

FOCUS

FOCUS ON

Flourishing

Friends University
FALL 2024



Letter from the President

For a plant or flower to flourish, it needs to be rooted in a well-nourished environment, one tailored to the needs of that specific species. In fact, the very definition of “flourish” mirrors this idea: “to grow in a healthy or vigorous way as the result of a favorable environment.”

This perfectly encapsulates my hope for Friends University. Vision: Flourish is our plan to establish an environment that sparks personal, spiritual and professional growth in our students. We have employed faculty members who are not just experts in their field, but who sincerely care about the needs of each student, encouraging emotional intelligence, critical thinking and problem solving. We have an intentional campus ministry staff and student leaders who inspire spiritual maturity and servant-leadership. We have dedicated coaches and conductors who call students to integrity, perseverance and unity.

Sometimes this growth comes from a nudge or a challenge that pushes our students beyond their perceived limits. Often our students flourish simply because their professors, mentors and peers have affirmed their gifts and vocation and have provided the space for exploration and discovery.

All these things, in tandem with our stunning campus grounds, nationally recognized degree programs, scholarship offerings and RISE Values (respect, inclusion, service and excellence) have allowed us to cultivate an authentic, transformative environment for Friends University students.

This fall, we have seen the fruit of Vision: Flourish. It is reflected in a nearly 5 percent increase in our traditional student enrollment, weekly chapel services filled with eager students, winning sports teams that demonstrate sincere respect, a growing interest in serving communities at home and abroad and the many facility and technology upgrades that support our excellent programs. There has been incredible momentum on campus, and we seek to capitalize on this contagious growth, energy and excitement to ensure that Friends University thrives well into the future.

Dr. Amy Bragg Carey
President, Friends University



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ON THE COVER

The newly renovated
Riney Fine Arts Center.

PHOTO BY ETHAN HARVEY



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VISION: *Flourish*

Friends offers Biblical soul nourishment through the infusion of faith into all aspects of campus life and learning.



A Flourishing FALL

Alumni Auditorium was a sea of red on October 24. With over five hundred students, faculty and staff in attendance for a special **Red-Out Chapel**, there was an air of exhilarating pride. Guests, draped in red spirit wear, cheered as Director of Campus Ministries, Mike Jaderston, flew through a list of recent highlights. **A five percent increase in enrollment, the launch of the first doctoral program, a renewed interest in mission trips, weekly worship and chapel services, a men's golf team ranked second in the nation, and the opening of the newly renovated fine arts center** were all celebrated as markers of God's faithfulness to Friends University.

Friends has been in a season of momentum. This has been preceded by intentional strategic planning, large-scale building projects, program investments, and personal transformation in the lives of our students.

This momentum propels us toward **Vision: Flourish**.

Vision: Flourish is the university's current strategic milestone. It is focused on establishing Friends as **the preferred Christian university in the region**; one that fosters a welcoming faith community and transformational learning environment. As the world continuously finds itself empty from self-serving philosophies, Friends aims to offer a Biblical soul nourishment. This is accomplished through the infusion of faith into all aspects of campus life and learning, allowing students of varied faith, or no-faith backgrounds the opportunity to witness the hope that comes with living as a friend of Jesus.

This strategic vision is focused on four key areas:



Program Elevation

Vision: Flourish has initiated program expansion, driven by a renewed commitment to academic excellence. The new Center for Enterprise and Community Engagement is the result of those efforts.



Endowment Growth

Vision: Flourish has emphasized endowment growth to ensure the financial stability of the university and promote Campus Ministries initiatives.



Robust Enrollment

Vision: Flourish has encouraged a vibrant campus community and increased enrollment, providing support to students as they navigate their pathway to a meaningful profession.



Flourishing Campus Community

Vision: Flourish is set to distinguish Friends university well into the future, impacting generations of innovators, ministry leaders, educators and storytellers, who are eager to transform this world.



LATINA IN LEADERSHIP: ESCALANTE PAVES WAY FOR A *Flourishing* HSI INITIATIVE

In recent years, Friends University has focused its efforts to becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). To reach this goal, Friends must enroll at least 25 percent of their full-time undergraduate student body as Hispanic or Latino, among other requirements. As of Fall 2024, Friends University is serving 21.6 percent undergraduate Hispanic or Latino students. This has been a part of an exponential growth, and the university is currently predicted to reach HSI status by 2026.

Director of the Hispanic Serving Initiative Bellaly Escalante, a Friends alumna, has a bright outlook for the initiative. Her position was created as part of the Department of Education Title III: Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant, which is designed to help eligible institutions of higher education become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students.

With the funding, the university has incorporated academic tutoring and counseling programs; purchased educational materials; added scientific and laboratory equipment for teaching; and constructed/renovated opportunities to support Hispanic and Latino students.

One of these efforts has been translating the Friends University website so that it is accessible to Spanish speakers.

Escalante participated in many Hispanic and Latino organizations during her time at Friends as an undergraduate, which helped her distinguish the areas to target as the Director of HSI. Among these organizations is Latino Leadership, a mentorship program that gives students with an interest in Hispanic and Latino culture and language the opportunity to excel; the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (H.A.L.O.) a program dedicated to promoting Hispanic culture and awareness; the Spanish Club, who engages students in school and community events; and the Sigma Delta Pi National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, who offers opportunities to practice Spanish through service projects.

"Latino culture is centered around community and lending a helping hand to whomever and whenever," said Escalante. "Because I have been immersed in a helpful and welcoming community, those "skills" have transferred and are serving me well, as I, along with others, try to navigate how we can best serve our Hispanic and Latino students."

Escalante participated in many Hispanic and Latino organizations during her time at Friends as an undergraduate, which helped her distinguish the areas to target as the Director of HSI.

FRIENDS CULTIVATES A *Flourishing* COMMUNITY THROUGH MISSION TRIPS



While local ministry work offers profound opportunities, the call to serve on a global scale provides vast perspectives and broader learning. Friends University students, faculty and staff journeyed around the globe in Christian service, partnering with Global Infusion to serve in May 2024.

▲ EGYPT

The Egypt team was led by senior Zoe Grolnic, assisted by sophomore Nate Wachtler, and was advised by Professor of Religion Dr. Stan Harstine. Students had their eyes opened to global Christianity and had opportunities to lead worship, share sermons and testimonies, and work with children. The team also spent two days hosting livestreams that were shown in Syria and Turkey, reaching over 5,000 people.

The call to serve on a global scale provides vast perspectives and broader learning.



▲ NICARAGUA

Travel from the arid expanses of Africa to the lush volcanic terrain of Nicaragua to find the next mission trip. The Nicaragua team was led by senior Gabi Murphy (Coombs), assisted by junior Wade Bright, and advised by Academic Success Coach Lacey Tisdale. The team went on home visits to members of local churches to evangelize and pray over their homes, assisted in feeding programs at local churches, played games, built crafts, and taught Bible stories.

"The Nicaragua trip was a wonderful chance to step out of my comfort zone, serve & connect with a new community, and focus on my relationship with God. It was impactful getting to know some of the families we met over the trip, hearing their stories, and supporting and uplifting them in the Spirit. I was also so proud of the group I got to travel with — their boldness, compassion, and joy in the Lord are contagious and so inspiring," said Tinsdale.



▲ PERU

Trekking from Central to South America, the Peru team found that the high-altitude wonders were rich with indigenous landmarks and contemporary life. The Peru team was led by senior Haven Pruitt, assisted by junior Kiana Hankins, and was advised by Assistant Professor of Spanish Teresa Molina. This team of eleven was the first all-female team that Global Infusion had in Peru. They performed skits in the plaza to spread the gospel, played with children in after-school programs and in children's ministry, and an excursion to Machu Picchu gave the team the ability to see one of the wonders of the world.

"My favorite part was connecting with the locals, especially our translators, as they became like family! They reminded me of the profound impact we can have on individuals, even when we don't realize or mean to," said Pruitt.

DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH: FRIENDS OFFERS NEW DMIN IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Friends University has focused on expanding its programs, now offering education from associate to doctoral levels. The Doctor of Ministry in Formation and Soul Care, introduced in 2023, is the first doctoral program offered at Friends.

This DMin's core objective is to give students an immersive experience that delves into the most distinguished and insightful thinking from historical and contemporary perspectives within the church. Dr. A. J. Swoboda is the lead mentor for the DMin program, leading the way with his experience work in theology, biblical studies and Christian formation.

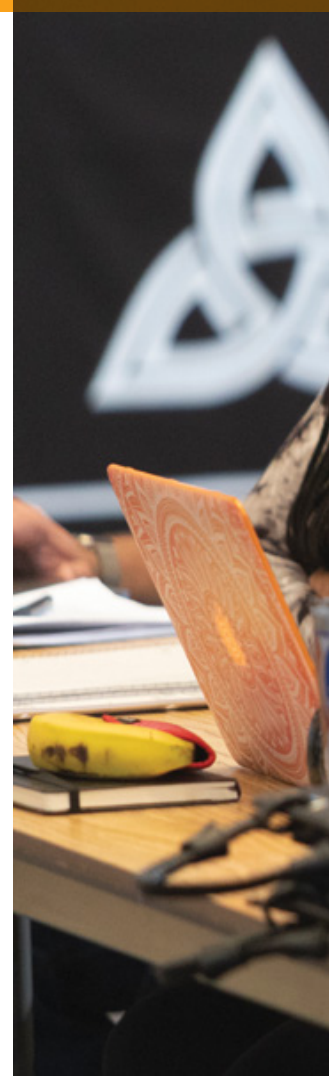
This program's development hopes to rekindle a profound clarity that Christians must stand on the shoulders of spiritual formation figures such as Saint Augustine, C.S. Lewis, Richard Foster, Dorothy Sayers, Athanasius, and Mother Teresa.

The DMin program is four years total with three years devoted to the core curricular schedule examining biblical theology, self-knowledge and soul care, and its implications for mission and engagement in the world.

A fourth year is devoted to writing and finalizing a doctoral project. There are 17 students in the first cohort.

Friends University has built upon its legacy as a leading institution in the area of Christian formation. Through initiatives such as the Apprentice Gathering, led by Dr. James Bryan Smith, and the master's program, led by Dr. Keas Keasler, the university has established itself as a cornerstone of theological education, integrating academic rigor with impactful, practical learning opportunities. Students enrolled in the DMin program will have the opportunity to engage with some of the most prominent contemporary thinkers in Christian formation, gaining invaluable insights and experiences.

"In essence, we expect our students to not only learn about Christian formation and soul care but also to practice these principles in their own lives," said Dr. Swoboda. "Jesus did not come merely to teach us a great theology of love; He came to teach us to love. Similarly, He did not intend for us to have just a robust theology of formation; He intended for us to be formed."



In essence, we expect our students to not only learn about Christian formation and soul care but also to practice these principles in their own lives.

— Dr. A. J. Swoboda



INVESTING IN SUCCESS: FRIENDS RECEIVES GRANT TO SUPPORT *Flourishing* ACADEMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT



The funds will further support Friend's mission to support degree completion and work-force readiness for all Falcons.



Over the past several years, Friends University has advanced with financial resources and community partnerships for mutual benefit, and to further its mission. As part of the university's vision, Friends was awarded a \$2.207 million Title III Part A Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant, generated from the U.S. Department of Education with period distributions awarded in payments over the next five years.

Year one of the SIP grant has funded \$100,000 to assist the IT department in a data migration from campus servers to the cloud; and hired a Director of the Center for Mission, Teaching, and Learning, a Director of Hispanic-

Serving Initiatives, and a Title III Grant Coordinator. The second year of the SIP grant will continue professional development, on-going data migration efforts, and develop open education resources (OER).

Dr. Preston Todd, vice president of enrollment management and student success, projects the funds will further support Friend's mission to support degree completion and work-force readiness for all Falcons. The grant also increases faculty and staff development to improve teaching, curriculum, OER and academic advising.

As of August, the university aims to participate in The National Symposium

on Student Retention, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference to support efforts in becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and Belong, a program developed and ran by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) to promote cultural awareness.

"The grant is geared toward student success for all students, with an emphasis on students from low socioeconomic backgrounds," said Dr. Todd. "The grant will provide budget support, and relief, allowing us to accomplish more key projects, invest in our talented faculty, and grow enrollment."

UNIVERSITY NEWS

Friends University Welcomes New Faculty to Campus

Friends University is excited to welcome the following faculty this fall.



▲ **SCHANEÉ A. ANDERSON**

Schaneé A. Anderson is a Special Appointment Assistant Professor of Zoo Science. Anderson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science at the University of Nebraska and a Masters in Elementary Education and Curriculum Instruction at Kansas State University. Anderson serves as a member for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the National Association for Interpretation, and the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education; and has been recognized for more than a dozen committees and awards.



▶ **LYDIA BECHTEL, PH.D.**

Dr. Lydia Bechtel is a new Assistant Professor of Voice. Dr. Bechtel received a Bachelor of Music (Vocal Performance) at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK; a Master of Music (Vocal Performance) at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO; a Master of Music (Musicology) and a Doctor of Musical Arts (Vocal Performance) at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory in Kansas City, MO. Dr. Bechtel has professional performances in 20 locations, attended 11 conferences and research presentations, published in four journals, and has professional affiliations in the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the National Opera Association, the College Music Society, the National Association of Music Education, and the American Musicological Society.



◀ **BOO DRYDEN**

Boo Dryden is the new women's wrestling head coach. He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2023 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and Human Sciences. Dryden comes to Friends after serving as an assistant coach for the men and women's teams at Andover High School. During his time there, he coached in two state tournaments and helped the program to its best finish in school history. His experience also includes coaching the Team Kansas national team at the USA Junior Duals in Tulsa, OK. This past summer.



◀ **JOICE P. HENRY**

Joice Henry is a Special Appointment Instructor of Music Theatre. Henry earned her Bachelor of Arts Dance in Performance at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Since moving to Wichita, Henry has performed and worked closely with the Crown Uptown, Wichita Children's Theatre & Dance Center, USD259, Crown Arts Collaborative, Wichita State University, Ballet Wichita, Arts Partners, Butler Community College, Metropolitan Ballet, and more.



▲ **LORI A. KANITZ, PH.D.**

Dr. Lori A. Kanitz is the new Director of the Center for Mission-Focused Teaching & Learning and a Professor of English. Dr. Kanitz received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at the University of Oklahoma; her Master of Literature and Theology at Durham University in England; and her Doctorate in Literature Theology at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Dr. Kanitz has had dozens of publications, presentations, and conferences throughout her career.

▼ **MATTHEW LOWE**

Matthew Lowe is the new cross-country head coach. Lowe graduated from Brescia University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology before earning a Master of Sports Science degree in Sports Coaching from the United States Sports Academy in 2018 and a Master of Education in Secondary Education from Grand Canyon University in 2021.

▲ **REBECCA LYNN, PH.D.**

Dr. Rebecca Lynn is a new Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Dr. Lynn received a Bachelor of Secondary Education in Mathematics, a Bachelor of Music Education in Vocal Music and a minor in Computer Science at Northern State University; A MDiv in Biblical Languages at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; her Master's in Mathematics and her Doctorate in Mathematics at Colorado State University. She is a member in the American Mathematics Society (AMS), Mathematical Association of America (MAA), Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Dr Lynn's doctoral and postdoctoral research has been in the fields of Commutative Algebra and Cohomology Theory and has two publications in the field.

**JANA MCCLOUD** ▲

Jana McCloud is a new Assistant Professor of Psychology. McCloud received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Sociology and Women's Studies at Wichita State University in Wichita, KS; her Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy at Friends University in Wichita, KS; and is pursuing her Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy at Northcentral University in San Diego, CA. Throughout her extensive work in the field, McCloud administered dozens of academic and professional presentations, online seminars and E-learning modules, guest lectures and community outreach involvement.



▼ STEVEN MONSEN

Steven Monsen is the new Assistant Instructor of Graphic Arts. Monsen received a Bachelor of Science in Instructional Design at Walden University and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Human-Centered Design at Liberty University. He has a Certificate in Design Thinking through the Interaction Design Foundation.



◀ ERIC PARKS

Eric Parks is a Special Appointment Assistant Professor of Family Therapy. Parks received a Bachelor of General Studies with emphasis in Psychology, Health Service Information and Policy, and Computer Science from Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a Master of Science in Family Therapy from Friends University. Parks is licensed and affiliated with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Clinical Fellow, is a Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist and is a Clinical Supervisor Prepare-Enrich Facilitator.

BRENDA QUICK ►

Brenda Quick is the new Special Appointment Assistant Professor of Physical Education. Quick received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Bachelor of Science in H.P.E.R, and a Master of Education at Southwestern College in Winfield, KS. Quick has 13 years of teaching experience at Friends University, on top of over 37 years as a health and fitness instructor.



◀ ALYSSA YOUNG

Alyssa Young is a Special Appointment Assistant Professor of Marriage & Family Therapy and the Assistant Clinical Director (KC). Young earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Sociology at the University of Kansas, and a Masters in Family Therapy at Friends University. Young is pursuing a Doctorate in Couple and Family Therapy at Antioch University, New England. Young has over 230 hours of specialized clinical training across four institutions and several scholarly presentations throughout her career.

Riney Fine Arts Center Ribbon-Cutting

BY ANNA CAREY

In 1979, at his church service, a young Stan Shelden found himself captivated by the powerful voice of famed Singing Quaker soloist, Earnest Alexander. Over the year, Alexander became a confidante to the high school sophomore, inviting him to concerts on the Friends University campus. Alexander eventually introduced Stan to director Dr. Cecil Riney. He was met with the kindness of Riney's handshake and the warmth of his smile. In that one, profound moment, Shelden felt seen and important. This campus and these people were special.

Years later, after Shelden's daughters graduated from Friends, the CEO of Shelden Architecture found himself back on campus yet again, not to attend concerts, but to renovate the very facility they were held in: the Riney Fine Arts Center.

On September 19, the university celebrated the grand unveiling of the new Riney Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Hundreds attended the special program.

The \$7.8-million-dollar renovation, led by Shelden Architecture, Simpson Construction, and Hein Landscaping, included an expanded entrance, spacious art gallery, chapel addition,

expanded black box theatre, and refreshed auditorium seating.

During the ribbon-cutting, Dr. Carey reminded attendees that the celebration represented the work of at least a hundred skilled craftsmen, the generosity of hundreds of donors, and the faithfulness of God. She said the facility will forever be marked as a place of "beauty, goodness and truth." The beautiful music and art within will inspire audiences. The goodness and generosity of those who supported the ambitious renovation will secure the lasting legacy of fine arts at Friends. And the biblical truth that grounds the facility, with the addition of the sacred chapel, will create space for reflection, worship and prayer. Additionally, Fine Arts Chair, Dr. Nathanael May, hopes the expansion will spur program growth, drawing in more students of passion and conviction.

Stan Shelden shared the many times his story has intersected with that of Friends. He considers it an unimaginable privilege to have been a part of enhancing this impactful fine arts building. From "concert attendee," to "proud alumni dad," Shelden now can stamp the "campus architect" title into his coveted Friends University tool belt.

The facility will forever be marked as a place of beauty, goodness and truth.

— Dr. Amy Bragg Carey





Distinguished Alumni



Outstanding Achievement in R.I.S.E.

▲ DR. CHRISTOPHER CASSIDY '04

Dr. Christopher Cassidy graduated from Friends University in 2004 with a degree in Music and a minor in Christian Studies. He returned to Friends University in 2005 to get the prerequisites for medical school and then attended the University of Kansas School of Medicine and graduated in 2012. Dr. Cassidy is the Medical Director of Wesley Medical Center's Emergency Department where he manages over 60 physicians and Advanced Practice Providers who have over 160,000 patient encounters per year across the four Wesley sites.

Outstanding Achievement in the Fine Arts

▼ ERIC STONE '90

Eric Stone is a 1990 graduate of Friends University where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Music. Stone is in his 31st year of full time Worship Ministry and the current director of the Singing Quakers Alumni Choir. He has served at Country Acres Baptist Church (CABC) for his entire career as a Youth Pastor, Senior Adult Pastor, and Administrative Pastor. He has served on the Alumni Advisory Board for Friends University and was the assistant for the Singing Quakers Alumni Choir for 25 years.





Outstanding Christian Leadership and Service

◀ **STEPHEN CAMPBELL '73**

Steve Campbell graduated from Friends University in 1973 with a major in Church Music. Campbell was active in the Singing Quakers where he served as Business Manager and was a baritone soloist for two years. Along with his wife, Campbell established a non-profit ministry called The Better Way, which developed into the Columbus Dream Center to help people discover their purpose and harbor of hope.

Campbell's recently released book *He Went A Little Farther: Stories of Challenge and Inspiration from the Streets of an American Inner-City* chronicles the stories of twelve people Steve and his wife, Wanda, encountered during their exciting ministry work.

Young Student-Athlete Alumni

▼ **DANIEL LITTLER G'13**

Daniel played for the Friends University men's soccer team for the 2011-13 seasons. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Finance and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and won the Harper L. Cole Outstanding Senior Award from the Division of Business. Daniel was honored by the Wichita Business Journal with the "Emerging Leaders" award and later the "Influencers" award.



▲ **TIFFANY TROTTER G'10**

Tiffany is a four-year letterwinner for the Friends University volleyball program from 2007-10. Tiffany graduated from Friends University in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science. She worked for Koch Industries for 10 years before venturing into a real estate career in 2021 and going full time in 2023. Her 2021 production earned her Rookie of the Year honors from her brokerage, Berkshire Hathaway in 2022. She received a spot in the President's circle, awarded to individual sales professionals who achieved \$185,000 + in total gross commissions.



Friends University Welcomes Four New Entries Into Its Athletics Hall of Fame



◀ NOAH MORFORD '07

Morford was a two-time Victory Sports Network All-American and twice earned All-KCAC honors at linebacker.

As a 2006 team captain, Morford was a key factor in the Falcons winning a pair of KCAC championships during his standout career at Friends.

DR. CECILIA BENTON '13 ▶

Benton graduated while holding six individual records in the 1500 meter run, 3K Steeplechase, 10,000 meter run, 1,000 meter run, Mile run and the 3,000 meter run.

Benton also maintained the KCAC record in the 10,000 meter event for an astonishing 10 years. A three-time NAIA All-American, Benton was named the 2012 KCAC Indoor Track & Field Athlete of the Meet after accumulating the highest point total in the competition.

In cross country, Benton was a contributor to a top five result at the 2011 NAIA National Cross Country Championships, the program's best-ever national finish.



Athletic Hall of Fame

▲ 2008 FOOTBALL TEAM

The 2008 Friends University Falcons won the KCAC regular season championship with a 9-0 conference record and finished the regular season at a perfect 10-0 overall, pummeling the opposition by a whopping 30.4 points per game in league play and 29.6 points per game overall in the regular season.

The Falcons finished the season and headed to the NAIA national playoffs ranked fifth in the nation before falling to Northwestern Oklahoma State University in the postseason.



▲ RACHEL STRICKLAND '09

Strickland's career got off to a robust start by being selected as the team's Newcomer of the Year and earning All-KCAC honorable-mention recognition.

Overall, Strickland was named the Volleyball team's Offensive Player of the Year on three occasions while twice receiving All-KCAC first-team and NAIA Region IV honorable-mention honors.

Strickland also lettered four years for the Falcon track & field program, where she earned three all-conference awards and recorded a top 10 national finish in the Javelin during her sophomore season.



Homecoming

The Friends University Falcons football team were in control from the outset in notching a convincing 59-14 victory over the Sterling College Warriors on Homecoming at Adair-Austin Stadium. Friends outgained Sterling 425 to 167 yards, with a characteristically, punishing ground game that accounted for 375 yards and seven rushing touchdowns overall. As of the game, the Falcons, 6-0 on the season, will open Kessinger Division play with a critical matchup at Southwestern College, both of whom are tied for the 22nd spot in the latest NAIA GoRout Top 25 Rating.

Athletic Awards

▼ BUSTER HARDMAN

Buster Hardman has been named an ABCA-Rawlings NAIA Gold Glove winner for the second season in a row. Hardman is a graduate student from American Fork, Utah.



▶ KEEGAN MARTIN

Senior Keegan Martin selected as Greater Wichita College Male Athlete of the Year.



▲ SILVA AVAKIAN

Silva Avakian second-team NAIA Women's Tennis All-America performer. Avakian is a junior from Pasadena, California, majoring in health management and minoring in natural science.



STUDENT VOICES

Voice of an Author: Lilly Busatti

Lilly Busatti, author of “Dancing in a Crowded Room” is a junior at Friends University. Busatti self-published her first romance novel when she was 19 years old, balancing her writing, school and social life with Red Bull and her over-achiever attitude. She is majoring in English with a focus in Creative Writing and minoring in Theatre; participates in the Singing Quakers; and is the editor-in-chief of The Mews.

With inspirations of modern romance authors like Emily Henry and Ali Hazelwood, Busatti originally drafted her piece as a romantic short story for an English conference. When her story didn’t make the cut, Busatti shifted her sights to a full-length novel. After six months of writing, editing and battling Microsoft Word formatting, Busatti was ready to publish.

But romance wasn’t the only topic that Busatti focused on. Wanting dimensional and fleshed-out characters, Busatti centralized her favorite character, Maria, on representing a chronic illness. Maria has an illness called Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), which comes from repetitive trauma in a specific area. Busatti wanted this character to best reflect the chronic illness as accurately as possible, so she called her friend with the same illness last November and had a long talk. There is not a lot of research being done for CRPS, nor are there accurate representations of the illness in the media, so she wanted her character to be that.

There are plenty of people that supported Busatti throughout the process. Her friends, who helped read, edit, and suggest corrections for her pieces were a huge part in getting the book together. Dr. Kassia D. Krone and the English department had a huge impact on Busatti’s writing and immediate support. Dr. Rayvon T.J. Moore had a lot of inspiration as well, as he was one of the first to slip Busatti \$20 for her novel. Busatti’s family were huge supporters as well.

“I’m hoping that my future is going to take me into more creative writing, as well as free-lance writing and editing. I’ve also been thinking about starting an Instagram account to provide advice for writers online. I mean, I published a book at 19, so I should be able to help others, right?”

I’m hoping that my future is going to take me into more creative writing, as well as free-lance writing and editing.

— Junior Lilly Busatti



Lilly Busatti (right) with a fan at Lilly's book signing event.



I was stoked when they announced my name for second place.

— Senior Zachary Garraway

Voice of a Thespiian: Zachary Garraway

Senior Zachary Garraway won the 2nd Place Junior Men Music Theatre Division at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference in November 2023. NATS celebrates the art of singing through a series of competitions and auditions designed to highlight the talented singers, performers and composers who are the rising stars in the profession.

As a consistent participant for many years, Garraway was expecting a great time at NATS, looking forward to the many performances and supporting his fellow Falcons. Over the competition, Garraway would switch between watching thespians on stage and performing his own songs.

Leading up to the competition, Garraway dedicated his time to perfecting his performances: It All Fades Away from the Western "Bridges of Madison County," Love to Me from the Neoromantic classical opera "Light in the Piazza," I Love Betsy from the romantic comedy "Honeymoon in Vegas," and Maria from "West Side Story."

Despite the energy to attend, the hardest part about the NATS conference was the drive! After a five-hour trip, Garraway had no time to recover, as his first performance was at 8 a.m. the next day. Thankfully, Garraway was full of animation, specifically in his favorite song "Honeymoon in Vegas." With the

movement, Garraway had a passionate personality as he sang, reenergizing his mind for the rest of the conference.

His biggest supporters are his family and all the faculty, staff and students that attended the NATS conference that celebrated his achievement.

"I was stoked when they announced my name for second place. It takes months of preparation and practice, only to travel there and see that there is lots of competition for the top. You never know who is singing and how much time they have dedicated to their performance because everyone is at their best. It is always so exciting because I never know how it will go," said Garraway.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Ron Avey

Ron Avey and a former classmate started an endowed scholarship in the name of Professor Jerry M. Highfill, who taught in the Business Division for many years. The Jerry M. Highfill Endowed Scholarship in Business is intended for full-time business majors in good academic standing.

Jerry Matthew Highfill (1913 -1988) was a respected figure in both academia and business. In 1969, he joined the Business Division at Friends University, where he taught until 1983, earning the title of Professor Emeritus.

Tell us about yourself. Family, careers, hobbies, etc.

I worked as an accountant for about 12 years. In 1986, I joined Waddell and Reed, a national investment and financial planning firm and became the Wichita area manager until I retired in 2018. I met my wife of 52 years at Friends and have three children and eight grandchildren. My retirement time is spent working around the house, traveling, playing a little golf, playing the guitar and keeping up with friends.

When did you graduate from Friends University and with what major?

I graduated from Friends University in 1973. My major was Business Administration.



What was your favorite moment at Friends University?

My favorite moment at Friends was the morning when I was walking from the parking lot to class and I met my future wife, Kathy.

Why do you feel it is important to give back to Friends University?

A small college like Friends was just what I needed after graduating from a large Wichita high school. It was easy to get to know the professors and other students. The university staff were very approachable and helpful. I was able to work part time while attending Friends, and the working experience helped me mature and realize the benefits of a college education. I became an adult at Friends and hope to help others achieve that too.

How did Jerry Highfill affect your time at Friends University and why have you decided to endorse a scholarship in honor of him?

Mr. Highfill took an interest in every one of "his students." He would motivate his students and promote the university by visiting his recent business graduates at their workplace, taking a picture of them, and posting the picture on a bulletin board at the university. Current students would find encouragement and motivation in these pictures.

Now that I have retired, I wanted to honor him. He was a special person in my life. I hope others will learn of the scholarship and want to donate. After all these years I am sure many of "his students" are retired and looking for a worthy place to make a charitable contribution.

FAMILY TREE

Grandparents: Tomas and Guadalupe Martínez

Children: Carmen Velazquez, Marco Martínez, Catalina Zortman (all Friends Alumni)

Son-in law: *Jeffery Zortman (Friends Alumnus)

Grandchildren: Junior Elijah Zortman and *Freshman Abby Zortman

* Not pictured



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The Martínez Family

Within the halls of Friends University and amidst the pews of Friends Churches, one family name stands out across three generations: the Martínez family. Originating from legacies deeply rooted in Guatemala and Honduras, the Martínez's have forged a profound impact within the Wichita community, emerging as stalwart leaders for Hispanic believers.

This family began in Guatemala, where Tomas Martínez was born to evangelion parents. Tomas wanted to pursue a career in serving the Lord and committed to Jesus Christ in 1955 at 9 o'clock p.m. Tomas studied at Berea Bible College in Chiquimula, where he met Guadalupe and became a pastor.

Guadalupe Martínez was born in Honduras. She committed to Christ after a near death experience — and a miracle — when she was seven years old. After dedicating herself to reading the Bible and shadowing pastors from El Salvador, Guadalupe was called to attend Berea Bible College in Chiquimula.

After marriage, Tomas and Guadalupe were invited by Dr. Raymond Martin in 1987 to plant Hispanic churches in Kansas; they established five Hispanic groups in the Friends Church

and settled in Wichita. Years later they were blessed with three children: Carmen, Marco and Catalina, who all graduated from Friends University.

Catalina later met her husband, Jeffery Zortman, also a Friends graduate, and are now the parents of Elijah and Abby Zortman, who are current Falcons.

Now, the latest generation of the Martínez family has made it full circle back to Friends University. Elijah Zortman is a junior Falcon with a major in Spanish and minors in music and business administration.

By the time Elijah and his sister, Abbey Zortman, graduate, Friends University will have been around for about 130 years. These "future Falcons" — as their grandfather calls them — can expect to find Friends a place where they, too, can deepen both their faith and their knowledge.

"When somebody asks me, 'where did your children study?' Oh, they studied in the most — I can't think of the word — but in the most beautiful university. It is an intellectual and spiritual cradle, and truly a family here," said Guadalupe Martínez.

FALL 2024 CLASS NOTES

In Memory

"In Memory" passages with more details were submitted by family and friends. Information received after August 1, 2024, will be included in the next issue. We reserve the right to edit as space allows.

Jeanette M. Auchard '54 died on December 20, 2023. Mrs. Auchard remained active in Woodlawn Methodist Church and organized a free clinic for which she received a gubernatorial commendation for her efforts.

William Harley Barkley died on July 5, 2024. Barkley taught at Friends University from 2002-2019. Bill was a lifetime church goer was a member of Summit Church, which became Life Change Church in Wichita.

Karen Wirth Bell '87 died on April 29, 2024. She worked in marketing/promotions for Cessna, Beech, and Learjet/Bombardier.

Nancy Helen Berges '14 died on July 14, 2024. Nancy worked with computer systems, starting with Morrill and Janes Bank in Onaga. She was a member of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Onaga, the Altar Society, and taught Religious Education classes.

Ellen Yvonne Bishop '98 died on March 14, 2024. Ellen earned her master's degree in human resources from Friends University, leading her to a long career in Human Resources and her membership in the Society for Human Resources.

John Marcus Blakeslee '99 died on April 1, 2024. He was a masterful salesman and shoed the entire town of Dodge City working as the manager of Payless from 1986 to 1994. When he moved to Nickerson, he gradually switched from helping youth to counseling adults.



STANLEY D. BROWN '59 died on April 3, 2024. In 1968, he joined the faculty at Friends University in Wichita, where he served as the Director of Development for 19 years.

Steven J. Braet '79 died on May 2, 2024. Known affectionately as Coach Braet to most, and G'Dawg to his grandchildren. His career began humbly in 1979 as an unpaid volunteer assistant and culminated when he served as the Assistant Head Coach and Defensive Line Coach of the Butler Grizzlies until his retirement in 2022.

Mildred Vina Cardin '64 died on January 2, 2024. She was a dedicated employee for over 25 years at Beach Aircraft (Raytheon Co-Hawker Beach craft) manufacturing aircraft. She loved dogs, enjoyed maintaining her lawn and garden and loved playing softball.

Rick Duane Cline '96 died on January 5, 2024. Rick was a long-time resident of Gypsum, an avid reader, and a western movie buff.

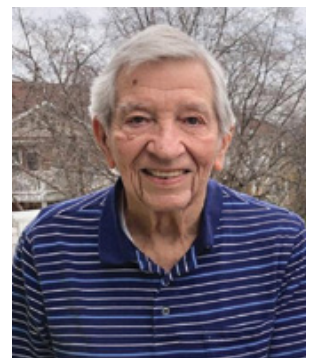
Lawrence Dale Crites died on July 5, 2024. Lawrence entered the Army in 1959 and trained at Fort Hood, Texas. He was a lifelong learner and looked forward to his nightly crossword puzzles.

Annie L. Cunningham '97 died on June 22, 2024. California is where she fell in love with the beach and late-night motorcycle rides with her husband on her Lady Colt 45 bike.

Carol J. Curtis '99 died on February 14, 2024. Carol enjoyed going to church, Bible study, Friday night dinner group, and spending time with family.

Linda Beth Estep '95 died on February 14, 2024. She enjoyed drawing, painting, being outdoors and spending time with her family and friends.

Rose Marie Estill '66 died on July 7, 2024. She was a Spanish teacher, Advanced Placement teacher, and counselor in the Wichita Public Schools from 1966-1997.



DONALD "DON" PAUL FOTH '55 died on March 27, 2024. Following his retirement from EMU, Don started his own tax business doing tax returns and accounting.

Sonia Joy Faust '65 died on November 15, 2023. She enjoyed fashion and fashion shows, cooking and culinary experiences and wine tasting, and had a green thumb and grew flowers, vegetables, and herbs.



HAROLD K. FRIESEN died on February 17, 2024. He taught at Friends University from 1975-2000. He was passionate about teaching, cared deeply for his students, and was a much-loved professor.

Glenn Gathers '72 died on January 9, 2024. He found happiness serving the good citizens of Saline County, ordering the Trucker Special and a vanilla milkshake at Bayard's, adventuring with his family, RV camping at Milford Lake, and attending live concerts.

Gary G. Greer '62 died on June 16, 2024. He worked for Dr. Jim Wilson as an agronomist at DeKalb.

Karen Halbert '88 died on February 5, 2024. She enjoyed time with her family, loved cooking, camping, crocheting, reading, sewing, and surging quilts, and NASCAR racing.

Stephen Lyle Harmon '54 died on May 2, 2024. He was a deeply spiritual man who enjoyed reading, fishing, napping, being with his family, and a lively spiritual debate.

Mae H. Harris '99 died on January 13, 2024. Mae dedicated over 35 years to the postal service, leaving an indelible mark of commitment and reliability.

Patsy Ann Harrison '52 died on May 13, 2024. She was a kindergarten teacher with the Wichita Public Schools for 30 years. Patsy was a talented cross-stitcher having won ribbons at the Kansas State Fair and was a longtime member of the Needle Arts of Wichita chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America.

Richard Hefley '70 died on June 30, 2024. He liked spending time with friends. He especially enjoyed Saturday morning breakfast and sharing the happenings of the past week.

Judith Ann Hendrix '98 died on June 27, 2024. She was a natural caregiver who always put others first, and her kindness and compassion were felt by everyone she met.

Jewell Henrichs '48 died in March 2024. As a member of Friends University Church, she taught the four-year-olds Sunday School class for 14 years.

Joyce Ann Holden '60 died on May 29, 2024. She served as a missionary in Kenya, where she developed Sunday School curriculum and served as adjunct faculty to Earlham Religious School and Queens Theological School for Christian education.

Richard D Holzrichter died on May 2, 2023. Richard loved woodworking and re-finishing furniture. He continued his love for teaching with Panhandle Eastern Pipeline as Director of Safety Protocol and an ethics teacher at Friends University.

Dr. Clarence Henry Horn died on July 8, 2024. Dr. Horn taught at Friends University from 2003 to 2010. He served as poll worker for Butler County Andover elections, volunteered at public schools, Congressional Awards Committee; Phi Delta Kappa, State and National Educational Organization; his local church; other community organizations and events too numerous to list.

Joan E. House '53 died on May 25, 2024. Joan joined the Navy and served the country in Corpus Christi, Texas. Following her retirement, Joan volunteered her time and taught immigrants English and American History to help them pass their national and civics tests to become United States' citizens.

Lila Rae Hulse '58 died on May 1, 2023. She was the first person from her family to go to college, graduating from Friends University with a bachelor's degree. She was a secretary and office administrator for every church she attended and for her late husband's company.

John Paul Hundley died on April 12, 2024. John Paul lived a long, rich life and after serving in the U.S. Navy, spent many years as a Church of Christ preacher preaching in positions around the United States and doing missionary work for 4 years in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Dean L. Johnson died on January 31, 2024. Johnson was a former faculty member of Friends University.

Joe Ann Jones '99 died on May 28, 2024. Joe Ann had a wonderful sense of humor, and sharp wit, a trait she passed on to family members.

Gloria Kazmaier '67 died on January 8, 2024. She played the piano for worship and sang duets, trios, quartets and had been in the traveling choir at Friends Bible College in Haviland, Kansas.

Gladys A. Kimball '52 died on December 10, 2023. She always had a heart for sharing the gospel and continued to do that by teaching Sunday School, organizing VBS, and playing the piano and organ for Derby Friends Church until she was no longer able to do so.

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Albert Lee Kimrey '05

died on December 11, 2023. While living in Wichita, Lee was an active member of the Masonic Lodge and Shriners, volunteering to be a clown until his health would not permit it. He enjoyed rebuilding cars and running jug lines for catfish.

Tracy Danielle King '04

died on February 16, 2024. Tracy loved life and lived it to the fullest, traveling, shopping, and spending time with her family. She was the "young" auntie to all her nieces and nephews. She was always ready to explore and hang out with them.

Heather L. LaRue '04

died on January 21, 2024. She had a passion for animals and opened her home to numerous cats, dogs, and horses. Heather enjoyed sewing, baking cookies and had mastered the art of baking delicious apple pies from scratch.

Mark Benjamin Linder '96

died on May 22, 2024. He was an avid collector of comic books, guitars, music posters, artwork, and memorabilia. Mark was also active in the Assembly of God Fellowship of North Texas, a participant in world missions, and in helping churches with business and banking.

Susan L. Livengood died on April 6, 2024. Her professional career was primarily spent serving in educational institutions, concluding at Friends University. During retirement she remained active traveling with family and volunteering for her church and the Greater Wichita YMCA.

Mary Lousie Mardock

'51 died on May 31, 2024. When she wasn't sewing, knitting, cooking, and baking homemade goodies for her family, she was busy being a Cub Scout Den Mother, Girl Scout Leader, directing the kitchen at the Methodist church and a Docent at the medical museum, which she oversaw for one year.

Kenneth L. Martin '56

died on December 29, 2023. Ken worked for Davis Manufacturing (now Case IH) for 33 years, rising to the position of Materials Manager. Ken enjoyed flying small planes, running, and photography.

Sara Pauline McDonald '66

died on January 30, 2024. She began her teaching career in Goddard, KS, primarily teaching middle level math and technology. She was elected to the Board of Education in 2007 and served on the board for 16 years. Sara's educational philosophy was to teach the students to work "smarter, not harder."

Bill Means '56 died in March 2024. Bill was a well-known and dedicated teacher and coach throughout Wichita and the surrounding areas and became a staple of the community. Coach Means, as he came to be known by many, was a pillar of the education and athletic system.

Donald Dean Mueller '57

died on January 28, 2024. He was the President of the Gideons International (Pulpit Rock Camp).

Mark A. O'Brien

died on February 5, 2024. He had a distinguished 24-year career in the Army, demonstrating a profound dedication to his country. Following his military service, Mark continued to impact lives in Wichita as an Adjunct Professor at Friends University, where he shared his extensive knowledge in computer networking and cybersecurity.

Jeanette Ann Parker

'12 died on January 18, 2024. Her mother says that Jeanette was born with a book in her hand, as she loved reading and learning. While she was working at Friends University, she decided to work on a second master's which she earned in Christian Ministry in 2012.

Eli Parnell '56

died on June 29, 2024. He helped establish the Derby Friends Church and was willing to help with disaster cleanups, church building; along with various community service projects.

**DIANE LYNN (OTT)**

PAUL '78 died on May 11, 2024. She completed her broker's license in real estate and was the proud owner of Suburbia Real Estate in Mulvane.

Larry Dean Paxson '09

died on July 9, 2024. He spent time with his brother, Phil, roughhousing, motorcycle riding, hunting, and spending time at the beauty shop with his mother.

Phyllis A. Pracht '93

died on February 23, 2024. A devoted mother and grandmother, she loved spending time with her family and especially watching her children and grandchildren's sporting events.

Phyllis A. Price '50

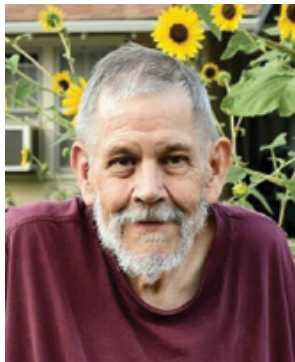
died on January 21, 2024. She was a retired schoolteacher in the Wichita and Derby districts. She would find time to relax, enjoying gardening, antiquing, and reading.

Dr. Harry Bruce Quantic

died in March 2024. At Friends University, Bruce helped develop the Master of Arts in Education program and he was on the review committee for the Wichita Grow Your Own Teacher program.

DAVID LEE QUICK '70

died on April 1, 2024. He taught as an Adjunct Professor of Art History at Wichita State University and Friends University. David's art was featured in many prominent shows and galleries around the country over his 55-year career.

**Dr. Richard L. Racette '61**

died on November 17, 2023. Richard took immense pride and satisfaction from his 35 years of service as a dentist.

Robert Rader '80 died on April 22, 2024. He spent his retirement golfing, attending grandchildren's activities, walking, and staying active at the Derby Recreation Center.

Nora E. Reaves '95 died on April 28, 2024. She received a bachelor of science in human resources from Friends University and pursued an aviation career with Raytheon.

Robin A. Riat '99 died on April 8, 2024. She worked as a librarian for universities, private companies, and government agencies. She also enjoyed reading, music, feeding the birds and squirrels, visiting friends and caring for cats.

KAREN GAYE

RIDDEL '77 died on December 11, 2023. Karen worked for many years as a committed special education teacher and adult education teacher for McAlester Public Schools.

**John L. Ricketts '73**

died on June 13, 2024. At Friends University, he was a member of Singing Quakers where he met the love of his life, Coletta Brown. For 56 years they celebrated the wins together and held each other's hands during the losses.

MAURICE A. ROBERTS '58 died on May 2, 2024. He helped lead the Lay Witness Missions and Friends Marriage Encounters for several years, traveling across the country in this ministry and making lifetime friends.

**Beverly Faye Rogers '00**

died on January 13, 2024. It would always be the stocking and management of the Bar M and X7 Cattle Ranches in both Kansas and Missouri with her father that she was most passionate about.

Michael C. Rowe '61 died on April 27, 2024. He helped his son Mark start Hospice Care of Kansas, which became Rivercross Healthcare, and a consultant to his son Grant with Valor Hospice and Palliative Care in Tucson.

Janet Kaye Sanders '02

died on May 26, 2024. She began her career with Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in 1972, where she worked in telecommunications technology before being promoted to Network Maintenance Manager in 1998 in Moberly, MO.

Kurt Schneweis '19 died on February 15, 2024. He was an amazing and doting "father" to his cat, Toby, and super loving a playful "dad" with his dog, Gracie.

Troy D. Spencer died on May 18, 2024. He worked for St. Joseph Hospital and Lubbers Cars.

Carol Ann Stamm '00 died on June 16, 2024. Carol enjoyed crocheting, cross stitch, playing the violin and spending time with her family and friends.

Michelle JoAnn Stewart '90 died on February 4, 2024. Michelle's private moments were cherished, as she enjoyed watching her DVD movies and shared weekly dinners with close friends.

**MAX L. SMITH '67**

died on May 16, 2024. He worked as a tax auditor for the Kansas Department of Revenue for over 40 years, retiring in 1998.

Warren C. Townsend '64

died on March 6, 2024. While teaching music and directing church choirs and community groups, he directed many major performances.

Alice Tritsch died on January 10, 2024. She was employed as an administrative assistant to the president of Friends University for many years.

Isidore A. Udoudoh '79 died on July 22, 2024. His commitment to nurturing young minds and fostering a love for learning was evident in everything he did.

Rheva A. Victor '90 passed away on November 22, 2023. She was a trailblazing female executive, loved to travel the world with her husband, and was committed to serving in her local community.

Kathryn A. Wahwasuck '00 died on June 15, 2024. She was an applications development supervisor for the State of Kansas for 20 years, retiring in 2016, and a member of the Topeka Bible Church.

Joyce Warren '91 died on May 19, 2024. She worked at Gulf Insurance as an underwriter for 30 years until she retired in 2013.

Catherine Raye Webster '68 died on December 11, 2023. Catherine taught middle school in South Carolina for three years and after that enjoyed substitute teaching and tutoring. Catherine had a love of history, music, needlepoint and reading.

Galen Eugene Womack '90 died on March 27, 2024. After graduation, he continued performing with the Singing Quakers Alumni Choir and Friends Alumni Jazz Band.

Patrick Wright '04 died on December 8, 2023. Patrick joined the Navy and served from 1991-1995 as petty officer third class and was stationed on the USS George Washington, CVN-73.

Shirley D. Yonce '60 died on January 3, 2024. During her early years, she taught Art, P.E. and ballroom dancing. In her free time, she was an avid Wichita Wings soccer fan, enjoyed bowling, drawing, painting and craft projects.

Class Notes

1940s

Don Martinson '43 was covered by the Wichita Eagle for his family's legacy with Friends University and the city of Wichita.

1960s

George Potts '61, or Energy Green Grandpa, was covered by Kansas Living for his YouTube channel about energy tips.

1970s

Steve Campbell '73 published *He Went a Little Farther*, a collection of stories about God's reach toward all people. His book won the Literary Global Independent Author Award.

ROGER '73 and **SUSAN '75 BROWN** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this past May. The Browns were married on May 24, 1974, and have three children and nine grandchildren.



DR. DAVID SHARLOW '91 was named the Dean for Visual, Performing Arts at Emporia State.

1980s

James S. Eicher '83 published *Warrior IV Life Fitness (WIVLF): An Introduction*, which spans over three volumes and covers serving as the magnum opus of Eicher's *Warrior IV Life Fitness (or WIVLF) Program*. Delving into history and Holy Scripture, this big book lays a Christ-centric foundation for reads, the "Warrior IV Life," in offering a truly integrated and authentically holistic heart, mind, body, and spirit approach to fitness, health, and wellness.

1990s

Janay J. Blome '91 retired from education on July 1, 2024.

David Chiles '94 celebrated 35 years of service in the Salvation Army in Wichita.

Amanda Kingrey '97 joined Maize USD 266 as Associate Superintendent, Teaching & Learning 7-12. She will develop administrators, teachers and staff members for instructional programs and assessments and will lead in areas including professional development, curriculum, and secondary education.

2000s

Kim Austin '00 was hired as Power Delivery Market Leader for Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT). Most recently, she was the Environmental Services Manager, US & Canada Linear Team and Complex Projects, for NextEra Energy, Inc., primarily supporting their transmission business line.

Evert Leroy Hastie '01

currently attends Butler Community College and is majoring in Theatre Performance. Hastie plans to attend WSU in the fall of 2026 and double major in Criminal Justice and Music Theatre.

**Matthew Glen Skillen**

'06 was promoted to Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer at McPherson College.

Amber Giron '07 joined Optum Kansas City as senior account manager, taking on the vital role of managing and coordinating member care plans and priorities.

Jessica C. Gregory

'07 received her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision in 2022 and has since worked at WSU as an Assistant Professor for the counseling department.

Dr. Courtney Long '08

joined Wichita State University as an Assistant Professor of Music Theory.

**CINDY JEAN**

HOHL '13 was a guest speaker on Ideastream Public Media, where she discussed librarians that protect rights to read and view against censorship.

CHEYANNE REED-

WARRINER '04 was appointed as the new assistant principal for Reidland Middle School, where she served as a math teacher since July 2016.

Ryan Hansen '05 and Diana C. Suarez '07

welcomed their third son Daniel Alexander Hansen to the world in June 2024.

Romy "Roth" Martin

'06 was recognized for inclusion in Marquis Who's Who. Driven to support the professional growth of others, Ms. Martin has distinguished herself as the owner of Find Your Strengths Coaching and Consulting LLC, a role in which she has excelled since 2023.

**Laura Sanders '09**

was named Assistant City Manager of Human Resources for the City of Bartlesville.

Kyle Wheatley '09

has been appointed Executive Director of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas for The American Legion Department of Kansas Boys State Committee.

2010s

Dr. Jessica Thomas '11

published *Choosing Light: Transforming Grief through the Practice of Mindful Photography and Self-Reflection through Rowman & Littlefield Publications*.

Ellen C. Mitchell '11

opened Blue Heron Therapy in July 2024.

Loren Houlberg '15

had her book *Pastoral Grit: Key Practices for Resiliency in Ministry* discussed on the YouTube podcast *Ministry Without Hating It*.

ALEX LAFLAND '08

joined Edward Jones as a financial advisor in Russell, KS.

AUDREY LAFLAND '10

is the 5th grade math teacher at Bickerdyke Elementary in Russell, KS.

**EMILY P. FREEMAN**

'19 was a guest on YouTube podcast *Unhurried Living*, where she discussed navigating life's crossroads through the perspective of her book *The Next Right Thing: A Simple, Soulful Practice for Making Life Decisions*.

2020s

Felicia Batiste '20 was nominated for the 40 Under 40 Honoree Award for the *Wichita Business Journal*.

Byron McSwain '21 opened his own coffee shop "Greater Grounds Coffee & Co" in July.

CALLYAN LACIO '22

received the Graduate Research Fellowships (GRFP) from the National Science Foundation. Lacio is conducting acoustic research that monitors and studies animals' calls to estimate their population sizes and look at changes in breeding timing and behaviors.

Faculty/Staff/ Board Notes

Trevor Biedron received the 2024 KCAC Assistant Track and Field Coach of the Year honors.

Coach Henry Brun was named 2024 KCAC Men's Indoor Track & Field Head Coach of the Year.

Sean Cash received the Teaching Excellence award for Region 5 in the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). He was also elected to chair Region 5 and the CEAC Board Chair for Business Professionals of America (BPA).

Dr. Rebecca Culver-Turner published a chapter, "Informed Consent" in the *American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Systemic Ethics* textbook in 2024.



Roger Danley retired after 25 years of service for Friends University.

Wanda Ewertz retired after 36 years of service for Friends University.

Dustin Galyon earned his second KCAC Coach of the Year award for the 2024 golf season.

Dr. Stan Harstine presented his current research on 1 John at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Along with Dr. Stan Harstine, **Dr. Douglas Estes** recorded thirteen episodes of their podcast, "Conversations in the Gospel of John" where they engaged with their colleagues around the world who study the Fourth Gospel and are members of faith communities.

Vashti Jones retired after 17 years of service for Friends University.

Sue Kessler retired after 19 years of service for Friends University.

Dr. Christian Kettler's six books were covered in a review essay by Dr. Jerome Van Kuiken, a professor of Christian Thought at Oklahoma Wesleyan University, which was then published as *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, Vol. 11, 2023.

Dr. Shawn Knopp was the keynote speaker for the Kansas Bandmasters Association New Band Director Bootcamp held in July. His keynote speech was titled "A Teacher's Magic".

Dr. Pamela Martin was voted President Elect of the Kansas Association of Private Colleges of Teachers of Education. She will serve a two-year term in this role followed by two years as the organization's president.

Rev. Dr. Wendy Mohler-Seib was a guest speaker on the *PlainSpoken* YouTube podcast, where she discussed the challenges involved in doing discipleship correctly, especially concerning young folks in the church.

Dr. Rob Ramseyer and **Dustin Galyon** started the *Impactful Coaching Project* early last spring, which includes two books and a podcast called "Beyond Coaching."

Eric Sanford is slated to be the President-Elect of KACRAO for the 2024-2025 Executive Council. If elected at the annual conference, he will serve as president the following year.

Denise Staley, Linda Stratton, and **Eric Sanford** attended the annual Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers conference in Topeka, KS.

Kammie Wendler retired after 23 years of service for Friends University.

BLAISE WEBSTER

presented at the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies Symposium in late August. His discussion was titled "It Only Takes One Word: The Necessity of Strict Lexicography in the Study of Biblical Literature."



DR. BRENT YODER was selected as one of 30 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Educators for the Association for Institutional Research. Yoder also co-presented "Tactics to Optimize a Network: Innovative Examples of Collaboration" at the Acadeum Midwest Community Summit this past April.



FriendsTalks
Theology. Community. Progress.

FriendsTalks Features Gary Thomas

The FriendsTalks lecture series hosted author and teaching pastor Gary Thomas, who presented his book *Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God*. FriendsTalks are held twice a year with free admission and are open to the public. For additional information, visit friends.edu/talks.

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