

# illumine

FALL 2025 • UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

*"When our graduates thrive, our region thrives."*

**USI ALUMNI LEADING  
REGIONAL EDUCATION**

**14**

*"Change was constant, but that's only part of the story."*

**ROOTED IN SERVICE,  
GROWING THROUGH  
PARTNERSHIP**

**26**

*Lighting the Way  
with Purpose*

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ILLUME • FALL 2025

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*On the Cover: One torch. Many flames. This issue of Illume celebrates the unstoppable momentum of purpose—where knowledge shared becomes progress made. A single torch ignites many—symbolizing the power of purpose to inspire, educate and illuminate the path forward.*





26



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# Illume

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*Illume* 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, IN 47712. Send editorial information to *Illume's* editor, [USI.Editor@usi.edu](mailto:USI.Editor@usi.edu) or call 812-465-7020.

## THE ROUNDABOUT

# SOLAR SPLASH TEAM TRIUMPHS

**WHILE MOST STUDENTS** were on summer break, seven USI engineering students were busy competing in the prestigious Solar Splash competition in Springfield, Ohio, earning first place in both the sprint and slalom events and finishing second overall.

Known as the "World Championship of Collegiate Solar Boating," the event challenges students to apply engineering skills in a real-world setting. Advised by Dr. Paul Kuban, Chair of the USI Engineering Program and Professor of

Engineering, the team made a strong comeback from last year with a fully redesigned solar-powered boat featuring a lightweight hull, improved accessibility and a robust solar-electric system.

Despite setbacks in the endurance race, the team adapted quickly, doubling their performance in the second round. "There's no substitute for preparation," said Jacob Mills '25. Senior Zoe Tucker added, "The team will be far more competitive next year."



## Dental Hygiene Students Certified

**SENIORS IN THE** USI Dental Hygiene Program are learning to use two advanced tools to help treat gum disease, resulting in a certification that prepares them to provide high-quality, cutting-edge care in their future profession.

One tool is the Biolase Epic Hygiene™, a soft-tissue laser that kills bacteria in deep gum pockets. The other is the PERIOFLOW®, a cleaning device that uses a special powder and air to clean below the gumline. The PERIOFLOW® helps remove harmful biofilm—a sticky layer of bacteria—while both tools promote healing and improve the management of gum disease.

The students first completed online training for the laser, which covered how it works, safety protocol and its usage in the dental office. After finishing the online portion, they earned a certificate, participated in a two-hour hands-on session and practiced using the laser on two sections of a patient's mouth during their clinical course.

Training for the PERIOFLOW® device was conducted separately. Students were introduced to it in the classroom and lab before using it on the same patient they treated with the laser.

"The standard of care for periodontal inflammation now includes new bacterial reduction methods," says Emily Holt '01 M'04, Clinical Professor and Chair. "Students practiced therapies within Indiana's scope, experienced laser readiness and saw improved patient outcomes."



**USI TUITION** and mandatory fees will remain flat for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years, following a recommendation from the Governor and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, as well as a commitment to maintaining affordable educational excellence.

The per-credit-hour, per-semester student fee will remain at the 2024-25 rate for all Indiana resident and non-resident undergraduate and graduate students.

Other mandatory fees will also remain unchanged for these years.





## ENGLISH PROFESSOR RECEIVES FULBRIGHT

**DR. AMY MONTZ**, Professor of English, has received a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to conduct research in Manchester, United Kingdom, during the 2025-26 academic year. She is the first USI faculty member to earn this honor since 2016.

Montz will spend six months at the University of Manchester, working in the John Rylands Library with the Elizabeth Gaskell Collection. Her project, *Two Lived Lives: An Autobiographical Survey of Elizabeth Gaskell and Her Works*, will explore the 19th-century author's writings, letters and related ephemera, alongside modern responses such as BBC adaptations.

In addition to her research, Montz will deliver guest lectures, mentor students and collaborate with the Elizabeth Gaskell House.

"This is the culmination of a career-long dream," said Montz. "I'm grateful to my USI colleagues and family for their incredible support."



## Q&A with Dr. Beam



**AS THE NEW** Dean of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education, Dr. Teresa Beam brings her expertise and leadership to USI. "I believe great leadership is about caring for the community you serve, listening well and clearing barriers," she said.

### What is your background in higher education?

Previously, I served as Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Technology at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. Prior to joining St. Mary's University, I was Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences and

Pharmacogenomics at Manchester University in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I served as Professor and Chair of Biological Sciences at the University of Saint Francis also in Fort Wayne.

### What was your initial reaction to finding out you got the job at USI?

I was excited to join the USI community. As a native Hoosier, I was eager to return to Indiana. I also noticed a culture of care and concern for everyone on campus, which really drew me in during the interview process.

Read full interview at [USI.edu/new-leadership](https://usi.edu/new-leadership).



## Getting to Know Dr. Mustafa

**JOINING THE UNIVERSITY** on June 23 as Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Abeer Ali-Mustafa has more than two decades of experience working with and helping students achieve their goals. "I'm looking forward to students showing me what their experience is here on campus," she said.

### What drew you to this position?

My mentor and previous boss at my old position saw the posting, and he said he thought the Vice President of Student Affairs at USI was a great opportunity for me. What really

drew me more (to USI) is that in my experience, I've found my niche and my happiness working at a regional campus. That is where I found I am more successful. But I also enjoy the environment and really helping students achieve success. That's where I've found my happy place. And that's what really drew me to USI.

Read full interview at [USI.edu/new-leadership](https://usi.edu/new-leadership).

## Shark Tank Investor to Speak in April

**ROMAIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS** will continue its tradition of hosting visionary leaders through its Innovative Speaker Series with Mr. Wonderful, AI and Wealth Creation: An Evening with Kevin O'Leary at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 16 in Liberty Arena, Home of the Screaming Eagles. The event is free, open to the public and doors open at 6 p.m.

The series has welcomed some of the world's most influential thinkers and innovators, including Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak; General Colin Powell; former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke; and

Uber co-founder Oscar Salazar. This year's guest, Kevin O'Leary—best known as "Mr. Wonderful" on ABC's four-time Emmy Award-winning *Shark Tank*—will share insights on artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship and wealth creation in what promises to be an inspiring and thought-provoking evening. The event will feature both a presentation and a moderated Q&A.

O'Leary, a successful business leader and investor, co-founded SoftKey Software, built The Learning Company, launched ventures, contributed to major networks, co-hosted Project Earth and authored bestselling books.

## USI RADIO & TV ON THE RISE

**THE RADIO AND TELEVISION (RTV) Program** at USI has once again earned high rankings, according to the Broadcast Education Association (BEA). This year, BEA ranked USI sixth in audio programs, 27th in sports programs and 22nd overall among more than 150 schools nationwide. In two years, USI has climbed 15 spots in the overall rankings.

The rankings are based on results from the BEA Festival of Media Arts, an international media competition focused on student and faculty creative endeavors. These rankings are not an overall evaluation of an academic program, but rather an evaluation of the quality and consistency of students' creative works compared to those at other institutions.

"These rankings reflect the great students we have and the hard work they have put in both this year and over the past five years," says John Morris, Instructor in Radio and Television. "For students considering a university, this says that as you consider USI, you know you will be in an outstanding program and working with other students and faculty who will help make you better each day."

USI's Radio and Television major prepares students for careers in the media industry by providing a foundation in media production, analysis and theory, paired with training in creating, editing and producing digital content.

Learn more about USI's RTV program at [USI.edu/rtv](http://USI.edu/rtv).

## Archie Gets a Boost

**ARCHIE**, USI's symbol of pride and spirit, needed financial support. Students serving as Archie previously received a \$2,500 scholarship, but the University aimed to raise that amount to \$5,000. Archie even appeared before the USI Foundation Board of Directors, where board members were invited to underwrite the scholarships.

John Schutz '82 stepped forward with a generous \$10,000 gift to fully underwrite Archie and fund two scholarships. His support will help sustain the spirit of USI while empowering students to pursue a college education.





# PROMISE SCHOLARS: A NEW PATH TO USI

**WHAT BEGAN AS** a bold idea in 2022 has become an impactful and heartfelt enrollment initiative. The Promise Scholars program opens doors for high school students who demonstrate grit, curiosity and potential. It's for students who are ready to soar as USI Screaming Eagles.

Each year, area high school principals nominate up to five seniors from their school who work hard, lead quietly and dream big. What sets this program apart is the personal connection. Deans visit schools to hand-deliver awards. Students are called to the principal's office, where some fight back tears. Families beam with pride. The moment is unforgettable.

Backed by all four of the University's colleges, Promise Scholars will soon benefit from even stronger connections, including curated Welcome Week events, cohort gatherings and expanded academic support. Many scholars are already thriving, earning Dean's List honors, becoming student leaders and fulfilling the hopes of their families.

The program has strengthened USI's relationships with local schools and is beginning to grow across state lines. For the students it serves, it's more than a scholarship—it's a promise fulfilled.



## Language Bowl Hits Record Turnout Again

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA'S** World Languages and Cultures Department hosted its 26th annual Language Bowl on April 1, 2025. A record 212 students and 21 teachers represented 13 southern Indiana high schools at the competition, which featured events in French, German, Japanese and Spanish.



## PASSING THE TORCH

**THIS FALL**, Addison Paul joined USI as the new Editor of *Illume*, bringing a storytelling background and six years of experience in higher education communications to the role. A graduate of Ball State University with bachelor's and master's degrees in creative writing, Paul has inspired teams, shaped publications and agonized over many sentences.

Caring for *Illume* sparked a new sense of purpose for Paul, who hopes to continue the stewardship of previous editors while shining her own light on the magazine.

"I'm grateful for everyone who brought this issue to fruition while bringing me up to speed," she said. "Thank you for welcoming me into the vibrant USI community and trusting me to carry *Illume's* torch."

The magazine team also recognizes Trish Shea, Freelance Editor, Writer and Graphic Designer, for her invaluable work as Consulting Editor of *Illume*. Shea's wealth of experience, adaptability and attention to detail carried content through production and made this transitional issue possible.



# LEARNING WITHOUT WALLS

## Taking Discovery Beyond the Classroom

**DURING THE SUMMER** academic break, University of Southern Indiana students swapped typical vacations for transformative learning experiences that took them across the globe and deep into their fields of study. From building bridges in southern Africa to studying geology in Yellowstone and exploring cultural life in the Amazon, these journeys showcased the power of hands-on learning and global engagement.

### BUILDING BRIDGES, BUILDING FUTURES

USI's Engineers in Action (EIA) chapter played a key role in completing two life-changing bridges in Eswatini, Africa, while making EIA history. The Khelekhele footbridge spans 93.5 meters (approximately 307 feet) across the Black Mbuluzi River, providing safe, year-round access for more than 4,250 residents. USI led the project alongside students from Penn State University and the University of Colorado Boulder.

When construction stalled after workers hit an underground rock, students from all three universities showed resilience and problem-solving skills that kept the project moving. Soon after, USI partnered with Cornell University and University College London on the global EIA organization's first-ever, student-led suspension bridge. The Hlanganani suspension bridge and the Khelekhele footbridge now connect more than 6,000 residents to schools, clinics and markets.

The legacy of these bridges is both practical and symbolic: communities are stronger, and a new generation of engineers has gained invaluable experience in international collaboration, leadership and innovation. For USI students, this summer marked their sixth and seventh bridge builds, a testament to years of sustained commitment to the project. Beyond the construction itself, students fully immerse themselves in the local culture—working, eating and sleeping alongside community members, while also socializing, learning the language and engaging with local customs. This exchange not only strengthens the bridges they build but also the human connections that endure long after the projects are complete.

### DISCOVERING EARTH'S STORY

Closer to home, a group of geology students, guided by Dr. Paul Doss, Professor Emeritus of Geology; Dr. Tony Maria, Chair and Professor of Geology; and Dr. Carrie Wright M'17, Professor of Geology, undertook a rigorous field course across the Black Hills of South Dakota and the Yellowstone Plateau.



Students hiked to see 50-million-year-old petrified trees, explored hydrothermal explosion sites and studied rock formations that reveal Earth's ancient history. Beyond geology, the course included discussions of Indigenous history and public land management, illustrating how science, culture and policy intertwine.

Camping in primitive conditions, the students forged camaraderie and confidence while transforming classmates into colleagues. The immersive experience encouraged them to see themselves not only as learners but also as future stewards of the planet.

### **ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE AMAZON**

Meanwhile, anthropology students, Nicholas Mack and Ashleigh Ream (pictured right), traveled to Peru under the guidance of Dr. Daniel Bauer, Professor of Anthropology, immersing themselves in the vibrant life of the Amazon basin. For these students, the trip was eye-opening. They were struck by the bustling energy of the markets of Iquitos, followed by the slower rhythms of village life along the river. The students completed supervised research projects aimed at gaining an understanding of human interactions with the natural environment, while learning and applying methods of ethnographic research.

Highlights ranged from fishing for piranha to playing volleyball with villagers, but the deeper impact came from witnessing the resilience of local communities. "To spend every day trying to make it to the next—

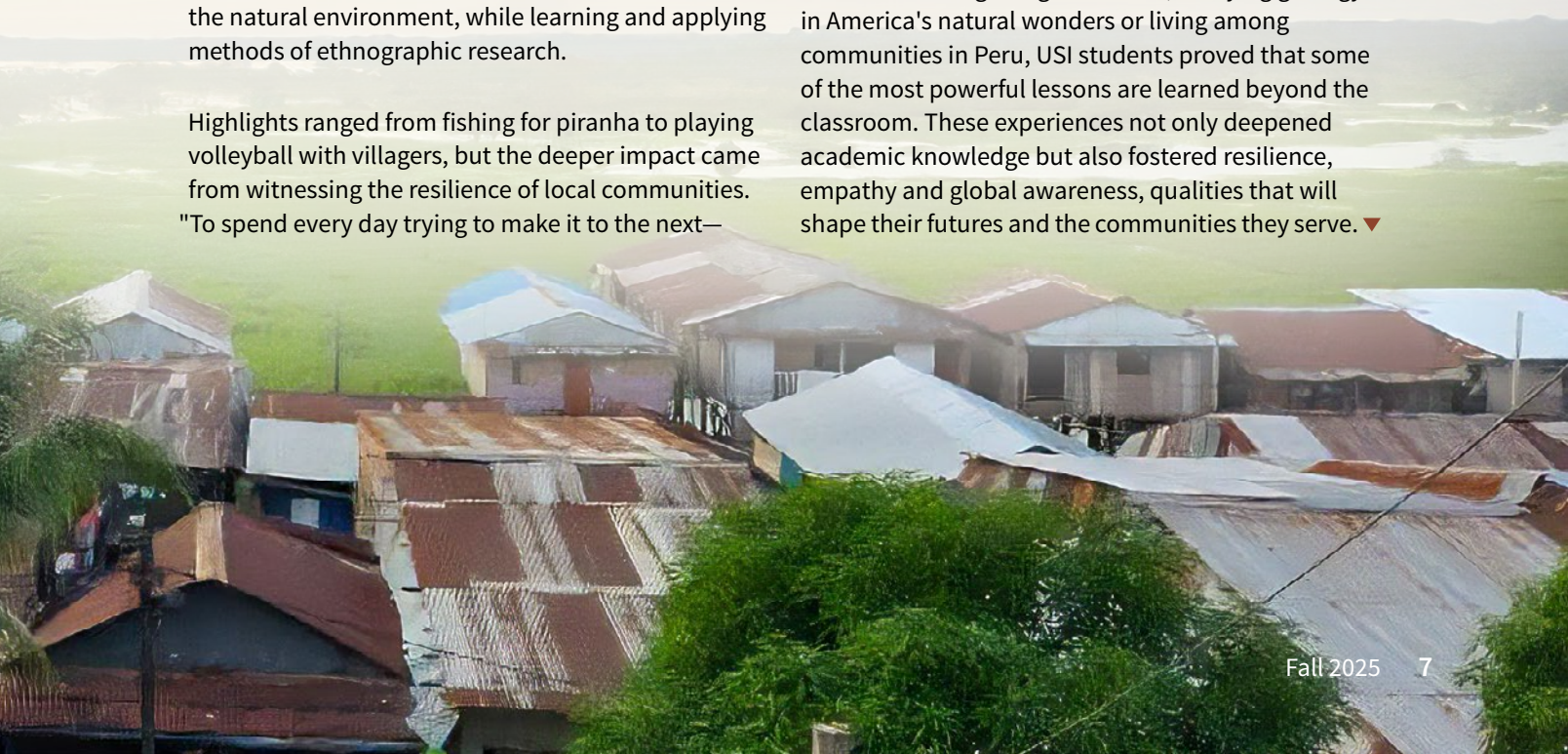


catching or foraging food, facing sickness and lack of clean water—was humbling," Mack reflected. "I will never be the same after what I experienced."

For these aspiring anthropologists, the experience of being unconnected from technology—and the wider world—for days reinforced the importance of cultural understanding in a rapidly changing global context.

### **LEARNING WITHOUT WALLS**

Whether building bridges in Africa, studying geology in America's natural wonders or living among communities in Peru, USI students proved that some of the most powerful lessons are learned beyond the classroom. These experiences not only deepened academic knowledge but also fostered resilience, empathy and global awareness, qualities that will shape their futures and the communities they serve. ▼







## A New Era for Screaming Eagles

*By Ray Simmons & John Farless '98 M'21*

**USI HAS OFFICIALLY** completed its transition to full NCAA Division I membership, a milestone confirmed by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors on June 23. Effective August 1, 2025, this achievement allows USI's student-athletes to compete for the NCAA postseason championships in all 19 intercollegiate sports.

USI becomes the seventh public university in Indiana to reach Division I status and is a full member of the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), a move that elevates the institution's athletic profile and strategic ambitions.

"We are excited to be moving into full NCAA Division I membership a year early," said USI President Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95. "Our athletic programs play a vital role in enhancing the University's visibility and reputation. We're proud of how our teams have performed and grateful for the NCAA's support."

USI announced its expedited reclassification in early 2024 following updated NCAA guidance. Since joining the OVC in 2022, the Screaming Eagles have earned multiple championships and academic accolades, including back-to-back OVC Institutional Achievement Awards and a 3.29 average GPA among student-athletes.

"The transition has been a campus-wide effort," said Jon Mark Hall, USI Vice President and Director of Athletics. "We're thrilled our student-athletes can now compete on the national stage."

USI Athletics has already made its mark, with Women's Basketball securing OVC titles and WNIT wins, and Cross Country/Track & Field earning 18 individual titles during the transition. Head Coach Mike Hillyard expressed excitement about hosting the NCAA Division I Great Lakes Regional this fall at Angel Mounds.





## 50 Years of Women's Basketball

**USI WOMEN'S BASKETBALL** is celebrating the 50th anniversary of USI women's athletics with a commemorative logo featured throughout the season. This milestone will be marked with a special event on January 24, 2026, when the Screaming Eagles play Western Illinois University during Ohio Valley Conference play.

## Athletics Racks Up Academic Awards



**SINCE MAY 2025**, University of Southern Indiana student-athletes have continued to excel in the classroom, earning conference, national and team academic honors across multiple sports.

USI led the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) in academics for both Men's Basketball and Women's Track & Field, while Soccer programs were recognized nationally by United Soccer Coaches for strong team GPAs. Volleyball earned the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award, and Men's Basketball received the National Association of Basketball Coaches Team Academic Excellence Award. In addition, Swimming & Diving had 22 student-athletes honored by the Summit League, while Softball, Baseball, Tennis, Golf and Cross Country/Track & Field produced numerous College Sports Communicators Academic All-District selections. USI athletes also collected 33 OVC Medals of Honor, the league's highest academic distinction, and more than 200 were named to conference honor rolls. These achievements highlight USI's commitment to academic excellence, proving Screaming Eagles are just as dedicated to their studies as they are to competition.

## ATHLETIC STAFF *Walk-Up* SONGS

### "Ready For It" by Taylor Swift



"If I were a baseball player, I'd choose it because people may look at me and underestimate my abilities!"

**Dr. Kimberly Hille '02**  
Assistant Dean of Health Professions  
Faculty Athletics Representative

### "#1" by Nelly



"It was my actual walk-up song when I played college softball. My jersey number was #1. It's just a song that gets me ready to go!"

**Laura Heline**  
Head Athletic Trainer

### "Here I Go Again On My Own" by Whitesnake



"It reminds me that no matter how many obstacles you encounter in life, you just need to keep your chin up and keep going."

**Mandi Fulton '06 M'10**  
Assoc. Athletic Director for Event Management

### "Right Here, Right Now" by Fatboy Slim



"A catchy tune that will get everyone excited and ready to go!"

**Andy Brown**  
Assistant Diving Coach

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Built on Purpose

**USI celebrated the Inauguration of its fifth President, Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95, on October 16 with a ceremony held at Liberty Arena, Home of the Screaming Eagles. President Bridges marked the momentous occasion with an inaugural address, excerpted below.**

**TODAY MAY BEAR** my name as the fifth President of the University of Southern Indiana, but this day is larger than any one person. Today belongs to those who founded this institution, to the business community that had the vision to create it, to the alumni who have carried our name into the world, to our donors and supporters, and to the State of Indiana. We are stronger together, and I have the distinct honor to help lead this extraordinary collective.

### OUR FOUNDING, OUR PURPOSE

To be named President of my alma mater is one of the greatest honors of my life. This University was built to serve students like me: first generation, limited in resources, seeking an affordable education close to home, working while studying and committed to making a difference in their own community.

The core values of USI—integrity, transformative learning, a welcoming environment for all and deep engagement with our community—are values that shape who I am as well. A degree from the University of Southern Indiana is a powerful investment and holds extraordinary value for our community and beyond.

### LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

I believe the path to success for USI is both history-driven and forward-looking. USI has always had an edge, a resilience, a grit. That edge comes from our very purpose—from the challenges we faced and the ways we prevailed. It is what distinguishes us, what weaves into the fabric of this institution and who I am as its servant leader. Our reach is broad, but our roots are deep. Purpose is a powerful binder.

### THE WHY

We seek to welcome 3,000 more students in the next five years. We must build on our success and create new paths forward. USI was founded by business leaders to drive the talent pipeline, to meet the workforce needs of our region and state, and to provide opportunities for families across the Midwest. Affordability and accessibility remain our responsibility.

My parents sacrificed for me to have this opportunity. Many of yours have as well. And many of you, like me, now make sacrifices for your own children and grandchildren. That cycle of opportunity is the legacy of USI.



***This institution was, and is, Built on Purpose.  
Built to open doors. Built to transform lives.  
Built to change the trajectory of families.***

**—Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95**

These "whys" are not abstract. They are embodied in students I meet daily, in families who gather around kitchen tables to weigh the cost of higher education, in faculty and staff who give their lives to teaching and mentoring, and in alumni who carry the USI story into the world.

### **FAMILY, FAITH AND LEGACY**

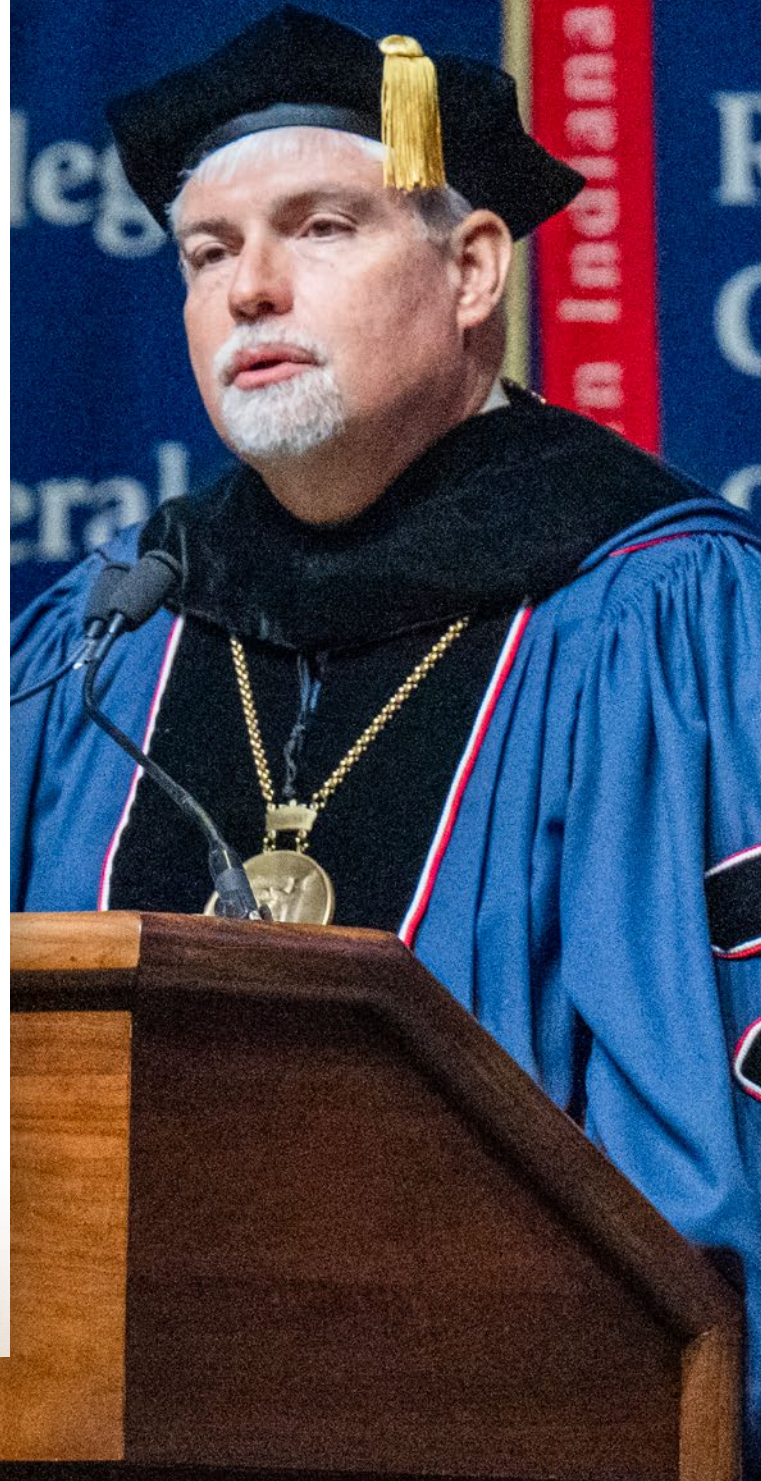
At my core, I am a husband, a father and a Pap. Rosemary and I built our lives around faith, love and service. Cory and Emily, Emma, and Abby and Jake, and now our five beautiful grandchildren, remind me every day of why we do what we do.

This institution was, and is, Built on Purpose. Built to open doors. Built to transform lives. Built to change the trajectory of families. This institution gave me the path, and it has given more than 55,000 other alumni the same.

Imagine the future we can build together. One where we live our purpose daily, ensuring that every student, no matter their background, finds a home here and a future built on possibility. Together we will build, we will serve and we will thrive—all on purpose.

*Go Screaming Eagles!*

**Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95  
President**





# Built on Numbers

THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT  
STEVEN J. BRIDGES '89 M'95

The University of Southern Indiana's fourth presidential Inauguration is both a celebration of our history and foundation, and a look ahead to serving students and impacting the world.

- **July 20, 2024** Bridges is appointed Interim President.
- **April 2, 2025** The USI Board of Trustees named Bridges President, succeeding Dr. Ronald S. Rochon.
- **October 16, 2025**  
President Bridges' Inauguration Ceremony.



President Bridges is both a **first-generation graduate** and the **first USI alum** to become president.



President Bridges holds **two degrees** from USI.

- Bachelor of Science in Accounting
- Master of Business Administration



# 4



*Dr. David L. Rice   Dr. Ronald S. Rochon   Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett   Dr. H. Ray Hoops*

President Bridges has worked for and with **all four** past USI Presidents.

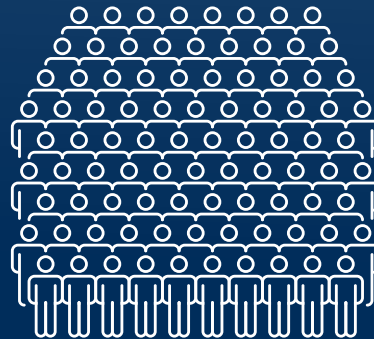
# 36

years President Bridges has served USI.

1989 ————— 2025

# 90

vocalists performed at the Inauguration Ceremony.



# 8

President Bridges has held **eight previous roles** at USI.

- *Bursar*
- *Chief Accountant*
- *Controller*
- *Banner Project Manager*
- *Business Office Manager*
- *Assistant Vice President for Business Affairs*
- *Vice President for Finance and Administration*
- *Interim President*

# 1

Presidential Medallion



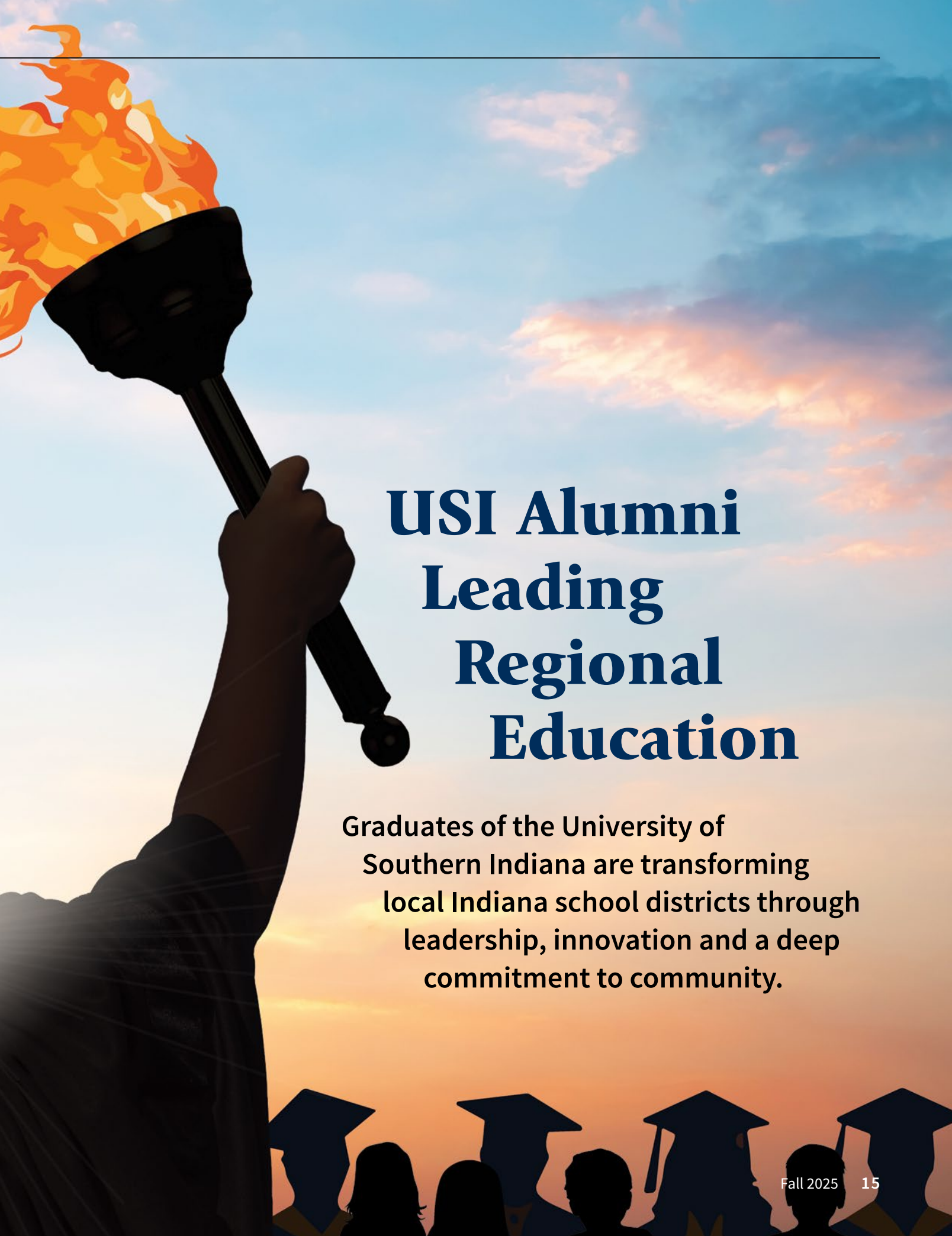


# Lighting the Way

*By Trish Shea*





A hand holding a flaming torch against a sunset sky. The torch is black with a bright orange and yellow flame. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with soft clouds. The overall mood is inspirational and hopeful.

# **USI Alumni Leading Regional Education**

**Graduates of the University of  
Southern Indiana are transforming  
local Indiana school districts through  
leadership, innovation and a deep  
commitment to community.**



## A PERSONAL STORY, A BROADER IMPACT

For USI President Steve Bridges '89 M'95, the story of the University's Teacher Education Program is also the story of his family. His daughter, Emma Bridges '14, is now a school principal in Henderson, Kentucky, serving in the same school corporation where her mother works.

"My daughter wasn't initially planning to teach," Bridges recalled. "But after one of her former teachers was injured and asked her to sub, she stepped in. That experience lit a spark, and eventually she took over the role permanently."

Student teaching at an Evansville high school, he says, gave her an entirely different perspective. "She saw students lined up at 6 a.m. for breakfast. It was eye-opening and formative. Today, she brings that empathy and understanding to her leadership."

Bridges cites his daughter's story as a microcosm of USI's broader mission: to prepare educators who not only teach but also lead, often in the very communities where they grew up. "When our graduates thrive, our region thrives," he said.

## A LEGACY OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION

USI's Teacher Education Program has been a cornerstone of the University since its early days, growing steadily from strong foundations in elementary, early childhood and leadership credentials.

"All of our professors have been educators themselves," said Dr. Mary Ann Cahill, Professor and Chair of

Teacher Education. "We build close relationships with our students and root for their success."

The department's partnerships with local schools are deep and longstanding. Nearly half of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation's (EVSC) 1,600 teachers—792 educators—are USI alumni.<sup>1</sup> Every education student completes at least one field placement within EVSC, providing them with firsthand experience in classrooms, curriculum and community needs. The quality of those teachers is also evident. For example, in the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation's (Columbus, Indiana) 2024-25 teacher performance report, seven USI alumni earned the highest average score in Universal Design for Learning (3.83) and the highest overall evaluation score (3.71) among all institutions represented.

"That kind of performance tells us our graduates are not just prepared—they're excelling," said Cahill.

For many, the connection begins before college. USI's Be a Teacher Day, launched in 2023, immediately exceeded expectations, drawing more than 365 high school students from across the Tri-state region—over seven times the anticipated number. The biannual event offers an immersive introduction to the profession through panel discussions, keynote speakers, mock classroom sessions and campus tours.

"It's exciting to see the full-circle effect," Bridges says. "Many of the leaders bringing students to Be a Teacher Day are USI alumni themselves. That kind of enthusiasm tells you something important is happening."

<sup>1</sup> Data provided by the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, reflecting teacher employment records as of 2024.

In just three years, Be a Teacher Day has become a model for similar initiatives across Indiana, helping to address teacher shortages and inspiring the next generation of educators.

## **FACULTY WHO INSPIRE**

USI's education faculty are central to its success. Dr. Rob Carroll '92, Assistant Professor of Education and 2023-24 Screagle Pride Award recipient, is celebrated for his unwavering commitment to student success, saying, "I serve USI students with the same care and commitment I'd give my own children."

Dr. Jill Raisor '03, Professor of Education and USI's 2023 Distinguished Professor, is recognized for her excellence in teaching, scholarship and community engagement.

Dr. Tori Colson, Assistant Dean of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education, was honored in the 2023 Class of Phenomenal Women of USI for her contributions to the community.

"These faculty are shaping not just teachers, but leaders," said Bridges. "When I ask alumni who influenced them, I hear these names again and again."



*USI's Teacher Education programs prepare students to excel in the classroom.*

## **USI ALUMNI IN LEADERSHIP**

Across southern Indiana, an increasing number of USI graduates are rising from the classroom to the highest levels of educational leadership, taking the helm as principals, superintendents and district administrators, where they shape policy, mentor teachers and drive systemic change that impacts entire school communities.





For **Dr. Darla Hoover M'05 D'24**, now Superintendent of the EVSC, that path began in USI's Transition to Teach Program and progressed from Chemistry Teacher to district

leader. Her doctoral dissertation addressed a real-world challenge facing EVSC, underscoring the University's emphasis on applied research with immediate community impact. One of her proudest achievements has been expanding Advanced Placement access by removing traditional barriers and shifting to interest-based enrollment. "You don't have to leave Evansville to get a high-quality program to become an educational leader," noted Hoover. "That's huge for building trust and stability in our schools." The results of her AP initiative speak for themselves: overall participation is up 170% and underrepresented student enrollment is up 282%.



In the North Gibson School Corporation, Superintendent **Dr. Eric Goggins '04** has transformed early childhood education through a \$2 million expansion funded by Toyota Indiana and the Toyota USA

Foundation. His leadership has also brought accessible playgrounds and dedicated social workers to every school building. "My time at USI broadened my understanding of education beyond

my small-town roots," Goggins said. "It prepared me not just to teach, but to lead for systemic impact."

For **Tracy Lorey '92**, Superintendent of Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools, leadership means aligning educational opportunities with the needs of the community. Under her guidance, the district has expanded career and technical education pathways and launched the Little Wildcats early childhood program to support working families.

"Homegrown leadership is essential," Lorey said. "Leaders rooted in the community understand its values and challenges. They're more likely to stay and invest in long-term outcomes."



At East Gibson School Corporation, Superintendent **Michael Galvin '93** has spent more than three decades in education, focusing on making schools community hubs, launching preschool programs and implementing the Jobs for America's Graduates initiative. He points to his USI education as a formative influence. "USI instilled in me a deep sense of professionalism and the belief that teaching is a craft to be honed," Galvin said. "That mindset has guided my leadership



*"When our graduates thrive,*



style—relational, values-driven and focused on student growth."

## PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION

USI's Teacher Education Program extends from undergraduate majors in early childhood, elementary and special education to master's programs, superintendent licensure and the EdD doctoral degree. The latter, delivered synchronously online, draws students from across the country while maintaining the real-time engagement that defines USI's approach.

Leadership development is woven into graduate programs, requiring students to identify and research a "problem of practice" from their work setting. Plans are underway for a first-year teacher support group to help new educators navigate challenges and remain in the profession.

"We want to provide ongoing encouragement and connection," Cahill said. "The statistics aren't great—many teachers leave within three years. We're here to change that."

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Bridges sees USI's role as part of a continuum from pre-K through doctoral education. "Even at the

state level, there's a shift toward seeing education as one vertical," he said. "We need to embrace that. Developing relationships across the educational spectrum is part of our DNA."

He believes the next frontier is aligning programs even more closely with community and business needs. "It's about good stewardship," he said. "If we prepare graduates who meet those needs, we're investing in regional growth."

## HOMEGROWN LEADERSHIP, LASTING CHANGE

From the high school student inspired by Be a Teacher Day to the superintendent implementing district-wide reform, USI's impact on education in southern Indiana is undeniable. Its graduates are not only meeting the challenges of today's classrooms—they're shaping the systems that will serve students for decades to come.

"Education has shaped my life," Bridges said. "I was a first-generation college student. Now, all three of my children have degrees. That's the kind of generational impact we can have. And that's why we do this work, because when our graduates thrive, our communities thrive." ▼

*our communities thrive."*  
*—President Steve Bridges*





# The Power of PURPOSE

**Aaron Pryor '10 M'14 D'25 shares how his own experiences and passion led him to a doctorate at USI.**

*By Trista Lutgring*

**WHILE WORKING ON** his dissertation for a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership (EdD) degree earlier in 2025, Aaron Pryor '10 M'14 D'25, Assistant Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), focused on a student population he knew well: first-generation students from low-income backgrounds.

"Among the things that came through in my findings was a heavy focus on the power of finding purpose and creating meaning for oneself as determining factors for students finding success in higher education," Pryor explained.

It was something he could relate to personally. After graduating

high school in 2005, college wasn't part of his plan. But a mentor—a high school math teacher—encouraged him to take a chance.

"He wouldn't take no for an answer," Pryor recalled.

Pryor enrolled at Purdue University, though he admits he felt lost. "I did that thing where first-generation college students kind of choose a profession without really knowing anything about it," he said. Financial pressures soon made continuing there difficult, so he transferred to Owensboro Community College.

At Owensboro, a course similar to USI's UNIV 101 became pivotal. It prompted him to think about what he truly wanted in a career. "During that first year, I went into exploration mode," he said. "That's where I first encountered social work."

Though uncertain what social work really entailed, something about it resonated. "It felt like a calling," he said. "Growing up, my mom's work was always adjacent to social services, so I was familiar with the field."

After earning his associate degree, Pryor transferred to the University of Southern Indiana to pursue a bachelor's in social work, a move that solidified his sense of direction. "I've always been about social change—about helping people and making a difference," he said.

During his senior year, he interned with Aurora, a nonprofit serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Evansville area. "I was lucky timing-wise," he said. "I worked alongside some of the best social workers in the area and learned so much from them."

The experience confirmed he was on the right path. After graduating from USI in 2010, Pryor accepted a full-time position with Aurora. For three years, he worked closely with individuals and families in crisis, but eventually, he began to feel the familiar nudge to keep growing.

"I started thinking about what the next step in my journey was, and that led me back to USI for a master's in social work," he said. "It felt like a natural evolution; the master's level is all about clinical work and therapy."





*Pryor (third from left) poses with his coworkers from Counseling and Psychological Services.*

Pryor completed the program in a single, whirlwind year. "That year was intense," he said with a laugh. "I bought my first house, got married, and was working full time while finishing my degree."

After earning his master's in 2014, he again found himself reflecting on what came next. Social work remained his passion, but he'd always had an interest in education. When a position opened at USI in the TRIO program, he applied—despite not knowing much about it.

"It turned out to be one of the best fits," Pryor said. "I got to work with students who shared similar backgrounds to mine—first-generation, low-income students—and help them work through barriers to success."

For seven years, Pryor served in TRIO, eventually as Director. The work was deeply fulfilling, but once again, the question of 'what's next?' arose. Around that time, USI had launched its new Doctor of Education program, offering a concentration in educational leadership.

"It felt like the next right step," he said. "USI just can't shake me," he added, smiling. "My doctorate will be my third degree from USI."

His dissertation gave him the opportunity to explore the deeper question that had threaded through his own journey: what drives students to persist in higher education? For Pryor, the answer centered on purpose. "Finding meaning and understanding your 'why' can change everything," he said.

Before completing his doctorate, Pryor took time to reflect on how far he'd come. "To think I once doubted I'd even go to college, it's humbling," he said. "Now, as a therapist in CAPS, I get to help students through the same struggles I faced. I see them in the early stages of that same journey, and it allows me to connect with them in a very real way."

That perspective shapes how he approaches his work every day. "It helps me truly believe in the words we say to students about realizing their potential," he said. "I know it's possible because I've lived it."

Pryor's story circles back to the central theme of his research—the transformative power of purpose. Despite financial barriers, uncertainty, and the winding path his education took, purpose gave his journey shape and direction.

"Understanding how powerful purpose can be and being in a position where I can help students find it for themselves has been deeply affirming," he said.

Through every chapter—from uncertain beginnings to earning his doctorate—Pryor has embodied the lesson at the heart of his own scholarship: that meaning and purpose are not only the keys to success in higher education, but also the foundation for building a life of service and growth. ▼



# Health Professions Center Renovation

**A \$49 MILLION RENOVATION** of the USI Health Professions Center, which houses the University's Kinney College of Nursing and Health Professions, is underway. The project adds more than 48,000 square feet of space for classrooms, updated labs and state-of-the-art equipment to support healthcare programs, while also transforming the building's exterior and creating a striking new front door for campus.

Inside, new labs, meeting spaces and updated areas for students and faculty will support continued growth of programs.

Funding comes from the Indiana General Assembly's capital appropriation for USI, approved during the 2023 legislative session. This marks the fourth and final phase of a multistage project in the Health Professions Center, which began in 2017. ▼











"The Kinney College is proud to play a vital role in **BUILDING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE FOR OUR COMMUNITY** and state, with licensure and certification pass rates that consistently exceed the national average. As we expand and renovate, our students will have access to cutting-edge labs and classrooms, ensuring they receive the **BEST POSSIBLE TRAINING** to meet the evolving demands of the healthcare industry."

—Dr. Julie McCullough  
Dean of the Kinney College of Nursing  
and Health Professions

**A Bold New Vision for Health Professions:** The redesigned Health Professions Center will feature a striking new entrance, a 250-seat auditorium and expanded first-floor student spaces. New state-of-the-art labs for Nursing, Respiratory Therapy and Occupational Therapy Assistant programs, along with refreshed offices and study areas, will enhance learning and collaboration.







# FROM VR TO ER

**USI'S NURSING PROGRAM** is advancing healthcare education by integrating cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) simulations into its curriculum. This immersive technology places students into realistic clinical environments where they can safely practice medication administration.

Students engage with VR in the new Clinical Simulation Center, located on the lower level of the Health Professions Center.

Through the simulations, students gain hands-on experience calculating dosages and preparing medications, verifying patient identity and following safety protocols. The result is a dynamic learning experience that builds confidence, sharpens clinical judgment and significantly reduces the risk of medication errors in real-world settings.

This innovative approach not only enhances student learning but also demonstrates USI's commitment to excellence, patient safety and preparing future nurses to thrive in a fast-evolving healthcare landscape.

Learn more about USI's VR nursing simulations at [USI.edu/vr-to-er](https://usi.edu/vr-to-er).

— Mary Scheller



# Rooted in Service, Growing Through Partnership

## The Evolving Mission of Outreach and Engagement at USI

*By Trish Shea, Jennifer Hertel '91 & Dawn Stoneking*

**SINCE ITS INCEPTION** in 1974, USI's Outreach and Engagement has connected people, purpose and possibility. What began with six noncredit classes and 202 enrollments has grown into a robust engine for community-based learning, regional partnerships and lifelong education.

Today, Outreach and Engagement supports more than 15,000 learners annually through workforce development, continuing and professional education, cultural enrichment, dual-credit programs, veterans programs, applied research and service learning. Grounded in USI's institutional values, the unit is guided by a clear purpose: "Outreach and Engagement will remain true to its mission and aligned with USI's mission by fostering partnerships, programs and initiatives with organizations and communities; facilitating the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources that enrich scholarship and culture; enhancing education and the workforce; and addressing societal issues for the public good," said Dawn Stoneking, Executive Director of Outreach and Engagement.

Outreach and Engagement complements the University's traditional role by providing and facilitating quality educational, research and technical services for people, groups and organizations in Indiana and the Tri-state. These activities support and promote individual well-being, social and cultural enrichment, economic opportunity and regional development.





## A LEGACY OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Outreach and Engagement has undergone several evolutions—once known as Continuing Education, later as Extended Services—but its foundational purpose has remained clear: expand access to meaningful learning experiences.

"Change was constant, but that's only part of the story," said Linda Cleek '82 M'00, who served 43 years in myriad capacities for Outreach and Engagement. "More important was—and is—an enduring devotion to lifelong learning in all its many forms."

In its earliest years, the unit, founded by M. Edward Jones, was a modest operation with a few staff members and a file drawer of student information. The first six courses, launched in spring 1975, quickly filled to capacity. "Every month or so, we'd get one or more new responsibilities," Cleek recalled. "Growth happened at a brisk pace thanks to the visionary leadership of Dr. Jones."

The department supported noncredit education, conference center coordination, and eventually, University-wide programs such as University Division and the Children's Learning Center, both of which were later integrated into other academic areas.

"We used to say, 'see a need, fill it,'" Cleek recalled. "That's how we worked—and still do."

## BUILDING BRIDGES, EXPANDING REACH

By the late 1970s, Outreach and Engagement began strengthening connections with the business sector, government agencies and social service providers. These relationships helped shape a unit that valued responsiveness, creativity and collaboration.

"The interdisciplinary team—and the faculty we worked with—was one of our greatest assets," Cleek said. "Even when people were overloaded, they brought so much energy and enthusiasm."

**These programs reflect  
a long-held value: meet  
people where they are  
and bring USI to them.**

*—Dawn Stoneking*

The University's autonomy in 1985 marked a turning point. With that momentum, the department began offering credit courses at Castle High School and other regional locations. Outreach and Engagement was no longer asking for a seat at the table; it was helping set the agenda for how the University served the region.

## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS, LASTING RESULTS

Stoneking acknowledges how programming has grown some of USI's most impactful initiatives from those early experiments. "An exemplary program benefiting regional workers, industry, communities and the environment is the Basic Orientation Plus® safety training program," noted Stoneking. "Now in its twenty-second year, the program continues to equip thousands of contractors with certifications in regionally and nationally recognized industry safety standards."

More recent success stories include Engaged Learning Day, an immersive, place-based learning experience for first-year students in the history and culture of New Harmony, Indiana, which was developed in partnership with the Provost's Office, the town and business associates of New Harmony, and USI's

Historic New Harmony and New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art. USI students have a unique opportunity to explore and discover valuable resources available to them and learn how to incorporate these assets into their academic journey.

## ADAPTING TO TODAY'S CHALLENGES

As the needs of learners, employers and communities have evolved, so has Outreach and Engagement.

The unit is deeply involved in addressing workforce needs through Lifelong Learning and Corporate Partnerships and Customized Training, which offers programs and training in project management, leadership development, digital fluency, adaptability and more. The Center for Applied Research and the Service Learning Program address actual business, nonprofit and community needs by engaging students in the application of classroom knowledge to real-world situations.

Technology training has also expanded from beginner Excel classes to advanced IT certifications, ensuring adult learners remain competitive in a rapidly changing workforce.

Mental wellness and community care are increasingly central to the unit's offerings. Lifelong Learning provides public programs in yoga and Tai Chi, while the Veteran, Military and Family Resource Center hosts an annual mental health summit for healthcare professionals and first responders.

## SERVING UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

From overseeing a Japanese school to preserving a historic utopian town, USI's Outreach and Engagement embraces opportunities to serve distinct populations. The Southern Indiana Japanese School, established in 1997, provides Saturday instruction for children of Japanese-speaking families living in the region. Meanwhile, Historic New Harmony, under University stewardship since 1985, preserves 23 historic sites and offers robust educational and cultural programming.

Historic New Harmony



Historic Southern Indiana



Center for Applied Research







A recent \$2.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. will expand interpretive offerings and deepen community engagement. "These programs reflect a long-held value: meet people where they are and bring USI to them," said Stoneking.

## A CULTURE OF CURIOSITY AND CARE

Much of the unit's strength lies in its people and the culture they've created together. Staff are encouraged to pursue continuing and professional education, microcredentials and degrees. Collaboration is both an expectation and a joy. That mindset has helped Outreach and Engagement stay flexible, innovative and community-focused.

## LOOKING FORWARD

As USI continues to evolve, Outreach and Engagement will remain a vital bridge, connecting the classroom and community, the present and the future.

The unit is continually launching new professional development offerings, and deepening its

relationships with employers, nonprofits and K-12 partners to ensure every program and initiative delivers measurable value.

"Our team listens deeply, adapts quickly and builds lasting relationships," said Stoneking. "That's what keeps us relevant and trusted."

For those who helped build the foundation, the future looks bright.

"It's been an incredible journey," Cleek reflected. "We truly lived 'Education for the People, By the People.' I hope Outreach and Engagement continues to serve with curiosity, optimism and heart." ▼





# 8,410 Moments of Discovery

## A Year of Campus Visits

By Trish Shea

**FOLLOW ME** as we travel through campus together! From tours to open houses, we've guided more than 8,400 visitors this year. Every stop shows why USI is the place to spread your wings.

### Health Focus

Nursing is the #1 program of interest among visitors. Visitors also explored sonography, dental hygiene and radiologic sciences.

### Fall Surge

October and November bring the largest crowds to campus.

### High School Visits

4,300 high schoolers explored USI, many with family in tow.

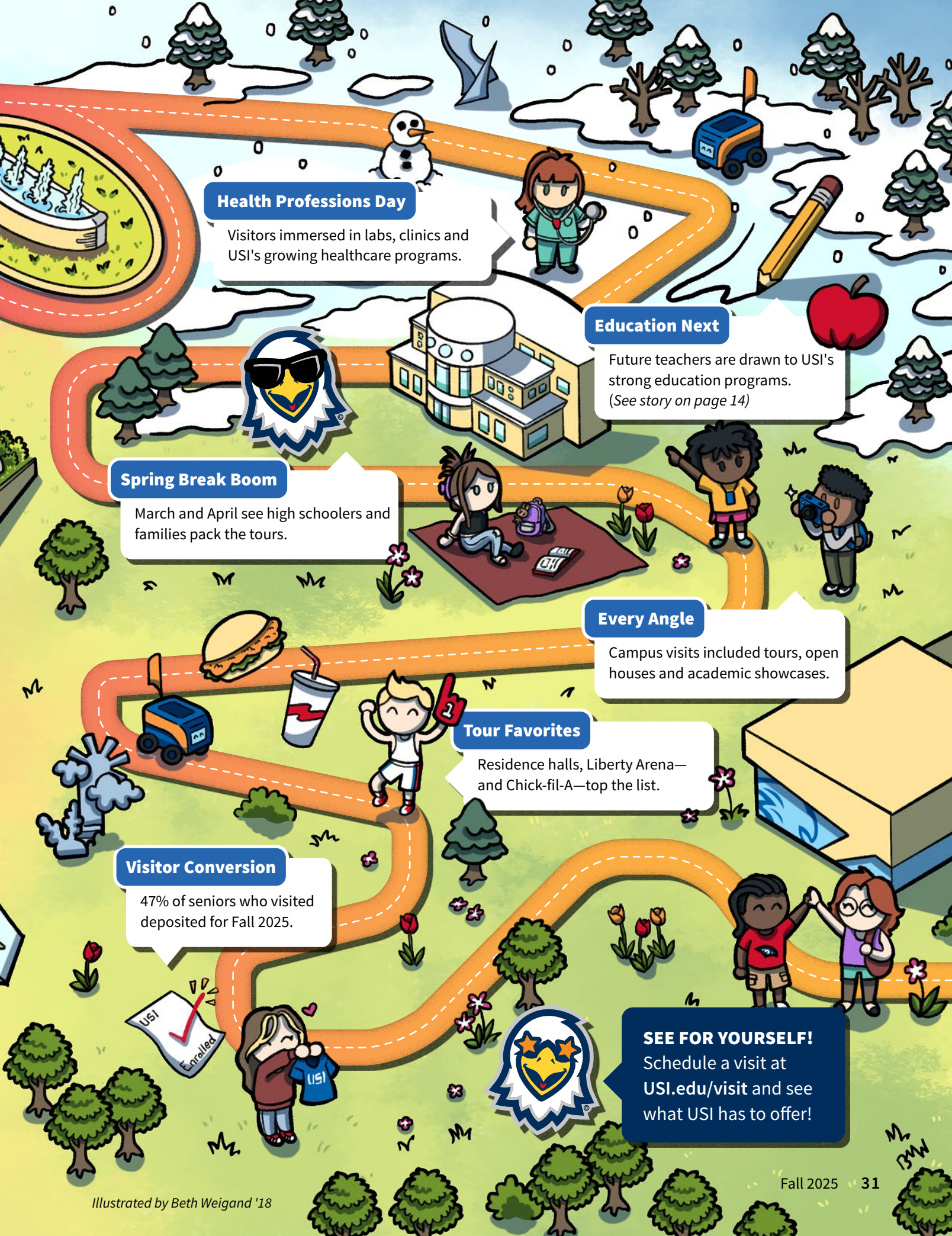
### Transfer Momentum

250 transfer students visited campus, bringing 190 guests.

### 28 States Strong

Visitors came from across the country—Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois led the way. Over 2,500 visitors arrived from southwest Indiana alone.





### Health Professions Day

Visitors immersed in labs, clinics and USI's growing healthcare programs.

### Education Next

Future teachers are drawn to USI's strong education programs.  
(See story on page 14)

### Spring Break Boom

March and April see high schoolers and families pack the tours.

### Every Angle

Campus visits included tours, open houses and academic showcases.

### Tour Favorites

Residence halls, Liberty Arena—and Chick-fil-A—top the list.

### Visitor Conversion

47% of seniors who visited deposited for Fall 2025.

### SEE FOR YOURSELF!

Schedule a visit at  
[USI.edu/visit](https://USI.edu/visit) and see  
what USI has to offer!



# THE BIG PICTURE







# Campus is Buzzing—Literally

**WE'RE PROUD TO** be an official Bee Campus USA affiliate, joining a national movement to raise awareness about the vital role pollinators play in our environment! This designation recognizes our commitment to fostering a more sustainable and pollinator-friendly campus.

At the heart of the initiative is USI's dedicated pollinator garden, designed to support a diverse range of native species. Located near the Science and Education Centers, it serves as a living example of how to create healthy habitats where bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects can thrive—feeding, reproducing and surviving through the seasons. Invasive plant species have been removed, and natural materials such as leaves and stems, which provide essential winter shelter and nesting sites, are intentionally preserved.

On the east side of campus, active beehives are maintained by the USI Beekeeping Society, a group of students, faculty, staff and community members passionate about pollinator education, conservation and sustainable beekeeping practices. The Society also supports outreach efforts and promotes responsible pesticide use across campus.

As a Bee Campus USA affiliate, we're committed to ongoing education, expanding pollinator habitats and leading by example in conservation efforts. There's still more work to be done, but momentum is building, and we're excited to keep the buzz alive.

*Pictured: Beekeeper and Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs Jason Hardgrave with biology major Emma Goodwin '28.*



## CHARTING



**DR. MELISSA STACER**, Professor of Criminal Justice and Director of the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice (MACJ), is equally at home in the classroom as she is on the trail. A dedicated scholar with a passion for corrections in the criminal justice system—including institutional systems, re-entry and the collateral consequences of incarceration—Stacer's worldview is shaped not just by academic inquiry but also by her adventurous spirit and deep connection to the outdoors.

An expert in her field, Stacer teaches a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses, from Criminological Theory and Ethics to Community Corrections and the Death Penalty. Her research spans diverse topics such as prison culture, justice-involved veterans and criminal justice education. She also currently serves as President of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences. Yet, outside of academic life, she has found another powerful way to engage with the world: through hiking.

What began as a shared interest with her husband in 2016 has grown into a defining part of her lifestyle. Stacer has logged more than 3,000 miles of walking and hiking since 2020, more than 250 miles this year alone. Her domestic treks are rooted in the Midwest, where she frequents the trails of southern Indiana and Illinois. She especially enjoys Ferne Clyffe State Park and Lincoln State Park and uses the USI-Burdette Trail for weekday walks. "The USI trails are amazing," she said. "I often see deer, hear birdsong and even spot the occasional owl. It's also a wonderful way to feel part of a community."





# A COURSE OF DISCOVERY AND LEARNING

By Trish Shea

While weekend hikes close to home are a staple, Stacer also carves out time each year for a more ambitious international journey. In 2022, she and her friend, Noel, completed the final 100 kilometers of Spain's famous Camino de Santiago. A year later, they hiked 35 kilometers of Italy's Via Francigena, from San Miniato to Siena. Most recently, she and her husband, David, walked the 84-mile Hadrian's Wall Path across England over nine days. "These trips are physically demanding but incredibly rewarding," she said. "There's something powerful about reaching each destination with your own two feet, immersed in the geography, history and culture of a place."

Stacer sees these hiking experiences as more than just physical challenges; they're opportunities for reflection, perspective and learning. "Hiking has shown me both how large and how small the world really is," she explained. "People everywhere have so much in common. I try to bring that understanding into the classroom."

Growing up in a small Michigan town of 800 people, Stacer understands the sense of limitation some

students may feel about exploring the broader world. That's why she shares her own story to show that it's possible. "Whether students are interested in hiking or not doesn't matter," she said. "What matters is realizing you can feel connected to something much larger than yourself. My motto is: 'Don't wait. Plan the trip. Start working toward your bucket list now.'"

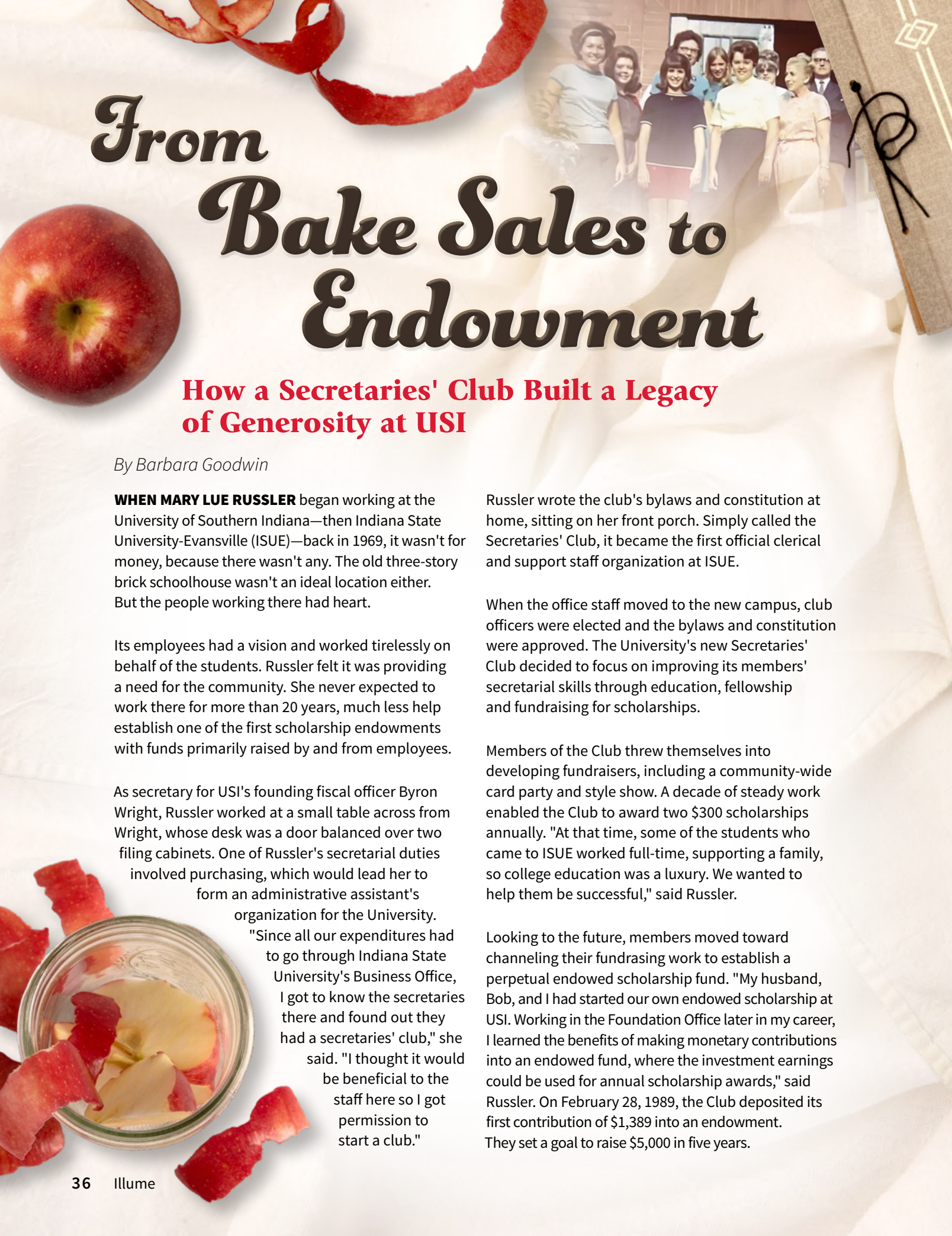
While hiking doesn't directly connect to the field of criminal justice, Stacer believes it enhances her role as an educator. She often draws from her hiking adventures, book club discussions (she's in three) and her role in launching the True Crime Book Club at USI to illustrate how learning happens everywhere—not just in classrooms. "These experiences help students see that lifelong learning is not just a concept. It's a way of life," she said.

Ultimately, Stacer's worldview is shaped by her belief in movement—through physical space, intellectual inquiry and personal growth. Whether guiding students through the complexities of the justice system or trekking across Europe one step at a time, she leads by example. Keep going. Stay curious. Never stop exploring. ▼

"HIKING HAS SHOWN ME BOTH  
HOW LARGE AND HOW SMALL THE  
WORLD REALLY IS. PEOPLE  
EVERYWHERE HAVE SO  
MUCH IN COMMON."







# From Bake Sales to Endowment

## How a Secretaries' Club Built a Legacy of Generosity at USI

By Barbara Goodwin

**WHEN MARY LUE RUSSLER** began working at the University of Southern Indiana—then Indiana State University-Evansville (ISUE)—back in 1969, it wasn't for money, because there wasn't any. The old three-story brick schoolhouse wasn't an ideal location either. But the people working there had heart.

Its employees had a vision and worked tirelessly on behalf of the students. Russler felt it was providing a need for the community. She never expected to work there for more than 20 years, much less help establish one of the first scholarship endowments with funds primarily raised by and from employees.

As secretary for USI's founding fiscal officer Byron Wright, Russler worked at a small table across from Wright, whose desk was a door balanced over two filing cabinets. One of Russler's secretarial duties involved purchasing, which would lead her to form an administrative assistant's organization for the University.

"Since all our expenditures had to go through Indiana State University's Business Office, I got to know the secretaries there and found out they had a secretaries' club," she said. "I thought it would be beneficial to the staff here so I got permission to start a club."

Russler wrote the club's bylaws and constitution at home, sitting on her front porch. Simply called the Secretaries' Club, it became the first official clerical and support staff organization at ISUE.

When the office staff moved to the new campus, club officers were elected and the bylaws and constitution were approved. The University's new Secretaries' Club decided to focus on improving its members' secretarial skills through education, fellowship and fundraising for scholarships.

Members of the Club threw themselves into developing fundraisers, including a community-wide card party and style show. A decade of steady work enabled the Club to award two \$300 scholarships annually. "At that time, some of the students who came to ISUE worked full-time, supporting a family, so college education was a luxury. We wanted to help them be successful," said Russler.

Looking to the future, members moved toward channeling their fundrasing work to establish a perpetual endowed scholarship fund. "My husband, Bob, and I had started our own endowed scholarship at USI. Working in the Foundation Office later in my career, I learned the benefits of making monetary contributions into an endowed fund, where the investment earnings could be used for annual scholarship awards," said Russler. On February 28, 1989, the Club deposited its first contribution of \$1,389 into an endowment. They set a goal to raise \$5,000 in five years.



The Club doubled its fundraising over the next two decades, gaining serious entrepreneurial skills, most notably with their iconic annual apple butter sales. This three-day, all-hands-on-deck event was held at the Outdoor Education Center. Volunteers cored, peeled and cut up 30 bushels of apples. Taking shifts at copper pots over bonfires, they stirred the apples and spices with long wooden paddles. The jars of freshly made apple butter were sealed and sold to waiting customers at the University's Fall Open Houses.



It was a successful small-batch experiment that lasted several years. A wildly popular, labor-heavy event, the apple butter making was just one of many fundraisers and bake sales that brought the Club closer to its goal of creating a lasting endowment.

The closing out of the 20th century ushered in many changes and challenges for the Club. Most of the original members retired but in their three decades of existence, left a legacy to support students in their educational journey.

The next generation of Club members integrated technology into their fundraising. A silent auction was established in the 1990s and would eventually be a virtual auction that is still held yearly. Club members cast a wide net in gathering gifts. In addition to locally donated products, they also offer opera, ballet and theme park tickets. "Last year, we raised \$3,400 in sales from the online auction and working concessions at a USI Men's Basketball game," said Julie Minnette, current President of the USI Administrative Assistants and Associates Club, formerly the USI Secretaries' Club.

Through decades of community spirit, the organization has proven that small efforts—when fueled by passion—can lead to extraordinary outcomes. Beginning with humble bake sales, the Administrative Assistants and Associates raised more than \$38,000, showcasing the impact gifts of employees and others. In the 36 years the Club has been in existence, it has opened doors for many student scholarship awards for generations to come. ▼





Rendering of new Wright  
Administration Building.

We have a history  
*of making  
our own  
history.*



Rice during construction of USI's first building.

## Our continued campus growth is no accident.

When Founding President David L. Rice laid out the first campus master plan in 1971, it looked very much like what you see today on our modern and vibrant campus. This fall, we broke ground on the renovation and expansion of our oldest campus structure, the Wright Administration Building. The project is expected to be completed in 2027.

## We're Growing with Purpose!





# AWESOME LUMNI

## Alumnus Creates Endowment for Imaging Sciences Program

USI's Radiologic and Imaging Sciences has exciting news! Alumnus **DR. ANTHONY GOODWIN '89** and his wife, Lisa (Patberg), have made a gift to the USI Foundation to establish the Dr. and Mrs. Anthony D. Goodwin Endowment. This fund will provide unrestricted support to Radiologic and Imaging Sciences at USI.



Goodwin graduated from USI's Radiologic Technology program in 1989, beginning his studies in 1985 as part of the first class when ISUE transitioned to USI. He went on to

earn a master's in radiologic science and a doctorate in allied health science from Florida Atlantic University. His dissertation on small-lung nodule detection became the foundation for Ascension St. Vincent's lung nodule screening program.

He also holds certifications from Cornell University and completed Harvard Medical School's Safety, Quality, Informatics, and Leadership program in 2023. Over his career, Goodwin has held roles as CT Supervisor, Vice President of Operations, PACS Administrator and, most recently, Technology Relationship Manager. Passionate about education, he continues to inspire the next generation of imaging science leaders.

"USI created the foundation for a very successful career," Goodwin said. "The Radiologic Technology program prepared me for amazing opportunities. Giving back so others may benefit from the same education that inspired me was our motivation to create this endowment."

Through service on the Alumni Council and volunteer work in classrooms and clinical settings, Goodwin has seen firsthand the program's impact on the community.

If you are interested in making a gift to the USI Foundation for Radiologic and Imaging Sciences or other programs at USI, contact the USI Foundation at [giving@usi.edu](mailto:giving@usi.edu) or 812-464-1918.





## Startup Growth Through Campus-Wide Collaboration

**JOSHUA MARKSBERRY '25**, a finance major at USI, discovered that asking questions was one of the most valuable tools in his education at the University of Southern Indiana. While managing college life, he also launched his own nanotechnology company, Catena. To grow the business, he regularly sought help from USI faculty and students, support that consistently came with a "Yes, how can we help?"

Founded in 2022 with what Marksberry jokes was "a box of scraps," Catena develops affordable, practical nanotechnology products. The company has released Catena-Clean (a cleaning solution) and Catena-Grow (a fertilizer), both available on Amazon, and is developing Catena-Crete, a concrete additive, and Catena-Zap, a conductive ink.

"My goal was to make nanotechnology affordable and useful for everyday households,"

he said. "Most nanotech products are prohibitively expensive. We wanted to change that."



Collaboration across campus helped fuel Catena's growth. Marksberry worked with engineering faculty Dr. Kerry Hall and Dr. Adam Tennant on testing Catena-Crete, while Steven Stump '99 M'09, Director of USI's Center for Applied Research, advised on marketing and grants. "One of the real advantages he had was direct access to labs, faculty and students willing to support him," Stump said.



Marksberry credits his finance education with preparing him to manage Catena's operations. "Finance is the language of business,"

he explained. "It taught me to analyze costs, overhead and financial reporting so we could bring products to market."

Looking ahead, Marksberry plans to expand Catena's offerings and continue collaborating with USI faculty. "I think he's on the cusp of something huge," Stump said. "It's a great testament to the innovation happening here."



## From Stage to Strategy

After decades in East Coast theater, **KEVIN HILL M'23** had one regret: never earning a college degree. When the pandemic halted productions, he seized the chance to chart a new path, ultimately leading him to the University of Southern Indiana.

"I had lost touch with my identity, my voice, my confidence and my ability to communicate effectively," Hill said. "I felt like a pot on the verge of boiling over. I needed to take action."



Hill first completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, then searched for an accelerated online MBA. USI's flexible program and a family connection in Evansville sealed the deal.

From a young age, acting, singing and dancing came naturally, and the theater became home. Over his career, he has collaborated with stars including Carol Channing, Josh

Groban, Kathleen Turner and Jonathan Groff. His work evolved into directing and choreography, and today he serves as Producing Artistic Director at North Shore Music Theatre in Boston and Theatre By The Sea in Rhode Island. This spring, he earned his second Elliot Norton Award nomination for "Outstanding Director, Large" for *TITANIC: The Musical*.



Hill (far left) poses with actors and staff from the production, *TITANIC: The Musical*.

Earning his MBA gave Hill the tools to expand his career. With his partner, Matthew, he launched Chappell Hill Productions and is co-producing *Wanted—The Legend of the Sisters Clarke*, set to debut on Broadway in 2026.

## From USI to the Masters

**DAVE MCATEE '88** turned his passion for golf into a global career, officiating at the world's biggest tournaments while staying rooted in his Evansville community.



McAtee poses with the 2020 Ryder Cup, officially played in 2021.

in business administration and economics, getting his start in the golf industry through his experience at USI.

The PGA of America, one of the world's largest sports organizations, is powered by a network of more than 30,000 dedicated golf professionals—including McAtee, who earned a degree

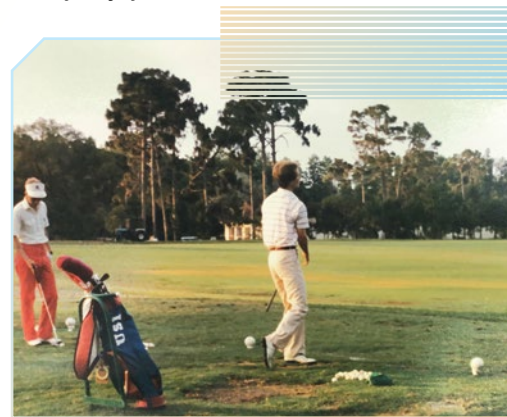
While playing for the USI Men's Golf team, he was inspired by his coach, Jim Brown, to pursue a career in the sport. "JB gave me the confidence and direction I needed," McAtee said. "He showed me it was possible to turn this passion into a profession."

For the past 25 years, McAtee has served on the PGA of America's national Rules Committee, spending the last two years as its chair. During that time, he has officiated all four men's major championships, three Ryder Cups and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In April, he celebrated a significant milestone: officiating his 10th Masters Tournament.

When not officiating, he's the Head Professional at Helfrich Hills Golf Course in Evansville, a role he's held since 2001.

Despite the global nature of his work, McAtee remains committed to his community. "One of the best parts of working with the PGA is that I can bring what I've learned back to Helfrich and use it to strengthen our local programs."

Reflecting on his time at USI, he says the University laid the foundation for his success. "USI gave me the confidence to take a chance on doing something I truly enjoy."



As a student, McAtee played on the USI Men's Golf team.



## STAY IN TOUCH

Update your information and send photos to [alumni@usi.edu](mailto:alumni@usi.edu) or by using the QR code.



*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.*

*Class Notes reflect submissions and updates received by September 1, 2025.*

## 1980s

**Jeff Embrey '86**, social science, was recently named Boys' Basketball Coach at North Posey High School in Poseyville, Indiana.

**David Higgins '87**, psychology, is Associate Professor and Associate Director of Clinical Experience at University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Kentucky.

**Mike Carroll '88**, accounting, is a recipient of the Circle of Corydon Award for being a role model, leader and outstanding member of the community in Henderson, Kentucky.

**James Goergen '89**, economics, finance, recently became a new member of the Board of Directors for Bassett Furniture in Bassett, Virginia.

## 1990s

**Jack Spencer '91**, political science, is an Inspector Specialist for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice in Tallahassee, Florida.

**Patrisha (Kempa) Kennedy '94 M'05**, communications, liberal studies, is a Public Relations Consultant at KT Kennedy Consulting in Traer, Iowa.

**Stephanie (Wuchner) Buchanan '97**, business administration, German studies, is Senior Carrier Sales Manager at Bluebird Fiber, which is based in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Shannon (Beard) Thurby '97**, business administration, is the proud owner of As Is Marketing in Sebree, Kentucky.

**Jason Engelbrecht '98**, physical education, was named the new Athletic Director at Heritage Hills High School in Lincoln City, Indiana.

**Cathleen (Goodwin) Tamez '98**, communications, retired from the Evansville Fire Department in July 2024.

**Christianna (Scott) Smith '99**, psychology, is Owner of and Certified Senior Advisor at Oasis Senior Advisors in Dyer, Indiana.

## 2000s

**Melissa (Woebkenberg) Dalrymple '00**, nursing, is Cardiology Coordinator for the Cardiac Service Line at Ascension St. Vincent in Evansville.

**Pollyanne Kimmel '00**, elementary education, was named the new Principal of Caldwell County Middle School in Princeton, Kentucky.

**Jamie (Land) Ball '01**, accounting, is HR Manager at Toyota in Princeton, Indiana.

**Jean (Cunningham) Blanton '01**, political science, public relations and advertising, is Deputy General Counsel (Americas) at Magnera Corporation.

**Alfred Cooper '03**, political science, is Office Manager at Gibson Water Authority in Haubstadt, Indiana.

**Ryan Fancannon '03 M'06**, marketing, business administration, is Managing Partner at S.W.A.N. Virtual Family Office in Evansville. He was featured in the 4th edition of the *Top 50 Fearless Leaders* publication by the International Association of Top Professionals.

**Craig McGowan '03**, economics, is Business Development Manager at Commonwealth Engineers in Evansville and Huntingburg, Indiana.

**Sarah (Cearlock) Wilguess '03**, occupational therapy, is the Director of Occupational Therapy/Related Services at Morgan Education in Centerville, Ohio.

**Jennifer Greathouse-Nance '04 M'12**, art, communications, is Digital Marketing Manager at the Professional Disc Golf Association in Appling, Georgia.

**Evan Hart '05**, history, was awarded the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching at Missouri Western State University in Saint Joseph, Missouri, where she teaches various history courses.

**Andrew Clevenger '06**, economics, is Client Operations Manager at First Advantage in Fishers, Indiana.

**1 Suzana Rodriguez Griffin '06**, Spanish studies, won the WBF World Title in Professional Boxing in Medellin, Colombia.

**Heath Howington '07**, business education, marketing, is the new Boys' Basketball Coach at Barr-Reeve High School in Montgomery, Indiana.

**David Hurlbut '07**, business administration, is Deputy Director of Vanderburgh Central Dispatch in Evansville.

**Lucas Niekamp '07**, political science, is Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives at the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Andrew Schenk '08**, marketing, is Sales Manager at Ride Tech in Jasper, Indiana.

**Clay Rogers '09**, sociology, psychology, is Director of Academics at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri.

**Cristina Myers M'09 D'13**, nursing education, advanced practice, is a Weight Management Service Provider at SSM Health Medical Group in southern Illinois.

## 2010s

**Floyd Bishop IV '10**, management, is Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Paducah and Louisville Railway in Paducah, Kentucky.

**Wendy (Johnson) Broughton '10 M'13**, health services, health administration, is the Executive Director at American Senior Communities in Indianapolis, Indiana. Wendy was awarded Executive Director of the Year







**Dustin Shaw '12**, business administration, is Vice President of Service at Evapar in Evansville.

**Celeste (Drew) Tabor '12**, accounting and professional services, is Director of Accounting at Tri-State Orthopaedic Surgeons in Newburgh, Indiana.

for American Senior Communities and Skilled Nursing Facility of the Year for the southeast region of American Senior Communities.

**Christina (Hale) Harlow '10**, psychology, is Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer at Berkshire Hathaway Energy in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Katie (St. Clair) Ritter '10**, elementary education, is Principal of Stringtown Elementary School in Evansville.

**Susan Brumley '11 M'21**, radiologic and imaging sciences, business administration, is the Chief Operating Officer – Central Region for Deaconess Health System.

**Lynne (Kilty) Fogt '11**, radiologic and imaging sciences, is a Staff CT Technologist at AAMC-Luminis Health in Annapolis, Maryland.

**Sarah (Titzer) Greer '11**, nursing BSN, is a Registered Nurse at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville.

**Mark McCracken '11**, finance, is a Wealth Advisor at Field & Main Bank in Henderson, Kentucky.

**Jared McIntosh '11**, business administration, is Senior Commercial Relationship Manager at First Financial Bank in Evansville.

**Sara (Nichols) Clark '12 M'14**, sociology, social work, is Director of Clinical Services at New Opportunities for Wellness in Evansville.

**Rhenda Newton '12**, elementary education, is the Owner/CEO of One of a Kind Gifts in Pensacola, Florida.

**Andrew Schenk M'12**, health administration, is the Vice President at Wilson Health Medical Group in Sydney, Ohio.

**Kelsey (Elpers) May '14**, accounting and professional services, is Accounting Manager at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Taylor Merriss '14**, criminal justice studies, sociology, is Special Projects Coordinator at the Evansville Police Department in Evansville.

**Brittany (Brasel) Skeels '14**, accounting and professional services, finance, is Tax Manager at LevitZacks in San Diego, California.

**Christina (Woodrow) Cohee '15 M'20**, nursing BSN, adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner, is a Nurse Practitioner at Franciscan Physician Network Eastside Family Medicine in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

**Payton Krempely '15**, radio and television, is an Account Executive at Gusto in Denver, Colorado.

**Kathrene (Stout) Latham '15**, art, is Special Publications Supervisor at Paxton Media Group in Paducah, Kentucky.

**Shannon Parks '15 M'19**, nursing BSN, Family Nurse Practitioner, is a Heart and Vascular Care Provider at SSM Health Medical Group in Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

**Duncan Taylor '15**, political science, international studies, is an Attorney at Duncan A. Taylor Attorney-At-Law in Morganfield, Kentucky.

**Briony Towler '15 M'22**, finance, business administration, is the Chief Financial Officer at the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Casey Voelker '15**, radio and television, is the Founder and Managing Partner of Captivated Content LLC in Evansville.

**Alexander (Thoe) Acosta '16**, radiologic and imaging sciences, is a CT Technologist at UCLA West Valley Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

**2 Cindy (Mauro) Nunley '16**, geology, is Senior Environmental Manager at the Indiana Department of Transportation in Indianapolis, Indiana.

# USI Family

## Retiring

### COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**David Huebner**, Art Workshop Supervisor • 31.8 years

**Julia Galbus Kiesel**, Professor Emerita of English • 28.5 years

### KINNEY COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

**Marilyn Ostendorf D'11**, Clinical Assistant Professor Emerita of Nursing • 23 years

### POTT COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND EDUCATION

**Joseph DiPietro**, Professor Emeritus of Geology • 34 years

### CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

**Terry McIntosh '96 M'23**, International Programs Services Coordinator • 12 years

### ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

**Madonna Hopf**, Senior Library Assistant • 31.5 years

**Miles Mann**, Associate Director Emeritus, Facility Operations and Planning • 37 years

**Kimberly Rollett**, Help Desk Supervisor, Administrative Technology Systems • 26.5 years

**Laurel Wilson**, Senior Applications Administrator • 18 years



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**Ashlee (King) Cox '17**, criminal justice studies, is a Criminal Intelligence Analyst for the Indiana State Police in Evansville.

**Corey Henderson '17**, criminal justice studies, sociology, is an Intake Coordinator at the Bureau of Disabilities Services in Evansville.

**Jalen Madison '17 M'21**, sport management, is Assistant Track and Field Coach at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Florence Takaendesa '17**, economics, mathematics, is Value Chains and Sectors Coordinator at Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries in Harare, Zimbabwe.

**Christian Barrett '18**, history, is a Young Adult Pastor at Westwood Church in Evansville.

**Kalley Rocca '19**, marketing, is a Client Advisor at Sterling Seacrest Pritchard in Tampa, Florida.

## 2020s

**Evan Allen '20**, finance, is Franchise Development Manager at LINE-X in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Emma Luczkowski '20**, communication studies, public relations and advertising, is Senior Marketing Strategist at the Kelly School of Business – Indiana University Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Kathryn Reuss '20 M'24**, social work, criminal justice, is Supervisor at Bethany Christian Services in Illinois.

**Jennifer Putnam-Scott M'20**, adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner, is a Nurse Practitioner at West Tennessee Medical Group in Jackson, Tennessee.

**Lucy Wagoner '21**, mechanical engineering, is Manufacturing Planner II at Raytheon in Tucson, Arizona.

**Kendall (Hurt) Burkart '22**, accounting and professional services, marketing, is Marketing Manager, Wealth Management at Old National Bank in Evansville.

**Audrey Carter '22**, English, is Youth Librarian at Tippecanoe County Public Library – Klondike Branch in West Lafayette, Indiana.

**Mackenzie Clayton '22**, psychology, is a Support Staff Member at Family Ark in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

**Grace Koltz '22**, theatre arts, is Music and Vocal Director at New Belle Theatre in Cape Coral, Florida.

**Zachary Williams '22 M'23**, computer science, data analytics, competed on the PGA Tour Americas and earned a professional tour card in the summer 2025.

**Lindsey Gallagher '23**, elementary education, is a Student Success Coordinator/Advisor at Vincennes University in Vincennes, Indiana.

**Taylor Stepp M'23**, project management, is the Director of Economic Development and Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College in Rio Grande, Ohio.

**Deniece Biggerstaff '24**, health services, is the Human Resources Director for Greene County Courthouse in Bloomfield, Indiana.

**Peyton Catt '24**, sport management, is Basketball Coach and Athletic Director at Vincennes Rivet High School in Vincennes, Indiana.

**Patrick Hickey '24**, individualized studies, is the Economic Development Director at the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership in Evansville.

**Jeremy Levine '24**, computer science, is a Software Engineer – Platform Engineering Team at Canopy Security in Detroit, Michigan.

**Ryan Roy '24**, manufacturing engineering technology, is a Manufacturing Engineer at Caterpillar Inc. in East Peoria, Illinois.

**Jillian Sorensen '24**, cultural awareness training, public relations and advertising, is a Marketing Assistant at Hafer in Evansville.

**Emily (Green) Thurman '24**, global studies, anthropology, was awarded the Cordell/Powers Prize at the annual Pecos Conference for her presentation, "Cross-Continental Connections: Spondylus Harvest and Use in the Ancestral O'odham Region," in Blanding, Utah.

**Jiwoo Ha '25**, accounting and professional services, is an Audit Associate at Ernst & Young in Denver, Colorado.

**Jered Petrey M'25**, healthcare administration, is the Chief Operations Officer at Abrams Eye Care Associates in Carmel, Indiana.

## Marriages

**Megan (Prickett) Paris '13**, psychology, and Jordan Paris were married September 2024.

**2 Cindy (Mauro) Nunley '16**, geology, and Jerod Nunley were married September 2024.

**3 Sydney (Zimmerman) Sturgeon '19 M'21**, marketing, business administration, and **Conner Sturgeon '20**, social work, were married November 2024.

**4 Mallory Mills '20 M'24**, dental hygiene, health administration, and **Wiktór Iskra '20**, accounting and professional services, were married June 2025.

**Kennedy (Stoll) Duncheon '21**, biology, and **Ethan Duncheon '19**, biology, were married May 2025.

**Kendall (Hurt) Burkart '22**, accounting and professional services, marketing, and Ryan Burkart were married August 2024.

**Melanie (Davis) Kramer '22**, psychology, and Kyle Kramer were married July 2025.

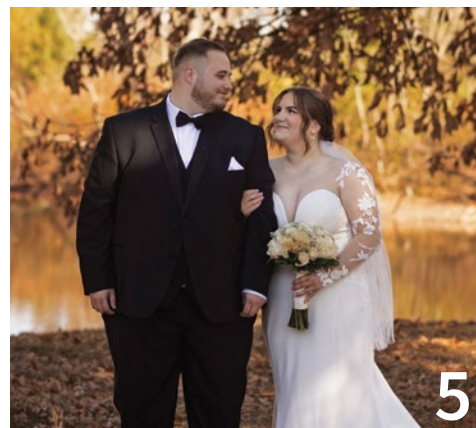
**Samantha (Harris) Niemiec M'22**, healthcare administration, and Eric Niemiec were married January 2025.

**Anna (Pittman) Hobson '23**, criminal justice, and **Noah Hobson '23**, criminal justice, were married September 2024.

**Paige (Bowen) Jones '23**, nursing BSN, and Jackson Jones were married May 2025.

**5 Taylor (Riggleman) Pope '24**, elementary education, special education, and **Bryce Pope '24**, finance, were married November 2024.

**Alyssa (McClain) Wood '25**, public relations advertising, world languages and cultures, and Chevy Wood were married June 2024.







**8 Rachel (Starling) Henderson '18**, nursing BSN, and **Corey Henderson '17**, criminal justice studies, sociology, welcomed Ellie Henderson in April 2025.

**9 Rachel (Girten) Graber '20**, nursing BSN, and **Josh Graber '19**, electrical engineering, welcomed Alaina Graber in November 2024.

**Emily (Miller) Edwards '22**, food and nutrition, and **Reid Edwards '20**, economics, finance, welcomed Ada Edwards in April 2025.

**Calista (Hazelip) Etienne '22**, public relations and advertising, and Zeb Etienne welcomed Peter Etienne in July 2025.

## Births

**6 Ashley (Triplett) Encarnacion '12**, health services, and Gilbert Encarnacion welcomed Eleanor Encarnacion in October 2024.

**7 Megan (Prickett) Paris '13**, psychology, and Jordan Paris welcomed Luka Paris in August 2025.

**Megan (Randall) Dick '16**, nursing, and Craig Dick welcomed Elizabeth Dick in May 2025.

**Sydney (Reed) Lohr '16**, English teaching, welcomed Bowen Lohr in April 2025.

**Elizabeth (Damm) Schmitt '16 M'21**, accounting and professional services, human resources, and **Brendon Schmitt '18**, international studies, Spanish studies, welcomed Oliver Schmitt in May 2025.

**Danielle (Wire) Nkrumah-Dartey '17**, mathematics teaching, and Daniel Nkrumah-Dartey welcomed Kayson Nkrumah-Dartey in July 2025.

## In Memoriam

**Steven 'Steve' James Schenck Sr. '72**, accounting, of Fishers, Indiana, died July 5, 2025. In 1973, Steve started his career at Indiana National Bank. He retired from Regions Bank in 2007 after 34 years in the banking business. When not working, Steve loved dining at a nice restaurant, taking a drive, especially in his beloved Porsche, betting on horses and working out. Additionally, Steve served on USI's Board of Trustees.

**Norma (Sechrest) Tiek '73**, elementary education, of Evansville, died May 21, 2025. She had a passion for teaching and enjoyed researching and teaching Indiana history. Norma taught herself computers, since

they were up and coming during her teaching career. In 1993, she retired from the Mt. Vernon School System after teaching elementary school for more than 20 years. She loved to travel with her husband, Reed, and she especially loved spending time with her family. Norma had a kind heart, a sunny disposition and was loved by many.

**Paul Krack '74**, respiratory therapy, of Evansville, died July 3, 2025. Paul served his country as an Airman in the United States Air Force and later taught exercise physiology at the University of Southern Indiana for 27 years. He was a talented artist who enjoyed painting and volunteered his time at the Peace Zone, teaching art. He also loved to bake and cook, and served his family many meals for the holidays.

## In Memoriam

**Terry Lee (Merritt) Young**, Senior Accounting Assistant, retired, died May 18, 2025.

**Deborah 'Debbie' June (Paddock) Whiteside**, retired, of Evansville, died on July 30, 2025. In 2015, she retired from USI as a Senior Administrative Assistant for University Division. Debbie was a past Treasurer for the Road Knights Car Club, and she loved attending Car Shows with her husband, Ron.

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**Michael 'Mike' Waterman '74**, sociology, of Louisville, Kentucky, died July 19, 2025. He answered his country's call as a U.S. Marine in Vietnam, receiving multiple commendations for bravery and dedication. His next role of service was with the Indiana State Police. He lived with a deep commitment to helping others, which would define his life's work. Among his many contributions, Mike found a deep purpose in mentorship. For more than 18 years, he counseled high-risk youth in the Job Corps program across Kentucky, Massachusetts and Maryland. He later continued this mission as a Counseling Manager and Chaplain with the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice before retirement. Throughout the years, he had a passion for offering steadfast support to youth and families in crisis. Rooted in unwavering faith, Mike served Simpsonville Baptist Church for 27 years in men's ministry, counseling, church security and international missions. He led with conviction, leaving behind a legacy of compassion and purpose.

**Monica Weinzapfel '74**, communications, of Evansville, died August 13, 2025. Monica was a graduate of Mater Dei High School. She then earned her undergraduate

degree from the University of Southern Indiana, where she discovered a love for theatrical costuming. The encouragement of a kind mentor propelled her to Northwestern University, where she earned her Master of Fine Arts. From there, she would go on to teach at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, and to an Assistant Professor position at the University of Virginia. In 1987, Monica came to Radford University, where she found a professional and artistic home, teaching and mentoring generations of students.

**Earl Hostettler '78**, business, of Elberfeld, Indiana, died August 8, 2025. He was a Veteran of U.S. Navy Submarine Service for more than six years. Earl retired from Alcoa with 29 years of service as an Electrical Maintenance Planner. He also participated in an annual deer hunting event in Kentucky with family and friends. He rode motorcycles, piloted small aircraft, hunted duck and deer, fished and camped. He was a member of the NRA, American Legion Post in Elberfeld and Westwood Church.

**Gloria (Tharp) Berger '79**, elementary education, of Newburgh, Indiana, died May 7, 2025. She enjoyed walking in

the park, cryptograms and word puzzles. Gloria was a believer and reader of religious and spiritual books. She was a member of the Teachers' Association.

**Ricky Mosby '80**, social science, of Newburgh, Indiana, died June 18, 2025. A proud United States Army Veteran, he honorably served his country in Korea. Ricky had a love for bingo and watching sports on television. He held the distinction of being the longest resident at Cypress Grove Rehabilitation Center, where he made his home for the last 22 years.

**James S. Watterson '81**, communications, of Henderson, Kentucky, died on August 17, 2025. A proud veteran of the U.S. Navy, James dedicated his life to service and hard work. He retired from International Paper, where he served as a security officer, and later owned and operated Ladies Only Fitness and Tanning alongside his wife, Susan. A gifted musician, James's love for the guitar inspired him to form several bands throughout the years, bringing joy to family, friends and his community. He also found great enjoyment in outdoor activities, embracing life with enthusiasm and creativity.

**Kim D. Swails '82**, marketing, of Evansville, died August 19, 2025.

**Marilyn M. Ellis '90**, chemistry, of Evansville, died March 5, 2025. She worked as a Cashier for McDonald's in Evansville.

**Norma 'Anne' Denner '92**, nursing, of Deland, Florida, died January 11, 2025. She worked as an Instructor in the Biology Department at the University of Southern Indiana for 32 years and as a Registered Nurse at Deaconess Midtown Hospital. She was also known for her love of genealogy and cats.

**Randall 'Randy' McCune '92**, management, of Evansville, died April 14, 2025. He began his work career at Shambaugh & Son Fire Protection while attending USI. Later, he and his father started Fire Tech Designing and Engineering. They owned and operated the company for 22 years before Randy went to work for Tri-State Fire and Protection in 2010. He loved hunting, fishing, tending his property, making his own honey, harvesting maple syrup and traveling with his wife.

**Lisa (Claybrooke) Herendeen '96**, business administration, of Evansville, died June 12, 2025. Lisa was a talented Interior Designer whose creativity and eye for beauty brought warmth and elegance into countless homes. She poured her heart into her work, founding her own store, Serendipity Designs & Decor, a dream she turned into reality through years of hard work and passion. Her ability to transform spaces was matched only by her gift for making others feel at home. Outside of work, Lisa was a devoted member of Christian Fellowship Church and passionately volunteered at Cancer Pathways Midwest.

**Marjorie 'Marge' (Hundley) Todd '96**, English, of Evansville, died June 1, 2025. Marge was a pastor's wife for 27 years. She dedicated her life to Christ at the age of 14 at Qualls Tabernacle in Indianapolis, Indiana. At the same age, she became a Song Evangelist, which led her to playing the piano and accordion and singing nationwide. Marge and her husband pastored many beloved congregations in Indiana and Kentucky. She received her bachelor's degree

# RIDE with PRIDE



## Indiana drivers can take their school spirit on the road!

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For each \$40 plate purchased, \$25 benefits the USI Alumni Scholarship Endowment. Anyone with an Indiana vehicle registration can purchase a USI license plate through the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). In 2024, 1,380 Indiana residents purchased USI collegiate plates, contributing \$34,500 in scholarship gifts. Low-digit plates (numbers 1-100) are available. For more information, contact the Alumni Engagement and Volunteer USI office at [alumni@usi.edu](mailto:alumni@usi.edu) or 812-464-1924.



in English from USI at the age of 60 and became a Substitute Teacher in Evansville after her husband passed away. She worked for H&R Block and led a grief support group (REACH). Marge was a published author, poet, songwriter and speaker.

**Carol (Hofrenning) Anderson '97**, nursing, of Newburgh, Indiana, died January 20, 2025. She began her nursing career at the Visiting Nurse Association and later became a Public Health Nurse at the Vanderburgh County Health Department until her retirement in 2010. She was also a dedicated advocate for healthy lifestyles and access to health information. She helped to create and publish a book of running and walking paths in the Evansville area and partnered closely with Deaconess and TMMI Toyota to establish the Step-Up Club, a running and walking program that inspired youth across the area. She gave her time and skills by establishing a Parish Nurse Program at Grace Lutheran Church, becoming one of the first parish nurses in southwestern Indiana. Carol served on the church council, Mission of Grace Board and led the Parish Nurse Program. She loved her Grace and Peace family, who reciprocated its love by creating a worship service for dementia patients at Walnut Creek Special Care Center.

**William 'Bill' Moore '97 M'01**, computer information systems, business administration, of Newburgh, Indiana, died July 19, 2025. Bill served in the United States Army. He retired from Alcoa after 29 years working in the IT Department. Bill was an Instructor at Ivy Tech Community College and was a past member of the Evansville Philharmonic Chorus. He loved woodworking, bible study and his missionary work in Afghanistan, Russia, Yemen and Tunisia. Bill wrote and published four books and made a CD titled, *Bless the Lord*.

**James Lawson Chapman '98**, business, of Evansville, died June 8, 2025. Jim was part Owner and President of his family's business, Nova Polymers, Inc. He enjoyed scuba diving, fishing and was an avid sports fan. Jim was a member of St. Boniface Catholic Parish.

**Sherry (Martin) Fisher '01 M'02**, social work, of Evansville, died May 28, 2025. She was proud to serve others as a licensed Clinical Social Worker, a licensed Clinical Addictions Counselor and a registered Play Therapist/Supervisor. As founding president of the World Association of Sand Therapy Professionals, she was recognized with both a President's Award for distinguished contributions and a scholarship established in her honor. Sherry had a strong work ethic for caring for patients in her private practice for mental health therapy. She loved God, taking cruises, going to the beach and expressing herself through art.

**Mary Beth Fahrenkrug M'03**, social work, of Evansville, died June 2, 2025. Mary Beth worked as a Social Worker for the United States Army at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, for many years. In her free time, Mary Beth was an accomplished photographer and an excellent artist. Throughout the years, Mary Beth won awards at the Mid-States Art Exhibition for her sculptures and paintings, and her piece, "My Grandmother's Purse," was featured in news articles. Mary Beth was a kind, considerate and genuine woman.

**Valerie (Berger) McKinney M'05**, business administration, of Princeton, New Jersey, died May 19, 2025. In work, personal life and civic engagements, she was generous and curious, offering a dry sense of humor and a clear sense of direction as a leader. Valerie spent her career at Alcoa, Bristol Myers Squibb and Otsuka Pharmaceutical Companies. She was passionate about the Girl Scouts and empowering women.

**Camilla Swain M'08**, liberal studies, of Evansville, died July 6, 2025. Camilla dedicated her life to education and service, teaching and advising students at Ivy Tech Community College for more than 25 years. A woman of deep faith, she founded Hope Impact and was a passionate advocate for adoption, homeschooling and trauma-informed care, adopting three children from Guatemala, Ethiopia and India. Known for her generosity and joy, she loved her family deeply and enriched the lives of countless students and colleagues.

**Kristina 'Tina' (Gogel) Schroering '09**, dental hygiene, of Celestine, Indiana, died May 7, 2025. She found great joy in her faith, family and especially in being a mother. Tina's children were the center of

her world, and she cherished time spent with them, whether visiting the zoo, enjoying beach vacations, spending days at Holiday World, going for walks or playing at the park.

**Sydni Ames '22 M'23**, health services, leadership, of Evansville, died June 17, 2025. With a diploma in hand, she ventured forth, becoming a beloved Clinical Analyst at Deaconess Hospital, where she not only analyzed clinical data but also the funny bone, diagnosing a dire need for levity in the halls of medicine. Her career and customer service were no joke to her; she was as passionate about them as she was about her membership in the Medical Professions Academy.

**Devin Deisher M'23**, healthcare administration, of Owensville, Indiana, died December 4, 2024. His work ethic and devotion to his career brought about his promotion to Director of Radiology at Deaconess Health Systems. In 2023, Devin was a recipient of the "20 under 40" award from the Rotary Club of Evansville, a volunteer coach for kids' sports and a proud father who cherished his family time.

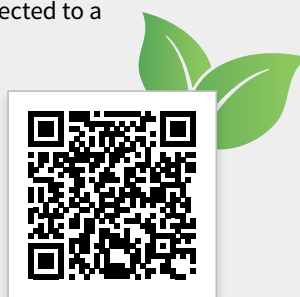
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For more than 40 years, **DR. PAMELA F. HOPSON D'23** (right), Executive Director of Campus and Community Strategy, and **INGRID LINDY '90** (left), Manager of Human Resource Information Systems, have witnessed nearly all of USI's history unfold during their careers. Their journeys began in 1979, a month and 15 days apart. Together, they have worked under all five USI Presidents, watched the campus expand—through construction and student population—and witnessed some of USI's most iconic moments.

**What is something memorable from your first year at USI?**

**Hopson:** The one thing that comes to mind is that we reached our 3,000th student in 1979. We celebrated that milestone shortly after I started.

Also, Ingrid, do you recall when we had student registration in the hallway of Wright Administration? There were representatives from each office. That's what you call one-stop shopping.

**Lindy:** Yes, I remember. Do you remember before they added the second level of Wright Administration, where my office is now, there was a big open room with

double-story ceilings? They would set up tables there for registration, and students would walk around to pick the classes they wanted.

The classes were printed on punch cards, and that was how students built their schedules each semester. If a class was capped at 30 students, which is a normal size, they printed 30 punch cards. Once the 30th card was handed out, that was it, the class was closed. That was the technology at the time and it felt high-tech.

**Hopson:** Yes, I remember that's how they did it at IU-Bloomington as well.

**Lindy:** So, what I remember most of all from my first year in 1979 was that the University shifted from working a 40-hour workweek to a 37.5-hour week. There wasn't money for salary increases, so they cut



our hours instead. But our hourly rates bumped up, and that's how we received salary increases.

I also remember the PAC opened during my first year on campus. That was in April 1980, and they celebrated with an ice cream social around the pool. That was really cool.

**How has the energy on campus and the perception of USI shifted over time?**

**Lindy:** One of the differences I see and feel on campus is the range of cultures represented at USI. We have people from so many places who are proud to show who they are and where they come from.

**Hopson:** And that did not happen overnight.

**Lindy:** It did not. But looking from 1979 to now, you can see a huge difference.

**Hopson:** I think the real shift came when we gained our independence. I remember how we started to have conversations across campus about how to interact with people who didn't look like us, didn't act like us, didn't have the same experiences.

We also asked: Are we providing the services students need to succeed? Our admissions

counselors started traveling across the state of Indiana, and not only did the student body makeup begin to change, but so did our employees and faculty.

**Lindy:** And now USI welcomes students from more than 40 different countries, which I think is amazing.

The impact we're making around the world has also changed how we're seen. We are now known around the world. For example, the Engineers in Action chapter here helped build bridges in South Africa. Those bridges allow villagers to get to work and students to return to school. So yes, we're making a difference in southwest Indiana, but also around the world as well.

I honestly don't think we toot our horn enough. But the truth is, we're doing great things everywhere!

**The conversation is just getting started! Don't miss the full chat with Pamela and Ingrid at [USI.edu/illuminate](https://www.usi.edu/illuminate).**





# SCREAGLE PRIDE

**...WAS FLYING HIGH** at Welcome Week as new students dove into campus life—foam and all! The outdoor foam party brought laughter, energy and a splash of Screagle spirit to kick off the semester, setting the tone for bold beginnings and unforgettable memories. For the third consecutive year, the University is celebrating an increase in first-time freshman enrollment! This fall, 1,367 new Screagles joined the USI family—a 3.5% jump from last year and another step in a steady upward trend.

