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THE MAGAZINE OF ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

STATE

IllinoisState.edu SUMMER 2021

A new era

Dr. Terri Goss Kinzy began her term as Illinois State's president on July 1. The 20th president to serve the University, Kinzy is the first woman to hold the office.



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FirstWord

Just over four decades ago this fall, I began my undergraduate degree at the University of Akron. All these years later, I once again feel a bit like a freshman coming to campus for the first semester of her collegiate journey.

The emotions that every student starting a degree feels when fall classes begin is exactly what I am experiencing as I take on the responsibilities of serving as Illinois



State's 20th president. What an honor to have been chosen to lead the University! I began July 1 and am enjoying all aspects of the work as I settle into the position. My husband, Scott, and I are especially grateful for the overwhelmingly warm welcome we have received.

Like those attending ISU for the first time this fall, I am still learning where buildings are located and details about the University's rich history. I am also answering the same question incoming students often hear: Why did you pick Illinois State? Many reply that the University's location is a selling point, and I agree. Scott and I understand why it is so special to be in the Midwest.

The range and quality of academic offerings is an even more critical criterion. During

the national search process, I realized that Illinois State has exceptional faculty teaching in stellar degree programs. As a scientist, I was delighted to see the research—especially with students involved—and a range of graduate programs that are equally impressive.

It is the potential to grow Illinois State that is even more compelling. We are on an upward trajectory that I find incredibly exciting, and I hope you do too. The prospect of establishing an engineering program is just one future directed opportunity. Others include renovating the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts; increasing international student enrollment; and strengthening partnerships locally, within the state, and across the country.

I knew Illinois State was the right place for me when I realized it is a thriving university committed to promoting equity, pursuing diversity, and assuring inclusion, which matches my personal convictions. The established process of shared governance is another strength that fits with my collaborative leadership style.

I am committed to continuing the individualized attention that is Illinois State's trademark. This is just one of the core values that makes the University exceptional as it impacts each and every student and enhances opportunities for student success.

It is a privilege to take the helm of this university, and I am eager to meet those who have been influenced through their campus connection. I look forward to working with you and learning from you more about what it means to be a Redbird.

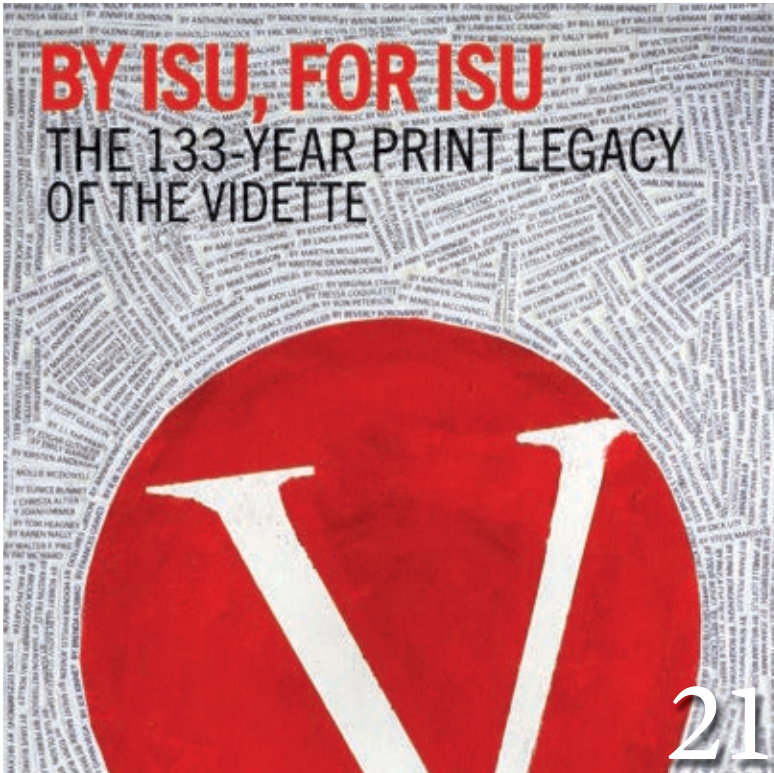
Terri Goss Kinzy, Ph. D.
President, Illinois State University



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Illinois' first public university

STATE

Volume 22, Number 1, Summer 2021



Vidette cover by Chris Grim

14 Ready to serve

Dr. Terri Goss Kinzy is an enthusiastic professor, internationally recognized scientist, and respected administrator who gets results. She is also a first-generation college graduate whose cumulative experience in academia prepared her for the ultimate leadership role as president at Illinois State University.

18 An unlikely combination

The word 'opera' conjures images of opulent staging of music performed in a foreign language. Not for Veronica Chamberlain '14, whose job is to teach students what an opera is and how to create their own in classrooms across Chicago.

21 Read all about it...online

The Vidette has been a learning lab and campus news source for more than 130 years. The newspaper entered a new era with the final printed version in April. Following a national trend, *The Vidette* is now strictly an online publication.

26 Dissecting disease

Basheer Becerra '19 is a doctoral student at Harvard Medical School's Department of Biomedical Informatics. His research ties to discovering options for sickle cell patients. Becerra credits ISU for providing the academic foundation needed for such groundbreaking study.

28 World of opportunity

ISU's Innovation Consulting Community (ICC) gives students a competitive advantage. An extra-curricular program, ICC connects students with clients facing a specific dilemma across the U.S. or around the globe.

2 University News

6 Redbird Athletics

34 Alumni Report

On the cover: Dr. Kinzy studied at Carnegie and led programs at Rutgers and Western Michigan University before seeking the ISU presidency.





Homecoming marks centennial year

Other than commencement, there is nothing on campus with as rich a tradition as Homecoming. This fall marks the 100th year since the celebration that brings alumni back to ISU each fall began.

The earliest version occurred in 1919 with a recognition of alumni and students who had served during World War I. Credit for the official start of Homecoming goes to President David Felmley.

During a trip east during the winter of 1920-1921, he noted what he called the homecoming trend at other schools. He appointed a committee to develop a plan. The University's first Homecoming was November 4-5 in 1921. Approximately 700 alumni attended a pre-game parade from Old Main to the football field. Other activities included a party in Fell Hall, a dance, and a free waffle breakfast.

The celebration was such a success that it became an annual tradition that expanded over time. A "hobo parade" through the downtown was added in 1923, with campus clubs

competing for recognition as the dingiest group. The parade, shown above from 1931, remains a Homecoming favorite.

Houses were decorated starting in 1927, which is another tradition that continues as local businesses and campus offices display a Homecoming theme. The football game remains another highlight of Homecoming, which has grown into a week of activities that includes events such as a 5k and tailgating.

Homecoming is the work of staff in Alumni Engagement, and many across campus, who will welcome Redbirds back for this year's celebration October 11-17. Information can be found online at Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu.

"This is an historic year for the University. The events to celebrate the 100th year of Homecoming are designed to reflect the rich traditions and vibrant future of the University," said Alumni Engagement Executive Director Kris Harding, M.S. '94. "We look forward to the many celebrations and seeing our alumni reconnect with fellow classmates, students, and the campus community."

Annual giving event exceeds past totals

Records were broken for the third consecutive year during Birds Give Back, a day in the spring semester when Redbirds come together to celebrate Illinois State. A total of 3,184 individual gifts were received from donors, who contributed \$1,138,866. That compares to 2,188 individual gifts and \$1,118,745 raised a year ago.

“This year was a major turning point for Birds Give Back. We’ve built momentum, and it’s becoming part of the Redbird culture,” said Senior Director of Annual Giving Jillian Nelson.

She coordinates the event that began in 2019 and is part of Redbird Philanthropy Week. It honors those who financially support the University and educates the campus community about the importance of giving back.

In-person events were replaced this year with the inaugural Redbird Philanthropy Quest, which featured a series of videos and questions that students answered. Nearly 1,000 students participated. There were also multiple challenges from alumni that encouraged others to give and increased the amount donated.

The School of Communication led the University’s academic programs with 215 gifts totaling more than \$100,000. It was also a big day for Athletics, which raised \$74,380 from 355 gifts to fund the Redbird Performance Lab. Another 390 gifts were made to the Multicultural Center.

Science journal publishes undergrads’ physics work

For the first time in 25 years, an Illinois State research team has had its work published in the prestigious *American Journal of Physics*. It is one of the most selective physics publications in the country.

The article, titled “Analog Implementation of a Hodgkin-Huxley Model Neuron,” was co-authored by Zach Mobbille ’19 when he was an undergraduate.



One priority during Birds Give Back is creating opportunities for students to express their thanks to donors. These students shared their appreciation on notes that were posted in the Bone Student Center for others to see and understand the impact of donors.

He became interested in single neurons while in an experimental physics course and wanted to construct an electronic circuit to mimic how they behave.

Mobbille, who is now completing a graduate degree in mathematics at ISU, partnered with Associate Professor of Physics George Rutherford, Professor of Physics and Biological Sciences Epaminondas Rosa Jr., Assistant Professor of Information Technology Rosangela Follmann, and fellow undergraduate physics student Jordan Brandt-Trainer ’19.

The team’s work is a study of how neurons connect and communicate, and how that behavior relates to the dynamics of the Hodgkin-Huxley mathematical model. The team answered these questions through computational simulations of electronic neuron behavior.

Family’s gift benefits College of Education

A \$500,000 gift from Barbara Efaw ’59 and family will support students in the

College of Education, which will name a student success center set to open next spring the Barbara and Larry Efaw Center for Educator Excellence.

Barbara studied elementary education. Her late husband, Larry ’56, M.S. ’59, earned degrees in business teacher education. He served in the Army before teaching high school business classes. Barbara taught until the birth of their children, David and Diane.

The couple had only \$100 when they married. They want to give others access to education that Larry enjoyed as a first-generation college student. In 2004, they established the Larry and Barbara Efaw Endowed Scholarship Fund to support future educators.

The family’s most recent gift “will make a tremendous impact for many years, allowing us to provide more academic, social emotional, and teaching supports to help our students persist in their dreams of becoming educators,” said College of Education Dean James Wolfinger.

Where are they now?



Susan Almeida left her Chicago home in 1969 to study elementary education at Illinois State as an undergraduate. She didn't leave the University until decades later, when she retired from the College of Education in 2011.

"I thought I would go back to Chicago, but I stayed forever," chuckled Almeida '73, M.S. '78. "Once I decided to be a teacher, I knew there was no other place to study but ISU." With jobs limited, she opted to complete a graduate degree and chose to focus on reading. That decision prepared her to join the faculty in DeGarmo Hall.

Almeida taught undergraduate education majors the art of teaching reading and in 1990, was chosen to serve as director of ISU's Reading Recovery program. She trained at the University of Illinois for a year to master the intervention that originated in New Zealand and targets children in first grade.

"We helped little school districts across Illinois. I was traveling all the time and trained hundreds of teachers," said Almeida, who continued her own professional development to remain a Reading Recovery instructor.

"What kept me going was seeing the children learn to read. The child changes from feeling frustrated and like a failure to finding success," Almeida said. "That kind of experience is unbelievable."

She also enjoyed training the teachers but after 20 years on the job, was ready to retire. That created the opportunity to volunteer as a hostess at Ewing Manor, which she did for nine years and until the pandemic restricted visitors to the property in Bloomington.

Almeida also retired from working at WJBC, a Central Illinois radio station that aired her call-in program called *The Broad View* on Saturday mornings for five years. She and her husband, Jerry Meiss '71, M.S. '77, now fill their schedule with family visits. There are three adult children and five grandchildren the couple adores. Their house in Normal is a favorite place for the grandchildren to gather and keeps Almeida close to the campus that she also considers home.

Almeida can be reached at susanaudrey3@gmail.com.

Online program ranked among nation's best

U.S. News & World Report has recognized Illinois State for having the 14th best online bachelor's degree program in the nation. The ranking is for the registered health information technician-health informatics management (RHIT-HIM) program.

Offered through the Department of Health Sciences, the sequence gives individuals with a degree and working as RHITs an easy path to further their education. The program prepares professionals to collect, maintain, and analyze health data that is used to deliver, manage, and finance quality health care.

"Our program bridges the gap between students' technical education and their professional education," said Dr. Jennifer Peterson, program director for health informatics and management. "As health care evolves to demand more expertise in informatics and analytics, many professionals find they need additional education to meet their professional goals or their facility's needs."

Psychology faculty named Distinguished Professor

Dr. Jeffrey Kahn has been named a Distinguished Professor, which is ISU's highest faculty honor. A professor of psychology, he joined the University in 1997 and has taught 14 different courses from freshman to doctoral levels.

Beyond receiving numerous teaching awards, Kahn is a prolific researcher with international acclaim. He developed and published the self-report *Distress Disclosure Index* (DDI), which is a standard assessment translated into five languages.

Kahn's research has been recognized with awards from professional organizations such as the Society of Counseling Psychology of the American Psychological Association. He has served on the editorial boards of the prestigious *Journal of Counseling Psychology* and *The Counseling Psychologist*.

Kahn is a past recipient of ISU's University Research Initiative Award, Outstanding College Researcher Award, and the Outstanding University Research Award.

Alumni award created to honor grad's legacy

Andrew Purnell Jr. '57 was a servant leader who advocated for equity, particularly for Black students. To honor his legacy, the Alumni Association established the Andrew Purnell Jr. Trailblazer Alumni Award.

Purnell worked as a student to form ISU's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter. He served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and in 1984, partnered with Black alumni to create the Illinois State Black Colleagues Associa-



Andrew Purnell Jr.

tion (BCA). It thrives today, with members providing scholarships to minority students annually.

A mathematics major, Purnell served in the U.S. Army. He was inducted into ISU's Steve and Sandi Adams Legacy Hall of Fame and received the Alumni Association's Mercier Outstanding Service Award. He was slated to receive an honorary degree at the time of his death in March 2020.

The Trailblazer Award will recognize alumni groundbreakers, innovators, and pioneers who make a positive change through servant leadership. The recipient will demonstrate great compassion to give, serve, and enrich the lives of others. Presentation of the honor will begin in 2022 at the annual Alumni Awards program.

Directors chosen for Alumni Association

There is new leadership within the Alumni Association following the annual meeting in June.

Karyn L. Aguirre '86, Daniel Jackson '18, and Matthew Rillie '15, all of Chicago, and Julia Durnell '19 of Normal were elected to three-year terms on the board of directors.

Officers were also elected, with Dave Horstein '08 chosen as president. Leah Walton '88, M.S. '92, is vice president/president-elect. Tim Griffin '93 is secretary; with Steve Smith '89, M.S. '93, serving as past president.

For information on the Alumni Association and how to get involved, visit Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/Association.

Stevenson Center gains national service status

Illinois State's commitment to AmeriCorps alumni through the Stevenson Center earned the University status as a School of National Service. The recognition further cements ISU's commitment to its core value of civic engagement.

The Stevenson Center coordinates AmeriCorps and Peace Corps activities on campus.

Former AmeriCorps members are admitted to the Applied Community and Economics Development Fellows Program, which is an interdisciplinary graduate sequence. They receive a graduate assistantship, paid internship, and full tuition waiver.

As part of a national network, 270,000 AmeriCorps members and volunteers

improve communities each year. Focus areas include disaster response, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, and veterans and military families. AmeriCorps has more than 1.2 million alumni.

The Stevenson Center also has a partnership that allows some current graduate students to serve as AmeriCorps members during their year on campus and/or their second-year internship.

These AmeriCorps members have completed the equivalent of 55 full-time service-years and have received education awards directly from AmeriCorps totaling more than \$300,000.

Special ed program named best in U.S.

The Department of Special Education (SED) has been named the number one school in Illinois and the nation by *College Factual*, which creates the Best Colleges for Special Education ranking. Overall quality of the program, degree completion, post-graduation earnings, major focus, and accreditation are factors used to evaluate programs.

ISU's department is one of only two in the country that prepares special education teachers in the areas of learning and behavior, low vision and blindness, and D/deaf and hard of hearing.

Students complete more than 600 hours of clinical experience prior to student teaching. They are prepared to teach learners with a range of disabilities and using assistive technologies.

Faculty are experts in their field and most have years of experience in the classroom working with students of all abilities. In the last year, SED faculty have been awarded two grants of more than \$1 million each to improve preparing educators.

Redbird Athletics



Pair of Redbirds beat the Olympic odds

by Nick Erickson

The odds of becoming an Olympian, according to past president and co-founder of the International Society of Olympic Historians Bill Mallon, is roughly 1 in 500,000. In other words, there's a better chance of finding 50 four-leaf clovers than participating at the crème de la crème of athletic spectacles.

Yet Illinois State University can claim a connection to two athletes who beat the odds and represented their countries at the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Aisha Praught Leer '12 wore the black, green, and yellow of Jamaica on the track as she competed in the 1,500-meter run. Women's basketball player Jada Stinson, suiting up as a grad transfer from Arkansas State this winter for the Redbirds, represented a Puerto Rico team making the Olympic tournament for the first time.

The Games were held without spectators due a coronavirus (COVID-19) case increase in Japan's capital city. But being an Olympian is a title so very few athletes can claim, and that's special whether or not fans were there. Getting that confirmation was just as meaningful to the athletes who realized their dreams.

"I was just like, 'wow, I'm really going to the Olympics,'" Stinson said.

This was Praught Leer's second Olympic Games. The former All-American runner at Illinois State also competed for Jamaica in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, except in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

Praught Leer—a Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment graduate—switched events in 2019 and opted for the shorter distance. Her best collegiate race came at a similarly distanced event, the mile run, at the 2012 NCAA

“I was just like, ‘wow, I’m really going to the Olympics.’”

indoor track and field championships in Nampa, Idaho.

Her itinerary looked a little different that day than it presumably did after her Tokyo run. After placing second in 4 minutes, 37.77 seconds—a school record by nearly eight seconds—Praught Leer boarded a plane at 5 a.m. the next day for Texas.

Despite nearly winning a national championship that was broadcast on ESPN hours earlier, Praught Leer headed straight for a dig to complete her summer field experience.

“To do extraordinary things, you’ve got to be a special person,” Illinois State cross country and track and field coach Jeff Bovee said.

“Special people aren’t necessarily born that way. She’s just really somebody that has taken advantage of every opportunity that has come her way. She doesn’t pass up any experience.”

Bovee could always count on Praught Leer rising to the occasion. He saw it countless times at Illinois State, and said she was perhaps the very best he’s ever

Praught Leer has embraced an advocacy role for young women of color. Her promotion of the sport embodies both the Olympic spirit and what it means to be a Redbird student-athlete.

“She’s always been confident, but to see her grow and be an advocate for so many others who need support, that’s just refreshing to see, and she’s so approachable,” Bovee said. “Anybody who meets her just says ‘wow.’”

Stinson played guard for a Puerto Rico squad that very well could be role models to young women in the country, as the island nation was represented in the Olympic women’s basketball tournament for the first time.

The team had breakfast at the governor’s residence, and she noticed people within the country recognizing the accomplishment.

That’s not lost on the graduate transfer who is at ISU earning a master’s degree in criminal justice sciences.

“It means a lot honestly just to be a part of history,” said Stinson, whose grandparents are from Puerto Rico.

Memphis—was first called up to the Puerto Rican national team in March for the Centrobasket Tournament in El Salvador. There, she averaged 14.5 points per game in four victories and was named to the All-Tournament Team. She then helped Puerto Rico finish second, behind the United States, in the FIBA Women’s AmeriCup tournament in June.

The youngest player on Puerto Rico’s roster during the Olympics, Stinson said the physicality at the international level was much more noticeable than the college game.

She hopes that translates to her game this winter at Illinois State as she muscles through the lane for the Redbirds.

She also valued the opportunity to get advice from older, more experienced players.

“It’s all a learning experience,” Stinson said. “And I feel like that’s what I’m getting out of this the most. Whether it’s just like picking the brains of the veteran players or just simply watching and seeing how they play.”

“It’s all a learning experience,” Stinson said. “And I feel like that’s what I’m getting out of this the most. Whether it’s just like picking the brains of the veteran players or just simply watching and seeing how they play.”

coached at learning to grow with expectations on the big stage.

Praught Leer, who obtained Jamaican citizenship after connecting with her birth father from Jamaica shortly after her college career, has carried that mindset off the track. She has spoken openly about her heritage through her social media, interviews, and sponsorships.

“It’s just been wonderful to represent Puerto Rico. I never thought I’d be able to do it.”

It was a whirlwind for Stinson as soon as her collegiate season ended at Arkansas State, where she led the team averaging 12.6 points per contest. The Fayetteville, North Carolina, native—who played the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 seasons at the University of

While the Games are over, being an Olympian is something nobody can take away from Praught Leer or Stinson. Not only did they beat the odds to become Olympic athletes, but they embraced the responsibilities and privileges of representing their countries and Illinois State.

Where are they now?



Provided by Utah Royals FC

Former Bone Scholar Kate Del Fava '20 may attend veterinary school someday, just as she intended to do after graduating in May 2020 as a pre-veterinarian medicine and animal sciences double major. But the new Kansas City team of the National Women's Soccer League is glad those plans are on hold for now.

Del Fava, who played a school record 7,099 minutes for the Illinois State women's soccer team from 2016-2019, has been a staple for a franchise that relocated to America's Heartland from Utah. She has been a regular starter for the team as a defender. She played midfield throughout college, showing her versatility.

The Utah Royals, now playing in Kansas City, selected Del Fava with the 12th overall pick in the 2020 draft. She also started five of the six contests she entered for Utah in 2020, proving she belongs in arguably the top women's professional soccer league in the world.

Track and field, cross country programs shine

It was a banner year for Illinois State runners.

The women's track and field program won its fourth consecutive Missouri Valley Conference indoor championships on February 26-28 in Cedar Falls, Iowa. On May 16 in Carbondale, the Redbirds won their third straight outdoor conference championship, setting a meet record with 232 team points.

During the indoor season, Kameesha Smith, who won the Missouri Valley Conference high jump for a second

consecutive year, soared all the way to the national meet. Smith, who is using her extra year of eligibility granted because of COVID-19, earned second-team All-American honors by placing 10th at the NCAA indoor championships on March 12 in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Smith's best jump of the winter was a historic one, as she bested a 29-year-old school record, clearing the bar 1.82 meters (5 feet, 11.5 inches) high on February 12 at the Grand Valley State University Big Meet in Allendale, Michigan. She then broke her own record at the 2021 MVC Indoor Championships, clearing a personal best 1.83 meters (6

feet). Tiffani Archey '93 previously set the record at 1.81 meters (5 feet, 11.25 inches) in 1992.

In outdoors, senior Jordyn Bruce was the MVC Most Valuable Performer after winning conference titles in both the heptathlon (5,439 points) and 400-meter hurdles (58.5 seconds).

Senior Sydney Laufenberg earned first-team All-American honors and placed fifth in the discus throw at the NCAA outdoor meet on June 12. Laufenberg's throw of 58.02 meters (190 feet, 4 inches) qualified her for the Olympic Trials.

On the cross country course, the Illinois State men's team won its first



Kameesha Smith

Missouri Valley Conference title in 19 years, taking home four of the first five spots at the league meet on March 3 in Evansville, Indiana. Senior Kevin Koski won the individual title while covering the 8,000-kilometer course in 24 minutes, 21.11 seconds. He became the first Redbird runner to win the individual crown since Scott Krapf '09 won it all in 2009. Koski went on to place 99th at the NCAA Division 1 championships on March 15 in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Labat makes history at gymnastics meet

On April 3, Illinois State gymnast Angelica Labat became the first person in program history to qualify for the NCAA national meet. The sophomore from Chesapeake, Virginia, scored a 9.950 on

Redbird Trivia

On April 25, Illinois State softball pitcher Morgan Day struck out 11 batters in a 1-0 win at the University of Evansville. During that game, she became one of four Redbird players in school history to eclipse 200 strikeouts in a single season. Who were the other three?

Answer: Audra Rast '06 (299 in 2003 and 235 in 2002); Nicole Kurth '02 (262 in 2001), and Jordan Birch '12 (233 in 2012).



Illinois State volleyball team wins Missouri Valley Conference

the vault at the NCAA regional meet in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, which punched her ticket to the pinnacle of college gymnastics. She ended up scoring a 9.735 on the vault at the national meet in Fort Worth, Texas.

Labat was the 2021 Midwest Independent Conference Gymnast of the Year.

Volleyball team wins Missouri Valley again

The Illinois State volleyball team punched its ticket to a third-straight NCAA tournament after securing the MVC tournament championship on April 3, when the Redbirds beat Loyola Chicago in four sets at Redbird Arena. It marked the first time the Redbirds made

it to three-straight NCAA tournaments since the 1996–1998 seasons.

The Redbirds finished the spring season at 17–6 overall, falling to UNLV in the first round of the NCAA tournament. In addition to the MVC tournament championship, they also won the league's regular season title. They earned an automatic bid to an NCAA tournament with just 48 teams instead of the usual 64 to due COVID-19, making the admittance to the field even more noteworthy.

Perkins wraps up stellar golf career

Illinois State men's golfer David Perkins '21 earned his second consecutive Mis-

souri Valley Conference golfer of the year honor. He became just the fourth golfer in league history to earn the honor in two straight seasons.

During his illustrious career, Perkins was named the MVC golfer of the week 15 different times, which is a record. In March, Perkins earned conditional status for PGA Tour Canada, setting himself up for his post-college career.

ISU again wins MVC All-Sports trophy

For the first time in more than three decades, Illinois State earned back-to-back Missouri Valley Conference All-Sports Championships. The Redbirds won the league's All-Sports Trophy in 2018-19 and again in 2020-2021. The conference did not award the trophy during the 2019–20 pandemic-shortened season.

The Redbirds earned six team titles—of the 16 MVC sports it sponsors—and had an aggregate score of 7.842. The All-Sports Trophy is based on a school's average finish in each of the sponsored championships by the Missouri Valley Conference. Teams are awarded 10 points for first, nine for second, eight for third, etc. The total accumulated points are divided by the number of sports in which a particular school competes.

“Winning the MVC All-Sports Trophy is something we strive to do every year, but earning it this year with everything they've had to go through is remarkable and truly something our fans, donors, alumni, and community should be very proud of,” said Director of Athletics Kyle Brennan.



Then *and* Now

Illinois State's student newspaper has been housed in multiple locations since its start in 1888. It is presumed that the earliest *Vidette* offices were within Old Main. Historians' records show the newspaper staff worked from the Old Union on the Quad from 1956 to 1969, at which time a move was made to Central School. Once part of Unit 5 public schools, the building at the corner of College Avenue and School Street was acquired by the University. The land now has a basketball court and is parking space adjacent to Hewitt-Manchester halls. In 1970, the *Vidette* took over Edwards Hall Annex adjacent to Schroeder Hall. The building, *above*, had been a military surplus warehouse from WWII that once housed heavy machinery. The current facility was constructed at the corner of Locust and University streets and has been the newspaper's home since 1994.

Pause^{for}Applause



Rising through the ranks

U.S. Air Force **Maj. Gen. Richard Neely '89** has proudly served as a military officer for 30 years, including deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom. A national leader in cyber security, Neely is director of the Illinois Department of Military Affairs. He is commander of the Illinois Army and Air National Guard. He is responsible for training, preparing, and deploying soldiers and airmen to support combat operations worldwide. Neely has overseen National Guard deployments in response to civil unrest, historic flooding in Illinois last year, and more recently COVID-19 outreach through testing and vaccination sites across the state.



Working his dream

From watching animated Disney films as a child, **Yohannes Yamasee '16** desired to develop such talent. He has reached that goal, operating his own animation studio and being recognized by *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for Art and Style. The magazine ranks the world's top 30 innovative creatives who are not yet 30. An art and technology graduate who was on ISU's track and field team, Yamasee earned a master's at UCLA. He completed an internship at Walt Disney Imagineering before opening Yohannes Studios in 2019. Based in Los Angeles and Chicago, the avant-garde studio specializes in 2D and 3D animation.



A powerful pen

Dasha Kelly Hamilton '91 opens minds and bridges gaps through the written and spoken word. She does both as Wisconsin's poet laureate. The first Black woman to receive the honor, Kelly Hamilton has a national and international presence. As an Arts Envoy for the U.S. Embassy, she has led community building initiatives in Beirut, Botswana, and Mauritius. Her production *Makin' Cake* creates a dialogue on race, class, and equity. She has authored two novels, taught at colleges and in prisons, and is a national Rubinger Fellow. While at Illinois State, she was Miss Black ISU and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority chapter president.



Living on a high note

Timothy Loest '85 has gone from his studies in music education at ISU to achieve international acclaim as a composer and arranger of instrumental music for young musicians. Beyond his work as director of bands for Itasca School District 10 in Illinois, Loest is an exclusive and award-winning writer for the FJH Music Company Inc. He coauthored with Illinois State Professor David Collier *Measure of Success: A Comprehensive Musicianship Band Method*, which has sold more than a million copies. A guest conductor across the country, Loest's compositions are performed worldwide. His pedagogical teaching impacts performers as well as audiences.

A Day *in the* Life



Dining experience delights Redbirds

Whether studying over breakfast, meeting classmates for lunch, or reconnecting with friends at dinner, the University's dining centers are an integral part of daily ISU life.

Today's dining experience is radically enhanced from what is remembered by older alums, who had to eat in their residence hall. There were minimal options of entrees that were served in a single-file line.

Current Redbirds have a surprising number of choices at Watterson Dining Commons in Watterson Towers and Marketplace at Linkins in Tri-Towers. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and a variety of proteins and grains are always available.

Staff in Event Management, Dining, and Hospitality create dishes that fit the needs of every student, from gluten-free and no dairy to vegan and vegetarian. Registered dietitians

work with individuals who have specific needs. And while the main entrees change daily, there are standard offerings that include a salad bar, pastas, pizza, burgers, and deli sandwiches.

Whatever is being served, quality and taste remain the priority. Both are more easily obtained with the opening of the Culinary Support Center (CSC) in 2019 at Watterson. It is there that Executive Chef Matthew Horton '12 and the culinary team create recipes and prepare food in bulk for campus locations.

"Developing more complex food safety plans and logistical systems takes time and requires a great team of individuals brainstorming ideas on best practices," Horton said. "The CSC allows us to generate more ideas and push our culinary



program higher and higher.”

The center occupies two floors and includes a cook-chill production area and cold prep room, as well as a bakery and test kitchen. One benefit is that there is a consistency to the taste and quality of food because it is made in the one space, then distributed across campus.

Another positive is the ability to prepare meals in volume. A smoker, for example, prepares up to 350 pounds of meat.

The centralized bakery has state-of-the-art ovens, mixers, and bagel makers.

Horton is pleased that the CSC allows staff to “make scratch recipes, control ingredients, reduce sodium, and eliminate allergens to make food more accessible to all students.” He also appreciates having a test kitchen where students can provide feedback on recipes being created.

“We test based on what our customers are asking for,” said Adam Feaman, assistant director of the CSC. “The test kitchen allows us to experiment with new products and still maintain our highest standards.”



The dining centers at Illinois State are always a hub of activity. Staff includes students, who appreciate the option of working on campus. Renovated spaces and multiple menu options make every meal an opportunity to enjoy great food with friends.

Students appreciate not only the quality of their meals but the service as well. They have the option to get meals to go and when not feeling well, food can be delivered to their rooms.

There are several food options beyond the dining halls. The newly renovated Bone Student Center offers McAlister’s Deli, Star Ginger, Qdoba, The Landing, Timbers Grill, and Starbucks. Other campus dining options include Airport Lounge in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts complex, Business Bistro in the State Farm Hall of Business, Milner Café in the library, a second Starbucks location, and four Subway restaurants.

Regardless of where students choose to dine, they find food that fits their tastes and lifestyle, adding one more reason to the list of why they enjoy their Redbird experience.



HISTORY *made in* HOVEY

SCIENTIST CHOSEN AS FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT

by Susan Marquardt Blystone

There are numerous ways to introduce Dr. Terri Goss Kinzy. To students, she is a caring professor and mentor. She is also a scholar known internationally for research in biochemistry and molecular biology. A proven administrator, she is respected for her leadership as a vice president at prestigious institutions. In her personal life, she treasures the roles of wife, mother, and grandmother.

On July 1, Kinzy added another title as she became Illinois State University's 20th president. She is the first woman to hold the position, which adds to her trailblazing accomplishments.

"I accept the responsibility of serving as a role model. If my being a scientist and president as a female helps others see their ability to achieve, then I am proud," said Kinzy, who was selected in a national search. She is "incredibly honored" to have been chosen to succeed Dr. Larry Dietz upon his retirement.

Kinzy expresses enormous respect for Dietz's leadership and his ability, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, to keep Illinois State resilient. "The University's future will be based on its very strong past," she said, pledging her commitment to "live our mission and elevate our institution as we educate and connect."

There is no doubt that Kinzy has the credentials and vision to build the partnerships needed to reach such a lofty goal. She has proven her abilities throughout a career in education that evolved from her inquisitive years as a child growing up in Louisville, Ohio.

"I had every child's microscope and chemistry set available, and a subscription to *National Geographic*," said Kinzy, a first-generation college student. Her father's formal education ended with elementary school. He worked as a used car salesman to support the family that also included her brother Patrick. Her mother graduated from a vocational school and was a bookkeeper. Both parents encouraged Kinzy's academic pursuits.





President Kinzy and her spouse, Scott, met as undergraduates. He is eager to fill the role of a Redbird ambassador and promote the University.

“It was always my dream to do science,” she said. A high school physics teacher fueled her passion that was cemented as Kinzy completed her undergraduate degree in chemistry at the University of Akron in Ohio.

Her career began at BP America. Hired as a chemist, she focused on biofuel development via molecular genetic manipulation of plants and generation of microbes for bioremediation of copper mine waste.

She veered toward academia during her graduate study. Kinzy completed a doctorate in biochemistry at Ohio’s Case Western Reserve University and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in molecular genetics at Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania.

answered,” said Kinzy, a world leader in the study of protein synthesis and drug development. “Everything we learn opens three more doors for opportunity to impact human or animal health or agriculture. All are impacted by how proteins function.”

Kinzy has studied protein production in organisms from fungi and mammals. She has furthered the understanding of how mRNAs direct the way in which proteins are made. More than \$9 million in international and federal funding has been secured from the National Institutes for Health, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies.

Projects have ranged from anti-fungal drug discovery, examination of how bacterial toxins affect cells, and automated

“I DO NOT LIKE TO LOOK AT WHERE THINGS ARE AS MUCH AS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AND CONTEMPLATING WHERE THEY COULD BE.”

Along the way, she developed a plan to teach at the collegiate level and run a research lab. She excelled at both, rising to professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She was also a professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the university, which is one of the nation’s leading public research institutions. There she became an acclaimed scholar.

“I have worked in the same field since I was a graduate student. There is always one more question that needs to be

DNA analysis. The work has been done in partnership with other scholars and students ranging from high school teens through post-graduates.

“It is very clear the high impact there is on students who have the opportunity to participate in research, particularly as undergraduates,” Kinzy said. Those she mentored had quite the experience. One project with a scholar in Europe, for example, led to determining protein structure.

“We could actually see what a protein looks like. All of my

students participated in an international collaboration and many traveled to Denmark,” said Kinzy, who was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2017. She was chosen by *Crain’s* Detroit Business for its 2019 Notable Women in STEM, an honor added to many accolades for her teaching, mentoring, and scholarship.

Kinzy gradually grew into administrative roles, rising from program director and dean positions to being named the vice president for research at Rutgers in 2016. She managed an operating budget of nearly \$43 million in an office with oversight of \$658 million in research expenditures.

“I was fortunate that the administrative move happened little by little because with the increasing responsibility, I had to step back from the lab a bit more,” she said. “I have had the opportunity to help so many more people advance their research and knowledge. You can be just as excited about students winning an award for their scholarship and a faculty member recognized as your own success.”

She relished helping others soar in her most recent role as vice president for Research and Innovation at Western Michigan University. Kinzy was also a professor in biological sciences as she led the institution’s growth in external research expenditures from federal grants by 33 percent in one year.

It was through the encouragement of her peers and family that she contemplated a presidency. Her greatest cheerleaders include her husband, Scott; their son Alan, who is studying business and hospitality; and their daughter Kate and her spouse, Ryan, who have an infant son Finn. Kate is a chemical engineer for General Mills.

Kinzy focused on state schools in her search and preferred the Midwest. “I am very committed to public education and was drawn to Illinois State because it is a dedicated community that is proud and looking to build on its success,” she said, describing ISU as an economic engine locally and within the state. “We have a very strong base with civic engagement in the community and we will build on that, including the corporate connections.”

The emphasis on undergraduate research also drew her to the University as it fulfills its motto to “Gladly learn and teach.”

“It’s fitting that ‘learn’ comes before ‘teach,’ as we all are always learning and then teaching, including our students.” She readily acknowledges her own learning curve as she takes the helm. “I do not have all the answers, but I look forward to hearing ideas and working together to implement them.”

She and Scott are incredibly grateful for the warm welcome and outpouring of support they experienced while transitioning to campus. Messages from faculty, staff, and alumni were greatly appreciated and fit with the type of presidency Kinzy plans to establish.

“I want everyone to share their ISU story because hearing from people is really important,” said Kinzy, whose first task is to understand the priorities of the campus community and local leaders as she builds relationships.

FIVE FACTS ABOUT PRESIDENT KINZY

- **DR. TERRI GOSS KINZY’S HUSBAND, SCOTT, IS ALSO A CHEMIST. THEY MET AT A RESIDENCE HALL PARTY AS UNDERGRADUATES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON.**
- **PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN KINZY USED BREAD YEAST IN HER LAB AS ONE TOOL TO EXAMINE WHAT MAKES THE HUMAN BODY PRODUCE PROTEINS.**
- **KINZY’S DESIRE TO LEAD A STATE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IS TIED TO HER CONVICTION THAT SUCH INSTITUTIONS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN REACHING STUDENTS OF COLOR, NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS, AND FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE GRADUATES.**
- **ONE FAVORITE PASTIME FOR THE KINZYS IS BIRDING, AND SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFYING BIRD NESTS. SHE ALSO RUNS IN 5K EVENTS.**
- **KINZY IS AN AVID READER OF SCIENCE FICTION, WITH *THE HITCHHIKER’S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY* SERIES A FAVORITE.**

She is committed to championing the University’s equity, diversity, and inclusion work, and will advance efforts to increase the international student population. Kinzy is also excited about the prospect of developing an engineering program and overseeing the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts renovation project.

Kinzy is eager to embrace each opportunity as president, with Scott ready to partner in his role. He has retired to fully engage in working as ISU’s ambassador. They both know there is a high anticipation for what lies ahead at Illinois State as the first female leads the University.

For those who wonder how she will approach the presidency, Kinzy shares that she follows the basic principle to never panic and embrace what is possible. “I do not like to look at where things are as much as looking to the future and contemplating where they could be,” Kinzy said.

That’s exactly what she did when applying for the University presidency. As a result, Kinzy is beginning her journey as a Redbird. She does so with enthusiasm and appreciation.



A HIGH NOTE

OPERA IS ALUMNA'S UNIQUE TEACHING TOOL

BY KATE ARTHUR

OH the drama. A roomful of second graders are writing their own opera and are stuck on a script about alien cows. What do you do?

You call that a win, said Veronica Chamberlain '14, who absolutely loves her job working with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students as they figure out what an opera is and then create one. Their creative effort involves composing an original song and then digging through their closets for costumes.

This isn't about recreating classics like *Carmen* or *La Traviata*. Their operas don't revolve around toxic relationships, frail heroines, and death duels—at least not yet. One class instead created a story about a blue-haired tarantula that leads a boy into another universe.

"When people think of opera, they think of the lady in the horn hat singing really loudly. It's so much more than that," said Chamberlain, who is education manager and teaching artist for the Chicago Opera Theater (COT).

The job takes her to CPS classrooms to teach second graders through high school freshmen about opera. On the first day, she asks the students how they would describe opera. "Women singing loudly" always comes back. She then explains that it is a form of storytelling not unlike musicals. It can feature rock, folk, or rap music.

"The whole idea is that opera is a living art form," said Chamberlain, who majored in music education. "You think opera is this old dead thing. It's not a thing that was, it's a thing that is. It's still living, breathing, and changing."

Chamberlain thought she'd teach high school choir following graduation, and she did for a couple of years. She then heard about COT, a grassroots opera company started in 1973 that has a national presence and is known for performing lesser-known operas.

Hired as a teaching artist in 2017, she visited schools to talk about what it's like to be a vocal performer. Now she's head of Opera for All, a free arts program that takes students through a year-long process of creating their own mini masterpieces. In the 2020-2021 school year, she worked with nearly 500 students in 18 classrooms all via Zoom. The students ended the year performing their operas, 10 to 20 minutes in length, to online audiences.

"This year has been bonkers. It's been a lesson in flexibility. Our operas aren't going to look like they have in past years, but that's OK," she said. "I pretty much produced 18 operas simultaneously, which sounds crazy, but I can't complain because my job is inherently fun."

Pre-pandemic, teaching artists visited classrooms to give lessons on how to create, produce, and perform an opera. The

effort involved composing a song, acting, choreography, and prop design. Auditions and rehearsals are run by the students.

Besides increasing each student's understanding of opera, another goal is to get them to a live COT performance. Past performances included *Moby-Dick* and *Freedom Ride*, which focused on the Civil Rights Movement. One class is selected annually to perform part of their opera on a professional stage in a Chicago theater.

"It's super influential to them, feeling those stage lights on their face, overcoming their nervousness on stage," Chamberlain said. "Whether they're the type of kid who's a ham and loves to perform or is more quiet and loves art, they all get to contribute and see their work. Maybe they contributed a word or a costume or performed. Every student has something to show and be proud of."



Helping Chicago Public School students rehearse the opera they created is work Veronica Chamberlain enjoys.

Teachers tell her that the students who excel in the COT program and love the experience are often not the ones who are best in math or stay focused in science. They instead shine uniquely in the creative effort fueled by imagination.

"All of the ideas come from the kids' brains. It's very real and exciting because it's stories they make up. The kids feel valued because we're using their ideas. They're leading the way," Chamberlain said.

When COT surveyed their partner teachers, 100 percent said students became more confident performing in front of an audience. The experience overall opens students' eyes to possibilities as they look to their future.

"They love movement and dancing, which gives them more chances to be successful," she said. "Not everyone's going to

“I FEEL SO STRANGELY EQUIPPED TO DO THIS JOB.”

leave opera class and say, ‘Now I want to be an opera singer,’ but maybe they’ll say, ‘I didn’t know someone designs the lights. Now I know that’s a job.’”

Although she never thought she’d be teaching elementary students, Chamberlain added a language arts endorsement at ISU. That turned out to be a bonus given she’s now working with grade-schoolers as they write scripts.

Other experiences at ISU also prepared her for a career she didn’t know existed. “When I heard about this program, I was like, ‘Get me in there. This is my jam,’” she said, laughing. “I feel so strangely equipped to do this job.”

Chamberlain studied voice with Associate Professor John Koch in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. He and his spouse, Tracy Koch ’01, cofounded the Midwest Institute of Opera (MIOpera), where he’s artistic director and resident conductor. The endeavor is a partnership with ISU that brings students and community members together to perform main-stage operas and prepare artists for music performance careers.

Tracy Koch was Chamberlain’s childhood piano teacher. She also gave her voice lessons. It wasn’t long before Chamberlain fell in love with arias. “She’s the reason I even knew what opera was,” Chamberlain said. “Opera wasn’t a nebulous hoity-toity thing to me. I knew an opera singer. She was my piano teacher.”

The Kochs also gave Chamberlain her first leadership experience in opera, as she was chosen to be chorus master

for MIOpera’s productions of Verdi’s *Aida*. She also served as children’s chorus master for Bizet’s *Carmen*.

“It was really because of that I dipped my toes into the opera world,” said Chamberlain, who also credits Professor Emeritus Dr. Kim McCord for the preparation she received at ISU.

McCord took her music education students to Chicago schools.

“I got to teach in a CPS classroom before I even student taught,” Chamberlain said. “I don’t think I would have felt as competent going into CPS had I not done that clinical.”

When she’s not teaching, Chamberlain performs in two Chicago choirs—the Wicker Park Choral Singers and Common Pulse, which is a semi-professional choral ensemble. She also volunteers as director of the Crescendo Seniors chorus, a partnership with a senior center and the Metropolitan School of Performing Arts in Arlington Heights.

And of course she sings in the Chicago apartment she shares with her spouse, Lucas Chamberlain ’14, whom she married in 2019. He is a Ph.D. candidate studying botany and sustainable agriculture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

While he researches fungus, Chamberlain remains happily immersed in music. If she had to name her all-time favorite opera, it would be the classic *Carmen*, but she also enjoys modern opera. Regardless of the style, she is intrigued because the story unfolds differently in each production.

Her own story, along with those of her students, is still being written.



Chamberlain guides students through all stages of the production process, from the artistic efforts involved in creating the set to brainstorming ideas as the story is written.

TURNING THE PAGE

Spring 2021 Campus newspaper moves to digital delivery by Nick Erickson

Illinois State University — Normal, Illinois

Everything seemed to be trending in a certain direction leading up to November 8, 2016—election night in the United States.

With Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton leading the polls over Republican businessman Donald Trump, Ema Sasic '18 and her fellow student editors and reporters at *The Vidette* had a roadmap for coverage. They had interviews lined up with people across campus and the community to discuss a Clinton victory.

As election night wore on, it became clear Trump would upset the former Secretary of State. Huddled in their office building at the intersection of Locust and University streets, *The Vidette* staff shifted to finding other voices to portray the results from a local angle.

That moment taught Sasic, now a reporter at *The Desert Sun* in Palm Springs, California, to always plan for multiple outcomes.

It's a strategy that has often paid dividends. In late April, Riverside County was set to release its latest COVID-19 numbers. Sasic knew the statistics would signify whether restrictions would be lifted in the area, and that residents would react strongly either way.

"I made sure to write two ledes for that one," said Sasic, who was at *The Vidette* from 2015-2018. She served as news reporter and news editor, columnist, and editor-in-chief. She credits Illinois State's award-winning student newspaper for preparing her professionally. "I feel like everything I've been able to accomplish so far is because of the foundation I got from *The Vidette*."

For 133 years, the publication has been a student learning lab and keeper of campus history. It has sprung careers ranging from local reporters in communities of all size to business executives, the chief Washington correspondent of *The New York Times*, and a pair of Pulitzer-Prize winners.

On April 27, staff printed the final paper product. A commemorative edition printed in May is available for purchase on the publication's website. Starting this fall semester, *The Vidette* will be entirely online, with all content exclusively on videtteonline.com. It follows the trend of a journalism industry that has become primarily digital as advertising revenue plummets, with consumers increasingly finding their news by searching online sites versus turning the printed page.



First issue of *The Vidette*, February 1888

9-11

Terrorist acts shake nation

By THE VIDETTE STAFF — In the more than a decade since the Sept. 11 attacks, the world has never again seen a day so filled with grief and sorrow. The Sept. 11 attacks were a turning point in the history of the world, and a day that will be remembered for generations to come.

“Today, our nation came ashore.”

— George W. Bush, President

... **George W. Bush**, President

... **George W. Bush**, President

... **George W. Bush**, President



The South Tower of the World Trade Center was hit by a hijacked plane Tuesday. The North Tower was hit by a previous hijacked plane, hours to its left.

Citizens react to U.S. destruction

... **George W. Bush**, President

... **George W. Bush**, President

... **George W. Bush**, President

Bush promises retaliation

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Bush said Tuesday that the United States would retaliate against the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

“We will not let this stand,” Bush said. “We will not let this stand.”

... **George W. Bush**, President

The Vidette

CAMPUS MOURNS KENNEDY'S DEATH

School Plans Conventions; Observes Day of Recognition

... **George W. Bush**, President

Vidette

Violence mars Quad 'Rites'

The Rites of Manoc... Rally ends... Bush Rites in picture

DAILY VIDETTE

IT'S OBAMA

Barack Obama elected President, makes history

Warming up hot rods
 Fixing parts and being strange cars. 15

A listening ear
 G.U. campus groups offer special opportunities for students to speak with their great-grandparents. 3

Game day
 For the first time since D-Day the MLL has cancelled a Day of Jinx. 24

specific content, in addition to having video components to stories. *The Vidette* has been a part of the School of Communication since 2010 in a move for the self-sufficient paper to become less dependent on advertising revenue. With the new organizational model, the School of Communication looks to engrain *Vidette*-specific courses in its curriculum and could eventually offer “gateway classes” for employment. WGLT will assume business and administrative oversight, as the transition eliminates the publication’s advertising department. *The Vidette* will keep its independent status, under the guidelines of the Illinois College Campus Press Act.

While there’s a certain rush that comes with placing stories and designing pages into the early morning hours, staff members look forward to expanding the publication’s digital presence. Elizabeth Seils ’21, editor-in-chief during the 2020-2021 school year, said the industry has changed even since she first arrived at the paper in 2018.

For example, Seils remembered using social media primarily for story promotion when she started. Now the paper turns to certain apps for storytelling. That practice will expand with plans to present more content on platforms such as Instagram live and Tik-Tok videos. “It’s kind of evolved from

“THAT FLAGSHIP PRINTED PIECE WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST, BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO GET THE EXPERIENCE, TELL THE STORIES, AND TO LOCK THAT INFORMATION IN FOR HISTORICAL REFERENCE FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY WILL STILL VERY MUCH BE IN PLACE,”

ence for the University community will still very much be in place,” said *The Vidette* General Manager John Plevka.

The paper has had a digital presence for more than a decade. *The Vidette* produces podcasts and social media

a thing we use just to promote our stories to an active part of how we operate,” Seils said.

Having that versatility will only pay off in the long run, said former sports editor Zack Carpenter ’16, who now covers The Ohio State University football for *Eleven Warriors*. It is an



entirely online publication focused on recruiting and analysis for a Buckeyes' program that has a huge national brand. Carpenter does it all—from photography and writing to live chats with fans. He is confident that journalists entering the field will all need a similar, well-rounded skill set.

“You have to look at it as a blessing in disguise that you are going to get all your experiences in a digital world, and you’re going into a professional world where it is all digital,” Carpenter said.

The former beat reporter for the Redbird football team engaged in these types of practices as an undergraduate as he experimented with different ways to tell a story. Now covering a team with such a rabid fan base, he appreciates even more the confidence he gained at *The Vidette*.

Carpenter recalled being shaky and nervous for his first baseball press conference, which he said only had about 10 people present following a game at Duffy Bass Field. Standing up and speaking as part of a credible organization gave him a purpose, and he became unafraid to take risks or challenge himself as he grew at the paper.

“With *The Vidette*, John (Plevka) gives you freedom to do your thing,” Carpenter said. “He always told us to not be afraid to fail.”

Whether under Plevka’s leadership or Rick Jones, M.S. ’92, before him or that of Harry Thiel decades earlier, the paper has long been a launching pad for motivated students to prepare for a profession they deem worthwhile.

Tina Haisman ’95, a member of the 2011 *Vidette* Hall of Fame class, started her own business as a life coach and personal relations consultant. She credits the newspaper for allowing her to tap into her creative side. Haisman was on staff all four years as an undergraduate, working as business manager two years.

“The skills I learned at *The Vidette* set me up perfectly to a life coaching career and running my own business,” she said. “I gained the business skills and also the writing skills for the marketing aspect. It is a school publication, but it gave us all real-world experience.”

THE VIDETTE.

1888–1892

...The Vidette...

1900, 1908



1902



1888–1892



1913–1914

The Vidette

1950–1967, 1969 longest used nameplate



1974–1977

Daily Vidette

1985–1987

The Daily Vidette

1995

DAILY VIDETTE

2002–2003

Daily Vidette

2007–2008



2017–2021

While they appreciate the boost in career preparation, student workers past and present are proud of how *The Vidette* has preserved the University's story. Plevka said the histories of both the publication and the institution are intertwined.

The Vidette's digital archives at Milner Library, found at VidetteArchive.IllinoisState.edu, are proof of that. They are used for a wide variety of research, from family genealogies to classroom teachings. A public health course during the spring semester, for example, tapped into past issues to see how campus responded to the Spanish Flu influenza pandemic in 1918.

"It's just fascinating as hell," Plevka said. "You can see how we covered things through the years."

The publication has recorded history as it has unfolded since 1888, but it's also had its own moments of cultural signifi-

cance. The paper's first student editor-in-chief was female, as 1889 graduate M. Kate Bigham led the publication more than 30 years before women had the right to vote.

Ray Richardson '77 was the paper's first Black sports columnist, providing perspective from Black students and athletes in a time when race tensions across the country remained high. Undeterred by letters to the editor trying to silence him, Richardson took pride in his work and hoped to inspire other students at *The Vidette*.

"When you look back on things, you realize that you were the first, but I also wanted to make sure I performed well enough so that I wouldn't be the last," Richardson said. He went on to cover the NBA, most notably for the *Pioneer Press* in St. Paul, Minnesota. "I would hope



The staff of the 1920–1921 *Vidette* with editor in chief Glenn DeAtley, far right. He was credited for changing the publication from a magazine format into a newspaper.

THE VIDETTE HALL of FAME

Established in 2007, the campus newspaper's Hall of Fame recognizes alumni from all sectors of the communication industry.

2007

Carl Hulse '76
Chief Washington
Correspondent
The New York Times

Jeff Kraft '81
Managing Director
MarketingWorks, Inc.

Kristen McQueary '95
Editorial Board Member
The Chicago Tribune

Janelle Pettit '02
District Business Manager
Heron Therapeutics

Bill Gaspard '82

Design Director
China Daily (Beijing)

Jay Blunk '86

Executive Vice President of
Business Operations
Chicago Blackhawks

Todd Heisler '94

Photographer
The New York Times
2006 Pulitzer Prize
winner

Harry Thiel

General Manager
The Vidette (1976-1996)

2009

Mike Shelly '62
Professor Emeritus, School
of Communication
Illinois State University

Heidi Vorhees '80

President and Co-owner
GovHR USA

2011

Marc Lebovitz '72
Media Relations Staff,
Retired, Illinois State
University

Ben Cordani '96

Assistant Director of Global
Trade Compliance
Caterpillar Inc.

**“EVEN ON A SMALL SCALE, IN THIS ISU COMMUNITY, IT’S NICE TO
KNOW I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. IT MAKES ME WANT TO KEEP DOING
THAT FOR LARGER COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS.”**

that what I did paved the way for others to come behind me.”

The Vidette’s history is interwoven with accolades. Staff frequently win a high-volume of awards at the annual Illinois College Press Association contest. Competition is with schools across the state, including the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern University. *The Vidette* won first for General Excellence twice in the last three years.

Even though print products are scaling back across the industry, student journalists at *The Vidette* aren’t deterred from doing important work. They continue to tackle delicate topics such as election coverage, social movements, and the pandemic. They are seeing the impact strong storytelling can have no matter the medium for presentation.

“Even on a small scale, in this ISU community, it’s nice

to know I can make a difference. It makes me want to keep doing that for larger communities and groups,” Seils said.

As the paper enters a new era, it does so with an army of former employees and supporters behind it. “*The Vidette* family,” as alums and current staffers alike call themselves, runs deep, evidenced by an active alumni Facebook page with more than 400 members. They all look forward to seeing the tradition of excellence continue.

“You feel all of that work on your shoulders, and you just want to make sure you are putting out a good product at the end of the day. I always felt that with every single issue and every single story with the hours put in by everybody,” Sasic said. “You felt so proud of that. Even as it moves to a digital presence, I feel there is still going to be so much to be proud of.”

Tina Haisman ’95

Certified Life Coach
Business Growth
Strategist

Bill Mulvihill ’98

Head of Sales, Media, and
Entertainment
Conde Nast (New York)

2014

Ed Pyne ’71

Publisher, *Normalite* and
Lexingtonian

Rick Jones, M.S. ’92,

General Manager
The Vidette (1996-2012)

John Abrams ’90

Chief Executive Officer
Venzee

Alex Reside ’10

Photography Producer
Apple

2016

Chris Ruys ’71

Founder
Chris Ruys
Communications

Jim Munz, M.S. ’92

Business Manager
The Vidette (1980-2001)

Jeff Knox ’98

Senior Director of Visuals
The Daily Herald
(Chicago)

Scott Gleeson ’11

National Sports Reporter
USA Today

Shannon Murphy ’05

Vice President and Client
Growth Lead
Bluedog Design

2018

Bryan Bloodworth ’79

Former Sports Editor
The Pantagraph

Sally McKee ’83

Former Managing Editor
Peoria Journal-Star

Tony Andracki ’87

Digital Content Manager
and Cubs Reporter
Marquee Sports

Jim Kirk ’90

Publisher and Executive
Editor
Crain Chicago Business

Mitch Pugh

Executive Editor
Post and Courier
(Charleston, South
Carolina)
2015 Pulitzer Prize
winner

2020

Mick Hubert ’76

Sportscaster
University of Florida

Kevin Petschow ’81

Senior Director of Public
and Analyst Relations
Syniverse

Jason Piscia ’96

Director of Public Affairs
Reporting Master’s
Program University of
Illinois-Springfield

Anna Trefil-Frazier ’06

Director of Advertising
*Journal of American
Medical Association*

REDBIRD —• READY •—



Alumnus prepared for Harvard study at Illinois State

by Amanda Layne

Basher Becerra '19 never envisioned being a graduate student at Harvard University when he enrolled in ISU's School of Information Technology (IT) as a freshman. And yet today, he is conducting research while pursuing his Ph.D. in bioinformatics and integrative genomics at Harvard Medical School's Department of Biomedical Informatics.

"Bioinformatics is applying computer science and statistics to analyze complex data that's derived from biological samples," Becerra said. "By using computer science, we can discover more interesting biological insights than we could by hand."

Becerra received eight scholarships while at Illinois State and was named a Bone Scholar, the highest honor an undergraduate can receive. He graduated with a degree in computer science and mathematics, with a minor in biology.

“The scholarships allowed me to focus on independent study, to do academic research throughout college, and take on extra courses. They really helped me do what I needed to do to get a solid background in computational biology and build necessary qualifications for applying to internships and Ph.D. programs,” said Becerra, who grew up in El Paso, just 20 miles north of campus.

With a family of IT professionals, it was natural for Becerra to choose his field of study. He has finished two years of the

The flexibility of Illinois State’s programs allowed me to take courses in different disciplines.

Harvard program, which typically requires six years to complete. He is studying genome editing in Dr. Luca Pinello’s lab at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Becerra uses a powerful gene-editing tool called CRISPR to disrupt certain areas of human DNA and gain a better understanding of that region’s function. This research can generate a lot of data, which is where computer science and statistics is essential in analyzing findings.

“The flexibility of Illinois State’s programs allowed me to take courses in different disciplines. Being able to do that during my undergrad was critical,” said Becerra, whose main area of study is blood disorders and specifically sickle cell disease.

“The disease is due to malfunctioning hemoglobin, which is the molecule responsible for carrying oxygen throughout the body. People with this disease have abnormal hemoglobin that causes red blood cells to sickle into a crescent shape, which can cause clots and create severe pain,” Becerra explained.

There are two types of hemoglobin—fetal present in infants and adult hemoglobin, which replaces fetal hemoglobin after infancy. The mutation that causes sickle cell disease is only found in adult hemoglobin. Becerra’s work involves learning how to prevent the switch to adult hemoglobin. The hope is to provide a new therapeutic option for patients suffering from the disease.

Becerra felt well-prepared for such scholarly endeavors at Harvard, especially because his Illinois State professors emphasized the importance of not only stellar academic work but also seizing professional development opportunities.

As an undergraduate, Becerra interned with State Farm Insurance Companies and Advance Trading Inc. in Bloomington, Columbia University in New York City, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Long Island.

Becerra worked closely with Dr. Nathan Mortimer, an assistant professor of cellular immunology in ISU’s School of Biological Sciences. While home this past semester because of the pandemic, Becerra returned to Illinois State as a visiting graduate student and enrolled in one of Mortimer’s classes. Becerra credits Mortimer with being a valuable mentor and for encouraging him to pursue his doctorate.

“Basheer is a very good student to work with. I’ve worked with a lot of really good students at ISU. I always like to encourage them to apply for their dream school,” Mortimer said. “I encouraged Basheer to go for the best programs that could give him that chance to learn, chance to be involved in cutting-edge research, and give himself a boost for the future.”

When he’s not in class or conducting research, Becerra works on his personal blog. He plans to provide academic guidance to other students, work-life balance suggestions, and self-help resources. He also hopes to introduce educational material on bioinformatics for computer scientists.

“A lot of computer science students don’t have the opportunity to be exposed to bioinformatics, even though their quantitative skills can help make huge advances in the field,” Becerra said. “I hope to create content to inspire more computer science students to pursue bioinformatics.”

Becerra’s goal is to lead his own scientific research team after completing his work at Harvard, whether it be in academia, industry, or a biotechnology startup. He credits ISU for giving him the interdisciplinary foundation needed to succeed at Harvard and beyond.

“The flexibility of the programs allowed me to take courses in different disciplines, and being able to do that during my undergrad was critical,” he said. “If I had just been restricted to computer science, I would not have been able to develop the skills to do computational biology or get into my Ph.D. program.”



Hannah Rademaker

Problems

Solved

Students become
creative consultants

BY JOHN MOODY

The challenge for every student is applying knowledge learned through lectures and gleaned from textbooks to the working world each will enter upon graduation. Illinois State offers many opportunities to put theory into practice, including through the Innovation Consulting Community (ICC).

Now in its fifth year, ICC is an interdisciplinary professional development program that connects undergraduate and graduate students in any major to an organization with a specific need. The interdisciplinary nature is by design to most closely resemble the working world.

“We had 15 projects this year, with 90 students drawn from 30 sub-disciplines. We were about 80 percent undergraduate and 20 percent graduate students, with about two-thirds in business majors and one-third from non-business

majors. Our clients are all in top management positions,” said Dr. Peter Kaufman.

A College of Business marketing professor, Kaufman co-founded ICC with Jim Jones, director of Illinois State’s Katie School of Insurance and Risk Management. They partner with 14 faculty serving as project coordinators to oversee research done by students who sharpen their collaboration skills and critical thinking.

The teams formulate recommendations for clients in both the profit and non-profit sectors locally, nationally, and around the world. As a result of the pandemic and the successful use of Zoom this past year, more international partnerships are anticipated going forward. An overview of projects completed since ICC’s start can be found online at innovationconsulting.community.



Dr. Peter Kaufman, *left*, is a marketing professor who partnered with Katie School of Insurance and Risk Management Director Jim Jones to create the Innovation Consulting Community.

Past clients have included Major League Baseball, the global mining industry, Habitat for Humanity, Jewel-Osco, health care organizations, public schools, and firms engaged in cybersecurity and sustainability.

Topics have been equally diverse, ranging from developing markets for Indonesian handcrafts and organic farming possibilities in that country to a giving donor program in Thailand, solutions for employee retention, and the affordability of health insurance.

Projects are most often secured through alumni networking, word-of-mouth, and ideas generated by faculty. The work is considered extracurricular with no academic credits earned and no financial stipend, yet students from the University's six colleges consistently interview for a spot each fall.

Teams are created after students practice with online modules covering topics that include project management, leadership, design thinking, self-awareness, and conflict resolution. This foundation is key because ICC projects have no obvious solutions and no outline to follow.

Each team delivers a final project to the client in the spring, by which time students have evolved to become consultants. In the process, they've practiced their professional presentation and writing skills while developing relationships with colleagues and clients.

"Students have to use creativity and critical thinking because they have to come up with real solutions for real clients," Kaufman said. While agencies have an interest in working with students, the practical need for results that will

help their organization is the top priority in engaging ICC. There is consequently a pressure to produce a viable plan.

"This is like Harvard Business School," Jones said of the unique opportunity. He mentored four ICC projects this year, including Managing Climate Risks for Smallholder Farmers in Developing Countries. The client, Microinsurance Network, has aid organizations around the world. Its mission is to promote the development and delivery of effective risk management tools for unserved people, including insurance.

"Students have to use creativity and critical thinking because they have to come up with real solutions for real clients."

DR. PETER KAUFMAN

Student team members included project leader Jinchuta (Paii) Chaam, Kwadwo Frempong, Hannah Rademaker, and Samuel Welker. They examined the connection between

“The best part has been seeing what it’s like to work for an actual international company.”

HANNAH RADEMAKER

climate change, food production, food security, and insurance distribution in Uganda. Small farmers there are struggling due to higher temperatures and drought. Uganda’s government is joining with the private sector to offer insurance products that can help lessen risks.

Results were shared over Zoom with client representatives in Italy and Luxembourg. The team used graphics to show the unreliability of rainfall patterns and difficult weather conditions during planting seasons that make food production challenging. The students concluded that the country’s northern region of Karamoja has the greatest vulnerability and would benefit the most from an insurance penetration program.

Team member Rademaker, a junior international business major, said coordinating Zoom meetings with clients around the globe was one significant challenge throughout the rewarding experience.

“The best part has been seeing what it’s like to work for an actual international company, unlike in class where it’s simulated on a computer,” Rademaker said. “I like this much better because it’s more real world. I’d like to do it again next year.”

Kaufman mentored a project called New Product Innovation and Origami: Beyond the Kayak. The challenge for this team was to research a potential new product for its client, Oru Kayak, a California-based outdoors company known for its line of folding, portable kayaks.

Research involved talking with existing Oru customers, interviewing Oru’s marketing/E-commerce manager, and studying industry trends. The team concluded the market needs a better, more lightweight, and affordable car topper.

ISU Professor Emeritus Dr. Louis Reifschneider, a plastics engineer, offered his product design expertise. Findings and a design recommendation were presented via Zoom to Oru’s CEO, Ardy Sobhani, who joined the meeting from Mexico.

The team consisted of Anamika Ditta, Chris Foerstel, Cam Hinman, Jakob Holleman, and Luke Graf. The ICC work was one of the best ISU experiences for Graf, a senior marketing major with specializations in integrated marketing communications and analytics.

“The biggest reason I joined was it gave me actual hands-on, real-world experience,” said Graf, who treated his ICC work like an extra class. He appreciated his varying duties, from brainstorming product ideas to researching markets.

Networking is an additional benefit, as the students connected with individuals in various fields and learned from interacting with agency or corporate leaders. Sobhani, for example, offered valuable advice.

“You have to follow the tide and the clues,” he said. “True design thinking is listening to customers and to what they want. That’s the best way to design.” Sobhani advised students to attack life and remember that the creative, human side of work—similar to what they had just engaged in throughout the semester—can’t be replaced by artificial intelligence.

Such working wisdom is invaluable to all ICC students, who will reap dividends from the experience regardless of their chosen field. They comprehend the truth behind ICC’s credo taken from Confucius: “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.”

THE
Tradition
continues...



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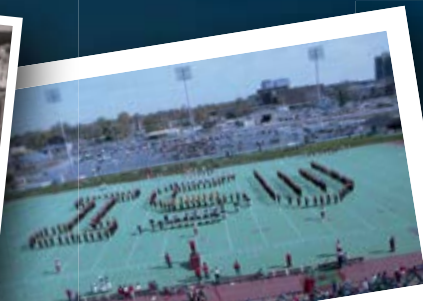


Half Century Club **Reunion** *weekend*

October 15-16, 2021

Induction of the Class of 1970 and 1971

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AlumniReport



Chicago alumna turns business degree into art

by Leia Atas

Liz Flores '12 pursued her passion to be a painter and muralist, despite majoring in entrepreneurship and small business management with a minor in Spanish.

She chose her degree through inspiration from her father, Jaime '80, who opened a family restaurant. He is former president of the Latinx Alumni Network and the first Latinx to serve on ISU's Board of Trustees.

"I wanted something that would mix creativity into the business aspect," said Flores, who was a member of The Association of Latin American Students, Alpha Psi Lambda, and the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization. She worked for Student Affairs and studied abroad in Spain.

Flores became an operations analyst in Chicago after graduation, but longed to paint and draw. She connected with artists and clients online, which was her start to working as a full-time painter and muralist.

"I'm very drawn to the female body and exploring different themes like personal freedom, womanhood, belonging, and

representing those experiences and emotions abstractly," said Flores. Her art can be seen in New York City and Chicago, where she completed a Bears mural in 2020, *above*. The piece at 4637 North Clifton Avenue focuses on community and connection.

Flores has worked with private and commercial clients including Lululemon and Sephora, and shared her story on the TEDx stage. She hosted her first Chicago solo show in the spring with 15 new paintings, which sold out on its first day.

Creating art has always been an outlet for Flores, who shared that it helps her overcome chronic anxiety. "Art continues to be a way to document the external state of the world and my internal reality," she said.

Flores credits her ISU foundation for her ability to reach her dream. "When I began my journey of becoming a full-time artist, there were many hard years, but the people that were cheering me on were the friends I made at ISU," she said. "They became my first collectors and are like family."

1960s

Lucy (Van Eman) Larson '60 is retired; her husband, **Carl Larson Jr. '61**, died in January 2021; resides in Bonita Springs, Florida.

Barbara (Barrett) Atkinson '61 is celebrating six months cancer free; resides with her husband, Richard, in Franklin, Texas.

David Rine '63 is professor emeritus and founding chair of the School of Engineering at George Mason University; resides with his wife Carolynne, in Olathe, Kansas.

Lee Davis '65, M.S. '69, retired after 23 years in public education; has worked in reverse glass painting for 50 years; resides with his wife, Kathleen, in York, Pennsylvania.

Ronald Geib '65 is working as a certified public accountant at age 83; he and his wife, Joyce, have been married 54 years; resides in Libertyville.

Karen (Hordesky) Malone '65 is retired from Lincoln-Way Community High School District 210; resides in New Lenox.

Richard Manahan '65, M.S. '71, Ed.D. '75, retired after 52 years in higher education as professor and administrator at East Tennessee State University, ISU, and Illinois Board of Regents; in ISU's COE and COB Hall of Fame; received ISU Distinguished Alumni Award; he and his wife, Lois, have four grandchildren; resides in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Linda (McKittrick) McElroy '65 is retired; founder and former director of Route 66 International Film Festival; resides in Columbia, Missouri.

Thomas Grites '66, M.S. '67, is retired as assistant provost from Richard Stockton College; teaches at the school; recipient of the NACADA Region 2 Outstanding Contribution to Scholarship Award; resides in Absecon, New Jersey.

Carl Kasten '66 has retired from practicing law; partnered with Tom Emery in creating the book *Abraham Lincoln and the Heritage of Illinois State University*; proceeds will benefit ISU; former Board of Trustees chair; Distinguished Alumni Award recipient; resides with his wife, Donna, in Carlinville.

Homer Thomas '67, M.A. '83, is the head coach of the University of Chicago track club; athletics/activities director at Southland College Prep; resides in Harvey.

Judy (Peecher) Davenport '68 retired from education; visited all 50 states and many foreign countries; resides with her husband, Raymond, in Pittsfield.

Roger Gibbens '68, M.S. '71, retired from Pekin Community High School after teaching

33 years; resides with his wife, **Janet (Pierson) '68**, in Hopedale.

Diana (Corley) Schnapp '68, M.S. '70, retired as a professor of communication; listed in several *Who's Who* publications; published poetry and in professional journals; directed church women's ministry; established ISU scholarship; resides with her husband, Frank, in Overland Park, Kansas.

Joseph Boyd '69, M.S. '74, retired as a Unit 5 school administrator; resides with his wife, Brooke, in Normal.

1970s

George Rodman, M.S. '71, is a professor at Brooklyn College; resides with his wife, Linda, in Lloyd Harbor, New York.

Jim Gumz '72 retired from Rolling Meadows High School after 35 years of teaching; coaches varsity girls' tennis and junior varsity boys' tennis at the school; resides with his wife, Wendy, in Palatine.

Marsha (Haertel) Klusmeyer '72 retired as lead teacher of deaf and hard of hearing students for Kanawha County Schools; taught in Illinois, New York City, and West Virginia; resides with her husband, Mike, in Charleston, West Virginia.

Susan (Kennedy) Laue '72 owns and is CEO of Media Masters Inc.; lead teacher and counselor trainer for social-emotional behavior skills PreK-12; resides with her husband, Thomas, in Evanston.

Michael McHale '72 retired as senior vice president from State Bank of Bement after 35 years; owns McHale Crop Insurance LLC; resides with his wife, JoAnn, in Monticello.

Diane McVicker '72 participated in initial overseas study in special education opportunity as ISU student; worked as a special education teacher; retired from Greeley-Evans School District 6; resides in Greeley, Colorado.

Janice (Ganz) Gilligan '73 is retired after teaching 20 years and another two decades as a certified nursing assistant; widowed and resides in Morris.

Janet Look '73 retired from teaching in District 230; adjunct English instructor at Joliet Junior College; resides with her husband, Jim, in Frankfort.

Dorothy (Dobrik) Lux '73 retired from teaching elementary school; resides in Frankfort.

Kathy (Miller) Mathewson '73 retired from Heartland Community College as the coordinator of employee benefits; her husband, **Robert '71, M.S. '74**, is retired after working at Bliss Inc., Governmental Managers Inc., and Nation-

al Fire and Casualty Company; couple resides in New Braunfels, Texas.

Pamela (Meyers) Michel '73 retired from Burlington Central School District 301 after teaching elementary and middle school students for nearly 30 years; coordinated gifted program for 10 years; resides with her husband, Steve, in Elgin.

Randy Crump '74, M.S. '79, Ph.D. '85, retired after 36 years in education; worked as superintendent 29 years; resides with his wife, Brenda, in Normal.

Earl Hieber, M.A. '74, continues substitute teaching at age 90; resides in Salem.

Michael Jarrell '74 retired from the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago; resides with his wife, **Patricia (Isome) '75**; couple enjoys being grandparents and resides in Naperville.

Susan (Tucker) Layden '74 is retired after teaching fourth and fifth grades; also taught special education; resides with her husband, Lawrence, in Normal.

Vicki Buerkett '75, M.S. '85, retired from Unit 5 after 35 years of teaching; loves caring for her four grandchildren; resides in Bloomington.



History made in Chicago

Torrence Gardner '13 is the economic and community development director from Chicago's 49th Ward. He co-authored Juneteenth legislation presented to the Chicago City Council and approved, making June 19 a day of observance. It was a step forward in efforts to make the date that commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S. an official holiday. That goal was reached this year when President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act. "Chicago's DNA would be incomplete without the contributions of African-Americans," Gardner said. "A day recognizing Black Americans overcoming slavery was overdue."

Redbird Legacy



Dr. Mary Ryder, M.A. '81, has a unique bond to the University. Her family connection began 110 years ago and spans four generations.

Mary's grandmother, Irene (Valentine) Blacker, attended Illinois State Normal University (ISNU) in the summers of 1911 and 1912, along with her sister Daisy. Another sister, Kathryn, attended in the summer of 1916. The sisters taught in country schools and completed continuing education credits.

Irene had three daughters, and each of the Blacker girls attended ISNU in the 1930s. They were Geneva, Guyneth, and Ruth. All three taught in country schools, with Geneva becoming a high school math teacher. They lived at 601 Normal Avenue in a home that is still standing.

"How this second generation made it to college during the Depression is special," Mary said. "Their farmer father, my grandfather, sold a cow to pay their tuition."

Ruth (Blacker) Ryder '38 met her husband, Bernard '40, at ISNU. They had three children, who are also graduates. Michael '67 studied physical science, Richard '70, majored in chemistry, and Mary did her master's work in English. A Distinguished Professor Emerita of English from South Dakota State University, Mary is shown above holding a photo of herself with her parents and siblings.

The three Ryder siblings share a Redbird connection with two cousins, Janice Blacker '72 and Shirley Blacker '79. Daisy's granddaughter, Mary Beth Norris '77, graduated in the same decade.

The fourth generation consists of great-grandchildren of Irene and Daisy. These include Jamie Schumacher '92; Kelly Reid '07, M.S. '14; Philip Drazewski, M.S. '14; and Sara Spencer '13, as well as her husband, Kyle Koerner '12.

The Redbird roots deepen through Mary's father, Bernard, who joined ISNU in the 50s as an associate professor of chemistry. He taught 28 years, becoming a full professor and chairing the chemistry department for nine years.

"Our family legacy mirrors the development of the institution from a Normal school to a mid-sized, multi-faceted university," Mary said. "My dad came in 1956 with President Robert Bone, and his role as first head of chemistry in

Katherine Derry '75, M.S. '82, retired and closed her counseling practice; volunteers as a disaster mental health team leader for the American Red Cross; resides in Rosenberg.

Patty (Isome) Jarrell '75 retired after 24 years as a paraprofessional in elementary and middle schools; worked in multi-needs and autism programs; resides with her husband, **Michael '74**, in Naperville.

Linda (Lebre) Martin '75, '77, retired after 43 years as a clinical laboratory scientist at OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, where she resides.

Nancy (Metaler) Peterson, M.A. '76, is a retired school psychologist; resides with her husband, Rich, in Elmhurst.

Walter Burton '77 retired from health care management; resides in Birmingham, Alabama.

Mary (Seisser) Holley '77 is an administrative assistant for Northern Illinois University's Alumni Association; resides with her husband, Larry, in Campton Hills.

Carol (Hirsh) Blechman '78 retired after 39 years as a special educator; enjoys travel, gardening, photography; volunteers at local soup kitchen; resides in Evanston.

John Davis '78 is the director of legislative programs with the Fleet Reserve Association; resides in Alexandria, Virginia.

Mary (Parker) Haynes '78 M.A. '10, is retired from teaching elementary students; resides with her husband, Thomas, in Heyworth.

Mark Lambert '78 retired as communications director for the National Corn Growers Association; met his wife, Nancy, at ISU; couple resides in St. Louis, Missouri.

Ed Lewandowski '78 retired after 35 years as a teacher and administrator; resides with his wife, Cynthia, in Shorewood.

William Long '78 earned a juris doctorate from the University of San Francisco; retired from the U.S. Department of Labor after 34 years; served as deputy director of operations; resides with his wife, Rebecca, in Chicago.

Mel Schnake, MBA '78, is professor emeritus of management from Valdosta State University; former assistant professor of management at ISU; resides with his wife, Robin, in Valdosta, Georgia.

Lawrence Whittet '78 is vice president of operations with Bridgeline Engineering; worked on a solar energy project in Dubai for two years; resides in Granbury, Texas.

Lynn (Moro) Keck '79 is a retired teacher; resides with her husband, Tom, in Rock Island.

Rosalind Lane-Ragland '79 retired from the Illinois Department of Corrections; resides with her husband, Ivan, in Dolton.

1980s

Juan Fernandez '80 is a professor of animal sciences at Purdue University; returned to faculty ranks after nearly 20 years in administration at three universities; resides in Lafayette, Indiana.

Maryalice Kilbourne '80 retired as a school library media specialist; resides with her husband, Kevin, in Cohocton, New York.

Paul Koch '80 is a senior vice president and COO of Curtis Power Solutions; resides with his wife, Wendy, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Rebecca (Moore) Miner '80 is a section chief with the Illinois Department of Human Services; resides with her husband, Dennis, in Springfield.

Doreen (Olson) Propst '80, M.S. '85, retired from East Peoria High School; works part-time at the school with students who have special needs; resides with her husband, Mark, in East Peoria.

James Mueller '81, M.S. '83, retired as a speech-language pathologist; resides in Moline.

Deborah (Wagner) Prebula '81 is a production manager with Aramark Uniform Services; resides with her husband, Jim, in Pecatonica.

Sue Seiz '81 is a consultant with Paragon Consulting Group Inc.; resides in Palatine.

Karen (Weber) Belker '82 completed a master's degree at University of Illinois-Chicago; worked in court services at Cook County Circuit Court; serves as school social worker at Husmann Elementary School in Crystal Lake School District 47; resides with her husband, Stephen, in Crystal Lake.

Nancy Henderson '82 is retired; director of children's ministry at St. James United Methodist Church; resides with her husband, Gerald, in Danville.

Marjorie Reynolds '82, M.M. '89, operates Marjorie's Violin Studio LLC; resides in Wauke, Iowa.

Ralph Zarumba '82 is a managing director over the electricity and natural gas regulatory practice with Black and Veatch Management Consulting, an international consulting firm; resides with his wife, Ellen, in Evanston.

Jeffrey Lord '83 is a national bank examiner with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, an agency of the U.S. Department of Treasury; resides with his wife, Michele, in Normal.

Jami Simon, M.S. '83, co-starred in the short film *Marcy Learns Something New* with *Saturday Night Live* alum Rachel Dratch; film won Best of the Year at the Vimeo Festival; had



Bonded as Redbirds

A friendship that began when six young women met as freshmen in the fall of 1968 has remained strong through the decades. They have attended weddings and celebrated anniversaries within the group, which meets annually. During the pandemic, they remained close with monthly Zoom conversations. They also attend special campus events, including the 40th anniversary of the Interdenominational Youth Choir (IYC). They are, *from left*, Faye (Banyard) Davis '72 of Orland Park; Janice (Mitchell) Purcell '73 of Chicago; Essie Harmon '72 of Chicago; Evelyn Carswell '73 of Atlanta, Georgia; Joann Morgan '75 of Chicago; and Alice (Carswell) Beck '72 of Springfield. Alice, who is a sister to Evelyn, served as the first IYC president.

a role in the FX show *CAKE*; resides in New York, New York.

Nichola (Todorovich) Blowers '84 retired after 35 years as an adjunct professor and technical supervisor in theatre at Joliet Junior College; resides in Joliet.

Brian Heatheron, M.S. '84, has a private practice as a clinical psychologist; resides with his wife, Monica, in Springfield.

Eileen (Biltgen) Hernley '84 retired after teaching special education for 37 years; works at Metropolitan State University in Denver coaching teachers working toward master's degrees or licensure in special education; resides in Centennial, Colorado.

Marshall Anderson, MFA '85, is a professor of theater and dance and department chair at the University of Wisconsin in Whitewater, where he resides.

John Riley '85 retired from the Indiana State Police after 34 years; resides with his wife, Deborah, in Westpoint, Indiana.

Maria Shaw '85 is a human services caseworker for the State of Illinois; resides in Champaign.

Debbie (Wilhelm) Shuppert '85 is a school counselor in Kenosha Unified School District; taught special education for 12 years; middle school counselor for 26 years; resides with her husband, Bob, in Gurnee.

Joe Regan '86 is the director of sales with Levi, Ray and Shoup Inc.; resides in Springfield.

Kim (Rife) Stephens '86, M.S. '99, retired after 33 years in education; worked as a general/vocal music teacher, taught second grade, and served 22 years as an administrator; resides with her husband, Larry, in Plainfield.

Elizabeth (Walden) Beasley '87, completed a doctorate in education at Walden University; supervisor of human resources at St. Mary's County Public Schools; adjunct assistant professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; resides with her husband, Richard, in Solomons, Maryland.

Sarah (Dixon) Bohnsack '88 owns Bohnsack and Frommelt LLP, a certified public accounting firm; her husband, Jay '88, teaches technology at Moline High School; couple has six children and resides in Taylor Ridge.

Kelly (Youmans) Hannapel '88 is a program administrator with Fermilab; resides in Aurora.



Helping in Haiti

Steve Johnson '74 was on the first crew of TV10 News and went on to work as a news photographer before overseeing video production at Illinois Farm Bureau and State Farm Insurance Companies. Now retired, he uses his talents to promote the charity PEACE Project in Haiti. The nonprofit supports three schools, including one in Carrefour near Port au Prince. A Bloomington resident, Johnson enjoys interacting with the students during his school visits.

Samuel Miller '88, MBA '17, is president and CEO of Crusader Community Health serving 58,000 patients in Rockford; resides with his wife, Marlene, in Stillman Valley.

D. Renee (Jones) Russell '88 is a music teacher and owns Kitten on the Keys; resides with her husband, Todd, in Rockledge, Florida.

Daphne (Whitehead) Sligh '88 is the division director of contracting for HCA Healthcare; completing doctorate in education; resides with her husband, Nathaniel, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Michael Kilbourne, MBA '89, retired after 32 years in law enforcement and six years as a police chief; appointed Kane County treasurer; resides with his wife, **Michelle (Manisco) '87, MBA '89**, in Carpentersville.

Nicholas Mizaur '89 is chief executive officer of the NMC Group of Companies, which owns capital equipment businesses in six states; previously served as the company's president and chief operating officer; earned law degree; resides in Omaha, Nebraska.

Troops

Jeff Burchfield '98 is a training officer with the U.S. Army; stationed at Rock Island Arsenal; resides with his wife, Lynn, in Coal Valley.

Toby Neal '02 has served in the Army as a military police officer 18 years; resides with his wife, Myra, in Germany.

Hannah Muir '14 is a Petty Officer 3rd Class in the U.S. Coast Guard; resides in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Brianna (Koenig) Sparkman '15 is a flight officer with the U.S. Navy; resides with her husband, Robert, in Chesapeake, Virginia.

In memory

Faculty/Staff

Donald J. Armstrong, Music; 3/20

Gilbert "Frank" Black, WGLT; 11/20

Clinton R. Bunke, Educational Administration and Foundations; 5/20

John Crew, Physics; 11/20

Janet K. (Stahl) Cross '66; Special Education; 9/20

Edmund T. Dorner, M.S. '68; Health Sciences; 11/20

George P. Foeller, Music; 12/20

Frederick "Terry" W. Fuess III, Agriculture; 11/20

William J. Gnagey, Psychology; 11/20

Donald M. Prince, College of Education; 11/20

James L. Roderick, Music; 12/20

Jim D. Scott, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; 10/20

C. Edward Streeter, College of Education; 11/20

Alpha J. Sweeney, Milner Library; 11/20

Henry J. Zintambila, Geography-Geology; 12/20

40s

Keith E. Davis '43; 9/20

Marjorie R. Hawes '43; 12/20

June L. (Jaeger) Patchett '44; 11/20

L. Joan Brucker '46; 11/20

Norma A. (Cooper) Bush '47; 12/20

Maxine M. (O'Neil) Pinnow '47; 10/20

Doris F. (Rittenhouse) Ryan '47; 3/13

Frances (Withers) Brinkman '48; 4/14

Helen L. (Copple) Edwards '48; 10/20

Rita A. (Kraus) Miller '48; 1/21

Beatrice B. (Hudak) Hanson '49; 5/20

Marjorie E. (Lawrence) Keasling '49; 12/20

Horace "HD" D. Longbrake '49; 8/20

50s

Roosevelt Banks '50; 10/20

John J. Dzuris '50; 10/20

Gerald P. Huddelson '50; 11/20

Morton "Chuck" J. Mills '50; 1/21

Dennis W. Ruble '51, M.S. '52; 11/20

Jane A. (Peasley) Speer '51; 12/20

John E. Griesemer '52, M.S. '58; 11/20

Jeanne M. (Farr) Hermanson '52; 11/20

Marilyn R. (Kimmel) Beemer Wagner '52; 10/20

Shirley J. (Andrews) Heidbrink '53; 10/20

Lois V. (Lamont) Beeler '54; 1/21

Rose M. (Marler) Lubitz '54, M.S. '62; 11/20

Iner A. Anderson '55, '64; 12/20

Robert H. McWherter '55; 11/20

Harold D. Samorian Sr. '55; 12/20

Willetta M. (Wyatt) Silva '55, M.S. '58; 12/20
 Marcia L. (Crawford) Sterenberg '55; 10/20
 James J. Dennis '56; 11/20
 Laura J. (Wade) Jamieson '56; 10/20
 Jane (Cline) Linder '56; 11/20
 John E. Campbell '57; 10/20
 Rachel I. (Kamm) Elbert '57; 12/20
 Margaret A. (Davenport) Garrett '57; 10/20
 William M. Loy Jr. '57; 10/20
 Carl D. Anderson '58, M.S. '63; 12/20
 James A. Gregory Jr. '58; 10/20
 Marjorie A. (Arseneau) Hagen '58; 10/20
 Nancy L. (Daley) Myatt '58; 1/21
 June M. (Rogers) Odell '58; 9/20
 Edward H. Koch '59, M.S. '64; 11/20
 Donald F. Wright '59; 4/20

60s

Joan L. (Wetherell) Bourne '60; 11/20
 Judith K. (Fell) Harmon '60; 1/21
 Sandra K. (Nardin) Pierre '60; 1/21
 Judy M. (Schoeben) Pierce '61, M.S. '76; 12/20
 Carol A. (Bowlby) Glynn '62; 11/20
 Lois J. (Rademacher Asper) Mills '62, M.S. '69; 12/20
 Thomas A. Spangler, M.S. '62; 1/21
 Dian L. (Dill) Thom '62; 11/20
 Patricia A. (Steiner) Wandling '62; 9/20
 Charles J. Zemaitis '62; 3/05
 Jack A. Crump '63, M.S. '66; 9/20
 Merlin A. Kieseewetter '63, M.S. '68; 11/20
 Mary A. Kirzeder '63; 11/20
 Alvin E. Brock '64; 1/21
 Constance A. (Perino) Dominguez, M.S. '64; 11/20
 Stephen R. Michalovic '64; 12/20
 Michael O. Mittlestadet '64; 11/20
 Jeanette (Bryant) Moore '64; 11/20
 John R. Ackland '65; 1/21
 Kathleen A. (Garey) Carlson '65; 1/21
 Richard E. Dutton, M.S. '65; 11/20
 Richard L. Hanson '65; 10/20
 Donna J. (Baughman) Leonard '65; 12/20
 Judith A. (Krebs) Miskie '65; 12/20
 Irene (Welch) Austin '66; 10/20
 Vernel F. Banister '66; 10/20
 Dwight K. Crabtree '66, M.S. '83; 10/20
 David P. Evans '66; 1/21
 Carol M. (Anderson) Gardner '67; 1/21
 Margaret A. (MacKay) Hughes '67; 11/20

Barbara M. (Jager) Lichtenwalter '67; 12/20
 Beverly J. (Gerken) Raber '67; 10/20
 Leon K. Stevenson '67; 1/21
 Patricia A. (Sherrard) Burke '68, M.S. '72; 1/21
 Sharon L. (Krueger) Mayne '68; 2/21
 Daniel R. Prosser '68, M.S. '70; 12/20
 Kora (Kieviet) Searcy '68; 12/20
 William E. Zielke '68; 12/20
 Judith L. (Baumgarte) Garner '69, M.S. '70; 10/20
 William V. Harrison '69, M.S. '70; 5/19
 Arvid D. Housenga '69, M.S. '73
 Lawrence R. Nonnie, M.S. '69; 10/20
 Linda K. (McWard) Rakers '69, M.S. '71; 11/20
 Sharon G. (Koresko) Relander '69; 10/20
 Mae N. (White) Stribling '69; 9/20

70s

Edna M. Hodges '70; 9/13
 Michael E. Powell '70; 10/20
 James Rockwell '70; 11/20
 Sandra E. (Brooks) Savage '70; 11/20
 Rebecca J. (Barcroft) Skinner '70; 1/21
 Deborah J. (Metz) Van Dyke '70; 8/13
 Clarence W. Williams '70, M.S. '74; 9/20
 Barbara "Bobbie" J. Lynn '71; 12/20
 Kathy L. (Sterrenberg) Mahler Rannila '71; 9/20
 Doris J. (Mehrkens) Rosene '71; 8/20
 Dierdre A. (Fair) Haas Wicker '71; 10/20
 Wilmer D. Nall, M.S. '72; 9/20
 Thomas N. Rowen '72; 11/19
 Michael B. Rowlands '72; 9/20
 Gary E. Rydleski '72; 11/20
 Margie S. (Abel) Sharp Sheaffer '72; 1/21
 David G. Smith '72; 8/20
 Warren F. Tourangeau '72; 12/20
 Richard C. Brunton '73; 10/20
 Joan M. (Ciboroski) Defenbaugh '73; 10/20
 Jon Keister '73; 2/20
 Michael W. Kirchner '73; 11/20
 Kathleen (Peak) Knott '73; 12/20
 Kevin B. Lenfant '73; 11/20
 Darilyn D. Manring '73; 12/19
 Philip M. Minneci '73; 11/20
 Debra K. (Williams) Prewett '73; 9/20
 Robert D. Reep '73; 10/20
 Wanda L. Billiter '74; 11/20
 Gary R. Garretson '74; 11/20
 Gail K. (Scott) Johnson '74; 11/20
 Daniel D. Kupkowski '74; 10/20

Gaye (Stucki) Platt, M.M. '74; 10/20
 Christina L. (Glidden) Supple '74; 10/20
 Sharman Thuren '74; 6/15
 Tim A. Adams '75; 9/20
 Marjorie I. (Read) Bulita '75; 11/20
 Margaret E. (Wynistorf) Green '75, M.S. '87; 11/20
 Dallas J. Stucky '75; 1/21
 Sueann M. (Tierney) Bates '76, M.S. '80; 10/20
 Mark E. Broendel '76; 10/20
 Ruth A. (Holstrum) Childers, M.S. '76; 9/20
 R. Stephen Graham '76; 11/20
 Pamela A. (Miller) Massey Higgins '76; 12/20
 Marc W. Jordan '76; 11/20
 Linda J. (Gintzig) Starling, M.A. '76; 1/21
 Deborah L. Thomas '76; 12/20
 Christine L. (Ryan) Elston '77; 3/08
 Carl A. Klappauf '77; 11/20
 David "Joe" J. Taylor '77; 12/20



Hooking endless adventures

Hanna (Cohen) Robbins '90 is immersed in a fishing lifestyle that she enjoys with her husband Pete. They frequently leave their home in Virginia to lead groups of anglers to Mexico, the Brazilian Amazon, Zambia, Alaska, and Panama. One excursion in Guatemala resulted in Robbins catching a sailfish, *above*. She shares tips on everything from gear to travel online at www.halfpastfirstcast.com.

Thomas L. Varilek '77; 1/21
Thomas M. Hammen '78, M.S. '83; 11/20
Carol A. (Creason) Kemna '78; 11/20
Marti K. (Deardorff) Lipscomb '78; 11/20
Rebecca J. (Milton) Bioty '79; 8/20
Robert L. Siebert '79; 11/20

80s

John "Jack" R. Ardaugh '80; 1/21
Kathryn A. (Shaffer) Blankenhorn '80; 10/20
Shon D. Easley '80; 12/20
Gregory R. Miller '80; 12/20
Levon Richmond '80; 12/20
Steven L. Bundy '81; 12/20
Steven C. Fannin, M.S. '81; 12/20
Bill Ganza '81, M.S. '84; 9/20
Nam K. Hyong, M.S. '81; 12/20
Lisa M. O'Farrell '81; 1/21
Ronald E. Plock '81; 11/20
Robert J. Ryan '81; 5/20
Mary D. Smith, M.S. '81; 1/21
Teresa M. (Burns) Bunsen '82; 10/20
Linda S. Ficek '82; 11/20
Walter J. Manijak '82; 1/21
Michael J. O'Keefe '82; 8/20
Imogene "Vicki" M. (Vickers) Olsen '82; 1/21
Margaret A. (O'Hearn) Woodtli, Ph.D. '82; 11/20
Timothy J. Adams '83; 12/20
Jack R. Hubble '83; 11/20
Becky L. Whited '83, M.S. '96; 12/20
Douglas A. Wellenreiter, M.S. '84; 11/20
Guy R. Chamberlin '85; 1/21

James L. Schafman '85; 10/20
R. John Muench '86; 10/20
Donald G. Arter '87; 12/20
Dean K. Lockas '87; 1/21
Lawrence Q. Perkins '87; 11/20
Elizabeth A. Wayne '87; 12/20
Michael F. Hayes '88; 12/20
Joseph P. Mikusa '88; 1/21
Angela M. (Shadley) Musgrove '88; 1/21
James G. Tarter '88; 11/20
Mark C. Boratto '89; 10/20
Kenneth M. Holmes, Ph.D. '89; 8/20
Lynn M. Pates '89; 12/20
Pamela (Baran) Wafful '89; 12/20

90s

Edward Burton '90; 11/20
Mark A. Elston '90; 6/20
John B. Funk '90; 2/21
Shelly A. (Franklin) Henson '90, M.S. '91; 2/21
Erma M. (Rhoda) Kahle '90, M.S. '92; 7/20
Pamela J. (Hill) Hallissey '91; 11/20
William E. Matthews '91; 2/21
Madalyn D. Tinervin '91; 1/21
Tammijean (Stevens) Giltmaker Kuhn '92; 11/20
Richard A. Nelsen '92; 2/21
Kimberlee D. (Greer) Fogal Ransdell '92; 12/20
Glendell G. Beckner II '93; 11/20
George E. Brown '93; 10/20
Michael D. Daniels '93, M.S. '95; 11/20
Carol J. Hiebert, M.F.A. '93; 2/21
Christopher M. O'Gara '95; 3/21
Todd J. Greenlee '96; 12/20
Xingguang Han, M.S. '96; 1/21
Tracy A. (Tofte) Jennings '96; 12/20
Melissa A. Monroe '97, M.A. '00, '07; 1/21
Chad A. Boudinier '98; 1/21
Darci S. (Denoyer) Mills '98; 11/20
Ashley E. Riggs, M.S. '98; 11/20
Marcia E. (Baird) Andrews, M.S. '99; 11/20
Dana K. (Robinson) Boehm '99; 11/20
Todd A. Hanneken '99; 3/21
Janet L. Huene, M.S. '99; 12/20
China-Li Erica Hyland Nystrom Smith '99; 11/20
Tammie M. (Alsdorf) Smock '99; 1/21

00s

Matthew W. Booth '00; 11/20
Laura A. Chandler '00; 11/20



Entertainer mourned

School of Theatre and Dance alumna Suzzanne Douglas died at age 64 in July after battling cancer. She established a 30-year-career as a television, cinema, and stage actress. A Chicago native, Douglas had television roles on *The Parent 'Hood* and *The Good Wife*. Film credits include *Whitney* and *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*. A two-time Image Award winner, Douglas received a Black Oscar, a Reel Award, and the Mary Martin Award for her professional work. Her legacy continues at Illinois State, as she established the Suzanne Douglas Scholarship to support African-American theatre students.

Bobby L. England '00; 1/21
Holly E. (Galetti) Heffren, M.S.N. '03; 1/21
Stephany B. Melcher '03; 11/20
Kimberly A. Mormann '03; 12/20
Michael J. Larson Jr. '04; 1/21
Robin E. (Daugherty) Petersen '04; 4/21
McKinley Williams Jr. '04; 10/20
Megan N. Kochanek '05; 11/20
Latiya "Tiya" L. (Henry) Lee '05; 1/21
Marla J. Knuth-Williams '06; 12/20
Ann M. (Lafary) Hicke, M.S.W. '08; 11/20

10s

Abigail V. Flagler '14; 10/20
Jordan D. Reinhart-Smith '18; 2/21

Correction

The spring edition of *State* incorrectly listed William Howat '76 as deceased. The staff apologizes for the error.

We want to hear from you!

There are three ways to submit your information.

- Go online to Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/ClassNotes.

- Email your news to sjblyst@IllinoisState.edu.

- Mail your news to Class Notes, Illinois State University, Campus Box 3100, Normal, IL 61790.

For additional information, contact Alumni Engagement at (309) 438-2586 or email alumni@IllinoisState.edu.

Notes beginning with the Class of 1990 can be found online at IllinoisState.edu/Magazine.



Thanks *to* You

Tony Nicolalde paused a Zoom meeting to help his mom make an appointment. That's because he is hearing and his parents, both immigrants from Ecuador, are Deaf. Nicolalde is a pro at straddling dual identities. He is hearing and Child of a Deaf Adult (CODA). A first-generation American of Latino heritage, he is fluent in Spanish, English, and American Sign Language (ASL).

It's Nicolalde's unique upbringing that informs his personal motto: It doesn't matter where you come from. You can be successful with the right resources.

The senior special education major's own resources include a strong support system of family, friends, and faculty such as Assistant Professor Stephanie Gardiner-Walsh. They communicated before Nicolalde set foot on campus. He was eager to work with Gardiner-Walsh, who is also CODA.

Nicolalde has also benefited from scholarships. Beyond a full tuition waiver for academic standing, he received the Class of 1986 Scholarship, Evelyn J. Rex Scholarship, Illinois State University Alumni Association Scholarship, and the Waneta Sedgewick Catey Scholarship. He's used the money to pay for housing and support his family.

Nicolalde's educational journey is the opposite of his parents' experience. They immigrated in pursuit of better educational opportunities before Nicolalde and his younger sister Ruth were born. Their experience motivated Nicolalde to pursue teaching as a career. "I don't want a student of mine to not have the best choices in education," he said.

One way Nicolalde hopes to provide for future students is by expanding the amount of ASL classes in Illinois. He's using data to correlate the population of Illinois students and existing ASL classes to prove demand for the curriculum. He's also concerned with supporting people of color, whether Deaf or hearing, within the educational system.

"I want to encourage hearing students to learn ASL," he said, "so that the Deaf community can feel welcomed into mainstream society while still maintaining their Deaf identity."

Support your passion at ISU and impact a student's Redbird experience. Make a gift online at IllinoisState.edu/Giving or call (309) 438-2294.



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A season to celebrate

This fall marks the 125th season of Redbird football. The early years were rough. In the 1920-1921 season, for example, head coach H. H. Russell had a squad of only 16. Half of the team members had never played football. Today's program has a roster of more than 100 student-athletes, who take to the field with confidence under head coach Brock Spack. Be part of the celebration during this anniversary year by purchasing tickets for the season or a single game. Visit GoRedbirds.com/tickets or call (309) 438-8000.