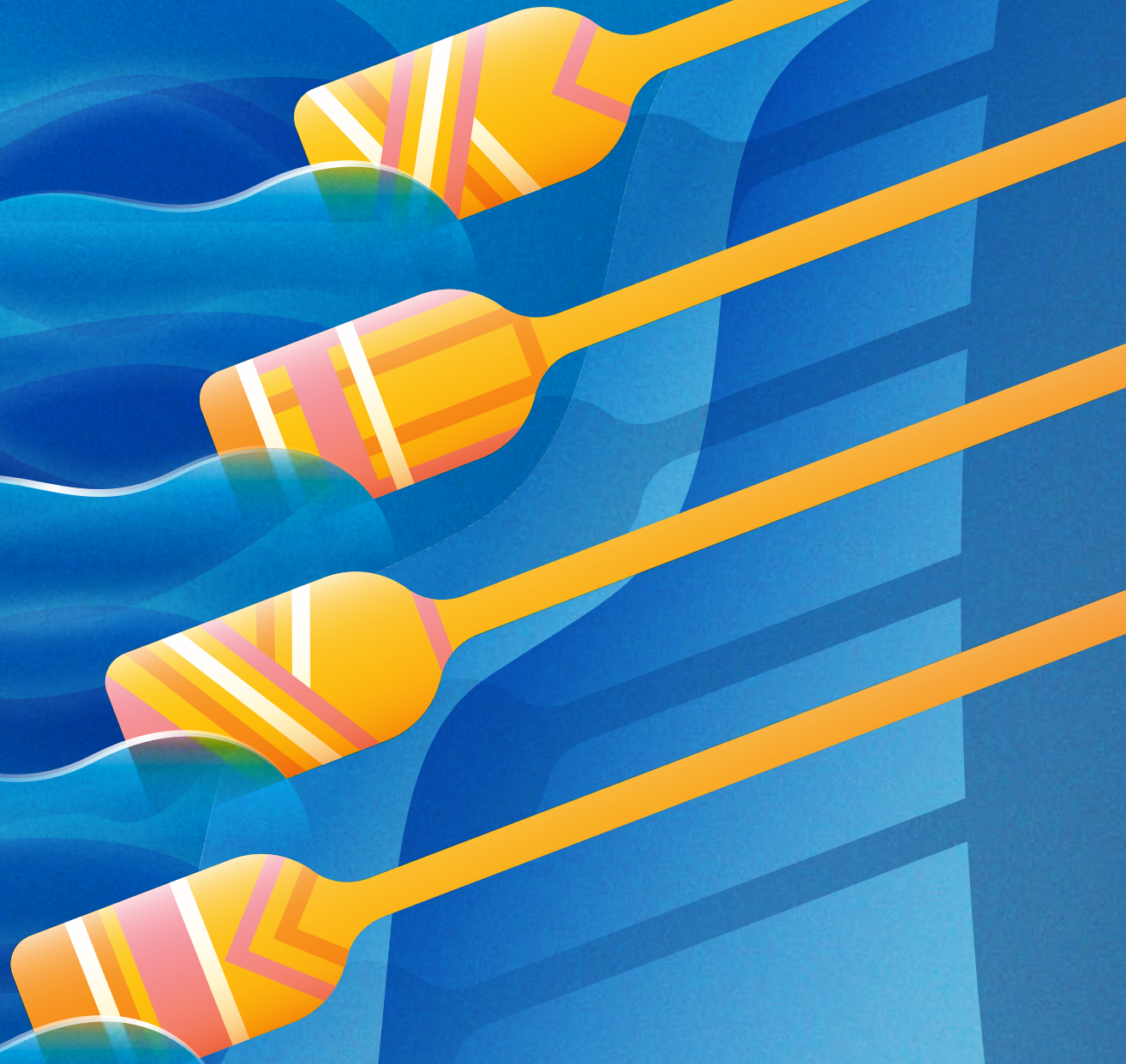


# illumine

—University of Southern Indiana—



SPRING 2022



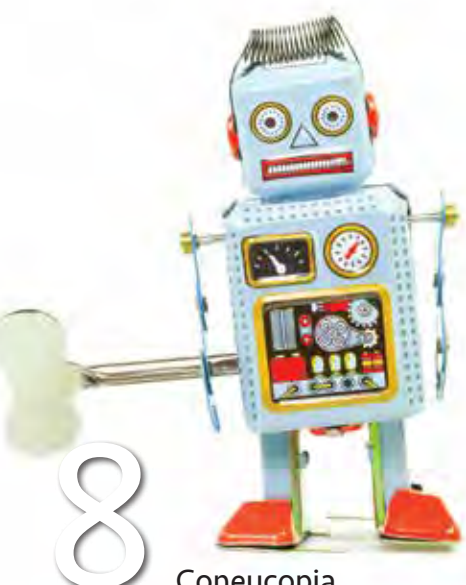
features

<b>Matchmakers</b>	<b>17</b>
Keeping Students on Their Career Tracks	
<b>Headway</b>	<b>21</b>
A Lesson in Perseverance	
<b>Crescendo</b>	<b>25</b>
The Sweet Sounds of Donor Dollars	
<b>Risking Life for Life</b>	<b>30</b>
Nursing Student's Drive Overrides Danger	





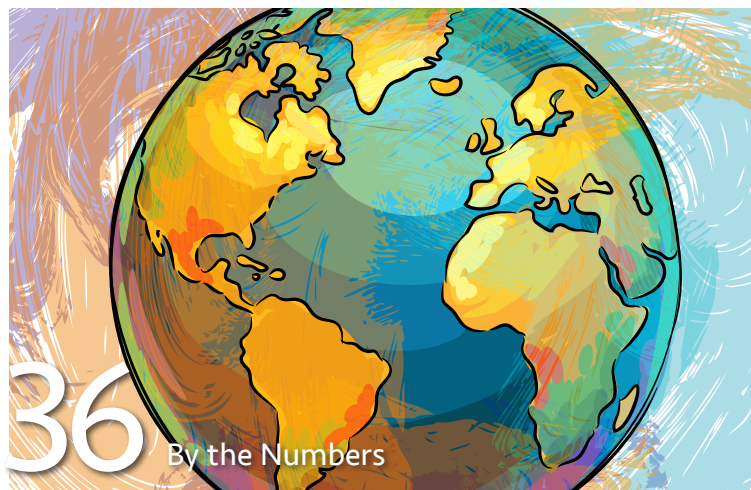
14 Scoreboard



8 Coneucopia



34 Behind the Scene



36 By the Numbers

departments

You Said/We Did 2  
 State of the U 4  
 We Dare—Again 6  
 Student POV 12

From the Desk of 13  
 Quotables 16  
 Class Notes 37  
 Tailfeather 48

## RIGHT PLACE FOR ME TOO

*Patricia Houglund Phillips' poignant memory [Fall 2021 illumine] of her first day in my history class at ISUE in 1967 resonated strongly with me. I felt her same "certain calm" because I too was in the right place at the right time—in spite of "the curling plaster falling on the floor." As the first in my family to go to college, I had recently received my PhD from Ohio State University. I took the position at ISUE so that I could teach students who might not otherwise experience the wider world of knowledge through higher education. I am so proud of Patricia and thank her and illumine for letting both her and me relive a vibrant moment that makes all my 40 years of teaching at ISUE/USI worthwhile.*

**Dr. Donald E. Pitzer**  
USI Professor Emeritus of History  
Evansville, Indiana



**Paula Payne**

Great article! So happy we are associated with Steve Bridges, both personally, and somewhat on a professional level, as our daughter attends USI. [#Tailfeather](#)

## NEW TWIST ON OLD STORY

*Just a note that one time MY dog ate THEIR homework! When I first adopted Herman, he destroyed everything—feather pillows, feather blankets, two remote controls, a shower curtain.... And then there were the clothes and shoes he pulled off furniture and out of closets, and a stack of student research papers conveniently located on my ottoman. How's that for a twist?*

**Dr. Leigh Anne Howard**  
USI Professor of Communication Studies  
Evansville, Indiana

## SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS



**Kathy Karn Carmichael**

Lee Ann Shafer's "From the Desk of"...was a wonderful article. I am so grateful for the program; I wouldn't be where I am today without it. [#FromtheDeskof](#)



**lakotakathryn**

Ben!!! Love that guy!  
[#StudentPOV](#)



**iugirl90**

My father-in-law was one of the many people who helped USI come to life. My daughter is a senior there! [#usiparent](#) [#screaglepride](#) [#RebelswithaCauseStory](#)

## HAPPY GRADUATES



**David Blake Conrad Snyder**

Thank you for allowing us to have an in-person graduation! Go Eagles! [#2020closure](#)

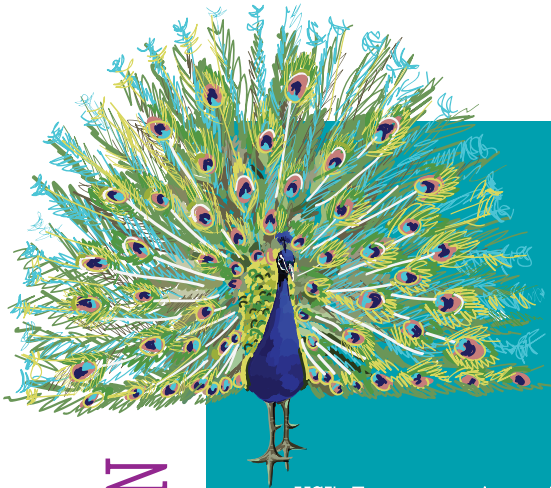


**crawfish\_sierra18**

From the bottom of my heart as a Spring 2020 graduate—who had to move out of her apartment before the state shutdown and never got to say goodbye to the community that built her and those she'd grown to love—thank you. It was nice to get the closure. [#2020closure](#)

*We invite readers to comment on articles and start conversations by bringing unique perspectives to relevant magazine topics. Correspondence and comments will not be limited to letters mailed to the editor, but may be from email or social media networks. Letters mailed to the editor may be published in the magazine unless the author states it is not for publication. Letters should be kept to 250 words, and may be edited for style, length, clarity, grammar and relevance to USI issues. Letters to the editor should be sent to [magazine@usi.edu](mailto:magazine@usi.edu).*





## THINGS THAT MAKE US PREEN

USI's ENGINEERS IN ACTION (EIA) CHAPTER WAS AWARDED THE EIA BRIDGE BUILDER SAFETY AWARD AT THE ANNUAL ENGINEERS IN ACTION BUILDER CONFERENCE LAST FALL, RECEIVING A \$1,000 PRIZE.

"THE DIRECTOR SAID WE WERE 'BY FAR THE BEST CHAPTER' WITH REGARD TO PROPER PPE AND ADHERENCE TO OSHA SAFETY PROTOCOLS,"

DR. ANDREW "JASON" HILL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGINEERING.

OUR STUDENT-RUN RADIO STATION—'95.7 THE SPIN'—BROUGHT HOME FOUR AWARDS IN THE 2021 COLLEGE BROADCASTERS, INCORPORATED (CBI) NATIONAL STUDENT PRODUCTION AWARDS COMPETITION, INCLUDING BEST PSA! CONGRATULATIONS!

USI'S STUDENT-BUILT, NASA DEPLOYED, SATELLITE, UNITE CUBE SAT, COMPLETED ITS JOURNEY OF

995 DAYS AND REENTERED EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE. AS MANY AS 12 STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY COLLABORATED ON VARIOUS STAGES OF THE PROJECT OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, MOST OF WHOM HAVE GRADUATED AND MOVED ON TO CAREERS IN ENGINEERING AND AEROSPACE.



USI RETIREE, NOW PART-TIME EMPLOYEE, JERRY BULGER, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR FOR FACILITY OPERATIONS AND PLANNING, AND HIS CREW WENT BIG FALL 2021 WHEN CREATING A FLOAT FOR THE WEST SIDE NUT CLUB FALL FESTIVAL PARADE. THEY REPLICATED THE GAZEBO NUT CLUB MEMBERS BUILT AND DONATED TO THE UNIVERSITY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE CLUB'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF USI'S FIRST GRADUATING CLASS, THE CLASS OF 1971.

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*illum* is published two times annually by the University of Southern Indiana for its alumni and friends. Reach us at: University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Boulevard, Evansville, Indiana 47712. Send editorial information to *illum*'s editor C. L. Stambush at [clstambush@usi.edu](mailto:clstambush@usi.edu), USI.Editor@usi.edu or call 812-465-7020.

As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer, the University of Southern Indiana considers all qualified applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy or marital status, national origin, age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other category protected by law or identified by the University as a protected class. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Affirmative Action Officer, USI Human Resources Department, University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Boulevard, Evansville, Indiana 47712.





A few months ago, I was invited to speak to a group of equine professionals about diversity, equity and inclusion. As an African American university president, with two out of three educational degrees in agriculture, I was asked to share with the predominantly White group of horse experts my perspectives on diversity.

My first objective, when engaging with anyone, is to find a way to connect. Connection is the foundational precursor for understanding the unfamiliar. As I looked at the intelligent faces gazing back in anticipation of my insight, it occurred to me that a confession was my segue to diversity. The path on which I could guide them to a different understanding. While they lived and breathed horses, I become uneasy in the presence of these majestic beasts. They are beautiful from afar, but you would never get me on one.

I am Chicago born and bred. Horses were never a part of my life, education or world. No one ever introduced me to a horse. No one ever educated me on how to engage with a horse. No one ever took my



hand and guided it from a horse's head to tail—down the mane, along the spine and across the backside—enlightening me on horses from a horse's perspective. No one ever taught me to communicate with a horse.

The members of this group were fluent in horse language. They understood a horse's energy. They connected and in turn, a trust formed between the two. I believe the same is true when people discuss race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political affiliations and every other group of "other." If we do not seek to understand and speak the language of those different from ourselves, if we let our fear of the different hold us back, we will never connect, engage, understand or grow.

As a scientist, I know fear is a biochemical and emotional response possessed by all living creatures designed to alert us to harm or danger, physical or psychological, and necessary for the preservation of life. But not all things rise to the level of being feared. Fellow human beings who simply look different, dress different, speak different, live different, love different, think different, vote different are not by default fear worthy.

Our fears expose our vulnerabilities. They intensify our anxiety. They drive us to recede and retreat. Fears keep us locked inside ourselves. Fears keep us pinned inside unhealthy paradigms. Fears manifest perceptions that may not be realities. Fears silo us. Fear of the different will divide and destroy us.

If we remain afraid, fearful of touching the horse, fearful of each other, we will never learn to connect with anyone different than our perceived selves. We may observe from afar and even admire, but we will never appreciate those different than ourselves in a way that leads to respectful, valued and sustained relationships. Never connect with them. Never understand them. Never learn from them.

My confessional fear of horses, as a symbolic narrative to a discussion on diversity, connected with the equine experts. That connection would not have been possible if I allowed my fear to cause me to dislike, treat with disdain or reject horses, and to avoid those professionals who work with and care for them. In that moment, in that connection, their faces revealed the opening of their minds and together we found the beginning of a pathway to understanding that being different is not something to be feared but embraced.



Facing down his fears and getting on Jolene, a Palomino American Quarter Horse owned by Mike Wilke, a friend of the Rochon family, took more than a step stool.

Dr. Rochon is not only apprehensive around horses but allergic too. After getting to know Jolene and riding her in the arena, his tension eased. "I want to go back. I want to learn how to trot and then gallop," he said. "That is the point, we have to keep going back until our fears fade, we connect and our divide dissolves."

# WE DARE



D1 D1

D1

D1



# — AGAIN



Over the course of USI's 57 years, there have been two seismic shifts. The first when the University broke free from its satellite status to become an independent institution in 1985. The second earth-shaking announcement came this February when USI tossed its athletic feather in the arena to be reclassified from Division II to Division I athletics and joined the Ohio Valley Conference.

If you want to win, you have to play ball (or swing, jump, run), and USI has never shied away from making the right move at the right time. When there was no affordable public higher education option in southern Indiana, community leaders and members stepped up to create a place for people to earn an education that advanced careers and elevated quality of life. Now another advancement is setting the stage for a new era.

The move to DI aligns with the University's third goal of its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan—elevate visibility and reputation by enhancing awareness and reputation of the University's identity and distinctiveness.

Scoring USI's readiness to go DI was tasked to an exploratory committee of 25 USI community members made up of students, coaches, faculty, administrators and alumni. The group's final report was based on a 26-item

planning checklist provided by the NCAA. The final tally revealed the University was "ready to transition to Division I now" in five categories, "ready to transition to Division I with minor adjustments" in 11 categories and "more than minor adjustments needed before making the transition to Division I" in 10 categories. With this report and a substantial amount of additional information and data in hand, the USI Board of Trustees carefully considered and unanimously approved moving forward with reclassification from Division II to Division I athletics.

The ball is in USI's court, and if we want to play, we have to pay. An increased budget from \$6.6 million to approximately \$12 million will be needed to fund required athletic scholarships and additional Athletics personnel. Upon NCAA acceptance to DI, the transition will take four years to complete, but USI's athletic teams would begin competing in the OVC in Fall 2022.

With a track record of 35 Academic All-America honors, 188 NCAA Division II tournament appearances; four NCAA Division II National Championships; 10 NCAA Division II individual national championships in Cross Country and Track & Field; 16 NCAA Division II Regional Championships; and a host of other accomplishments—we are determined to compete.

To learn more about the move, visit [USI.edu/WeDare](https://usi.edu/WeDare).



To read about the history of USI's athletic journey scan this code.

D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1 D1



Every picture tells a story, or is that a picture's worth 1,000 words? We don't want you to write 1,000, just a line or two, putting some words into the mouths of these Screaming Eagles.

*illumine*  
Last Pen a Caption winner



"If we win, it's Ryan's or Ponderosa Steakhouse. If we lose, it's Burger King."

*Eric Schoenstein*

Be creative, fun and succinct in writing your caption and send it to [magazine@usi.edu](mailto:magazine@usi.edu) or C. L. Stambush, editor, University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Boulevard, Evansville, Indiana 47712

## ROSEY THE ROBOT Reinvented

USI has received a \$50,000 Catalyst Award from the U.S. National Academy of Medicine (NAM)—part of the National Academy of Sciences—to research and develop an artificial intelligence prototype (a virtual assistant called Joi) to improve emotional well-being and independence for people living with dementia, especially those aging-in-place. "To be recognized on a global stage is very exciting," said Dr. Lisa Fournier, Project Coordinator for the USI Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). "I'm so inspired by all the research and innovative projects that are taking place worldwide to help maintain health and well-being as we age."

## FROM OLDER TO bOLDER:

### A Podcast on Aging

A new podcast from the University of Southern Indiana Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness is showcasing and exploring the dynamic lives of older adults in southwestern Indiana. *bOLDER People*, hosted by Dr. Katie Ehlman, USI Professor of Gerontology, features interviews with a wide variety of experts and elders about their life experiences and how aging has played a role in those experiences. Topics of conversation include innovation in the field of gerontology, such as age-friendly initiatives, living-in-place opportunities and more.

"This podcast is about people who have been given the gift of longevity and are willing to reflect on their lives, lessons learned and living well," said Ehlman. "They will share captivating stories of decades of experiences, and we will listen and be inspired."







# EXPERT'S RECONSTRUCTION HELPS DELIVER JUSTICE



Last year, Dr. Susan Helfrich, Adjunct Professor in the College of Liberal Arts' World Languages and

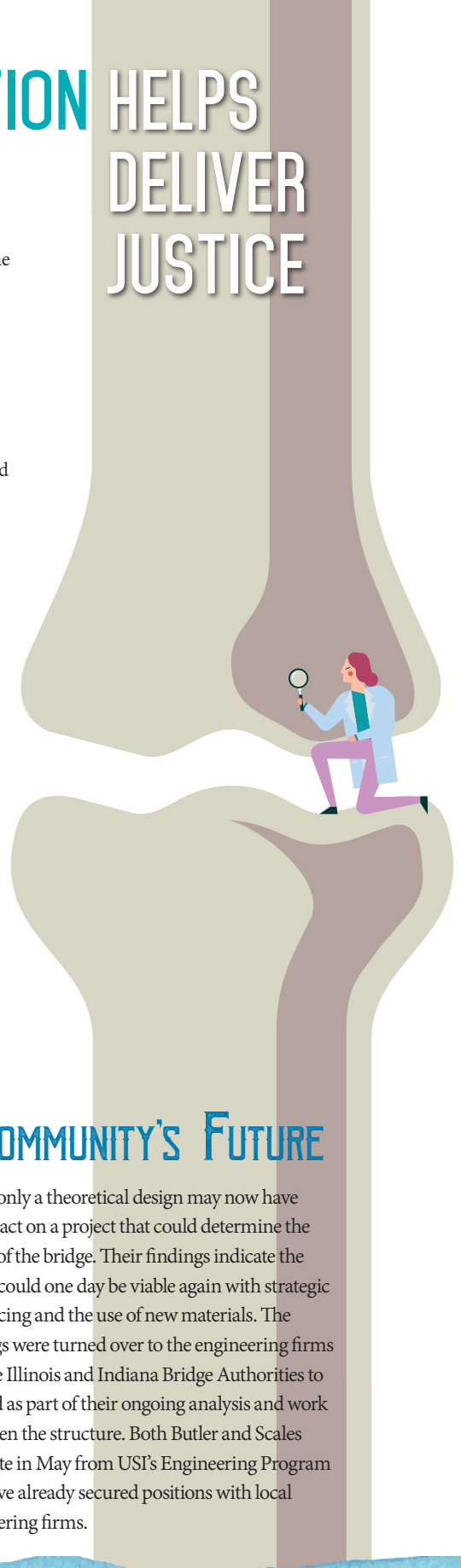
Cultures Department, a physical and biological anthropologist, was called on by local law enforcement officials to help with a case involving the remains of a female victim found in Warrick County, Indiana. The Sherriff's Office was able to identify her body after releasing a description to the public, which generated several tips to her identity.

Though Helfrich's work wasn't about finding the identity of the victim, her expertise pieced together the details of the woman's death for investigators, to find out what exactly happened. "My expert testimony regarding trauma from a gunshot wound assisted in the conviction of two individuals linked [to the killing]," she says. "I am honored to be able

to assist local coroners in death investigations. My experiences working with modified bones has led to my assistance in the analysis of bone trauma in southwestern Indiana."

Helfrich has been working with local law enforcement departments and coroner's offices since she began teaching at USI in 2013. In Vanderburgh County, she has worked with Coroner Steve Lockyear on several investigations, including the search for Aleah Beckerle (2016-17) and the ongoing search for Dawnita Wilkerson (2020-present).

"At USI, I have a wonderfully supportive community in both the World Languages and Cultures and Criminal Justice Departments," says Helfrich. "I am reinvigorated in my work when curious USI students want to discuss my research after class, and when mentoring student volunteers in the laboratory—just as my mentors once did for me."



## SENIOR PROJECT REVIVES COMMUNITY'S FUTURE

Every year, USI senior engineering students pick a project, and last year Zach Butler and Jared Scales, under the guidance of Dr. Kerry Hall, Associate Professor of Engineering, chose to study the structural loads of the New Harmony Bridge, permanently closed since 2012. The bridge, which spans the Wabash River, was a gateway shortcut between Indiana and Illinois which reduced travel time for commuters and was a boon for historically and culturally significant New Harmony, Indiana. The students' study coincided with a renewed interest in reopening the bridge and what was

at first only a theoretical design may now have an impact on a project that could determine the future of the bridge. Their findings indicate the bridge could one day be viable again with strategic reinforcing and the use of new materials. The findings were turned over to the engineering firms and the Illinois and Indiana Bridge Authorities to be used as part of their ongoing analysis and work to reopen the structure. Both Butler and Scales graduate in May from USI's Engineering Program and have already secured positions with local engineering firms.

# Crack a Spine

## *Afro-Hispanic Linguistic Remnants in Mexico: The Case of the Costa Chica Region*

By Dr. Norma Rosas Mayén, published by Iberoamericana/Vervuert housed in Germany and Spain.

The book investigation examines the current linguistic characteristics and sociolinguistic status of this speech area on the brink of extinction. It advocates on the behalf of those Costa Chica Afro-Mexican communities that have been stigmatized and customarily ignored in Mexico's nation-state politics.



## *Home and Away: Lived Experience in Performative Narratives*

Edited By Dr. Leigh Anne Howard, published by Routledge.

The book explores how performative writing serves as a process that critically interrogates space/place in relation to personal, social, cultural and political understanding. "I am telling my family that this is a readable scholarly book!" says Howard.

## NEW MBA CONCENTRATION

The University of Southern Indiana is excited to announce it is expanding its existing Master of Business Administration online programs to include a new concentration in marketing. The MBA program is designed to accommodate the lifestyle demands of working professionals and is delivered 100% online through accelerated eight-week courses.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

USI.EDU/MBA

## Volunteer USI

Volunteer USI is a University-wide program to recruit, place and recognize volunteers who give their services and talents to benefit USI and the surrounding communities. Made up of student, alumni, employee and community volunteers, it is an organization of individuals that donate their time to this University and to their communities. Founded in July of 1996, Volunteer USI is coordinated through the office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer USI. Visit [USI.edu/volunteer](http://USI.edu/volunteer) to learn more.





# Hello *illum*e readers:

Thank you all for participating in the 2021 *illum*e readership survey. The results are in, and I wanted to share some of the highlights and address some of the concerns. I believe some of the comments can be addressed by providing an overview of how *illum*e comes together. The 52-page publication is produced twice a year by a small team including me, USI's editor/senior writer (responsible for conceiving, interviewing, writing, editing, assigning, et al), one lead designer (layout and design, she and two others design the covers), a couple of photographers and a few contributing students, staff and/or faculty, and host of campus-wide proofreaders. I also have the help of a team of readers across campus who review each issue. The content is produced in a six-month span, designed in a month, proofed over three weeks, with printing and mailing taking up the last three weeks.

Over the past 49 years, the magazine's constituency has grown to nearly 50,000 readers. The publication's redesign in 2016 included the creation of a mission statement to "instill a sense of pride and strengthen readers' ties to the University of Southern Indiana by telling its unique stories, resulting in deeply supported relationships." Seventy-five percent of responders said we were achieving this goal.

Some of you expressed concern about print and mailing costs, paper vs digital and receiving multiple copies to homes.

The magazine's budget has not increased in the past 10+ years. Despite rising paper and postage costs, we manage to remain in balance and continue to send an award-winning publication to alumni, employees and stakeholders. Students do not receive the print version until they graduate. They are sent a digital copy and can pick up a copy at one of the eight racks around campus.

Some suggested employees get their copy delivered on campus. However, I conducted a cost analysis of this just before the pandemic and discovered it would cost an additional \$205 to hand deliver *illum*e to office mailboxes as opposed to sending them through the postal service. This has to do with *illum*e's nonprofit mailing status vs the cost of trucking the 1,010 copies to campus and USI's Distribution Services delivering them.

Print vs digital. Overwhelmingly, print is the choice of readers. This is true of not just USI's constituents but alumni across universities nationwide, according to CASE\* surveys.

However, if you do not want to receive the printed version or if your household receives multiple copies (your own, your alumni children, their spouses) you have the power to change that. Email me your full name, home address and USI graduation year to [USI.Editor@usi.edu](mailto:USI.Editor@usi.edu) and tell me what you would like to happen: receive digital only (include preferred email address), be removed from print and digital mailing list or have your children's copies mailed to their home. (For this you will need to include the person's name and new mailing address.)

We appreciate your feedback, and I am looking closely to see how I can live up to readers' expectations by incorporating some of the wonderful ideas. Please know you have been heard, keep your ideas and insights coming. All of us strive to deliver content in layouts that will resonate with you as much as possible. After all, *illum*e is produced for you!

Sincerely,

C. L. Stambush  
Editor/Senior Writer

## **SURVEY PRIZE WINNERS**

Emily Hartman '22, German Studies  
Katlyn Runyan '24, Health Services  
Conner Sturgeon '20, Social Work

\*Council for Advancement and Support of Education



# STUDENT P.O.V.



Diego Neira Socorro '23  
Marketing

## Giving Back

Since my freshman year, I always felt the need to get involved in activities and groups I thought could be beneficial for the rest of my academic and professional careers. Part of that goal was accompanied by my desire to continue to be a leader and put together a plan to do big things with other students on and off the campus.

In finding a way to accomplish that desire here at USI, I joined the University's Engineers in Action chapter—an international, student-led organization that builds bridges for people to reconnect them to their communities. Being a business marketing major, I took on the role of fundraiser for the chapter's first solo bridge-building project in West Virginia last summer. One of the activities I organized to raise funds was a Valentine's Day booth, where we received donations for the bridge construction, but also made some profit by selling chocolate strawberries and cupcakes. Part of the funds were used to purchase Engineers in Action customized sweatshirts and T-shirts for the West Virginia project travel team. The remaining funds were saved in our organization's account to cover future on-campus activities, and

the donations were used to cover part of the construction materials payment to the Engineers in Action staff account.

A team of eight USI students and two instructors spent three weeks building a vehicle bridge for the Nichols family (a mother and son), whose old bridge—a 30-foot span over a small creek—was damaged by several floods months earlier. Without a bridge, only the son was able to walk through the creek and climb a small hill to catch a ride to work. During the project, we stayed in a church 30 minutes away from our bridge site. Our group shared the church with two engineers from JZ Engineering. We worked alongside this consulting firm to learn the technical guidelines for bridge construction.

As I woke every morning and prepared my food for the day, my desire to build the bridge led me to work hard and help accomplish the daily goals of the team. On the site, my role as fundraiser changed to more hands-on and labor intensive, such as cutting wood, carrying concrete materials and moving rocks from the river to other spots of the bridge site.

Our days were long and hard. My body hurt from a recent hip surgery after tearing my hip labral while training with the Florida International University soccer team in Miami months earlier. Even with the pain, I never stopped doing my best and supporting whoever needed it. Every night I sat on my bed and thought about what I did right and wrong, and how I could improve my abilities to get more things done the next day.

This project helped me improve my construction skills such as excavating, concreting and woodworking. But it also helped me practice my leadership, communication and safety skills. Helping people is something I love doing, and knowing this bridge changed the life of a family in a poor economic situation made me feel proud of myself and my USI Engineers in Action team. As my third year at the University is around the corner, and as a foreigner from Venezuela, I see every activity and project as a chance to help people and show myself to this awesome community. I am proud to be a Screaming Eagle who is excited to keep chasing more goals and supporting the people who gave me an opportunity in this new country I now call home.



# DESK OF...

# FROM THE



During my childhood in the south side of Richmond, Virginia, I knew my upbringing would not be my future. Watching the news and being observant, I knew my family had our obstacles, but we still pushed forward.

I can recall my grandmother encouraging (telling me) to get a job at a local fast-food restaurant. Being the persuasive person she was, my grandmother convinced me that making my own money would be better than spending hers. So, I gave in and started my first job at Long John Silvers. My first day was one I will never forget. I walked in and finished all my paperwork before I received my first duty of the night. It was a Friday, and unbeknownst to me, it was the busiest day of the week. The manager gave me the task of being a cook that day, and I recall doing everything wrong because a flurry of directions was coming at me. I did not know this at the time, but the fire of that night was molding me for the better. Being immersed into the blaze known as the "Friday night rush" was no joke. And while I can recall being placed on dining room duty due to my poor performance in the kitchen, it felt good to know that I was finally making my own money.

As the night continued, I was asked to take out the trash, but in doing so, I exited the wrong door forcing an alarm to sound throughout the entire restaurant. I was embarrassed, but I had not been fired, so I kept on working. I worked at that job until the early stages of my college career because it provided me with perspective and the

DR. D'ANGELO TAYLOR  
Associate Director of the Multicultural Center

foundation of treating people with kindness and providing excellent service under duress.

As I navigated the rigors of college life, all my job-taught lessons were tested in a new environment across the country. As luck would have it, I met Dr. Jack Thomas by chance in a residence hall cafeteria, an encounter that led to another where he agreed to mentor me. Equipped with my previous lessons and newfound mentorship, I felt great about where I could go in my life. The constant challenges from my mentor and his circle pushed me to do the same with my circle, thus paying it forward the best way I knew how. This service, mentorship and professionalism mentality helped me grow beyond the young fast-food worker or the average college student. My newfound outlook on life allowed me to impact lives in a way that can only be explained by those whose lives I have touched. I share excerpts of my story with my students every chance I have because we all have an anecdote or life lesson that may present itself at the perfect time to help someone else.

These days, I think about how listening to my grandmother convincing me to get a job was one of the best decisions in my life. That decision forced me out of my comfort zone. I echo the words of the keynote speaker at my doctoral commencement ceremony, "Good, better, best. Don't you rest until your good is better, and your better is your best."

My best is yet to come...



## ATHLETE Q&A PARKER COLLIGNON '22

### ● MAJOR AND GRAD YEAR?

I'm a double major in accounting and economics. I graduate in May 2022 and aspire to be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

### ● FAVORITE PRE-MATCH HYPE SONG?

I don't really have a favorite—it depends on my mood. There are times when I need mellow types of music to calm my nerves, and other times I like songs that'll hype me up. I like most all genres.

### ● WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A USI ATHLETE?

It's both an honor and a privilege to be a USI athlete. I'm lucky I've remained healthy enough these last three years and have been able to compete and represent USI in a way I'm proud of. I'm also thankful that my coach, Chris Crawford, took me on as a recruit (even with my lack of experience). Overall, I love playing as a Screagle.

### ● WHAT'S THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR IN YOUR USI ATHLETIC CAREER?

I've realized over the years that no one is going to do the hard work for you, and this is especially important in a somewhat individualized sport like tennis. Tennis players can't pass the ball to a teammate on an off day, so it's important to prepare adequately (it takes a special initiative to be great). It's easy to place blame on others for scheduling, training methods, etc., and it's hard to put in the extra time needed to improve, but I will say the latter option is always worth it. All things considered, I've learned important skills like discipline and time management.

### ● WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION YOU GET ABOUT BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE?

I often hear the stereotype that student-athletes aren't really always "students" and we only care about athletics. That simply isn't true. My team has a very respectable GPA, and I'd like to think we all have great careers ahead of us. My focus in particular isn't solely on sports. I've been able to balance athletics with my academic and professional goals, too.

### ● WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO POST-MATCH MEAL/SNACK?

Carbohydrates! Contrary to what people might think, carbs are not "the devil." They allow athletes to (1) feel energized/fueled and (2) recover after a contest. I love breads, pastas and potatoes as well as fruits and vegetables. For a snack, I'm always eating something with peanut butter in it.

### ● REFLECT ON YOUR FAVORITE MATCH AND WHY.

One of my favorite matches was from a few years ago. My freshman year, we played Drury University in the first round of the conference tournament. Though we lost, it was an all-around high-level match, and it showed that we can compete with one of the best teams in the conference. There was a lot of energy, and it was a fun match. More recently, we played Walsh University and won convincingly. It was filled with tight matches, but we overcame with grit, and that's always a good feeling.

### ● WHAT IS THE TRAINING PROCESS LIKE FOR TENNIS?

I always tell people tennis can be like a track meet, but it also tests your endurance. It's filled with a bunch of little sprints needed to get to the ball, and good training is designed to reflect that. On the court, it's common to drill some and also play practice points. Off the court, I enjoy lifting weights, plyometrics (i.e., jump training), HIIT cardio workouts, yoga/stretching and the like. It's fun because tennis players need to train a variety of muscles (and in different ways) in order to perform well physically, and this keeps training from getting too boring.







**WHAT'S YOUR INNER THOUGHT PROCESS WHEN PLAYING IN A MATCH?**

To be honest, I think I do better when I stop thinking and just enjoy playing. In reality, I try to figure out what's going on in the match. Strategically, I analyze who is winning the point and how. I ask myself questions like "Is my forehand/backhand better than theirs?" and "Do I move better than my opponent?" I adapt my play based on the answers to those questions. In a sport like tennis, there are ebbs and flows. It's great to be playing well, but it's also necessary that you stay positive in the bad times, too—otherwise, the wheels can fall off so to speak.

*Parker is the recipient of the \$10,000 Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) Scholarship, allowing him to graduate debt-free. For more information on the how to help fund student scholarships, visit [USI.edu/scholarship-need](http://USI.edu/scholarship-need).*



For the tennis team schedule, scan here:



“THE STORY WAS *inspired* BY AN ARTICLE I READ IN THE ‘NEW YORKER’ ABOUT A MOM WHO LEFT HER CHILD AT HOME ALONE BUT THE *emotional journey* IN THE BOOK WAS INSPIRED BY MY COMPLETE ANXIETY ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE A BABY. I WAS THAT FREAKED ABOUT HAVING A BABY THAT I STARTED A WHOLE *dystopian novel* ABOUT THE SUBJECT. IT TURNS OUT I REALLY LIKE BEING A MOM.”

JESSAMINE CHAN | *novelist, Southern Indiana Reading Series*

“THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *prosecutorial oversight* AND POLITICS. BECAUSE OF THE WAY PROSECUTORS ARE SELECTED [THROUGH ELECTION], A LOT OF THE TIME THESE PEOPLE RUN ON *numbers*, AND IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO HAVE ALL THESE CASES, TO BRING THEM TO COURT, TO SEND PEOPLE TO JAIL. AT ELECTION TIME, PEOPLE ARE LIKE ‘Wow, YOU PUT ALL THESE PEOPLE IN *prison*, WE FEEL SO MUCH SAFER NOW.’ RATHER THAN QUESTION HOW MANY THAT WERE SENT TO JAIL WERE INNOCENT.”

DR. CAROLINE JALAIN | *Liberal Arts Faculty Colloquium “Punishing the Powerful: A Study of Prosecutorial Misconduct in the Era of Ethics Reform”*

# “OVERHEARD QUOTABLES”

“USI HAS A *tradition* OF BEING A DARING ATHLETIC *competitor* AND NOW IS THE TIME TO CONSIDER WHERE WE GO FROM HERE.”

PRESIDENT RONALD S. ROCHON | *speaking on the exploration into the possibility of moving from Division II to Division I athletics*

“I DON’T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS AND THE TRUTH IS NEITHER DOES ANYONE ELSE. WE ARE CERTAINLY ON THE *pandemic rollercoaster*. I’M NOT SURE IF WE ARE ON A HILL GOING UP OR ON A HILL GOING DOWN, I JUST KNOW THE RIDE CONTINUES. HISTORY WILL TELL, ULTIMATELY, WHETHER THAT IS *a good thing or a bad thing*. ONE THING TO KEEP IN MIND WITH ANYTHING WE SAY ABOUT THE PANDEMIC IS IT’S A LIVING ORGANISM, IT’S *evolving* WITH TIME, IT HAS A LOT OF ‘LABS’ TO DO ITS WORK IN THE HUMAN BODY AND IT CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND MUTATE.”

DR. JAMES PORTER | *Deaconess Health System President in a presentation to the USI community*

“WHEN THE FIRST BOOK I PUBLISHED CAME TO ME IN THE BOX, I OPENED THE BOX AND TOOK OUT THE COPY THAT WOULD BE MY READING COPY, LOOKED AT IT, FLIPPED THROUGH IT AND SET IT ASIDE AND PUSHED THE OTHER BOOKS IN THE BOX TO THE WALL AND *kept doing* WHATEVER IT WAS I WAS DOING.”

PHILLIP B. WILLIAMS | *poet, Southern Indiana Reading Series*

“THE *\$25 million Lilly Grant* PROJECT CONTINUES TO ASSIST WITH ADULT LEARNERS AND SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO OUR EFFORTS TO INCREASE OUR PRESENCE IN THAT MARKET, AND A \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM LILLY FOR *retention predictor* FOR MODELING ALSO SPEAKS TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN.”

STEVE BRIDGES | *update on the 2021 Strategic Plan, Professional Development Day*

“IT’S *amazing* TO ME THAT *students* ARE ACTUALLY WILLING TO SEEK HELP. WE HAD 267 *new requests* FROM STUDENTS FOR SERVICES. WE’VE HAD THIS HUGE REQUEST FOR SERVICES AND THAT IS A *wonderful* THING.”

ROBIN SANABRIA, PHD | *Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, Professional Development Day*





**THE  
MATCHMAKERS**



**HOW CAREERS ARE LAUNCHED**

by C. L. Stambush

Tucked into a lower-level suite in the Orr Center, is the unassuming Career Services and Internships Office. While its locale isn't high-profile, its function contributes to the foundational success of every USI student—past, present and future. The services offered range from helping students understand their majors' career options, to hosting career fairs, to resume development, to outfitting students for interviews and more, but the staff's ultimate objective is matchmaker. Matching dreams with opportunities, goals with careers and students with employers.

"We are kind of like a dating service," says John Perkins, Career Coordinator for the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. "We know what employers want and what students are looking for, and we help bridge that gap by putting them together."

Before reaching that bridge, there are several steps students need to take, starting with a visit to the office as first-year students. It's difficult for them, however, to see so far into their futures and grasp the need to visit the department early in their college career. "We encourage students to work with Career Services to ensure they are majoring in something that will lead to a job in an area they want to live," says Stephanie Fifer, Employer Engagement Coordinator. "If they come in at least once a year, we can make sure they are on the right path."

While the department's primary stakeholders are students, the staff see their role as a service provider for three distinct yet linked constituents: students and alumni, faculty, and community and employers, delivering unique resources to each segment—service, partnership, collaboration—respectively.

Students (and alumni, to many degrees) have access to a host of career-achieving resources from coaching to connecting. The service most requested of career counselors is resume development—a constructed story of your work history and not a regurgitation of positions held. "Coordinators review resumes and help students refine the descriptions of their skills and qualifications to better align with a potential employer's job position," says Pam Doerter, Career Coordinator for the College of Liberal Arts.

Before resumes can be shined to perfection by proofing, proofing and more proofing, the nuances of who you are and how you will contribute must be developed. "A lot of students think, 'I was a good student so I'm going to get a job,' as if that's all there was to it," Perkins says. "They don't know or want to worry about the principles of job hunting because they were a good student. What they forget is there are other skills employers want besides the degree."

Many of those other skills—what the counselors call competency skills—are developed through participation in and holding leadership positions in student organizations on campus, as well as volunteering for community nonprofits. "Students don't realize how much experience is needed for an entry-level job.

This can come from internships or volunteer positions," says Elizabeth Buchanan, Career Coordinator for the College of Nursing and Health Professions, and recent graduate herself.

Core coursework also cultivates communication, teamwork, organization and the power of showing up. "Students are presented with opportunities to learn valuable skills that translate into the workforce by participating in their classes. Group projects and classroom presentations provide opportunities to utilize their technical abilities that the coursework develops, but also the ability to communicate effectively and work well with others," says Jennifer Riester, Career Coordinator for the Romain College of Business. "We assist students in learning how to convey that to employers through their resumes."





When crafting resumes, applicants need to know how to sell themselves, know what desired traits to list on their resume and how to frame it in the right context for the employer. Additionally, the right words—keywords—play a significant role in a *curriculum vita* being seen by a hiring manager. "You have to be very aware of what you are putting on your resume because some big companies run applications through a tracking system," Fifer says. "If it doesn't have keywords that match the employer's job description or key skills, the resume never goes to the next level."

Companies are employing other forms of automation too, such as video interviews. This trend was seen prior to COVID-19 but the practice has continued and will likely be a mainstay from now on. "It's not even a person doing the interview on the other end," Fifer says. "[Interviewees] are answering recorded questions and their responses are then reviewed."

Awkward for most but especially for new-to-the-scene job seekers. And stressful. There are no human cues—such as nods or gentle smiles—to lend comfort and let you know you are doing okay. Career Services and Internships helps students train and prepare for video interviews using a program called Career Launch that contains a training module for students to practice and perfect their no-person interview skills.

Appearances make lasting impressions, and to help ensure students show up for interviews dressed for success, Career Services and Internships established the Suits for Students' Success Closet containing professional, business attire students can select and keep. The clothes are all donations suitable for interviews, clean and contemporary in style. Students can visit the closet and select one outfit annually. "They don't always think about bringing dress clothes to campus," says Fifer, noting donations come from USI employees and clothes drives held by local business partners. "COVID-19 was great for us because everyone stayed home and cleaned out their closets," she says, adding they can get "wiped out" right before the career fairs.

If Career Services and Internships is the bridge between students and employers, then faculty are the bridge between students and Career Services and Internships. The partnership is a positive two-way street for faculty and the department, with students as the winners. "We always do a lot for faculty," says Perkins. "They'll reach out to us for information on what's hot [career-wise]. They want to know if we can help them find careers for their majors."

On the flipside, many faculty assign students to do mock interviews using USI's Career Launch program. "In these cases, the professors review the assigned interviews and provide feedback to their students," Fifer says. Faculty also encourage or assign students to attend networking game nights and career fairs hosted by the department—a profitable offering for students that the department struggles to get them to attend.

Career Fairs are held in the Spring and the Fall semesters in the Screaming Eagles Arena, which can accommodate 120 employers seeking to connect with USI students as future employees. "We attend career fairs as it's important for college students to know that we want to retain them in this community and that we like to hire local students that would be a good fit in our industry," says Becky Glines, Communications Director at Southwestern Healthcare, Inc.

The event can be the entry point for students and alumni wanting to get their foot in a company's door. "USI students who have come through our Communications Department are able, willing and ready to tackle the workforce. They are go-getters who have so much to teach us with the ever-changing way that the world receives their information," Glines says.




**"WE TELL STUDENTS THEIR RESUMES WILL BE GLANCED AT FOR 6 TO 10 SECONDS, AND IF SOMETHING DOESN'T CATCH THE REVIEWER'S EYE THEY MOVE ON TO THE NEXT APPLICANT."** - JOHN PERKINS

The breach between inexperienced job seekers' expectations and employment realities can be more of a gulf than a gap. The biggest misconceptions students have are salary expectations and level of entry. Too many expect \$50,000-\$60,000 from the start and a mid-level position. "We had one student we had to have a heart-to-heart talk with because she believed she'd get a manager's position upon graduation," says Fifer. "She had an entry-level offer and we advised her to accept it because that's how you get your foot in the door and advance to the level you desire."

To dispel delusions of grandeur and ground students' aspirations, Career Services and Internships hosts panel discussions where employers can give students the lowdown on working for area companies. "It is hard to navigate the workforce," says Glines. "I would like students to be aware of the challenges that arise when finding a job in their career area. Sometimes students aren't aware that finding those placements don't happen right away. There are many times that individuals have to work in other positions within an organization. It is always important when interviewing [however], to express career desires so that the organization can consider that person when an opening should arise."

The current Great Resignation has employers in a frenzy to find quality workers, but the one segment of society not participating in this trend is newly-graduated college students. For them, getting a job is a job. They can expect to apply to 100-150 positions (an average across industries), sending 10-15 letters and resumes each week, but no more than two a day, says Buchanan. Any more, and applicants start making avoidable mistakes such as forgetting to change the job title or company name to match a different job opening. Following these practices, hopeful hires can anticipate 20-25 interviews, leading to one job offer.

The craft of successful career matchmaking, if not life partners then long-term daters, is a slow and artful dance of sequenced, well-timed moves and strategic choreography. It involves planning, patience and good manners if you want a company to pop the question. 

### DOs

- Join student organizations to develop leadership skills
- Tailor your application to speak to the job, company and/or industry
- Network/network/network
- Do homework on each company—know their main products, up-to-date news, etc.
- Volunteer strategically

### DON'Ts

- Forget to write a thank you email within one hour after interviewing
- Use a resume template—they create generic resumes
- Just hunt by job title—think key skills and job descriptions
- Rely on only one source, hunting site or method
- Target specific job titles

## CAREER SERVICES STAFF



**PAM DOERTER '07**

Career Coordinator for  
College of Liberal Arts

"Our goal is to help them blend professional development with the education and skills they have learned while at USI."



**JOHN PERKINS**

Career Coordinator for Pott College of  
Science, Engineering, and Education

"My background in recruiting gives me the unique perspective of how employers view, assess and pick their candidates, allowing me to share this information with our students."



**ELIZABETH (LIZZ) BUCHANAN**

Career Coordinator for  
College of Nursing and Health  
Professions

"My goal is to not just help students build high quality resumes, cover letters and LinkedIn profiles but also help them gain valuable experience that will lead them to their career."



**JENNIFER RIESTER**

Career Coordinator for  
Romain College of Business

"I'm very passionate about what I do, because I like to encourage students in their preparation, so they feel confident in moving into their future."



**STEPHANIE FIFER**

Employer Engagement Coordinator

"I used to plan patient-centered events and develop marketing related to cancer awareness. Now I plan student events and develop marketing about career development for students. I was able to use transferable skills to switch industries by knowing how to present those skills on my resume."

[USI.edu/careerservices](https://www.usi.edu/careerservices)



Before Dr. Kester Phillips '02 became a board-certified neuro-oncologist, and before

he was accepted to a renowned medical school for a fellowship, and before he published dozens of articles in prestigious journals, and before he became medical director of the Ivy Center for Advanced Brain Tumors team at the Swedish Neuroscience Institute in Seattle, Washington, he was a biology student struggling with and failing every standardized test in his academic journey.



# HEADWAY

HOW DR. KESTER PHILLIPS  
NEVER LET FAILURE  
GET IN THE WAY  
OF HIS SUCCESS

By C. L. STAMBUSH  
INTERVIEWED BY  
KAYLEE JOHNSON '20 M'22

Not just once, but again and again. "These exams were my Achilles heel," he says. "I didn't know how to prepare for them to yield the necessary results."

He might not do well with such tests, but Kester excels in overcoming adversity. An animal lover born in the Caribbean Islands of Trinidad and Tobago, he and his brothers were raised by his grandparents after his parents emigrated to the United States. They were divorced by the

time he came to the U.S. at 14 years old to live with his mother in Brooklyn, New York, while his father had moved to Evansville. "We grew up in an impoverished neighborhood, well below the poverty threshold," Kester says.

"In high school, I started barbering in the small living room of our apartment to earn money to help my mom pay bills and meet our basic needs. I perfected my skill by practicing on myself and my brothers. Still, I saw education as my path out of the struggle."

Kester's grades were good in high school, but his scores on the standardized SAT and ACT tests would not earn him entrance to college, even if he could afford it. As an undocumented student, he was not eligible for federal and state college scholarships. But, he was not deterred. He took a job, after graduating high school, barbering in a Brooklyn shop for two years to save up to become a veterinarian. While cutting hair, he hit the books, earning a veterinary assistance certification through a distance learning program. His father suggested he attend college in Indiana, where tuition was affordable.

He applied to USI and was accepted, but his subpar ACT and SAT scores meant he would be placed in remedial courses for English, math and composition.

Academic institutions across the nation have historically considered these entrance exam scores one of the strongest indicators of a student's educational success, prioritizing them over all other measures of a person's capabilities. But that line of thinking is waning. In 2021, the University like many across the country, adopted a test-optional policy for students applying to USI. "While test scores can be a helpful tool in predicting collegiate student success, some research findings suggest standardized tests do not accurately reflect academic ability and potential for success in college," says Dr. Mohammed Khayum, USI's Provost. "By adopting a test-optional policy, USI allows each student to determine how to showcase their academic ability."

In the summer of 1995, however, entrance tests were not optional, and despite excelling in learning and applying that knowledge in the classroom he did not score well, and it shook Kester. Faced with a counter-narrative concerning his academic abilities, he wanted to attribute the low score to being out of school for two years. But the real issue was only beginning to surface, and it would be a barrier to overcoming every milestone in his educational career.

Kester knew he could not go down this learning road alone, and he sought help from Academic Skills, knowing he needed exceptional grades to be accepted in any veterinary program. "I was really determined to succeed," he says.

It was there that he met another person determined to see him succeed. Academic Skills volunteer tutor Dana Brooke, who retired from Bristol Myers Squibb after working 26 years and wanted to give back to his community. "Kester was a wonderful experience for me. He was very mature and conscientious," Dana says. "I helped him with [math], organic chemistry courses [and physics], but he was an excellent student in the biological sciences, and I could not help him there."

The duo developed a bond that endures still, as day in and day out Kester's knowledge of the courses deepened with Dana's extra guidance. "Dana had a knack for explaining complex concepts," Kester says.

Dr. Shelly Blunt, Professor of Chemistry and Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, recalls Dana's dedication to Kester and all USI students' success as a force that motivated him to sit in on some of her lectures, to refresh his own knowledge and ensure his instructions aligned with her teachings.

While attending USI, Kester continued cutting hair (opening and operating his own shop) to support himself and his young family—a wife and daughter. His dream of veterinary school was redirected, however, when his advisor Dr. Jeanne Barnett, USI Professor Emerita of





Biology, recommended he become a physician because of his caring nature, warm personality, reliability and intellect. "He was so good with people...his optimistic, positive interactions. We talked about what his options and possibilities were, and basically, it came down to the fact that you do much the same thing as far as the work that goes into getting into vet school and medical school, so why not broaden your horizons?" she says.

In his senior year at USI, Kester discovered Yale University's Minority Medical Educational Program (MMEP). He applied and was accepted, but still had three courses to take at USI to graduate. Barnett advised him to join the program and take his last college courses at a college in New York, then transfer the credits back to USI. "I remember riding the trains to take classes at Bronx Community College," he says. "The courses were easy after my education at USI."

Some things were a breeze, but getting into medical school would not be, as more standardized tests—MCATs—were in his future. During this time, he took a job as a tech assistant at one of Columbia University Medical School's labs, caring for laboratory mice and rats before taking a position as a research technician in a laboratory studying the physiology and cell biology of neurotransmission in disease states, particularly in drug addiction and Parkinson's Disease. The research excited him, harkening to his molecular biology studies with Dr. Marlene Shaw, USI Professor Emerita of Biology. "Here I am," Kester says, "this is all the stuff I learned from her now being applied."

As a research technician putting in countless hours, he co-authored a few papers with his mentor, neuroscientist Dr. David Sulzer, presented his work at national conferences and more. After three years, it was time to apply to medical school. He took the MCAT and scored poorly. He took it again. Another low score. Again. Same story. "I think I took it four times," Kester says, "but it was a no-go to the point that one doctor at Columbia University said I'd never get into medical school. That was hard to hear, and it discouraged me, but it also motivated me to prove everyone wrong."

Kester started researching international medical programs, finding them less focused on test scores and more interested in his entire academic portfolio, his

drive and his determination. In 2006, at the age of 32, he returned to his island roots when Ross University School of Medicine, in Dominque, West Indies, recognized his passion and compassion for others and invited him to join the Class of 2010. "I stayed focused," he says. "I had to make it work." He enjoyed neuroscience and cellular and molecular biology at Ross University. He even tutored friends who needed help in those subjects.

Ross University was a dual-campus program, with introductory science courses conducted on the island and clinical clerkships at hospitals in the United States. During his clerkship training, he rotated through different medical specialties and treated patients under the supervision of physicians. The rotations exposed him to all the general fields of medicine, including internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry, neurology and general surgery. "Neuroscience was fascinating, so I wanted to study neurology," Kester says.



Kester returned to New York after graduating from Ross University to study clinical neurology at the State University of New York (SUNY) Medical Center in Brooklyn. Four years studying neurology, learning different subspecialties—stroke, epilepsy, neuroinflammatory disease, movement disorders, headache, neuromuscular disorders, pediatric neurology, behavioral neurology—led to one finding: none were a fit. "I wanted to block the oncogenic signal transduction pathways with drugs to retard tumor growth," he says. "I had memorized all these pathways in Dr. Shaw's Cell Biology class and in medical school."

His education was far from over, and Kester headed to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan for an elective in brain tumor treatment. "While there, I developed an interest in the science behind tumors and cancer, as well as the art of treating patients' brain tumors," Kester says. "In neuro-oncology you have the unique opportunity to interact with patients and their families throughout the entire trajectory of their disease."

Being there for others is who Kester is and he'd found where he could be his best. Now he needed a fellowship

## BROOKE: A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

In 1994, Dana Brooke, a Bristol Myers Squibb early-retiree with a pharmacy degree, wasn't deterred when his unusual request was rebuffed. "I needed something to do, so I called the Academic Skills Department at USI to volunteer to help students in math or chemistry," he says. "I was told something to the effect that they hired advanced students as tutors and would not need my help."

The department, in existence since 1965, couldn't be faulted for not knowing how best to respond to Brooke's offer. "Over the years, we haven't really had a lot, if any [community members volunteer]," says Michael Broshears, Assistant Vice President for Academic Success, who joined the department in 2007.

But Brooke tried again and he soon found himself sitting at a table waiting for a student to help. "I could come and go as I wished," he says. "Later, if a student I was helping wanted to continue, I would make appointments for him." That's the arrangement he had with Kester Phillips, tutoring him regularly throughout his years attending USI.

The impression Brooke made on so many students' lives, like Phillips, ripples across the decades. "My very first student was taking Intermediate Algebra and was having a lot of trouble. She was an excellent worker and, with a little guidance, prevailed," Brooke says. "To this day, my wife and I get a Christmas card from Amy!"

Brooke no longer lives in the area and his volunteer-tutoring years at USI are behind him, but they make him reflect on his career choice. "I loved working with the students," he says. "In retrospect, I wondered if I should have been a teacher."

to take him to the next level. He applied widely and lined up interviews. His first was at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. The director was impressed and offered him a coveted specialist fellowship in neurology at the end of the interview. His head encouraged him to keep interviewing, but the chair of neurology at SUNY Downstate said, 'Are you crazy?! Nobody turns down Harvard.' So, he accepted.


Before joining Harvard, Kester was required to earn his medical licensure. He marginally passed the first two components of the three-step exam and needed to pass the third to be credentialed for the fellowship program. During residency, he experienced some upheaval during a divorce and failed the board exam three times. That's right, another standardized test. By now, you know the outcome. "I called the medical director and told him I failed the board exam after my third attempt," Kester says. "Fortunately, he held a spot on the condition that I pass on the fourth attempt." He hunkered down for two months to devote 100% of his time and energy to passing the test. Still, it took four tries. By the end of his first year in the two-year fellowship, however, Kester had to admit the fellowship program was not a good fit. "I needed additional training to fulfill my career objectives," he says. "I looked for another opportunity to hone my skills."

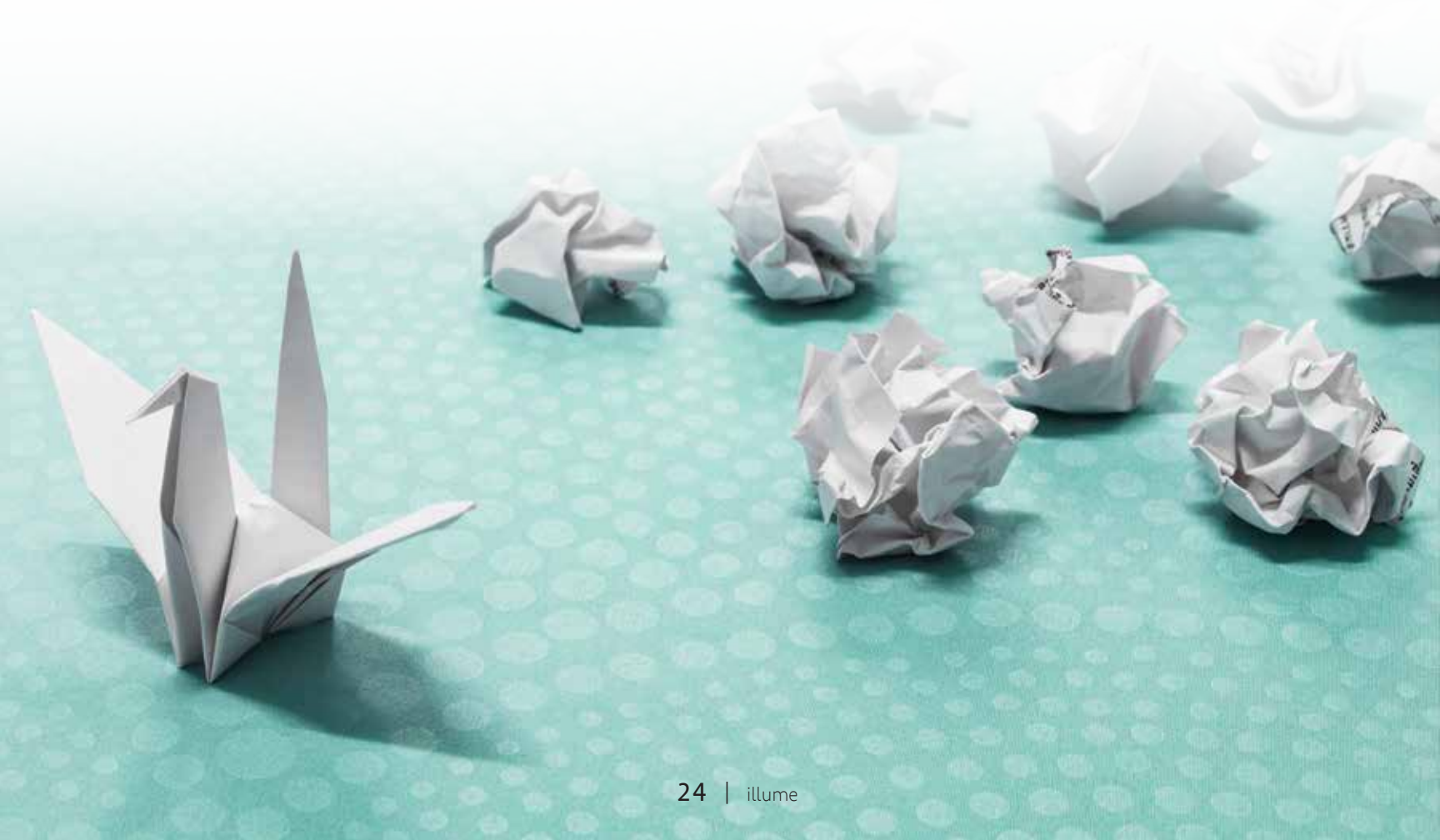
Just like when Dana Brooke entered his life at USI, the stars were aligning to bring Kester a new mentor through a fellowship at the University of Virginia Medical Center alongside Dr. David Schiff.

"Dr. Schiff wrote the first neuro-oncology textbook I purchased [during residency]," Kester says. "I would see him at conferences and would be awestruck."

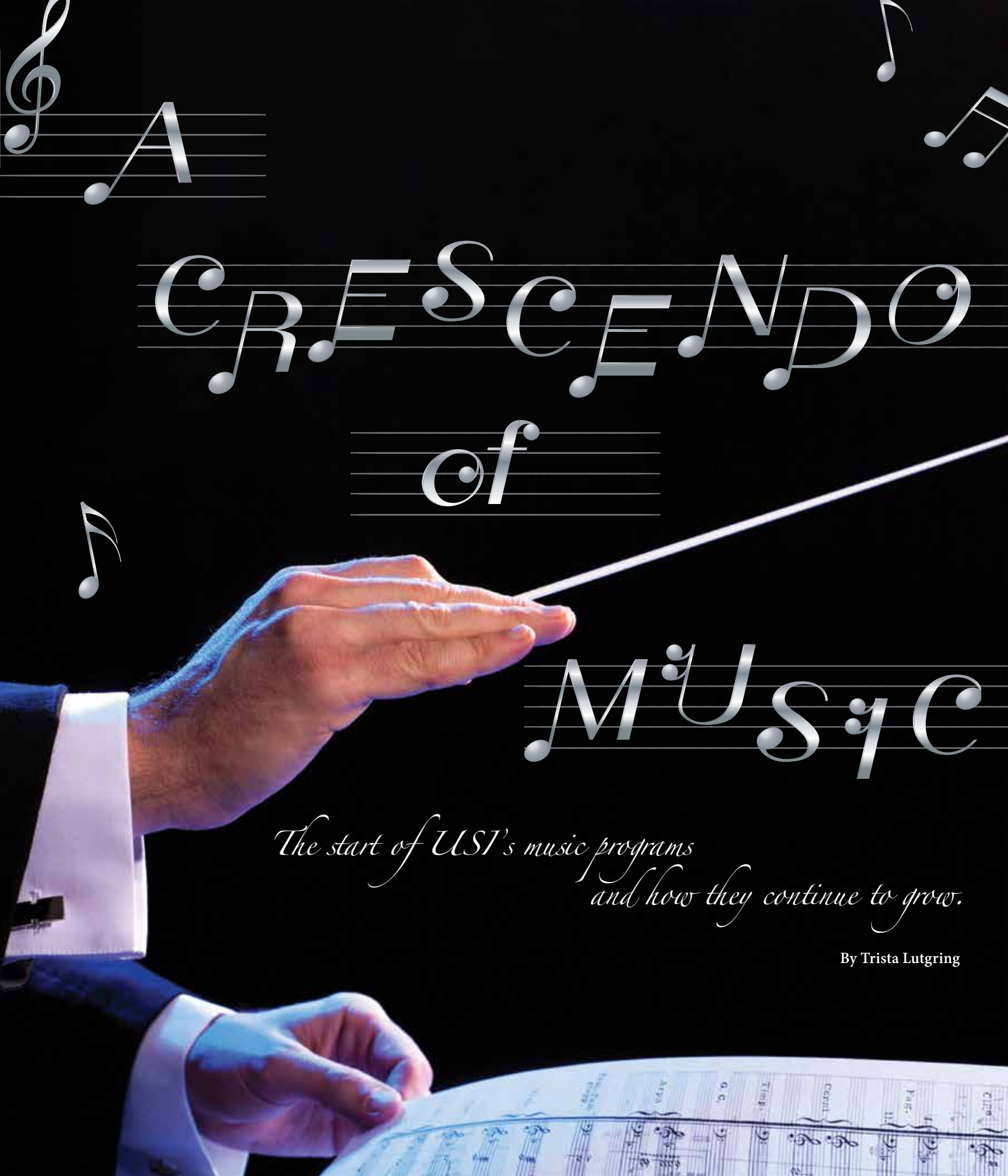
Alongside Dr. Schiff, Kester absorbed knowledge, insights and advanced techniques. He conducted innovative research, wrote chapters for medical books and presented at neurological conferences. The rigors of the work infused his natural drive to push himself beyond expectations.

Today, Kester is a naturalized citizen and part of a neuroscience team in Seattle, Washington, specializing in brain cancer and living in a house overlooking Puget Sound. His daughter and son are grown and navigating their own college careers. His patient-centered philosophy reflects his inner self: compassionate, kind and respectful. His patients leave him five-star reviews on healthcare sites that rate doctors. And while in many ways he has arrived, his journey is far from over.

When he rode in the car to Indiana from New York to attend USI, he cried. When he reflected on the people who ensured he succeeded at USI, tears welled up in him. When he thinks of his patients an intense emotion squeezes his heart. "I'm there from the beginning to the end. I give them hope. I show them compassion," he says, noting he is always optimistic that new treatment options will emerge and improve the survival of patients with some of the most aggressive brain tumors. "I just want them to live another day. It's a tough journey." 







A  
CRESCENDO

of

MUSIC

*The start of USI's music programs  
and how they continue to grow.*

By Trista Lutgring



In 1969, a still very young University of Southern Indiana had students begging for more—activities, entertainment ... something outside the classroom to occupy their minds and time.

Hope was ignited at the beginning of the Fall Semester that year, when University administration hired on David Deeg as an instructor of music, who declared, “We need more entertainment here.” Students rallied behind him quickly.

What Deeg and students may not have imagined—and what officials may not have realized at the time—was their determination would fuel those who followed, ignite future instructors to push for a more robust music program and open the door for donors to provide the necessary means to lead USI to a future with even more musical offerings.

In October 2021, those offerings sprouted when award-winning composer and Posey County native Philip Hagemann provided

a \$2 million leadership gift to the University. Through this generous gift, USI established a fund to support and develop music programs at the University. Not only will the funds help current music ensembles and courses on campus, but it also bolsters the long-range vision of a full degree within USI’s renamed Philip Hagemann Performing Arts Department. “Music must be part of a truly educated person’s study,” says Hagemann. “I am happy to assist in that endeavor.”

As other institutions across the nation look at cutting music programs and education, USI is at the beginning of an exciting chapter, fostered by dedicated University instructors, students with a passion for the arts and community members who have seen the importance of music in higher education.

## *A Historic Orchestrated Effort*

When USI was a fledgling university and students were clamoring for music shows, Deeg secured a sponsorship from Beta Sigma Epsilon (business fraternity) to have the folk singers Ric and Lee perform. For two nights,

the duo drew excited crowds—mostly students—for shows with music and humor.

No other proof was needed—USI students wanted musical arts as a part of their university experience, and the Mid-America Singers was formed. “Deeg created (the group) and patterned it off the Singing Hoosiers (at Indiana University),” says Dan Craig, Associate Professor of Music and Director of the USI Chamber Choir and Women’s Choir.

The Mid-America Singers was a dynamic force across the Tri-state; they not only acted as ambassadors of the University but were a popular entertainment provider in the Evansville community. The group sang, jammed, rocked and danced for crowds on and off campus. According to Craig, if there was an event in Evansville or on campus, the Mid-America Singers were there. “There was a time when they were making up to 30 or more appearances a semester,” he says.





Though Connie Romain '74 came to the campus to pursue a degree in education, her higher-ed experience was shaped not only by her course work. As a longtime lover of musicals and a singer, Romain found a spot with the Mid-America Singers and Band which greatly influenced her time at the University. "I just can't even tell you what a wonderful time in my life it was. We learned a lot from David Deeg...about performing and singing properly. It was a learning experience as well as a fun time."

To expand the University's musical entertainment events, Deeg proposed the creation of a 16th century English Christmas dinner—a Renaissance madrigal. "The Mid-America Singers, costumed in elegant 16th century robes, will provide the entertainment for this gala event," he was quoted as saying in an internal newsletter. "And the dinner will be served in the pageantry that surrounded the English feast."

Donning Renaissance period costumes, the Mid-America Singers and Band danced, sang and played in the Forum building (also

known as the Tub) to the delight of the audience who packed the place. The feast for the event was personally cooked and served by USI's First Lady Betty Rice. "The Rices believed this was an opportunity to bring the community out to USI for fellowship," says Craig. And the community agreed, by traveling to the University campus in support of the musical group.

Romain, who was a part of that first feast on campus, recalls around 75 people attending the first event. "It was so exciting," she says. "Betty made [plum] pudding, the roast beef and everything. She was amazing."

The event resulted in the formation of a tradition at USI's campus that has continued for more than 50 years, growing from one to four performances during the holiday season. Audiences are seated in Carter Hall, served a dinner fit for royalty crafted by University Dining Services. Members of the University's Chamber Choir perform selections of old English and Irish Madrigals, along with folk songs and other holiday choral selections to ring in the festive season.


The Mid-America Singers were a strong fixture on campus and around the

community for more than 30 years and gained national attention when they performed "An Elizabethan Christmas Celebration" on PBS television in 1977.

John Schutz '82, business administration, joined the Singers upon coming to USI to keep music a part of his higher education. "It was something I enjoyed, and I had a fairly good skill at doing it at that point in time," he says. One of the biggest performances for the group during Schutz's time was at Disney World. "We all drove down there in buses and performed out on their patio area," he says. "We had a good time."

## *Moving Forward*

In 1995, Craig injected a dose of excitement into the music program. Building off connections he formed during a trip to Poland with the late Larry Goss, Professor Emeritus of Engineering Technology, Craig was able to take the Mid-America Singers to visit Poland



for a European tour. “That was a big deal. We went and spent two weeks performing concerts all over Poland,” he says.

That first international trip led to others in following years—with each performance, each trip, Craig and others in the music program recognized there was a crescendo happening, a building moment where USI could go beyond the handful of classes and music groups that were available for students. “We’d taken the program about as far as it could possibly go,” says Craig. “But we knew what we could do.”

USI’s Chamber Choir, a combination of the Mid-American Singers and Band (dissolved in 2001) and the Madrigal Singers Show Choir, became the University’s sole mixed-voiced ensemble group. Students involved in Chamber Choir come from all disciplines across USI’s campus, and these students carry on the long tradition of the Madrigal Feaste. Like the Mid-America Singers before them, the Chamber Choir also stages performances for civic events and corporate parties in the Tri-state region. The USI Women’s Choir and USI Jazz Ensemble

were also formed at this time. By the 2010s, it became obvious to those in the music program that it had reached a pivotal point. It was time to push forward even more. Of course, to accomplish this, there had to be support—not just on the University administration and student level.

Over the years, there were several major gifts from community members that played a large part in growth. These Evansville citizens, alumni and friends proved through their giving that music was important to the make-up of the USI campus.

The Dr. William C.H. and Phyllis R. Grimm Choral Music Endowment, provided by Phyllis Grimm in 2011, became an integral part of supporting the operations of the choirs and the continued forward momentum of the music program. Over the years, students have also been aided with scholarships and other endowments thanks to the generosity of the William E. Schmidt Music Scholarship; Thomas E. Topper MD Music Program; Deborah J. and Loretta M. Zygmunt Music Scholarship Endowment; Connie Romain

Music/Theatre Scholarship Endowment and David V. Deeg Memorial Music Scholarship—all given to USI after seeing and hearing what the musical groups and courses were allowing students to accomplish.

These gifts paved the way for an addition of a keyboard lab in the Liberal Arts Center, where students could learn piano, and that keyboard lab morphed into an expansion of offerings never seen at USI before. “We knew [the keyboard lab would allow us to] add applied voice, which is vocal lessons,” says Craig.

Voice instructors were hired—Dr. Jackline Madegwa and Dr. Cheruvathur “Joe” Uthup—to help with the new voice minor disciplines. Along with music theory and piano, aural skills were added to the coursework of music program students.

A leadership gift from Genevieve B. Bootz in 2013 made way for the addition of a Steinway/Boston grand piano, and that in turn saw the USI Foundation funding six more Steinway/Boston pianos, that reside in soundproof rooms established for students to practice in privacy.







Two more Steinway/Boston pianos came to campus in Fall 2020 gifted from John Lawrence '73 and Randy Haaff '84.

The final steps to bringing music major programs to campus came with Hagemann's generous \$2 million gift last fall. "With the help of the Foundation and the generosity and those who have come before, Philip Hagemann and (his long-time friend) Dr. Murray Rosenthal, we have been given a leadership gift that will allow us to lay the foundation for major programs in music," Craig says.

Hagemann, born and raised in Mount Vernon, Indiana, is an accomplished musician, teacher, producer and award-winning composer of two full-length operas, 10 one-act operas and 75 choral works, with an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from USI, awarded in 2016.


"Music has been an integral part of my life since my youth," Hagemann said, when the gift was announced. "With hard work and attention to detail I achieved success and want others to share in that success. What better

place than the University built 'by the people and for the people' a scant 12 miles from my hometown."

Craig says, in keeping with the University's focus on enhancing academic distinctiveness, the vision isn't just for one music major, but five majors in total: applied vocal music/education; music business; music therapy; music and sound production; applied instrumental music/education. At a time when other higher education music programs are seeing cuts and possible removal of curriculum, USI is firmly showing a dedication to growing musical arts on campus.

The Hagemann gift will allow USI to renovate existing spaces to teach applied voice and instrumental music, and to expand the instrumental music offerings currently on campus. The funds will help with recruiting purposes, for equipment and infrastructure purposes and for the maintenance of the Philip Hagemann Award for Musical Performance, which goes to high school juniors and seniors in Posey County.

And just as USI's musical groups have been an integral part of establishing the music programs and minors existing on campus today, they will continue that support as the majors in music begin to take shape. "We are here primarily to teach and if you're interested in music, why should you not have an opportunity to perform?" says Craig. "Our ensembles, even our audition ensembles, are going to be open to the entire University community. They play a huge part in the vision of the new programs. They stand as the visual and aural identity of the new department."

With the plan laid out, that identity looks to grow into something Craig and others in the program and across the University hope to see recognized on a national level. With USI's history of offering a solid, recognized education, Craig sees this direction for music at USI furthering that mission. "As we build our resources to hire faculty and increase programs, we are going to be able to stand toe-to-toes with other universities," he says. "This leadership gift, along with all those which have come before, will one day be recognized as the seeds which ultimately produced a full-fledged music program." 





Front to back/left to right: Ellie Conley '22 (nursing, French), Chief Steve Anderson (Perry Township Fire Department), Khole Stroud '25 (management), Dr. Greg Mendel (Instructor in Biology), Laci Schwenk '25 (undecided), Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf (Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing), Pam Thomas (Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing), Matthew Gabrielli (USI Public Safety Officer), Nathan Devillez (USI Public Safety Officer).



# RISKING LIFE FOR LIFE

Nursing Student's Drive Overrides Danger


By John Farless '98 M'21



*"There was one quick moment of fear as I climbed into the backseat but at that time, I was much more occupied with the well-being of the patient."*

— Ellie Conley





When Ellie Conley showed up for rugby practice on a sunny fall afternoon, she had little idea what was in store for her and the rest of the team.

Just after 4 p.m. on a Wednesday afternoon, a vehicle careened off the eastbound exit ramp of the University Parkway coming to rest precariously on its side across the fence from the USI rugby field.

Conley, a senior nursing major, and her teammates ran toward the accident, scaling the fence to get to the scene. She says it wasn't what she saw at first as much as what she heard: the sound of a child crying inside the vehicle. Conley, her teammates and several others who had stopped were able to help the child out of the car to safety. Fellow players sat with the child and comforted her. The mother, however, was still trapped inside and experiencing a medical emergency.

In that moment of chaos, through the sound of crying, Conley realized the seriousness of the situation. The Indianapolis native has always wanted to help others and the science of caring for the human body, mixed with the ability to form connections and be compassionate, led to her keen interest in nursing.

She realized the car was balanced on its side at the top of a steep embankment and in danger of rolling back down. By now, several others who'd stopped had positioned themselves to brace the vehicle

and prevent it from moving. Conley says she knew what she had to do; she had to get to the woman in the vehicle to render aid. Climbing through the rear hatch, she made her way to the front and began to evaluate the patient, drawing from her nursing training and a recent eight-week rotation in emergency room and acute critical care training. "Each [nursing] student is prepared to face whatever we find when we join the workforce," she says. "They provide more clinical hours to students than most other nursing schools in the state of Indiana, which allows us to understand our roles."

Conley's intense training in the program yielded quick action in an emergency. "In that moment, first aid came naturally to me," she says. "We do a lot of real-life scenarios, and it helped to revert to what was ingrained in me. I'm just grateful to the professors who did that, so I didn't have to think about it in the moment. There wasn't a lot on my mind except my first aid training and a big rush of adrenaline. Our personal safety is always top priority, but we often feel drawn to care for our patients."

The future nurse in Conley did an evaluation of the patient and ensured she was in a stable position and her airways were clear. That's when she heard a familiar voice. One of those who had stopped to help was Dr. Greg Mendel, USI Instructor in Biology and a chiropractor, who coached Conley in making sure the woman's neck and spine were supported. Conley, who'd had Mendel as an instructor years earlier, says it was comforting to hear that voice.

Mendel, whose own stepson, Aidan Mercer, was in a serious car accident earlier that summer, ran into the scene, knowing it was those first few moments of care that saved his son's life after his accident. "After seeing what my son went through and knowing that sometimes the first one there can save a life, I knew I needed to throw myself in there and help in any way I could," he says. He wanted to get into the car to help but since Conley was already inside, he knew the best thing he could do was help the others stabilize the

## ON CALL

Responding to off-campus emergencies is nothing new for USI's Public Safety. Director Steve Bequette says his officers have responded to multiple injury accidents on the highway adjacent to the University. "We had one instance where an ambulance stopped on the highway by the University with a patient who had just coded," says Bequette. "They knew our EMTs were close and asked

for help with CPR. We've also responded to a residence just off campus for a teen who had overdosed. One of our officers administered NARCAN and saved his life."

Several of USI's Public Safety officers also work for Perry Township Fire Department which adds to their experience responding to emergencies. Perry Township serves as the first

responder for the USI area. "Our officers have a vested interest in both USI and the Perry Township community and it shows," says Bequette.

Public Safety is also no stranger to the faculty, staff and students in USI's Health Professions. They have worked with the Health Professions Programs, and specifically the Nursing Program on emergency plans for

the Health Professions Center. Recently Public Safety worked with Julie St. Clair, Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing, on a couple tabletop training exercises that centered around a response to a tornado ripping through the Stone Center in downtown Evansville. Those types of trainings are very well received and add a unique level of preparedness for the campus community.





vehicle. "I was very proud of her," he says. "She was obviously very well trained. It was great to see the USI community come together and help like this."

Being inside the car, Conley wasn't aware of how precarious the situation was until she looked up. The passenger window hovered above her and she felt the car rocking. "It scared me, but I knew that little girl was scared too [for her mom]."

USI Public Safety Officers Nathan Devillez and Matthew Gabrielli were the first emergency personnel on the scene. They braced the vehicle and got the bystanders out of the way, in case the car fell. When Devillez learned Conley was inside rendering aid, he asked if she was comfortable being in that situation. She was and advised him the patient was unconscious but breathing and that she was "holding C-spine," a cervical spine stabilization technique used in the field to prevent further injury.

"The vehicle was very unstable, so I stayed just inside the rear and communicated with the student inside," says Devillez, who has been a Public Safety Officer for four years and a firefighter and EMT with Perry Township for 19 years. "She took a big risk going in there."

In high school, Conley's summer job was lifeguarding at the local YMCA. "I've never been quick to taking unnecessary risks, but I've been trained since age 15 to be protective over those I am responsible for, and to jump in to help whenever I can," she says.


Suddenly, the woman woke up and started moving around, destabilizing the car even more. Perry Township Fire Department arrived and used stabilizing jacks to secure the vehicle. "Once the patient was conscious, the nursing student did an amazing job of keeping her calm until we were able to get her out. She stayed with her the whole time, and I was just a liaison," says Devillez, who helped

pass medical instruments to Conley, including a neck stabilizing pillow and a pair of sheers she used to cut the seatbelt off the woman to help free her airway. Conley was also able to help get the seats folded down inside to aid with extrication.

"We do this kind of work because we're trained to do it and we've been in situations like this before. Ellie's never been in a situation like this and that was impressive," says Devillez. "She went above and beyond anything she needed to do, and she stayed calm the entire time. She went into a car on its side that was not stable and did it knowing she was putting herself in danger. That's a true testament to who she is as a person."

With the patient and vehicle secured, members of the Perry Township Fire Department took over and Conley was able to crawl safely out of the vehicle. The woman was successfully removed and transported to the hospital for evaluation and treatment.

Conley could have ended her involvement there but instead moved to the daughter who was still with her teammates nearby. "I braced her a little bit for what was happening, comforted her and steered her away from watching as her mother was being removed," she says.

Sometimes when people find themselves in challenging situations, they question their life's choices. Not Conley, who was awarded Most Valuable Person by the Perry Township Fire Department for her actions. "I liked the feeling of having the right knowledge and being able to do something productive with those skills," says Conley, who graduates in May and plans to pursue a hospital career in medical surgery. "I enjoyed working in a medical scenario with other medical professionals. It was a good experience to see first-hand what it takes to work with a team in a situation like this. It reinforced that I've chosen the right field." 

## TWICE THE HOURS = TWICE THE EXPERTISE

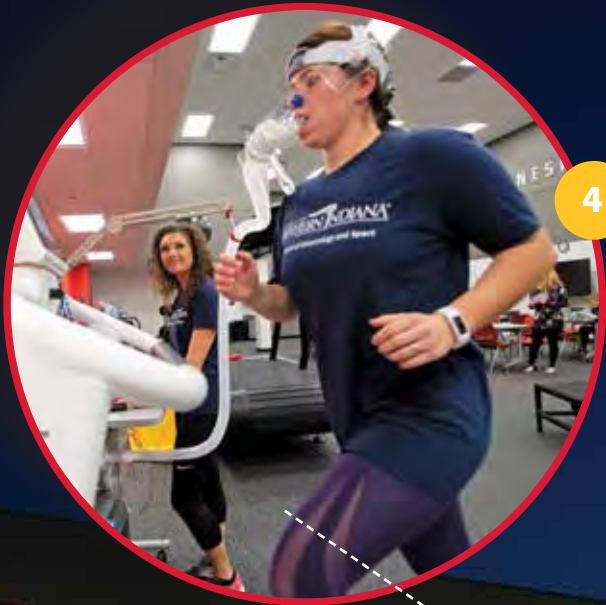
Long before nursing student Ellie Conley climbed the fence to aid a woman and child in a single-car crash near USI's campus, she'd spent hours learning and practicing what it takes to be a successful first-on-the-scene medical emergency responder. Intense hours mandated by USI's Nursing Program's 1,200 hours of clinical experience, making it more than twice the required hours of many other programs.

Courses like Care of the Adult III focus on human responses to complex, multi-dimension health problems in adult patients, but also build on the program as a whole, including other medical surgical courses that teach students to be excellent at assessment skills and how to provide interventions. "We give them life threatening scenarios, but we also give them less critically ill scenarios, so they are prepared

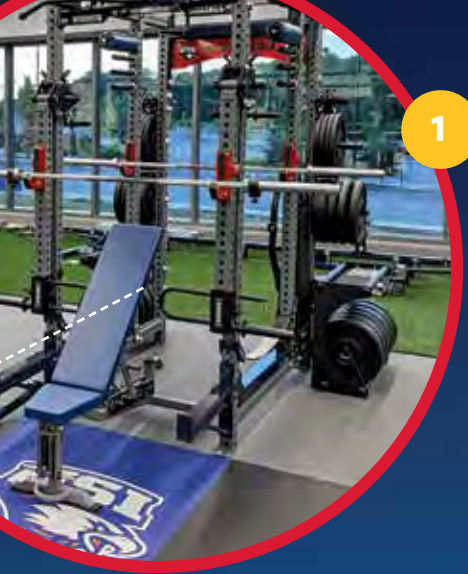
to function in all areas where they'll practice," says Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf, Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing.

It's not just the number of hours, but the variety of those hours offered. "We offer a huge variety of clinical opportunities, and our students rotate through those experiences," says Pam Thomas, Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing. Experiences range from on-campus to local and regional

hospitals and other healthcare facilities, but also branch out into the local community. For example, in 2019, the College of Nursing and Health Professions received a four-year grant in excess of \$2 million through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to increase the number of registered nurses trained in primary care to positively impact health in rural communities.







## BEHIND THE SCENE

The newly renovated, three-story Screaming Eagles Complex is a multi-functional facility where USI's varsity teams train in an elite weight-room facility, kinesiology and sport students gain hands-on experience in the Human Performance Lab,

coaches and trainers strategize games and individual training programs, and faculty develop lesson plans that deliver innovative insights for students on the Exercise Science, Kinesiology or Sports Management tracks.



1. The eight, space-saving Sorinex Power Racks are the same professional strength-training equipment used by the Los Angeles Lakers to improve their strength and stamina on the court. An all-in-one, super versatile, weight-training system allows two to four athletes to train at once.
2. The entire 6 x 4 x 8-foot, 3 x 3-inch 11-gauge steel frame is perforated with holes (44 top to bottom, 31 front to back) to allow endless customization options to accommodate a precise individual fit for every athlete, from the smallest to the largest.
3. The EliteForm Motion Capture system on every rack uses two cameras with infrared beams to track the explosive velocity of every barbell rep performed by the athlete, providing real-time insight into athletes' performances. Head Strength and Conditioning Coach and Instructor in Kinesiology and Sport Josh Wildeman develops the individual training for each athlete on the Men's and Women's Basketball teams, Women's Volleyball team, Baseball team and Softball team, and supervises strength-training programs for the remaining teams.
4. The Kinesiology and Sport Department's Human Performance Lab and Instructional Performance Center has a combined 5,000 square foot space for students who major in exercise science or kinesiology to gain hands-on experience using world-class weight training and fitness and performance testing equipment.
5. Students aren't the only ones the data-driven technology in the Human Performance Lab can benefit. For a modest charge, community members are invited to schedule an appointment to get their lactate threshold, body fat, resting metabolic rate or VO2 max measured. Whether you plan to run your first marathon, become a competitive cyclist or just stay fit, USI offers a service designed for you. Sign up here:



# BY THE NUMBERS

INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL

**31** MEMBERS

**8** regions of the world

**FOUR** colleges

**15** undergraduate studies

**22** countries represented

**14** GRADUATE STUDIES

Thirty-six **MAJORS**



## IN THEIR WORDS

"The world needs more people and leadership like [those] provided to [students at USI] aspiring to grow and build a better life. Being the first official international student [to join USI after the Center for International Programs was established in 1998], I feel an obligation to serve."

– Vladimir Kasparov '01 M'05, Business Administration, Uzbekistan

"[USI] people are the most welcoming and supportive...I've ever met. I love my USI family. I was given a lifetime opportunity that changed the trajectory of my life. I am happy to give back to the community any way I can."

– Gloria Sengwe '18, Economics, Zimbabwe

"USI was a dream place for me, it really helped me to learn and meet people with diverse cultural backgrounds. [It] changed my perspective about the world and helped me in decision and leadership roles as well. I want to reconnect with all the beautiful international people I met at USI and continue my learning journey from them."

– Asim Ahmed '20, Global Undergraduate Exchange program, Pakistan

"USI was an opportunity for me to grow personally, academically and professionally. It welcomed me in such a deep way that it is hard to put into words. [This Council] will be a great opportunity for me to pay it forward, helping other people have a chance to get an experience as I [did]."

– Taynara Oliveira de Almeida M'21, Health Administration, Brazil

"My experience at USI changed the course of my life, which is not to be said lightly. I'm confident if it was not for USI and the people who work [there] my life would have been on a completely different trajectory from what it is now. I believe I can contribute my experience and perspective to the group."

– Eugene Qilo '13, Computer Science, Iraq

The Council was founded in 2021 after Heidi Gregori-Gahan, Associate Provost Emerita for International Programs, approached USI's president, Dr. Ronald Rochon, about creating a post-retirement role to develop a robust international alumni network and charitable fund to support international student success. Gregori-Gahan—or Mama Heidi as international students refer to her—was the University's first director of the Center for International Programs (CIP) and had always longed to develop a stellar alumni network, but the rigors of building a program took precedence. She continues to serve USI part-time and remotely as the International Advancement Specialist.

"With the help of Planning, Research and Assessment, Alumni Relations and our CIP database, we have been able to pull a combined list going as far back as 1999," Gregori-Gahan says. "We are still working on a way to figure out how to identify international students who were enrolled prior to 1999, although I am sure we had some, including someone who is the ambassador to China for the United Arab Emirates."

The Council has 31 members scattered around the world, who convene virtually, serving a three-pronged mission to: reach, serve and engage our international alumni in meaningful ways; foster a lifelong intellectual and emotional connection with the University; support USI's internationalization, alumni and advancement efforts. Currently, they are developing a calendar of events and getting current contact information for the institution's 1,400 international alumni.

TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT GREGORI-GAHAN AT [GAHAN@USI.EDU](mailto:GAHAN@USI.EDU).



# Class Notes

## STAY IN TOUCH

EMAIL us  
at [alumni@usi.edu](mailto:alumni@usi.edu).

UPDATE your information  
and send photos  
via the form  
at  
[usi.edu/AlumniUpdate](http://usi.edu/AlumniUpdate).

*Class notes may be edited  
for length or clarity.*

*We regret that  
we may not  
be able to use all  
submitted photos, and  
reserve the right to select  
which ones are included.*



## 1970s

**Michael Buchanan '71**, management, offers this throwback photo of wedding groomsmen from the mid-1970s. Left to right: George Michael Barton, George Strieter, Michael Weare, Charles Scheidegger '71 and Mike Buchanan. [1]

## 1980s

**Kirk Mann '81**, accounting and management, is Executive Director at Imperial Valley Housing Authority in Brawley, California.

**Emily Gartner '84**, business administration, presented her new fashion collection "The Good Earth" in Milan, Italy, in September 2021. "I'm excited to be working on a new collection for International Women's month in March using Indiana landmark themes paired with female subjects in the custom print pattern. I was honored to speak with the great-great granddaughter of Madam C. J. Walker to get input on creating her relative's print and wearable art piece for the upcoming show." [2]

**Jean (Puertzer) Miller '86**, social science, is Director of Addiction Recovery at Branchville Correctional Facility in Branchville, Indiana.

**Roger Scott '87**, communications, visited the Roman ruins in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. [3]

**Michael Carroll '88**, accounting, is the recipient of the 2021 USI Romain College of Business Distinguished Accountant Award. He is the Chief Financial Officer at Heritage Federal Credit Union and has had a 25-year career in leadership, risk management, finance, accounting and financial reporting.

**Eric Wooden '88**, political science, is General Attorney for the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board in Chicago, Illinois.

**Anthony Goodwin '89**, radiologic technology, was promoted to Technology Manager for all special operations in southern Indiana region for Ascension Health.

**April Mitchell-Nading '89**, broadcast journalism, started doing handstands in her 50's, she will be 60 this year. She is an Account Executive and Yoga Instructor who has written and published her first e-book, titled *The Rotator Cuff Diaries*. It details her recovery from shoulder surgery and shares tips on healing. [4]

## 1990s

**Tracy (Shurig) Maxwell '90**, nursing, is a Nurse Anesthetist at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana, Illinois.

**Lynn (Simpson) Maserejian '92**, nursing, is owner and Senior Placement Advisor of Oasis Senior Advisors Evansville and the Tri-state area. Her twins are now attending USI.

**Richard "Rick" Reed '92**, sociology, retired Detective Sergeant from the Evansville Police, has published nine true crime novels. "I was sought out by Kensington Publishing in NYC after I caught serial killer Joseph Brown in 2000 and asked to write the true crime book. From there I was asked to write the thriller/fiction series of Det. Jack Murphy novels. I can thank USI for the start of my career in law enforcement, becoming an author and teaching at Ivy Tech College as an Assistant Professor." Left to right: Reed with author Alafair Burke at the Edgars in New York City. [5]

**AmyLu (Rice) Riley '93**, communications, recently published four books in a new inspirational fiction series called *Valley of Artisans*, set in a fictional town in southern Indiana. She sells them online. [6]

**Paula Wilderman '93**, biology, has been named a finalist for 2022 Colorado Teacher of the Year. After earning a doctorate in microbiology, molecular biology, Wilderman spent many years in the oil and gas industry as a scientist and Business Development Analyst. In her second career as a mathematics and science teacher, she constantly demonstrates the wonder of learning and can be heard encouraging her students to say, "I don't know that...yet."

**Kimberly (Lavelly) Crowley '94**, nursing, is a Community Health Nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, Indiana.

**Jenny (Fritz) Jones '95**, business administration, is Senior Executive Assistant at UKG in Weston, Florida.



**Erin (Johnson) Gibson '96**, communications, is now Content Creator in the marketing department of Woods and Woods, The Veteran's Firm.

**Michelle (Synder) Cave '97**, accounting, was promoted to Account Administrator at Spring Valley Bank.

**Jeffrey Bidwell '97**, history, has been elected President of the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting. In addition to serving as Director of Surgical First Assistant Program at Madisonville Community College, Jeffrey also teaches American History at the college.

## 2000s

**Rebecca "Becky" Glines '00**, public relations and advertising, is Communications Director for Southwestern Healthcare in Evansville.

**Erin (Deen) Elliott Stennett '00**, social work, is celebrating owning her own travel agency Majestic Memories Travel & Vacations, Inc., in Paoli, Indiana. "For many years I worked in traditional social work roles, working with troubled teens, the chronically mentally ill, dislocated workers and with the aged and disabled. I was blessed to visit and reignite my love for Disney. In 2013, I finally found out that I could make money helping people plan trips to Disney, and I quickly decided I wanted to help people plan trips to other places as well." [7]

**Kimberly (Simon) Wildeman '00**, communications, is a Human Resources Specialist at Deaconess Hospital, Evansville.

**Robert Lesh '01**, computer information systems, is Enterprise Architect for the U.S. Department of the Navy.

**Lindsay Botsch '05**, finance, has been promoted to Market President at German American Bank in Evansville.

She will lead the financial services team serving Vanderburgh, Warrick and Gibson Counties.

**Kristine (Browder) Georges '06**, elementary education, is Executive Director of Tulip Tree Health Services of Gibson County, Inc., in Princeton, Indiana.

**Gina (Lawson) Mullis '07**, English teaching, is an author, speaker and coach. She published her third book. "My time [at US] was so valuable, and I have advanced in my education career because of what I learned in my time there."

**Christy (Blake) Riddle '06 M'07**, social work, '18 M'21, nursing, is working as a board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, Indiana. She also is on the faculty of Indiana University's School of Medicine Psychiatry Residency in Vincennes, teaching and supervising medical residents' therapeutic skills.

**Naomi Ashley Boone '08**, social work, is a Medical Social Worker at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Andrew McGuire '08**, accounting and professional services, is Vice President and General Auditor for OneAmerica Financial Partners in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Kathy (Wood) Vossmer '08**, exercise science, and **Matt Vossmer '08**, business administration, hiked the Grand Canyon Rim in October 2021. [8]

## 2010s

**Christina (Hale) Harlow '10**, psychology, is Vice President of Human Resources and Talent Management at CenterPoint Energy in Houston, Texas.

**Lori McDaniel '10**, health services, has embarked on a new career as a





real estate agent. "My degree in health services has been a useful tool, especially when dealing with public health in regard to selling or buying real estate properties. Health and well-being are something that investors, tenants and employees all care about which can produce communities that thrive. My success with the company has allowed me to travel to places like Japan, England, France and various other countries around the world. After graduating from USI, I moved to San Antonio, Texas, and was fortunate enough to raise my family here and proud to call it home in the downtown area across from the Towers of Americas." [9]

**Joshua Tyler '10**, business administration, and **Megan (Gaddis) Tyler '10**, biology, **M'16**, industrial management, are busy raising their two children, Emma (3 years old) and Nolan (7 months old). [10]

**Debra Wilson '10** nursing, **M'11**, nursing management and leadership, Ft. Myers, Florida, has been appointed Vice President of Oncology at Lee Health.

**Jordan Honeycutt '11**, business administration, opened Soul Juice, an organic, locally sourced, in-season juice bar, in Bloomington, Indiana, this year, with plans to open another location in Evansville.

**Jessica Harper Schnur '11**, nursing, received a life-saving liver transplant on August 13, 2021. "I am now an official advocate with Indiana Donor Network and a UNOS Ambassador. I also serve as a National Patient Advocate for the American Liver Foundation and will be the chairperson for the Liver Life Walk in southern Indiana this year." [11]

**Jacob (Jake) Kohlmeyer '13**, English teaching, graduated from IU School of Informatics and Computing with a master of library and information science. He works as a Reference Librarian for the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library at EVPL's Central branch, having joined EVPL in 2017. [12]

**Elizabeth Neel '13**, public relations and advertising, is an Executive Assistant at Ernst & Young in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Teresa Shoemaker '13**, mathematics, and **Thor Högberg '14**, engineering, moved to Sweden with their daughter, Kajsa Högberg (12 years old) and dog Svea. [13]

**Ashlynn (Kemp) Johnson '14**, health services **M'19**, health administration, published her third romance novel, selling them in three states and nine bookstores. [14]

**Lynn Strohl II '14**, health services, **M'17**, business administration, and **Hollie (Zieles) Strohl '16**, social work, **M'17**, social work, married June 22, 2019, bought their first house and had a son, Lynn Christopher Strohl III. The family lives in Valparaiso, Indiana. [15]

**Jenna Citrus '15**, art, had a transformative 2021 as she transitioned into creating a variety of uplifting songs, healing music and guided meditation tracks. In her work *Exhale A 21 Day Meditation Challenge*, she shares the types of meditation and

breathwork knowledge she's learned, selling it across online platforms. [16]

**Ryan Hadley '15**, political science, was selected by Indiana's Governor Eric Holcomb to be the Executive Director for the Indiana Office of Energy Development. He most recently served as the Executive Director of External Affairs for the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission where he oversaw the agency's legislative, media and stakeholder management strategies.

**Aireca (Rich) Smith '15**, nursing, and **Ryan Smith '15**, accounting, had their first child, Owen, in May 2021. [17]

**William Terbrack '15**, marketing, is an Account Executive at Seismic in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Brian Wilson '15**, engineering, has been promoted to Associate Project Engineer at Commonwealth Engineers in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The associate program exists to develop talent within the organization and allows exemplary team members to



10



11



12



13



14



15

grow in leadership roles. Commonwealth Associates represent the future of Commonwealth Engineers.

**Teresa Bowling '16**, criminal justice studies and sociology, was named 2020 Indiana State Police Trooper of the Year for the Jasper District during the Indiana State Police Awards Ceremony in November. The ceremony recognizes troopers and state police civilian employees throughout the state for their accomplishments beyond normal expectations. **[18]**

**Ashton Mossberger '16**, social work, got engaged to Tyler Logan and will be married April 30, 2022. "We reenacted a scene from *Friends* to announce our engagement." **[19]**

**Shianne Bowlin '17**, psychology, criminal justice and Spanish, earned a master's in forensic psychology from Arizona State University in 2018 and a juris doctorate from the University of Maine School of Law in 2021. She is now a Mental Health

Attorney at Disability Rights Maine and lives in Portland, Maine. **[20]**

**Graham Gerni '17**, English, earned a master of library science from Indiana University's Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering.

**Sarah Jackson '17**, accounting and professional services, **M'20**, business administration, got engaged to Ross Canada on October 22, 2021. **[21]**

**Brittany Schrink '17**, business administration, has given birth to two children since graduation and through the pandemic. Atlas Evan Patrick Guthrie was born January 19, 2020, and Zate Murphy Guthrie was born June 27, 2021. **[22]**

**Marissa Zirkelbach '17**, accounting and professional services, **M'18**, business administration, has been promoted to Supervisor in the Audit and Assurance Services Division at Riney Hancock CPAs.

**Erin Bonner '18**, psychology, began her doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Indianapolis this year.

**Elizabeth (Burress) Chanley '18**, nursing, and **David Chanley '18**, nursing, have upon graduation passed their nursing boards, bought their first home, had a baby and are expecting their second child this spring. **[23]**

**Kacy Eschweiler '18**, sports management, is now Member Services Representative at Nashville Soccer Club in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Thomas "Tommy" Wiseman '18**, accounting and professional services, is Senior Accountant of Financial Reporting for First Harrison Bank in Corydon, Indiana.

**Alice Walker '19**, accounting and professional services, has been promoted to Staff II Accountant in the Tax Services Division at Riney Hancock CPAs.

## 2020s

**Darian Cartwright '17**, social work, **M'20**, social work, learned upon graduation she was pregnant with a sweet baby boy. Fast forward a year and a half and her baby boy is now one year old. **[24]**

**Ashley Seyffarth '21**, art, joined Regency Properties in Evansville, as Marketing Coordinator. She is responsible for designing files, writing press releases and updating and maintaining the company's website.

**Megan Webster '21**, radiologic and imaging sciences, and Joe Riggs were engaged on December 31, 2020, and will be wed this June. She currently works at a hospital in Terre Haute, Indiana, as a CT Technologist, and her fiancé is an IU medical student. **[25]**



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## Marriages

**Norma Lawrence '00**, public relations and advertising, and Al Unser Jr., were married September 20, 2021. The couple met (he is a two-time Indianapolis 500 winner) when she became the Executive Director of the Wings and Wheels Foundation. [\[26\]](#)

**Laureen (Martin) Ludwig '05**, public relations and advertising, married Andy Ludwig on October 16, 2021, in Evansville. [\[27\]](#)

**Jeremiah Johnson '13**, sports management, and Andrea Bright, married September 25, 2021. [\[28\]](#)

**James Bowles '14**, sports management, and Kimberly (Aldridge) Bowles were married on October 8, 2021, in Noblesville, Indiana, at Mustard Seeds Gardens. The couple lives in Noblesville. [\[29\]](#)

**Brittney Losiniecki '14**, health services, and Caleb Hardin, were married on June 24, 2021. The couple lives in Owensville, Indiana.

**Madeline O'Daniel '15**, marketing, and **Tristan Macon '11**, accounting and professional services, were married October 23, 2021. Together the couple represents four generations of USI alumni. Madeline is an Athletic Department Merchandiser for Shoe Carnival Corporation and Tristan is a Senior Pricing Analyst for Accuride Corporation. [\[30\]](#)

**Shan Sherwan Hussein M'15**, business administration, and **Christopher Johannes '15**, German and journalism, married June 28, 2019, in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. The couple met at USI in 2012. [\[31\]](#)

**Anastasia (Carter) Gray '16**, finance and Spanish, and Aaron Gray, were married October 24, 2021, in Jacksonville, Florida. The couple lives in St. Augustine, Florida. [\[32\]](#)

**Nathan Criss '17**, marketing, and Kelsey Chevront, were married on November 6, 2021, in Marietta, Ohio. The couple met in Charlotte, North Carolina when they relocated after college. They are now happily married and living close to both their families in Columbus, Ohio. [\[33\]](#)

**Marissa (Weisman) Goodness '17**, health services, and Gibson Goodness, were married September 25, 2021. [\[34\]](#)

**Ann Marie (Kaufmann) Banet '17**, elementary education, and Travis Banet, married July 3, 2021. [\[35\]](#)

**Kaylie Walbert-Henry '18**, psychology, and **Ryan Potendyk '18**, radiologic and imaging sciences, were married September 18, 2021, at White Willow Farms. [\[36\]](#)

**Beth (Eversole) Weigand '18**, art, Graphic Artist, and **Zach Weigand '02**, art, Senior Graphic Artist, were married October 1, 2021.

The couple lives in Evansville and work in USI's Creative and Print Services. [\[37\]](#)

**Cassidy (Schaefer) Kanzler '20**, history, and Ethan Kanzler were married November 20, 2021. The couple lives in Westfield, Indiana. [\[38\]](#)

## Births

**Sara (Shurr) Dimitroff '07**, psychology, and Sean Dimitroff welcomed Cid on January 9, 2021.

**Andrew McGuire '08**, accounting and professional services and Abigail Reed, welcomed Molly Anne on December 9, 2021.

**Amanda (Murray) Whitesel '08**, art, and Zachary Whitesel, welcomed Ezekiel through adoption on February 12, 2020. [\[39\]](#)



**Chelsey (Burton) Sullivan '09**, elementary education, and Micheal Sullivan, welcomed their second baby girl, Odella Joy, in September 2021. **[40]**

**Roberta (Mistrisin) Rolley '11**, health services, **M'14**, health administration, and Craig Rolley, welcomed Jack Robert on August 27, 2021. **[41]**

**Kaitlin (Baker) Harpenau '14**, accounting and professional services, and Matthew Harpenau, welcomed Harrison on September 23, 2021. **[42]**

**Rachel Runyon Lortie '14 M'15**, occupational therapy, and Neil Lortie, welcomed Lionel Adrian on May 11, 2021. The couple recently moved back to Illinois to be closer to family.

**Andrew Igel '16**, sport management, and **Haley (Worden) Igel '16**, health services, welcomed Avery on June 27, 2021. The couple lives in Indianapolis where Haley works for IU Health as a Data Manager

and Andrew is Director of Operations at Phalen Leadership Academy. **[43]**

**Dylan Robling '15**, business administration, and **Chelsey (Hedrick) Robling '16**, criminal justice studies, welcomed Andi Catherine on August 26, 2021. **[44]**

**Haley (Hannon) Campbell '16**, English teaching, and **Caleb Campbell '16**, marketing, of Indianapolis, Indiana, welcomed Annabelle Marie on September 16, 2021.

## In Memoriam

**David Hartley '71**, business education, of Princeton, Indiana, died July 7, 2021. He worked at Keith's Home Decorating in Princeton until 1989 when he switched to F&M Home and Building Supply. David retired in 2019.

**Mary Ann (Crowe) Bannwart '72**, elementary education, of Henderson,

Kentucky, died October 29, 2021. She was a teacher for the Union County School System and a substitute teacher for Henderson City. An avid golfer, Mary Ann was on the Lady Spitfire Golf League and league champion in 2009.

**Jerry Powers '72**, management, of Evansville, died November 21, 2021. He was an Elvis Presley fan, veteran of the U.S. Navy in which he served two tours in Vietnam as a hospital corpsman on the USS Princeton followed by a long career as a Healthcare Administrator, receiving good reports from the Indiana State Board of Health.

**Bernard "Sonny" Reisz '72**, English, of Evansville, died September 5, 2021. He was an accomplished piano and keyboard musician who toured and played with Florence Henderson's band when he was younger. He earned his law degree and joined Evansville's Public Defender's Office's Juvenile Division, dedicating himself to defending his "little angels."

**Patricia (Herrenbruck) LeGrange '73**, dental assisting, of Evansville, died November 30, 2021. She worked a total of 44 years for two dentists' practices, priding herself on knowing all the patients' names and their families' names. When not working she loved to cook, shop, decorate her home and be with friends and family, or travel the United States.

**Carole (Johnson) Murray '74**, elementary education, of Evansville, died October 10, 2021. She earned her degree as an adult, and loved helping others, volunteering over the years as a scout leader for the Girl Scouts, Pink Lady for Deaconess and tutor for adults at the Literacy Center. Travel, reading, puzzles and family were her passions.

**Jerry Patterson '74**, elementary education, of Princeton, Indiana, died August 28, 2021. He was a "hometown boy" and passionate member of his community, educator with the North Gibson School Corporation for 28 years,





# USI FAMILY Retiring

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Hilary Braysmith**, Professor Emerita of Art History

32 years

**Stephen Zehr**, Professor of Sociology

28 years

**Cynthia Christy Baker**, Associate Professor of Social Work

26.5 years

**David Cousert**, Associate Professor of Social Work

37 years

**Joseph Uduehi**, Associate Professor Emeritus of Art Education

23 years

## POTT COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ENGINEERING

**Kristine Dedmond**, Academic Advisor

27 years

**Gina Berridge**, Associate Professor Emerita of Education

14 years

## ROMAIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**Peggy Shields**, Associate Professor of Marketing

35 years

## COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

**Jeri Burger**, Associate Professor of Nursing

20 years

**Ann White**, Dean Emerita of the College of Nursing and Health Professions and Professor Emerita of Nursing

32 years



City Councilman and coached girls' little league softball and basketball.

**John Hall '74**, marketing, of Mt. Vernon, Indiana, died November 6, 2021. He was a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, and later spent 27 plus years in marketing, business administration and communication, where colleagues highly regarded his work. John collected model cars, planes and trains, loved the outdoors and appreciated the simple things in life.

**Deane Radcliff "Tim" Ashby '75**, elementary education, of Evansville, died December 4, 2021. He received a master's degree in physical education with a concentration in athletic training from Indiana University and was the Head Athletic Trainer at the University of Illinois Chicago and later becoming the Assistant Athletic Trainer for the Orlando Renegades in the USFL under Coach Lee Corso. Tim later was the Assistant Athletic Trainer at Northwestern University before moving to Evansville where he was a teacher and certified athletic trainer at F.J. Reitz High School, retiring from the EVSC in 2011.

**Sharon (Perkins) Effinger '75**, elementary education, of Gilbert, Arizona, died September 9, 2021. She was a dedicated teacher and loved to travel. Sharon participated in Summers as an Education Ambassador for the People-to-People organization, traveling to Europe, Australia and New Zealand—her favorite destination.

**Stewart "Stu" Marvel '75**, radiologic technology, of Griffin, Indiana, died August 10, 2021. A dedicated farmer, he owned Kern Family Farms, in Griffin, Indiana, and lived his life in a manner that honored Jesus Christ.

**Leonard "Len" Schmitt '75**, biology, of Evansville, died October 17, 2021. He had a 41-year career at Deaconess, sang in the Germania Mannechoir, was a ham radio enthusiast, amateur astronomer, accomplished square dancer and master woodworker.

**Sharon (Pike) Blackman '76**, elementary education, of Evansville, died January 13, 2021.

She was employed at St. Mary's Hospital for several years and retired from Central Daycare as a teacher.

**Deborah (Zirkelbach) Blake '77**, elementary education, of Evansville, died September 13, 2021. She taught at St. Joseph School, lent her hand to Evansville Auction, worked for the Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Department, ran an antique business with her sisters and volunteered where she was needed.

**Joseph Michael Reed '77**, political science, of Evansville, died December 9, 2021. He retired from the Evansville Police Department in 2017 as Deputy Chief after 36 years on the force. Joe was proud to be a patrol officer, a role he considered the backbone of the department.

**James Bloodworth '78**, civil engineering technology, of Mt. Vernon, Indiana, died October 15, 2021. He moved to Tyler, Texas, after earning his degree and started his own company that provided consulting for railroads, mines and utilities.



**Paul "PJ" Joseph Hayden Sr. '79**, communications, of Newburgh, Indiana, died November 21, 2021. He was a U.S. Army veteran who earned his ISUE degree while playing the guitar professionally full-time. After graduation, he opened Mat Man, Inc.

**Connie (Brauns) Freeman '80**, elementary education, of Evansville, died January 3, 2022. Teaching was her passion, earning a master's in education and spending her career at Resurrection Catholic School, Rockport Elementary and Luce Elementary. She loved her pool, the beach, tropical plants and laughing.

**Susan (Maier) Thompson '80**, mathematics, of Newburgh, Indiana, died July 6, 2021. She retired from Bristol Myers after 30 years of employment. Susan enjoyed cooking, loved animals and was an avid recycler. Above all, she loved her family.

**Richard Hicks '81**, art, of Evansville, died November 27, 2021. He worked for the *Evansville Courier and Press* for 34 years

as a photographer and graphic designer. In his free time, he enjoyed recreational photography and genealogy. His greatest joy came from spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren.

**Timothy Fitzgerald '82**, art and philosophy, of Evansville, died July 19, 2021. He had a master's degree in sculpture and despite his work being characterized as "constructivist" he considered himself to be a traditional sculptor. Timothy participated in exhibits, workshops and collections.

**George Schmadel '82**, communications, of Evansville, died November 24, 2021. He worked as a Customer Service Representative at Home Depot for many years. George enjoyed reading, going to the casino and attending the Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science.

**Cathy (Griffin) Hargis '84**, science teaching, of Naples, Florida, died June 23, 2021. She was driven to help others through education and earned a master's



in counselor education and doctorate in educational leadership before retiring from a long and impactful career.

**Bertha (Anderson) Thompkins '84**, elementary education, of Evansville, died July 12, 2021. She enjoyed reading, music, ancestry and social clubs. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were a big part of her life.

**James McComas '85**, psychology, sociology, of Evansville, died September 2, 2017.

**Joseph Lake '86**, business administration, of Batesville, Indiana, died June 23, 2021. He led Human Resources globally for the Valvoline Division of Ashland, Inc., and traveled to many parts of the world. He enjoyed sharing stories of his trips to China, Europe and India. He loved to meet new people and experience new cultures.

**Dale "DC" Crossfield '87**, business administration, of Haubstadt, Indiana, died December 16, 2021. He played



baseball for USI and had an earned run average of 3.25, 72 IP. After college, DC joined a farm team for the Cincinnati Reds before an injury ended his career. He could always talk a good game and played one too! He was inducted into the Greater Evansville Sports Hall of Fame for football and baseball in 2020.

**Michael Hall '87**, marketing, of Lexington, Kentucky, died December 19, 2021. He was a gifted athlete—a star quarterback for the Henderson County Football team who went on to have a successful career in sales and management. He loved hiking, golf and being a grandfather.

**Todd Erwin '89**, history, of Evansville, died July 4, 2021. He was passionate about helping others and touched many lives. Todd enjoyed traveling and seeing the world.

**Maurice Olwali '89**, economics, political science, M'91, secondary education, of Evansville, died October 1, 2021. He was born in Kenya and came to the U.S. in the 1980s to attend college. Maurice worked





for the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library for 23 years, greeting everyone he knew by name and went above-and-beyond for all.

**Judith Ann (Eakins) Jackson '90**, health services, of Little Rock, Arkansas, died May 27, 2021. She spent her career in healthcare as an X-ray Technologist and Patient Representative and later teaching communication at Arkansas Tech University. Judy was devoted to healthcare and education and donated her body to the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education to help educate future healthcare providers.

**Lisa Layne (Lindauer) Gossman '92**, elementary education, of Wadesville, Indiana, died December 9, 2021. She was the Director of Daycare at Adventure World in Kansas City for eight years, and the Office Manager at Lindauer Manor Apartments. Lisa enjoyed fishing, watersports and the outdoors. She loved spending time with her family, especially playing cards with them.



**Michael Musgrave '92**, social work, of Evansville, died October 15, 2021. He believed in doing all he could for the mental health of his community and dedicated 40 years of service to Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare. Michael received his master's degree from the University of Louisville.

**Barbara Ellen (Hill) Ungetheim '92**, elementary education of Boonville, Indiana, died December 19, 2021. She taught 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades for 20 years and loved every moment of it before transitioning into selling real estate and finally retiring to travel the western United States with her husband.

**Christopher Ziller '92**, social science teaching, M'97, secondary education, of Princeton, Indiana, died August 17, 2021. He was a history teacher at Tecumseh High School, a life-long learner and runner. He loved teaching history and found fun ways to help students learn. His other passions included baseball cards, music (Marvin Gay), Jeopardy and the Chicago Cubs.



**Pricilla Ann (Lettermann) Radcliff '93**, nursing, '98 M'02, social work, of Evansville, died August 16, 2021. She dedicated her life to healing others as a nurse, massage therapist and Reiki master, third class. Friends and family considered her a "burst of sunlight" in their lives. Her nurturing way is greatly missed.

**Lani Ann (Hustace) George '96**, accountancy, of Murchison, Texas, died October 14, 2021. She was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy, serving eight years and earning the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Lani held a Doctor of Jurisprudence and was fluent in French and German.

**Tracy Lechner '96**, communications, of Evansville, died December 18, 2021. He worked at Coca-Cola and Kellogg and survived the plane crashing into Jojo's restaurant in 1992, while he was eating breakfast. Tracy was a committed husband and father who enjoyed being with his family and friends, bicycling, woodworking, classic rock and his pup Ottis.

## USI FAMILY Retiring (continued)

### ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

<b>Vicki Bierley</b> , IT Inventory Associate	17 years
<b>Charles Blane</b> , Custodial Worker	15 years
<b>Debbie Butler</b> , Information Technology Operations Manager	33.5 years
<b>Linda Dillbeck</b> , Administrative Associate	22 years
<b>Arlene Fortune</b> , Academic Advisor	24 years
<b>Michael Goelzhauser</b> , Campus Store Manager	33.5 years
<b>Connie Keeling</b> , Senior AV Systems Manager	21 years
<b>Nancy Martin</b> , Coordinator of Student Teaching and Licensure, Teacher Education	30 years
<b>Laura McDaniel</b> , Manager of Undergraduate Admissions Systems and Operations	26.5 years
<b>Michael Murphy</b> , Manager of Business Information Systems	14 years
<b>Jimmy Prior</b> , Principal Software Developer/Analyst Emeritus	32 years
<b>Kenneth Rice</b> , Grounds Maintenance Worker	20 years
<b>Mark Rusk</b> , Associate Director Emeritus of Undergraduate Admissions	23 years
<b>Lisa Staples</b> , Administrative Associate	17 years
<b>Richard Toeniskoetter</b> , Chief Information Officer Emeritus	10 years
<b>Keith Wright</b> , Custodial Worker	13 years



**Janette (Davis) Nesbitt '96**, psychology, of Mt. Vernon, Indiana, died July 1, 2021. She was a teacher and director at Susanna Wesley Nursery School, a New York Yankees fan, and member of the Ontario Bible Council for 11 years.

**Michelle (Bieker) Schroeder '96**, accounting, of Jasper, Indiana, died September 1, 2021. She dedicated her career to Kimball International, starting in marketing and reaching Chief Financial Officer, working in investor relations. She loved cards, games, puzzles and family, and was awarded the University of Southern Indiana Distinguished Accountant Award in 2018.

**Matthew Shields '97**, sociology, of Evansville, died September 5, 2021. He was an Eagle Scout and member of the Evansville Masonic Lodge #64, Scottish Rite, York Rite and Hadi Shrine. Matt spent 28 years working for the Vanderburgh Corrections Program before going to work for the Vanderburgh County Therapeutic Work Release Program.

**Matthew Braun '98**, communications, of Evansville, died January 2, 2022. He worked for Industrial Contractors and ICI Skanska for more than 25 years and was Vice President of Industrial Equipment. Matt loved music—especially jazz—and playing his bass guitar. He had a kind heart for everyone.

**Paula (Mitchell) Mayfield-Ford '98**, communications, M'05, business administration, of Evansville, died September 12, 2021. Her sparkling personality, humor and passion for life made her a natural supporter of others. She was a member of Delta Zeta Sorority, active volunteer and woman of deep faith.

**Ava Bartley '00**, nursing, of Henderson, Kentucky, died October 25, 2021. She had a passion for helping others and put herself through school so she could contribute to the health and well-being of others.

**Miguel Latorre '00**, journalism and computer publishing, '14, art, of

Evansville, died October 6, 2021. He had a passion for photography while at USI and participated and displayed his work in the McCutchan Art Center as a student. Miguel enjoyed friendships, science fiction, video games and skateboarding—around the country.

**Thomas Baugh '01**, elementary education, of Jacksonville, Florida, died October 10, 2021. He was an educator through and through, teaching elementary students, tutoring them in math and science, and giving golf lessons to anyone interested.

**Manda Jo Clevenger '01**, computer information systems and French studies, of Lebanon, Indiana, died January 2, 2022. She earned her law degree from Valparaiso University, was married to **Matthew Petty '01**, computer information systems, and worked for the State of Indiana in the Department of Environmental Management, Department of Health and later as

Director of Food Protection. She also was on the Zionsville Park Board.

**Scott Basham M'03**, business administration, of Indianapolis, Indiana, died December 16, 2019. He was inducted in the Beta Gamma Sigma School of Business Honor Society as a student and was a Senior Business Analyst for One America in Indianapolis.

**Chad David Crowe '03**, political science, of Indianapolis, Indiana, died January 1, 2022. He was a member of TKE fraternity, graduated with a doctorate of law degree from Indiana University's Robert H. McKinney School of Law, and was the former Deputy Director of Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. With a brilliant mind, huge heart and stylish sweater vests, Chad always brought life to a room and joy to conversations.

**Timothy Ivy '03**, public relations and advertising, of Evansville, died October



42



43



44



19, 2021. He had many passions—snowboarding, art, soccer—but his children and grandchildren had his heart. Tim's bearhugs will be greatly missed.

**Dixie Carol (Casey) Turpen '03**, social work, of Corydon, Indiana, died September 6, 2021. She dedicated herself to helping others, her family and supporting the Greyhound Pets of America.

**Maureen O'Brien-Beadles '04**, health services, '05 nursing, of Huntingburg, Indiana, died November 5, 2021. She was

a dedicated nurse, caring for others for 25 years, and received a Nurse of the Year Award in recognition of her commitment to healthcare. Maureen was an active seamstress, fisherwoman, kayaker, camper and bowler.

**Africa Sherrod '04**, sociology, of Pompano Beach, Florida, died September 14, 2021.

**Steven English M'05**, family nurse practitioner, of Pleasant Ridge, Kentucky, died November 11, 2021. He dedicated 40

years of his life to the medical profession. Steve enjoyed life, his Harley, playing his bass guitar and being with friends and family.

**Wade Conway '10**, journalism, of Evansville, died October 8, 2021. He was a remarkably determined man, given the physical challenges he faced being born with Arthrogryposis. Wade loved rock-n-roll, auto racing, baseball and volunteering as a coach for Bosse High School's baseball team.

## USI FAMILY In Memoriam

**Martha Kuenzli Smith**, Instructor Emerita English (20 years), retired, died July 9, 2021.

**Susan Michele (Mayberry) Ruholl**, Lead Custodial Worker (15 Years), retired, died August 10, 2021.

**Sister Victoria Pohl**, Professor Emerita of Mathematics (25 years), retired, died September 24, 2021.

**Larry Shelton**, Senior Mechanic, (16 years), retired, died October 6, 2021.

**Richard Gish**, Maintenance Mechanic (15 years), retired, died November 26, 2021.

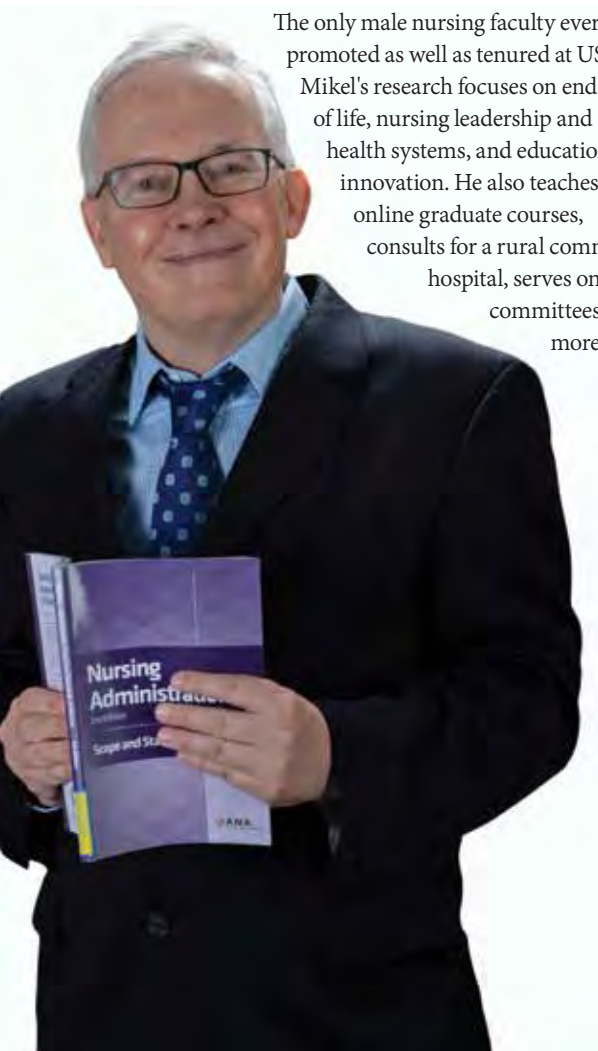
**Jeffery Seyler Sr.**, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry (28 years), died December 16, 2021.



Loves to play gospel music on his piano.

**T**he career Dr. Mikel Hand thought he wanted and the one he landed on reside at opposite ends of a spectrum yet are surprisingly akin. Mikel, Associate Professor of Nursing, joined USI's faculty in 2011, bringing more than 30 years of healthcare and eight years of academic experience to students. In high school, however, he imagined his future in funeral services, but a health service course his junior year derailed that idea. By his senior year, he was working a 40-hour a week nightshift as a CNA and attending school—the catalyst into a life-long enthusiasm for...well, life, with a special interest in oncology.

The only male nursing faculty ever promoted as well as tenured at USI, Mikel's research focuses on end of life, nursing leadership and health systems, and educational innovation. He also teaches online graduate courses, consults for a rural community hospital, serves on committees and more.



Has a passion for visiting historic homes, especially those of former presidents.



**As a male in a female-dominated field, what underappreciated value do males bring to nursing?** We bring a fresh perspective and a different approach to healthcare concerns. Women are wonderful, but we need the balance of both genders. Our interests may be different as well.

**What challenges did you face working as a hospital nurse?** They're different depending on the position I was in at the time. As a staff nurse, one of my greatest challenges was burnout. I went from medical oncology to bone marrow transplant. Working in large research facilities, it was not unusual for patients to die as a result of treatment complications. It was hard not to feel personally responsible when the outcome did not go well. It is somewhat ridiculous to think that way, but you bond with those patients and their families.

**Describe your teaching style and its impact on students.** My teaching style could be best described as high standards with love and customization. I provide clear expectations, but I try to approach teaching based on where students are at intellectually. I want them to be successful and one approach does not work with every student.

**Your areas of research are diverse. What is the connection for you?** For me they readily connect based on my clinical interest, additional specialized expertise and the degrees I hold. End of life research stems from my long career in oncology and a remaining interest. Leadership and health systems are the core of the three spheres (courses that I primarily

teach and thus important I contribute to that body of knowledge). I hold a doctorate in education and feel responsible to continue to contribute to the knowledge surrounding educational innovation.

**What words sum you up?**  
What you see is what you get.  
I am authentic.

**What one lesson have you learned from students?** You may have a plan, but you need to be prepared to change it if it is not working.

**What book should everyone read, and why?**  
Howard Gardner's "Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership." The book features leaders in history, of which many were known as great while others were quite evil. I think it is important to know that even an evil terrorist can be an effective leader. They have a clear set goal and they accomplish it at the expense of others who are willing to follow them. It all depends on how leadership skills are used.

**What do your hobbies teach you?** They teach me to have a life outside of constant work. I need to do fun things so that I have the energy to continue to do what I do. Funny enough, hockey reminds me that we all have frustrations, there are just different ways of dealing with them. There are days when I would like to have a stick and a hockey puck.



Avid Thunderbolts fan.





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soar.

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*Spirit and Heart of USI*



**A stressful finals week calls for extreme relief, so the David L. Rice Library and Recreation, Fitness and Wellness sponsored Paws & Play, featuring Hoover and Boo Bear. A hug goes a long way.**

*Visit [USI.edu/spiritheart](https://www.usi.edu/spiritheart) for submission guidelines.*