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# Horizons

GRACELAND UNIVERSITY

John Sellars, PhD, CPA

2007-17

President of Graceland University

Reflections  
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**WITH MY RETIREMENT THIS SUMMER I WILL FOCUS THIS LAST LETTER TO SAY "THANK YOU," TO EVERYONE. WITHOUT A DOUBT, BETTE AND I HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY SUPPORT FROM THE CAMPUS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS. FOR THIS WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL. NOW I WANT TO FOCUS ON THE FUTURE.**

Graceland University is a special place; a holy place. I have watched as countless students, staff, faculty and visitors' lives have been enriched and transformed. My life too has been transformed and enriched because of the divine spirit I see in each person who visits or resides here! It has been a marvelous experience.



**A**s I climb the stairs in the Higdon Administration Building every day, I look at the photographs of past Graceland presidents and hope I have not disappointed them.



I can hear my father's words: 'Always leave a place better than you found it.' My hope is that I am leaving Graceland better than I found it.

As I see the next 10 years, Graceland needs to finish updating the campus and technology. While we have done a lot of work the last 10 years, more needs to be done. With new technology, social media and electronic learning management systems, there will be expanded, rich opportunities for learning and personal growth. There will be opportunities in e-learning and blended classrooms that will provide high-impact learning experiences.

New opportunities will surface in service learning, internships, learning communities and study abroad. Service learning and internships will teach through experience to deepen students' knowledge of their world as they apply their scholarship in real-world settings. Students will give back to the broader community as mature citizens. Learning communities will engage students through liberal arts experiences that ask "big questions," ethically and professionally. An expanded study abroad program will help students to experience different

## **I have learned that Graceland's alumni and friends do not shy away from a challenge. Together we can be successful.**

cultures and stimulate reflection on race, equity, freedom, liberty and civility.

Professional development opportunities will help all employees to promote continuous student learning, in and out of the classroom.

In the future, the Community of Christ Seminary can support the church throughout the world by providing opportunities for professional and lay ministers and members to grow spiritually and to develop mature and thoughtful ethical commitments and theological understanding.

The future offers exciting educational opportunities for student success that Graceland must capture. This will take investment. The challenge is to continue to increase Graceland's endowment and reve-

nue streams to surround our students with the best facilities, technology and programs. None of this will come easily, but I have learned that Graceland's alumni and friends do not shy away from a challenge. We can be successful with "The Power of Together."

It is because of these experiences that I am certain that Graceland's best days are ahead of us.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as the president of Graceland University.

*John Sellar*



I have been deeply blessed by the opportunity to be a part of Graceland for 19 years — as a faculty member, a member of the Executive Council and as President. My three children are Graceland alumni. My wife was a professor of art here. We are a Graceland family. Being the President of Graceland University is an incredible privilege.



“John has always cared deeply for students. When they succeed, his eyes light up and he cannot contain his smile. When they suffer, his sorrow is apparent. In his heart of hearts, John is a person who loves people.”

David Schaal, MA '80  
Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students



“John has been one of the most thoughtful, kind and caring people I have ever worked for in my career. He understood the challenges of being a working mom and always let me be a mom first, which meant the world to me and my family.”

Jodi Seymour  
Executive Assistant to the President and  
Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees





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“The lesson from John that will stay with me forever: ‘Don’t give up’ and ‘Try, try again.’ If something doesn’t work, try something else. Think differently. He taught me not to give up on people, even our worst critics. I absorbed that message by watching him never give up.”

Kathleen Clauson Bash, PhD  
Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness



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“In John’s 10 years at Graceland, he has been tasked with finding ways to reduce the annual budget (or increase revenue) by almost \$8 million. It is amazing to me that over the same period of time, he traveled extensively to meet with donors and helped raise \$90 million!”

Kelly Everett, BA ’77  
Vice President for Institutional Advancement



“

“John reads everything. Years from now, I’m still going to be finding issues of *The Economist* on my desk, highlighted at the passages he wants me to read.”

R. Paul Davis, MA ’81  
Vice President of Business Services



We shall never forget the joy we have shared, and will continue to cherish the time we’ve spent as part of the inspiring Graceland family.

*John Sellen*



# Dr. Patricia H. Draves

## 18th President of Graceland University

Dr. Patricia H. Draves will become the 18th president of Graceland University. Dr. Harry J. Ashenhurst, chairman of the university Board of Trustees, made the announcement after an intensive search process that lasted eight months. Draves is currently Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio.

"Dr. Draves is an excellent fit for Graceland at this time," Ashenhurst commented. "Her philosophy of education, 'steeped in the Christian tradition,' as she wrote in her letter of application, aligns well with Graceland's own." Ashenhurst praised her very strong academic and administrative experience. "She knows the university system inside and out," he said, "and we look forward to working with her to chart a clear course for Graceland's future."

Draves earned a PhD in chemistry from the University of Illinois and received a Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the University of Texas-Austin. She began her teaching career at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, where she became Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. In 2002, she accepted a teaching position at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois, and later served as director of its biochemistry program. In 2006, she assumed her current position as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mount Union.

Draves has been married to her husband, Jeffrey Draves, for 27 years. Jeff, a physical, computational and environmental chemist, serves as the chair of the department of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of Mount Union. They have twin boys, William and Benjamin, who are both students at private liberal arts universities.

In regards to the announcement of her new role, Draves said, "I am extremely honored to have the opportunity to serve

Graceland as its next president. Jeff and I have found the Graceland community to be welcoming, passionate and committed to students. We are excited to work with the many dedicated members of the greater Lamoni and Independence communities, alumni, Community of Christ and friends of Graceland."

**"Dr. Draves is an excellent fit for Graceland at this time. Her philosophy of education, 'steeped in the Christian tradition,' as she wrote in her letter of application, aligns well with Graceland's own. She knows the university system inside and out."**

**Dr. Harry J. Ashenhurst**

The search for a new president began last spring with the announcement of Sellars' retirement plans. Ashenhurst appointed Dr. Kay Mussell, retired Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at American University, to head a search committee. The university hired the firm AGB Search to assist in the process.

The candidates met with leaders of Community of Christ, Graceland administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members at both the Lamoni and Independence campuses. Ashenhurst commends the Graceland community for its critical participation in the process. He noted that turnout at interview sessions was very strong

"with thoughtful and insightful questions." He was especially pleased with the strong student engagement in the selection process.

Draves will arrive on campus this spring and orient herself to Lamoni and Independence and university administration before assuming her presidential duties June 15. Dr. Sellars will continue with Graceland until July 15.





## A PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION



**“She has established a resume that speaks of authenticity, integrity and passion. Dr. Draves is a great match for the values of Graceland and the Community of Christ.”**

The most important decision the Board of Trustees makes is the selection of a new president.

We were very fortunate 10 years ago when Dr. John Sellars submitted his application. He led Graceland through a decade of challenging times when we depended upon his fundraising skills and financial acumen. He was also instrumental in pulling together a leadership team that is working effectively throughout the university. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and myself, I extend our gratitude to John for 10 years of devoted service as our president. Dr. Sellars is admired for his passion and commitment to Graceland, now and to its future.

We now turn our eyes to the future and extend a welcome to Dr. Pat Draves, Graceland's 18<sup>th</sup> president. She brings critical experience working with students. She understands what shared governance with the faculty means. She has established a resume that speaks of

authenticity, integrity and passion. Dr. Draves is a great match for the values of Graceland and the Community of Christ. Pat and her husband, Jeff, are excited about joining the Graceland community, and we are excited to have them.

The Board is working on insuring a successful transition with Graceland's multiple communities: students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, donors and Community of Christ. Planning is taking place to clarify the expectations and responsibilities we have for a new president and how we can help accomplish them. We will begin with a dialogue between the Board and the new president and expand to all constituencies that will provide the basis for goals for both the transition and long term.

I am confident that Dr. Draves has the experience, skills and commitment to lead Graceland into a successful future, and we stand ready to do everything we can to assist her in that worthy goal.

Dr. Harry J. Ashenhurst,  
Chairman, Graceland University Board of Trustees



# Translate to Alumni Success

Graceland University creates learning communities where students develop their potential for meaningful and productive lives for the betterment of the world.

This mission comes alive in the stories of amazing alumni.

In the next several pages, you'll read alumni stories of success across several diverse disciplines. Each story – and there are many more – tells of the grounding influence that Graceland had on their lives. For every alumnus, the strong network of relationships made at Graceland reinforces and exhibits

## **the Power of Together.**

Graceland's mission and values are imprinted on students' lives, and the successful outcomes from alumni reverberate around the world. Graceland graduates are making the world a better place.







# Andrew Murphy

When Andrew Murphy '14 started at Graceland, he had seen little of the world beyond the Midwest. In Lamoni, “the center of everywhere,” he became friends with Hawaiian volleyball players who inspired him to travel. After a summer in South Korea with World Service Corps, he was on his way to being a global citizen serving the less fortunate.

HealthEd Connect and Enactus invited Andrew, along with Lisa Ash '09, Dan McLain and Charles Persall '11, to represent Graceland's school of education in Zambia. Andrew saw the HealthEd Connect teams building schools and helping communities rise out of poverty. He saw the difference that compassionate, determined individuals can make in the world.

After graduating in 2014 as an elementary education major, Andrew joined Teach For America (TFA), a nonprofit aimed at mobilizing our country's young leaders as educators and education advocates. Andrew was placed at George Washington Carver, a dual-language public school in Kansas City, Missouri, for his two-year commitment. But Andrew loved the job so much that he stayed with the school and is now teaching his third year. Not many college graduates aspire to teaching in an inner city dual-language school. In fact, the shortage of applicants has created the need for TFA's two-year assignments to the schools in less desirable demographics. Driven to be better at his career, Andrew also completed a Master of Education in English from Park University.

Last summer, Andrew went back to Zambia for HealthEd Connect on his own for two months. In the three years between his trips, Andrew had grown as an educator, and he became a mentor to Zambian teachers. He helped them with professional development and curriculum. “I came with a lot of expectations and ideas for helping students with math through games like playing cards,” Andrew shared. “But what

took most of my time was something completely different. I ended up teaching about science and diseases like AIDS and Tuberculosis in their elementary curriculum.”

Loren Hall, Executive Director of HealthEd Connect, is grateful for Andrew's contributions. “Andrew Murphy really made a difference in our schools last summer. They are in better shape right now than ever,” she said. “We were really fortunate to have him on our team there. With his ability to see what needs to be done and step up to the task, Andrew's love for serving people is commendable.”

Andrew has a passion and conviction for helping others. His time in Zambia caused him to think more about how he can make a difference in the world and commit his life to teaching the most vulnerable populations. He hopes to travel to Argentina next, so he can improve his Spanish, which will help his parent-teacher conferences become deeper and more effective.

Andrew is grateful for the education and the life-changing opportunities he received at Graceland. The exceptional faculty support helped prepare Andrew for TFA and his master's program. Michelle Dickey-Kotz referred him to HealthEd Connect during a classroom management course. Peggy Henson '71 taught him reading and special ed classes. She was also the sponsor for the Graceland Student Education Association. “She really invested in me and opened up to me,” Andrew recalled. And now those experiences have come full circle, as Andrew – now a teacher himself – remains open to his students in Kansas City and around the world.

“Andrew was inspired by HealthEd Connect's mission to ‘empower women and children through health, education and advocacy programs.’”



# Tara Shupe



There is a reason why people choose to be on one side of the camera and not the other. Peering through her Nikon D 8-10, Tara Shupe '11 shies away from being in a photograph and struggled to reveal her accomplishments, but she has found success capturing the world from the other side of the lens. Freelance photography careers are not very linear, and success comes in surprises. Tara is open to gathering creative energy at every turn and thankful for the broad artistic base she received during her Graceland years.

Tara is sponsored by the well-known Lowepro, a camera bag distributor, which was one of the benchmark accomplishments she set for herself. After working in New York (another benchmark) for a stint, she is based out of Kansas City and works for 435 Magazine and a wide variety of freelance clients.

In high school, Tara got interested in photography but entered Graceland as a business major, thinking it would be a better degree to get a job. She took a Graceland film class from Dennis Piepergerdes '61 and loved it. She followed her heart and switched to studio art and visual communications.

"I bought a camera on eBay, and it became my voice. I made the majors fit around my photography. It was good because it taught me all the background and design programs. In every project, I used my photos with words, which was actually very realistic to my first job at an ad agency. I was well prepared."

Tara worked with SIFE (now Enactus) and did an Outreach International internship, for which she traveled out of the country – something she had never experienced before. "Graceland introduced me to humanitarian work, and I don't think that would have happened if I went somewhere else." The adventure of travel sparked a different side of learning that she really loved: the planning and working with new groups of people with a clear mission involved. At Graceland, she participated in many different clubs and organizations, which prepared her with a wide variety of experiences.

"So I didn't go to a photo school where I learned everything about the specific craft. Instead, I got to mess with all these different, creative things that really built up my scope, which made me want to start up our business adventure, Wild Creatives; an idea that is much more than photography. It's about being creative – in any area – and spending time together with other creative people, celebrating creative energy."

Tara just returned from India, where she combined three of her passions: working with a nonprofit, traveling and photographing a new culture. While working on an earlier project, Tara met a video photographer from Colorado who shared her humanitarian interests – something her time at Graceland instilled. She invited Tara to be on a team to create materials for a nonprofit. It was a whirlwind trip to the headquarters of Indian Christian Ministries, and Tara stayed on several days to gather photos to add to her portfolio.

Beyond the bread and butter photography shoots, Tara enjoys new adventures in traveling and photography and is capturing the world with her Nikon. Her artistic scope, broadened through Graceland's influence, helped to prompt her entrepreneurial adventure with Wild Creatives, linking artists of every genre to explore the creative energy when they gather.

“Graceland introduced me to humanitarian work, and I don't think that would have happened if I went somewhere else.”





A man in a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers is standing in front of a whiteboard. He is pointing with his right hand towards the whiteboard, which has some faint, illegible writing on it. The man is looking back over his shoulder towards the camera.

# Mike Davis

“Graceland was the best four years of my life. At Graceland students are given an opportunity to define themselves, to learn to balance work and life, and for me, to learn how to ask questions and find creative solutions.”

Mike Davis '10 samples the pizza everywhere he goes. It is all part of the cultural immersion that Mike includes in his research. His time at Graceland included managing the Pizza Shack, and he considers himself a connoisseur.

For the past seven years, Mike Davis has had great success working with Prosci, a change management research firm that works with Fortune 500 clients around the world to improve project results. He loves the research analyst components of his job—asking questions to find out what does and doesn't work in a successful company, then developing strategies for change.

As a research analyst and operations manager, Mike applies the curiosity and work ethic he developed at Graceland. In 2010, he graduated with a double major in business administration and accounting. He loved how his tax classes applied knowledge of systems and numbers to real-life scenarios. He knew he didn't want to be a traditional number cruncher, and that he'd rather apply the theories he learned to systemic change for the betterment of organizations and society.

Mike found his passion for business planning while participating in Enactus at Graceland. The program challenged him to create new solutions and better processes, and to communicate ideas with teammates, executives and consumers. He loves creating strategies that could solve our daily problems. His garage is filled with new business plans on poster boards. For him, business is a way of thinking.

Applying this mindset to the Global Affiliate Network that he works with at Prosci has produced success. Since he was promoted to the team two years ago, they've grown from 12 to 32 partners serving over 45 countries. Mike is working to develop infrastructure within this expansion while improving the quality of their partnerships.

“A lot of what I do for Prosci today is develop, foster and grow relationships with our partners around the world. In my interview process for Prosci, I described what Graceland's curriculum helped me discover. I am aware that it was much more than the classes I took, or the faculty, or the smaller student body; it was the collective result of spending four years in a setting that focuses on students learning to be successful.”

“I learned how to maintain relationships at Graceland,” Mike shared. “Economics classes taught me how to apply theory, accounting taught me how to follow rules, and business taught me how to make my own rules.”

Mike's memories of Graceland are rich with friendships that continue. He regularly plans ski trips with several of his Closson buddies and is one of the partners with Enactus on the GU4U alumni/student mentoring program. Mike also serves on the Graceland Alumni Board of Directors, where he puts his strategizing skills to work giving back to his alma mater.

“Graceland was the best four years of my life. At Graceland students are given an opportunity to define themselves, to learn to balance work and life, and for me, to learn how to ask questions and find creative solutions.”

Back to the pizza. As a world traveler, Mike can tell you about pizza (and business) in Africa, Europe, South America, Central America, Australia, Canada and across the U.S., where he has had an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and rich collaboration with a new Prosci affiliate, creating solutions to make life a little bit better.



# Keely Cardwell

**K**eely Cardwell graduated from Graceland in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). After working as an RN for seven years, she is currently finishing a Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) at the University of Kansas. Horizons caught up with Keely to hear about her burgeoning career and Graceland memories.

Keely knew two things from a young age: she wanted to attend Graceland, and she wanted a career in anesthesia. Graceland was the natural choice for a daughter of two Gracelanders, Byron Thomas '76 and Lori Thomas (Chandler). Keely grew up Community of Christ, attending Spectacular each summer and looking up to the college students on staff. Graceland was her first choice for undergraduate.

At a fourth grade career day, her classmate's parent talked about their job in anesthesia. The idea stuck in Keely's mind, and she shadowed an anesthesiologist in high school. She has several family members in medical professions, and she decided to follow a path to nurse anesthesia.

To obtain her BSN, Keely studied at Graceland's Lamoni campus for three years, then attended Graceland's School of Nursing in Independence for another year and a half. Although it was hard to leave her friends in Lamoni, she cherishes the lifelong friendships she made on both campuses.

"The community at Graceland is truly unique and allows relationships to form deep roots that last a lifetime," Keely shared. "I was also a cheerleader at Graceland for two years (2003-05). I enjoyed cheering for football and basketball games, and this is ultimately how I met my husband, Casey Cardwell '05. He was a fellow cheerleader."

Keely also valued the world-class education she received at Graceland. Sharon Little-Stoetzel was among her favorite teachers in the nursing program. "She taught our pharmacology class and had such an upbeat way of teaching that made this difficult subject manageable. She was always kind and encouraging."

After Graceland, Keely and Casey moved to Oregon, then to Idaho, before heading to the University of Kansas so Keely could work toward her DNAP. Casey was a religion major at Graceland, then obtained an EMS degree to work as a paramedic. Both have dedicated their careers to serving others in times of crisis.

"I hope I am able to affect change in my part of the world through my patient care. I chose anesthesia so I could be a kind and calming presence for someone before surgery," Keely said. "Sometimes this is the most difficult time for a patient and/or their family. I hope I am able to provide some reassurance that they are not alone, and I will be present during the surgery to provide competent and vigilant care of them and their family."

This commitment to serving others is heroic, but nurse anesthetists don't often get proper recognition for their knowledge and work. "In Kansas alone, CRNAs provide approximately 70 percent of the anesthesia services," Keely shared. "CRNAs are the predominant anesthesia providers in the armed forces and the Veterans Affairs health care system nationwide."

According to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) 2016 Practice Profile Survey, CRNAs safely administer approximately 43 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States. Keely has accepted a job in Boise, Idaho after she graduates. She will work for an anesthesia group for

the St. Luke's Health system in Boise and the surrounding suburbs. She is excited to get back to Idaho where she and her husband enjoy camping, hiking, biking and a generally active lifestyle.

Graceland's influence on her life is immeasurable; her marriage, career, and lifelong friendships all started through the nurturing and empowering process of education where she found success



“The community at Graceland is truly unique and allows relationships to form deep roots that last a lifetime.”



# James Thomas Jr.

**J**ames Thomas Jr. '09 has created a life he never thought possible. And now he's giving that same chance to high school football players who might otherwise believe they can't do the same.

JT, as he is known to his friends, was born and raised in an area of poverty in Orlando, Florida, and he faced limited options for his future. Without the resources to be successful, he recalls, "it was easier for me to stay home and be a drug dealer than it was for me to go to college." But that all changed when he met Graceland Admissions counselor Kevin Brown '96.

Brown helped James recognize the possibilities available to him if he chose to come the 1,300 miles from Orlando to Lamoni. At the time, he felt it was the only chance that allowed him to trade perhaps a troubled future for one of opportunity. For James, Graceland was his chance.

As a freshman, he wasn't sure he was going to make it at Graceland. The first is always the hardest year, especially for students who experience such a culture shock. He recalls, however, that once he stopped comparing Lamoni to Orlando and began to see what Graceland – and Lamoni – had to offer, he began to not only appreciate his time here, but cherish it.

A self-proclaimed social butterfly, James had interactions with people from all over the world while at Graceland, and he experienced a whole new way of living. He recalls, "I learned how to live in a small town; I learned how to be around a different race." Being from a predominantly black community in Orlando, he was introduced to multiple cultures – including the local Amish.

An All-American track athlete for Graceland, James still holds the record for the indoor 60 meter and the outdoor 100 meter. He was a member of the football team to win the first conference title in 30 years for Graceland, and the amusement comes through in his voice when he talks about the goal

post being brought down in celebration of the team's success that year. The biggest influence throughout his time at Graceland and to this day, however, was the people.

The relationships he built while at Graceland, like so many, continued beyond graduation. Adam Clark, one of his Graceland football coaches, later hired him as a graduate assistant at Western New Mexico, where James spent six seasons climbing the ladder to defensive coordinator. In 2014 at the age of 27, James was the youngest defensive coordinator in college football. He credits his Graceland relationships and the connections he made as a Yellowjacket to his success.

A physical education and health double major at Graceland, James earned a master's degree while at Western New Mexico. He is now the defensive coordinator for Clarion University in Pennsylvania, an NCAA Division II school, and is again wearing the blue and gold. He and his wife, Razanna '10, who he met at Graceland, live there with their two children.

While he recognizes that many believe the best part of being a college football coach is being on the field and in the heat of the action, he finds reward in recruiting. "I've been able to give athletes like me opportunities to get out of similar situations." And through those given opportunities, James intends to create a few more for himself. "I wake up every morning loving what I do," he said. But he's not done. "I'm gonna keep on climbing until there's nowhere left to climb."

**"Before I left high school, I wasn't educated. And when you say 'educated,' everybody thinks academically... But Graceland opened my eyes to so many different things. I left there with so much more knowledge than just books. I can make it anywhere."**



**"I love that place. I love Graceland."**



# Patty Kochaver



Showcased in galleries and private collections around the U.S., Patty Kochaver '84 credits Graceland for her artistic beginnings. She has perfected her calling and has a studio at the Midwest Clay Guild, north of Chicago. Her unique ceramic work has evolved to an exquisite, recognizable style. Currently, she exhibits in an international juried show called Materials, Hard and Soft, in Denton, Texas. Represented by Blue Gallery in Kansas City, her website is [pattykochaver.com](http://pattykochaver.com).

**Q** Ceramics is a broad medium. What is your specialty?

**A** Wheel thrown saggar fired vessels. (A saggar is a refractory container used in China hundreds of years ago to protect fine porcelain ware.) I use saggars as a container for combustibles, which create interesting marks on the pot's surfaces. I was studio coordinator at the Evanston Art Center (EAC) for nearly 10 years (2001-10) and had a fully equipped studio at my disposal. This gave me the freedom to experiment and hone in on the body of work I do now. I work intuitively but also document my firings to understand the science of it. The forms I fire have evolved over the years, and I can spend hours getting the curve, balance and lift just right. I've saggar fired floor vessels (three feet high) but prefer mid-sized round bottle forms and boxes. Another specialty of mine is teaching. I've been teaching adults since 1991 and now teach at Lill Street Art Center and the EAC. Creating my own work is a solitary experience, which I enjoy, but it's nice to have teaching to bring balance. As with my artwork, my teaching has also evolved. I was lucky to learn so many facets of working in clay while at Graceland under the instruction of Mel Clark '68.

**Q** Success as an artist is hard won. What has been the key for you?

**A** Persistence. A common feeling among artists is "I sometimes feel like a fraud." There isn't a lot of societal support for the decision to do art for a living. I think we always have to bolster ourselves. I moved to a Chicago neighborhood where there were a lot of artists working to pay the bills and pursuing their work. I've sacrificed to afford studio space. I remember my mother telling me I had to start thinking of myself as a professional. That



change in mindset was what I needed. I got a teaching studio in Chicago and later became a department coordinator at the EAC where I taught. My support system and exposure grew there, and I started entering juried exhibits with the new body of work I was producing. I made gallery contacts and started showing and selling. Landing the position at the EAC was pivotal for my career and direction, but I wouldn't have gotten the position if I hadn't already invested time, sweat and tears in my decision to be an artist for a living.

**Q** What was most memorable about your time at Graceland?

**A** My time in Kelly Hall. And the people. There were so many impactful instructors, and the feeling of freedom to create in the ceramics department was wonderful. I remember working in the studio for days without sleep, just being energized by creating. I'm thankful for being given such a large base of knowledge in ceramics. Painting, drawing, printmaking and design all feed into the same creative well and inform and enhance my main body of work. When I can, I continue with painting and drawing classes to provide a fresh perspective.

**Q** Your thoughts on a liberal arts education?

**A** The benefits of a liberal arts education are invaluable. Students experience things they might not otherwise. It allows expansion of ideas and experiences, broadens perspectives and viewpoints, and provides a solid base to face the world. I often draw on what I learned at Graceland and think my younger self would be surprised that I'm actually using this. The relationships that develop through a liberal arts education are also invaluable and long lasting.





# Amanda Deering Jones

**A**manda Deering Jones '01 believes she made one of the best decisions of her life when she decided to become a theatre major at Graceland University. With an already developed interest in film, the Sarasota, Florida, native grew up in the Community of Christ and aware of Graceland. When it came time to choose a college, she knew she wanted to go somewhere with smaller classes and better access to faculty. A visit to Graceland offered a feeling of comfort and familiarity.

Amanda now works as a script supervisor at Pixar Animation Studios, a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company, but she fully recognizes that she didn't get there on her own. "I was lucky enough to be at Graceland during the Kate Musgrove era," she explains. "She completely transformed the department, and it was the best possible training I could have received." Amanda also acknowledges her classmates in the theatre department. "We felt like we struck gold as a crew, and they remain very important people in my life. Most especially, I met my amazing husband, Jay-Vincent '00 at Graceland."

While great training is important in the film industry, connections are often credited for

lifting people to success. For Amanda, it was a Graceland connection. Michael Lewis '90 was president of the Alumni Board at the time she graduated, and she gives him credit for connecting her to her first film job. "I am one hundred percent certain that I wouldn't be where I am today without his help." And where she is now has made a difference – both in her life and those touched by her work.

Having spent nearly her entire career in animation, Amanda feels fortunate to have worked on films that have made an impact on people. Most recently, she has produced the short film *Borrowed Time* in her off time over the course of five years. The film has been an official selection for many awards over the past two

years, has won seven so far, and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Short in 2017. "The success of *Borrowed Time* is beyond thrilling, and the experience has changed my life," says Amanda. But she says the deeper purpose to affect and reach people has made all her hard work worthwhile.

Amanda doesn't stop at film when making a difference, however. In her personal life, she has spent the last several years trying to move toward a zero-waste lifestyle. "My husband and I have made great strides, and I try to share what I learn with everyone I know, because most of the changes are pretty easy to implement; it comes down to a choice and voting with your wallet." Like the Graceland Sustainability program, which has developed since Amanda graduated from Graceland, Amanda sees waste as a big issue. She intends to do more in the future to help the world move away from single-use waste, and she and her husband have recently added seven chickens to her brood (two dogs and one cat) to get their own farm fresh eggs.

Amanda and Jay-Vincent are alumnus with productive careers who are making a difference in people's lives through their vocation and through the choices that they make.



# Jody Hovland

Graceland Theatre Department's Guest Artist on Campus

Graceland University's Theatre Department hosted Jody Hovland, a guest artist in-house for six weeks, who played the lead in the production of *W;t*, a 1999 Pulitzer Prize winning one-act play written by Margaret Edson. Directed by Graceland's Professor of Theatre Gary Heisserer, PhD, the play's cast was an exciting mix of students, faculty and guest artist.



When Gary, Associate Professor of Theatre Tracy Salter and Assistant Professor of Theatre Seth Campbell set out last spring to select a season of productions, their goal was to represent a diverse selection of work they felt was best for the students and the community. There was no question *W;t* fit that criteria. Gary met actor and director Jody Hovland, co-founder and former Artistic Director of Iowa City's professional company, Riverside Theatre, through an organization called the National New Play Network (NNPN), of which Jody is currently an Ambassador. The two struck up an acquaintance and mutual respect for each other's work over the years. Gary previously saw Jody present a staged reading at the Kennedy Center as part of an MFA playwriting program and knew she would be extremely well-suited for

**"It has been an incredible experience working with Jody on the production. She has shown us that striving for the highest standards of artistic excellence can wonderfully co-exist with kindness, compassion and collegiality."**

~Gary Heisserer

the role. For Jody, it was an easy sell. She already had experience in the part of Dr. Vivian Bearing, Professor of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Poetry, when she played the character in a professional performance of the play put on by her own theatre company. However, this time around, she brings a whole different level of experiences to the role as a cancer survivor.

Dr. Vivian Bearing is learning to suffer. A patient undergoing treatment for stage 4 ovarian cancer, she has become the subject of research for the oncologists and clinical fellows caring for her. Her prognosis grim, she finds kindness and compassion in her primary care nurse, Susie. Vivian

relates in a combination of flashbacks and monologues to the audience about being an uncompromising scholar while a professor, then the shift to holding onto whatever dignity she has left in her plight

against this unforgiving disease of which she so candidly shares. In true, witty form, Vivian gets the last laugh. *W;t* is chock-full of ironies around every turn and cleverly leaves its audience amused.

Gary worked with the cast practicing voice projection, line delivery and timing in rehearsals for the production. When asked about what specific benefits working with a guest artist brings to his students, he stated, "It has been an incredible experience working with Jody on the production. She has shown us that striving for the highest standards of artistic excellence can wonderfully co-exist with kindness, compassion and collegiality."

After 34 years working alongside her husband and business partner, Ron Clark, and 30 years as a Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at Cornell College, Jody and her husband have delved into freelancing and travel the country doing what they love: performing live theatre.

To learn more about Jody and get a little wisdom from a professional in the arts, read an interview with her online at [www.graceland.edu/JodyHovland](http://www.graceland.edu/JodyHovland).





A large, modern brick building with a curved facade and multiple windows. A sign above the entrance reads "Welcome To GRACELAND UNIVERSITY". The building is surrounded by greenery and has a set of stairs leading up to the entrance.

# Increased Online Programs with a New Delivery System

Graceland's Independence campus is home to online programs that have increased from nursing to include business and education. Highly ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*, check out the new offerings provided in nursing, education and in business at [www.graceland.edu/discover/online](http://www.graceland.edu/discover/online).

To accommodate the rapid growth in Graceland's online education, the online programs will move from eCollege delivery system to BrightSpace Learning Environment by D2L, which will improve the speed and functionality of the courses.

"Our new partnership with D2L provides Graceland with an opportunity to enhance the online learning experience for our students, the potential to offer expanded learning options for the Lamoni campus, and will significantly reduce our annual expenses," says Paul Binnicker '94, Director, Center for Graduate and Continuing Studies.

BrightSpace Learning Environment, developed and marketed by Desire2Learn (D2L) Inc., is a cloud-based learning management platform designed to deliver to learners fully online, blended and competency-based educational (CBE) programs that are intuitive, flexible and learner-centric. The ease of the Windows-based, drag-and-drop implementation allows for a user experience that is clean, simple and conducive to rapid adoption as a course delivery architecture.

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**“Our programs provide the rigor and flexibility required by busy professionals, allowing them to meet the curriculum requirements and never miss a beat performing their jobs. I couldn't be more pleased!”**

Connie Wright '16, Graceland University Director of Instructional Design.



Graceland employees John James '16 and Rina Poli '16 recognized the opportunity to continue their education to further their careers through online offerings. James signed up for the online bachelor's degree program that offers dual majors in business administration and organizational leadership. He was unsure of how he wanted to finish his bachelor's degree until he heard about the online program at Graceland. His previously earned college credits easily transferred, and now that he is finished with his dual degree, he is quick to compliment his instructors, saying, "They are professional, knowledgeable and caring." James has already applied and been accepted into a graduate program at the University of Missouri.



Poli graduated in December 2016. She was drawn to the online bachelor's degree in health care management, which she completed in just one year. "It went by so fast, and I thought the instructors were excellent." Poli said she would recommend this program to any working adult who wants to learn more about the health care environment and enhance their career opportunities.





# General Education Is Essential Education

“Faculty members at a wide range of institutions are finding they can have a powerful impact by organizing curriculum – not just individual courses – to support students’ learning and success.”<sup>1</sup> A strong, well-balanced education is crucial in today’s professional world. Graceland has revised its general education requirements to new essential education courses that organize curriculum in themed groups that will give graduates a competitive edge providing essential skills to thrive in life.

In mid December, Gary Heisserer, Professor of Theatre/Director of University Assessment, held a meeting in Carol Hall for faculty and staff to examine details of the new essential education curriculum. Heisserer discussed the benefits this will bring to the university and its students. The first phase of the new curriculum went into effect this year, with full implementation planned for Fall 2018.

Students, parents and institutions of higher learning are charged with thinking beyond a major and focusing on fundamental skills valuable to employers, such as critical thinking, oral and written communication, creativity, ethical judgement, ability to work effectively with others, knowledge of global issues, and competency in solving complex problems. Removing the singular emphasis

on majors and concentrating on a sound liberal arts education creates leaders, ethical human beings and informed citizens.

Andreas Schleicher<sup>2</sup> stated, “Today, because of rapid economic and social change, schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we don’t yet know will arise.” The capacity to make smart decisions fosters highly productive and lucrative employees with the ability to learn, unlearn, then relearn.

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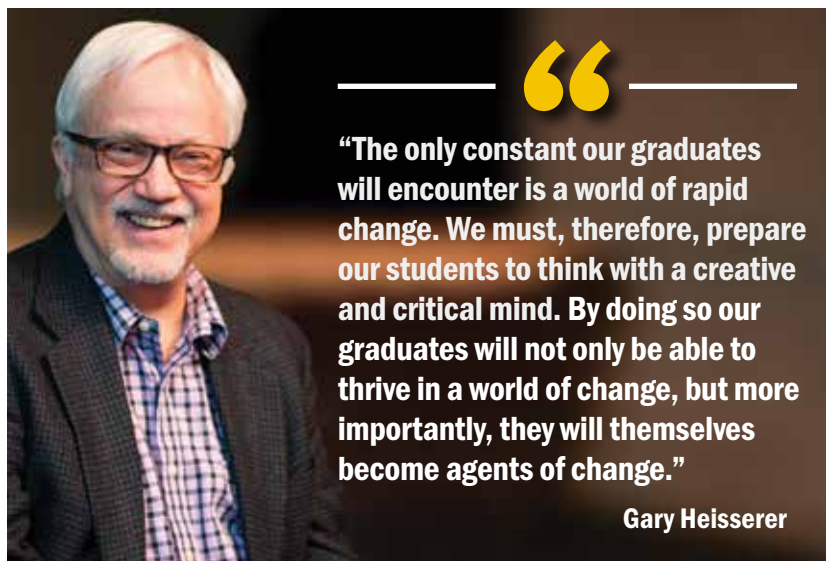
**The new curriculum will cultivate the intellectual flexibility needed for professional and personal development throughout life.**

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According to CNNMoney.com, “a new study by networking site LinkedIn found today’s college graduates don’t just change jobs, they often switch to entirely different industries. Many will change jobs four times by the time they are 32.” Graceland needs to prepare students for flexible career paths and lifelong learning by providing a sound educational base.

The uniqueness of the essential education curriculum distinguishes Graceland from other colleges and universities across the country. Students will follow one of five broadly-defined tracks or themes: sustainability, peace, equality, world citizenship and innovation. The new curriculum will also be aligned with a wide variety of co-curricular and noncurricular events on campus.

Graceland’s essential education will provide a sound intellectually-unifying experience; a liberal arts base that will be beneficial for professional aspirations as well as personal endeavors.



<sup>1</sup> Loni Bordoloi Pazich, Roosevelt Montas and Steve Mintz.  
[https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/01/26/disparate-institutions-find-common-core-curriculum-reaps-significant-benefits-essay?utm\\_source=Inside+Higher+Ed](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/01/26/disparate-institutions-find-common-core-curriculum-reaps-significant-benefits-essay?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed)

<sup>2</sup> Division Head and coordinator of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the OECD Indicators of Education Systems programme (INES)





# Yellowjacket Update



**T**he Graceland University men's basketball program has earned a top 25 national ranking in the NAIA Division I national poll for the first time in program history. Despite returning none of the top five scorers on last year's team and hiring new head coach, Craig Doty, in May, the Yellowjackets have found quick success.

**“Everything we have accomplished so far, we have done together. Our student-athletes play for each other, and they genuinely care about each other.”**

Craig Doty, Head Coach



**G**raceland University Athletics relaunched the athletic website, gujackets.com, in early January with a fresh new look, just in time to showcase the success of several student-athletes amplifying their skills this spring.

**J**unior center Jeremy Deemer has experienced individual success as a member of the Graceland basketball team. Deemer is one of 20 student-athletes in the country named to the 2017 Allstate NABC and WBCA Good Works Teams® by Allstate Insurance Company, the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA).

Jeremy was also named to CoSIDA Academic All-American Team and earned First-Team All-Conference honors this season.



**“Jeremy is an individual who embodies all that is good about being a student-athlete. His commitment to community service, academics, clubs and organizations around campus and to our basketball program is second to none.”**

Craig Doty, Head Coach



## Generous Donation Gives Students Opportunity to Use Cutting-Edge Science Equipment

The faculty in Graceland's Resch Science and Technology Hall take pride in the building's scientific equipment and teaching labs available to students. So, when Dr. Mike Wiley '83, Senior Organic Chemist at Eli Lilly and Graceland alumni board member, began inquiring about the needs of the department, Graceland University Associate Professor of Biology and Chemistry Dr. Mary Shawgo piped up. On her wish list was a Thermo Scientific NanoDrop Lite Spectrophotometer, a patented sample retention system that measures the concentration of DNA in very small sample volumes of 1  $\mu$ L (there is over 350,000  $\mu$ L in one can of soda) with incredible accuracy. Presented last

spring to the math and science department, students taking their intro class for biology, chemistry or pre-nursing get an opportunity to take samples of DNA from their cheek cells and determine how much DNA they have isolated with the NanoDrop Lite. Upper level biology students can conduct research with equipment giving Graceland students the confidence to step into intern roles at places like Eli Lilly with experience using equipment at a highly professional level. Because of the generosity of Graceland alumni like Dr. Wiley and his wife Dana Cochran-Wiley '82, students gain valuable experience to take into their professional lives.



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# Bob Kelly Retires After 37 Years

Since Aug. 29, 1979, there has been both a calm and a heightened level of mischief on Graceland's Lamoni campus. On that day, Bob Kelly launched a career with Graceland that would become a legacy, as he began his first day as a campus maintenance worker. Since that time, Bob has made his impact on countless Graceland projects and people through his work ethic and benevolence.

Standing anywhere on the Lamoni campus today, it would be impossible not to experience the influence Bob has made on the Graceland landscape. He has had his hand in every project from dredging Founder's Lake – at least twice – to the 100-year anniversary renovation of the Higdon Administration building. He has been involved in pretty much every capital construction project since that day in 1979, even winning the "Extra Mile Award" in September 2005.

Bob's Graceland experience, however, goes far beyond what is visible during a visit to "the Hill." He has been a trusted colleague, a caring boss, a teacher and a friend. He has been so much to so many people. Derek Sutherland, who worked under Bob with Facility Services for several years said, "Bob was so much more than a boss. He was the best teacher I had while at Graceland, and I still count him as a friend."

Bob retired last year after holding up the campus for 37 years, the last 28 as Campus Maintenance Supervisor. But he hasn't gone far. After a weekend retirement, Bob began a new role as the Maintenance and Grounds Supervisor for Lamoni

“Bob was so much more than a boss. He was the best teacher I had while at Graceland, and I still count him as a friend.”

Derek Sutherland



Community Schools, where he will no doubt have an impact on a whole new generation of kids. Maybe one day, a few of them will come to Graceland and carry on his legacy, creating an impact with a ton of hard work and just enough mischief.

## Studio G Student Communications Center

### Creating Synergy

Walking through the Memorial Student Center (MSC) these days, you're likely to catch a new type of collaborating taking place right in the center of campus. Three student organizations – **The Acacia yearbook, The Tower newspaper and Communications Club** – now occupy a shared space intended to boost student communication.

Studio G, as the new student communications center is called, is located on the mezzanine in the MSC Main Room with a view of the most active area of Graceland student life. Students involved in the afore mentioned organizations use the space as a hub for collecting information on Graceland events, stories and initiatives

and dispersing it using at least one of the communications mediums available to them: campus digital signage, posters, email announcements and social media, to name a few.

"Studio G is a space that the yearbook staff only dreamed of my freshman year," said Katelyn Metcalf, Acacia Editor. "Now that it's a reality, the yearbook staff – along with the other organizations – finally have a place to call home. It has provided a space for us to plan, create and build relationships with one another. Studio G is truly a blessing to our staff."

Additionally, with a physical space to showcase the work of The Acacia, The Tower and

Communications Club, as well as the opportunities available to other students, these organizations have grown. The Acacia alone has welcomed 11 new members this year, according to Katelyn.

“Studio G is a space that the yearbook staff only dreamed of my freshman year.”

With the introduction of Studio G, the rest of the Graceland student body now also has a central location to take their yearbook photo, ask for help promoting their own clubs' or organizations' events, as well as offer feedback on the best ways to communicate with them

on these and other important campus happenings and issues. Organizational student communication is better than ever before.



# CLASS

# Notes

## WEDDINGS

**Andrew '13** and **Katie Fryer**, Brampton, Ontario, Canada, June 18, 2016.

Joe and **Nichelle Closson '10 Oxley**, Independence, Missouri, Oct., 2016.

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Tom '55** and **Terry Moore '56 Freeman** celebrated their 60th anniversary on Aug. 25, 2016.

**Warren '46** and **Helen Skinner '46 Hinkle** celebrated their 70th anniversary on Oct. 19, 2016.

**Rolland '56** and **Alice Hughes** celebrated their 60th anniversary on Dec. 29, 2016.

**Lonnie '67** and **Carol Knittle '67 Mair**, celebrated their 50th anniversary on Dec. 18, 2016.

**Joseph '52** and **Betty Wellington** celebrated their 60th anniversary on June 3, 2016.

## BIRTHS

**Robert Bishop '08** and **Kendra Freeman '10 Bishop**, Lansing, Michigan, Darius Hall, born June 30, 2015.

**Brady '03** and **Erin Bonnefin Cackler**, Independence, Missouri, Benjamin John Mark, born Nov. 4, 2016.

Aaron and **Jana Booth '96 Coil**, Mankato, Kansas, Pierce, born March 13, 2015.

**Ryan '96** and **Donna Lindeen '96 Harrington**, Cannon Falls, Minnesota, Devon, born Oct. 3, 2014.

Brandon and **Brooke Johnson '04 Wright**, Clive, Iowa, Addison Nicole, born Dec. 20, 2012, and Palmer Nicole, born May 17, 2014.

Blake and **Katie Lickteig '09 Uhlenhake**, Shawnee, Kansas, Makenna, born Aug. 5, 2015.

**Dritan '07** and **Megan Fryer '07 Zhuja**, Waukee, Iowa, Aurora Lucia, born May 13, 2014, and Arian, born April 16, 2016.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Norman Bernauer '49**, Kansas City, Missouri, Jan. 11, 2017.

**Donald Bigby '83**, Miami, Oklahoma, June 13, 2015.

**William Boger '76**, Buckeye, Arizona, March 28, 2016.

**Don Booz '48**, Grain Valley, Missouri, Dec. 12, 2016.

**Eleanor Putnam '58 Bruner**, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Nov. 30, 2016.

**Barbara Berridge '47 Bayless England**, Edmond, Oklahoma, Nov. 29, 2016.

**Clarence Conoley '48**, Overland Park, Kansas, Jan. 30, 2017.

**Duane Constance '48**, Stewartsville, Missouri, Nov. 12, 2016.

**John Datschefski '70**, Independence, Missouri, Oct. 20, 2016.

**Dehryl (Tony) Dennis '63**, Boise, Idaho, Jan. 8, 2016.

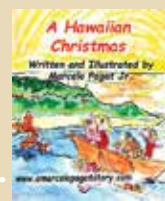
**Jack Downey '43**, Auburn, California, Dec. 19, 2016.

**Marilyn Johnston '47 Dutschmann**, Kilgore, Texas, Dec. 6, 2016.

## 60s



**Marcelo Pagat Jr. '64** recently published a book that he wrote and illustrated while at Graceland over 50 years ago. The book is titled *A Hawaiian Christmas*.



## 70s

**Barbara Bayless Webster '73** has co-authored a book called *A Place for Me!: Empowering Wisdom to Create an Amazing Life*.



## 80s



**Jana Zinser '80** recently wrote a book titled, *The Children's Train; Escape on the Kindertransport*.







## Graceland's Connections with Kosovo

**A**mong his posts, Ambassador John Menzies '70 was the Chief of Mission for the United States Office in Pristina, Kosovo, 2001-02, and was largely responsible for Graceland's connections to Kosovo. Before his term as Graceland's president and afterwards, Ambassador Menzies has helped many international students call Graceland home. Two of Kosovo's Graceland graduates are returning this spring, continuing the Graceland legacy of international connections. Dhurata Hoxha '04 will be the commencement speaker for Graceland's 120<sup>th</sup> Commencement on April 30. Zana Zeqiri Rudi '06 and Dhurata Hoxha will receive Honorary Doctorates at Graceland's commencement.



### Zana Rudi

was appointed as Kosovo's Ambassador to Panama in January 2017. Previously, she served as Chief of Mission in Kosovo's Embassy in Panama where she established the Embassy as the first and only mission of the Republic of Kosovo in Latin America. To date, she has organized four presidential visits, two ministerial visits and other visits between the countries. Before heading Kosovo's Embassy in Panama, she served as political adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo from 2011-13.

Zana is married to Korab Rudi and has a daughter, Lisa Rudi. Zana gave volunteer service to Graceland from abroad by serving on the Alumni Board of Directors from 2011-14.



### Dhurata Hoxha

was appointed a Minister of Justice in July 2016. Prior to present appointment, Mrs. Hoxha served as a political advisor to the Speaker of Assembly of Republic of Kosovo Mr. Kadri Veseli, with responsibilities covering security policies and rule of law. Dhurata is from Mitrovica and lives in Prishtina with her husband, Visar, and their two children, Mal and Hana.

**Margaret (Pat) Gilbertson '51 Dyer,**  
Irvine, California, Nov. 10, 2016.

**William Heath,** Faculty Emeritus,  
Port Isabel, Texas, Dec. 8, 2016.

**Reed Holmes '37,**  
Pepperell, Maine, Nov. 13, 2016.

**Garry Waldon Hunt '58,**  
Klamath Falls, Oregon, Jan. 12, 2017.

**David Leonard '52,**  
Mountain View, California, Oct. 7, 2016.

**Linda Marvell,** Graceland Employee,  
Independence, Missouri, Dec. 16, 2016.

**Patricia Matlak '59,**  
Arlington Heights, Illinois, Oct. 19, 2016.

**Carol (Dean) McKay '53, Spradlin McCready,**  
Osawatomie, Kansas, Oct. 25, 2016.

**Mary Garrett '55 Mitchell,**  
Westminster, California, Aug. 15, 2016.

**Maxine Barrows '49 Monroe,**  
Leon, Iowa, Dec. 23, 2016.

**Sandra Youngs '75 Naylor,**  
Lamoni, Iowa, April 10, 2016.

**Eugene Painter '59,**  
Bend, Oregon, Nov. 14, 2016.

**Sarah Thatcher '06,**  
Roeland Park, Kansas, Nov. 22, 2016.

**Ruth Tilton '49 Potter,**  
Independence, Missouri, Dec. 31, 2016.

**Carl Rossman '55,**  
Owosso, Michigan, Dec. 8, 2016.

**Faye Martin '36 Santavicca,**  
Marietta, Georgia, Dec. 2, 2016.

**Richard Owen Self '54,**  
Oviedo, Florida, Nov. 29, 2016.

**Sarah Thatcher '06,**  
Roeland Park, Kansas, Nov. 22, 2016.

**Brenda Trumbley '77,**  
Seminole, Florida, Sept. 28, 2016.

**John Vertako '77,**  
Blue Springs, Missouri, Feb. 1, 2017.

**Gilbert Vitek '55,**  
Lamoni, Iowa, July 2, 2016.

**Earlene Allen '50 Walters,**  
Deer Lodge, Montana, Sept. 14, 2013.

**Jody Meek '10 West,**  
Bethany, Missouri, Oct. 25, 2016.

**Bill Williams '40,**  
Spokane, Washington, Dec. 11, 2016.

**Betty Lou Bullock '53 Young,**  
Independence, Missouri, Jan. 15, 2017.

**Casper "Cap" Winkler '49,**  
Feb. 4, 2017.

### Corrections to Previous Horizons

**Linda Wetzel '74** of Dayton, Nevada was incorrectly reported as deceased.

**Edward Daly III '00** of Loveland, Colorado was incorrectly reported as deceased.

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All funds received from the brick plaza go to the Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship Fund, which exists for the sole purpose of providing scholarships to descendants of Graceland alumni.



For more information or to purchase an alumni brick for yourself or a loved one:

[WWW.GRACELAND.EDU/BRICK](http://WWW.GRACELAND.EDU/BRICK)