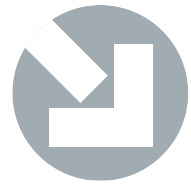


# HARDING



SPRING 2022

NAVIGATING  
NEW YORK



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#### INTRODUCING OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

Dr. Mike Williams met and addressed the student body in chapel Nov. 16, 2021. Excerpts from his speech serve as this magazine's introduction of him to you.

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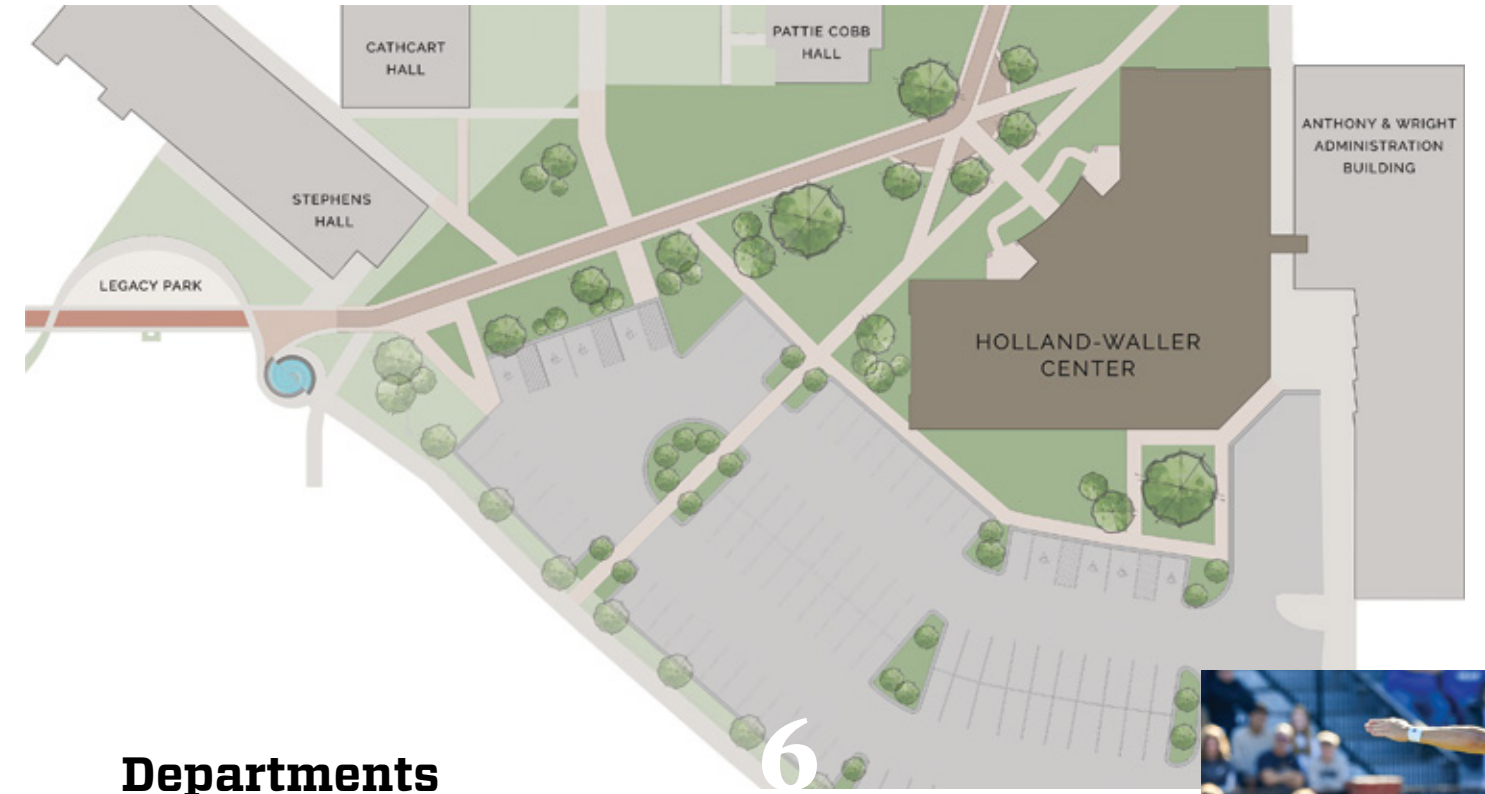
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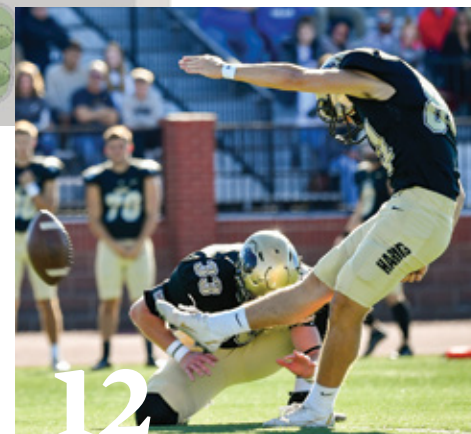
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ILLUSTRATION BY RENATE HOLZNER

OPPOSITE PAGE: PHOTO COURTESY OF EL FUTURO. THIS PAGE: RENDERING BY SCM ARCHITECTS, PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

# Certainty in changing times

By DAVID B. BURKS, *president*

I WANT TO THANK OUR BOARD OF trustees for extending to me the opportunity to work with Harding once again during this period of transition. I am grateful to our faculty, staff, students and alumni for the support shown to me during this extraordinary time of change for our beloved University.

COVID-19 has been our constant companion for the past two years and has influenced literally everything we do. We are grateful for the good health of our students and faculty and thankful for the fact that we have been able to be fully open this school year with normal activities for our students, including returning the annual new year's trip to New York City (page 18). God has been faithful.

During this time, we have emphasized our need to grow our enrollment so that more people can be transformed by the message of Christ. We also have initiated new programs to meet the needs of current and future students. New construction projects are underway (page 6) which are needed for our changing programs.

The one constant in this time of unprecedented change is our commitment to our unchanging purpose. We believe in the integration of faith, learning and living, and we will always strive to honor God in everything we do.



Now we turn our attention to the coming of Dr. Mike Williams on June 1 as the sixth president of Harding (page 14). I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Williams in both recruitment and advancement during the 26 years I was president. He loves God, is a man of great faith, and loves Harding. I very much look forward to his leadership in the years to come. I know you join me in prayer for Dr. Williams as he assumes this important role at Harding. 🙏

*David B. Burks*

## HARDING

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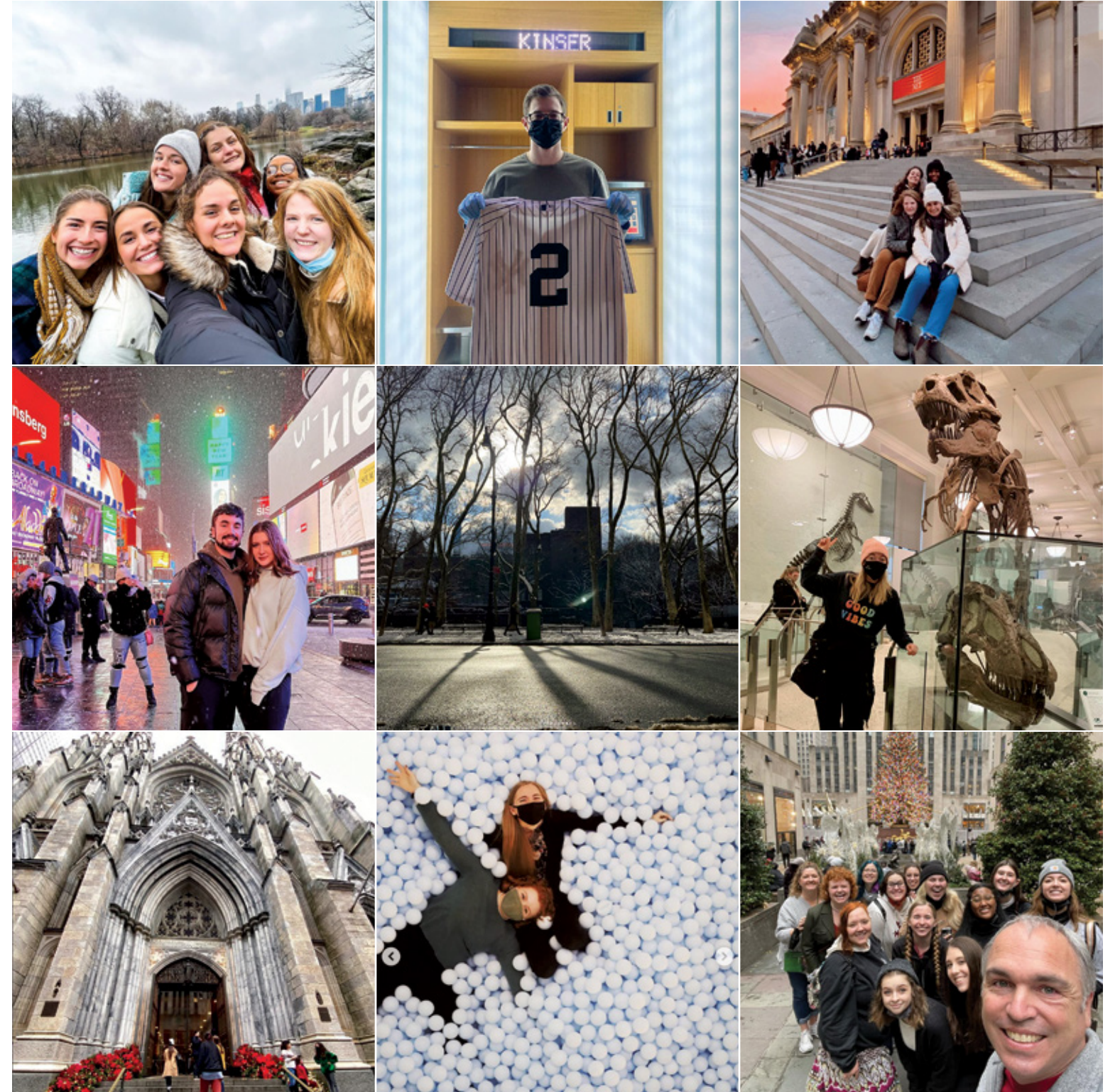
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PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

# 'New York, New York'

INSTAGRAM SELECTIONS FROM THE NEW YEAR'S TRIP 📷



TOP ROW: @meganbsledge, @britton\_kinser12, @emilystinnett MIDDLE ROW: @\_elisemarie\_., @melerioryork15, @karliifisher BOTTOM ROW: @halliesarah, @lydialeila3, @bjones9



Sleet and snow cover the quadrangle Feb. 4, forcing the campus to close for two days. Unlike the back-to-back February snow storms of 2021, the thaw began that weekend, and campus reopened on Monday.  
PHOTO BY NOAH DARNELL



# Around Campus

For the very latest campus news, visit [harding.edu/news](https://harding.edu/news).



## Construction creates campus connections

**T**HE YEAR 2022 BRINGS several new building projects to campus. The planned Holland-Waller Center will replace the Ganus Building, which was built in 1951 in honor of then Chairman of the Board C.L. Ganus Sr. At the time, it was a student center and bookstore, but it now houses the departments of history & political science and foreign languages & international studies. Both departments will continue to be housed in the new facility along with the ROTC program, Office of International Student Services, Walton Scholars program, Sino-American Studies Institute and English as a Second Language program. To continue honoring the Ganus family, Harding will create the C.L. Ganus Sr. Department of History and Political Science. The interior of the Holland-Waller Center will feature displays in recognition of the contributions made by women to the University. “Sue Locke Holland and Joella Sample Yurcho Waller (the mothers of Suzanne and Rodney

Waller) are examples of the thousands of mothers and grandmothers who have prayed and sacrificed to send their children to Harding,” said Dr. Bryan Burks, vice president of university advancement. The building will be located near the women’s residence halls, and a second-floor glass student lounge will provide a view of the front lawn to the north and a view of the First Ladies Garden to the west. With a front entrance situated at a 45-degree angle and an extended brick sidewalk complete with cohesive landscaping, the building will connect the center of campus with Legacy Park. In addition to the \$4 million contributed by the Waller family, the University has received a challenge grant from the Mabee Foundation of \$2 million and has one year in which to complete the fundraising. The Ganus building will be razed in June with construction on the new building to begin in August. The facility is expected to be completed and open for use in fall 2023. Also in summer 2022, upgrades are planned for Benson Auditorium. The original heating

and air conditioning units will be replaced to assist in maintaining air quality and temperature. Power systems in the stage area will be upgraded to ensure safety during productions. There will be new paint and carpet, and the current restrooms will be combined, providing double the space for the new women’s restroom. A new men’s restroom will be added on the east side of the lobby, replacing current office space. In spring 2022, a new track will be constructed near the intramural fields on Beebe Capps Expressway. Following the spring track season, the existing track will be removed, and renovations to the football field will begin. These renovations include replacing the eight-year-old turf as well as moving the field closer to the home stands to provide an enhanced experience for Bison fans. The visitor stands also will be moved closer to the field. The next phase of this project includes building a new concession stand with restrooms and is anticipated to begin in spring 2023.

RENDERING BY SCM ARCHITECTS

## Trustees Neely, Risinger fondly remembered

**FOLLOWING RECENT LOSSES** of two members of the board of trustees, colleagues and friends reflected on their leadership and service to the University.

Lundy Neely ('71), 73, died Dec. 21, 2021. A native of Vandalia, Ohio, he founded Crown Solutions, a water management company, in his hometown in 1984. He was a longtime member and elder at Cassel Hills Church of Christ. He served the board for 13 years as vice-chairman of the Advancement Committee and a member of Alumni & Parent Relations, Finance & Investment and Student Life committees.

Neely’s relationship with the University led to deep friendship with many. When asked to reflect on the character of a dear brother, these leaders saw a man of faith, vision and service.

“Lundy and I were dear friends for 55 years. Simply put, he was one of the finest men I have ever known. He had an intense dedication to his faith and a serious commitment to serving others. His wonderful wife, seven children and 22 grandchildren are a testament to the Christian man that he was. In his business life, he was a complete visionary and was able to see opportunities when no one else could. Lundy had an uncommon humility. He had a deep love for Harding and was very generous to the University and its students,” said Dr. Jim Carr, retired executive vice president.

“Lundy’s passing was such a shock to us all on the board of trustees. He was a beloved member, serving since May 2008 on multiple committees, and was always intimately engaged. He was eternally optimistic, a visionary who loved Jesus Christ, his church, his family and Harding University. His last function as a board member was reflected in his concern over Ohio Valley University closing and how we could help those students continue their Christian education. He was a model board member

and will be sorely missed,” said Dr. Robert Walker, chairman of the board.

Neely is survived by his wife of 51 years, Elizabeth “Beth” Geer ('70); seven children, Brett ('96), Amy Stevens ('98), Rob ('99), Jon ('02), Matt ('02), Ben ('05) and Becky Woodward ('06); two siblings, Barbara Thomas ('67) and Jeff ('77); and 22 grandchildren.

Harry B. Risinger Jr. ('68), 75, of Collierville, Tennessee, died Jan. 31, 2022. He was a member of the board of trustees from 1985-2017, including one term as chairman. Growing up in Searcy, he attended both Harding Academy and Harding College, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in accounting. He earned an MBA from Memphis State University in 1974 and became a certified public accountant.

Enlisting in the Army after graduation, he served three years during the Vietnam War. Professionally, he was a successful leader in many roles at W.R. Grace and Co. and Seminole Fertilizer Corp. He then worked 16 years as a financial advisor, retiring as first vice president of Morgan Stanley’s Memphis branch.

Risinger also served as an elder at Millington Church of Christ for 25 years and as a member of the boards of Agape Child and Family Services, Truth for Today World Mission School, and Christian Chronicle.

President David Burks reflected on his relationship with Risinger. “I loved working with Harry Risinger Jr. as a member of the board of trustees. He served us in a beautiful fashion for 32 years, four of those years as chairman. Harry loved Harding and was a true leader. He raised very tough questions in board meetings and, as a consequence, made us better. We will miss his wonderful example.”

Risinger is survived by his wife of 51 years, Janice “Jan” Robinson ('69); two sons, Matt ('94) and Adam ('95); two sisters, Linda Stanley ('65) and Amanda Jones ('83); and four grandchildren.



company, in his hometown in 1984. He was a longtime member and elder at Cassel Hills Church of Christ. He served the board for 13 years as vice-chairman of the Advancement



1985-2017, including one term as chairman. Growing up in Searcy, he attended both Harding Academy and Harding College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in

## Equipping educators for success

**THE CANNON-CLARY COLLEGE** of Education is partnering with Forward Arkansas to help equip educators in Arkansas’ kindergarten through 12th-grade classrooms to transform learning for every student.

The University was one of eight higher education institutions in the state selected to receive a \$100,000 planning grant as part of the Forward Arkansas’ Educator Preparation Program Design Collaborative. Selections were made during the fall semester after a competitive statewide process that looked for institutions with a strong commitment to increasing teacher diversity and creating a legacy of fundamental transformation.

“We see the Forward Arkansas Design Collaborative as a support system to transform us from our vision to a new reality for preparing and supporting highly qualified teachers in every classroom in Arkansas schools,” said Dr. Donny Lee, dean of the college. “This collaborative provides the ‘critical friend’ to walk alongside us as we work together to consider how and what to meaningfully change to move forward to make our vision a reality. We recognize we need help to do this, and this collaboration provides what we believe to be just the right help. The initial year-long planning phase is the perfect opportunity for us to unpack data, look ‘under the hood’ to see what is really going on, consider options to improve what we do and how we do it, and to move beyond where we are right now.”

In addition to the grant, the University will receive design and technical assistance from Forward Arkansas and its partners to develop transformation plans that are in line with the Arkansas Department of Education standards for educator preparation. In the future the University will have the opportunity to pursue additional multi-year funding to help implement their plans.

“As we have navigated the processes in this grant since last fall, we are learning more about ourselves, strengthening partnerships with local school districts and building a more robust model of teacher preparation that will prepare our students to make a real difference in the lives of those they teach in the coming years,” said Lee. “We have the opportunity to change the lives of children and their families, and this grant has provided even more capacity to do this.”



# SPOTLIGHT



**BRIDGET SMITH** is director of Disability Services & Educational Access for the University. After graduating with a bachelor's in special education, Smith began working at Sunshine School in Searcy where she served elementary children with severe intellectual developmental disabilities for five years. She decided to spend the next six at home raising her own children and then returned to Sunshine School in 2012, this time working with adults. In 2019, she returned to Harding with a desire to give back to the University and to help give students confidence and a pathway to a rewarding collegiate experience.

### WHAT ARE YOUR FONDEST EXPERIENCES AS A STUDENT AT HARDING?

I loved my Harding experience. I truly had some of the best years of my life here. I believe in my heart that I could not have had a better collegiate experience anywhere else. Growing up in Columbia, Tennessee, I didn't even know about Harding until I was a junior in high school. Dr. John Simmons and his wife, Beverly, are good friends of our family, and we went to church with them. They both attended Harding, and their daughter was planning on going, so they wanted me to visit. First of all, I wondered, 'Where is Searcy?' As we got closer, I was saying to myself, 'Where are we going?' along that flat drive on Highway 64. When I got here, I had the absolute best time that weekend. We got to stay in the dorms, and when I went back home, I told my parents, 'This is where I am going.' One of my favorite memories was living in the dorm with my friends. There were two years when 20 or more of my friends were living in the same hallway. It boggles my mind to think how you can meet so many great people in one place and still have such a close connection. Even though I don't keep in touch with all of them on a regular basis, I feel as though I could pick up the phone and reconnect very easily.

### WHAT TYPE OF ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES DOES YOUR OFFICE PROVIDE?

Students with documented learning, physical or psychological disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations — that can mean classroom or testing accommodations. If a student has a chronic illness that poses a barrier to class attendance, we will work it out so they can still continue in that course as long as it does not alter the fundamental nature of the course or learning objectives. We also are able to help students with accommodations when faced with temporary medical needs. Each student has specific strengths and weaknesses, but we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made.' I want our office to be a place where students feel at ease and encouraged. I want them to feel empowered and to realize that they have what it takes to meet their full potential. Our mission is to serve these students and ensure they have equitable access to academics and campus life at Harding.

### WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR JOB?

I always have an initial visit with students, and many times they are hesitant about receiving any type of accommodations. Then they come back later and tell me that how we helped them made all the difference in the world, and the service was a game changer. That is a win. Many students will say they were scared at first but ended up so thankful. Students tell us how comfortable my administrative assistant, Cindi Ingram ('07), and I make them feel. I think that is because the climate we have created together is welcoming and supportive. That is exactly what we are going for. We don't want anyone to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable in our office. It is about educational access. We have to talk about their disabilities, but then we're moving on to what accommodations are reasonable for them and how we can remove barriers and level the playing field. The cherry on top is when students tell us they were so glad they came into our office. I'm very humbled to be able to do what I do. I never dreamed I'd get to be at Harding serving in this role. 🧠

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



# NEWSMAKERS

### AMERICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

**Marnie Walker** was named conference center director and event specialist in November 2021. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the math department. In October 2021, 174 students were inducted into the American Studies Institute.

### COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Dr. **Dutch Hoggatt**, professor of communication, was awarded "Best of Show" for his audio radio documentary at the Broadcast Education Association faculty audio competition in October 2021. The title of his documentary was "Artist Spotlight – Louis Armstrong."

The 2021 *Petit Jean* yearbook, led by Editor-in-Chief **Holly Tubbs** ('21), has been named a Pacemaker finalist by the Associated College Press. As a finalist, the yearbook is recognized as one of the top seven yearbooks in the country.

### FINANCE

**Lynette Brooker** was promoted to director of payroll.

**Anissa Falconer** is now tax and accounting manager. She was previously senior accountant.

**Sharyl Holst** joined the team in November 2021 as purchasing coordinator. She has been with the University since 2012, working in Cannon-Clary College of Education and Carr College of Nursing.

**Tammy Smith**, who was the finance administrative assistant for 17 years, was promoted to staff accountant.

**Craig Wade** is now general ledger accountant after serving 16 years as an accounting clerk.

### HONORS COLLEGE

Dr. **Jim Miller**, associate professor of communication, was appointed assistant dean of the Honors College Jan. 1, 2022.

### ROTC

**Brian Tims**, senior international business major, was the first University cadet to be nominated and selected to attend the U.S. Army Cadet Command George C. Marshall Awards and Leadership Seminar at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in February.

### SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dr. **Dave Bland**, professor emeritus of homiletics, was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in fall 2021 from the Academy of Homiletics. He is the first from churches of Christ.

# MY VIEW

TIFFANY BYERS

## Gaining momentum from our past

*Director of Diversity Services Tiffany Byers shares her perspective on the importance of learning about the journey when dealing with diversity.*

**ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO**, I began a journey of researching my family history. I lost my grandmother and father in 2004 and 2005, respectively, and the loss renewed a strong desire to learn about my family. Ancestry search engines offered the opportunity to research the many stories I had heard as a child, but I did not know where to begin. Someone suggested beginning with the United States census. I was surprised and shocked to find I could only trace my lineage to 1870. For anything before then, I had to look to a slave schedule. I was deeply saddened because these records confirmed that my ancestors were considered property, not people. However, after years of persistence and detective work, I now have binders of research to share with my family.

Reflecting on my journey to find more of myself, I reminisced on my years at Harding and how I have witnessed growth in the approach to diversity and improvement in race relations. I witnessed African American alumni and current staff, faculty and students share personal experiences on campus and how they see the future for our University. I watched in awe as the University honored many of our African American firsts during Homecoming 2021. I heard the joy and watched the tears of the honorees' families as they expressed such gratitude for Harding remembering and committing to never forget the pathfinders who made a Christian education open to all.

I also have had the honor of embracing my fellow co-workers as they struggle to understand and yearn to support faculty, staff and

students of color. It has been with joy that I have worked with faculty who saw a need to incorporate diversity in their orientations for incoming students. As Harding continues to gain momentum in the quest to form a more equitable culture, I am encouraged to work daily to make this a reality.

We all have a journey to learn more about ourselves through our family histories. I love that the University is committed to creating a culture where we acknowledge and honor the successes and failures of our past in an effort to redefine our future, and I am confident that one day soon we will have binders of stories to share with our Harding family. 🧠



PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



### Living the dream

FOR ALMOST 10 YEARS, sophomore Jacob Weatherford has wanted to jump rope in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. This year, that dream finally came true.

Weatherford started jumping rope as a second grader in a local club at his elementary school.

After 14 years of jumping — 11 of those competitively — it's taken him across the globe and introduced him to people he now considers lifelong friends.

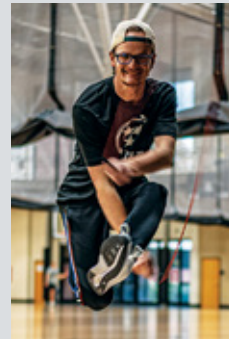
"I've had the opportunity to compete all over the country in places like Florida, California, North Carolina and Ohio," said Weatherford. "I also have had the opportunity to compete across the world in Norway, and I was supposed to compete in Canada before the pandemic."

In addition to competitions, Weatherford also has performed at halftime shows and in parades, festivals, music videos and TV shows.

"It has made me who I am today through the skills and life skills I've learned," said Weatherford. "I'm more confident and more social because of it. I don't know where I would be without jump rope."

Weatherford practices and competes as part of a team, Hot Shots TN, based in Franklin, Tennessee. In a normal week, when all his teammates are home, he says they practice three to four times for two or three hours each practice. However, while he's at college, he tries to jump at least once a week in Ganus Activities Complex.

This year, Weatherford and his team participated in multiple com-



petitions in order to qualify for Team USA. Weatherford qualified to represent the USA at the World Championship in 11 events.

In order to be selected for the Macy's Parade, Weatherford was required to submit an application. Fortunately, he was selected out of 200 applicants to be on a team of 100 and flew to Ohio for Labor Day weekend to practice. Over the course of the weekend they were taught two routines: one for the parade route and one for Herald Square.

"We literally jumped the entire weekend, all day Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday," said Weatherford. "We were building up our stamina to see if we could actually do it and also learning the routines super well so that we wouldn't forget them. It was the most exhausted I've ever been at a jump rope event."

The week of Thanksgiving the team arrived a few days early to practice and eagerly anticipated Thursday morning. After performing the parade routine over the three-mile route, they finished with the Herald Square performance. Although it was exhausting, Weatherford said it was so worth it.

"It was one of the best experiences of my life. Like I said earlier, I wanted to do it 10 years ago, and ever since then I've waited for my opportunity. Words cannot express what I was feeling, and to do it with people I love and cherish in my jump rope friends, it means the world to me."

### Passionate for puppets

WHEN SOPHOMORE MEGAN DRAUSE started making puppets in high school, she never could have imagined where this school-project-turned-hobby would lead. She was accidentally enrolled in a costume and makeup class for theatre credit, and creating a puppet was the final exam. During the process, she was surprised to discover how much joy it could bring. Having found her passion, she has created 12 puppets, including Maggie who now lives in the elementary library at Arkansas School for the Deaf. Maggie is a special puppet with a full hand that can communicate in American Sign Language.

"It was such a simple adjustment [to the pattern] that I couldn't believe no one had ever thought to just add another finger," said Drause. By doing so, she has given children who are deaf an experience they have never had before.

Drause attended North Little Rock (Arkansas) High School and was active in theatre productions, fostering her love for puppets and forming a bond with her theatre teacher, Shelle House, who now builds puppets professionally. "When I was in high school, it was just a weird hobby, but now I'm learning that this is something people enjoy, that makes them happy, and it can actually be useful."

Drause chose American Sign Language for her foreign language credit requirement to be a high school honor graduate and has contin-



ued ASL courses at Harding. Her mom's best friend works at Arkansas School for the Deaf, a personal connection that led to a greater interest in the language and the community. Through research projects exploring student support needs, especially at the early-childhood level, she had the idea to create a puppet for students who are deaf, one that they can understand and befriend.

"Watching the kids interact with Maggie and light up when they realized, 'This creature is speaking to me, in my language!' — it was really special to get to see."

There has been such an overwhelming response from people who hear about Maggie that Drause is now considering turning her hobby into a business. As a business management major, she is learning accounting and marketing skills that will benefit her in starting a company.

"Every [puppet] I have created was hand sewn and made from scratch. Eventually I began calling it something, and that was its name. I think of each one as having its own personality, and no two are alike. Mass producing them could mean they lose that." To ensure that puppets in her future line maintain their uniqueness, Drause plans to create and copyright her own pattern.

She also works in the costume shop for University theatre productions and created the narwhal used in "Elf The Musical" during Homecoming 2021.

TOP PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY, BOTTOM PHOTO BY MADISON METZGER



## SEEN on SOCIAL MEDIA

NCAA champion, Heisman Trophy winner, ESPN Sports commentator and author Tim Tebow was on campus Jan. 18 as part of the American Studies Institute Distinguished Lecture Series (more coverage on back cover).



**Carol A. Boyd**  
Excellent role model. Harding ... you outdid yourself!!!!



**Kendra Bradshaw** @BradshawKendra  
Thank you for sharing your words of faith, hope and love at @HardingU tonight! What a blessing and inspiration to do what God calls us to do now ... not next year, next month or next week. Now.



**Lisa Smithson Lammons**  
Tim is the real deal. My daughter went to the high school where he played football, so we've been following his career for a long time. He is the most genuinely kind human being you'll ever meet. Love love love Timmy Tebow!



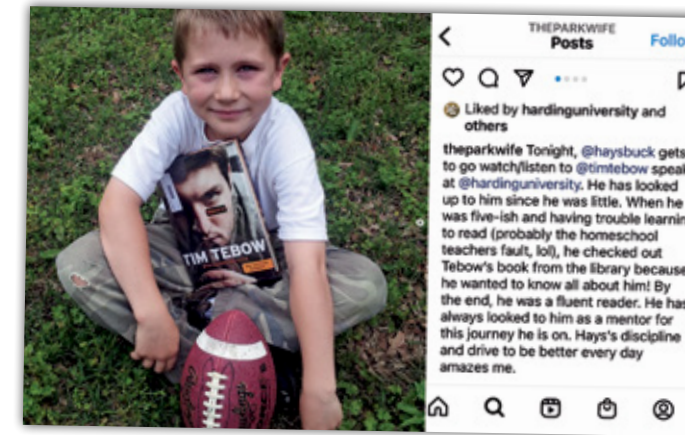
**April McLean Milby** april.milby  
Thank you HU for bringing such an incredible force of inspiration to your students.



**Marcie Miller** marcie33miller  
I left better than I came! Thanks, @timtebow!



**Jessica Wells** jessica2694  
Love God, love people. I love Tim Tebow's heart for others, incredibly motivating. Bring faith, hope and love to those needing a brighter day in their darkest hour of need.



### EVENTS

APRIL 14-16

#### Spring Sing Weekend

Join guests returning to campus to see hundreds of students perform in Spring Sing 2022, "Moments," reflecting on and celebrating the pivotal moments in their lives. Social club members and their friends will compete for cash donations to their chosen charities. [harding.edu/springsing](http://harding.edu/springsing)

MAY 7

#### Spring Commencement

Turning their tassels, students from the University's 10 colleges will celebrate the completion of bachelor's, master's, doctoral and specialist degrees as faculty, family and friends gather to honor these milestone accomplishments. [harding.edu/graduation](http://harding.edu/graduation)

JUNE 9-10, JULY 14-15, AUGUST 17-18

#### Bison Bound

Incoming freshmen and transfer students and their parents are welcomed for a two-day orientation as they prepare for their first semester. This information-packed event provides an opportunity to build a class schedule, select meal plans, parking passes and chapel seats, explore campus and make new friends. [harding.edu/bisonbound](http://harding.edu/bisonbound)

JUNE 18-23, 25-30

#### Uplift

Hundreds of high school students from across the country will gather on campus with their youth ministers and sponsors for a week-long summer camp. Each day, they will worship and study together as well as enjoy recreational activities and entertainment.

Spark provides a similar experience to Uplift for fourth-sixth graders June 12-15. [upliftonline.com](http://upliftonline.com)

JUNE 24-JULY 8, JULY 1-15, 8-22, 15-29

#### Honors Symposium

High school juniors from all over the world are challenged spiritually and academically through daily engagement with our finest professors and mentoring by top University student counselors. They explore how each of us fits into the world as Christians through stimulating academic classes and fun activities designed to develop group bonding. Those who complete the program are awarded three college credit hours. [harding.edu/symposium](http://harding.edu/symposium)

For a complete list of events, visit [harding.edu/calendar](http://harding.edu/calendar)

## BY THE NUMBERS

### HOLIDAY LIGHTS

# 5

Weeks to prepare the display

# 75

Women for Harding and Greenskeeper Garden Club volunteers who refresh the wreaths

# 10+

Members of the physical resources department who hang the lights

# 500,000

Total LED lights

# 320

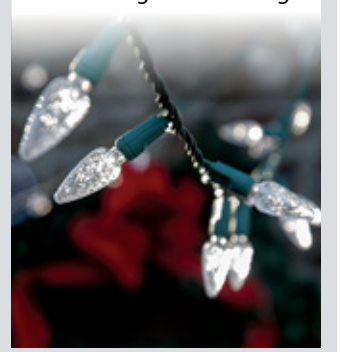
Wreaths

# 245

Hours lights are on during the holiday season

# 15

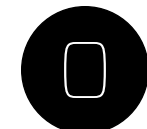
Years of lights at Harding





## Top 10 in the nation

By SCOTT GOODE, assistant athletic director for sports information



**OUTRIGHT WINNER** of the Great American Conference, the Bison football team made its fifth-straight NCAA Division II playoff appearance in 2021, one of only three teams in Division II to qualify for the last five tournaments. The Bisons finished with an 11-2 record, the team's eighth season in the last nine with nine or more wins and its fourth in the last five seasons with 10 or more wins.

The defense recorded its seventh opening-night shutout since Harding restarted the football program in 1959, defeating East Central 28-0 Sept. 4 in Searcy. The last shutout was

20-0 over Southern Arkansas in 2010. The 28-point margin was Harding's second-largest shutout behind a 39-0 victory over Lane in 1992.

Offensively, senior fullback Cole Chancey became the leading rusher in the history of the Great American Conference, passing Ouachita Baptist's Kris Oliver, with 3,775 yards.

In the lone loss of the regular season, Southeastern Oklahoma scored the game-winning touchdown and two-point conversion with 46 seconds remaining to take a 32-31 win Sept. 11 in Durant, Oklahoma. The Bisons had trailed 24-10 with 9:04 left in the third quarter but scored three straight touchdowns to take the lead late in the game.

Sophomore Grant Ennis kicked a 51-yard field goal early in the first quarter, the longest by a Harding kicker since Eddy Carmona's 62-yarder against East Central in 2011.

The Bisons bounced back with a dominating 37-6 victory over Southern Arkansas in Magnolia. Harding had possession of the ball for more than 42 minutes and never punted. The Bisons gained two extra possessions in the game when kicker Cameron Scott recovered two on-side kicks. The offense had 30 first downs. The Bisons last had 30 or more first downs (31) in a 49-7 win against East Central in 2018.

On Sept. 25 the Bisons defeated Ouachita Baptist 38-21 in Searcy. Harding's 409 rushing yards in this game were the most ever in the 62 meetings between the Bisons and Tigers. The victory snapped Ouachita Baptist's 30-game Great American Conference winning streak.

Oklahoma Baptist entered the Oct. 2 game in Shawnee, Oklahoma, averaging 41 points but, after a touchdown on their opening drive, were held scoreless by the Bisons who won their third straight 31-7. Oklahoma Baptist rushed for only 3 yards on 16 carries, the fewest allowed by Harding since holding Southeastern Oklahoma to -3 yards in 2018. Chancey led the rushing attack, scoring his 50th career rushing touchdown.

In the 49-10 win over Southern Nazarene Oct. 9 in Searcy, Chancey became Harding's career rushing leader, breaking the record held by Alan "Snake" Dixon since 1973. The win extended Harding's winning streak to four games. It was the team's 11th straight home win and Southern Nazarene's 10th straight road loss. Sixteen different Harding players carried the ball at least once in the game.

Harding's fifth-straight victory Oct. 16 also was Harding's fourth-straight road victory over Henderson State dating to 2014 with the 46-21 win in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Chancey rushed for 231 yards, the fifth-highest single-game total in program history. Cade Pugh had an interception and a fumble recovery in the game, becoming the first Harding player with both in one game since Jacory Nichols in 2019.

Defeating Arkansas-Monticello 64-7 Oct. 23

in Searcy, Harding scored seven rushing touchdowns, a defensive touchdown and a special teams touchdown in its highest scoring effort since a 70-42 victory at Southern Arkansas in 2015. Six different players scored a rushing touchdown as the team ran its winning streak to six games.

The Bisons' final touchdown came on a Cooper Carroll interception on the goal line. He returned it 100 yards, becoming only the second Bison with a 100-yard interception return and the first since Bershard Tillman against Northeastern State in 1999.

**TRAVELLING NEXT TO ALVA**, Oklahoma, where the team defeated Northwestern Oklahoma 73-14, the Bisons rushed for a school-record 685 yards and 10 touchdowns — the most points scored and the most total yards ever by Harding in a road game.

It was the most rushing yards ever in a GAC game and the most in an NCAA Division II game since Colorado Mesa rushed for 708 yards against New Mexico Highlands in 2016.

The team had three freshmen — Jhalen Spicer, Blake Delacruz and Will Fitzhugh — all rush for more than 100 yards. It was only the third time the Bisons had three players eclipse 100 yards in the same game.

The eighth-straight victory was a 55-7 win over Southwestern Oklahoma on Senior Day Nov. 6 in Searcy. Utilizing 17 different rushers to gain 459 yards and score seven touchdowns, it was the Bisons' third consecutive game with 50 or more points.

The Bisons held Southwestern to 0-for-11 on third downs. The last time Harding held an opponent without a third-down conversion was in a 58-0 victory over Southern Nazarene in 2014, when the Crimson Storm was 0-for-10 on third downs.

The Bisons had 506 total yards and held Southwestern to only 24 rushing yards on 21 carries.

In the final regular season contest, the team scored on its first four possessions of the second half to defeat Arkansas Tech 31-0 Nov. 13 in Russellville and win its ninth consecutive

For the latest sports information, visit [hardingsports.com](http://hardingsports.com).

### BY THE NUMBERS

**.986** Fielding percentage at short-stop of baseball's Connor Kelly in 2021, earning the NCAA Division II Rawlings Gold Glove. He made only two errors on 144 defensive chances.



**1** The first three-time individual GAC cross-country champion, Bison Dylan Douglas won the 10K conference championship in Searcy in 25:35.2 with freshman Luke Walling placing second just under one second behind Douglas.

**3** Number of Lady Bison cross-country runners in the top 15 at the GAC Championship. Junior Nieves Megias was fourth, junior Jada Trice was 12th, and junior Molly Passmore placed 15th.

**5** Consecutive seasons Harding has reached the national football playoffs, one of only three NCAA Division II teams to do so.

**2** Number of Bison soccer players who have received All-Central Region from United Soccer Coaches, including 2021 honoree Jack Savage, who also earned the honor in 2018, and Christian Ramos in 2017.

**17** Career-high number of goals scored in 2021 by Lady Bison soccer forward Emma Roberts. She was named GAC Player of the Year and Third Team All-American.

**9.97** Assists per set averaged through three seasons by Lady Bison volleyball setter Sarah Morehead, second all-time only to school-record holder Leah Tepe (12.88).



Will Fitzhugh is one of 17 rushers who combined for 459 yards and seven touchdowns in the Bisons 55-7 win over Southwestern Oklahoma on Senior Day at First Security Stadium Nov. 6, 2021.

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



# INTRODUCING OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

Compiled by KATIE CLEMENT

**D**R. MIKE WILLIAMS was announced as the sixth president of Harding University Oct. 27, 2021, and begins his presidency June 1. Williams earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University in 1985 and later returned to earn his Master of Business Administration. He earned his Doctor of Education from the University of Pennsylvania. He began serving on Harding's admissions staff in 1987, was named director of admissions services in 1991, and was appointed vice president of advancement in 2003. Williams has served as the president of Faulkner University since 2015. Speaking in chapel Nov. 16, he introduced himself to the student body. Excerpts from this talk are contained here as our way of introducing our next president to you in his own words. We also share reactions to the announcement from people who know him well.

"Good morning. It's great to be here. I can't tell you that the last three weeks haven't been overwhelming. The outpouring of love from the Harding nation has just been over the top. Since the press conference, we've gotten so many messages and social media posts that there is no way we can respond to all of them appropriately, so let me say, 'thank you.'

You will be blessed to be a part of this family the rest of your life. I didn't recognize that when I was a student here, but wherever you go, whatever country you find yourselves in, you're going to connect with Harding grads. Whether they graduated 30 years before you or 30 years after you, you're going to find a bond with them that is going to anchor yourselves together. ...

It's absolutely humbling to be a part of this distinguished Christ-centered university. And when I think about the capacity in this room, the God-given horsepower that's in this room at this very moment, it's staggering. It's staggering to think about all that could be accomplished to redeem all of humanity. You need to know that today and every day that I get the honor to stand before you, I am completely aware that every one of you is created in the image of God, created in the image of the Holy One. And I'm cognizant that the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, lives within you, and I'm absolutely inspired by the fact

that he's chosen you. He's chosen you to be a part of his redemptive force and the world. ...

The world is crazy. I've not met a high school or college student yet that doesn't believe the world is crazy. And the last 18 months have been even crazier. There's a gravitational pull to make us think that today's world is worse than the previous generation. And let's just be honest, my generation thinks that you guys are going to drive it into the ditch. But don't worry, our parents thought we were going to drive it into a ditch. And their parents thought they were going to drive it into a ditch. In reality, the world has been in the ditch a long time, hasn't it? Sometimes we have a vacation Bible school lens in which we interpret scripture, but Jesus entered a first-century world that in many ways was much worse than 2021 in America. I think it's extremely intriguing to think about the first-century church and the impact it made on the chaos of the first century. The New Testament just gives us this window of about five decades, and historians kind of pile on and help us learn more about ancient Roman culture.

Dr. James Kennedy wrote, "Life was expendable prior to Christianity's influence. ... In those days abortion was rampant. Abandonment was commonplace. It was common for infirm babies or unwanted little ones to be taken out to the forest or mountain side to be consumed by wild animals or to starve. ... They often abandoned

PHOTO BY NOAH DARNELL



female babies because women were considered inferior.” ...

First-century Israel would have included gladiator contests and sexual promiscuity and the marginalization of women. It was truly a barbaric culture. And yet, this small little band of Christians had a dramatically different worldview, didn't they? They drastically had a different view of human life. They cared about the sick. They cared about the disabled. They cared about the elderly. They cared about the marginalized people on the fringe. It was Christians, prompted by their faith, that started sneaking out to the place of exposure and rescuing the little ones before they died. They were the first ones to launch hospitals. They were the first ones to launch orphanages. The influence of the early church, they elevated women. They had this good Samaritan ethic that propelled them to charity and benevolence. Their influence even impacted the court system and the thoughts of justice. In essence the church transformed the Roman empire. The growth of Christian thought and practice was the catalyst of one of the most important reforms in the moral history of mankind. ...

**B**Y THE THIRD CENTURY, the Roman emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. And regardless of what you think about Constantine, or his successors, they ended the practice of exposure. This barbaric culture is completely influenced by Christians. From Constantine on, we see Christians making powerful contributions to the progress and advancement of the world.

William Wilberforce, the British evangelical, he's the one who championed the abolitionist movement in Britain, wasn't he? Two thirds of the American Anti-Slavery Society were Christian ministers. Christians ran towards education, especially higher education. Every European university was started under Christian principles. Here in the United States only one out of the first 123 colleges in America wasn't founded on Christian principles. The only one that wasn't was my alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, founded by Benjamin Franklin — not exactly a pagan secularist. ...

This church launched in the midst of a barbaric Roman culture, pagans. The revolution was started by 12 disciples who were called by the Messiah, and most of them were your age. Many scholars believe that the disciples, when they were called, may have been 18-21. And so when I read the gospels, and I hear names like Peter, James and John, I don't think about three guys like me. I think about three guys that look like Asher Patten and Ethan Brazell. That's how I read the gospels. They had no formal training. They had no political capital. And yet, empowered by the Holy Spirit, guided by Jesus' teaching and his example, they changed the world. The redemptive work of these revolutionaries deeply shaped my view of a Christ-centered university.

You all know Dr. Burks' favorite word — it's camaraderie. Isn't it a great word? It's a descriptive word of this community and high-spirited fellowship. I love it. I also have a favorite word. It's my aspiration for every Harding graduate. We certainly want you to leave this place rigorously prepared for a career of accomplishment. We want to tease out all of your God-given talent and form you. But our desire for you extends far beyond professional development. I hope every one of you, while you're here, finds your chazown. Chazown



Dr. Mike Williams addresses the student body in chapel Nov. 16.

“Mike Williams knows Harding well. He loves Harding, and he understands the culture. He has a proven record of service, and under his direct oversight, Harding thrived in two of the most critical dimensions of a university's existence: enrollment and fundraising. His experience and savvy in these matters are exactly what Harding needs in order to navigate the turbulent waters ahead.”

**SCOTT ADAIR**, *associate professor of Bible and ministry*

“From my experience, college can be a rewarding but also a very distracting and challenging time in a young believer's walk with Christ. It is crucial for young Christians to have older mentors in the church who are willing to invite them into their homes, encourage them and be there for them as they mature in their faith. Having the Williams do this for me while I was in college was a turning point in my faith. I appreciated the time they took each week to spend with us and invest in us. Part of who I am today and where I am with my walk with God is due to the Williamses' willingness to open up their home to me for Wednesday night Bible studies. I am so grateful that God placed them in my life and allowed me to stay focused on him despite the struggles, pressures and temptations around me as a young Christian.”

**KURT ADAMS**, *2011 graduate*

“What an honor it is to know and love the Williams family. Mike and Lisa will be a great blessing to Harding because of their leadership abilities, their love for young people, their experience in higher education, and, most of all, their joy-filled passion for the body of Christ. We closely served with Mike and Lisa when he was a deacon at College Church of Christ. They hosted one of our largest weekly home Bible studies, which was the center of our ministry. Students flocked to their home to be spiritually, emotionally and physically fed. We love the entire Williams family. Mike brings a level of expertise and leadership that will help Harding flourish as a lighthouse of Christian education.”

**TODD AND DEBBIE GENTRY**, *former College Church of Christ campus ministers*

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

“I was privileged to be hired in 1998 as an administrative assistant for the office of admissions by Mike Williams, who served as director at the time. Even then, it was evident that he had a passion for Harding. I watched a strong team become even more successful under his leadership. Mike is a kind, humble, caring Christian man who leads by example. Plus, he has a great sense of humor. I look forward to watching Harding grow with him at the helm. His passion for Harding is contagious.”

**PAULA LANGSTON**, *admissions administrative assistant*

“As Harding navigates new and challenging times, I am both hopeful and encouraged that Dr. Williams will become our president this year. I have known Mike and Lisa for more than 20 years, and I believe they will both bring new energy and vision to Harding. Mike is engaging, but he is more than that. He genuinely loves people, and he is able to cast a vision that brings people together for a cause bigger than themselves. Mike reminds us of who we are and why we are here, as he communicates a clear vision that is both passionate and sensitive. I look forward to Mike and Lisa coming home to Harding and leading us into a future that will bless many.”

**DONNY LEE**, *dean of Cannon-Clary College of Education*

“College can be a challenging time in which you begin the journey of discovering who you are. Attending the Williamses' small group was one of the things we looked forward to each week during our time at Harding because we knew it would be encouraging and uplifting. This environment allowed us to build lasting relationships with many people who attended this group, and we are very grateful for that.”

**KALLSY AND LOGAN PAGE**, *2014 graduates*

“I first met Mike when my family came to visit my wife's parents in Searcy in June of 1999. He was over admissions at that time, and I found out through a mutual friend, Jimmy Carr Jr., that Mike needed an admissions advisor for the Southeast. We met for an interview, and I knew right away that he was the kind of person that I'd like to work with. His engaging and calming demeanor makes him enjoyable to be around and puts you at ease. He's always smiling and in a great mood. He loves this place, and I think he will be an excellent leader for years to come. Mike and Lisa Williams are going to bring so much to the Harding family, and it's going to be a joy to watch their leadership unfold. Harding has been so fortunate to have five incredible presidents, and Mike will certainly be a wonderful addition to that legacy.”

**MORRIS SEAWEL**, *senior advancement officer*

“I had the blessing of working with Mike Williams in the advancement office here at Harding from 2003-15. Mike was the vice president for advancement during that time and was a great leader. Our office grew professionally and spiritually during his time of leadership. In those 12 years, I never remember a single time that he turned me away when I needed to talk to him. Mike was always positive and encouraging. I believe Mike is going to be a tremendous blessing to Harding when he returns to serve as our president.”

**DAVID UNDERWOOD**, *senior advancement officer*

is a Hebrew term. It means vision. The Bible says when people don't have vision, they perish. And it's been my experience that when college students don't find their chazown, they die too. ...

Every college in America helps you find your 'major.' What you like, what your interests are, what you think you're good at. But at Harding we want to provoke you to think about what really bothers you, what keeps you up at night. We want to introduce you to some of the realities of the world. ...

The accomplished Harding graduate has to have that first responder mentality when chaos breaks out and everybody runs away. It's the Bisons gifted by the Holy Spirit who run toward broken humanity. Chazown. Chazown — that's where your talents deploy. You haven't just determined your career direction. You've got a mission. You've got a vision for life. A Christ-centered education propels you to believe in God, but it also teaches you that God believes in you.

[My wife] Lisa and I are so honored to have the chance to walk beside you in this journey. The registrar is giving me a list of the names of every student at this University. Before the beginning of next year, Lisa and I want to lift up every one of your names to the creator of all things. We want the sovereign Lord to hear us whisper your name and ask for blessings all over you. If you are graduating in December or May, we are going to pray for God's shield to protect you and for his spirit to guide you like a flame. Lisa and I know from our own experience, and from walking beside college students for 37 years now, that college is sometimes a crucible. Sometimes you hit the wall. Sometimes you doubt. Sometimes you're burdened. We were there.

We will share our phone numbers with you. You can text us if you want us to pray for you. You are not in my address book or Lisa's. You can self-identify if you want, but you don't have to. The sovereign Lord knows who you are, and we will lift you up. Lisa and I regard our role with you as a covenant relationship. Also, as I think about the future of Harding University, it's a future that needs your input. This is a great university, but we aspire to be better. We want the trajectory to go higher. We want the influence to go broader. I need your input.

There is one thing you need to know. I am currently the president of Faulkner University, and I am going to finish strong there. I'm not the president here until June 1. So you may dump all of that email into my old Harding email address, but I'm not going to read any of it until June 1. I've got to finish strong. I've got to be a man of integrity. But come June 1, you can rest assured I'll read every single note and idea.

As we finish out our time in chapel today, you are not dismissed. You are sent — sent to this rich academic community. I hope that your intellectual curiosity drives you to learn, to explore life's questions. To find your chazown. You're sent. You're sent to this unbelievably remarkable community, and you have a huge opportunity to develop deep and meaningful relationships. Let's make sure everyone is included. You got me? Nobody sits alone in the caf. We are family. College is a team sport. You're sent, not with guns or harsh words or even with a razor-sharp social media account. You're sent with love. You're sent with compassion. You're sent with mercy. You're sent to a world to be revolutionaries, change agents, influencers, disciples who seek to restore the world to what God intended from the beginning. You're sent. ...

Bisons, I love you.” 📺

# A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

By LUKE HUMPHREY

Photography by MELERI YORK, MADISON MEYER and JAXON NASH

**O**N JAN. 1, MORE THAN 100 HARDING students and professors — seven groups spanning multiple programs, departments and colleges — arrived in New York City for the educational experience of a lifetime.

**E**VERY YEAR, STUDENTS TAKE THIS TRIP FOR CLASS credit by completing assignments before, during and after. Over the course of a week, the groups learned through various channels, from museums and guided tours to real-life case studies and visits with Harding alumni. Even beyond their scheduled time together, students continued to learn important lessons about the city's diversity and cultural significance by navigating its vast subway system and visiting its most iconic landmarks and locations.

These lessons did not come without their own challenges; the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic spurred everyone to think on their feet as planned events were canceled or locations closed without notice. However, due to the ingenuity and resilience of the groups' leaders, students were able to have an eventful trip learning real-world applications about their respective areas of study.

Only hours after celebrating the new year, students and professors arrived at the hotel — conveniently located in Times Square. That evening,

groups walked together around Times Square and Rockefeller Plaza to familiarize themselves with the streets surrounding the hotel, concluding their most restful day of the trip. The following days were packed full of memorable experiences, crowded subway rides and record-breaking numbers of daily steps walked.

On Sunday morning, Jan. 2, groups gathered separately for worship; afterward, most groups traveled downtown to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum. Students, who were either too young to remember the attacks or not yet born in 2001, spent a somber afternoon walking through the museum learning about the history of the attacks and mourning the loss of nearly 3,000 lives. One group entered the museum expecting only to reflect on the tragedy but left with an unexpected lesson in the repercussions of such an event.

The group from Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration — led by Dr. Glen Metheny, associate professor — also discussed the events from a business perspective. Senior Kalie St. Clair, an international business major, learned about the effects the attacks had globally: not only did more than 50 countries lose citizens during the attacks, but also many large companies were left without offices, and the stock market experienced a drastic plunge. “While this wasn’t the focus, it is interesting seeing how it all played out because the market had to come back from this event,” St. Clair said. “Corporations and countries all over were able to come together, despite the significant loss, to bring the market back up and ‘start’ the country again. It was fascinating to see how the business world was able to come back from this loss and grow into the huge international market that we see today.”

Metheny echoed St. Clair’s thoughts and discussed how there is a business aspect to everything. The museum has now become a business by selling tickets, creating attractions, hiring employees, etc. “There is a price for everything,” Metheny said. “From a museum to Yankee Stadium, there’s a price for everything.” This tragic day in history provided many opportunities for education, and the business students did not waste theirs.

Later that afternoon, a group from the social work program and College of Bible and Ministry — led by Dr. Andrew Baker, assistant professor of Bible; Dr. Kathy Helpenstill, associate professor of social work; and Kyle Thompson, assistant director for Community Connection and Social Impact — rode the subway from the memorial to Harlem for an exciting dinner with Terrance Talley (’88), a social work director.

Talley met the group at Amy Ruth’s, a home-style Southern cuisine restaurant, for a lively evening filled with laughter and stories. Between bites of fried chicken, students listened to Talley speak about his experiences as a social worker in New York City. He originally came to the city seeking two things: find a career in public relations and be challenged. When a career in social work called him instead, Talley accepted the challenge and has been changing lives for more than 25 years.

Inspired by Talley’s stories, senior social work major Eden

Henderson acknowledged the importance of a community working toward a common goal, affirming her desire to be a social worker. “If anything is going to get done, it has to be through a team that is each contributing their strengths,” she said. “A single person is incapable of solving big issues by themselves, but when they are able to pull others in on the project and work with them, things are able to get done more efficiently and effectively.”

The next day was filled to the brim with tours and meetings. A group of students from Carr College of Nursing — led by Drs. Lisa Engel and Juli Lane, associate and assistant professors — toured the Henry Street Settlement, an immigrant tenement community prominent in the world of public health and nursing. Business students participated in a tour guided by Annaline Dinkelmann, her seventh time to lead Harding students. Drawing from her own career on Wall Street, Dinkelmann led the students around famous locations in the eight-block radius such as the New York Stock Exchange and the Federal Reserve while sharing fun facts and stories. When prompted about her successful career, she simply stated: “Networking is your net worth.”

**A**FTER LUNCH THAT DAY, THE GROUP FROM THE apparel merchandising program — led by Becky Boaz, assistant professor — met with Colton French (’18). French, who received his master’s from University of the Arts in London, currently works as an assistant stylist at Madewell and met with the students briefly inside Brookfield Place, a popular shopping destination in downtown Manhattan. The attentive audience of aspiring fashion professionals was eager to learn how French managed to go from Arkansas to London to New York City. Mirroring the networking theme of the day, French attributed his success to his connections. He explained the importance of knowing the right people and knowing where to look. The group left feeling inspired about their future careers in the fashion industry.

The following day proved to be a popular one for museums. The apparel merchandising group visited the museum at Fashion Institute of Technology, the social work and Bible group visited National Museum of the American Indian, and the groups from the communication department and Cannon-Clary College of Education both visited Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

The education group — led by Courtney Cottrell, graduate assistant; Matthew Perring, director of professional field experiences; and Dr. Cheri Smith, associate professor — visited the museum with the mindset of educators who might have students living in similar conditions. The group’s tour of the museum was unplanned but ended up being a highlight. Cottrell, Perring and Smith improvised the first few days of the trip because the planned three-day workshop at Columbia University was canceled at the last minute due to concerns about COVID-19. Their backup plans still created memorable educational experiences.

Prior to the trip, students were required to read *A Tree Grows*



Communication students Sydney Tabor, Tiane Davis, Meleri York, Kayleigh Tritschler and Gabriel Huff explore Color Factory, an interactive art museum.



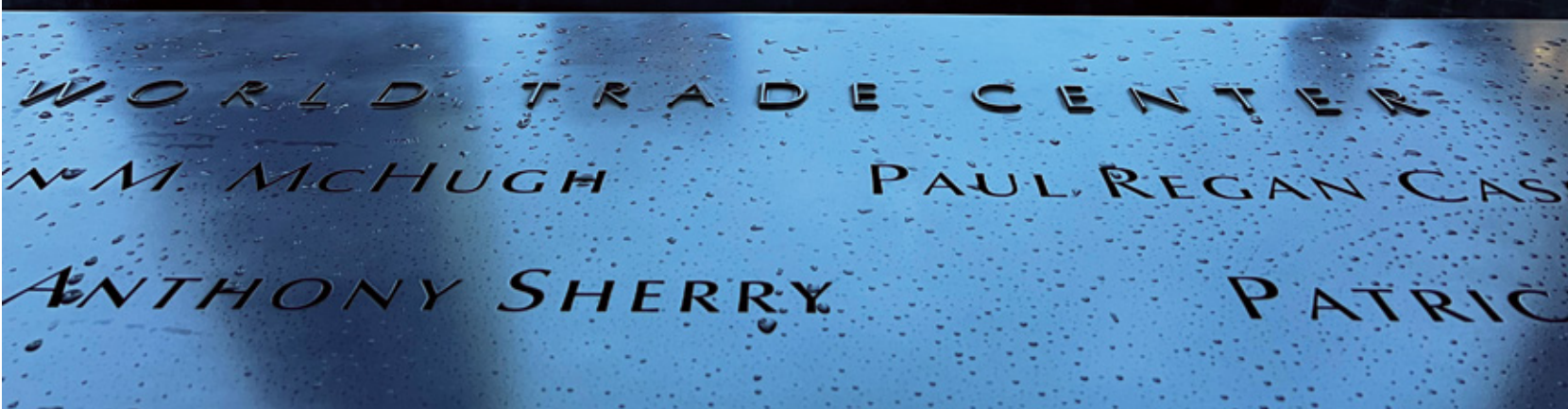
The 79-foot Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center stands tall well into the New Year. The plaza was a short, four-block walk from the Times Square hotel.



Students wake up early to watch the “Today” show live in Rockefeller Center.



Students reflect on the 9/11 terrorist attacks while visiting the national memorial and museum. The emotional experience left students with a greater sense of reverence for the victims.



*in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. The group leaders connected the dots between living conditions of the novel's protagonist and the Tenement Museum. The museum tells the untold stories of ordinary, working-class people who moved to New York City and lived in dilapidated, unfavorable housing. Students were encouraged to imagine their future students lived in these compact spaces — potentially a reality for some of these soon-to-be teachers. While on the “Hard Times: 1880s” tour, students were given an impromptu lesson in empathy: for Natalie Gumpertz, the 1880s woman whose city life is chronicled throughout the tour; for others living in similar conditions, past and present; and for their future students.

In the College of Education, students are taught not only to become effective educators, but also how to think beyond the classroom and understand their students. Junior Melanie Barnes, an elementary education major, was reminded of the importance of recognizing the diverse backgrounds of her future students. “We need to take these differences into account when planning lessons and managing our classrooms,” Barnes said. “We as teachers need to be willing and able to accommodate different students’ needs in order for them to succeed.” The unforgettable Tenement Museum left an impression on everyone who visited.

Wednesday began cold and rainy, but weather did not prevent the groups from having an eventful day. The business group toured

Yankee Stadium; the education and social work and Bible groups visited A House on Beekman, a nonprofit in the South Bronx; the apparel merchandising group met with Instagram influencer Caroline Vazzana; and the nursing group toured the History of Nursing Museum at La Salle University in Philadelphia.

**T**HE COMMUNICATION GROUP — LED BY NOAH DARNELL, instructor; April Fatula, director of Student Publications; Dr. Jim Miller, associate professor; and Dr. Jack Shock, distinguished professor and the originator of the annual trip — explored the American Museum of Natural History in the morning. Before they were allowed to walk around the museum, students listened to their daily case study of the First Amendment. Adjusting to the challenges COVID-19 posed to their itinerary, leaders established the five-day First Amendment tour, focusing each day on one freedom guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Students visited locations significant to the freedoms of religion, press, speech and assembly; and on this rainy day, Fatula discussed the freedom to petition regarding the controversy surrounding the infamous statue of Theodore Roosevelt proudly displayed on the museum’s front steps. Students huddled under umbrellas to hear her explain why the statue was being relocated from New York to

North Dakota due to the power of petition. Dozens of people led the charge to remove the statue, most of whom are highlighted in a special exhibition inside the museum.

Junior Ben Lane, a public relations major, was impressed by the museum’s willingness to provide multiple perspectives on a complex issue. “The statue is Roosevelt valiantly posed on a horse with a Native and African figure at his right- and left-hand side, which, in light of the United States’ racial history, symbolically communicates hierarchy,” Lane said. “Even though this wasn’t the artist’s intention, it still symbolizes the racial hierarchy which only compounds the need for proper symbols within our society. I’m thankful I was able to learn about this on our trip because it provided a non-charged and inviting environment to learn about this statue’s history, its meaning and how it affects people.” The group went on to discuss other freedoms at locations such as St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Museum of Modern Art, and Grand Central Terminal.

Late that evening, the theatre group — led by Ben Jones, assistant professor — met with alumnae Julie Goddard (’21) and Katherine Stinnett (’18). The two share an apartment and are both navigating the search for a successful career in theatre in New York City. In solidarity with the city that never sleeps, the group stayed up later than anticipated, crammed into one hotel room, and listened to the two women share stories of chasing dreams and working with celebrities such as Anne Hathaway and Jared Leto. Goddard shared stories of the Holy Spirit calling her to New York and how all the financial stars aligned for her to be able to afford it. Stinnett shared what it was like to be an extra in television shows and movies in order to gain acting experience.

At one point, Jones and Goddard shared an inspiring conversation about chasing dreams that filled the room with energy and enthusiasm. Goddard’s story of moving to the city involved uncertainty and fear of not having every detail ironed out. Jones reassured anyone wanting to follow in Goddard’s footsteps by emphasizing that sometimes the pieces fall into place once the decision to pursue a dream is put into motion. “Knowing where fear meets preparation, there will always be a moment — if you have a dream — where you have to dive,” Jones said. Goddard echoed his sentiment of facing dreams head-on with a simple statement: “You have to have faith that if God is going to bring you to something, he’ll bring you through it.”

Some of these students’ dreams are to act, sing and dance, and some dream of being behind the scenes. What better way to learn about all facets of theatre than by seeing plays and musicals. As a group, they saw four productions: “Cinderella,” “Caroline, or Change,” “The Play That Goes Wrong” and “Winnie the Pooh.” Outside of meeting times, students were required to see two more productions on their own. Their trip was designed with copious amounts of free time, and many students took advantage of this by seeing as many as 10 productions ranging from “Hamilton” to “Flying Over Sunset.”

Thursday’s schedule required some groups to travel outside of

Manhattan. The social work and Bible and business groups traveled to Long Island to visit Timothy Hill Children’s Ranch — founded by Jerry Hill (’65). The education and nursing groups visited the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, where nursing students spent a few extra hours. After walking in the footsteps of more than 12 million immigrants, the group began their tour of the abandoned Ellis Island Immigrant Hospital. The tour was guided by a passionate man named Fred Voss, the brother-in-law of David Kratzer, a former adjunct professor in the College of Sciences in the early ’80s.

Voss began the tour in the Registry Room, where health professionals would keep an eye on anyone who needed medical attention. Taking no chances at spreading diseases, doctors would often grab people if they were simply out of breath and take them to the hospital through a series of connected hallways and tunnels. Upon further examination, immigrants were either allowed to enter the city or admitted to the hospital. The group walked through these halls until they made their way to the hospital, learning along the way about its impressive history.

**G**IVING THE STUDENTS A WELL-ROUNDED EXPERIENCE, Engel and Lane periodically chimed in with connections to what they were teaching in their classes. Students learned that the hospital was often used for education. One room led to a morgue with a special area for students to watch autopsies and learn about illnesses that ailed a multitude of the immigrant patients. The three-hour tour allowed ample opportunities for students to picture themselves learning in this fast-paced environment. They gained an appreciation for the Ellis Island nurses — who lived on the island and worked six, 12-hour shifts every week in the early 1900s — and the current caretakers who strive to preserve the historic island.

On Friday, groups made the most of their last full day in the city. The education group met with two of their heroes: Sophie Blackall and Brian Floca, both children’s book authors. The nursing group served breakfast at the Bowery Mission, a support center for people without housing. The social work and Bible group met with activist Stephen Green and joined the business group to meet Dr. Chip Roper of VOCACenter, a nonprofit team of vocation coaches. The theatre group toured the Hudson Theatre, after touring the Tony Kiser Theatre with alumna Sarah Harris (’16) the day before. In addition to their academic responsibilities for the day, the apparel merchandising and communication groups visited Color Factory, an immersive art exhibit centered on colors.

On Saturday, Jan. 8, the seven groups said their goodbyes to the Big Apple and headed home. Avoiding nationwide snow storms, everyone returned safely to their hometowns and headed back to Searcy to begin the spring semester. The trip successfully provided another opportunity for students to expand understanding of their majors through firsthand experiences. They returned to campus with many stories to share, inspiring friends and classmates to mark their calendars for next year’s trip. 📅

# El Futuro offers hope and healing to Spanish speakers with mental health needs

Director and alumnus Dr. Luke Smith finds that building trust, compassion and connection is key

By RUPEN FOFARIA, EDNC.ORG, originally published Oct. 15, 2020



**L**UKE SMITH ('96) COULD BE SITTING in a nice office someplace charging a couple hundred dollars an hour as a child psychiatrist. That's not who he is, though. He's more of the roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-involved type.

Smith is the director of El Futuro, a nonprofit clinic in Durham, North Carolina, where Spanish-speaking immigrants can access culturally responsive mental health services. He's been working with the immigrant community for 21 years, and you can hear some of his "why" when he talks about early experiences.

Like the time the Department of Social Services brought a student into his clinic after suspected child abuse. The DSS representative said the child had told his friends at school his parents were molesting him.

"But the word for 'to bother' in Spanish is *molestar*," Smith said. "His parents were *bothering* him. They weren't abusing him at all."

Or another experience, when Smith attended an Individualized Education Plan meeting on behalf of a Latino family. He remembers the red-carpet treatment he received as a doctor and the very different treatment offered to his patient-family.

There was an element of classism, and it wasn't limited to the English speakers in the room.

"The translator — yeah, they got the job because they speak Spanish, but they're not really connected with this family," Smith said. "He was looking down at this family."

These early experiences helped Smith see the barriers between Spanish-speaking families and the schools. He realized that the challenges to offering mental health services were not just language-based, but were cultural, too.

"It's not clear-cut; it's a little more messy than that," he said. "And not everybody is willing to get messy."

But Smith rolled up his sleeves and helped create a place where

members of the Latino community — adults and youths — feel comfortable going for mental health services.

El Futuro, which was founded as a volunteer organization in 2001, formed as a nonprofit in 2004 and now has a staff of 43 — including 25 clinicians.

Today, it serves the mental health needs of Latino families in Durham and Siler City — "in a bilingual environment of healing and hope." And it does so with nearly 75% of funding coming from grants and donations.

Here's how it works.

## Confianza — developing deep trust first, then meeting mental health needs

**THE FIRST INGREDIENT** is trust. But not just any trust — *confianza*.

"It's a deep trust," Smith said. "When an immigrant comes into our community, it's what they're looking for and hold onto very quickly. So many of us have that experience of going to another country and finding somebody you can talk to, and you feel like, oh, this is my best friend all of a sudden. I don't think we always reciprocate that very well as Americans when people come to the U.S. But when we do, we make friends for life."

Smith talked about a stigma in the Latino community regarding mental health. Based on his work, he said, he realizes that setting up a clinic and offering mental health services is not enough to guarantee El Futuro can serve the community.

Instead of hanging a sign and hoping Spanish-speaking residents will come to it, El Futuro tries to meet the community where they are.

People come for services, but what they find is relationships. And through building relationships, El Futuro has grown more effective.

"We've never once had to really advertise our services because people, through those key concepts of *confianza* and relationships, people found us. We've never once had to go out looking for people."

## Calor humano — a focus on compassion

**AS THE ORGANIZATION** has grown, it has maintained its personality and focus on *calor humano* — human warmth.

El Futuro serves nearly 1,800 people a year, about 45% of whom are youths. Most of El Futuro's clients have experienced trauma related to poverty and migration.

Nearly all, about 98%, live below the poverty level, and 56% have been victims of crime.

"Making mental health treatments accessible for underserved Latino families," Smith says, "improves their quality of life and helps people get back to their dreams for the future that brought them to our community in the first place. It creates a better, healthier community for all."

The mental health services are a priority, but when families come, they aren't just getting prescriptions or therapies. They're building connection.

Recently, for instance, El Futuro transformed the green space adjacent to its building into a garden. Families visit with mental health needs, but they hang out in the garden and start to build community.

"It's about bringing in people from very different backgrounds, people from different socioeconomic standings, races and ethnicities, and just kind of watching the melting pot happen out there in a nice way," Smith said.

"When kids come to play, their parents start to talk, and I always say that one of the greatest factors that affects the immigrant community is the lack of social capital and the relationships they leave behind [in their country of birth] and the big networks that they leave behind."

"And so being able to see those reconnect here in new ways is really ... it's a fun experience. In one way, we have a community garden, but then the other garden is of people growing and little seeds being planted."

## La mesita — sitting around the little table

**EL FUTURO'S AUTHENTICITY** is a key driver of its effectiveness, Smith said. This is a byproduct of not only providing services, but providing them authentically and with love.

People have noticed the success. For several years, El Futuro has received calls from other counties in the state asking for help.

But deep trust and human warmth cannot be manufactured out of cookie-cutter molds. El Futuro did not think it could understand each of these communities and build the kinds of relationships it needed to be most effective.

"We realized that every place where we could go has its own microclimate almost, in terms of the community, who's in the community, who are their leaders, where is the infrastructure, where is the funding coming from," Smith said. "It's really hard to figure that out in each community."

Instead, El Futuro looked for organizations and people already serving the Latino populations in those communities. It invites them to sit together with El Futuro, as if around a little table — *la mesita*.

"We use the concept of cultural humility," Smith said. "We know that we haven't learned everything. Really, what we've been doing is we are just gathered around the table discussing what's new and

how to do a better job. So we thought, what we could do is bring in more people to the table, pull up more chairs. 'Pull up a chair to the table and learn with us,' is what we say."

El Futuro has been doing this through its La Mesita Latino Mental Health and Substance Use Provider Network since 2018. Over the course of 2020, Smith says, this network has grown by 60% to 866 people.

The training network includes webinars, conferences and weekly case studies.

"It's a way that we can leverage what we're doing," Smith said. "It's just a very dynamic learning platform that we're trying to push out, and seeing all the people flock to it is really great."

## Global mental health work done locally — by *el pueblo*

**SMITH SAID HE WAS** always drawn to international work, from his time as a psychiatry resident at UNC in the early 2000s. His plan from the start was to go overseas and work with populations in another country.

He discovered something when he started volunteering at a community health center while still a resident.

"That's when I found out that the other country had come to us," he said. "It was a little bit disappointing."

Not for a reason you might think. Smith isn't trying to build a wall or anything. His 21 years on the front lines of this work have proven quite the opposite, in fact.

He's tearing down walls and building bridges — and gardens.

Smith's initial disappointment stemmed from the unexpected revision of his dreams. He thought he'd travel the world — a doctor missionary on a global quest. Then he realized he didn't need to go quite so far to serve his purpose.

"I fell in love with the culture, the language, the cross-cultural challenge," Smith said. "And I wanted to work on the real disparity gap that I saw — the disproportionate under-care for people who were Spanish speaking or Latino descent."

That love has bled into the very fabric of El Futuro, which prides itself on its empathy and love for the community it serves. Indeed, more than the ability to speak Spanish, these are the traits Smith looks for when El Futuro makes new hires.

"I sometimes use the term *el pueblo* when we're hiring somebody," Smith said.

A *pueblo* is a town or village, but *el pueblo* can refer to someone who is of the community.

He holds that as the greatest compliment. It's what he wants to be, and what El Futuro strives to be. *Muy pueblo.* 🇺🇸

Upon graduating from University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Dr. Luke Smith moved to North Carolina for training in child and adult psychiatry. While volunteering in the community and perceiving a great need for Spanish-language services, Smith mobilized the community to create El Futuro. As executive and medical director, he provides psychiatric care to both children and adults. He is board certified in adult psychiatry and in child and adolescent psychiatry. In addition to being active with direct services and shaping policy at the local and state levels, Smith leads the organization in research efforts through projects funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute with a focus on creating evidence-based practices that are especially targeted to help the North Carolina Latino community.



# VIEWING PATIENTS THROUGH THE EYES OF CHRIST

*Family nurse practitioner program prepares nurses to show compassion and mercy in every patient encounter*

*Introduction by DONA CLARIN, program director and associate professor  
Compiled by HAILEY PRUITT*

**THE MISSION OF THE CARR COLLEGE OF NURSING** is “Developing Nurses as Christian Servants.” In 2015, the college expanded its program offerings by adding the Master of Science in nursing with a focus on preparing registered nurses as future family nurse practitioners. The curriculum is focused on providing care to patients across the lifespan in outpatient care settings. Delivered in both online and on-campus formats, the flexibility allows students to better balance the demands of work, life and school. The required on-campus time allows for face-to-face relationship building between faculty and students, while ensuring national competencies are being met through live workshops and interprofessional educational activities.

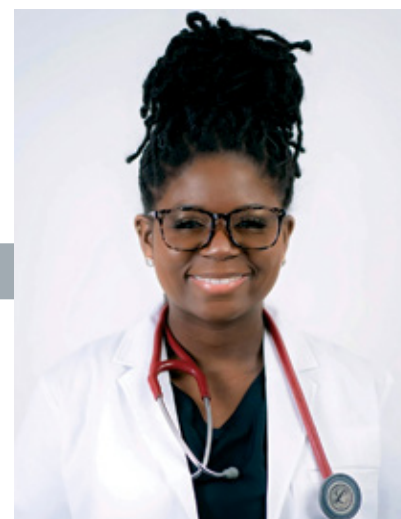
I believe one of the best parts of our program is that we not only provide the appropriate educational opportunities, but we also mentor on how to provide care from a Christian perspective. The students are faced with many situations that challenge their core values, and I believe the faculty do an excellent job of assisting students on how to exhibit compassion and mercy in every patient encounter. In their own words, students and alumni share their experiences and the value of the program.

## CECILIA COOK

**I WAS BORN AND RAISED** in New Albany, Mississippi, and I am a single mother to a very outgoing 2-year-old boy named Levi.

I obtained my associate degree in nursing from Northeast Mississippi Community College in 2017 and continued my education at Mississippi University for Women where I earned a Bachelor of Science in nursing in 2018. I’ve spent most of my nursing career working on general medicine units; however, I also have worked on a neurology/stroke unit. I currently work as a corporate float-pool nurse in surgical/oncology, post-surgical and COVID-19 units.

I was previously enrolled in another family nurse practitioner program but, after much thought and prayer, determined it wasn’t a good fit for me. Coincidentally, a current Harding student overheard my conversation at the nurses’ station while at work one day. She gave me Dr. Clarin’s phone number and told me to reach out. The first conversation with Dr. Clarin was all I needed to decide where to continue my education. For a program director to take time out of her busy schedule to call me spoke volumes. She cared enough about my education to listen to every question and concern I had and extended a warm welcome into the Harding family.



Without a doubt, I am exactly where I need to be.

While previously working in Memphis, Tennessee, I realized the obstacles and challenges many patients encounter. I have witnessed patients in extremely binding positions with their health. For example, many cannot afford their life-sustaining medications. Homeless patients fail to realize the severity of their medical conditions because of their fight and determination to find the next meal or shelter. Illiterate patients fail to understand their medical diagnoses because they are too embarrassed to ask questions or seek clarification out of fear of judgment, resulting in inadequate administration of their medications and imposing more severe health threats. Drug users or alcoholic patients who have relapsed multiple times and been abandoned by family, driving a more profound depression, are those I seek to help most. The situations I encountered while working in Memphis allowed my passion to grow, and I have concluded that service in an underprivileged community is what I am most fit for. My goal is to use the knowledge gained in the family nurse practitioner program to advocate for patients of these communities.

The atmosphere at Harding is unmatched. I know that I have instructors who care about me not only academically but physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It doesn’t get much better than that. To know that I have instructors praying for me and over me is top tier.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Harding is not only providing me with a solid foundation and framework in advanced nursing practice to give me the professional aptitude to effectively assess, diagnose, prescribe and manage the overall care of patients but is also instilling Christian values and ethics that will drive my nursing practice so that God speaks through me with every patient encounter.

## CARRIE DIMARIA

**BORN AND RAISED IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**, I currently live in Waco, Texas. My parents retired last year and moved to Waco, and I have two older sisters who have given me five endlessly energetic nephews and one adorable niece. I am single and have a 3-year-old Portuguese Water Dog, Aubrey, who is my fuzzy fur baby.

After high school I attended the Adventures In Missions program at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. My team spent 18 months working with Paul and Amy Dowell in Lima, Peru. I then double majored in nursing and vocational Christian ministry at Harding and earned a Bachelor of Science in nursing in 2013.

I have primarily been a medical-surgical nurse for seven years.



I started in orthopaedic trauma in Spokane, Washington, transitioned to a float pool in Newport, Rhode Island, and then tried travel nursing for a year. Currently I am working in a float pool for Baylor Scott & White. I have worked inpatient in orthopedics, oncology, renal, neurology, rehab, long-term acute care, psychiatry, emergency department, infusion therapy and cardiology.

As an undergraduate at Harding, I had heard whispers of future plans for various nurse practitioner programs. In the spring of 2020 when I decided to look into going back to school, Harding was one of the first I considered. I consulted a former classmate who had just graduated from the family nurse practitioner program, contacted the dean with follow-up questions, and started the program in January 2021.

Harding is unique because they teach us to practice from a Christian perspective, which shifts the focus of practice to quality holistic care. We view the patient as a whole physical, spiritual, mental, emotional and social being who also is a part of a family and community. It is easy to see the diagnosis before the patient and become frustrated with the lack of progress some people make. When we try to view patients through the eyes of Christ, we become more understanding and forgiving.

From theory to documentation we are taught and held to a standard of excellence. I feel like we will specifically be prepared for that

first hurdle of our professional careers. There also are a lot of professional networking opportunities through the Harding community, which is important when starting out as a new graduate in any field.

I was very concerned that I would not do well in a primarily online program because I am so used to learning in a classroom setting, but that has not been an issue for me. Because it is a smaller group of students, the teachers are able to take the time to work through things with us, and we get a lot of personal attention and understanding.

As a future family nurse practitioner, I am interested in learning advanced practice nursing skills like suturing. I would like to start out in urgent care so I can experience a wide range of ailments. However, I would really like to know and care for my patients long term in whatever form that may take.

#### ZACHARY MCBROOM

**I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN SMITHVILLE, Oklahoma,** and I have lived in Searcy for the last 2 ½ years with my wife, Katie, and our dog, Max. We both work in healthcare, and I am in the family nurse practitioner program while she is in the pharmacy program. We are adventurous and enjoy spending our free time traveling, hiking and enjoying Lake Ouachita.

I completed a bachelor's degree in nutritional science and spent a year in medical school before finally attending The University of Oklahoma accelerated nursing program. After I graduated in 2019, we moved to Searcy, and I work as a nurse in the local emergency department.

We moved to Searcy so Katie could attend Harding, and I thought that having the opportunity to attend a university where I would be living would provide me with the best opportunity to meet and communicate with my professors and learn from my program studies. I also appreciated that Harding was a Christian university whose values reflected my own and intertwined faith into the curriculum. Additionally, after interviewing on campus, I knew it was where I wanted to be because I felt genuine interest and care for me as a person and as a student. Thankfully, this program has exceeded my expectations.

One of the biggest perks of Harding's family nurse practitioner program is the mix of online coursework and in-person, hands-on learning experiences that are completed on campus. The program also offers a part-time option, which has allowed me to take full advantage of learning study material while continuing to work in the local emergency department. Fortunately, the program's flexibility has worked very well for us, and I am thankful for the experience.

The professors at Harding are very knowledgeable, and it has been a pleasure to learn from them. Additionally, the mixture of online and hands-on training has been welcoming, as well as the

help in finding good preceptors to learn from. I also appreciate that the program emphasizes holistic patient-centered care.

For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to work in family medicine. Other specialties I believe I would enjoy include urgent care and cardiology.

I have really enjoyed my experience at Harding. I am thankful for the opportunity that this program has granted me, and I look forward to graduation.

#### JENNIFER CHRISTIAN

**I AM A 2020 GRADUATE** of Harding's family nurse practitioner program and a lifelong resident of Valliant, Oklahoma. I have been married to Dakota for 13 years, and we have a very energetic 5-year-old son, Logan, who is the light of our world. We enjoy spending family time outdoors.

I received my associate degree in radiologic technology from the University of Arkansas and worked in a hospital setting. I have always had a love for nursing, and I later studied at Eastern Oklahoma State College and became a licensed registered nurse. I worked mainly in emergency room settings and home health while earning my bachelor's degree at University of Cincinnati.

I am currently a full-time advanced practice registered nurse in the emergency room, and I am loving every minute of it. I also work part time at a clinic, and I love the variety of care I am able to provide while serving both in the emergency room and family practice.

I did not plan to attend Harding initially, but God works in mysterious ways. A close college friend was accepted into the family nurse practitioner program, and she called and said I should apply, so that's what I did. It was the best decision and path God could have laid for me.

Dr. Clarin and the faculty were absolutely amazing. I have never been part of a program that made me feel like family and had a lasting impact on my life and edu-

cational values. During my clinical rotation for pediatrics, I was very sick with pneumonia and felt like I couldn't attend. Dr. Clarin came to my house and drove me to my clinical site. We did our evaluation, and she drove me back home. Her compassion really showed how much these professors care about us. This does not happen in every program. Harding has morals, values and a Christian base that will drive you to become the best provider you can be in your community. I am so thankful for the University and the staff that prepared me to be the provider I am becoming.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

#### KEISHA FOX

**I AM A 2019 GRADUATE,** and I live in Conway, Arkansas, with my husband, Tyrone. Together we have a blended family of seven children and one grandson. My 15-year nursing background includes geriatrics, pediatrics, hospice, home health, rehabilitation, medical-surgical and mental health. Currently I am a family nurse practitioner practicing in rural Arkansas areas.

Dr. Clarin personally contacted me when I submitted my application, and following our conversation, I knew I wanted to come to Harding. I prayed for guidance as this decision affected not only me but my entire family, and I have not regretted my decision. The opportunity to continue to work while completing my studies was also a major benefit. I was hesitant about an online program, but

Harding is much more. The hybrid program allowed for much-needed personal interaction with professors and classmates. I never felt alone during the program because there was always someone available to communicate with me. Even my preceptors were impressed by the fact that the instructors actually came to observe me at clinical sites.

I feel that I was well equipped and prepared to start my career as a family nurse practitioner follow-

ing graduation. The demands are challenging but necessary to give each person the knowledge to apply to each individual patient. The spiritual guidance from the professors and classmates really helped to reduce the stress and provided the push to stay on track and complete the program.

I love caring for and serving others, and I wanted to be able to give more to my patients, their families and the community. My education at Harding has provided me the tools to be able to provide safe patient-centered care, meeting people where they are and allowing my Christian faith to guide me.

#### LAUREN FRANKS

**I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN SPARKMAN, Arkansas.** My husband is a local contractor, and we have two children ages 10 and 14. Our family is involved in church ministry at Sparkman First Baptist where I am the children's minister and music leader.

I completed my bachelor's degree at Henderson State University and worked several years in women's health as a nurse and later as a clinic manager in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Deonna Whatley, a



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Harding student working in the clinic, was especially impressive. During our time working together, I had mentioned wanting to be a family nurse practitioner but had not had the time to pursue it. After Deonna graduated, her supervisor, Dr. Dona Clarin, called and asked if I had ever thought about coming to Harding. I was hesitant at first, but one of the clinic providers was leaving, which would

provide more flexibility for me, and she encouraged me to move forward with my education.

Through the interview process it became clear that this was a decision God had anointed. The timing worked out well for my family, and a particular online course was offered at the perfect time for my schedule. At my first interview I saw scriptures on the sidewalk outside the Swaid Center, and I realized I was surrounded by

people who wanted to be clothed in scripture, exactly where I was supposed to be. At Harding, the faculty prayed for us, and our class believed in God and in prayer. Even three years after graduation, we still communicate and pray for each other regularly.

I dreamed of bringing healthcare to my small town, 30 miles from any providers. There was a local clinic built in the 1950s but later converted to a food bank. After working for Baptist Health for 15 years, I pitched to them the idea of restoring the building to a clinic. The original request was denied, but members of the community helped renovate the space anyway because they wanted to give the people of Sparkman something to be proud of. Eventually, Baptist gave us a year-long trial run, not expecting much. The Harding community also supported me in this effort and gave me the confidence not to take "no" for an answer. We served over 20 patients on the very first day, compared to the expected goal of only four, and Baptist Health Family Clinic-Sparkman has been serving this community since June 2021.

The Christian environment at Harding also helped me be more compassionate, to really look at people and not see them as just names on a list. I want to care for patients as a whole — their families, their homes, even their animals sometimes. I have bandaged a patient's calf after hours and assisted with a goat's birth on my lunch break. I truly care about everything in the lives of my patients, not just their blood pressure or a broken finger. Patients reciprocate by calling to thank us and report what treatments are working for them. My experience in the family nurse practitioner program inspired me to make our community like Harding's, one of compassion, relationship and service. 🙏







# Connections



Send us your news! Let us know about your wedding, a birth, job change, promotion, award, retirement, etc. Email your items to [alumninews@harding.edu](mailto:alumninews@harding.edu) or write Harding University, Office of Alumni Relations, Box 10768, Searcy, AR 72149-5615.

## 1968

**Max Edrington** retired from his optometric practice of 49 years. He and his wife, Diane, and their three sons have lived in Long Beach, Mississippi, since 1972 after his graduation from optometry school.

## 1974

**Gail Welker Miller** was named professor emeritus at York College. She retired after 36 years as an associate professor of biology. She is married to **Lester Ray Miller II** ('73).

## 1975

**Rick Adkins** is a partner with Arkansas Financial Group. His wife, **Maureen Blackburn**, served 28 years as a music teacher at the Anthony School before retiring in 2020. The Adkinses served as chairpersons of Opus XXXVII, the black-tie fundraiser for the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra on Nov. 13, 2021. Rick has served on the Board of Advisors for the symphony, chaired the symphony governance committee and served on the foundation board.

## 1976

**Penny Nichols Burks** earned her master's in curriculum and instruction from Louisiana Tech University in 2002. She retired in June 2021 from Bossier Parish Schools as special education coordinator. She serves on the board for Bossier Kids and SOCKS. She and her husband, Billy, have two children.

## 1979

**Judy Chism Carte** is a retired nursing home administrator. She also was a social worker with Southern Christian Home, Domestic Violence Association of Arkansas, and Adult Protective Services.

## 1982

**Dan Alessio** received the 2021 Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners Walter J. Howe Member of the Year Award for contributions to the organization. He has been a forensic scientist with the Oregon State Police Forensic Services Division for 22 years as a firearms examiner and crime scene responder.

## 1988

**Greg Lindstrom** won first place in the senior division of the international Virtual Tuba/Euphonium Competition. He is active as the principal tuba in the Little Rock Wind Symphony and Natural State Brass Band. He sits in the Immanuel Brass Quintet, Capital City Brass Quintet and Quapaw Brass Quintet.

## 1989

**Mike S. Allen** recently published a nonfiction book, *A Murder in Searcy*, with co-author Deana Hamby Nall. The book gives an account of a 1974 crime and the subsequent investigation and trials. It has been featured on Amazon's webpage for "Hot New Releases for True Crime" and appeared on Amazon's bestsellers list for "New Releases in Biographies and Memoirs."

## 1992

**Clarence L. Hulse**, Economic Development Corp. Michigan City (Indiana) executive director, has received the honor of Fellow Member status by the International Economic Development Council. He is credited with creating more than 30,000 jobs and \$3.5 billion in direct capital investment during the past 20 years.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

## 1997

**Jason Hurt** is a urogynecologist who recently joined the staff at Northwest Arkansas Urology. He graduated medical school in 2002 at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and completed his residency in 2006 at Louisiana State University in Shreveport.

**Axel Liimatta** has recently co-written *Even the Wind*, a book about an F2 tornado that struck Whetstone Boys Ranch, a therapeutic boarding school in the Ozarks. He and his wife, **Christine Creasy** ('94), helped start the ranch in 2010.

**Trent Eric McManus** (HST) received his Ph.D. in education from the University of the Cumberland. He is an economics and government teacher at Chester County High School and coaches soccer, track and field, and basketball.

## 1999

**Neil Chilson**, senior research fellow for technology and innovation at Stand Together, has launched his book, *Getting Out of Control: Emergent Leadership in a Complex World*. Previously, he was chief technologist at the Federal Trade Commission. Prior to his appointment, he was an advisor to acting FTC Chairman Maureen K. Ohlhausen. He contributes regularly to the Washington Post, USA Today, Entrepreneur and Morning Consult. He holds a Juris Doctor from George Washington University Law School.

## 2001

**Paul Gower**, owner of Lunamark, a driving force in the creation of Little Rock TechFest, was inducted into the Arkansas Academy of Computing as a member of the 2021 class of honorees at a virtual ceremony on Oct. 30, 2021.

**Lisa Wilson** became certified as a financial planner qualified professional in January 2020. She serves as client services manager at Good Life Financial Advisors.

## 2002

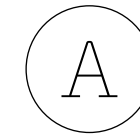
**Joel Johnson** has joined the firm of Williams Mullen as a partner in health care in the Raleigh office. He recently completed his term as president of the North Carolina Society of Healthcare Attorneys. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## 2005

**Philip** ('06) and **Amy Eichman White** announce the

## Where talent meets passion

PROFILE | ALICE-ANNE LIGHT



**SELF-PROFESSED HOMETOWN GIRL** — born and raised in Searcy — Dr. Alice-Anne Murray Light ('07) credits her roots at Harding for her ongoing love of performing. She is currently an assistant professor of voice at Texas Tech University, but her talents have taken her around the world. Her mezzo-soprano voice has been lauded within the competitive world of vocal performance, earning her honorable distinctions.

While at Harding, Light had an impressive career in the music department. From participating in Chamber Singers to winning the "Outstanding Student" award her senior year,



Light's involvement around campus was noticeable to her peers. She considers herself fortunate to have built relationships with her professors as well, many of whom she maintains close relations with today. "I loved traveling nationally and internationally with the Harding Chorus under Dr. Cliff Ganus III, and I realized in my senior year I had a passion for both teaching and stage performance," she said. "Dr. Kelly Neill was instrumental in my development and is a big part of the way that I teach today."

After graduating, Light earned her master's from the University of Mississippi and her doctorate from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. Well established in vocal performance, she taught

at Harding for one year, Northwest Mississippi Community College for two years, William Jewell College for five years, and has been teaching at TTU since 2018. In addition to teaching, she performs opera and concert professionally around the globe. She traveled as far as Romania and China, taught masterclasses, performed in recitals, and even sang the National Anthem for the Tuscan-American Association in Italy — all in 2019 alone.

Light's talents have been noticed within the competitive world of vocal performance. She was named an honorable mention for the American Prize in Art Song in 2019 and a finalist for The American Prize: The Ernst Bacon Award for Excellence in the Performance of American Music in 2020. Most recently, she is a semifinalist for the American Prize in Virtual Performance as of February; winners will be announced later this year.

Light continues to have a successful, meaningful career using her talents and passions cultivated from her beginnings at the University. "My education at Harding gave me such a holistic worldview that has allowed me to travel all over the country and interact with many kinds of people and feel at home in every situation," she said.

She is looking forward to the April premiere of "Hours," a song cycle by Cecil Price Walden that she commissioned and co-created over the last four years. 🎵 — Luke Humphrey

birth of a son, Silas Asher, Oct. 16, 2021. He has three brothers, Isaac, Titus and Ezra. Philip is a manager at a plywood mill, and Amy is a homemaker.

**Judy Plaster Cuellar** is director of financial aid and student accounts at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas.

## 2006

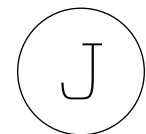
**Chris Hanvey** became manager of proprietary property management/special access employees across Boeing's defense, space and security. The new role covers multiple Boeing sites across the country.

## 2007

**Philip** ('06) and **Tara Skelley Burrows** announce the birth of a son, Edwards "Ward" Nichols, Feb. 3, 2021. Philip is an engineering manager for Facebook. They married in 2018 and reside in Memphis, Tennessee.

## Reflections on a century

PROFILE | EDDIE SHEWMAKER



**AN. 22, 2022, EDDIE SHEWMAKER ('44) CELEBRATED** his 100th birthday, inspiring a walk down memory lane. "I was destined to come to Harding," he said. His grandparents were farmers in Green County, Arkansas. When his grandmother, Emma Shewmaker, heard about plans to establish a Christian college in Morrilton, Arkansas, she moved there, taking four of her sons to

attend a school that became a family tradition.

In 1934, when Harding moved to Searcy, his grandmother did too, so Shewmaker lived with her his first year. He remembers standing in line with Dr. Cliff Ganus Jr. to register for classes. He worked on campus for 20 cents per hour doing odd jobs and later grading Bible



exams for Dr. George Benson. He even taught algebra for a year at Harding Academy and managed the on-campus laundry service.

After graduation, Shewmaker planned to propose to his girlfriend, Reba Faye Nadeau ('47), but that summer he was drafted. After training at a general hospital in El Paso, Texas, he was assigned to a lab for blood and urine testing. Later, he was relocated to Neosho, Missouri, where he bought a ring and asked Reba Faye to come for a visit. He was shocked that Mrs. Cathcart, who had a reputation as a strict dorm mom, actually gave

her permission. He proposed, and "that was that." Because he was still in the Army, a wedding would have to wait another year.

They married in 1946, and Shewmaker went on to earn both a master's and doctorate from the University of Nebraska. Taking an opportunity to continue his career and help the church grow in New Jersey, he helped found Northeastern Christian Junior College in Villanova, Pennsylvania, serving on the board for 35 years. He also helped establish Echo Lake Church of Christ, where he and his wife served for 60 years.

He also had an incredible career with Exxon, developing a safer and more economical process for cleaning tankers that transport crude oil. After years of experimentation and convincing, the process was finally approved by the United Nations in 1978.

In 2010, they retired to his hometown of Paragould, Arkansas. His beloved Reba Faye died in 2019.

When asked if he had any advice to share, Shewmaker said, "At Harding there's a lot more to learn than just technical subject matter. Both the brain and the spirit, the center of decisions and guidance, are trained and inspired at Harding. I hope students know what a tremendous value they're getting." 🎓 — Hailey Pruitt



2009

**Brent Aebi** is an ophthalmologist who has joined East Tennessee State University Health. He completed his ophthalmology residency from Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis, where he was chief resident. He received his M.D. from Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio, and is board certified in ophthalmology. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and a board member of the Tennessee Academy of Ophthalmology.

**James** ('11) and **Taylor Lake Kee** announce the birth of a son, James Warren "Jimmy," Sept. 9, 2021. James is in his final year of his orthopaedic surgery residency at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Taylor is a homemaker.

**Adam Parker** is a South Asia investigations advisor in antihuman trafficking matters for two international nonprofits. Previously, he served with Metro Nashville Police Department from 2009-17, and his wife, **Lori Wise** ('08), was a newborn intensive care unit nurse at Vanderbilt. They live in South Asia with their three children, Savannah, Jack and Levi.

2010

**Bentley** ('98) and **Allison Weaver Harrell** announce the birth of triplets; two daughters, Sloan Bailey and Sutton Blair, and a son, Beck Carter, March 31, 2021.

2012

**Amanda H. Herren** has joined Cunningham Bounds LLC as an associate. She began her legal career as an assistant district attorney with the Mobile County, Alabama, district attorney's office. She earned her Juris Doctor from Cumberland School of Law and is a member of the Mobile Bar Association, American Association for Justice, Alabama Association for Justice and the South Alabama Trial Lawyers Association.

**Cory Spruiell** is the college and young families minister at Bella Vista Church of Christ in Bentonville, Arkansas. He received his master's in historical theology from Harding School of Theology in 2020.

2013

**Meagan Spencer** is the program coordinator of the Communication Sciences and Disorders program at Freed-Hardeman University. She earned her master's in speech-language pathology from Harding in 2015 and her educational doctorate from Abilene Christian University.

**Josh Stevens** has been named to the Oil and Gas Investor 40 Under 40 list. He works in Arlington, Texas, as vice president of finance with U.S. Energy Development Corp. He lives in Trophy Club, Texas, with his wife, **Camille Lifsey** ('14), and two sons, Charles and Wyatt.

2014

**Weston Jameson** was named Abilene Christian University's women's basketball assistant coach. He spent last season as an assistant coach at Arkansas State after five seasons at Harding. He and his wife, **Lauren Harrison**, have three children, Berklee, Kelynn and Harrison.

2017

**Megan Albers**, a certified physician assistant, has joined Washington Regional East Springfield Family Clinic. She earned a Master of Science in physician assistant studies from Harding in 2019.

**Noah P. Watson** has joined Quattlebaum Grooms & Tull PLLC of Little Rock, Arkansas, where he concentrates his practice on litigation and appeals. He previously served as a law clerk to Judge Lavenski R. Smith of the U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. He obtained his law degree from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law.

2021

**Katie Conder Coats** has joined the NavPoint Real Estate Group as marketing coordinator. She and her husband, **Blake** ('20), live in Castle Rock, Colorado.

Passages

**Edwina Gae Ransom Cox** ('46), 96, of Little Rock, Arkansas, died Oct. 23, 2021. For 22 years, she taught eighth-grade English at Cloverdale Junior High. She was a member of Windsong Church of Christ. She was preceded in death by her husband of 40 years, Ray Cox Sr. She is survived by two children, Ray and Pamela Womack; a sister, Georgie Cathey; a granddaughter; and three great-grandchildren.

**L. Gene Hightower** ('50), 91, of Houston, died Sept. 11, 2021. He became a licensed pilot at age 16, the youngest ever in the state of Arkansas. He worked at Brown and Root, an engineering firm, where he retired after 30 years. He was a member of the AOPA, a 33-degree Master Mason and an Arabian Shriner. He was a member of Garden Oaks Baptist Church for more than 50 years. He is survived by his wife of 73 years, **Ora Delle Huffstutler** ('50).

**Elizabeth "Liz" Russell Sims** ('51), 91, of Mesquite, Texas, died June 9, 2021. She met her husband at Harding, and they started their married life together

in Minden, Louisiana, while he served in the U.S. Air Force in Korea. From Minden they moved to Texarkana, Texas, and she completed both her bachelor's in education and master's in English from East Texas State University. She first taught men in prison and later elementary students in Mesquite. She was a member of Mesquite Church of Christ since 1980. She was preceded in death by her husband of 64 years, **Jwill** ('51). She is survived by her three children, Jwill Jr., Shannon Messick and Russell; 13 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren.

**Elmer Gathright** ('53), 92, of Quitman, Arkansas, died Nov. 21, 2021. He taught school in Heber Springs for two years before becoming superintendent of West Side School District whose original gymnasium bears his name. He then became a longtime owner of Gathright Ready Mix Concrete in Heber Springs. After retirement, he enjoyed being a cattle and hay rancher until the age of 90. He was a member of Heber Springs Church of Christ. He was preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, Mildred. He is survived by three daughters, Sandra Howard, **Sharon Thomas** ('79) and Karen Gathright; a brother, Kirby; three grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

**Andy T. Ritchie III** ('56), 87, of Searcy, died Jan. 4, 2022. He followed the same calling as both his father and grandfather, preaching the gospel for more than 60 years for congregations in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Minnesota, New York, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Virginia and New Mexico. He also served as a missionary to Liege, Belgium, and preached at various congregations around southern Ontario, Canada, while working with Great Lakes Christian College. He was a believer in Christian camping and had a special relationship with Camp Hunt. In the late 40s, he was a counselor, and in the 60s and 70s, he served as camp director and board president. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, **Phyllis Robertson** ('68); and by a daughter, **Elizabeth Roach** ('80). He is survived by his wife of five years, **LaVera Haynes** ('57); three children, **Thomas** ('80), **Alice Ramsey** ('81) and **Bob** ('85); three siblings, **Ed** ('59), **Bettye Casey** ('65) and **Joan Toepel** ('67); 11 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren.

**Marjorie "Margie" McGinnis Wiley** ('56), 86, of Denton, Texas, died Oct. 11, 2021. In 1957, she worked as a dietetic intern at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. As a licensed dietician and member of the American Dietetic Association, she worked at Hermann Hospital in Houston; Christian Care Centers in Dallas; VA Hospital in Bonham, Texas; Hilltop Haven in Gunter, Texas; and River Gardens in New Braunfels, Texas. She was a preacher's wife and worked with her husband serving churches of Christ throughout Texas. Retiring in 1998, the cou-

Humble servant



**FROM 1987 TO 2016**, David Crouch directed Public Relations, now known as University Communications and Marketing. As this magazine considered how to pay tribute to the humble man who served the University for 46 years, it seemed fitting to share thoughts from social media by some of those who knew him best.

David Crouch was a connection point between Harding and so many alumni, donors and friends. As such, he never got the kudos that he deserved for the behind-the-scenes support that he provided for the alma mater he loved so much. ... His years at Harding were Harding at its best.

**TIM BRUNER**, director of information 1976-77

Perhaps the four words — humble servant of God — best describe my mentor and friend David Crouch. He set the example of a life filled with intentionality and love. When (my daughter) Becca received an encouraging, congratulatory and humorous email from him after he learned she passed her boards this fall, she said, "We don't deserve this sweet man." With David, God gave us more than we deserve.

**TOM BUTERBAUGH**, director of publications 1991-present

I don't think I know anyone else with his gift to make so many of us feel so special while encouraging us to fulfill our personal and professional potentials.

**APRIL FATULA**, director of news services 2000-08

He made a huge eternal difference at Harding, a quiet giant in every aspect of his life.

**KAY GOWEN**, assistant director of public relations 1987-89

David Crouch was an unbelievable man. He meant a great deal to me and the kids in our track and cross-country programs. He made us feel important. He traveled the country to take pictures for us. ... He made Harding a good place.

**STEPHEN GUYMON**, head track and cross-country coach 2002-19

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

SUBMITTED PHOTO



DAVID CROUCH | 1948-2022



He was so much more than a friend. He was a mentor and a godly example who challenged me to always be better with a camera but more importantly to have a stronger faith. I will deeply miss his visits and being able to learn from his deep wisdom and experience.

**JEFF MONTGOMERY**  
director of photographic services 1991-present

His humility was inspiring. His love for his family was precious. His intentionality of asking me about my life and

family made me feel at home in our office. When he retired, I missed getting to just sit around and talk to him. I loved catching up with him when I could, and that often happened through phone calls over the last couple of years. ... He was a great man.

**HANNAH OWENS**, director of digital media 2011-20

**David Crouch** ('70), 74, of Searcy, died Jan. 31, 2022. During his 46-year career with the University, he served in various roles including director of Placement and Alumni Relations and director of the Office of Public Relations for 29 years before retiring in March 2016. A member of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, he served CASE District IV in many capacities including 10 years on the organization's board and two terms as treasurer and received their 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award. He also served nationally on the CASE Commission for Marketing and Communications. He was a member of College Church of Christ where he was a deacon. A member of Searcy Optimist Club, he served the club as president, vice president and secretary/treasurer. In 2021 he was named Optimist Citizen of the Year. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, **Lola Murry** ('69); three children, **Tracy Cunningham** ('93), **Eric** ('99) and **Brandon** ('01); and five grandchildren. 📷

ple lived at Saint Francis Village in Crowley, Texas, and attended Western Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. They moved to Denton in January 2021 to live closer to family. She is survived by her husband, Bill; two daughters, Mary Perry and **Julie Slate** ('90); two siblings, Dorothy and Buddy McGinnis; and a granddaughter.

**Carl Lee Blanchard** ('57), 93, of Stone Mountain, Georgia, died July 13, 2021. He joined the Army as a reservist in 1950, serving until 1956. He worked for the United States Geological Survey in Anchorage, Alaska, and was transferred to Stone Mountain in October 1973, after calling Alaska home for 27 years. He spent the next 47 years in

Stone Mountain and was a member of Avondale Church of Christ. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Mary Lorraine. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marie Garner; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

**Larry Peebles** ('60), 83, of Texarkana, Texas, died Oct. 31, 2021. He played basketball and baseball at Harding and then attended University of Arkansas Medical School to become a physician while also playing semi-pro basketball and baseball. He joined the U.S. Air Force and became a major before being honorably discharged. He began practicing family medicine in Texarkana in 1965 and later specialized in radiology. He was preceded in

death by his wife of 61 years, **Tish Maynard** ('61). He is survived by three children, **Laura Fidone** ('85), **Skipper Simmons** ('91) and **Mason** ('92); two brothers, **David** ('66) and **Sammy** ('70); nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

**Gaylon Hannah Gwin** ('63), 80, of Sellers, Alabama, died Nov. 4, 2021. She wrote for *Alabama Conservation* magazine as well as many other periodicals. She was a member of Liberty Church of Christ. She is survived by her husband of 58 years, **Gerald** ('64); three children, Nick, Eric and Susan; a brother, Rich Bach; and 11 grandchildren.

**Curtis C. McKnight** ('66), 76, of Norman, Oklahoma, died Sept. 11, 2021. He earned a master's



MIKE JAMES | 1946-2021

# Such a man as Mike

By LOU BUTTERFIELD, retired professor of communication

**P**ROVERBS 18:24 SAYS, "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Mike was such a friend. I called him Mikey; he called me Loubie. There was a man who made everyone he met feel like a best friend. Mike was such a man.

There was a man who was rarely seen without a smile, an encouraging word and endless energy. Mike was such a man.

There was a man who made our lives better and led the way to heaven for students and adults alike, which may be best expressed as, "I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day." Mike was such a man.

For nearly five decades experiencing life together meant loving our families, praying and praising, hosting home Bible studies and counseling students; teaching and baptizing, always seeking to be God's men; being colleagues at Harding, beginning the University TV network, joining as partners in business; laughing, crying, sharing family losses and triumphs; enduring heart-breaking hospital emergencies, and literally helping save several lives, all while relying on faith in God and the guidance of his Holy Spirit.



Paraphrasing John 21:25 without the slightest hint of irreverence, "Now there are so many other things that Mike did, were every one of them to be written, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

There was a man who on his deathbed, his boundless energy failing, looked up, smiled weakly and proclaimed, "I'm okay." What a legacy for all of us. Mike was such a man.

There was a man who, I believe, on Oct. 9, 2021, was escorted to paradise by God's angels into the very presence of God himself. He now gathers around the great throne of God the Almighty in worship with all the saved who have gone before him, waiting cancer-free and painless for those of us who soon will follow. Mike is that man.

Ephesians 1:3 states, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Mike is such a blessing.

In my life I have been blessed with hundreds of great friends. But never have I had a better friend than Mike, who was once described as "top notch, first class, one of a kind," to which I would add "a genuine follower of Jesus." Mikey is that man.

**Mike James** ('73), 75, of Searcy, died Oct. 9, 2021. Drafted in 1965, he was commissioned as an officer in 1967 and served in Germany and England. He received the Master of Science in mass communications from Arkansas State University in 1984 and his doctorate from Florida State University in 1992. He worked at Harding for 47 years, serving as campus photographer, chair of the department of communication, dean of the College of Communication and dean of the Honors College. In 2007, he received the title of Distinguished Professor of Communication. From August 2010 through December 2015, he and his wife were resident directors at the Harding University Greece program where they helped establish a new church facility in Elleniko. He was an elder at College Church of Christ, a member of Searcy Rotary Club and a member of the Ozark Porsche Car Association. He was preceded in death by a grandson. He is survived by his wife, **Beth Hogan** ('73); four children, **Jennifer Green** ('97), **Jeremy** ('97), **Jessica Collins** ('03) and **Jonathan** ('10); and nine grandchildren.

in mathematics from Western Illinois University and his doctorate in mathematics education from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He made Norman his home in 1981 when he joined the Oklahoma University Department of Mathematics. He served as associate department chair for a time and retired as an emeritus professor in 2011. Mathematics education was his passion, and to that end he researched and taught the best evidence-based instruction methods, developing a mathematics education doctoral program within the department. For more than 20 years he was a U.S. coordinator and played other major roles in two very large international research projects: Second International Mathematics Study and Third International Math and Science Study. He authored and co-authored hundreds of presentations and journal publications from those studies as well as many books. An elder at First Christian Church of Norman, he taught Bible classes for more than three decades and served on the education committee. He is survived by his wife, Michelynn Smith.

**Bobby Dan Orr** ('67), 79, of Dallas, died Sept. 14, 2021. Immediately after high school graduation, he enlisted in the Army and served for three years under the 84th Engineer Co. stationed in Nuremberg, Germany. He spent the next decade working in the mission field with churches in Central and South America where he learned to read, write and speak fluent Spanish. It was a small group Bible study that brought him to the Velez household where he met his wife. The couple lived in Farmers Branch, Texas, for the next 40 years. He worked in several different fields, ultimately settling on home improvement work with Orr Enterprises, all the while pursuing his true calling in ministry. He continued to preach and teach Bible studies for the Spanish-speaking congregations throughout the metroplex for more than 20 years. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Bertha Velez; three daughters, Rachel, Paula and Briana; three siblings, Earl, Frances Ramsey and Norma Smith; and six grandchildren.

**Alice Ann Hendrix Straughn** ('69), 74, of Little Rock, Arkansas, died Sept. 25, 2021. She completed her bachelor's in nursing at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 1970. After being hired at UAMS as a charge nurse on the pediatric floor, she was recruited to be part of the first nurse practitioner program in Arkansas. After time off to raise two sons, she began teaching in the licensed practical nursing program at Saint Vincent Infirmary. In the mid-1980s, she began working on her master's in nursing at University of Central Arkansas, where she joined the faculty upon completing her degree. She joined the faculty at University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1991, teaching pediatrics and medical surgical nursing and especially enjoyed clinical practice. She is survived by her

husband of 54 years, **Keith** ('67); two sons, Greg and Matt; and three grandchildren.

**Judith Giddens Howard** ('70), 74, of Hoover, Alabama, died Dec. 7, 2021. She was a member of Homewood Church of Christ. She is survived by her husband, **Will Jr.** ('68); three children, **Will III** ('05), Anna Dreyfus and **Katie Towell** ('02); two sisters, Sara Rogers and Evelyn Shelton; and five grandchildren.

**Elizabeth Nan "Beth" Holloway Watson** ('71), 72, of Searcy, died Jan. 7, 2022. She received her associate degree from Freed-Hardeman, attended Harding and graduated from Memphis State University in 1972. Her first job out of college was staff administrator at Baptist Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She next became secretary to Dr. Jimmy Carr Sr. at Harding and served in that role for almost two years. She was a Bible class teacher and was involved in ladies' Bible classes, prayer groups and home Bible studies. She was a member of College Church of Christ. She is survived by her husband of 51 years, **Bob** ('70); four children, **Rachel Welch** ('97), **Todd** ('89), **Mark** ('05) and **Russ** ('08); and nine grandchildren.

**James Thomas "Tommy" Beasley** ('72), 71 of Longwood, Florida, died Oct. 14, 2021. He worked as a computer analyst in information technology. He was a talented artist and gardener and enjoyed reading. He is survived by his wife, Zulima Sosa; three children, Davis, Julie Jones and Annie; two stepsons, Billy and Michael Litsey; a brother, **Robert** ('73); and seven grandchildren.

**Carl Wiley May** ('73), 70, of Columbia, Tennessee, died Sept. 25, 2021. He was the retired owner of R.C. May Jewelers and a master jeweler. He was a minister, having preached at Berea Church of Christ for many years and at Shipp's Bend Church of Christ. He was preceded in death by his wife, **Wanda Lee Monteith** ('73). He is survived by three children, Elizabeth Chapman, David and Michael; a brother, Al; and six grandchildren.

**Richard Lee McEuen** ('80), 64, of Paragould, Arkansas, died Dec. 20, 2021. He earned his Master of Business Administration from Washington State University and taught business classes at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould and York College in Nebraska. He was a deacon and led singing at Hillcrest Church of Christ in Paragould. He previously served as a deacon at Centralia Church of Christ and Kennewick Church of Christ in Washington and East Hill Church of Christ in Nebraska. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, **Glenda Hardman** ('78); three children, Michael, **Kristen Ashby** ('12) and **Matthew** ('13); two brothers, **Kirk** ('90) and John; and two grandchildren.

**Timothy Donald Flatt** ('81), 62, of Collierville, Tennessee, died Dec. 1, 2020. He excelled in

basketball and is 10th on the career scoring list and ran track at Harding. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Memphis State University in 1983. He had a successful career as a businessman specializing in marketing and administration and most recently worked as the practice administrator at Pediatrics East. He was a member of Highland Church of Christ where he served as a deacon. He served as a faith encourager at Hope Works. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, **Pamela Jean McFarlin** ('81); two children, **David** ('08) and **Kevin** ('12); his parents, **Bill** ('62) and Louise; two brothers, **Steve** ('78) and **Daniel** ('82); and three grandchildren.

**Jason T. Flooding** ('98), 47, of Vincent, Ohio, died Oct. 21, 2021. He worked for the Bureau of Fiscal Services in Parkersburg, West Virginia, and was a member of Belpre Church of Christ. Before moving back to the Ohio Valley, he lived in Alabama where he was regional manager for Pioneer Electronic. He is survived by two children, Nathaniel and Jolie; and his parents, Ken and Brenda.

**Christopher "Chris" Michael Burchett** ('16), 36, of Searcy, died Dec. 4, 2021. He spent the last several months of his life traveling South America. Prior to that, he worked for Timothy Hill, most recently at their Center Hill Lake location in Smithville, Tennessee. He also had worked for College Church of Christ, where he was a member. He was preceded in death by his father, **Michael** ('93). He is survived by his mother, **Sonya Petway Hardin** ('81); and a sister, Anna Layne.

**Ann Bell Guffey**, 84, of Searcy, died Nov. 8, 2021. She received a degree in English from Lyon College.



She was part of the Harding family for more than 33 years, serving in financial aid. Devoted to Harding, she helped thousands of students attain their degrees. She was a member of West Side Church of Christ. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ollie "Gus." She is survived by two children, **Timothy** ('84) and Ginann Swindle; two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

**Wanda Faye Huffstickler**, 79, of Beebe, Arkansas, died Dec. 1, 2021. She worked in the business office at Harding from 1982-2007. She was preceded in death by her husband, John; two sons, John Jr. and Phillip, and a grandson. She is survived by four children, Beth Conner, **Heather** ('97), Morgan and **Jordan** ('19); a sister, Duella Cope; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

**Bob J. Corbin**, 88, of Searcy, died Dec. 15, 2021. He played baseball at University of Oklahoma until he was drafted into the service. He spent two years in the U.S. Navy during the Korean Conflict. He



then went to East Central State College in Ada, Oklahoma, to play baseball and basketball. He returned to University of Oklahoma and graduated in 1961 with a Master of Education in health and physical education. He moved to Holdenville, Oklahoma, where he taught and coached at both junior and senior high school levels. On July 1, 1964, he became research assistant and director of the testing lab at Harding, his employer for the next 44 years. He and colleagues Dr. Harry Olree and Dr. Carroll Smith produced groundbreaking physical fitness and sports medicine research funded by NASA into the 1970s, supplying information essential to the Apollo and SkyLab programs. He rose to the rank of professor in the kinesiology department and helped develop the text and curriculum for the PE 101 "Introduction to Wellness" course. A member of College Church of Christ since 1964, he served as an elder. Active in mission work, he spent 15 summers leading students to Italy for the University's international campaigns. He was preceded in death by his wife of 44 years, **Ruthann Latimer** ('97). He is survived by his wife of 17 years, Joyce Pruitt; three children, **Connie White** ('82), **Cheryl Finley** ('86), and **Scott** ('88); three stepsons, Larry Pruitt, Marty Pruitt and Eric Pruitt; a brother, Billy Gene; nine grandchildren; six step grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

**Dr. Henry North III**, 41, of Searcy, died Dec. 22, 2021. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in



biology from Texas Southern University in 2004 and obtained a Master of Science in 2005. He then worked on the Human Genome Project at Stanford University. He then matriculated to Howard University and defended his dissertation in pharmaceutical sciences with a focus in medicinal chemistry in May 2011 and was hooded in May 2012. Immediately, he began working as a post-doctoral fellow at Howard University's School of Pharmacy. After completing his research, he joined Harding's College of Pharmacy in 2013 as an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences. He was known as a "gentle giant" among his colleagues. He mentored many young African American youths with the 100 Black Men, served as president and vice president of Searcy Lions Club, and was voted Lion of the Year in 2017. He was the co-editor of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists Drug Discovery and Development Interface. He was a member of West Pleasure Church of Christ. He is survived by his father, Henry; stepmother, Marjorie Ruth; and three siblings, Frank, Alise and Anson.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

PHOTOS BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



# We are better in community

By DAVID REED

**I** STILL REMEMBER THE DAY in June 2017 when I begrudgingly stepped foot on the campus of Harding University for Honors Symposium. In all honesty, I had no desire to spend two weeks of my life in Searcy, Arkansas, baking in the summer heat with 49 other people I did not know. What could Harding really offer that was better than the other universities I was considering? In my mind, the answer to that question was “not much.” There was no way that a small school in the middle of nowhere could afford me the opportunities and community I desired.

I could not have been more wrong. By the end of those two weeks, I realized that the value of a Harding education runs much deeper than what can be put on a brochure, shown in a building or even taught in a classroom. The crux of the Harding experience lies in the wonderful community that students have the privilege of participating in on a daily basis. The intangible value of the relationships I built during those two weeks and the promise of being able to build many more shifted the paradigm on which my college decision was made. No longer was I worried about acceptance rates, rankings or statistics. Rather, I was dreaming about the community that I could build by pursuing an education in a faith-based environment with people committed to pushing me in the right direction.

For the better part of 18 months, this community was disrupted, though not lost. While we were not able to gather together, we maintained our level of care for one another as we adapted our habits in the interest of our health. Nonetheless, there was a certain piece of the Harding experience that was notably absent as we navigated this new world. With the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, the Student Association was excited to see how we could “Keep Moving Forward,” reclaiming this missing and crucial part of student life while hoping that students would recognize its importance in making Harding such a special place.

The student response has been above and beyond anything we could have imagined. We have been amazed (but not entirely surprised) by the wholehearted and enthusiastic participation of the student body in campus events, gatherings and celebrations. The excitement of being back together, of being in community, is palpable. This was clear from the start, as students came together in September to provide necessities to Afghan refugees displaced by the takeover of the Taliban. In a matter of days, by the grace of God and the strength of the Harding community, we collected over 100 boxes from social clubs, campus organizations and individuals, far surpassing our original goal of 50. Moreover, the extended Harding community consisting of alumni, parents and friends chipped in to donate over \$7,000 in support of this cause. This was only possible because we chose to come together as a student body.

I remember walking up to the Rhodes-Reaves Field House for Midnight Madness 20 minutes before it was supposed to start, thinking that there would not be a long line to get in. I was wrong. The line, five people wide, stretched all the way to the Ganus Activities Complex lawn. The Harding community could not wait to come together and cheer on their fellow students. Football

tailgates, with some amazing encouragement from coach Paul Simmons, have been more crowded and exciting than they ever were in my freshman year. Family weekend brought a flood of parents, siblings and extended family back to campus for the first time since Spring of 2020, making the celebration feel like Homecoming came a month early.

The Botham Jean memorial dedication demonstrated the commitment of the Harding student body and wider community to honor the memory of someone who was and is so dear to us. Relay 4 Life honored those students, family members, faculty and community members who are fighting or have fought the tremendous battle against cancer. Churches are full once again as Harding students and community members alike are eager to learn, worship and spend time in

community. Wednesday night Bible

studies have resumed meeting

in the homes of profes-

sors, coaches, admin-

istrators, students

and commu-

nity members

as young and

old come

together in

recognition

that we are

better when

we learn from

one another.

A relation-

ship with Christ

requires a relation-

ship with the body of

Christ. The two cannot

be separated. Through the

trials and tribulations of the past

year and a half, one thing has become

abundantly clear, especially at Harding: we

are better when we are in community. 

*David Reed is a finance major from Vienna, Virginia. His editorial originally appeared in the Dec. 3, 2021, issue of The Bison.*



ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ALLEN



**RICK AND SUSAN HARPER KNEW THEY NEEDED TO GET THEIR ESTATE PLAN IN ORDER**, but they had more questions than answers. How do we ensure that we are taking care of our children and future grandchildren and also supporting the organizations we cherish while limiting the tax implications on our assets? And how can we create an estate plan that is thorough yet affordable?

“I’m really, really big into avoiding any tax possible,” said Rick, “so when the opportunity came up to move our assets into a trust and develop an estate plan with PhilanthroCorp, I was a really easy sell.”

A faith-based estate planning consulting company and Harding partner, PhilanthroCorp provides free counsel to Harding’s alumni and friends to ensure your dreams and goals are accomplished through proper estate planning. Details of your estate remain confidential and are not shared with the University. This can be done over the phone from the comfort and convenience of your own home.

“It gives me peace to know that when we are gone, we know where our estate is going to go,” said Susan. “I was just thinking about the scripture, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant’ (Matthew 25:21). I believe that by using PhilanthroCorp and Harding, we have done well where he can say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’”

PhilanthroCorp’s estate specialists are available to review your existing plan or assist in setting up a new estate plan. Contact them at 800-876-7958 ext. 2125 or visit [philanthrocorp.com](http://philanthrocorp.com) to get started.

## Final Frame

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“So many times now we are in a society where we complain, and we say this is somebody else’s job. No, it’s your job; it’s my job. The Great Commission is our job. **Serving the least and the lost** is my job, and it’s your job. That’s what our mission is.”

— Tim Tebow, ASI Distinguished Lecture Series speaker Jan. 18, 2022