

# illumine

—University of Southern Indiana—



ACTIVISM | SPRING 2021



features

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# YOU said | online feedback

## HAPPY DANCE

Sunny days with my favorite feathered friend!  
@anna.ardequeen



Can't believe that I am done with the first year of #gradschool and @FulbrightPrgrm #exchange journey at the @USIedu @USI\_LiberalArts! This year has been full of challenges and great opportunities! This beautiful campus will be extremely missed till fall.

Mariam Gamdlishvili

## SOCIAL MEDIA SNIPPETS

Congratulations to all these students, but also congratulations to all the students who put in the effort to do academically well in tough times like these. Regardless of GPA, if you did your best, that's all you can do. It wasn't an easy year for many students. (Commenting on the posted Dean's List)  
Jada Alexia Hampton



Family and friend support is almost a given, but the support from the professors is a blessing. These professors go above and beyond.

Jason Flickinger

## PARENTAL PRIDE

If there is anything that makes this easier right now, it is recognition of @BallState and @USIedu's commitment to student life and student safety (especially in the fall and in preparation for the return to the spring semester). These parents appreciate the efforts.

Paul Hankins

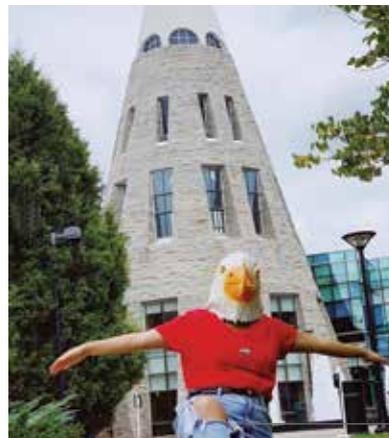
Wonderful professors, beautiful campus and many programs of study. I personally recommend [USI's] Elementary Education program. But if you're into science like I am, you could get a minor in science and learn a lot of very interesting facts that you will add to your wealth of knowledge. Our children are in need of teachers who will make the learning experience fun.

Dani Rider-Basham

I'm so thankful my daughter goes to USI! You are an amazing president! Thank you for all you do!

Laura Burkhart

I really love working on this beautiful campus! Go ahead, show 'em what you got.  
@gregoryblair\_art



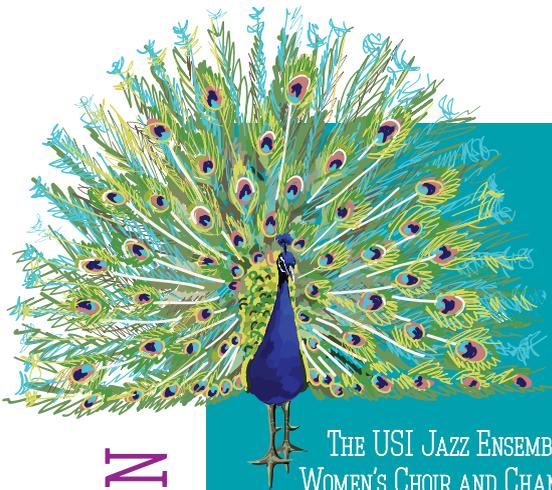
So proud of the students and faculty for making the most of this semester in these trying times. Proud to be a Screagle parent!  
Donielle Derington Underwood

## BIRDS EYE VIEW

Fun fact: this isn't just a mask, but a depiction of me by the time I get my masters! SCREAMING and BALD (like this eagle)!!!

@samerenity

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



ONLINE THINGS THAT MAKE US PREEN

THE USI JAZZ ENSEMBLE, WOMEN'S CHOIR AND CHAMBER CHOIR PERFORMED THEIR FALL CONCERTS ON YOUTUBE FOR EVERYONE'S ENJOYMENT.



USI'S CREATIVE AND PRINT SERVICES RELEASED AN ARRAY OF GIF STICKERS— SOME SEEN HERE—FOR USI

STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FANS TO USE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, INCLUDING A MASK-WEARING ARCHIE (SEARCH "#USI" IN THE GIPHY APP) AND USI-SPECIFIC CLOTHING FOR THE POPULAR VIDEO GAME, ANIMAL CROSSING.

THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS' FACULTY PRESENTED ITS FALL COLLOQUIUM SERIES OF INFORMATIVE TALKS VIRTUALLY. ANYONE COULD JOIN ONLINE AND LEARN ABOUT THE PERILS OF PLASTICS, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN JAILS, IMPROVE ABILITY TO EVALUATE ARGUMENTS AND MORE. THE VIDEOS ARE ARCHIVED AT USI.EDU/LAFC.



USI'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION HONORING MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S LEGACY WAS FREE ONLINE. THE WEEK-LONG EVENT TITLED "THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW!" FEATURED INSIGHTFUL LOCAL AND NATIONAL SPEAKERS, INCLUDING KEYNOTE DR. TALITHA WASHINGTON, AN EVANSVILLE NATIVE, MATHEMATICS PROFESSOR AT CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY AND THE FIRST WOMAN TO BE NAMED A FELLOW BY BOTH THE AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY AND THE ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS IN THE SAME YEAR.

THE UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL SERIES GLOBAL SALON TOOK LIFE-LONG LEARNERS VIRTUALLY AROUND THE WORLD WITH INSIGHTS INTO LIVE-IN SCIENCE IN ANTARCTICA, INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, NUTRITION AND NEURODEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN CHILDREN, AND HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE IN AFRICA.

WATCH THE ON DEMAND AT USI.EDU/GLOBALSALON.



#### EDITOR

C. L. Stambush

#### WRITERS

Kaylee Johnson '20 M'22

Erin Meyer

C.L. Stambush

#### DESIGNERS

Beth Eversole '18

Amy Ubelhor

Zach Weigand '02

#### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Barbara Goodwin

LaVerne Jones '05

Elizabeth Courtney Randolph

*Director of University Communications*

John Farless '98 M'21

*Director of Alumni Relations and Volunteer USI*

Janet Johnson M'05

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In my hometown of Chicago, Illinois, along the course of North to South Ashland Avenue, the house numbers mirror each other end to end, so that if you folded a city map in half the addresses would align, but that is where the resemblance stops. The south side rolls through a once thriving neighborhood known as Englewood, that today reflects urban neglect. Several areas within the community have bars on windows, potholed streets and cracked sidewalks. The north side meanders into Rogers Park, a place of obvious infrastructure investment, with manicured lawns, silent security systems and songbirds. The eight miles from one end to the other are worlds apart aesthetically, physically, economically, psychologically, spiritually and more. On one end there is networking and privilege, while the other harbors abandonment and disregard against a backdrop of unyielding resilience among its members. One is predominantly White while the other Black.

This street in Chicago is both a reality and a work of art by photographer/social justice artist Tonika Lewis Johnson. She is the creator of the Folded Map Project, a photo/video investigation into what urban segregation looks like, as a means of connecting people rather than driving them farther apart. It is a project that has allowed a community of people who live on Ashland to join forces as they strive for a continuum of possibilities and a better future for all. Johnson's project challenges people to understand change is possible and encourages them to be part of the solution. As an activist artist, she's making what freedom-fighter, civil rights activist, Congressman John Lewis called "good trouble."

# ACTIVISM.

THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL  
APPROACH TO BEING AN ACTIVIST  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Johnson is not alone. Activists—advocates and ambassadors for the community—have always been and are all around us. They are the scientists, doctors and nurses, essential personnel fighting for the globe to be free of this virus. Fighting for complete strangers to have the best healthcare services possible. Putting themselves at risk every day because they believe in the wellbeing of people; they believe in human life and human dignity. Activists are private citizens, teachers, students, policy makers, parents. They are volunteers who allowed COVID vaccines to invade their bodies in the name of science and the welfare of all of us.

President Barack Obama wrote a letter to John Lewis, “Because of you...” honoring Mr. Lewis and all civil rights freedom fighters for paving the way for many of us to occupy societal roles once not possible. I echo his “Because of you....” You, the unsung heroes and sheroes in our community and on our campus. People who work in grocery stores stocking shelves and packing food baskets for the elderly and unemployed. People who come together to find ways to help family members pay for rent or medicine. People who continue to find solutions during one of the most stressful times in our nation’s recent history. People who show up on campus, no matter what, to fix a leak or support students who are lonely or depressed from being isolated or quarantined. People who bring stability, calm, kindness, compassion, dedication, courage and hard work to the forefront of the dilemmas we face as a nation and around the globe. This is what community activism looks like to me.

Because of you, USI has the honor of making a difference for the future (ours, yours and others) educating you, your children, our community for 55-plus years. Because of you, USI has enabled thousands of young (and not-so-young) people to become doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals, scientists, educators, artists, engineers, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, policy makers, philosophers, journalists, historians, lawyers, judges, psychologists, social workers, ambassadors and more. Community activists—quiet, loud, bold, behind-the-scenes—everyday ordinary people.

As president of this University, I am always asking myself, *How do I serve all? How can the USI community continue to serve all?* Part of the answer comes from John Lewis. “Good trouble” is necessary when creating an informed, engaged and civil citizenry that will always think of the betterment and wellbeing of the whole and not just the self. We have a history, as an institution and nation, of people coming together to serve others with respect and civility. This is our path forward, our map, our moral compass. We do this for our children. We—our students—can be a part of the solution to the troubles/challenges we face by our actions. Let us face them with “good trouble.” Because of Tonika Lewis Johnson. Because of John Lewis. Because of you. Because of us. Because we can. Because we must.

## Volunteer

Bring your gifts to your community in ways that improve the lives of others. After graduating from college, I volunteered at the Urban League, as a literacy instructor, to teach an adult man to read, and I often think how liberating it was for him and the confidence he gained in himself. Today, one of my favorite activities still involves the power of literacy, and that is to read to school children.

## Engage

Elders are the brain trust of every society. Within their experiences and memories are the blueprints of life’s successes in building community and healthy relationships across perceived boundaries that define our humanity. When we listen to them, one of the great lessons we gain is the ability to not replicate poor choices, poor behavior or poor policies that are potentially harmful to our respective communities, our nation and our globe.

## Teach

As an educator, I practice activism. For me, the path forward in society is through education. But, while not all are destined for college, all are in need of mastering crucial life skills: literacy, communication, networking, financial management and more. Activists, to me, have always been servant leaders following the mantra: Each one, teach one. Each one, serve one.

## Vote

Don’t passively let others shape the world you live in. Educate yourself on the candidates’ positions and execute your responsibility and right by casting a vote. Exercise your constitutional duty by voting in every federal, state and local election, from primaries to presidential.

## Learn

Check out Tonika Lewis Johnson’s Folded Map Project and see how her art and vision inspired two people from opposite ends of Ashland Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, to join forces for a better future, for a better community. [www.foldedmapproject.com](http://www.foldedmapproject.com)



## Thankful Pies, Pandemic à la mode

The USI Food and Nutrition Student Organization (FNSO) held a pie fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House before the Thanksgiving holiday, raising around \$500 by selling 80 pecan, pumpkin and apple pies. "We thought we might sell around 30 pies," said Casey Hand, FNSO President, "so we were shocked and ecstatic to have such success selling 80 pies. A lot of planning, time and effort was put into getting the ingredients and making the pies. There were over 20 volunteer hours logged, with multiple people volunteering across a three-day time span."

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

*Last Pen a Caption winner*



"Then you take the pointy end and poke it right here. If you hear a scream, you did it right!"

Jeanetta Scott, USI Public Safety

Pen a Caption

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

## POTT PROGRAM, FIRST IN STATE

The Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education's Bachelor of Science in Manufacturing Engineering (BSMFE) program has been accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology.

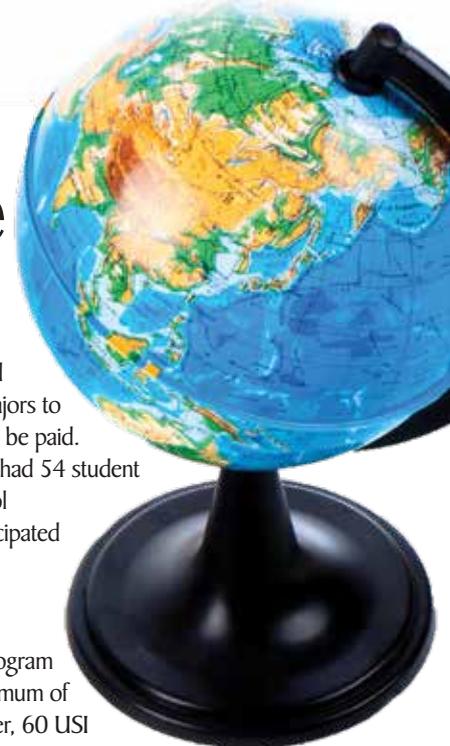
First offered as a named degree in the College in 2016, USI's BSMFE program is the **only baccalaureate program of its kind in the state of Indiana** and **one of less than 25 in the United States.**

FIRST IN STATE

## Student Teachers Substitute

The need to replenish school corporations' well of substitute teachers when COVID-19 started quarantining teachers created an opportunity for USI education majors to gain more classroom experience and be paid. During the 2020 Fall Semester, USI had 54 student teachers placed in 12 different school corporations, among them, 28 participated in the Substitute Teaching Program for Student Teachers.

Student substitute teachers in the program can sub in any grade level for a maximum of 10 days. In the 2021 Spring Semester, 60 USI education majors were eligible to sub beginning March 1.



## NEW LA CONCENTRATION

THE PROFESSIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM WILL OFFER A NEW HEALTH SERVICES CONCENTRATION IN THEIR APPLIED STUDIES PROGRAM BEGINNING FALL 2021. ADULT LEARNERS, WHO ARE INDIANA RESIDENTS, LOOKING TO COMPLETE THEIR DEGREES CAN APPLY FOR A \$2,000 GRANT THROUGH THE STATE OF INDIANA'S ADULT STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM.



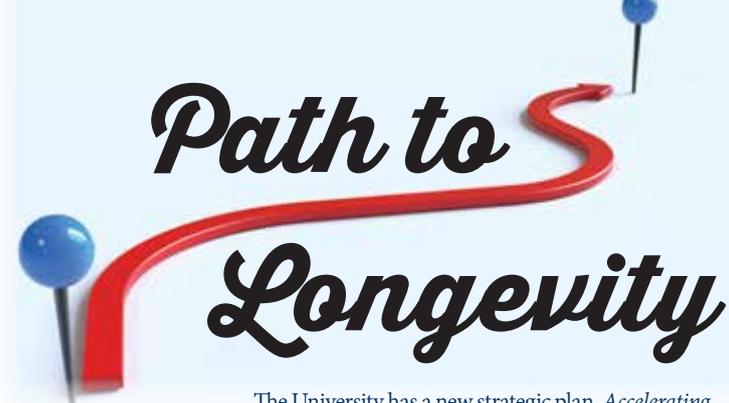
## USI ATHLETES STANDING UP

University of Southern Indiana Athletics launched a Strength of 17 initiative which highlights its student athletes' desire to take action against social injustices happening in the United States. Strength of 17 is designed to combine the influence of USI's 17 Screaming Eagles athletic programs into one voice to help make change happen not only at the University, but in the Tri-state area.

The varsity athletic programs have created 17 different action items that have been transpiring throughout the 2020-21 academic year. "Several of the action items have taken time to plan, while some have been simple in nature, but they all have a purpose and have been developed by our student athletes," said Jon Mark Hall, Athletic Director.

## GRANTING OPPORTUNITY

The University of Southern Indiana Foundation received a \$2 million leadership gift from the estate of the late Hershel B. Whitney for nursing scholarships. The gift will provide financial assistance to USI students who have met the high standards required for entry into USI's Nursing Program.



## Path to Longevity

**"Accelerating Impact is a roadmap that will help USI advance toward its vision: to be a recognized leader in higher education boldly shaping the future and transforming the lives of our students through exceptional learning and intentional innovation."**

**President Ronald Rochon**

The University has a new strategic plan, *Accelerating Impact: USI's Strategic Plan 2021-2025*, built around four goals: improve student success, foster impactful engagement, elevate visibility and reputation, and strengthen financial viability. Each goal has measurable objectives with supporting strategies and action steps. As implementation of the plan gets underway, significant attention will be given to track, report and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and actions steps executed.

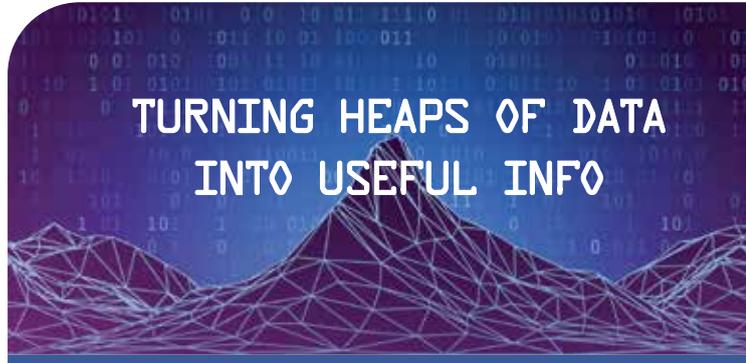
The plan, and updated vision and mission statements, were developed by a committee co-chaired by Dr. Mohammed Khayum, Provost, and Steve Bridges '89 M '95, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and followed a period of review and research, incorporating feedback from more than 2,600 USI students, employees, retirees, alumni and friends of the University. More information about the plan can be found at [USI.edu/strategic-plan](http://USI.edu/strategic-plan).



## Leading the Curve on Career Enhancement

To enhance students' learning experience and prepare them for success in the job market, the Romain College of Business' Marketing Department re-designed the discipline's Interactive Marketing course to equip students with skills sought by almost every organization looking to hire within the marketing industry.

The course covers search engine optimization (SEO), web design, email marketing, display advertising, Google Analytics, social media marketing and mobile marketing. The College will solicit businesses in the greater Evansville community for students to work to develop customized digital marketing strategies.



## TURNING HEAPS OF DATA INTO USEFUL INFO

The sheer volume of data being collected in today's digital world was forecast to reach 59 zettabytes in 2020. That's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes—21 zeros! Businesses, corporations and industries need analysts to manage the mountains of data and turn it into useful information for competitive and strategic decision making. This is no small feat. Enter the power of data analytics.

The Romain College of Business has added a data analytics course to its Business Administration curriculum. The course provides an overview of methodologies enabling business students to enhance decision making in their chosen discipline by identifying business problems, determining which business analytics tools can solve them and applying them effectively.





Allowing students and the campus community to stay fit, even with COVID-19 social distancing and mask-wearing requirements, led to creative changes at the Recreation, Fitness and Wellness Center. To keep students motivated and engaged, three wellness initiatives were launched: Move More, Sleep Well and Gratitude. Some fitness classes met in person for a time in the fall, then switched to virtual and video when classes went remote after Thanksgiving. The Center saw an uptick in bicycle checkouts, but club activities slowed as groups were unable to travel off-site.



Climbing Club members, however, took advantage of the disruption to challenge themselves to learn and practice new skills when the climbing wall went ropeless, because there was no method to disinfect the ropes. Instead, they turned to bouldering or free climbing (where disinfecting was possible) that pushed participants to employ problem-solving skills to move up the wall. Club members posted snapshots of their dexterity on social media using #tableclimbing and #DeadHangChallenge to keep their spirits and climbing skills up.

“THE MANNER IN WHICH WE ARE *socialized* THROUGH A FOOD IDENTITY IS TIED TO OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION, AND IF YOU ARE *paying attention*, YOU CAN LEARN A LOT ABOUT SOMEONE BASED ON THEIR **FOOD STAPLES.**”

DR. TERRI JETT | Associate Professor of Political Science at Butler University, speaking on how Food Connects Us All at USI's "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" Speaker Series

“WE ARE A COUNTRY THAT IS *divided* BY OUR FEARS, OUR PREJUDICES, OUR ANGER. IF WE AS A COUNTRY CONTINUE TO BE *polarized*, DIVIDED, UNABLE TO TALK WITH *one another*—IF WE ARE A COUNTRY THAT FINDS THAT BECAUSE OF OUR DIVISIONS WE CANNOT GOVERN AND DEAL WITH THE *problems facing our society*—THEN, MARK MY WORDS, WE WILL GO THE WAY OF PAST EMPIRES.”

LEON PANETTA | former U.S. Secretary of Defense, speaking at the inaugural "We Stand Together Speaker Series 2020-21" on the Challenges of Leadership in Democracy

“WITH SO MANY PEOPLE WHO *had not left their home* STATE IN AMERICA...THIS IS A CHANCE TO TRAVEL AND REALLY HELP YOURSELF, HELP OTHERS, HELP THE WORLD AND BEYOND. YOU'RE *growing exponentially* IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.”

ANDREA TILLER | virtual speaker at the College of Liberal Arts' Global Salon on "Taking Your Skills and Education Global"

“BE SMART ABOUT *news consumption*. DON'T GET ALL YOUR NEWS FROM ONE PLACE. TRY TO GET YOUR NEWS FROM AS MANY *credible sources* AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE, THAT WAY YOU WILL BE MUCH MORE *informed* ABOUT THE *decisions* YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE.”

ABDUL-HAKIM SHABAZZ | speaking via Zoom at the Political Science and Public Administration's annual Community of Scholars event



“PEOPLE WANT TO BE *involved* IN SOMETHING, MOST OF THEM DO, THEY JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT. FIND SOMETHING... YOU WANT TO DO. FIND YOUR NICHE. FIND YOUR *passion*, AND ADD THAT *voting* ELEMENT TO IT.”

DR. GENA MCCLENDON | College of Liberal Arts 2020 Sydney Berger Lecturer, speaking on Electoral Justice Meets Democracy

“ALTHOUGH ASIAN STUDENTS ARE *minority groups* CURRENTLY, THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WILL INCREASE, AND THAT MEANS THERE WILL BE MORE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THEM AND *American* PEOPLE IN AND OUT OF CLASSROOMS. *Setting to know each other*, WE WILL BE ABLE TO LOWER THE CULTURAL BARRIER AND LIVE TOGETHER WITH *respect*.”

ERINA TAMURA M'21 | on how Kendo, a Japanese form of martial arts, grew her confidence, in an interview about why she performs Kendo

# STEPS TO BECOMING AN



An activist is defined as a person who works in support of, and on behalf of, a certain issue; someone who advocates for change. Activism can be very public and visible—like leading a protest or march for a cause, or more “behind the scenes”—like beginning a letter

writing campaign to elected representatives. Activists are any age or gender and come from a variety of backgrounds.

Sweden’s 15-year-old Greta Thunberg achieved international recognition as a climate activist in 2018, with what began as a

school project. Me-Too activists are gaining more recognition and support. Individuals who become activists are often driven by issues of economic, environmental and/or social justice, such as the Black Lives Matter activists who were motivated by tragic deaths, in which many were compelled to

action by individual experiences. Finding your passions is the first step in becoming an activist and advocate. If you are looking to get started, here are some suggestions.

1. Learn as much as you can about your area of interest, including those who are directly impacted. If your area of activism directly impacts individuals’ lives, make sure you meet some of these people. Learn about their lives and experiences. Work with them, not for them.



2. Start small. You won’t likely start your activist work by speaking to hundreds of people or organizing a large protest. It is best to get your feet wet by writing a letter, signing a petition or joining a march. This will give you a taste of what activism is like and can lead to future action.



3. Seek and make connections. Activists are most effective when they work in collaboration with one another and with the public. There are likely many people already working in your area of interest. Learn about them, get to know them and join forces. Having people to collaborate with and to support your work and, eventually, follow your lead, are essential.



There are many organizations that focus on issues of political, environmental, economic and social justice. Find what interests you and join with other like-minded individuals to make a difference!



# score | BOARD





## The Eagles' Nest

Sports are rarely played without close contact to other athletes.

Keeping USI's student-athletes virus-free and on the field or court this year has been the focus of our athletic trainers, who have become in-resident COVID experts, says Jon Mark Hall, Athletic Director.

One of their primary duties is to make sure student-athletes aren't displaying coronavirus-related symptoms.

Every athlete uses a COVID-19 screening-test app called Sway to answer a list of questions and enter their temperature.

If they say yes to any of the questions, they are flagged in the system, checked on and helped through the process of reporting and quarantining.

Despite some COVID-related challenges and the required mask wearing during practices, there have been bright moments for USI's student athletes.

## HIGH NOTES



### SOCCER

With six new players to the men's team, it was especially tough, but the team maintained its high academic standing. The women stayed fast to their commitment to growth and rocked a solid 3.66 GPA.

### TENNIS

All but one fall tournament was played by the women's team; cancellation of the spring season in 2020 halted the men's team path to competing for a conference title. Both teams are refocused on a strong new season.



### BASKETBALL

Versatility in the 2020-21 season (adding or postponing games on short notice) prepared athletes to deal with life's realities.

### VOLLEYBALL

Team members completed a virtual curriculum that improved their mental game, leadership skills and cultural standards.



### BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

Every baseball player got an additional year of eligibility to make up for lost playing time; seven of the nine graduating seniors will return in 2021; all received the scholarships needed.

Despite COVID quarantines, softball players adapted effortlessly to numerous changes.



### VARSITY CLUB

The Club auctioned off all 88 donated items and 40 gift cards, raising \$14,000 in an online auction.

### FANS

Unable to attend games, fans turned their tickets into charitable gifts for athletes, generating \$20,000 to ensure student athletes remain supported.

### ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

USI Head Coach Stan Gouard's first win at the helm of the Screaming Eagles was the 1,000th victory in the history of the Men's Basketball program.

USI is scheduled to host 80 home athletic events on campus this spring, in addition to the NCAA II Elite Eight at Evansville's Ford Center.

# BETTY J. FORDICE RICE

## A Luminary's Light Shines On

by C.L. Stambush



The University of Southern Indiana is sad to report Betty Fordice Rice, founding first lady and wife of USI's first president, Dr. David L. Rice, died January 26, 2021, at the age of 90 at her home in York, Pennsylvania. She earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in home economics education from Purdue University, where she met and married Dr. Rice.

The humble first lady, who shied away from titles and preferred to be known as Betty, was a champion of the University and community, known for her immense warmth, kindness and generosity. Her dedication to women's education was instrumental in creating strategies to increase the number of women attending USI. As an influencer alongside her husband, she helped establish and sustain,

through her personal involvement and fund-raising, many programs to support learning and student life at the University, including women's athletics, religious life, Greek organizations and the traditional USI Madrigal Feaste.

A tireless community advocate, she served dozens of Evansville organizations as a board member and board president, including Girl Scouts of Raintree Council, American Association of University Women, United Way, YWCA, Evansville Home Economists, Extension Homemakers, Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, Keep Evansville Beautiful and Westwood Garden Club. In retirement, she served the USI-New Harmony Foundation and the Posey County Community Foundation.

A passionate educator and respected leader in civic affairs, she was recognized for her "vision and boundless energy" in building community support for the University with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from USI in May of 2000. In 1997, USI created the David L. Rice and Betty Fordice Rice Presidential Scholarship Endowment in their honor.

Betty, always a welcoming figure on campus who opened her home to all, is legendary for many things, among them her bread pudding, cooking up hundreds of batches in her own kitchen to serve at the Madrigal Feaste from 1969 to the late 1990s. The imprint she left at USI continues to nourish our community and shine brightly.





# SEEDS OF CHANGE

BY C.L. STAMBUSH





In a way, Courtney Johnson '15 is like a farmer tending a plot of land. In this analogy, it's easy to envision him surveying a long-forgotten field as he thinks about what to sow, assessing the soil to understand which nutrients are lacking and then cultivating it so that the kernels he plants can develop strong roots that grow into sturdy plants and sustain many.

While he shares farmers' philosophical mission to grow and nourish, the 6'4" man with an infectious smile and dressed in a sharp suit looks nothing like the men and women who plow the soil. Johnson's acreage consists of city blocks made of concrete and bricks. Instead of funneling his efforts into crops of corn and soy, he tills the community by seeding hope and paths to success for Evansville's underserved youth.

What started as one-on-one mentoring of 11 students at Glenwood Leadership Academy and Lodge Community School in 2013, after moving back to Evansville and while a student at USI, blossomed into a nonprofit organization called Young & Established (Y&E). "I didn't really know what I was doing when I first got started," he says. "I just knew I wanted to

help people." Over the past seven years, Y&E's fund raising, mentoring and tutoring services have impacted many lives by hosting 50 drives (eight annual events), raised more than \$150,000 and mentored/tutored 112 students.

Johnson cut his entrepreneurial teeth on lending a hand—acts that shaped and strengthened his spirit in the process. When he was 8 years old, he tagged along with his father mowing lawns and later sold candy. In high school, he organized dance parties by booking venues, hiring security and DJs, and promoting the events. By the time he arrived at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana, he'd graduated to raising \$3,000 in two days for Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation—a feat the national nonprofit took note of and offered him a position organizing events. "That molded me without me knowing it was something I was going to do in the future," he says.

Back then, the future was different for the Evansville native. After graduating from Benjamin Bosse High School, where he played basketball as a Bulldog, he headed to Kentucky Wesleyan to play football as a Panther. He wanted to transfer to Indiana State University

but going from a private to a public college meant some credit hours weren't compatible, so he attended Ivy Tech Community College to earn transferable credits. "I bounced around a lot. I tell people that's not a bad thing," he says. "I'm a people person. I was able to network and meet a lot of great people at different universities."

True to his nature, Johnson got involved at Indiana State, organizing mentoring programs, joining the student government association and becoming a big brother for Big Brothers Big Sisters. With his public relations and communications studies, and experiences, he envisioned himself in someplace like Los Angeles or New York City. But fate had other plans.

After three years in Terre Haute, a family member's illness led him to return to Evansville. Eyes and heart open, Johnson took a long look at his hometown community and saw some patches that needed tending. "I felt there were gaps," he says. "There are a lot of organizations and nonprofits [in town], but I felt like there were people in our community being left out."

Being on the outside is an experience Johnson knows intimately but rarely shares with others.



He's private to the point of not saying which family member was ill or what the illness was that caused him to come home. The persona Johnson wears publicly 364 days a year is...happy. Passionate. Unfailingly enthusiastic and upbeat. To hear the marketing entrepreneur, life coach and unpaid CEO of Y&E talk about the families that need help or the responsibilities of running the new community center Y&E opened this spring during the pandemic, makes you wonder when he sleeps; something his mother asks him too.

But on June 2, his public façade cracked when he posted a video a few days after watching George Floyd die when a Minneapolis police officer put his knee on Floyd's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. In Johnson's 23-minutes-and-54-seconds-video post, he shared his personal experiences as a Black man growing up in Evansville, of racial profiling, saying that as a high schooler he was detained by the police, while at the Fall Festival with a group of friends, because he wore clothes similar to someone who was reported to have a gun.

"I was really emotional that week [Floyd was killed] because of the things I've had to deal with," Johnson says. "I don't ever want to sound like I'm complaining because I've accomplished a lot. But what I've had to deal with right here in my own community, when all I've ever wanted to is better our community..."

As Johnson's voice trails off, you hear his resistance to revealing too much of his experiences. He has tried to in the past, he says, but people didn't want to hear it. Didn't want to believe it, he thinks, because of his successes.

Lee Ann Shafer, BPS Advisor and Instructor in Professional Studies, says Johnson doesn't get the recognition he deserves. She counseled him when he was earning his Bachelor of Professional Studies at USI and continues to follow his good works—the toy, food, milk, school-supplies drives—that he posts on social media.

As a student himself, Johnson mentored kids at two middle schools and calling on friends via social media to join him to clean up parks in the city's forgotten areas. "I'm always passionate as far as helping people and giving back, but I really wanted to get others involved in what we are doing."

Dr. Anne Statham saw Johnson be interviewed by Brad Byrd on television and invited him to speak about his work to his fellow peers in her ethics of global engagement course. "I think what he is doing for the community is quite amazing. He has really made a difference in the community around several important issues and is an inspiration to other students to see they can be effective." The professor emerita of sociology says he was a leader in the classroom and committed to bettering communities, inspiring students to become more active in the community and volunteerism.





“It was a good feeling to know that a professor on campus was really happy about the work I was doing and wanted to be involved and got her students involved as well,” Johnson says. “That was really encouraging.”

Such encouragement filters in from many sources within the community, but none is stronger than what his family—both immediate and extended—provides. “My family has always been a giving family, in doing things for the community or church,” Johnson says. When he speaks, you can hear the gratitude, seeds sown by those who went before him, in his common refrain of “*I’ve been blessed.*”

Like a farmer, Johnson works long hours, saying the responsibility he feels can be stressful because the work is nonstop. “It’s every day,” he says. “I could have kids or parents calling me at 3 a.m. needing food. Or a young man or young lady needing a ride or dealing with some type of abuse at home. You really don’t turn anything off.”

At 31 years old, with gray hair beginning to pepper his trendy cut, Johnson admits there were times when being elsewhere sounded attractive. “I think we lose a lot of young people [to other cities],” he says, “especially minorities.” But what kept him rooted here was his family and being involved in the community. “I prayed on it. I kept telling

myself this was where I was supposed to end up. I felt like I would be giving up on the community [if I left], that was the reason I wanted to stay and do everything I could to help Evansville.”

No longer a one-man operation, with Johnson hopping from school-to-school mentoring and tutoring Evansville’s youth, Y&E now has a nine-member board of directors, nine tutor and mentor volunteers and up to 77 volunteers for certain events. A community center—the only one in a 10-mile radius—provides a safe space and learning opportunities, replete with computers, Wi-Fi, washers and dryers, a food pantry and more to come.

COVID-19 alerted Johnson and his nonprofit of the precarious food situations some families are forced to navigate. They simply didn’t have enough to eat and couldn’t get it, he says, and were reaching out to Y&E. Johnson spent weeks delivering bags of food to those in need, an eye-opening experience for him, and motivation to establish a community garden next summer in one of the city’s food deserts.

“Seeing things grow. I don’t know what it is about seeing how fast things grow, it’s a good feeling,” he says, referring to the garden but probably, subconsciously, talking about something else. “Knowing that you did it. That you grew it. It’s a great feeling.” 





THE THIN BLUE LINE:  
PERCEPTION

BY C.L. STAMBUSH



Looking at it straight on, the idea of police wearing body cameras seems like a sound measure for keeping both police and citizenry accountable for their actions. A small lens clipped to the police officer's uniform shirt pocket that holds a battery pack and sends video data to a remote server is a win-win. Technology is, after all, black and white. But shift the lens angle and a new narrative emerges—a backstory rife with perception, expectation, suspicion, conflict, assumption, accusation, failed technology, abandonment and more.

It's this behind-the-scenes storyline that intrigued USI's Dr. Melinda Roberts, Professor of Criminal Justice and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Marthinus Koen, then USI criminal justice faculty and currently at State University of New York at Oswego; and Dr. Bryce Newell of the University of Oregon. The trio co-conducted and authored quantitative and qualitative research into how body-worn cameras (BWCs) were perceived by the police who wore them and the administrators who implemented the policy. Their months of research, published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice* in 2021, probed how BWCs influenced areas of reporting, decision-making, citizen encounters, behavior, training and supervision, as well as how variously ranked officers' perceptions of BWCs were shaped over time.

"The Black Lives Matter movement has elucidated the strained relationship between police and the communities they are sworn to protect," said Roberts. "With new pressure from communities across the United States to defund the police, research related to technology that may improve police-community relations is incredibly important and timely."

## THE PLAYERS

The professors, using existing research conducted by peers, collected new data through surveys, interviews and ride-a-long observations

to expand and deepen the body of academic work surrounding police use of body-worn cameras. Pennybridge Police Department (PPD)—a pseudonym researchers used for an urban police department in the United States to ensure confidentiality—granted the trio insider access. Among the several hundred anonymously participating officers across all ranks, two categories were identified: administrators—high-ranking officers, internal affairs and public relations officers—who enact policy, and users—patrol officers, detectives, first-line supervisors—who are more engaged in street action and directly interacted with BWCs.

While humans were the major actors in this inquiry, technology played a prominent role too: the camera equipment manufacturer ProCop (pseudonym) and the on-site server ViewSafe (pseudonym) provided.

Ideally, the researchers' scope would have captured perceptions and beliefs surrounding BWCs prior to Pennybridge PD implementing them, but the department had initiated body cameras a couple years earlier, before the 2014 Ferguson, Missouri, shooting of Michael Brown by Police Officer Darren Wilson that many believe sparked the demand for police BWCs across the nation.

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

With a growing national trend toward distrust of police, transparency was key to the adoption of body cameras at Pennybridge PD. It tested and evaluated many companies, narrowing it to three before choosing ProCop because it offered the most affordable option.

"Due to the size of the department, the initial costs of purchasing enough devices and possible future storage costs were the main considerations for administrators when choosing a company," said Roberts.



# LICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

# PO

While cost and community openness were the reasons administrators expressed for initiating the use of BWCs, 67% of users said they initially feared the real motivation was a means of entrapping them, while 16% were neutral and 17% felt the BWC policy was enacted to support officers' accounts.

"PPD officers had serious concerns about their privacy," Koen said, noting this was documented to be true of officers across the United States. "In particular, they seemed worried that run-of-the-mill conversations between colleagues would be recorded for anyone to scrutinize."

Roberts said their research showed this perception of "gotcha" was inflated among users when administrators rolled out a commonly practiced mandate that supervisors run scheduled checks to ensure patrol officers were in fact activating their BWCs.

Aside from perceptions users held, the camera equipment and on-site server provided by ProCop and ViewSafe proved problematic—from the clip that held the camera lens in place to the diminished battery life most officers experienced to the slow-loading, crash-and-freeze-prone servers. Officers interviewed reported camera cables came loose during foot pursuits or struggles with suspects and swung wildly, revealing jarring video images of the ground and distorted footage.

Like most police departments in the U.S., Pennybridge PD's BWC policy required patrol officers to switch on their equipment when responding to a run, and to keep the cameras rolling throughout the course of the encounters. If arrests were made, patrol officers typically used the downtime in the jail, while waiting for suspects to be booked, to write their incident reports. The users reported the onsite servers were sluggish and videos took too long to download at the jail, making report writing during this time less feasible.

Rather than view their videos to aid in corroborating memories of events, most officers chose to rely on memory only, as they always had.

The exception to this were incidents deemed "complex" or involving "use of force." In those cases, 70% of users reported they documented their incident reports in concert with the footage to ensure detailed accuracy, knowing superiors, prosecutors and the public were watching.

Electronic survey questions about officers' use of BWCs when writing reports revealed roughly 25% said they used the footage in all cases while about 75% did not. When asked if the BWCs changed the way they reported their activities, only a small percentage said it did.

First-line supervisors responsible for patrol officers echoed similar frustrations with the tediousness of the technology. Those in the administrative group, however, didn't share this sentiment because they didn't interact directly with the technology. In use-of-force cases, prior to BWCs, research revealed administrators relied on information reported to them by first-line supervisors. They believed BWCs provided a tool that supported overall good policing and unburdened the department of unreliable witnesses and the fallibility of human memory.

## CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

The eye of the camera influenced behavior in several ways. Researchers discovered that before BWCs, many officers said they employed their discretion and decision-making skills in cases of petty offenses and misdemeanors. For instance, if a teen was caught with a small amount of marijuana, an officer might take it away, grind it into dust in front of the teen and call their mother, said Roberts. Or, if a homeless person had curled up on a business' private property during subzero weather, an officer could give them a ride to a shelter.

But Pennybridge PD's policy of "record every citizen encounter" led 76% of officers to express that BWCs changed the way they policed. Among them, 57% said they no longer felt comfortable cutting people a break; 7% stated it had no effect on their behavior.





“Officers were afraid if they gave one person a break and let them off with a warning, and two hours later that person ended up killing someone, they would be reprimanded,” Koen said. “Moreover, officers feared their use of discretion (by letting some people go and others not) could be interpreted as preferential treatment by some members of the public or supervisors. To them, it was safer to use less discretion, which seemed to impact their job satisfaction.”

Knowing others were watching influenced behavior in both police and citizens, Roberts said. Administrators noted that officers weren’t as vulgar and were less sarcastic around citizens because of the BWC policy. The patrol officers acknowledged this to the researchers and reported that it encouraged them to be more verbal too, reciting step-by-steps of what they were doing for the camera’s record when they engaged officially with the public.

For their part, the public was not always aware of the camera, but when they were, users reported people responded in several ways: it made them more cooperative or reassured them their Constitutional rights were being protected or caused them to pander to the camera in hopes of becoming a YouTube sensation by talking and acting outrageous.

The research revealed BWCs caused some citizens, such as witnesses to crimes, to clam up. The users felt people seemed reluctant to provide a permanent video record of what they saw because they feared it would lead to retaliation from those they testified about in their statements.

“The researchers could not prove this to any extent,” said Koen, “but a handful of officers reported that BWC presence made people from higher social ranks more comfortable and willing to interact with the police when they were the victims of a crime. However, people of lower socio-economic status were less likely to be caught talking to the police in the case that they were the victims of a crime.”

## WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

Part of Pennybridge’s strategy when creating the body-camera policy included releasing footage to the public and media as proof of no

wrongdoing and to reduce public skepticism. “To PPD administrators BWCs were a symbol that they had nothing to hide and that the technology would vindicate police officers by showing that 99% of the time, they do the right thing,” Koen said.

But what you see isn’t always what there is. Ideologically, users understood the importance of releasing the footage, but expressed surprise at not always knowing in advance that it was being released.

The researchers learned users were concerned the camera didn’t capture the entire context of a situation. For instance, it couldn’t record what was running through an officer’s mind or the level of threat they perceived. They reported to the research team that they worried in a rush to be transparent, administrators would release footage to the public that only told part of the story and resulted in diminishing their credibility. This belief caused some users to express BWCs led them to “de-police” by being less proactive on the job, but researchers (including peer research) discovered no evidence of this happening.

The reliance on video footage as verifiable proof has made its way into the courtroom as a staple. “Some prosecutors don’t want to take a case to court without it,” Roberts said.

Assembling footage for a court case is labor intensive. The Pennybridge prosecutor’s office didn’t have the resources to scroll through hours of video footage to pinpoint the exact frames needed to show a jury, and the onus fell to the police. They reported to the research team “spending anywhere from two to eight hours tracking down, sifting through, watching and compiling footage for the prosecutor.”

State law required Pennybridge PD keep all video footage for 180 days (an acceptable practice among many departments) unless it involved an ongoing case, then it needed to be kept until the case was resolved. This vast array of stored police-runs allows the footage to potentially be used as a training tool to supplement new officers’ knowledge as well as means of learning from mistakes.

“Videos should be used broadly in training and at shift briefings to demonstrate how officers handled difficult situations in exemplary



ways, rather than to highlight mistakes made by individual officers,” said Newell. “The latter approach could seriously erode officer trust and job satisfaction. These negative videos could be used fruitfully in one-on-one training with officers to help them change unwanted behaviors.”

While the department had no strategic plan to incorporate videos into training at the time of BWCs inception, some officers reported taking it upon themselves to review and evaluate their own behavior during encounters with the public in order to improve their skillset and keep everyone safer. Koen said this was “especially the case among officers who belonged to specialized units such as K9 or SWAT.” Other users, however, saw the videos as a means of “nit-picking” their behavior and a budding source for “Monday-morning quarterbacking.”

## THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Prior to Pennybridge PD initiating BWCs, many viewed the technology’s use as either good or bad, depending on the group the officer occupied, opinions waxed and waned over the course of the policy’s implementation and data collection. During this time, when the team peeled back the façade of this black and white thinking, a nuanced labyrinth was exposed.

While the equipment provided by ProCop and ViewSafe was eventually abandoned by Pennybridge PD in search of a replacement, the research executed by Roberts, Newell and Koen provided valuable insight into perceptions of BWCs and key recommendations for administrators to ensure trusting relationships between them and the patrol officers wearing the body cameras is developed.

“Program evaluation is one of the most important research methods in assessing the effectiveness of a program and identifying the intended and unintended impacts of the policies or laws related to the program,” said Roberts. “A strong, trusting partnership between academic researchers and criminal justice agencies can help these agencies determine what is working and how to change the things that are not working to achieve their desired goals.”

The professors’ research unearthed issues and they offered several solutions to Pennybridge PD’s leadership, including forecasting the value of videos showcasing high-intensity situations using force as a training tool in the future, provided a strategic plan was developed for when and how videos would be used.

“A common thread connecting many of our recommendations,” Newell said, “was the need for more detailed and clear policy guidance around body-camera use in the department. For example, how and when footage would be accessed and used by supervisors or whether officers can (or should) watch their footage prior to writing reports.”

What the research revealed was not a cut-and-dry definitive on the issue of BWCs but a need for more research.

“It’s complex,” said Roberts. “Whether a person is an academic or not, they have an opinion about body cams. I have engaged in various debates with friends and colleagues since beginning this research. Many people, despite the various downsides illuminated in our research, believe that all police should have cameras and that is the be-all-end-all solution for solving the problems between citizens and police. Going into this research, I also thought that most of the findings would clearly point toward cameras being a positive program for both the police and community. Today, if someone asked me if all police should be required to wear body worn cameras, my answer would be, it depends.”



# A Call Leads to a

By Erin Meyer

A LATE-NIGHT PHONE CALL IN THE FALL

OF 1999 CHANGED LARRY BACK'S LIFE.

THE USI GRADUATE AND LONGTIME

EMPLOYEE HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD

EVENTUALLY INSPIRE HIM TO CHANGE

THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS OTHERS.



That October evening, his wife picked up the receiver and heard panic in their daughter-in-law's voice. Her husband, the Backs' 23-year-old son, was out of control. Loud. Aggressive. Threatening to quit his job. "It turned out he was having a manic episode," Back '99 said.

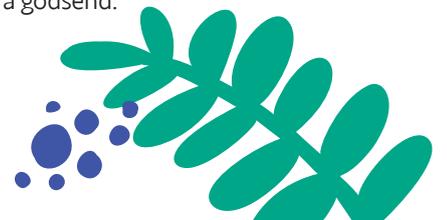
They called 911, and as their son was admitted to a facility for the help he needed a receptionist told the Backs about an organization that might help them: the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI.

They enrolled in NAMI Evansville's free Family-to-Family course a few months later. Over the next 12 weeks, alongside others with loved ones battling mental illness, they learned about diagnoses, the brain's biology and, importantly, how to better communicate with their son, diagnosed with bipolar disorder. "You had to stop and think about what you were going to say, so you really needed to listen more carefully," Back said. "It just made you be more reflective."

When the course ended, the Backs agreed to stay involved as volunteers; Larry, especially, discovered a passion—and talent—for advocacy. Over the past 20 years, he's lost track of the number of courses he's taught and support groups he's led for family members of, and individuals with, mental illness. As NAMI Evansville's longtime affiliate leader, he now answers three or four calls a week from people across the country in need of resources or support. "You hear a lot of stories that are hard to hear," he said. "I think back to when we needed the help, it was there. So, I feel like if I can help somebody else, or at least point them in the right direction, [I want to do that]."

Five years ago, one of those calls came from Kent Kunce, a landlord in Evansville desperate to help a tenant and friend with bipolar disorder. The situation was "reaching crisis phase" when he connected with Back.

"He listened very effectively," Kunce recalled. Together, they talked through options, empowering Kunce to initiate a delicate—and potentially life-saving—discussion with his tenant. "I never would have been able to accomplish that without Larry. He truly was a godsend."



# Calling

The experience increased Kunce's awareness of mental health struggles other tenants faced. Determined to be more confident and knowledgeable in the future, he enrolled in a NAMI Evansville course and began attending support group meetings led by Back.

Today, Kunce is not only better informed about mental illness, he's also deeply invested—as the president of NAMI Evansville's board of directors. "I would not have found all of these things if it had not been for me finding Larry," he said. "He's just a wealth of knowledge and a great resource for our community."

In addition to facilitating NAMI Evansville events, which have continued virtually during the pandemic, Back trains volunteers across the state to become NAMI leaders in their communities. He also spends time visiting patients at the Evansville State Hospital, where he was named Volunteer of the Year in 2018.

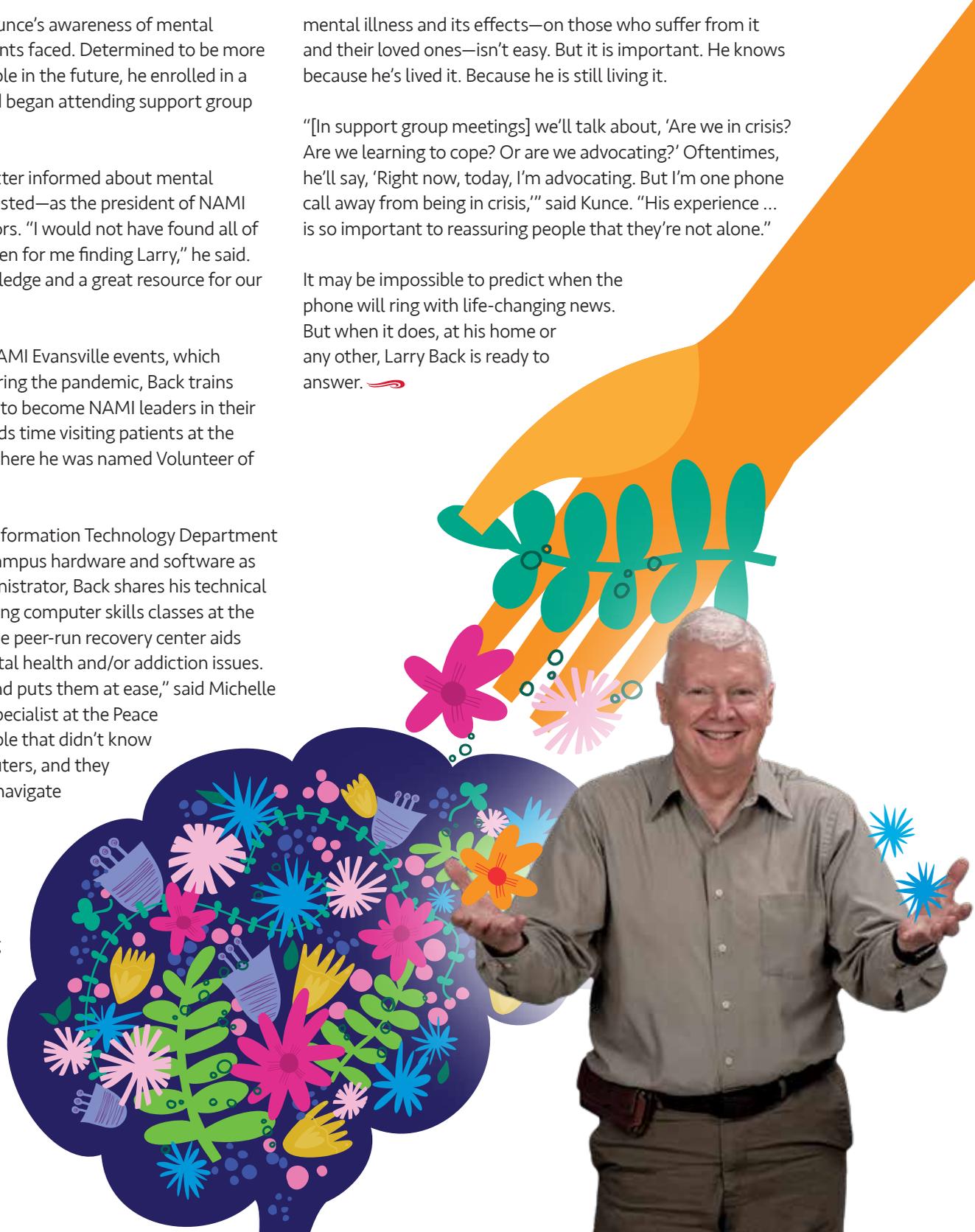
A 27-year veteran of USI's Information Technology Department dedicated to maintaining campus hardware and software as a Senior Applications Administrator, Back shares his technical expertise as well—by teaching computer skills classes at the Peace Zone in Evansville. The peer-run recovery center aids adults struggling with mental health and/or addiction issues. "He puts [our peers] first and puts them at ease," said Michelle Krack, Certified Recovery Specialist at the Peace Zone. "We had several people that didn't know the first thing about computers, and they said he really helped them navigate through that."

Recently retired from USI, Back remains as involved as ever with NAMI Evansville, though he is always looking toward the future; new volunteers are critical to fulfilling the organization's mission. He knows discussing

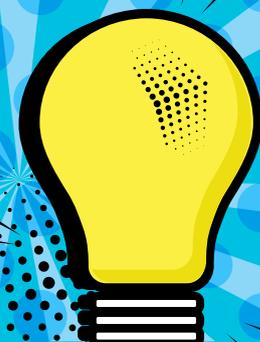
mental illness and its effects—on those who suffer from it and their loved ones—isn't easy. But it is important. He knows because he's lived it. Because he is still living it.

"[In support group meetings] we'll talk about, 'Are we in crisis? Are we learning to cope? Or are we advocating?' Oftentimes, he'll say, 'Right now, today, I'm advocating. But I'm one phone call away from being in crisis,'" said Kunce. "His experience ... is so important to reassuring people that they're not alone."

It may be impossible to predict when the phone will ring with life-changing news. But when it does, at his home or any other, Larry Back is ready to answer. 



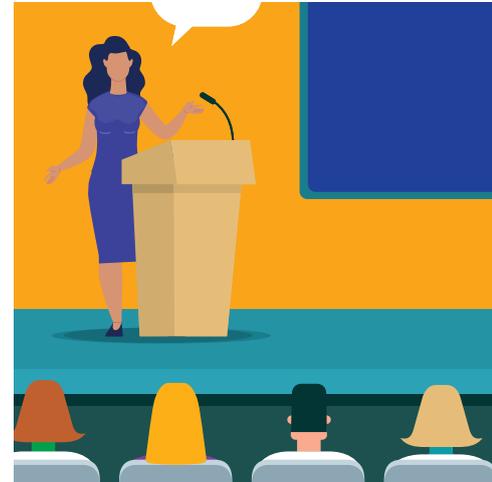
# ONE MOMENT, PLEA



## HOW DR. LYNN UNEARTHED DESTINY

I had no intention of going to college, neither of my parents went, and it was not emphasized or expected in my home. But after high school graduation, when all my friends left town and I had no plan, it dawned on me that I needed to think about the future. I began taking classes at my local community college; classes I was interested in, not classes needed for graduation. I took the history of the Plains Indians, mythology, African-American literature, anything that sounded compelling. Eventually, I matriculated and decided to pursue a degree in environmental studies; as it turned out, I wasn't very good at science. All the while I continued taking courses that intrigued me, and I eventually took a course with Dr. Mary Bogin at Onondaga Community College on women's history. This course changed my entire career trajectory, I never contemplated that women had not been written into history and now, finally, I was learning a history I could relate to. I decided that I wanted to do that for others, teach them history that helped them understand their lives, to make history more real and more relevant for them.

**Dr. Denise Lynn**  
Associate Professor of History and  
Director of Gender Studies  
College of Liberal Arts



## HOW DR. WELLS HEARD A CALLING

I initially thought nursing was my career calling. However, I realized my childhood dream was clouded by what others expected of me. I did not recognize my passion for education until I began my graduate assistantship while obtaining my master's in health education. I discovered the greatest joy in advocating and educating. I thrived on the assigned tasks and projects I completed alongside my director on campus and within the local community. I was provided the opportunity to educate and enlighten individuals on health matters and disparities. I was able to clearly identify that education was where I would be of the greatest benefit to the community once I taught an undergraduate personal wellness class. The chance to teach solidified my passion as an educator. It confirmed that I was not designed to provide direct care, but I would make an impact in the lives of those who desired to do so. It is liberating as a professor to have an impact on students with a strong desire to provide care and improve the health of citizens.

**Dr. Phonesia Wells**  
Assistant Professor of Health Services  
College of Nursing and Health Professions

DISTILLING THE MOMENT IN LIFE THAT LEADS US ON OUR CAREER PATH IS CHALLENGING. FOUR FACULTY STRIVE TO PINPOINT WHEN IT HAPPENED FOR THEM.



### HOW DR. YANG DISCOVERED TRUE NORTH

During my undergraduate years, I had a discussion with one of my professors that is still vivid in my memory. We talked about the financial market efficiency. It was an unforgettable experience because I didn't know I could talk about finances so enthusiastically. That's not who I knew myself to be. But after our conversation, I felt better acquainted with the course materials. Ten years later, I had an opportunity to put myself in his shoes. The first class I taught, as a graduate student, was to an undergraduate business finance class with nearly 70 students. I was super scared to face them, as speaking in front of others had never been natural to me. As the quarter went by, I built up my self-confidence, and students started to raise their voices, ask questions and share their opinions. Students turned my classroom into a very active forum, and I was so happy to see them interact with each other. Suddenly, I saw myself of 10 years earlier in them, and it thrilled me. Only then did I see how that conversation with my professor was the moment that set me on my career.

**Dr. Jinsuk Yang**  
Assistant Professor of Finance  
Romain College of Business



### HOW DR. STROM PICKED PASSIONS

There are many moments that shaped and molded my career in kinesiology and sport. However, there was one person who gave me more than a few "seeds," my mentor, coach, great friend and a person I admire and look up to even to this day, Lew Smiley. Lew took me under his wing when I was 15 years old and got me interested in working out, tennis and coaching. The seeds were sown very early, but what truly trajected me into my career path were three simple words he said to me over the phone as I called him for advice when I couldn't decide whether to pursue a degree in biomedical science or exercise science. He asked me "Why not both?" He made me realize I didn't have to choose if I was passionate, wanted to learn and if I put in the work. He always pushed me to do better and be more, this was no exception. I took that advice, and the dual majoring gave me a leg up against the competition and the tools I needed to be successful, not only in the upcoming master and PhD coursework, but for the rigors of research as well. It gave me the assurance to pursue my passions full force. Thank you, Lew.

**Dr. Cody Strom**  
Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and Sport  
Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education



# ourtney's



Quietly crouched  
behind home plate,  
Courtney Schoolcraft '23  
finds comfort.

The players and pitches may, at times, be unpredictable. But since tugging on her first catcher's mask at 7 years old, she's learned to remain steady. Calm. In control. And always prepared to strike.

"I like throwing people out. That's my favorite part," said the respiratory therapy student from her home in Crest Hill, Illinois.

A year ago, she wasn't sure she'd ever do it again.

After an impressive 15-4 start to the 2020 season, Schoolcraft and her USI Softball teammates were shocked when it abruptly ended without a single at-bat on their home field—their five-game winning streak held hostage by an adversary more ruthless than any they'd faced before.

As the world scrambled to keep up with COVID-19, Schoolcraft encountered yet another opponent—just as vicious, but much more familiar. "They saw that it spread," she recalled.

The disease she'd beaten just a few months before—cancer—was ready for a rematch.

Schoolcraft's battle began as her freshman year at USI ended in 2019. "My mom was helping me move out of my apartment at school and she noticed this big lump on my foot," she said. Though prominent, the bump was painless. And it had been there ... a while. Schoolcraft wasn't worried, and, at first, her podiatrist wasn't either. A cyst was the

expected diagnosis—until a biopsy showed something more sinister. Clear cell sarcoma.

"Sarcoma's like 1% of cancers, and then my specific type of sarcoma is the 1% of the 1%," said Schoolcraft.

A flurry of appointments and scans led to an intense 34-part radiation regimen. Unwilling to miss class—or softball—she elected to undergo treatment in Evansville. While radiation attacked the cancerous cells in her increasingly sore, scorched left foot, Schoolcraft attacked her sophomore year, showing up even when she couldn't lace up. "One day my assistant walked into the dugout and she saw her [Schoolcraft] struggling ... her foot was too fat and swollen to be put into her cleat," recalled USI Softball Head Coach Sue Kunkle. "She put her little Croc on her one foot and the cleat on the other, she got out on the field and did some drills."

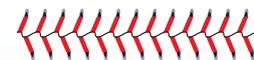
Quitting was not an option. Neither was complaining.





# courage

By Erin Meyer



Teammate Mary Bean '22, exercise science, remembers sitting beside Schoolcraft during radiation appointments and watching her crawl around their apartment to avoid the pain of walking. But she never saw her friend break—or even bend. “Nothing ever changed. You would not know that she was going through what she was going through,” said Bean. “Always a smile on her face.”

After months of juggling school, softball and her sarcoma treatments, Schoolcraft celebrated a clear scan in December 2019, prompting a long-awaited, but short-lived, return to the starting lineup. “She was on fire. She hit well, she played well,” said Kunkle.

COVID-19 didn't care. And neither did the cancer, which reemerged a few months later in her lymph nodes and lungs.

Fiercely competitive, Schoolcraft again vowed to remain undefeated, enduring weeks of chemotherapy that left her tired, weak and immuno-compromised—five hours from

campus. As she worked with professors to not only remain enrolled during the Fall 2020 Semester, but carry a full course load, her teammates made sure Schoolcraft never felt forgotten—sending frequent messages, wearing yellow ribbons and bracelets, selling t-shirts and telling the softball world, and anyone else who would listen, about their brave friend. “We started a hashtag in the summer, #Courage4Court,” said roommate and teammate Mikaela Domico '22, biology. “I think that helped us spread the word a little bit more and share her story with people at different schools and around the country.”

“Every team we played against knows who Courtney is,” added Bean.

Schoolcraft would rather it be solely because of her long bombs and laser arm, but she understands—and accepts—the opportunity presented. She was young, healthy and in the best shape of her life when cancer barreled into her like a wild pitch. Even as a skilled, seasoned catcher, she couldn't stop it. And while she's

not big on “what ifs,” she wonders what might have happened if she'd worried about that strange lump on her left foot a little sooner.

Because of her courage and candor, maybe someone else will.

“[This will] hopefully prevent it from happening to someone else, because sarcomas are generally in younger populations. You can be so healthy and not feel a single symptom, like I did,” said Schoolcraft. “Just being aware of what's going on with your body [is so important].”

Nearly two years after her initial diagnosis, Schoolcraft is relishing her return as she once again settles into her home behind the plate at USI. She is still steady. Calm. And in control.

But more than anything, she is grateful.

“Even if we lose,” she said, “I'll appreciate that I get to be on the field.”



Back row (L-R): Alicia Webb '21, Elissa Brown '22, Katie Back '22, Sammie Kihaga '23, Jordan Rager '23, Lexi Fair '24

Front row (L-R): MacKenzie Bedrick '24, Emma Tucher '23, Mary Bean '22, Courtney Schoolcraft '23, Mikaela Domico '22, Jessica Tucker '21, Rachel Martinez '23

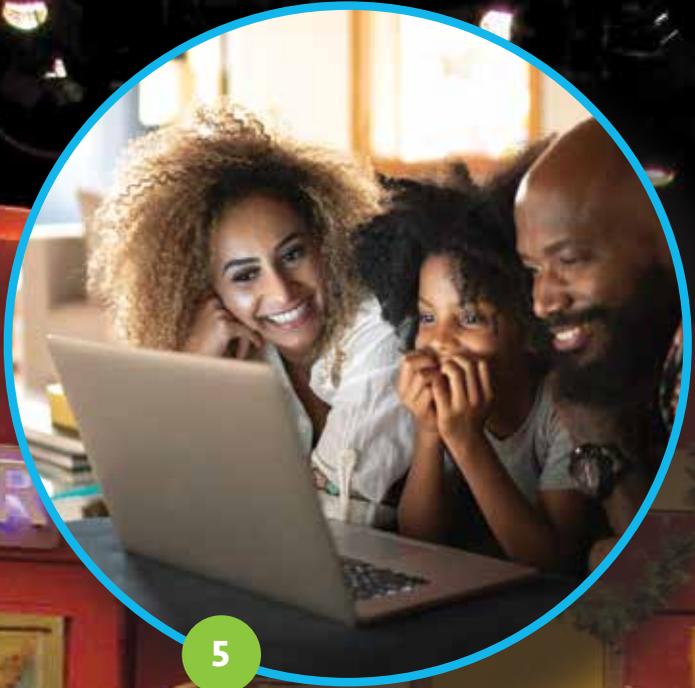
Quarantined: Allie Goodin '23, Emma Herron '24



Photo credit: Zoie Hunter '21, theatre



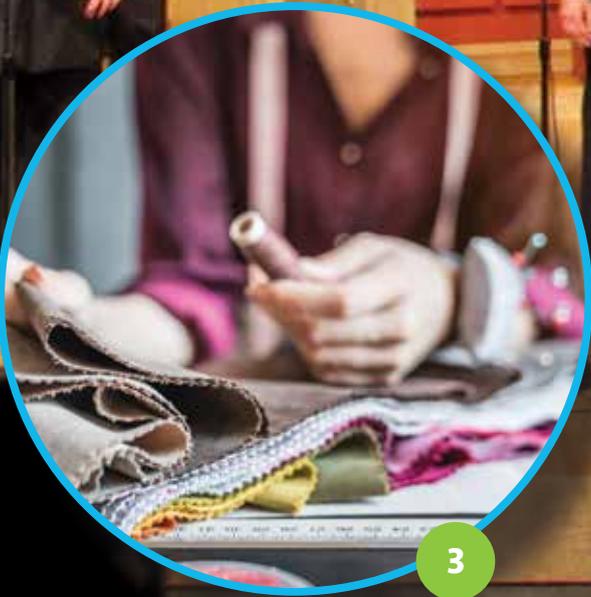
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2



## BEHIND THE SCENE

Pivot is the word of this COVID-19 year, and USI's Performing Arts Department devised a creative way for the "show to go on" when they switched it up by recording productions so audiences could enjoy them from the comfort and safety of their homes. A *Christmas Carol*, originally slated for December, with a big cast and fun for younger

children, was nixed for *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. It was a holiday family play that ticked all the COVID-imposed boxes: short rehearsals worked and it had a set that could be designed around social distancing. Despite the lack of a live audience, student actors and crew learned valuable skills and had a chance to showcase their work digitally.

1. Lighting and sound differ for live versus recorded productions, as contrasts appear heavier on camera and sound had to be recorded separately and simultaneously. Using "sitcom lighting" to create super flat balanced lighting across a large stage provided a uniform look. They used 16 microphones to record digital audio that was then mixed on a computer in post-production, similar to how movies and live albums are created.
2. Videoing a play takes ingenuity. Running six to seven cameras, to capture various angles and create a seamless narrative that simulates sitting in a theatre, required a rope and pulley system attached to trusses in the Performance Center. A remote cable was used to operate a mechanical motorized gimbal to move and focus the camera across the stage for a variety of shots.
3. Wardrobe fittings—two quick, in-person, masked appointments after the costume was first fitted to a dress form using the actor's measurements—allowed the costume crew to make limited tweaks before stepping back. Hair and makeup proved somewhat trickier, since actors had to do it themselves. Each was sent researched photos from the period along with all the supplies. The look needed to not only be perfect, but consistent for each day of filming to ensure continuity across several days of filming.
4. Actors were ensconced in individual booths with plexiglass windows in order to be close while briefly maskless—a creative departure from the way a radio show was read in 1946, the year the play was set. Then, actors would have gathered around one mic. Because no one moved about on stage, no blocking marks were needed for actors to know where to stand.
5. Audiences learned about the streamed play through social media and the press, and tickets were sold online at [USI.edu/theatre](http://USI.edu/theatre). A link was emailed and patrons could watch the production once. While *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* is no longer showing due to licensing agreements, *Songs for a New World* can be purchased until September 2021 at [USI.edu/theatre](http://USI.edu/theatre).





We, as college students, understand when something wrong is going on. We need to recognize it and face the wrongdoing head on. USI does not facilitate or support any kind of wrongdoing, and you shouldn't either. Be an adult and do the right thing in every situation. If you have trouble recognizing a possible wrongdoing that's going on in your personal community and are not sure how to address it, reach out to someone who may have a better solution.

– Austin Clausheide '21  
Marketing  
Evansville, Indiana

## Open Dialogue Advocacy



I think the entire year of 2020 has put a lot of things in perspective for all of us. It is vital to speak up or act upon something that is wrong, and there are right and wrong ways of doing that. To not point out someone's wrong doings, whether they are words or actions, is wrong within itself. I think a lot of people don't speak up when they see something wrong because of the [need to] avoid conflict, fear or for the simple fact that it doesn't affect them directly. I would encourage everyone, no matter if you can relate to the topic at hand, or if you witness something wrong, correct it, bring awareness and attention towards it, and be the change you want to see.

– Jady Jones '23  
Biology (Pre-PA)  
Indianapolis, Indiana

When I encounter people not being their best selves and I see their actions could harm others, or even themselves, I find myself stepping up and being the voice of reason. I think it is important to remember that in life everyone can be a light for a person that is in a dark place, so I always try to shine some light; to guide someone else's path. Never be afraid to speak up for what is right, because in every kitten is the heart of a lion just waiting to be heard. Being that voice might just improve someone's day.

– Danielle Walker '22  
Master of Public Administration  
Evansville, Indiana



I am a strong believer that nothing will ever be changed without having a meaningful conversation. However, willingness to have a productive conversation must be on both sides. Yes, it is important to stand up. Yes, it is important for those within our community to voice concerns when they see wrongdoings. However, we must understand that to stand up for what is right does not require an argument—it requires us to be capable of sitting down and having a productive conversation and problem solving together.

– Elizabeth Buckmaster '21  
Sonography  
Henderson, Kentucky



In today's society, there is a constant internal battle between right and wrong, and we have to realize the importance of speaking up and speaking out against wrong doings. Change must be initiated, and issues must be exposed in order to promote social change. When people decide to speak out and address issues in our communities, they have the power to ignite change and create awareness. We are living in a time of excessive social change, and everyone has the chance to encourage it. All it takes is a little courage to stand up for what you believe is right, whether it is combating racism or gender inequality, everyone has the chance to influence society in a positive way.

– Taegan Garner '23  
Sociology and Political Science  
Olney, Illinois



Speaking up when one sees wrongs in society is critical to accomplish a more welcoming community to all people. All people should be treated equally, regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation, etc. Not being affected by certain social issues should not be a synonym of not caring for those who do. Staying silent is deemed an approval of allowing these social problems to persist. As members of society, we should look out for one another, love one another and support one another. We are all global ambassadors that play a vital role as the youth who will move forward this great nation and the world.

– Jotam Chen '22  
Manufacturing Engineering  
Panama City, Panama



# Class Notes

## STAY IN TOUCH

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

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

*Class notes may be edited  
for length or clarity.  
We regret that  
we may not  
be able to use all  
submitted photos, and  
reserve the right to select  
which ones are included.*

## 1970s

**Becky Boling '75**, Spanish studies, is the Stephen R. Lewis Jr. Professor of Spanish and the Liberal Arts Emerita at Carleton College. The 2016 Liberal Arts' commencement speaker has been publishing her poetry and winning awards. Her poem, "Shores," won the Red Wing Arts' 19th Poet-Artist Collaboration. She won in the Northfield Sidewalk Poetry Contest in 2016 and 2018, and "Owls" was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

## 1980s

**Dennis Geisser '82**, mining engineering technology, President of Atlas Systems of New England, is exploring the U.S.A. as he heads into retirement.

**Dan Hollis '83**, communications, was selected for enshrinement by the board for the Marshall University's W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications Hall of Fame. He inspired countless students to become journalists and continues to produce award-winning video projects.

**Pepper Mulherin '88**, political science, has been appointed to represent the eighth district through June 30, 2023, with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. She also serves on numerous boards in her local community, including the Evansville Rotary Club (past president), Southwest Indiana Chamber, Warrick Chamber of Commerce, Evansville Industrial Foundation and others.

## 1990s

**Bryan Morrison '91**, psychology, Environmental Health and Safety Manager at USI for 15 years, was a cheerleader for four years, two of them as team captain. He met and married his wife **Emily Koresel Morrison '92**, social work, **M'00**, social work, while they were both attending USI. [1]

**Julie Vandever '97**, communications, is Community Relations Manager for Bell Oaks Place Senior Living in Newburgh, Indiana.

## 2000s

**Elizabeth (Lawrence) Childers '00**, business administration, and twin **Norma Lawrence '00**, public relations and advertising, raised funds for the Susan G. Koman Foundation as part of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month. They were both diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020 and participated in the Foundation's virtual walk.

**Cassandra (Harris) Laurenti '00**, chemistry, and her family of six hit the Panama City Beach, "sharing the Screagle love wherever we go!" [2]

**Richard Bennett '01**, biology, **M'17**, business administration, USI's Associate Professor of Biology met his sister Lisa for the first time in October 2020, and his brother Kenneth for the first time in November 2020. "In May 2020 I sent in a sample for DNA analysis through

23andMe. Through genealogical and other DNA analyses of others involved, I was able to confirm I have two siblings. This photo is the first time the three of us were all together." [3]

**Brandi Ponsler '02**, public relations and advertising, **M'07**, public administration, received 12 awards for excellence from the Kentucky Society for Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Conference for campaigns and initiatives she created while employed at Methodist Health in Henderson, Kentucky, as its Manager of Marketing and Public Relations. This spring, she accepted a new position as Director of Public Relations and Communications at Brandon Regional Hospital in Brandon, Florida.

**Tim Roman '02**, journalism and computer publishing, has been growing his business since graduating. "Over the last 10 years, I have gained business every year for my company To The Finish, LLC." [4]

**Amy Casavant '03**, art, is Foundation President and Sustainability Programs Leader with Old National Bank in Evansville. She is responsible for philanthropic strategy, implementation and oversight of the Old National Bank Foundation, and supporting Old National's sustainability initiatives.

**Kendall Waking '06**, public relations and advertising, is Director of Operations with Timberline Industries and Miller Casket Company.

**Michelle (Price) Seibert '07**, psychology, met and married Matt Seibert after graduating from USI. She earned her EdS in School Psychology at Western Kentucky



University. She and her family spent four years studying, teaching and consulting in Vietnam. In May, they welcomed their fourth child. [5]

**Erin (Ennes) Hansert '08**, public relations and advertising and Spanish, and her husband Kevin Hansert are the proud IVF parents of Julian, born in June. [6]

**Montra Reinhardt M'09**, nursing education, was announced as the new Dean of the Marchant School of Nursing with Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington, Indiana. She was previously an associate professor and department chair in the School of Nursing.

## 2010s

**Elise Andrews '11**, elementary education, M'20, business administration, is Program Coordinator for Meetings and Events International in Evansville.

**Bradley King '11**, engineering, was awarded Young Engineer of the Year by ACED Indiana for 2020. [7]

**Brianna Williams '12**, communication studies, wrote a children's book titled *The Adventures of Bree the Bee: The Radio Station*, teaching kids about radio. Launched in December! [8]

**Tami Jaramillo Zuniga M'12**, liberal studies, successfully defended her dissertation proposal and officially became a PhD candidate.

**Taylor Atkins '13**, accounting and professional services, was promoted to Business Unit Controller in November for ITW headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. His work has taken him to nearly 30 different countries. [9]

**Zane Clodfelter '13**, journalism, a stadium announcer for USI since 2013 was proud to be back at Screaming Eagles Arena behind the microphone for the men's

basketball home opener against Rockhurst November 27, after a long hiatus caused by the pandemic. "I love lending my voice to my alma mater and will always be proud of USI." [10]

**Kimberly McElroy-Jones M'13**, health administration, is Director of Community Partnerships for Community Health with Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is a fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives, an Indiana Healthy Marriage and Family Coalition board member, former board member of the Children's Bureau, Inc and Outreach, Inc, and a former board chair of the Avondale Meadows YMCA.

**David Martinez '13**, social science teaching, bought a house in Crown Point, Indiana. [11]

**Ashlynn Johnson '14**, health services, M'19, health administration, published two novels: *Love on Shore* and *Love is a Storm*. [12]

**Lori Merkley '14**, health services, M'16, occupational therapy, is an occupational therapist for Aegis Therapies.

**Virginia Morgan '14**, French, M'20, second language acquisition policy and culture, is Global Trade Compliance Analyst with Berry Global, Inc in Evansville.

**Debra Servello D'14**, organizational and systems leadership, is the Interim Dean for Rhode Island College School of Nursing. [13]

**Brenden Davidson '15**, political science, stands watch as Officer of the Deck, responsible for navigating the ship safely, during an underway replenishment onboard USS Chancellorsville off the coast of Japan. [14]

**Rachel Athipposhy '16**, engineering, M'19, engineering management, is Substation Automation Engineer with Vectren Centerpoint Energy in Evansville.

**Alexander Martens '16**, history, earned his Master's in college student affairs



from Eastern Illinois University, accepted a position of career consultant with Indiana University and adopted two black labs. [15]

**Jevin Redman '17**, marketing, joined WNIN Radio part-time in Evansville. He also is currently the Sports Director at Fox Sports Evansville and the basketball/baseball play-by-play voice at University of Evansville.

**Christina Lutes '18**, economics, **M'20**, data analytics, and **Drew Herron '19**, computer science, got engaged and plan to marry in May 2021. They met while attending USI. [16]

**Kaitlyn Begle '18**, social work, **M'20**, social work, is a licensed social worker at BrainPower Neurodevelopmental Center, LLC in Newburgh, Indiana.

**Lydia Moll '18**, criminal justice and sociology, **M'20**, social work, is a therapist with the Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare in Evansville.

**Ashley Case '19**, social work, **M'21**, social work. "Since graduating I've had a handsome baby boy. This picture is our 2020

Christmas photo with myself, my boyfriend Jimmy, our son Liam and his daughter Ameliya." [17]

**Travis Williams '19**, chemistry, was named Quality Assurance Lab Manager with Uniseal in Evansville.

## 2020s

**Zachary Carick '20**, engineering and electrical engineering, is Electrical Hardware Engineer with General Motors in Warren, Michigan.

**Olivia Dehner '20**, marketing, is Business Development Officer with Indiana Members Credit Union in Evansville.

**Barron Demarse M'20**, engineering management, is Facilities Manager of SpaceX at Cape Canaveral Air Force Base, in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

**Melissa Driskell '20**, nursing, is Oncology

Nurse Navigator at St. Vincent Hospital in Evansville.

**Makenna Gries '20**, respiratory therapy, is a respiratory therapist at Riley Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Amanda Hardin M'20**, healthcare administration, is Physician Practice Administrator at Taylor Regional Hospital in Campbellsville, Kentucky.

**Shelby Howell '20**, nursing, was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honors Society of Nursing.

**Nathaniel Kalsch '20**, engineering and electrical engineering, is Product Engineer-Electrical with Elastec in Carmi, Illinois.

**Kierra Romero '20**, kinesiology, is Health Fitness Specialist with HealthFitness in Tampa, Florida.

**Emily Schnell '20**, social work, is Cross System Care Facilitator for Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in South Bend, Indiana.

## Marriages

**Carol McGuire '00**, interpersonal-organizational communications, and Todd Hackett, were married on December 22, 2019. The couple resides in Dunedin, Florida.

**Jacob Hatton '10**, accounting and professional services, and Lindsey Smith, were married October 17, 2020. [18]

**Andrew Bolton '11**, health services, and Lydia Lagenour, were married July 25, 2020. The couple resides in Jasper, Indiana.

**Lori Vanderheide '14**, health services, **M'16**, occupational therapy, and Nathaniel Merkley, were married August 15, 2020. The couple resides in Jasper, Indiana.

**Blake Bruner '15**, sport management, and **Alexis Leak '15**, health services, were married September 19, 2020. The couple works for Old National Bank and she is a Delta Zeta alumna. They reside in Evansville with their dog, Bolt. [19]

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**Lexi Taylor '17**, business administration, and **Justin Locher**, were married September 19, 2020. [20]

**Scott Sherwood '17**, marketing, and **Madeline Kissel '17**, art, were married August 31, 2019. The couple resides in Evansville.

**Alexa Humphrey '18**, elementary education, and **Zachary Ferguson '16**, social science, were married November 14, 2020. Together they have ventured into real estate in Evansville. [21]

**Madison Doan '19**, English teaching, and **Jarred Bannon**, were married November 23, 2019. The couple resides in Evansville.

**Riley Snodgrass '20**, history, and **Savannah Bush '20**, special education and elementary education, were married May 18, 2019. The couple resides in Mount Vernon, Indiana. studies.

## Births

**Chelsey (Burton) Sullivan '09**, elementary education, and **Michael Sullivan** welcomed **Runa Mae Louise** on July 11, 2020. [22]

**Alexandria (Stout) Klemann '11**, health services, and **Cody Klemann** welcomed **Blaire** on July 22, 2020. [23]

**Roberta (Mitrison) Rolley '11**, health services, **M'14**, health administration, and **Craig Rolley Sr.** welcomed **Craig Robert Jr.** on September 1, 2019.

**Stephanie Michelle (Lutz) Simon '13**, elementary education, and **Tanner Simon**, along with daughter **Harper**, welcomed **Clark** on May 14, 2020. [24]

**Alyssa (Hammel) Williams '13**, physical education teaching, and **James Williams** welcomed **Carly** on February 25, 2020.

**Haley (Oeth) Duckworth '14**, public relations and advertising, and **Nathaniel**

welcomed **Greyson Christopher** on October 24, 2020. [25]

**Cory Ingram '15**, exercise science, and **Brooke (Mullen) Ingram '17**, nursing, welcomed **Grant** on January 2, 2020.

**Lauren (Brown) Eagleson '16**, management, **M'20**, human resources, and **Ryan Eagleson '16**, criminal justice studies and sociology, **M'20**, human resources, welcomed **Evelynn Victoria** on July 11, 2020. [26]

**Danielle (Wire) Nkrumah-Dartey '17**, mathematics teaching, and **Daniel Nkrumah-Dartey** welcomed **Kyler** on October 5, 2020. [27]

**Erica (Hale) Van Leer '17**, elementary education, and **Logan Van Leer** welcomed **Jameson Joshua** on July 18, 2020.

**Nikela (Klinghagen) Schultz '18**, German studies, and **Zachary Schultz**, of Evansville, welcomed **Leon** on February 2, 2020.



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## In Memoriam

**Charlotte (Smith) DeWig '73**, elementary education, of Evansville, died October 10, 2020. She taught many years at Oak Hill Middle School where she was also the cheer and dance coach. She loved spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren who affectionately called her MeMe.

**Stanley Skelton '73**, elementary education, of Gentryville, Indiana, died December 17, 2020. He loved the outdoors, hunting, fishing and just enjoying nature.

**Philip Thomas '73**, social science, of Alford, Florida, died September 10, 2020. He served in the U.S. Navy as a Radioman and was a proud member of the Amvets Post 231 of Fountain, Florida. He enjoyed gardening, playing golf, fishing, working in his yard and daily walks with his dogs.

**John Walker '74**, elementary education, of Evansville, died August 8, 2020. He will be

greatly missed by his wife, daughter and son who will remember him as the best father any child could have wanted.

**Norma Wyber '75**, elementary education, of Evansville, died October 25, 2020. She dedicated 45 years of life to preschool ministry and taught Sunday School classes to toddlers.

**Carolyn (Carole) Dowell Rust '77**, English and French studies, of Mt. Vernon, died November 29, 2020. She was a writer and avid volunteer with Historic New Harmony and more, as well as serving on many USI boards. She was the first USI graduate to serve as a University Trustee.

**Ruth Ann (Jahn) Hall '78**, business, of Evansville, died June 16, 2020. She was an optimistic and unassuming person, and a kidney recipient who encouraged others to consider being organ donors.

**Hugh Cole '78**, biology, Henderson, Kentucky, died November 23, 2020. He

taught biology at various high schools in Kentucky, South Korea and Vietnam, and loved playing music, walking on his land in Maine, reading and being an uncle.

**David Osterman '78**, accounting, of Evansville, died August 30, 2020. He retired from the United Leasing, Inc. after 25 years of service, and enjoyed learning history, NASCAR, reading and movies.

**Michael Spellum '79**, accounting, of Evansville, died October 17, 2020. He loved rock and roll, making people laugh and football, especially the Green Bay Packers.

**Fay (Berkemeier) Heil '80**, art, of St. Wendel, Indiana, died September 5, 2020. She worked as a phlebotomy technician for 33 years at St. Vincent Hospital. She enjoyed flower gardening, oil painting and spending time with her family.

**Kerry Kamp '80**, accounting, of Evansville, died June 1, 2020. He was the Executive Assistant for Transportation and Services

for the City of Evansville. He was a jokester who loved working around the house and teasing family and friends.

**Sister Rita Joyce DiNardo '81**, elementary education, of Evansville died December 11, 2020. As a member of the Daughters of Charity, she devoted her life to the ministry as a teacher and librarian in Illinois, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and Maryland.

**Michael Doris '83**, business administration, of Newburgh, Indiana, died October 12, 2020. He served his country with a celebrated career in the United States Navy and retired in 1976 after 22 years as Chief Warrant Officer. He then joined Fifth Third Bank becoming Vice President and Senior Trust Officer, spending 28 years in wealth management.

**Mary (Nevill) LeGate '84**, accounting, Evansville, died November 13, 2020. She loved animals and supported many



local and national animal protection organizations. She loved travel and made many trips to Europe to enjoy the ancient architecture, varied cultures, history and scenery.

**Lana Baker '85**, communications and sociology, of Marion, Kentucky, died July 9, 2020. She enjoyed her family, traveling, reading and robust conversations. She especially loved her husband and the home they shared on Brushy Pond.

**Jonathan Parkhurst '85**, political science, of Evansville, died August 20, 2020. He was an attorney for 30 years in Posey and Vanderburgh counties, trying over 150 jury trials. He taught criminal law and trial techniques to young prosecutors for the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys' Council and the National Advocacy Center.

**Tonya (Ausenbaugh) Staup '86**, communications and social science, of Evansville, died August 13, 2020. She worked for 33 years at the Boys and Girls Club of Evansville as a Program Director and

Assistant Executive Director. She enjoyed wineries and traveling.

**Nelda (Searcy) Veach '87**, marketing, of Evansville, died July 29, 2020. She was a Senior Marketing Executive for Via Media. She was one of the finest, loveliest and most beautiful people.

**David Baumgart '89**, elementary education, of Evansville, died May 28, 2020. He served in the United States Marine Corps during Vietnam, was a devout Catholic and had a big heart.

**Carolyn Sue (Moehlenkamp) Stephan '89**, science (teaching), of Evansville, died October 15, 2020. She loved family celebrations and always had an open door and hugs for all the kids who passed through her home.

**Lavon Boyd '90**, psychology, of Newburgh, Indiana, died September 13, 2020. She enjoyed sewing, traveling and her grandchildren.

**Deborah Wildt '91**, elementary education, of Mount Vernon, Indiana, died May 15, 2020. She loved her family very much and treasured her time with them.

**Sharon Duell '92**, history, M'00, liberal studies, of Newburgh, Indiana, died September 30, 2020. She and her husband purchased an automotive dealership, Evansville Chrysler Plymouth in Evansville. During her life, she served on many nonprofit and charity boards in Evansville.

**Elizabeth Ann (Mahon) Gustafson '92**, social work, of Evansville, died December 16, 2020. She retired from Deaconess Hospital after many years of service as a social worker in hospice care. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her.

**Ronald Schindler '92**, social work, of Evansville, died December 2, 2020. He worked for the Vanderburgh County Corrections Facility for over 30 years and was a club member of the Owls.

**Margie (Parsons) Drennan '94**, English, of Evansville, died December 10, 2020. She was a Purdue Gold Master Gardener and immensely proud of her many diverse types of ferns and rare black grass.

**Mary Alice Lowe '94**, nursing, of Evansville, died August 4, 2020. She worked as a registered nurse at Deaconess Hospital for 28 years, the last 15 in the intensive care unit.

**Marsha McDevitt Phillips '94**, social work, M'95, social work, of Francisco, Indiana, died November 19, 2020. She was a beautician for over 30 years before deciding to complete her undergraduate degree and opened New Beginnings Behavior Management, LLC.

**Bethany (Palmer) Grimes '95**, elementary education, of Evansville, died October 10, 2020. She was a passionate gourmet cook. She enjoyed dining out and sampling other styles of cooking, as well as mushroom hunting.

**James Pfender '96**, nursing, of Newburgh, Indiana, died June 8, 2020. He served his

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community for 20 years as an ER trauma nurse for Deaconess Hospital and as a firefighter for the Evansville Fire Department.

**Betty Jo (nee Armstrong, Grimes) Altheide M'97**, liberal studies, of Crozet, Virginia, died September 18, 2020. A proud eighth generation Hoosier and long-time resident of Princeton and later Newburgh, she was deeply proud of her rural roots and being the proverbial farmer's daughter.

**Kim Welch '98**, social work, of Evansville, died July 20, 2020. He received USI's Golden Key Award and pursued his graduate degree while working full-time as a case manager. As a social worker, he provided counseling and therapy to many patients within the hospital and nursing home systems.

**Monica Stinchfield '99**, finance, of Evansville, died December 1, 2020. She was employed at First Federal Bank

for over 40 years, and was active with Habitat for Humanity, serving on the Board of Directors for 16 years, and was on the Board of Directors for HOLA of Evansville.

**Matthew Kelley '02**, industrial supervision, of Evansville, died September 27, 2020. He loved anything with wheels and a motor, especially automobiles or tractors, but his greatest joy were his three daughters.

**Aaron Smith '03**, computer information systems, of Boonville, Indiana, died August 17, 2020. He enjoyed deer hunting, soccer, Notre Dame football and most of all spending time with his sons.

**Zachary Farmer '08**, respiratory therapy, of Boonville, Indiana, died December 7, 2020. He spent his life doing everything he could to improve the lives of those around him. He was a young man with an old soul who loved his family, friends and his canine companion Alexa.

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**Ron Shelton '12**, sociology, of Evansville, died October 19, 2020. He had a great passion for education and learning, constantly attending classes throughout his life, and was a United States Navy veteran and lifetime member of the VFW Post #1114 of Evansville.

**Angela (Martin) Hollingsworth '17**, radiologic and imaging science, of Evansville, died June 1, 2020. She loved her family and enjoyed working as a radiology clinical educator at Deaconess Hospital and taught Radiology part-time at USI.

## USI FAMILY Retiring

### COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Virginia Weiler, Instructor in Marketing  
15 years

Paul Raymond, Associate Professor of  
Political Science  
28 years

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

Nancy Myers, Mathematics Specialist  
27 years

Margaret Gruenwald, Instructor in Mathematics  
22.5 years

### ROMAIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Ernest Nolan, Assistant Professor Computer  
Information Systems  
37 years

Sharlett Gillard, Professor of Computer  
Information Systems  
34 years

Tim Mahoney, Instructor of Economics  
33 years

Jennifer Williams, Professor of Computer  
Information Systems  
28.5 years

### ADMINISTRATION

Sylvia Dillworth, Administrative Assistant  
29 years

Virginia "Ginny" Bryant, Assistant Director of  
Development, Major Gifts  
27.5 years

Donna Moore, Senior Administrative Assistant  
25 years

Mary Ann Bernard, Senior Gift Processing  
Assistant  
20 years

Brian Brown, Custodial Worker  
20 years

Susan Schmitt, Senior Library Assistant  
17 years

Cathy Coomes, Administrative Assistant  
16 years

Jeri Broshears, Senior Administrative Assistant  
15 years

Linda Taylor, Custodial Worker  
10 years

She is a Chinese opera singer, performing operatic repertoires in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Korea and the United States.

**D**r. Bohan Ye, Assistant Professor of Economics, has many passions: students, research, teaching and singing—specifically in Chinese Operas. Born in Beijing, China, she fell for opera when she was a girl because of the beautiful costumes. She spent hours listening to performances until she knew them by heart and could sing them herself. Her grandmother arranged for her to train with one of China's masters, and she spent all her after-school time practicing opera. While performing in New York City, she met her husband, who was a musician in the performance troupe. Opera is a passion, but it's education that drives her. She knows the sacrifice and effort it takes to earn an education and pushes herself to make every lecture interesting and valuable.

She owns more than 200 hairpieces, 10 fans, four Fuchen (a stick with the green fibers that the actor holds), four pairs of swords and five full sets of costumes for different roles.



### **Why did you decide to be an economics professor?**

I love teaching and research. Sharing my knowledge is a passion of mine. I want students to know what I know and how I learned it. It keeps my mind young too!

### **What is your focus/area of interest?**

I have studied many subjects in different places. I studied finance at Tsinghua University in China, management science and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, econometrics at

Tilburg University in the Netherlands and economics at the University of Arizona. I am interested in using experimental methods to study economic questions, especially social preferences like trust and altruism.

### **How did you become interested in that area of study?**

My undergraduate major was finance. After taking a psychology course taught by a professor from

UC Berkeley, I became interested in psychology, as it reveals why people do what they do. I was happy to find out there exists an interdisciplinary field called experimental economics. It allows me to study an individual's decision making and behavior with both solid economic models and creative design of psychology experiments.

**Describe your teaching style.** I use an interdisciplinary approach to teach. I've always believed that my priority is to assist students in enhancing their critical thinking and practical

skills. I believe that all students, regardless of their background, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status, can learn and thrive in an environment where they are stimulated and challenged, and where they feel reaffirmed and supported. I endeavor to

create a classroom where all my students feel safe to participate and to enjoy challenges. In my opinion, every lecture is a stage performance, and the instructor is the only performer. I am trying to make my classes just like big shows!

### **What is Chinese opera and how does performing it enhance your teaching?**

It is a comprehensive stage art style that incorporates music, acrobatics, martial arts, performance art, etc. Learning to perform for the opera

helped me know how to teach because it allows me to control the learning pace by reading the audiences' reactions so I can pause when needed for students to absorb the information.

### **What book do you recommend people read?**

"The Book of Why" by Judea Pearl and Dana Mackenzie. It illustrates the scientific method of causal analysis—which is valuable to almost all researchers—and is deeply philosophical but very readable, using many daily examples.

### **What word or phrase describes you?**

I am always curious about the world, thankful for what I have and optimistic about the future.



She plays the piano and loves drama movies; she is building a library of movie clips to use in her economics classes.



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