

SOUTHEASTERN

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023



DAVIS INGLE:
THE PATH TO THE
WHITE HOUSE —
FROM INTERN TO
WORKING FOR THE
PRESIDENT

ALSO FEATURING

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After faithfully pursuing his dream career in Washington, D.C., Davis Ingle landed a role in the White House, working directly with the president and his staff as a press assistant.

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LETTER FROM **THE PRESIDENT**



KENT J. INGLE, D.MIN.

As I reflect on this past academic year, I am reminded of all the incredible milestones Southeastern University has achieved. In the fall of 2022, we reached a record enrollment of over 10,000 students — a goal we have been working toward for over a decade. Due to our remarkable growth, Southeastern was named one of the fastest-growing private institutions in the nation by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Much of our growth is because of our partnerships with the local church. Through our partnership model, we are able to meet students where they are by providing affordable and accessible education. We currently have students from 42 states and in countries worldwide, including Brazil, Moldova and Uganda.

While we continue to expand our reach, our mission of equipping students to live out their divine design to serve Christ and the world around them has remained

the same. This is evident through our students' commitment to serving others. In the 2022–23 academic year, students participated in missions trips in the following countries: Greece, spending a month serving in a refugee camp; Fiji, building water filters for villages with limited access to clean drinking water; and trips to Hungary, Croatia and the Netherlands, meeting the practical needs of Ukrainian refugees.

We also had incredible success in our athletic programs, with our men's indoor track team winning the first national championship in program history. On the field, two of our softball players made national news. When an opposing player was injured after hitting a grand slam, Southeastern players picked her up and carried her across three bases, putting the opponent ahead in the game — demonstrating the importance of putting sportsmanship over competition and doing the right thing in every situation.

All of this is a reminder of God's faithfulness and the blessings He has given our university as we remain committed to fulfilling our mission. Every issue of this magazine demonstrates how God continues to use our students and alumni as they step into what He has designed for their life.

In this issue, you will read stories of alumni like **JIM WELLBORN '73**, who spent over five decades ministering in more than 70 countries as a pastor, evangelist and missionary with the Assemblies of God through Ambassadors in Mission (AIM) and Builders International. This magazine features the DeWeerd family,

JEREMY '19 (MAML), **JEN '22 (MAML)** and **CADEN '21, '23 (MAML)**, who found that the Master of Arts in Ministerial Leadership program at Southeastern fit each of their unique ministry roles. You will also read about how **DAVIS INGLE '16, '17 (GMBA)** participated in an internship that helped him discover his passion for politics and government affairs and eventually landed him a job in the White House.

One of my favorite parts of our magazine is our student stories. This issue highlights **LANDON HAYS '23**, a Rubik's Cube ambassador who is passionate about using his talent of making portraits with 3-D puzzles for God's kingdom. Then there is **HEIDI HESTER '23**, who joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Honors Internship Program and plans to pursue a local or federal law enforcement career. These are just a few stories of what our incredible students are doing.

As you read through this magazine, I hope you feel inspired and challenged to continue stepping into what God has designed for your life. I hope this magazine encourages you as you read about what God is doing on our campus. If you have not done so already, we ask that you share your story with us so we can hear how you are using your God-given talents to step into your calling. We also invite you to come back and visit the campus to see firsthand what God is doing at Southeastern.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for your alma mater. May God bless you!

FRAMEWORK LEADERSHIP



LEADERSHIP REQUIRES A FRAMEWORK

Join Kent Ingle as he talks to the world's most innovative leaders about how they develop a framework for life and leadership.

NEW Framework Leadership Podcast released every Monday.



FRAMEWORK LEADERSHIP

Podcast



MEET SEU'S NEW CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

Southeastern recently had the opportunity to meet with the university's new chief advancement officer, Julie Paul, on her vision for the future and what she's looking forward to the most with engaging alumni, students and families. Prior to this role, Paul served in the office of the provost overseeing special projects. Paul has a background in business entrepreneurship, public relations, and graphic and interior design. She also has executive-level expertise in project and school development, implementation and institutional advancement.

What appealed to you about working at Southeastern?

I came to SEU because my husband (Dr. Jeff Paul) is the dean of the Jannetides College of Business, Communication and Leadership. One of our children has special needs, and he attends Pathways School of Excellence at SEU. When we were living in Oklahoma, he never had a community before and there wasn't a Christian schooling option available for him. We homeschooled him for the first 10 years of his life. Being at SEU is the first time he has had a group of friends and a community that supports him and supports us as a family. We have never had a community like this before. We have only been here for two years, but it already feels like home.

What I love about SEU is their respect for academic excellence coupled with accessibility. We have wonderful and

excellent faculty and staff. Southeastern makes education accessible so that there is something for everyone here. I feel like they can serve all the needs of the church when it comes to academics and career readiness. They empower their students to think, communicate, lead and serve well. It is a privilege to have the chance to share SEU's story of excellence, community and accessibility because we have experienced that ourselves!

What is your vision for the Advancement Office?

Our purpose here is to help our leaders achieve their vision for SEU. To do that, we need to tell the story of Southeastern University — who we were, who we are and who we will be in the future. We need to share it with our community, churches, families and alumni. There is also some storytelling that needs to be done institutionally. We want to show how we are here to walk alongside our colleagues on campus and partner with them in sharing the successes of the great students and programs here at SEU. When we are in tandem with the vision of our leadership and highlighting the accomplishments of SEU students and alumni, our community and partners will help us lead the way in Christian higher ed.

One of our major focuses is to grow our endowment and our operational support so that SEU is financially secure in the



Julie Paul

years to come, despite changes in our nation and world. We want to build on the solid foundation that SEU has so that we can continue to be nimble, innovative, and able to take on challenges and growth at a speed that most universities can't. By increasing our endowment to \$50 million in 10 years, we can position the university for healthy and sustainable growth.

How has the Advancement team grown?

Our Advancement team is now very robust, growing from a team of four to nine. We have created five new positions within the last few months. We now have four major gift officers, an online engagement director, a donor relations and engagement director, a director of operations and special events, and a coordinator of donor records and analysis. SEU has invested in advancement not just for the fundraising aspect, but because we have so many people who want to partner with us in different ways. Our team helps connect our partners' passions and SEU's resources so that we can fulfill our initiatives and serve our community, our students and the kingdom.

What can alumni look forward to in the upcoming year?

We hope that, within this next year, alumni can see how proud SEU is of them. We hear all the time how wonderful our alumni are, how wonderful our students are, and how different they are from students and graduates from other colleges. Their moral compass, great work ethic and servant-leader mentality are very evident. We hope we can express how proud we are of them as they graduate and carry the SEU name wherever God sends them.

We are also in the process of updating and rebranding our Alumni Association to reflect the full scope of our alumni demographics. We want to be sure that our alumni know that they are valued, and we want to give them something back for what they have given to SEU. They can look forward to some new advantages of being a member of the Alumni Association, especially when it comes to networking, career development

and extended education opportunities. We are working to create a better networking platform for them to explore new career paths, or to find mentorships or a community within their fields of expertise.

What can alumni look forward to at Homecoming?

We are really excited about Homecoming this fall! There will be opportunities for family and cohort engagement as well as great food and fun at our tailgating event, a brunch launch party for our new alumni website and some special gifts just for coming. Through the next few years, we are going to be highlighting different segments of our university and our alumni. This year, we are holding an event for the School of Honors as it celebrates its 15th anniversary. We will also be celebrating the football program's 10-year anniversary. We want everyone to feel like they will be specifically celebrated over the next few years.

Favorite book?

I love "The Lord of the Rings" by J.R.R. Tolkien. I start it every Thanksgiving break and read through all three books by Christmas.

Favorite movie?

"The Lord of the Rings"

Favorite Bible verse?

My favorite verse is Psalm 86:11, which says, "Teach me Your way, Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name." If my heart is united to Him and I am putting Him in the proper place of authority over everything that is in my life, then I am always going to have the right frame of mind, despite whatever is happening that day — good or bad. I love the quote from C.T. Studd: "Only one life 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." That is my desire for our team as we move forward stewarding partnerships for the kingdom and His people. Is it for Christ? We hope our efforts will be just that!

Favorite hobbies?

I love to garden. I love to kayak and to be outdoors. I like to do all of that with my family.

If you could go on vacation anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I would probably go to a secluded island where nobody is, but I would make sure there are no wild animals so my kids could just run free. If we could be like the Swiss Family Robinson, we would be.

Tell us about your family.

My husband, Jeff, is the dean of the Jannetides College of Business, Communication and Leadership. We have four kids. Our oldest will be in his junior year of college in Oklahoma, and our daughter will be a sophomore at SEU next fall. We also have a 12-year-old who goes to Pathways School of Excellence and a 7-year-old.



The Paul Family

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL & HEALTH SCIENCES



Dr. Mark Reinhardt

After a nationwide search for a chief nursing administrator, Southeastern announced the hire of Dr. Mark Reinhardt in March of 2023. Reinhardt now serves as a visionary leader for the university's nursing programs, faculty and students.

Within his new role, he oversees disciplinary partnerships, initiatives and projects, and ensures that excellence in program design is prioritized across all deliveries at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Before coming to Southeastern, Reinhardt served as a professor and the associate dean of Valdosta State University's School of Nursing in Georgia; the dean of the University of Lynchburg's School of Nursing in Virginia; and the department chair and coordinator of the family nurse practitioner program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. He is also a retired army officer with over 20 years of active duty.

Launching Innovative Degrees

Southeastern has announced the Master of Science in Medical Sciences (MSMS)

degree launching in the fall of 2023. Under Reinhardt's direction, the College of Natural & Health Sciences also aims to add a Doctor of Nursing Practice with a focus in behavioral health, and a combined Master of Science in Nursing and Master of Business Administration degree.

The college is also developing an accelerated BSN program and exploring the addition of associate degree programs.

Master of Science in Medical Sciences

The Master of Science in Medical Sciences (MSMS) program was created to prepare students for health professional schools and provide a solid foundation for those who wish to begin advanced medical study to become a doctor, dentist, pharmacist or physician assistant.

As the only program of its type in Polk County, where Southeastern's main campus is located — the MSMS will also be one of a few programs to incorporate faith-based opportunities nationwide.

The program will be able to be completed in three semesters through an accelerated timeline and will be delivered through a "flipped classroom" synchronous learning approach. In this format, students will receive cutting-edge instruction in a small group cohort format.

"This degree sets students up to succeed once they are admitted to medical school. Although they are highly prepared and capable, many undergraduate students do not qualify for admission during their first round of medical school applications," said **DR. AIMEE (VINSON) FRANKLIN '07**, dean of the College of Natural & Health Sciences. "We recognized the need for students to feel more confident when applying to medical schools and to have the chance to create connections with their peers who are on the same journey."

The MSMS degree program will launch in the fall of 2023, pending approval from SACSCOC.



SEU ANNOUNCES TRADES PROGRAMS

In the fall of 2023, Southeastern University will be launching SEU Trades — an innovative collection of programs in construction technology, HVAC, event production, project management, and in the plumbing and electrical fields.

With major workforce shortages projected in several trade professions in the coming years, Christian higher education is uniquely poised for the holistic development of essential trade professionals. SEU Trades will aim to meet industry needs by offering skilled labor programs and mentor-rich apprenticeships, paired with a comprehensive, faith-based curriculum — all at an accessible and affordable rate.

“Skilled trade professions are essential to our way of life and to thriving communities,” said Provost and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Meghan Griffin. “We gravitate towards new frontiers such as AI, robotics and genomic medicine, but the future is predicated on the foundational professions — power, air conditioning and plumbing — that keep it all running. Those jobs are in high demand and will not be replaced by technology.”

She continued, “Our goal is to serve the professions here in Lakeland and in the communities surrounding our 200-plus partner sites.”

SEU Trades will offer degree programs and certificates at the university’s main campus, through partner sites and online. The program will utilize an innovative

learning model that combines trades education and traditional college coursework. Learning will mostly take place on the job, and traditional courses will be focused on the students’ chosen fields.

“Students will be introduced to skills through virtual simulations and then practice them in apprenticeships with mentors. It’s a model as old as discipleship, and these relationships develop technical skill as well as spiritual formation,” said Griffin.

A few of the degrees that will be offered at the program’s launch are a Bachelor of Science in Construction Technology and an Associate of Applied Science in Construction Technology. Minors in event production, project management and construction technology will also be available. Pending accreditor approval, HVAC, plumbing and electrical programs will follow in January of 2024.

Students enrolled in SEU Trades will have the opportunity to earn while they learn by completing a paid internship in their desired field as they simultaneously obtain an associate or bachelor’s degree. As a result of the combination of on-the-job training and online learning, students will have maximum flexibility. Courses will also be budget friendly and financial aid options will be available.

“Our vision with SEU Trades is to provide an environment that will train and develop the whole individual in order for them to be ‘work ready,’ productive and a valuable asset to wherever they are employed,” said Glenn



Barnard, professor and executive director of SEU Trades.

As executive director, Barnard was recently hired at the university to serve in a cross-functional role overseeing SEU Trade’s budget, planning, vision and strategy. His primary function is to procure and manage partnerships, develop the academic programs, and to serve both students and industry partners.

Prior to his role at Southeastern, Barnard worked at Cost of Wisconsin, Inc., a theme and speciality construction services organization. Over the course of 18 years, he served as their regional sales director, vice president of operations and senior project manager. He also worked in various positions with Rock & Waterscape Systems, Inc., in Orlando, Florida, and has held a contractor license in 10 states.

The Associate of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees will launch in the fall of 2023 pending approval from SACSCOC.

SEU Invited Community “HOME” for Annual Christian Conference

Southeastern University held its annual SEU Conference in February of 2023. The conference took place over the course of three days at Family Worship Center in Lakeland, Florida. The theme for this year's conference was “HOME.”

Pastors and preachers from across the nation traveled to Lakeland to speak at the morning and evening conference sessions. Speakers included Irene Rollins, Tim Timberlake, Manouchka Charles, Manny Arango, Shawn and Jill Johnson, Charlie Hughes and Matthew Keller.

Musical guests included the university's worship group, SEU Worship, and Red Rocks Worship. In addition, SEU Conference offered luncheons hosted by Jill Johnson, Matthew Keller and Charlie Hughes.





SEU WELCOMES

NEW CAMPUS PASTOR

JONATHAN RIVERA



In June of 2023, Southeastern welcomed new campus pastor Jonathan Rivera to the university community.

James and Brittany Powell, who had been serving as the university's campus pastors leading up to Rivera's hire, transitioned to new positions on the pastoral team at Red Rocks Church in Denver, Colorado.

Before coming to SEU, Rivera had been serving as the District Youth Director of the Florida Multicultural District of the Assemblies of God. With extensive experience working with youth communities, Rivera has served young people in the local church for over 10 years and has preached throughout the United States and around the world.

"Pastor Jonathan is a dynamic leader with a clear passion for the local church, ethnic diversity and building up the next generation of leaders who will influence and shape our world," said President Kent Ingle. "I am beyond excited to have him on campus with us, and I truly believe that he is equipped to lead our entire community as we step into this new season."

Rivera has previously served as the junior high pastor, the lead youth pastor and the creative pastor at Calvario Church in Orlando, Florida.

"Southeastern is an incredible community that I'm excited to be a part of. For years, SEU has been on the forefront of lifting up and discipling the next generation of Spirit-empowered leaders, influencers

and followers of Jesus who will transform and redeem culture across the world through the message and demonstration of the Gospel. And I'm looking forward to riding the wave of what God is already doing and continuing to fan the flame in Lakeland," Rivera expressed.

As he enters his first year in the role, Rivera aims to establish and build relationships with staff, faculty, alumni and the student body.

Rivera explained, "Before the university is anything else, it should be a family. The vibrant spiritual atmosphere that you experience on campus, in chapels and at conference is something that I want to preserve and protect. It's truly what makes the SEU experience transformational."

COMMENCEMENT

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of Spring 2023!



President Kent Ingle



Commencement speaker Shirley Hoogstra



Student speaker Katie Pierce-Renzulli

Southeastern University celebrated its Spring 2023 Commencement ceremony at RP Funding Center in Lakeland, Florida. The spring class of 2023 is the university's 86th graduating class, with 943 graduates — bringing the total number of Southeastern graduates to 23,200. The graduates originate from Florida, 44 states and 18 countries, including Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Italy, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Graduates also came from 83 of the university's partner site locations.

The ceremony featured guest speaker Shirley Hoogstra, president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU), as well as student speaker **KATIE PIERCE-RENZULLI '23**.



USING RUBIK'S CUBES FOR GOD'S GLORY

Most college students move onto campus lugging in mattress toppers, mini-refrigerators, microwaves and decorations — any small detail that will make their dorm rooms feel more like home. For **LONDON HAYS '23**, personalizing his room entailed trying to fit a 4-foot by 6-foot wooden frame and 600 Rubik's Cubes into a 144-square-foot Bauer dorm he shared with his roommate.

An ambassador for Rubik's Cubes, Hays creates portraits using the 3-D combination puzzles and shares the

content on social media. His work has received millions of views, and he has also been commissioned by national and international organizations to make portraits.

At a young age, Hays was fascinated with the process of solving problems. This intrigue led him to discover a Rubik's Cube. After figuring out how to solve the puzzle, Hays was ready for a new challenge. He soon found artists who used Rubik's Cubes to create artwork, and he wanted to do the same.

Hays' first portrait was for his high school senior project. After getting approval from his school, Hays reached out to a company that provided him with 600 Rubik's Cubes for two weeks. Hays used the cubes to make his first portrait: an image of Jesus.

"I chose to make one of Jesus because He is the Lord and Savior of my life, and there is no greater person to walk the planet than Him," said Hays.

The portrait took five days to complete as he was still in school and playing soccer. After it was completed, his artwork was shared throughout his county school district.

"It was a really unique opportunity because I attended a public school where not everyone knew the name of Jesus," said Hays. "My heart behind my senior project was to glorify God. I thought a unique opportunity was to do that using Rubik's Cubes."

Hays didn't stop there. He felt like God was calling him to continue to use his gift. For his eighteenth birthday, he asked for 500 miniature Rubik's Cubes so he could continue making portraits.

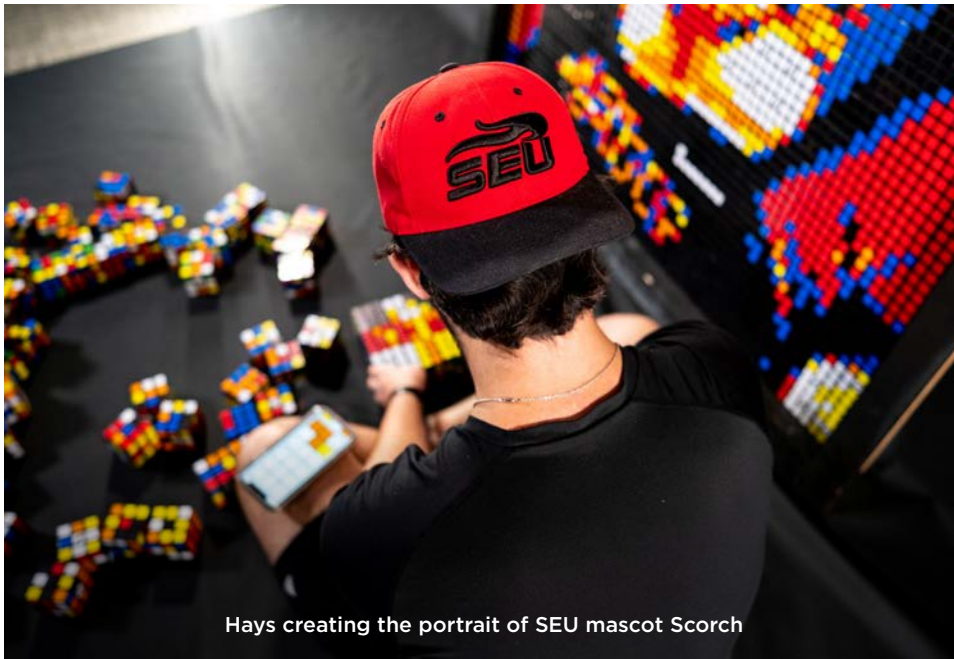
Three weeks after his birthday, the world shut down due to the pandemic. Like many seniors, Hays' senior year ended abruptly, cutting his soccer season short and preventing him from walking the stage for graduation.

"I was able to use my Rubik's Cube art and the gift God had given me to help me through that tough and difficult time," said Hays.

With the miniature cubes, Hays continued to create portraits and use his



Hays with a portrait of SEU mascot Scorch



Hays creating the portrait of SEU mascot Scorch

social media account to promote his art. He tagged Rubik's Cube's official page in all of his social media posts, hoping to gain their attention.

After a month, Rubik's Cubes reached out to him about being an official ambassador — which came with the perk of receiving 1,000 cubes. As an ambassador, Hays creates content for the company and tags them on his social media posts.

When it came time for him to go to college in the fall of 2020, Hays followed in his parents' footsteps by attending Southeastern. They both earned education degrees at the university and work in schools in Rome, Georgia. **TONY '96** is currently a high school teacher and **AIMEE (JARRAD) '96** is an elementary principal.

While a student at Southeastern, Hays has seen his portraits taken to national and international levels. Initially, as an ambassador for Rubik's Cubes, Hays made portraits that appealed to him, but he soon discovered that trending topics interested others more. When the new Spiderman movie came out in 2021, he made a portrait of Andrew Garfield that accumulated 400,000 views.

More recently, Hays made a portrait to commemorate the life of professional

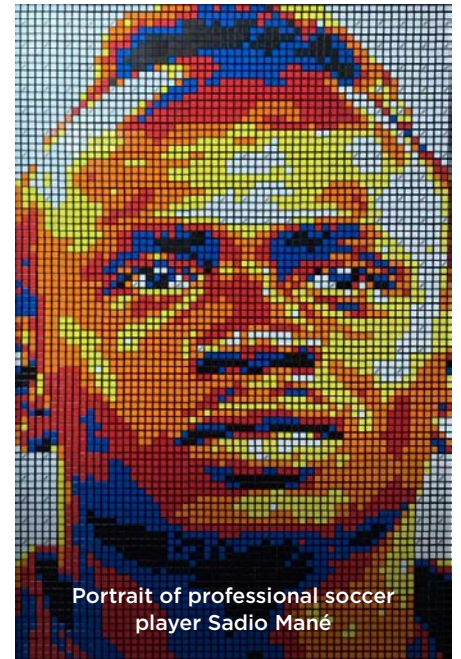
basketball player Bill Russell. He tagged Bleacher Report who later shared his Instagram post, giving it over 2 million views.



Portrait of professional basketball player Bill Russell

From there, one of the largest soccer teams in the world, FC Bayern Munich, located in Germany, commissioned him to make a portrait of one of their summer signings, Sadio Mané. The post received over 4 million views.

One of Hays' favorite experiences was constructing portraits for Elevation



Portrait of professional soccer player Sadio Mané

Church's youth conference, YTHX21, in 2021. He traveled to North Carolina and spent 10 days making mosaics of all 19 guest speakers. "I'll never forget that experience," said Hays.

Each mosaic takes him three to four hours to complete. To create the portraits, Hays uploads an image into a program that provides a mapped-out guide of what each Rubik's Cube should look like and where to place it.

"The program I use is a form of digital design and goes hand in hand with my graphic design major," said Hays.

As a student at Southeastern, Hays was a member of the student marketing teams: We Are SEU and SEU Creative. Now that he has graduated, Hays' goal is to become a media pastor, utilizing his gifts in graphic design and creative content development. He also has a passion for serving the Lord as a worship leader.

"One of my favorite passages of scripture is Psalm 37:4, which says, 'Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart,'" said Hays. "My life is a living testament to that. I started with a crazy dream, and now I am living my dream. I make Rubik's Cube art as a hobby. I just want to inspire people and glorify God."

A TOP-SECRET CALLING

Every year, an average of 12,000 students from across the country apply for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Honors Internship Program. Southeastern student **HEIDI HESTER '23** was one of just a few hundred that secured a spot.



Heidi Hester

The Honors Internship Program is a 10-week, paid summer internship for undergraduate and graduate students. The program provides students of all academic backgrounds with the opportunity to work side by side with FBI employees and learn about the agency's operations.

Although she had always felt drawn to the field of criminal justice, she originally enrolled at Southeastern to pursue a degree in business management. However, it only took a few classes for her to realize that it was not the path God was calling her to.

"I think my passion for criminal justice stems from my desire to help people," she reflected. "After switching to a double major in criminal justice and legal studies,

I felt more confident that I was fulfilling what God had designed me for."

When it came time in her academic journey to select an internship, Hester happened to come across the FBI website.

"I had been praying about where God wanted to place me, and I discovered the honors internship opportunity. I thought it was a long shot, but I still applied," she recalled. "I just loved how the core values of the agency were based on bravery and integrity. That's what really inspired me to go for it."

Applying for the program in early fall of 2021, Hester secured her initial interview in December — which occurred over the phone due to the pandemic. She was selected to continue the process, which required her to pass all of the FBI's employment background investigation requirements. She participated in polygraph exams, drug tests, fingerprinting and multiple interviews.

Headquartered out of the field office in Tampa, Florida, Hester began her internship with the FBI in June of 2022.

"At first, it can be very intimidating walking into this huge, looming building," Hester remembered. "But once you meet everyone and get comfortable, they really become your family and truly care about you."

During her experience as an intern, Hester had the opportunity to see all of the varying aspects of what it means to be a federal agent.

"I was assigned to the Lakeland Resident Agency (LRA), which was amazing — I got to experience what a resident agency was like. Instead of being assigned to one specific squad at a field office like Violent Crimes, Domestic Terrorism or Cyber Crimes, I got to see a bit of everything at the LRA and work on a variety of cases. This really opened my eyes to the different opportunities I have in the bureau, not only as an agent but



Hester (fifth from the left) and other FBI interns with a Black Hawk helicopter on MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida



Hester (front row, middle) and her fellow interns meet with special agents who oversee the FBI Tampa division.

also as a professional staff employee,” she explained.

As the only intern at the Lakeland location, Hester often joined the other trainees in Tampa for activities and field trips. Hester’s recruiter took the interns to see a live autopsy at a medical examiner’s office, on visits to a federal court, to participate in a personal fitness test and for a ride in a Black Hawk helicopter.

“The experience definitely felt like a movie,” Hester emphasized. “What’s really cool about the internship is that your day to day is always different. You’re not just in the office doing paperwork, you’re out in the field getting hands-on experience.”

She also had the opportunity to go on searches and meet with members of the evidence response team in Tampa. In another instance, she visited a shooting range and learned how to safely handle and operate a firearm.

“Going to the gun range was one of the coolest experiences. I had never shot a gun before, so getting over that fear really helped me take a leap out of my comfort zone,” she said.

Another valuable aspect of Hester’s internship was being able to see the connection between the content she was learning in her courses and the procedures she was observing in the field.

“One week, I was learning about initial appearances in court proceedings in my U.S. American Courts class, and that very same week I got to attend an initial appearance with a federal agent,” she commented. “It was super helpful to be able to apply what I was learning in the classroom in real time.”

Due to her favorable evaluations, Hester was able to continue her summer internship into the fall of 2022 and the

spring of 2023. During those semesters, she interned part time, dedicating about 16 hours a month to the agency.

As a recent graduate, Hester plans to pursue a career in either local or federal law enforcement.

“My main goal is to be out in the field where I can help serve the community around me,” she expressed.

If Hester has the chance to continue her journey with the FBI, she already has a clear picture of what she’d want to be assigned to.

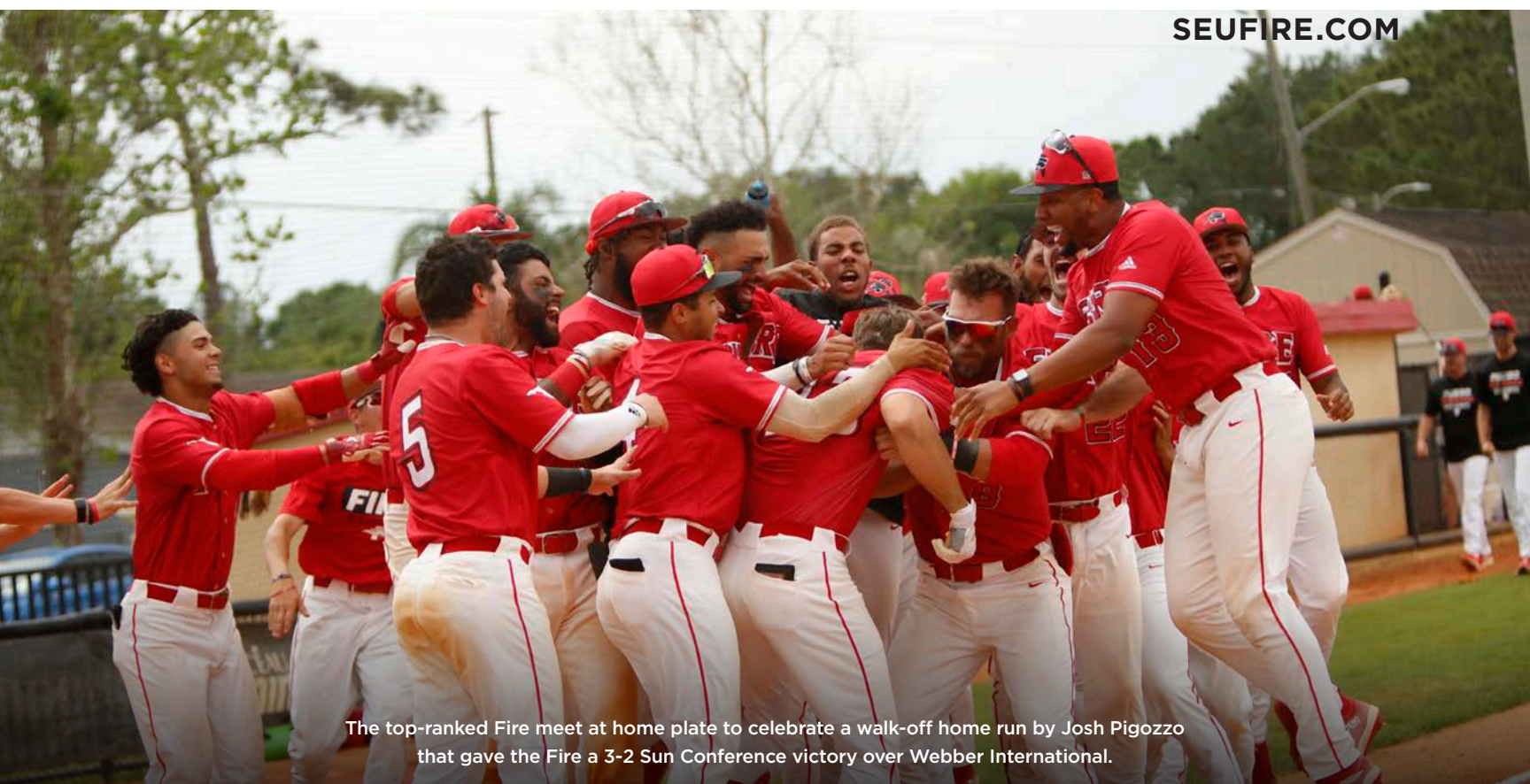
“I would really like to work for the Violent Crimes Against Children unit,” she said. “I have a heart for children, so if I have the opportunity, I’d like to make a difference in that area.”

Ultimately, Hester considers her internship to have been a very formative and beneficial experience.

“It’s amazing to look back on the beginning of my internship and see how everything’s progressed, and the impact and difference we’ve made. Most of all, I really value the connections and relationships I’ve established with accomplished professionals in the bureau. It’s helped prepare me to develop the skills and qualifications needed for this next season of life.”



Hester (front row, sixth from the left) helps distribute toys at Tampa General Hospital for the FBI Citizens Academy’s Christmas in July event with other interns.



The top-ranked Fire meet at home plate to celebrate a walk-off home run by Josh Pigozzo that gave the Fire a 3-2 Sun Conference victory over Webber International.

BASEBALL

Southeastern was ranked first in the NAIA Coaches' Top 25 all season, winning their first 25 games of the season and clinching The Sun Conference regular season title for the fourth consecutive season. The Fire also won the conference tournament title for the third consecutive season, coming back from a loss in the semifinals to Webber International. Isaac Nunez was honored as the conference player of the year, finishing the season with a .433 batting average. Darien Smith was the league's pitcher of the year with a 10-2 record and a 2.94 ERA with 127 strikeouts in 85.2 innings of work. Both were NAIA First-Team All-Americans as was closer Reece Wissinger who was 5-0 with six saves and a 0.86 ERA. Southeastern made its fifth consecutive Avista NAIA World Series appearance after winning the Fayette Bracket of the Opening Round. The Fire won three games in Lewiston behind four home

runs from Chayce Bryant, winning a pair of elimination games to get within a contest of the national title game.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Fire were one of the hottest teams in the NAIA at the end of the season, winning 12 of 13 games to clinch The Sun Conference regular season title and tournament titles. Southeastern then upset third-ranked Union and 13th-ranked Faulkner during the opening round of the NAIA National Tournament in Montgomery, Alabama, to advance to the Round of 16 for the first time since 2014. The run ended with a 79-71 loss to eventual national semifinalist OUAZ. Riley Minix repeated as The Sun Conference Player of the Year and was the College Sports Communicators Academic All-American of the Year for NAIA men's basketball.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

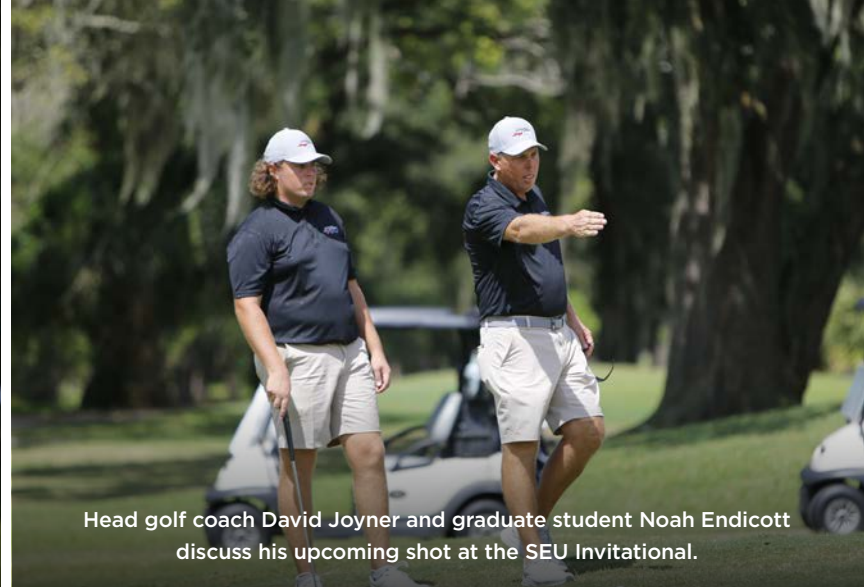
Six of the first 14 games against NAIA programs that Southeastern played were ranked in the Top 25, challenging the group from the start. The Fire picked up a convincing 96-80 win over No. 18 Georgetown over Thanksgiving break and went 5-1 during the month of January. This built some momentum towards the end of the year, which saw the Fire make a run to the conference tournament final for the third consecutive season after an overtime win in the semifinals.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

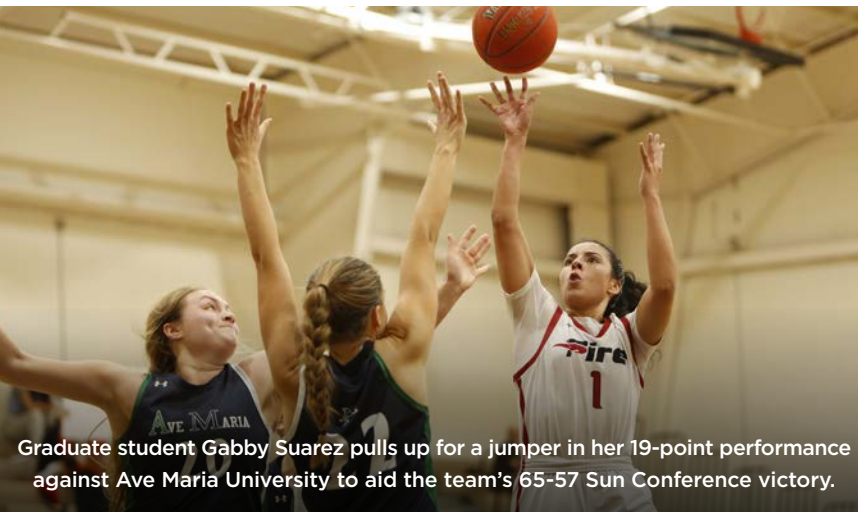
The Fire overcame a slow start to the season with a stretch of winning five out of six matches, which included hosting matches for the first time in program history at Highland Park Church. Southeastern went 2-2 in The Sun Conference Tournament in Gulf Shores, Alabama, advancing to the semifinal



All-American Hallie Riley finishes her swing at the Dalton State Invitational to aid her team to a third-place finish out of 12 teams.



Head golf coach David Joyner and graduate student Noah Endicott discuss his upcoming shot at the SEU Invitational.



Graduate student Gabby Suarez pulls up for a jumper in her 19-point performance against Ave Maria University to aid the team's 65-57 Sun Conference victory.



Kennedy Jones goes all out for a dig in the Fire's 4-1 Sun Conference victory over Warner University.

round. During the AVCA Small College Beach Nationals, the Fire picked up two more wins to reach the championship match, losing 3-1 to Webber International to cap a 10-10 season. Sophomores Holly Kaczmarek and Emilia Harding were selected as an AVCA Top Flight for winning 75% of their matches at a specific position.

MEN'S GOLF

Southeastern finished in the top three in seven of the 10 tournaments it played in during the 2022-23 season. Senior Matthew Soucinek became the first Fire men's golfer in 10 years to win medalist honors at The Sun Conference Championship, winning the individual title by two shots. He was named an NAIA All-American for the third time in his career. The Fire went on to have their best finish at the NAIA National Championship in program history at 11th.

WOMEN'S GOLF

The Fire had a successful season under first-year head coach David Joyner, spending most of the season ranked in the NAIA Top 10 and winning three consecutive tournaments, including the last one of the fall at Grasslands in Lakeland and the first one of the spring at King and Prince in Georgia. The Fire finished eighth at the NAIA National Championship with two golfers earning All-American status in senior Hallie Riley and sophomore Marlie Smit.

SOFTBALL

The Fire had to battle one of the most difficult schedules they had faced in 11 years during the 2023 season. During the regular season, SEU played in 14 games against Top 25 opponents with four of those games coming against Top 15 teams in the first three weeks. The team also made national news when

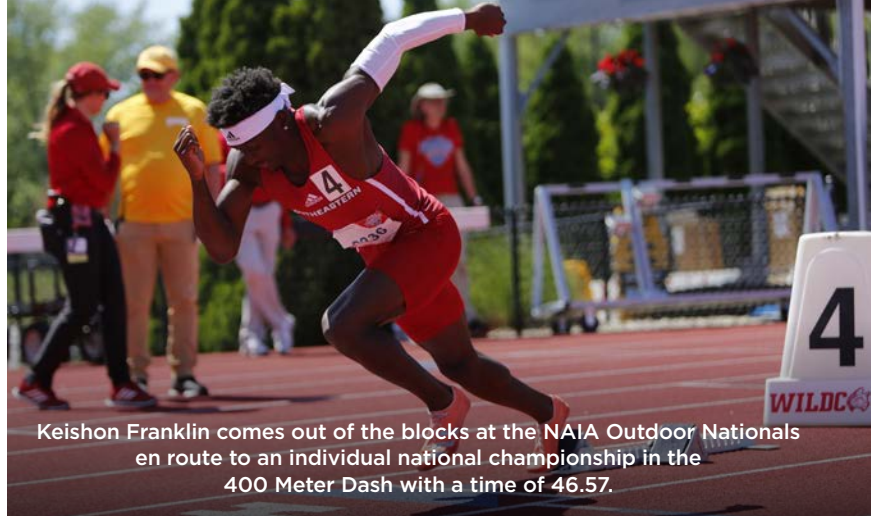
sophomores Leah Gonzalez and Chapel Cunningham carried an opposing player around the bases after hitting a go-ahead grand slam in a loss to Grand View on February 25. The season concluded with a 33-18 overall record and a second-place finish in The Sun Conference. The team were runners-up in the conference tournament. Southeastern received an at-large bid to the NAIA National Tournament Opening Round, going to Ashland, Oregon, falling to eventual national champion Southern Oregon, 2-0.

MEN'S TENNIS

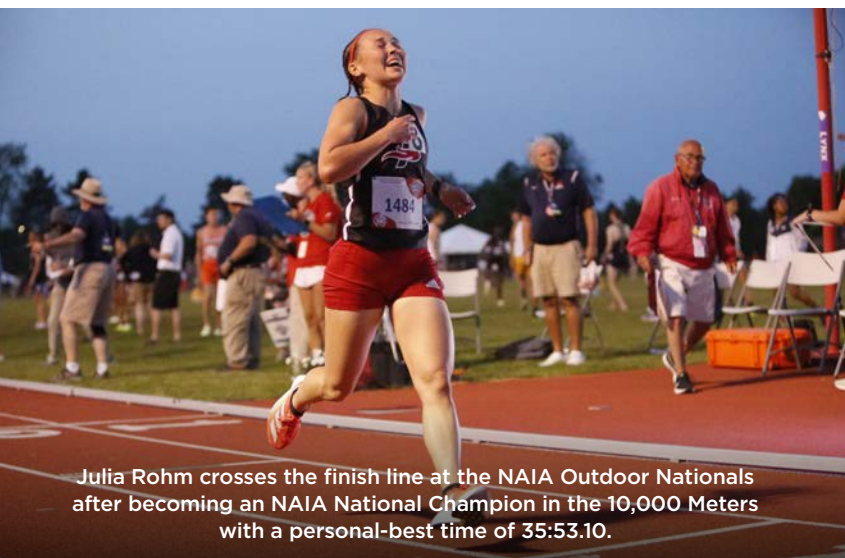
Southeastern had a record-breaking year under coach Drew Dickens. The team set a record for wins in a season with 18 and advanced to the national quarterfinal for the first time in program history. Ranked fifth in the final poll, the Fire came up just short of a trip to the semifinals with a 4-2 loss to Tennessee Wesleyan. Dickens was named The Sun Conference Coach



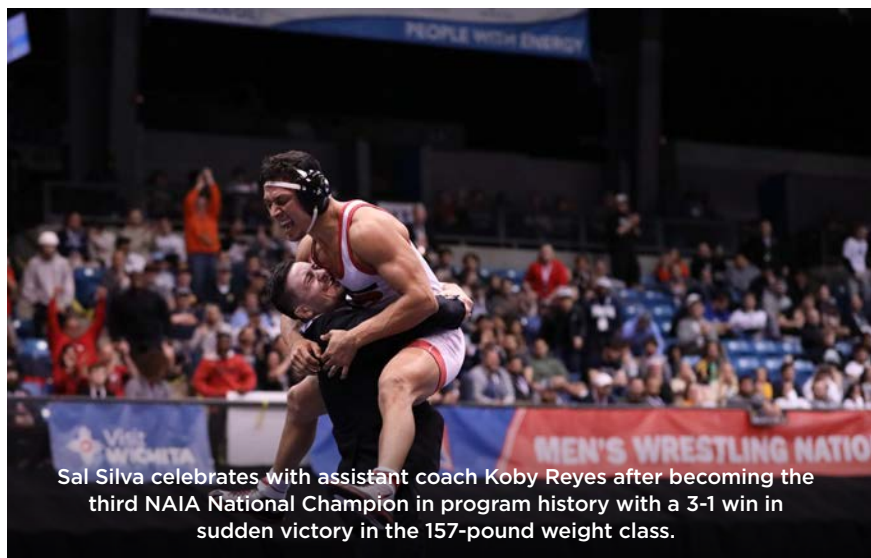
Fire women's tennis celebrate with Beatrice Letizia after her victory over No. 3 ranked St. Xavier to send the team to the NAIA National Tournament Semifinals for the first time in program history.



Keishon Franklin comes out of the blocks at the NAIA Outdoor Nationals en route to an individual national championship in the 400 Meter Dash with a time of 46.57.



Julia Rohm crosses the finish line at the NAIA Outdoor Nationals after becoming an NAIA National Champion in the 10,000 Meters with a personal-best time of 35:53.10.



Sal Silva celebrates with assistant coach Koby Reyes after becoming the third NAIA National Champion in program history with a 3-1 win in sudden victory in the 157-pound weight class.

of the Year, and Christian Garay was the league's player of the year and received First-Team NAIA All-America honors with a 19-3 overall record.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

History was made during the 2023 season by the Fire, which included six wins against teams ranked in the Top 25. The highlight was at the national tournament where the Fire won their national quarterfinal match against No. 3 Xavier (Louisiana) 4-2 to make the program's first national semifinal appearance. The season ended with a 4-1 loss to eventual national champion Georgia Gwinnett and a 14-8 overall record.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

It was a breakthrough season for the Fire in 2023 with the men's team winning the NAIA Indoor National Championship and finishing third at the outdoor championships in just the fourth full season of competition. Joseph Taylor was

the 400 Meter champion at the indoor championship and Keishon Franklin was the outdoor champion in the 400 Meters. Both were key in the 4x400 Relay Championship during indoor with Davien Worrels and James Turner. The team also swept the indoor and outdoor Sun Conference Championships, marking the third consecutive indoor title and fourth consecutive outdoor title.

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

The women's team had a strong showing during the outdoor season, spending the entire year ranked inside the Top 10 of the US Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Track and Field Ratings Index. The team won both the indoor and outdoor Sun Conference Championships for the third and fourth consecutive seasons, respectively. Graduate student Julia Rohm scored 18 points at the outdoor championships, winning the 10,000 Meter title and then placed second in the 5,000 Meter with a new program-record time. Southeastern

also placed fourth in the 4x100 and 4x400 relays, and had their first All-American in the Heptathlon with Mariam Davis placing sixth.

WRESTLING

The Fire put together a special 2022-23 season with a record 10 home dual victories, a 13-4 overall record and a fourth-place finish at the NWCA National Team Duals for its best finish in program history. Southeastern sent the maximum 12 wrestlers to the NAIA National Championships and matched its best team finish at third. Six wrestlers earned All-American status, highlighted by Sal Silva's 157-pound championship, who got a takedown in sudden victory to become the fourth national champion in program history. Coleman Bryant was the runner-up at 184 for his second All-American honor. Isaac Crowell became the program's first three-time All-American with a seventh-place finish at 125.



NAIA NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

BUILDING CHAMPIONS. PURSUING CHAMPIONSHIPS.

Men's Track & Field

Joseph Taylor - 400m Track & Field

**Davion Worrels, Keishon Franklin, James Turner, Joseph Taylor
4x400m Track & Field**

Sal Silva - 157lb Wrestling



DAVIS INGLE: THE PATH TO THE WHITE HOUSE





Ingle (fourth from the left) and his team with President Trump

When **DAVIS INGLE '16, '17 (GMBA)** took a chance on an internship outside of his desired profession in Washington, D.C., he had no idea that it would lead him to his calling and redirect the entire course of his career. Discovering his passion for politics and government affairs would eventually land him a job in the White House, working directly with President Donald Trump as a press assistant.

Although Ingle never thought that he would end up working in politics, he always had an interest in communications. Growing up, he dreamed of following in his father's footsteps and diving into the world of sports broadcasting.

Ingle's father, Dr. Kent Ingle, currently serves as the president of Southeastern University. Prior to his time in higher education, Kent worked as a television sports anchor for NBC and CBS in Southern California.

It was his father's experience that inspired Ingle to research opportunities on the West Coast during his junior year at Southeastern. "I was looking for internships at the NBA, with teams like the Clippers and the Lakers," he recalled.

Before Ingle could find an internship in sports broadcasting, his father informed him of an opportunity to intern with

U.S. Congressman Dennis Ross, who had been representing the state of Florida at the time and now serves as the director of Southeastern's American Center for Political Leadership (ACPL).

"I wasn't totally sold at first, but my dad convinced me that it would be a great learning experience," Ingle expressed.

In the summer of 2015, Ingle made the trek to Washington, D.C., and began his three-month internship in the U.S. House of Representatives under Congressman Ross.

"It was almost like a calling opened up to me once I got there. I felt like God was telling me, 'this is where you're supposed to be,'" remembered Ingle. "Within the first week, I just absolutely fell in love with it."

By the time he completed his internship, Ingle knew he had to get back to D.C. With his sights set on returning, he finished his senior year at Southeastern and enrolled in the Global MBA program. As a part of his graduate studies, he took a class in El Salvador and earned certificates in politics, philosophy and ethics from the University of Oxford, and in international relations and affairs from the University of Cambridge.

After earning his master's degree, Ingle applied for a wide range of roles in D.C.

The first door that opened for him was an unpaid internship in the White House Liaison Office within the U.S. Department of State.

"I was hesitant to do another internship, as it would be my third one without knowing when I would find something full-time. However, I reminded myself that this would get my foot back in the door," he said.

Ingle's plan to develop and further his career in D.C. was eventually halted by the government shutdown in 2018. At the end of his State Department internship, he secured a verbal offer for a position in the White House, but the shutdown led to a shift that eliminated the job he was promised.

"I felt like I was right back to square one," Ingle remarked. "I started to question if I was in the right place."

In the midst of this uncertainty, Ingle returned to Florida to continue his job hunt from home. In the spring of 2018, he planned a weekend trip back to D.C. with his friend and fellow alumnus **LEVI LALL '17, '19 (GMBA)**, who currently practices corporate law in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Ingle decided to use this time to connect with some previously established contacts,



Ingle at the Daytona 500

which happened to include Congressman Ross' chief of staff. During their meeting, Ingle was asked if he'd be interested in returning to Ross' office full time.

"I was beyond excited. Dennis had always been a great boss, and his office was where it all started for me," he commented.

Within the next few weeks, Ingle accepted the position and began as a staff assistant in Ross' D.C. office. He remained in this role until the congressman retired months later.

At Ross' retirement party, Ingle connected with a White House staffer and received an offer for another unpaid internship, this time in the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Although the offer wasn't ideal, Ingle decided to trust the process.

"It was a very humbling scenario going from full-time employee back to an unpaid intern, but my parents were both really supportive and encouraged me to see it through," he said.

This decision paid off a few months later, when Ingle's performance led him to be brought on full time. Ingle served in the OMB as a confidential assistant for the deputy director of management and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's administrator.

Several months into this role, a member of the OMB's communication team recommended Ingle for an open position in the White House Press Office, and he was asked to interview for the job.

"I was really happy with my position at the time. However, I've always been a believer of saying yes to an interview — no matter what point you're at in life," Ingle emphasized. "When I heard about the role and what it entailed, I was blown away. It sounded like the job of a lifetime."

Ingle joined the press office as a press assistant, also termed press wrangler, during the Trump administration in October of 2019.

"In hindsight, I can see now that the way everything happened was definitely a God thing," he reflected.

As a press assistant, Ingle worked in the West Wing of the White House alongside the president's immediate staff. His main responsibilities included managing the daily press pool for the White House Correspondents' Association, coordinating press logistics for former President Donald Trump's domestic and international travel, and helping to produce press briefings and public events with the president.

Ingle was tasked with building the daily press pool, which consisted of reporters, producers and cameramen from major news networks who worked on White House grounds and were on standby for reporting needs.

"I was basically the intermediary between the White House and the press pool," Ingle stated. "If reporters had questions relating



Kent and Davis Ingle

Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian



Ingle at the White House

to the president or White House affairs, I would relay the messages and work to set up interviews and resolve their requests.”

A challenging aspect that Ingle learned to navigate was the atmosphere created by various members of the press.

“There was a lot of personal growth that came from this job, as there were times that the energy was hostile. I realized that the

best way to grapple with that was to just remain professional, not act out of character and focus on getting the job done.”

Ingle also molded the travel press pool, which consisted of 13 reporters who accompanied the president wherever he went to document his activities and help distribute his addresses to the American people in the event of a national emergency.

As one of three press assistants, Ingle consistently traveled with the president both domestically and internationally. During his time in the press office, he had the opportunity to accompany the president on over 50 trips aboard Air Force One and on even more trips in the presidential motorcade.

In one instance, Ingle went overseas to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January of 2020. On another occasion, he joined President Trump for NASCAR’s Daytona 500 race in Florida and even took a lap in the presidential motorcade on the Daytona International Speedway.

“Every day was something new. I never knew what my day was going to look like,” he commented. “And it was very common to be working 18 to 19 hour days — including the weekends.”

While in this position, Ingle worked under two former press secretaries, Kayleigh McEnany and Stephanie Grisham. He assisted them with press briefings, and also helped monitor the press while they covered meetings and events on White House grounds.

Ingle is able to use what he learned from his experiences at the White House in his role as the communications manager at the America First Policy Institute (AFPI), a private, nonprofit think tank based out of Washington, D.C.

Ingle’s day to day is often centered around the news cycle, as he handles press and media relations, drafts press statements and arranges bookings for policy experts. Ingle also continues to work with a wide scope of reporters from outlets such as Fox, CNN, Politico and many others.

“My favorite part of my job is the press relations. I enjoy the challenge of breaking through the noise and getting our policy experts’ messages out there — there’s an art to it,” he remarked,

When it comes to the future, Ingle dreams of one day returning to the White House.

“Working with the media and the press is my life,” he said. “I’d love to be back in the press office as a deputy press secretary or another similar role in the administration.”

Although the fast-paced, high-intensity environment could be chaotic, Ingle cherishes the year and a half that he dedicated to working in the press office.

“If I had the chance to go back and do it all again, I would,” he said. “I got to wake up every day and work for the American people. I always went home at the end of the day satisfied, knowing I loved what I was doing and that my work was making an impact. It was very rewarding.”



Ingle (front right) and his team with Kayleigh McEnany



JIM WELLBORN: MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR GOD'S KINGDOM



Wellborn's last AIM trip in 2014 to Austria



Jim and Linda with their children and grandchildren in 2022

JIM WELLBORN '73 has more than 6,600 contacts on his phone. Having served five decades in ministry, Wellborn is known for being a connector. Whether he's in Springfield, Missouri, traveling overseas or attending a missions convention, he's bound to run into someone he knows.

Wellborn's years in ministry span from leading thousands of youth on missions trips with Ambassadors in Mission (AIM) to connecting people with Builders International's construction projects worldwide. Yet, life in ministry and missions wasn't always what Wellborn had planned.

"I had my dreams and my vision for my life as a normal Christian with a normal job," said Wellborn. "God had a better idea. God always has a better idea."

Wellborn can pinpoint the exact moment that changed his life. In the old chapel of what was then South-Eastern Bible College, with no air conditioning, Wellborn, dressed in a suit and tie, surrendered his future to God.

"The altar at the chapel at Southeastern was so pivotal in my journey of faith. It's where it all happened," said Wellborn. "I said, 'Okay God, I will do whatever you want me to do.'"

As a pastor's kid, Wellborn felt called into ministry at a young age. Wellborn's father was a pastor in the West Florida District of the Assemblies of God (AG) when he was young, and then his family moved to Alabama to pastor a church. Wellborn spent his summers working in church youth camps in the state, and Southeastern groups would often frequent the camps and share about the college.

This led Wellborn to enroll at Southeastern in 1969, where he pursued a degree in secondary education and a minor in Bible. Wellborn remembers pulling up to campus one year later and his friend, **DEXTER LAMBERT '73**, introducing him to **LINDA**

(NICHOLS). "We started dating in November, and when we did, it kind of sealed it for me," said Wellborn. The two were married in 1972.

Following Wellborn's graduation in 1973, the couple moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, and were youth pastors for three years. During that time, his parents became AG U.S. missionaries to Alaska. After Wellborn resigned from his position in Knoxville, he and Linda went to visit his parents with their one-month-old baby, Josh.

An hour after being at his parent's house in Bethel, Alaska, the phone rang. The AG church in Fairbanks (just over 500 miles away) needed a youth pastor, and within a week, Wellborn accepted the position. The Wellborns flew to Ohio, where Linda was from, to pack for the move. Linda took a flight to Alaska with their son, and Jim made the over 5,000-mile drive to bring their belongings.

The Wellborns served as youth pastors in Fairbanks for one year before moving to pastor in Nikiski, Alaska, for two years. While in Alaska, Wellborn was elected as the district youth director (DYD) for the state in 1976. As a DYD, he helped host the first AIM trip to Honduras and the first youth convention in Alaska.

"Alaskan Eskimo villages are one of the toughest missionary fields I have ever experienced," said Wellborn.

During their time in Alaska, their second son, Jonathan, was born. Wellborn also produced his first Christian album where he sang with background music, something he said was not common at the time. "I started getting invitations to all kinds of events — district events and other Christian organizations," said Wellborn. "I even sang at the governor's prayer breakfast."

The Wellborns resigned from their position as pastors in 1978. They moved their now family of four to Ohio, close to Linda's family, to become evangelists. While they were in Ohio, they had their daughter, Aimee, and Linda went back to college to earn an education degree and started teaching at a high school.

"When Jim traveled in evangelism, it seemed like the right opportunity for me to enroll in Akron University to finish my secondary education degree in business education — thinking an education degree would enable me to have a schedule coinciding with our children," said Linda.

For 10 years, Wellborn did music evangelism, singing and sharing the gospel across the country. He also preached at youth camps in the summers and made four albums. "We would do eight camps a summer from Nova Scotia to New Mexico to Florida, 8,000 miles in an Oldsmobile with the whole family. It was fun," Wellborn said.



Wellborn with an AIM team and Mother Teresa in 1994



Jim and Linda in the United Arab Emirates in 2020



Wellborn (bottom left) on an AIM trip in El Salvador in 1992

He recalled how, in his second year of college at Southeastern, he got involved in the traveling choir. “Traveling and being in front of audiences led me into music ministry and being an evangelist,” he said.

Wellborn also had the opportunity to preach in Brazil and Indonesia. At the time, the couple started to feel called to missions, but every opportunity fell through.

Then, in 1988, Wellborn received a phone call from **TERRY RABURN '08 (MAML), '20 (D.Min.)**, who was the national youth director at AG headquarters at the time, asking him to become the student director for AIM. Wellborn brought their family of five to Springfield, Missouri, and served in that position for 26 years.

In his role, Wellborn coordinated and facilitated student missions trips all over the world and traveled to 71 countries. Two of these trips included ministering at the Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, in 1992 and in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996.

“We did street evangelism for about two weeks in Barcelona. We had well over 500 students. In Atlanta, we had over 3,000 students in the Olympic outreach,” said Wellborn. **MIKE ENNIS '84** helped Wellborn coordinate the events.

Wellborn recalled leading the first AIM trip to Russia and East Berlin after the wall fell. The students evangelized on the streets of Germany and Siberia. Then, they held a youth camp in Russia.

“I saw the power that a missions experience can give to a student,” said Wellborn. “I believe every young person in the Assemblies of God should have the opportunity to serve on a trip before they go to college, during college or after college.”

In one AIM trip to India, where they held a youth convention for over 600 people, Wellborn had the opportunity to meet and pray with Mother Teresa.

Some of Wellborn’s favorite trips were to Argentina, Egypt and Greece. While in Egypt, he ministered in Cairo and

then traveled to Assiout to minister at the Lillian Thrasher Orphanage, which has cared for more than 20,000 children since it opened in the early 1900s. Linda was a part of that trip and conducted a girls’ retreat in Alexandria. His family often took part in the trips he led.

“As our three children became teens, they were able to participate in AIM trips both internationally and stateside,” said Linda. “The impact of AIM and missions has been instrumental in their lives.”

All three of their children now serve in ministry. Josh is the national youth director for the AG, Jonathan is a missionary to Argentina, and Aimee is the Kansas district KidMin director.

While Wellborn served with AIM, Linda earned her master’s and doctoral degrees. She started teaching at Evangel University in Springfield in 1993, and she became the first full-time director of the master’s and adult education programs in 2000.



Wellborn as an evangelist in 1984



Jim and Linda with their children and grandchildren

“My years at Southeastern were formative ones,” said Linda. “While I didn’t finish my baccalaureate degree there, my learning and experiences shaped my life and calling to serve young adults seeking to find their place of service in the kingdom. I often reflect on those years when I stand before a class or meet individually with students.”

“If God takes anything good from your life, He restores it back to you 100 times better. You just have to trust Him. God always has a better idea.”

In 2014, Wellborn transitioned to work with Builders International. With a role in builder relations, Wellborn networks with churches, organizations and volunteers to connect them to projects that Builders International is working on worldwide. Wellborn also helps with events and fundraising.

Builders International’s mission is to connect volunteers and donors with community leaders around the world to build places where people can find hope. Some of their more recent projects include building churches in Uruguay, Panama and Honduras. In 2022, the organization built a refugee center in Poland that serves 60 Ukrainian refugees. The organization also helped open a dental and medical clinic at Home of Hope in Bangladesh that serves over 130 orphans.

“He always looks for connections and trusts the Lord to guide him as he connects churches, teams and individuals with opportunities for service to the kingdom,” said Linda. “His heart is always to serve the missionaries, whether through the many years of AIM leadership, connecting teams with missionaries or now, with Builders International’s connections — finding the right fit for a team desiring to serve on a project.”

While Wellborn doesn’t take as many trips overseas anymore, he finds joy in being at the front office of Builders International

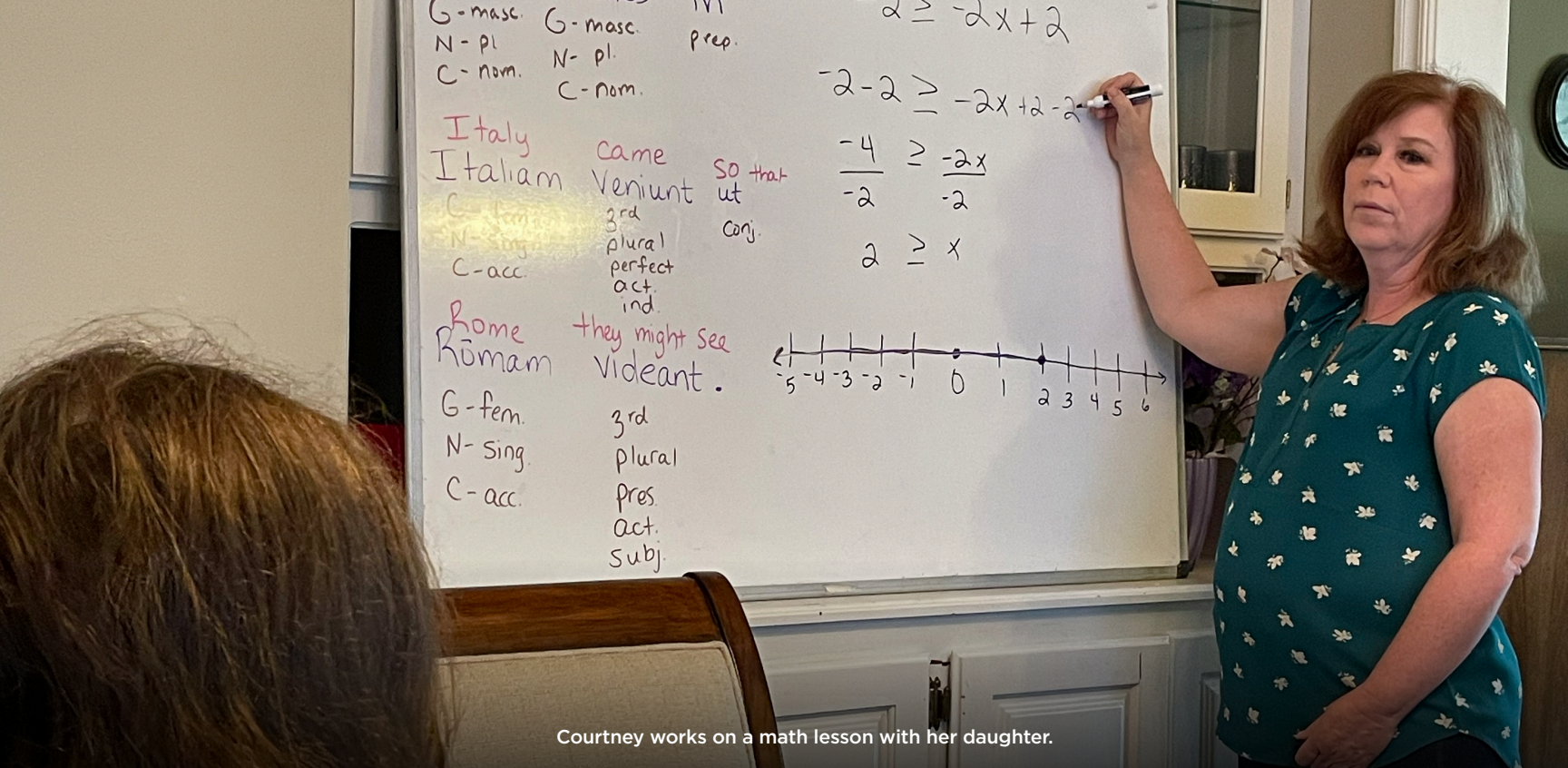
to welcome guests and connect them to the mission of the organization. Linda still serves at Evangel and is the director of institutional effectiveness and a faculty member.

“Our life has been more fulfilling than I could have dreamed — my love of serving young people has only grown through the years,” said Linda. “In the early years, it was helping students find their place of service in the kingdom. In these latest years, I find unbelievable joy in having visits and emails from past students sharing how God has directed their paths.”

As Wellborn reflects on his years in ministry, he’s always reminded of the importance of following God’s plan. “If you are called, you can’t get away from it. We all have things that we have to lay on the altar. If God takes anything good from your life, He restores it back to you 100 times better. You just have to trust Him. God always has a better idea.”

JENNIFER COURTNEY: A CLASSICAL ROUTE TO EDUCATION





Courtney works on a math lesson with her daughter.

As Southeastern University's first graduate from the master's in classical studies program, **JENNIFER COURTNEY '22 (MA)** is paving new pathways for education. Whether she's developing curriculum for Classical Conversations Multimedia, guiding her children's instruction at home or providing other families with tools for home education, Courtney cultivates learning at all levels.

Courtney and her husband, Tim, first decided that they would pursue classical education for their children when their oldest was entering first grade in 2005. So when they learned about Classical Conversations through an interest meeting at their local public library, they sensed it would be the right move for their family.

"I had spent a lot of time researching different methods for home education," Courtney remembered. "When the Classical Conversations group came along with the opportunity to join other families doing the same thing, it was a good fit for us."

Classical Conversations is a Christian homeschool network created by parents for parents. Rooted in the classical education model, Classical Conversations connects families and creates communities where they can walk through the program together. When Courtney and her family joined, the Classical Conversations network had branched out to several states, and they were able to be a part of the first group established in Oklahoma.

"If there's one word of encouragement I could give to anyone, I would say to be a lifelong learner."

Classical Conversations community groups begin for students at age four and continue until high school graduation. They meet one day a week to do group activities, discuss literature, present speeches and papers, and participate in debates and labs.

Courtney guided all four of her children through the program — with two having

graduated and moved on to college, and two currently studying at the junior high and high school levels.

As for her own journey with Classical Conversations, Courtney started off as a state manager, traveling around Oklahoma to recruit directors and establish new homeschool communities. She officially joined the staff in 2011 and launched a Classical Conversations' blog, known at the time as "Writer's Circle," where she wrote daily articles on how to navigate various aspects of homeschooling. In addition, she often held webinars to prepare and train parents for home education.

In 2017, Classical Conversations began to expand internationally. "At that point, they had been around for almost 30 years and were wanting to make some changes to their curriculum and begin writing more of it in-house," Courtney recalled. "That's how my current role was born."

She now serves as the global curriculum director for Classical Conversations MultiMedia.

Courtney oversees a team of writers who each oversee a specific subject area. Meeting one-on-one with them virtually throughout the week, she reviews their work, and provides feedback and direction when needed.

“I ensure that all subjects — whether it’s math, science or Latin — are harmonizing. It has to be able to flow together for both the students and the parents,” she explained.

A couple of times a year, Courtney meets with her writers to work on the curriculum together in person. In preparation, they do extensive research to develop concepts and activities for targeted age groups.

“My favorite thing about my job is getting to the root of a subject in order to outline it in a way that allows both parents to teach the material around their dining room table and our tutors can lead their seminars every week. That’s what I really see as the vision of my team,” she reflected. “We want to provide really comprehensive training so that families can fully embrace it and make great discoveries as they learn together.”

Courtney also supplies training for Classical Conversations’ international partners’ leadership teams. In addition, she led the program’s “Everyday Educator” podcast for several years, and she now hosts a weekly book club with Classical Conversations founder Leigh Bortins over Zoom.

Little did Courtney know, all of the experience she was accumulating through her work with Classical Conversations and at home teaching her children would allow her to continue her master’s degree.

“I had originally begun a master’s program at the University of Illinois, right after I received my bachelor’s degree. About a year into it, my husband and I decided to take a different path, but I had always intended to pick it back up,” she said.

Scott Whitaker, who serves as Classical Conversations’ director of new initiatives and as a partner site director for Southeastern, kicked off the journey by connecting Courtney with Dr. Meghan Griffin, Southeastern’s provost and chief academic officer.

Courtney emphasized, “It was really that first conversation with Dr. Griffin that inspired me to enroll in the master’s program. We had been talking about what it would look like for me to finish up my degree with Southeastern, and she could see a clear path for me to continue the work I was already doing while earning my master’s at the same time.”

As a parent whose children were involved in Classical Conversations, Griffin had personal insight into developing the Master of Arts in Classical Studies at Southeastern and understanding why it would be a good fit for Courtney.

“Classical Conversations is an incredibly rigorous, life-giving homeschool curriculum. The master’s degree came from the question of, ‘How do we get these parents with tons of teaching experience and varied education credentialed to teach at the college level?’ The degree was designed so they could earn credit for what they’re learning about classical education, enhance them as educators and have them be a part of what’s happening in higher education,” explained Griffin.

Individuals in the master’s program take classical courses and classes focused on a specific subject area. Courtney’s degree is in literature and rhetoric, and qualifies her to teach English and writing at the collegiate level.

“In my current role, I’ve had to do extensive research, create bibliographies and consult a wide range of sources — specifically with grammar curriculum. Fine-tuning those research abilities and having access to the SEU library has played an integral part in that,” Courtney remarked.

Courtney was also able to synchronize two published Classical Conversations projects with her Southeastern coursework. For the first piece, “Essentials of Language:



Courtney meets with her team to work on curriculum projects.

English, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish,” Courtney adapted the fourth- to sixth-grade grammar curriculum to fit the grammatical styles of several other languages. For the other project, Courtney compiled a series of fables, fairy tales, poems, myths and legends organized by geography into a trilogy for young readers, entitled “Ancient World Echoes,” “Old World Echoes” and “New World Echoes.”

Courtney joined the first group of students enrolled in the master’s in classical studies degree program and was the first to graduate in the spring of 2022.

“I’m thrilled that Jennifer is our first graduate,” expressed Griffin. “She will be the first of many.”

“I’ve been wanting to do this for a long time, so it was pretty exciting to accomplish something that I started back in 1994,” said Courtney. “As someone who was working full time and homeschooling her children simultaneously, one of the aspects that I really appreciated about the program was the flexibility. The unique path that Southeastern provided made it possible.”

As for the future, Courtney plans to continue her team’s progress in developing the Classical Conversations curriculum. She also aspires to pursue a Ph.D., and write and publish a book detailing her grandmother’s experiences through key moments in history.

“If there’s one word of encouragement I could give to anyone, I would say to be a lifelong learner. I love the fact that there are just so many interesting things in the world for us to see and learn about. I’m excited to keep going and doing that as long as I still can.”



Jennifer Courtney with her husband, Tim, and their children



Courtney (second from left) and her Classical Conversations colleagues



THE DEWEERDTS: FORGING NEW PATHS WITH EDUCATION



All with their own unique callings, the DeWeerd family members have found degree programs at Southeastern University that fit each of their varying roles within the ministry. And, as a result, **JEREMY DeWEERDT '19 (MAML)** would describe his household as a Southeastern family.

“SEU has really helped form us in ministry training, theology and our careers,” Jeremy reflected. “In many ways, it has enabled us to enhance our leadership abilities.”

Jeremy and his wife of 27 years, **JEN DeWEERDT '22 (MAML)**, are parents to sons, **CADEN '21, '23 (MAML)**, Connor and Paxton. At the age of 10, Paxton is the only member of the family who hasn't yet pursued a degree from Southeastern.

As the first to enroll at the university, Jeremy had been encouraged by Justin Lathrop, Southeastern's vice president for strategic partnerships, to look into the Master of Arts in Ministerial Leadership (MAML) program.

“After learning about the MAML, it just seemed like a perfect fit for me as a senior pastor,” explained Jeremy.

Caden was the next DeWeerd to apply to Southeastern for an undergraduate degree. Jen followed shortly, joining the MAML program in the fall of 2020.

“I had watched Jeremy go through the program, and I thought, ‘Can I do this?’” Jen recalled. “I would seriously encourage anyone who is considering starting school again, to do it. I was 48 years old when I began the MAML program, and it was such an incredible experience.”

After graduating with his bachelor's in organizational leadership and a minor in pastoral leadership, Caden followed in his parents' footsteps and also entered the MAML program.

“We are one of only a few families who has had a mom, dad and son all go through the program,” Jeremy pointed out.

Connor is currently studying music business at Southeastern. With plans to graduate in the spring of 2024, he intends to pursue a career in the music industry. “I'm open to a lot of potential paths, whether it's in production, performance or teaching,” said Connor.

Connor has played guitar for 10 years and has written and produced his own music. In 2022, he released his first EP, “City of Reverie,” on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music and several other streaming platforms. His latest single, “LOVELY,” came out in February of 2023.

Jeremy and Jen serve as senior pastors of City First Church — a multi-site church based out of Rockford, Illinois. City



Jeremy preaching at City First Church.

First's Rockford location brings in about 3,500 attendees to its in-person services and 50,000 viewers for its online services.

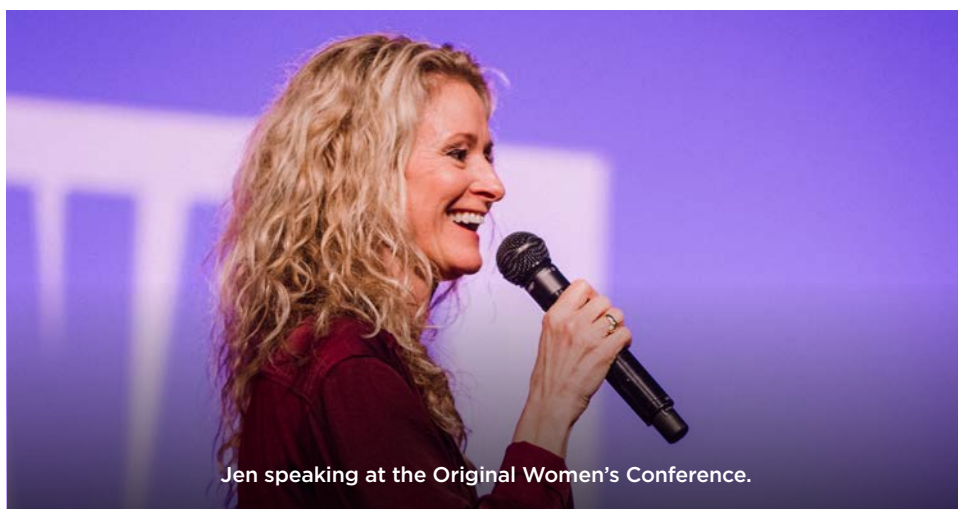
As senior pastors, Jeremy and Jen oversee a pastoral staff of 19 individuals, including the principals and the head of their pre-K to 12th grade school, Christian Life Schools.

In addition to the Rockford location, City First has sites in Rockton, Illinois; Cape Coral, Florida; and at correctional centers in Bowling Green, Florida, and Dixon, Illinois.

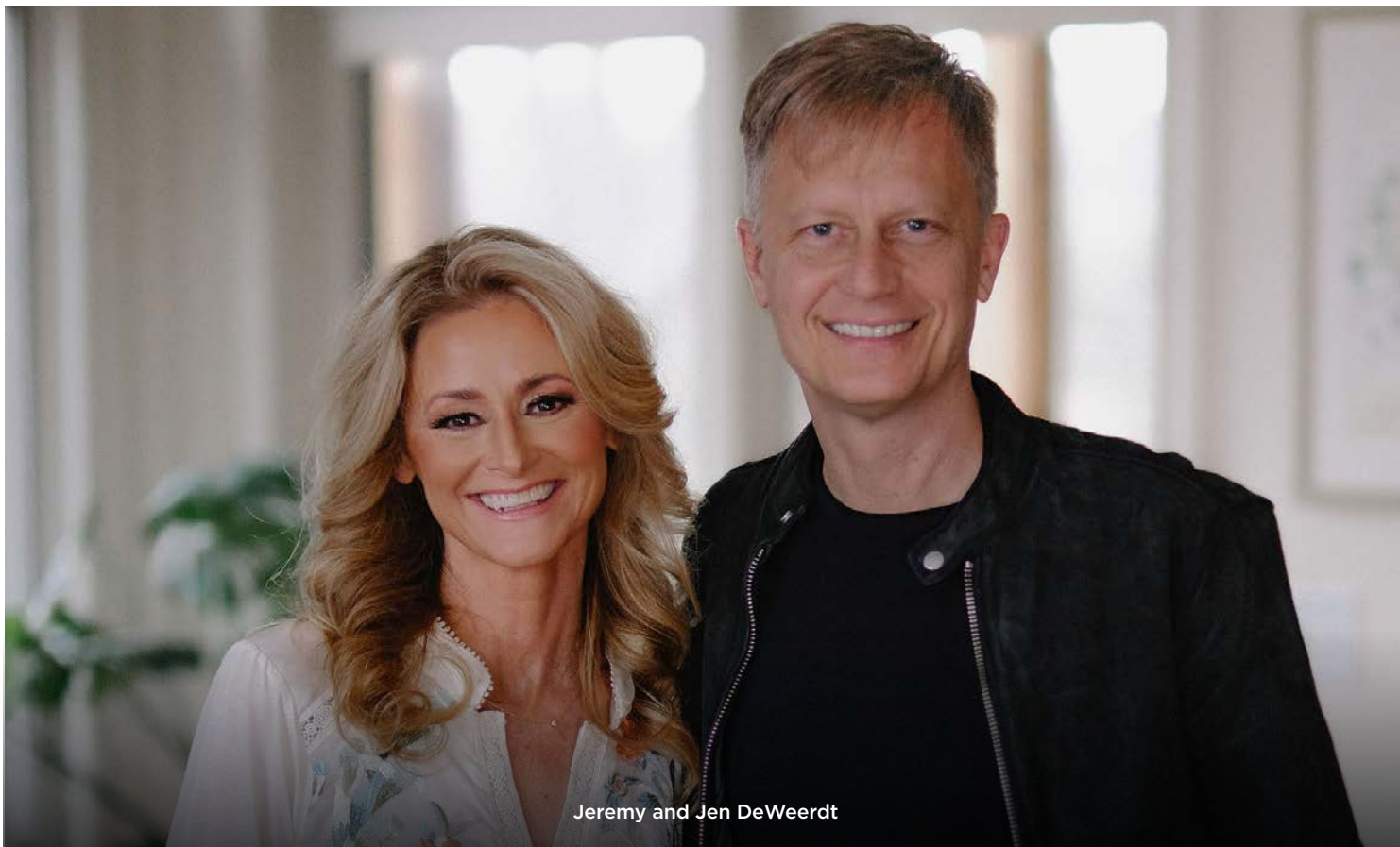
Jeremy and Jen have been in their current positions since 2007. Previously, Jeremy spent more than 16 years as student ministries pastor, co-leading the youth ministry with Jen. He also founded and directed the post-high school ministry, Rockford Master's Commission, now known as City First Leadership College, in 1993.

Two years after Jeremy founded the program, Jen joined him in its development.

Beginning as a one-year discipleship training program, the leadership college has since expanded to offer up to four years of residential ministry training. It also teaches advanced discipleship skills



Jen speaking at the Original Women's Conference.



Jeremy and Jen DeWeerd

to prepare students for leadership roles in vocational ministry and the secular marketplace.

City First Leadership College eventually became a Southeastern partner site in 2017. Offering educational tracks in pastoral leadership, lighting and sound productions, creative fields and more, the City First program has graduated more than 1,200 students since its inception.

“I founded the Rockford Master’s Commission (now City First Leadership College) primarily for ministry training, but also for teaching life and leadership skills in the global marketplace,” remembered Jeremy. “I have been interested in the spiritual development of the youngest generation for all of my adult life. And as a minister in the Christian church, my ultimate goal is for these young adults to come to a life-changing faith in Jesus, while also discovering the purpose that God has for their life.”

Both Jeremy and Jen have been able to integrate their learning experiences from the MAML program into their roles at City First.

“The MAML challenged me to study at a greater depth. The works that we read were truly eye-opening and gave me further insight into the word of God,” said Jen.

As a lead pastor, Jen helps guide the overall vision of the church and serves on the executive and teaching teams. She is also the founder of the Original Women’s Conference, which has grown to two locations and over 3,000 attendees within 15 years.

For Jeremy, his experience in the MAML program has broadened his perspective and abilities.

“My studies in the MAML program substantially impacted both my preaching and leadership strategies. It’s allowed me to deliver more dynamic messages on

Sundays and shepherd the development of my staff,” Jeremy reflected.

Although the three DeWeerds were in the same program, they worked through the MAML in different cohorts. However, they were still able to support and encourage each other through their common academic pursuits. They shared textbooks, their experiences with certain classes and assignments, and recommendations for their favorite professors.

“We really assisted each other experientially,” Jeremy noted.

Jen expressed, “It’s also been special just to see the relationships that have formed and grown from our time at Southeastern, even outside the dynamics of family, but with the incredible professors we got to learn from.” She added, “My professors were definitely one of my favorite parts of the program. They’re all very encouraging and challenging in their own way.”



People from around the world virtually attend City First's metaverse church service.

The DeWeerdt's oldest son, Caden, also works at City First Church, serving as the pastor for the church's online location, City First Anywhere.

City First Anywhere includes online viewers and attendees of City First's metaverse location — an extension of the online church that was partly inspired by Caden's Southeastern coursework.

“One of the coolest things that the MAML cohort inspired me to do originated from my practical theology course with Dr. Alan Ehler,” Caden commented. “Our assignment was to pinpoint a problem we saw in the church and supply a practical, theologically-sound way to fix it.”



Caden DeWeerdt

Caden's project was focused on starting a church in the metaverse: a virtual-reality space where users can interact with each other in a computer-generated environment.

Shortly after he accepted his position, Caden was able to utilize his research to help launch City First's metaverse location. “I attribute a lot of credit to Dr. Ehler for pushing me and inspiring me to take that first step,” said Caden.

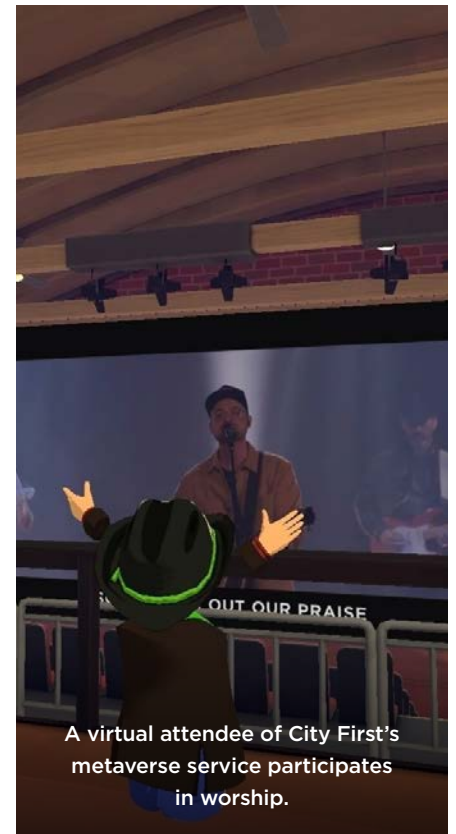
The City First metaverse church holds services weekly on Friday, separate from the Sunday service times. People can join in from anywhere around the world with the use of a virtual reality headset.

Caden remarked, “We've had people from Japan, Germany and countries all across the globe attend.”

The metaverse location officially launched in March of 2022 and now averages about 20 to 30 attendees. With the use of their headsets, participants can step into the virtual walls of City First Church and navigate as if they were actually there. They are able to sit down and watch the service, and even raise their virtual hands to express themselves during worship.

“Jesus calls us to go out into all of the world, and although it's virtual, it is still

a part of our world. There are real people with real souls behind the avatars who still need to be reached,” Caden emphasized. “These are people who may not be comfortable walking into a physical church building. And even though they may be thousands of miles away, we are still able to stand in front of them, hear their voice and minister in a way not many others have before.”



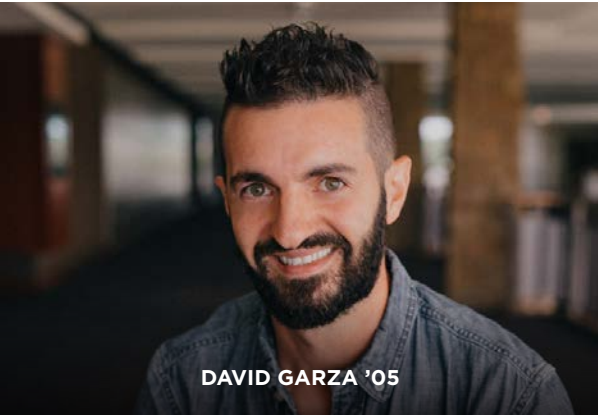
A virtual attendee of City First's metaverse service participates in worship.

He continued, “We've had people accept Jesus as their Savior in our metaverse services. I think it's a beautiful representation of what the online church can become.”

“Whether you're in vocational ministry like Jen, Caden and I, or the marketplace as Connor soon will be, we're all called to make a difference in this world,” said Jeremy. “Education awakens the mind and God uses that to direct your life and reinforce your calling. I think we've all found this in Southeastern, and it's positioned us for success.”



LUKE GAMBILL '98



DAVID GARZA '05



RACHEL (TRAMPLER) CARMICHAEL '12

CLASS NOTES

IN THE LIVES OF SEU ALUMNI

1985

JAY STEWART and his wife of 40 years, **MELANIE (DEAN) '87**, are the lead pastors of the Refuge Church in Kannapolis, North Carolina. In May of 2023, he started on a 3,400-mile bike ride across America from Corona del Mar, California, to Charleston, South Carolina, known as LifeRide. Jay founded LifeRide to bring awareness and raise funds for Love Life, a Christian organization dedicated to uniting churches to end abortion and to address the orphan crisis.

1998

LUKE GAMBILL is an assistant professor of music business at Lee University in

Cleveland, Tennessee. He also serves as Lee University's coordinator of music business and director of their Campus Choir, a large traveling ministry worship choir and rhythm section. Previously, Luke spent 12 years as the creative director for Capitol Christian Music Group in Nashville, Tennessee, and was the creative manager for Integrity Music in Mobile, Alabama, for seven years. During his career in the music industry, Luke won a Dove award, received multiple Dove award nominations, and worked alongside prominent Christian artists like Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant. Though now in full-time academia, Luke continues to produce and arrange music for various clients across the country. He and his wife, Tammy, have two daughters and a son-in-law and are based in Cleveland, Tennessee.

1999

JOHN TEMPLE is the Florida State Representative for District 52. He has also been the chairman of the Sumter County Republican Party since 2018. John has 23 years of experience in education and previously served as a math teacher at McKeel Academy in Lakeland, Florida, and the principal at Bushnell Elementary and Wildwood Elementary. He currently serves as the director of professional learning and accountability for the Sumter County School District. John and his wife, Jessica, have two children.

2005

DAVID GARZA is the vice president of marketing for Texas Trust Credit Union



JORDAN TALLEY '15



TAUAN SALGADO '17



**JONATHAN '18, '19 (MSW)
AND NATALIE (GLENN) FERGUSON '17**



KAITLYN ROMERO '18



MATTHEW SCALES '18



NICHOLAS "NICK" SCHOFIELD '18



HAYLEY (ROSALES) CHRISTIE '19

in Arlington, Texas. He has over 15 years of experience in marketing and business operations. David was most recently the associate director of marketing for Gateway Church in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and the associate director for Jack Hayford Ministries. He and his wife have three children.

2012

RACHEL (TRAMPLER) CARMICHAEL is the founding primary school director at Collegiate Hall Charter School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Previously, she was a social services specialist for Tulsa Public Schools for nearly six years. She earned her master's in social work from Missouri State University in 2013 and earned her Licensed Clinical Social Worker license (LCSW) in 2019. Her husband, John, is

a pilot and the two enjoy spending time outdoors and flying to new places.

2015

JORDAN TALLEY is a player development assistant for the University of Florida's (UF) Gators basketball team. He previously was a graduate assistant at James Madison University, where he earned his master's in adult education and human resources development. He was also an assistant coach at Tallahassee Community College and at Santa Fe College, among other positions.

2017

TAUAN SALGADO is the co-founder and director of soccer for the Lakeland

United FC soccer club based in Lakeland, Florida. Previously, he served as an assistant coach for Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky, and The Villages Soccer Club in The Villages, Florida. A Brazilian native, Tauan played professional soccer for the Associação Atlética Portuguesa. While at Southeastern, Tauan was the Sun Conference Player of the Week and the SEU Offensive Player of the Year in 2017. He was also a kicker for the SEU Fire football team in 2018, when they won the 2018 Mid-South Conference.

2018

JONATHAN FERGUSON '19 (MSW) and his wife, **NATALIE (GLENN) '17**, are campus pastors at Christ Fellowship Church in Westlake, Florida. Jonathan and Natalie helped



GLORIA (STEPHENS) THORNTON '16, '17 (MA)

GLORIA (STEPHENS) THORNTON '16, '17 (MA) won the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia USA 2022 title.

Thornton first started using a wheelchair in 2018, after experiencing complications from postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) and other health problems. She was referred to the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia USA pageant by a friend, but she didn't feel like she would be a good fit. Then, in August of 2021, she lost her oldest brother.

"After he passed away, I wanted to find something that would give me a purpose again. So I went ahead and I applied — it was about a 20-page application with multiple references. I turned everything in, and I said a prayer and put it to the back of my brain. Then I got an email about three weeks later saying that I actually won the title for the state of Virginia. I was super excited."

Thornton won the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia USA title in 2022 and then went on to participate in the Ms. Wheelchair USA pageant in July of 2022. Gloria's platform was, "It's okay to not be okay: the correlation between chronic illness and mental health." Gloria advocated for

mental health awareness through podcasts, interviews and news outlets.

"I like to advocate and bring awareness to the fact that somebody can have mental health issues but also chronic health issues as well, and they're both equally as valid."

Thornton currently works as a non-injury claims adjuster for USAA and is also an adjunct professor for Southeastern's human services department. She lives in Virginia with her husband, Eddie, who is serving in the Navy. There, Thornton volunteers as an ombudsman for her husband's Navy ship, establishing and maintaining communication between Navy staff and their family members on land.

Thornton previously worked for the YMCA's youth and family services department as a kinship social work case manager in San Diego, California, where she did case management and home visits.

She is currently in a patient advocacy certificate program and is a member of a wheelchair dance team called the Rollettes. In the future, she wants to continue teaching and advocating, and hopefully be able to speak at a TED talk.

launch the new Westlake campus in March of 2023 and have worked with Christ Fellowship for over five years.

JULIA KASTER began her psychiatry residency at Community Health Network in Indianapolis, Indiana. She graduated from the Marian University's College of Osteopathic Medicine (MU-COM) in Indianapolis in May of 2023.

KAITLYN ROMERO was matched into an internal medicine residency at the University of Florida, Jacksonville and began her residency in July. She graduated from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in May with a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine and a Master of Public Health. Kaitlyn also completed her Master of Science in Medical Sciences from the University of South Florida in Tampa.

MATTHEW SCALES is completing his first year of residency in internal medicine at HCA Florida Largo Hospital in Largo, Florida. He graduated with his doctorate in osteopathic medicine from the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

NICHOLAS "NICK" SCHOFIELD graduated from the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville. He will be beginning his Otolaryngology residency in Tampa at the University of South Florida (USF) in June alongside his fiancé, Tara, who is in USF's Nurse Practitioner MSN program.

2019

HAYLEY (ROSALES) CHRISTIE completed her second year of teaching chorus at Howard Middle School in Ocala, Florida. She was recently accepted into Florida State University's (FSU) Master of Music Education program.

JOEY HUNGERFORD '19 currently serves as the communications director for U.S. Congresswoman Lauren Boebert, representative of Colorado's third congressional district. Since August 2021, he has worked in the Congresswoman's Washington, D.C., office.

As communications director, Hungerford oversees a variety of communication efforts, including speeches, media bookings, press conferences, social media posts and more. In addition, he helps prepare Representative Boebert for meetings and large-scale events, such as the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), by crafting remarks, creating introductory videos and live tweeting events.

"This is my dream job," he expressed. "Using what I learned at Southeastern to help deliver the Congresswoman's message to the American people has been a blessing."

In addition to his full-time position, Hungerford does contract work for former president Donald Trump. On occasion,

he will travel down to the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida, to document events and capture footage for Trump's social media accounts and presidential rallies.

Hungerford also completes projects for the House Freedom Caucus, where he often constructs informative booklets for newly elected and incoming members of Congress.

Previously, he worked as a digital specialist for a Conservative organization in Lakeland, Florida, and served as a videographer for various real estate and agriculture companies.

In the future, Hungerford aspires to work as a digital director in the White House.



JOEY HUNGERFORD '19

SAMUEL J. CIULLA recently graduated as the Spring 2023 valedictorian from Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida, with a Juris Doctor degree. He accepted a full-time position as a real estate attorney at Gunster, one of Florida's largest and oldest business law firms. Samuel will begin his new position at Gunster's Downtown Tampa location in September of 2023 after taking the Florida Bar Exam in July. His law review article, "Putting a Moratorium on Moratoria: Avoiding an Unlawful Regulatory Taking While Preserving Safe Rental Housing During a National Crisis," has recently been published in the Stetson Law Review.

TORI (SCHEFFLER) LILLESTOLEN received her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) from Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Lynchburg, Virginia. She will be completing her residency in pediatrics.

2020

ANA BREGEL is a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) at a private practice, helping children with special needs gain skills to be more successful in the world. She recently graduated with her music therapy equivalency degree from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana and passed the CBMT Board exam. Ana also serves in youth ministry alongside her husband, Jonathan, at One Church Markham Woods in Longwood, Florida.

RAY CHILDS (M.Ed.) has worked for the Florida Department of Corrections for over 15 years. He is currently the education supervisor for the Polk Correctional Institution, where he started his career as a correctional officer. Ray also served as a classification officer, a computer systems and IT teacher, and a regional correctional services consultant.

JONAH CROWDER graduated with a Master of Music in Music Production with distinction from Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts.

HOWARD REAM is the mayor of Colorado City, Arizona. He is also the facilities manager for Mohave Community College's north campus and volunteers at Common Grounds Youth Center in Colorado City. Howard previously worked in construction in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has more than 20 years of experience in facility maintenance.

ANNA (CERAVOLO) SCHMIDT is an online teacher with K12 Stride. She was previously a seventh-grade social studies teacher at Discovery Academy in Lake Alfred, Florida. Anna met her husband, **CALEB '20**, while they were members of Southeastern's School of Honors. Caleb works at Lockheed Martin in Lakeland, Florida, as a tax compliance accountant.



SAMUEL J. CIULLA '19



TORI (SCHEFFLER) LILLESTOLEN '19



ANA BREGEL '20



RAY CHILDS '20 (M.Ed.)



JONAH CROWDER '20



GRACE (JICHA) TORRES '20



LYNDAL BEDFORD '21 (MSW)

GRACE (JICHA) TORRES owns and operates Grace Torres Photo, a wedding photography and videography business alongside her husband, Christian. Based in Lakeland, Florida, she and her husband travel nationally and internationally to capture destination weddings and elopements, and have been featured in Brides magazine and CNBC's Make It.

CHRISTIANA (LAFFERTY) WEIST is a law student at Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law in Columbus, Ohio. She and her husband celebrated their one-year anniversary in the fall of 2022.

2021

LYNDAL BEDFORD (MSW) is a mental health therapist for Grace Hope Counseling of Florida in Winter Haven.

He is also a field director and instructor of social work at Warner University in Lake Wales, Florida. Lyndal worked as a school social worker for Polk County Schools, a registered clinical social work intern through Florida Health and a licensed minister. He served as the executive pastor for Friendship Church in Mulberry, Florida, for two years.

TRISTAN LABELLE (MSW) is a Navy veteran and a case manager for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs in Salem, Virginia. He previously served as a peer mentor and case manager for St. Vincent de Paul CARES in Lakeland, Florida.

MEGAN MARTINEZ is the communications strategist for Options for Women Pregnancy Help Clinic based in Lakeland, Florida. She serves as the graphic designer for the clinic's marketing materials and social media. As part of her

role, Megan also maintains the company's website and serves as their copywriter and event photographer.

NATHANIEL "NATE" WOODS, JR., (DSL) is the special assistant to the president for inclusion transformation at the Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He was previously the interim dean for workforce education, the human services program director and a faculty member at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen, Washington. He recently published his first book, "Developing Others Through Service: Starting with ME!" Nate is also the co-founder of the leadership development firm, DOT Service LLC, where he offers virtual fireside chats for student-athletes, trauma-informed workshops and trainings, suicide prevention and awareness training, and coaching for organizations around the world alongside his wife, **PAGECAROL**



TRISTAN LABELLE '21 (MSW)



MEGAN MARTINEZ '21



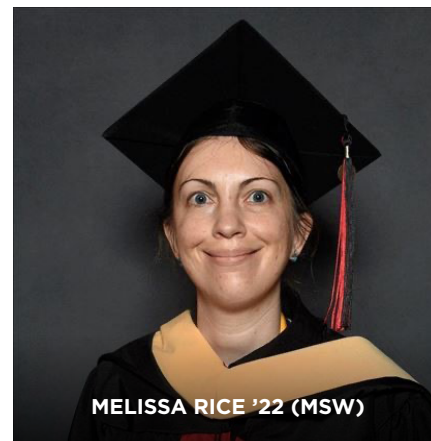
NATHANIEL "NATE" WOODS, JR., '21 (DSL)



JOEL DARCEY '22



EMMA MATTHEWS '22 (MSW)



MELISSA RICE '22 (MSW)



DARLENE STARRETT '22 (MSW)

'19 (Ed.D.). PageCarol is the assistant dean for student success at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and recently published her first book, "Post-It Encouragement: A 90-Day Inspirational Journal." Nate and PageCarol have been married for 15 years and have two children, Nate III and Angelo.

2022

NATHAN CUNNINGHAM is the esports coach at Keiser University in New Port Richey, Florida. As part of his position, he's helping build the program, develop the facilities and recruit students. During his time at Southeastern, Nathan served as the captain of SEU's Overwatch esports team.

JOEL DARCEY is the afternoon show producer for Z88.3, a Christian radio station based in Altamonte Springs, Florida.

EMMA MATTHEWS (MSW) is a resident director for Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois. She has also been working as a rural school social worker in St. Anne, Illinois, since August of 2022.

ISAIAH NELSEN is working toward his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. During his time at Southeastern, he worked as a research assistant for Dr. Ralph Salvatore and presented at several conferences, including the American Chemical Society National Conference and the Florida Academy of Science.

MELISSA RICE (MSW) is an outpatient social worker for Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, where she provides psychosocial support, assesses patients for psychosocial needs and connects them to needed resources.

DARLENE STARRETT (MSW) is an adjunct counseling professor at Trinity College in Trinity, Florida. She also serves as a therapist with the Mary Welsh Foundation in New Port Richey and is the social services specialist at the Citrus Hospice House for Chapters Health Systems in Lecanto. Previously, Darlene worked as a child bereavement specialist. She is the mother of three children and has eight grandchildren.

KELLY WEDLEY (Ed.D.) is a sergeant with the Polk County Sheriff's Office in Winter Haven, Florida. She is also the assistant program director for the National Public Safety Innovation Academy (NIA), an accredited eight-week program for law enforcement and corrections supervisors to get STEM-based education. Kelly was previously a detective with the Bureau of Special Investigations.

IN MEMORIAM

1978

JOHN HOWELL SEAY passed at the age of 69 on March 23, 2023. He was previously a staff sergeant in the United States Air Force. John also went on several missions trips. John is survived by his wife, Janie; his son, Stephen; his brothers, Carl and Jerry; his sister, Carol; and his three grandchildren.

1981

DEAN ELLIOT passed at the age of 63 on April 2, 2023. He was an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God and was a missionary in over 50 countries. He was also passionate about encouraging and ministering to pastors in India. Dean

pastored a church for 11 years and served as an interim pastor for several churches. Dean is survived by his wife of over 30 years, Brenda; his son, Nathan; his daughter, Lauren; his sister, Deb; along with many other family members.

2001

ANDREA EVANS '11 (M.Ed.) passed at the age of 46 on December 10, 2022. She worked as a site coordinator for adult education at Wallace Community College's Sparks Campus in Eufaula, Alabama. Andrea was a teacher, taught GED prep and served as a volunteer youth pastor for several years. Andrea is survived by her parents, Ronald and Arlo; her sister, Adriane; her brother, Michael; and many other family members.

DAVID AMBROSE passed away on January 6, 2023, at the age of 70. David is survived by his wife, Lorraine; his siblings, Linda, James and Glenda; along with nieces and nephews.

CELIA MARIE (CRAMPTON) OLSON passed away at the age of 71 on October 22, 2022. She taught nursing at the University of Louisiana and the University of Maryland's Frostburg campus. Celia enjoyed traveling and doing missions work with her husband of 45 years, David. Celia is survived by her husband, her daughters, Heather and Amanda; her sister, Diane; and her seven grandchildren, along with other family members.

SEND US YOUR CLASS NOTES

All submissions due by **November 17, 2023**, for the next issue.

Email: alumni@seu.edu

Submit online at: [SEU.edu/alumni](https://www.seu.edu/alumni)

Mail to: **Southeastern University**

University Advancement

1000 Longfellow Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33801



LEAVING A LEGACY



Planned Giving

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Here are a few ways you can leave a lasting legacy.

Bequest

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This option allows you to designate SEU as a beneficiary of your insurance policy or IRA, either in your existing policy or in a new, separate policy naming SEU as the sole beneficiary.

Charitable Remainder Trust

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