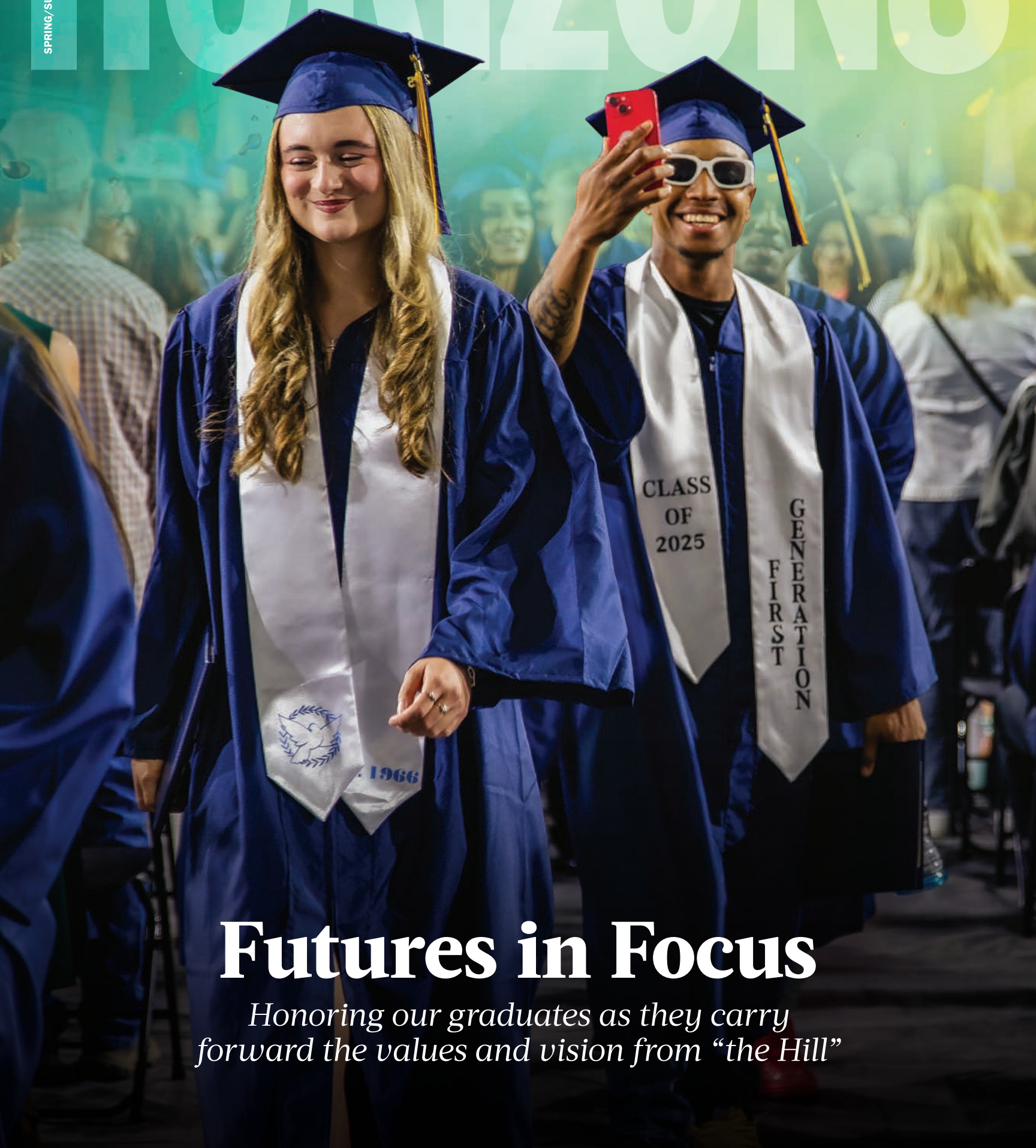


HORIZONS



Futures in Focus

Honoring our graduates as they carry forward the values and vision from “the Hill”

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Bold Steps & Belonging

Commencement marked the end of my first academic year as president of Graceland University. I've spent much of the past year listening – learning from students, faculty, alumni, and staff about what makes Graceland so beloved, and where we must grow to meet the challenges of the future.

It has been a year of hard work and hopeful beginnings. I'm grateful every day for the people who make this place extraordinary.

When I was inaugurated in October, I shared three goals that will guide our efforts moving forward:

To create a strong student experience

To make Graceland a great place to work

And to drive revenue so we can reinvest in our mission

None of these goals will be accomplished without some pain. None will be accomplished without some transformation. To prosper into this century, Graceland must move forward boldly. We must not be afraid to make mistakes or to change our minds.

And that is what we are doing – together.

We are reimagining academic programs, growing graduate enrollment, investing in campus experiences, and centering student success in every decision. We are strengthening community among our employees, listening to feedback, and working to make Graceland not only sustainable, but vibrant and values-driven.

Graceland is proudly different.

We are a university that embraces radical belonging. Our students come from 30 countries. We are a minority-majority university. Nearly half of our students are Pell Grant eligible. This does not mean Graceland has been untroubled by problems, but rather that we choose to invite everyone to the table to build a vibrant educational community.

We provide transformative education at an incredible value – the most affordable private university in Iowa. However, cost is only part of the story. A Graceland education teaches students to look beyond themselves. We strive to create graduates who understand the world and aspire to make it better.

Graceland remains a place where students, regardless of their background, learn to broaden their minds, develop their voice, and engage deeply with others. We reject narrowness and fear. We nurture curiosity, empathy, and intelligence.

Higher education is changing, and Graceland is changing with it – not by compromising who we are, but by doubling down on what matters.

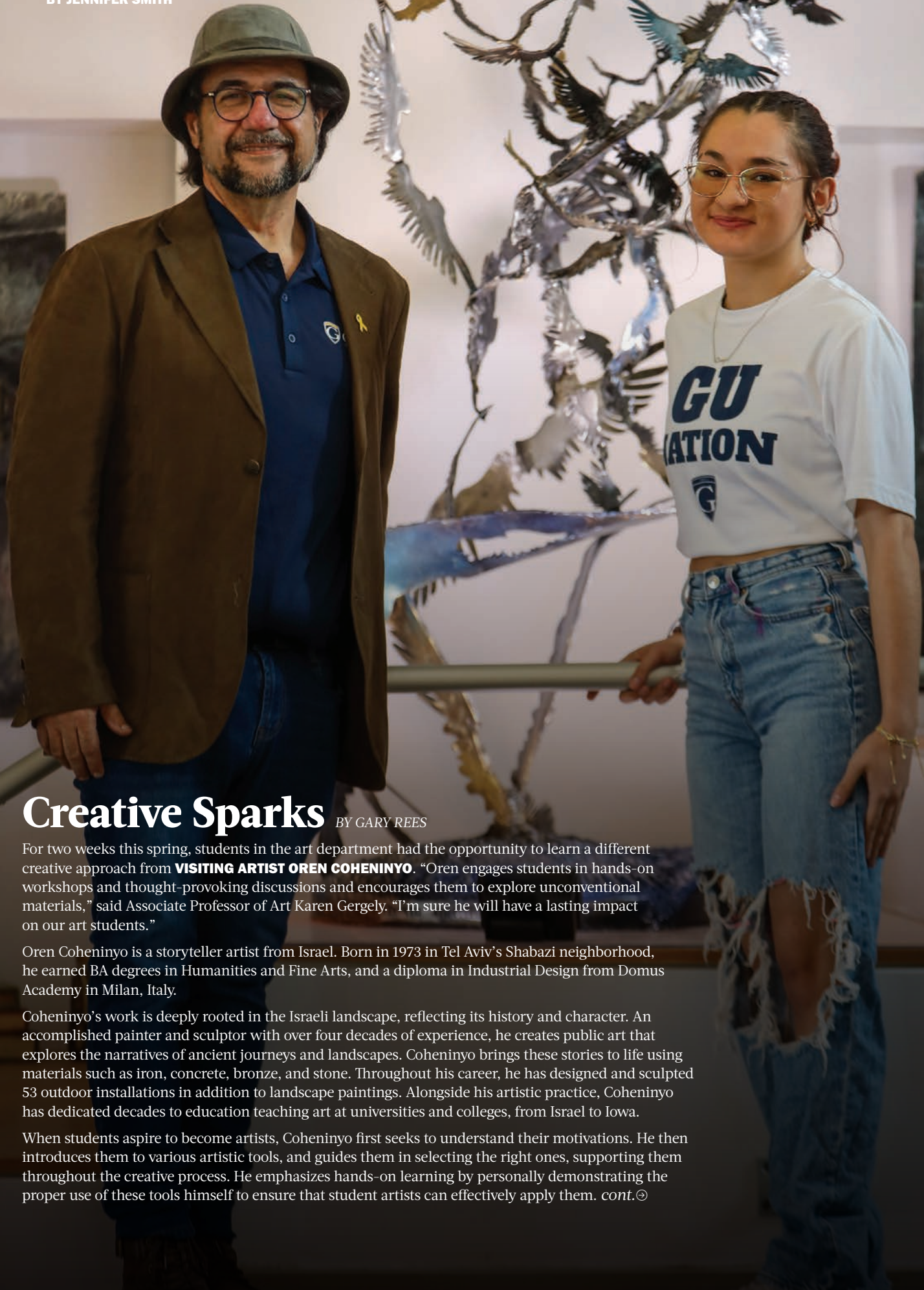
To our alumni, friends, and extended community: thank you for believing in this mission. Thank you for walking beside us. We're just getting started.

Joel Shrock, PhD
President

The Buzz

BY JENNIFER SMITH

Art student Mya Amsden '28 had the opportunity to observe Coheninyo's work on his *Wing to Wing* metal sculpture, unveiled to the campus community this spring.



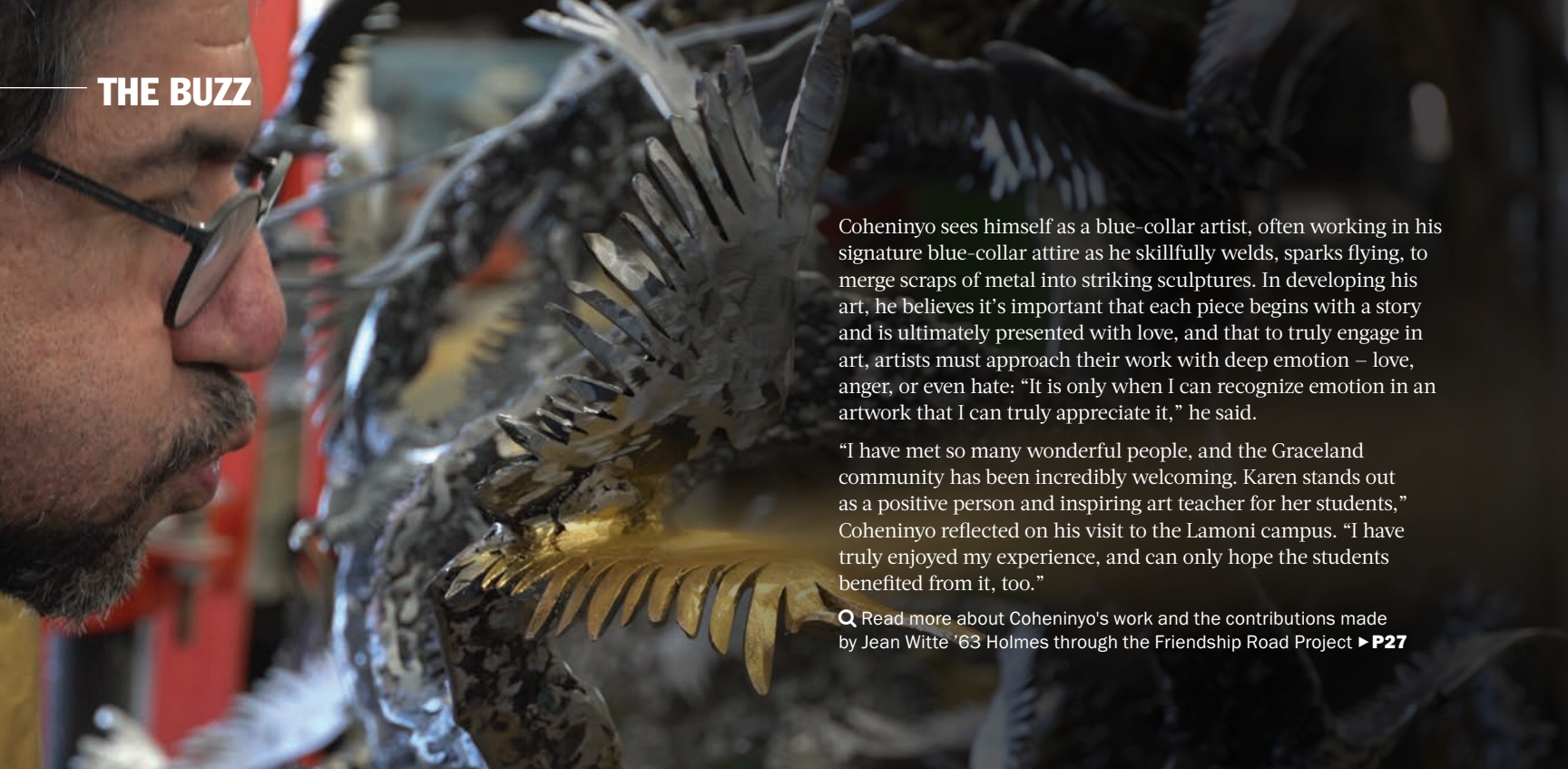
Creative Sparks BY GARY REES

For two weeks this spring, students in the art department had the opportunity to learn a different creative approach from **VISITING ARTIST OREN COHENINYO**. “Oren engages students in hands-on workshops and thought-provoking discussions and encourages them to explore unconventional materials,” said Associate Professor of Art Karen Gergely. “I’m sure he will have a lasting impact on our art students.”

Oren Coheninyo is a storyteller artist from Israel. Born in 1973 in Tel Aviv’s Shabazi neighborhood, he earned BA degrees in Humanities and Fine Arts, and a diploma in Industrial Design from Domus Academy in Milan, Italy.

Coheninyo’s work is deeply rooted in the Israeli landscape, reflecting its history and character. An accomplished painter and sculptor with over four decades of experience, he creates public art that explores the narratives of ancient journeys and landscapes. Coheninyo brings these stories to life using materials such as iron, concrete, bronze, and stone. Throughout his career, he has designed and sculpted 53 outdoor installations in addition to landscape paintings. Alongside his artistic practice, Coheninyo has dedicated decades to education teaching art at universities and colleges, from Israel to Iowa.

When students aspire to become artists, Coheninyo first seeks to understand their motivations. He then introduces them to various artistic tools, and guides them in selecting the right ones, supporting them throughout the creative process. He emphasizes hands-on learning by personally demonstrating the proper use of these tools himself to ensure that student artists can effectively apply them. *cont.* ☺



Coheninyo sees himself as a blue-collar artist, often working in his signature blue-collar attire as he skillfully welds, sparks flying, to merge scraps of metal into striking sculptures. In developing his art, he believes it's important that each piece begins with a story and is ultimately presented with love, and that to truly engage in art, artists must approach their work with deep emotion – love, anger, or even hate: "It is only when I can recognize emotion in an artwork that I can truly appreciate it," he said.

"I have met so many wonderful people, and the Graceland community has been incredibly welcoming. Karen stands out as a positive person and inspiring art teacher for her students," Coheninyo reflected on his visit to the Lamoni campus. "I have truly enjoyed my experience, and can only hope the students benefited from it, too."

Q Read more about Coheninyo's work and the contributions made by Jean Witte '63 Holmes through the Friendship Road Project ► **P27**



© Pictured, left to right: R'Moni Canady-Dunn '25, Mylin McDaniel '25, Mya Lozoya '25, Al-Farouk Salako '25, and Megan Coon '26.

A Rewarding Exchange

A culturally responsive approach to teaching is one aspect that gives Graceland educators a successful edge in all settings, from elementary or secondary classrooms to specialist vocational and corporate train-the-trainer settings. This intercultural competence often can't simply be picked up on home grounds, but must be actively experienced and explored. An alumni connection opened up a wonderful opportunity for student teachers at the Gleazer School of Education to do just that: with **A PRACTICUM IN PUERTO RICO**.

Education professors Tanya Coffelt and Michele Dickey-Kotz led the small Graceland delegation to the Palmas del Mar community of Humacao on Puerto Rico's southeast coast, where they received a warm welcome by their hosts at The Palmas Academy (TPA), a private college preparatory school. The TPA faculty and students happily opened the doors to their culturally diverse classrooms, and allowed R'Moni Canady-Dunn '25, Megan Coon '26, Mya Lozoya '25, Mylin McDaniel '25 and Farouk Salako '25 to fully immerse themselves by observing and co-teaching.

Coffelt, Dickey-Kotz and Field Placement Coordinator Melissa Newman are very proud of how the group established meaningful, bilaterally rewarding relationships in an entirely new environment within only a couple of days: "Each of them proved that they have the capacity to make a difference in this world, far beyond Graceland. No matter what external messages their own future students are subjected to – in their classroom, they will know their value and worth; they will know that they matter."



"Stepping into a teaching role helped me realize how much I've learned, and how naturally it's starting to come together. Seeing the students respond with excitement and actively participating gave me a huge boost in confidence. It reminded me that I can create meaningful and joyful learning experiences through music, and that I'm on the right path."

R'MONI CANADY-DUNN '25



Anatomy In Motion

In the Health and Movement Science department, chair Melanie Mason, DAT, and her colleagues are learning to master an impressive new acquisition that they are very proud of: **THE ANATOMAGE TABLE**.

The Anatomage setup adds a whole new dimension of exploration and learning to the class: it virtually strips away the anatomical layers of the human body and reveals how bones, joints, muscles and connective structures work together in motion. Simulating different movements, the students can visualize what it looks like when movement patterns are impaired, and how corrective exercise can improve mobility and stability.

The interactive educational tool is loaded with 3D anatomy, physiology and pathology data compilations for the various medical disciplines, so the very first nursing cohort on the Lamoni campus this fall will benefit from it, too. [Q See story ► P16](#)

The table came to Graceland by lucky timing: at a conference, Associate Professor of Allied Health James Geiselman, DC, met fellow instructor Brian Nook, DC, of the Iowa-based Palmer College of Chiropractic. Nook told him about the college's California campus closing and reducing its inventory. After some internal rallying by Geiselman and Mason, this circumstance resulted in a great deal for Graceland's students – shortly after, they gladly helped unpack, set up and test out the new campus asset.

Everyone's still playing around to get the hang of the seemingly endless features and functions of the Anatomage table, but everyone who sees it bring anatomy to life already agrees, "This is so cool!"



Pretty Good Pod

Director of Libraries Gabriel Chrisman has a favorite new inventory piece at the Frederick M. Smith Library, and it is not a book. For him, it really was about time: he had always envisioned such work and meeting pods for his previous libraries. Now, his vision finally took rectangular shape.

A **DO GOOD FOR GRACELAND PROJECT** survey by students within their Transformational Leadership major pinpointed areas for academic success improvements. One such point was more inclusion of the library as a study and collaboration hub. The space was there, the need was there as outlined in the students' presentations, Chrisman's idea was there...and for the financial realization, President Shrock stepped in, activating the Presidential Fund for Excellence that allows him to allocate funds specifically to immediate enhancements of the student experience.

Soon after, the top-of-the-line pod model by the Finnish producer Framery was delivered and installed at a perfect spot in the library – just in time to be instantly fully occupied throughout all finals week days in April, as Chrisman gladly observed on his user interface's pod usage report.

Originally designed for corporate settings, Graceland is one of the company's first customers in academia – the 'time machine' truly transported us ahead of others!

Chrisman is already daring to envision again: additional pods in various occupancy sizes for both the Lamoni and the Independence campus libraries, so more Graceland students can enjoy these pretty good little work spaces.



⌚ While Dr. Mason and one group of students in the Corrective Exercise class are leaning over the table at the front of the room, another group follows along from their desks on their corresponding tablets.

⌚ The pod seats up to six people, and provides soundproof, well-ventilated smart space for concentrated and confidential study, testing or counseling sessions, meetings, presentations, or video calls.

Strongly Rooted in Excellence

Celebrating **GRACELAND**

At Graceland University,
student success is more
than a diploma. It's a story.

BY SHANE ADAMS '99

Still Growing for the Future

It's the Air Band routines that bring a campus to its feet. The late-night study sessions that turn into lifelong friendships. The quiet leadership that helps someone else feel like they belong. It's also the determination to return to school after starting a career or a family, to chase a dream that requires both courage and caffeine. Every student who walks across the stage brings with them a story shaped by resilience, connection, and growth – and those stories continue long after the tassel is turned.

GRADUATES

flickr • View all Commencement photo albums here:
[flickr.com/gracelanduniversity](https://www.flickr.com/photos/gracelanduniversity/)

In this feature, we celebrate a few of those stories from the past academic year. Three of them – Jy Smith, Ishbel Wilson, and K'von Dixon – are recipients of the prestigious Student Life Award, recognized for the spirit and leadership they brought to the Lamoni campus. Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Dave Schaal, EdD, described these three individuals at Baccalaureate, “The Student Life Award celebrates not only the depth of impact, but also the breadth of impact across the student experience. Jy, Ishbel, and K'von are all such perfect examples of what makes our community special because they consistently reach students not just within their own circles, but also outside of them as well.”

Their experiences reflect the heart of Graceland student life. We also spotlight Helen Kute, a graduate of our nursing program who just completed her master's degree while raising three young children and preparing to enter the field as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Their journeys are very different – and that's exactly the point. Graceland's campuses are filled with students of all backgrounds and life stages, each one contributing to a university community that is, as always, strongly rooted and still growing.

“One of the greatest joys of this role is hearing the stories of our students and alumni – the quiet determination, the leadership, the grit, the kindness. Our mission at Graceland is to help students prepare for meaningful and productive lives, and when I see where they go and who they become, I know we're doing just that.”

PRESIDENT JOEL SHROCK, PhD



“Every time I meet a graduate like Ishbel, Jy, K’von, or Helen, I’m reminded why this work matters. They’re out there making a difference – in higher education, in business, in healthcare, in their neighborhoods.”

PRESIDENT JOEL SHROCK, PhD

Ishbel Wilson '25 LEADING WITH JOY AND INTENTION

For Ishbel Wilson, Graceland wasn’t just a family tradition – it was a calling. The youngest of four siblings who all attended Graceland, Ishbel still needed to make the choice for herself. “There was a time I wasn’t sure I wanted to follow the same path,” she admitted. “But at Spectacular in 2019, the theme was ‘Belong,’ and something clicked. I felt it in my bones. Graceland was where I was meant to be.”

And belong she did. Ishbel’s Graceland years read like a full-blown love letter to campus involvement: GSG President and Intramural Director, Enactus, Community Development, Women’s Soccer, Symphonic Band, the Honors Program, House Council, and Integrated Student Media. She choreographed award-winning Air Band routines and championed a campus culture where every student felt seen. “I learned that the smallest things can mean the most,” she said. “A smile. A song that represents someone’s culture. Saying someone’s name when you pass them. Those things build community.”

After graduation, Ishbel is heading to Minnesota, where she will serve as the Director of Residential Experience and Student Engagement at St. Mary’s University while pursuing a master’s in data intelligence and geoanalytics. Her long-term goal is to work in environmental policy. “I want to help people and protect the planet. If I can do both, I’ll know I’m in the right place.”

As for the Wilson family legacy? With Ishbel’s graduation, it’s the first time in 13 years that no Wilson sibling is on campus – a streak that includes nine Air Band wins and five years of student government service. “We’ve left a mark,” she said with a laugh. “But we couldn’t have done it without our parents. They made it all possible.”

EDITOR’S NOTE Shout out to Greg Wilson '89 and Peggy Wheaton '89 Wilson for encouraging their children to keep up their Graceland legacy.



Jy Smith '25

BUILDING LEGACY ON AND OFF THE COURT

For Jy Smith, basketball opened the door to Graceland – but what happened after that was much bigger than sports. “Once I got there, it stopped being just about the game,” he said. “Graceland became a space where I grew – as a leader, as a student, and as a person.”

His time on the Lamoni campus was full of moments that mattered, but one stands out: being named a Student Life Award recipient. “That meant everything,” he said. “It reminded me that what I did outside the classroom – the way I showed up for others – that mattered too.”

Jy was a leader on and off the court, serving as President of the Black Student Union and helping plan events that built awareness, inclusion, and joy. He worked in Residence Life as both an Assistant Residence Hall Director and Apartment Manager, supporting peers through personal and academic challenges. “Graceland taught me how to lead with purpose,” he said. “To be focused but also grounded in who I want to be.”

Since graduating, Jy has leaned into entrepreneurship – running his own barbering business and e-commerce operation – while also pursuing a professional basketball career, traveling the country for tryouts. But his dreams stretch further: “I want to create a community center someday. A space with mentorship, business resources – a place for kids to feel seen. I didn’t have that growing up. I want to build it for others.”

K'von Dixon '25

STAYING TRUE TO HEART AND HUSTLE

When K'von Dixon reflects on his time at Graceland, one moment stands above the rest. “Winning that first home football game after years [September 3, 2022, 46-35 win over Evangel] – the energy, the pride, the joy,” he said. “It was something I didn’t think I’d get to experience, and it meant a lot.”

Football brought K'von to Graceland, but what kept him there was something deeper. “Being part of the House system, working in Residence Life, getting to be House President – those things helped me find my voice.” And he didn’t want to be a leader in name only. “I didn’t want people to feel like they had to stick with just their hall. I wanted to be someone they could come to no matter what.”

Through football, track, and campus involvement, K'von learned to stay grounded in his values. “Graceland helped me understand who I am and who I want to be. It gave me the space to grow into that.”

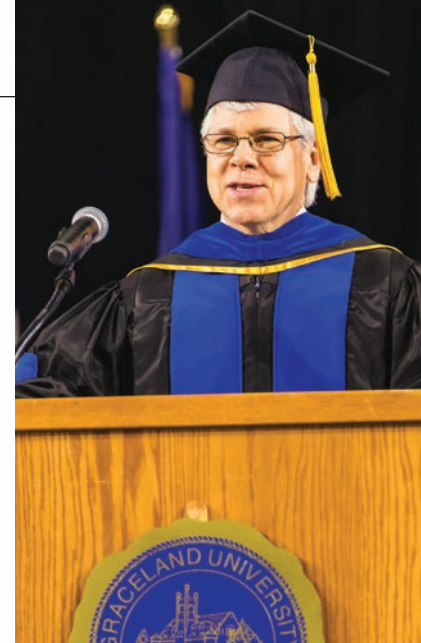
Now preparing for graduate studies at Texas Tech University, K'von will serve as a Graduate Hall Coordinator while also continuing to play indoor football. His sights are set on a career in higher education, student engagement, or human resources – roles where he can keep helping people feel seen and supported. “I just want to be in a space where people matter. That’s what motivates me.”

And for fun? “I love anime and video games,” he admitted. “They help me slow down and stay connected to joy – something I think we all need more of.”



“While Graceland is a university... it’s also so much more than that. It’s an experience. It becomes a part of the fabric of who each of us are and who we will continue to become. We get to carry that part of us forward into everything that that we do. We get to share it with every person that we meet, and we get to honor it within ourselves.”

KATHLEEN “PACO” CADMAN, PhD, '02



Helen Kute '18 & '24 **FROM RN TO NP – AND STILL GROWING**

Helen Kute’s journey to and through Graceland has been marked by both bold ambition and quiet strength. After earning her LPN in 2015, she knew she wasn’t done learning. A friend told her about Graceland’s accelerated BSN program, and in 2018, she graduated with her nursing degree – the first of two Graceland milestones.

What stands out most from her BSN experience wasn’t in the classroom, but in Guatemala. “We volunteered at [Kansas City] Chiefs games to raise funds to build a school, and then we actually traveled there to help make it happen,” Helen said. “It was incredible – being part of something bigger than myself and getting to serve people while learning about a different culture.”

This past year, Helen graduated again – this time with her Master of Science in Nursing, specializing as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). All while raising three toddlers under the age of five. “It’s a busy, beautiful life,” she laughed. “Graceland gave me the foundation and confidence to take this next step.”

Now living in Olathe, Kansas, Helen is preparing for her first role as a nurse practitioner and dreaming of what comes next: her own private practice, volunteer service in her home country of Kenya, and continuing to make an impact wherever she’s called. “Graceland helped me believe in myself,” she said. “I’ll always be grateful for that.”

Rooted in the Future

These four graduates represent just a glimpse of the many extraordinary students who cross Graceland’s stages each year – some cheered on in Lamoni’s Morden Center, others recognized in ceremonies across our nursing and graduate programs. They come from different places, follow different paths, and pursue different dreams. But what unites them is the way they carry Graceland with them – in their work, in their values, and in the communities they’re building. As we celebrate their accomplishments, we’re reminded that the Graceland Experience doesn’t end at graduation. It continues in every life they touch. ■





☒ From left: Kathleen “Paco” Cadman (pictured with President Shrock) described her journey to the podium at the December ceremony, noting that sometimes the weird and windy paths we’re on are more about “the cool connecting bits, or shortcuts, or detours along the way.” Charlie Conway shared valuable lessons woven into his life experiences at the April commencement. Faculty emeriti (left to right) Kevin Brunner, Jack Ergo, and Dan Pratt pose together after being acknowledged on stage.

128th Commencement

Two graduation weekends marked the end of the 2024 Fall and the 2025 Spring semesters – and exciting new beginnings.

From Baccalaureate and the President’s Reception to the big Graduation Day: Commencement is a weekend of pivots on the Independence and Lamoni campuses. The conclusion of the Fall and Spring semesters was marked by tears and cheers in many languages, inspiring speeches, joyful celebrations of accomplishment, moments of introspection and retrospection, and excitement over what comes next.

With the 128th graduating class, a promising, exceptionally talented and ambitious new cohort of Graceland graduates was sent out into the world to make all the difference. At the same time, colleagues who had coined their own little Graceland era were sent off into their well-earned retirement (for now), visiting family members were affirmed they had made the right choice for their fledgling student, returning alumni were again reminded of this special place in their life – and at least one faculty member from the Lamoni campus headed straight for the golf course, also highly deserved.

Every single graduate who walked the Community of Christ Auditorium and Morden Center stages – be it as a legacy student or having just started a new Graceland legacy – can be extremely proud of all the big and small accomplishments culminating in their Graceland degree. The greatest lesson they all shared was that sticking with it and not giving up can lead to such a pivotal, proud moment.

Words of Wisdom

The December commencement address was delivered by Kathleen “Paco” Cadman, PhD, ’02. With her rich expertise in rural health, Cadman leads the highly anticipated resident Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program that is launching in Lamoni this fall (read more on page 16).

Charlie Conway, PhD, ’84 addressed the graduating class at the April commencement. Retired as Chief Scientific Officer of Biohaven Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Pfizer Inc., Conway is a neuroscientist who pioneered migraine treatments. – BY JENNIFER SMITH

Faculty Recognitions

Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching



Fall 2024

Stephanie Jacques, DNP

Assistant Professor of Nursing

for sharing her passion for the specialty of critical care nursing, her outstanding student rapport, and continuously advancing her teaching methods.



Spring 2025

James Geiselman, DC

Associate Professor of Allied Health

for blending classroom excellence with real-world relevance, ensuring the academic success of student athletes, and leading the Resch Scholars program.

Exceptional Service Award



Kevin Brunner, PhD, '86

Professor of Information Technology, Ackerley Scholars Director

for leading as chair and coach, mentoring Ackerley scholars, and organizing high-impact STEM outreach activities.

Excellence in Scholarly Achievement



Ioseb “Soso” Gabelaia, PhD, '10

Interim Chair of Humanities, Assistant Professor of Business Administration

for elevating Graceland’s academic profile around the globe with prolific international publications, presentations and research cooperations.

Faculty Emeriti

These faculty were conferred Professor Emeritus status.

Kevin Brunner, PhD, '86

Professor of Information Technology, Ackerley Scholars Director

for his legacy of service and leadership in academics and student life since 1998.

Jack Ergo, MM

Associate Professor of Music, Piano/Harpsichord Orchestral Studies

for personifying the Music department — training, accompanying, and mentoring music students since 2001.

Daniel Pratt, PhD, '81

Professor of Chemistry, Dan & Alice Waite Endowed Chair for the Sciences

for preparing students for successful careers in science and healthcare as both teacher and leader since 1999.

Q Read all commencement recognitions online:
graceland.edu/Horizons

MAKING THE WORLD A SAFER PLACE

BY JENNIFER SMITH

*A closer look at **THREE SAFETY-FOCUSED PROGRAMS** preparing Graceland graduates to serve and protect their communities and critical systems.*



From the well-established and continuously developing major **Criminal Justice** over the recently introduced and already popular **Forensic Psychology** to the newly installed specialty track **Cyber & Homeland Security** within the Computer Science & Information Technology (CSIT) major, Graceland's academic catalogue covers all the complexities of crime prevention, detection, and prosecution – in the field and the lab, in court and in the virtual domain.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING GETS REAL

In April, under heightened security and safety measures, current and prospective Criminal Justice and Forensic Psychology students witnessed the Iowa Supreme Court at work on the Lamoni campus. This insight into a complex legal process and demonstration of all the people and parts involved was also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for everyone from the Graceland and Lamoni communities who attended the special session.

From the auditorium seats in the Shaw Center or via livestream from the stage-turned-courtroom, the public observers intently followed the oral arguments that were part of the Court's proceedings in Case No. 24-0346, Kelly Brodie, et al. v. Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, et al.

In an oral arguments session, the attorneys deliver presentations to the court to emphasize specific legal aspects. The appellant (party who filed the appeal) speaks first, then the appellee (opposing party). The appellant returns a brief rebuttal or reply argument. During oral arguments, the Supreme Court further directly queries attorneys to help clarify case nuances and ruling implications.

Following the hearing, everyone was invited to a reception sponsored by the District 5B Bar Association. Students, faculty, and community members were able to meet *in facie curiae*, face-to-face with the Supreme Court – and now be the ones to pose their questions to the justices: Chief Justice Susan L. Christensen, Justice Matthew McDermott, Justice Christopher McDonald, Justice Edward M. Mansfield, Justice David May, Justice Dana Oxley, and Justice Thomas D. Waterman.

Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Matt Schneider, MS, appreciates the exemplary learning opportunity this campus court session provided. His students majoring in Criminal Justice and Forensic Psychology like Alissa Caruso '27, Clemente Delgado '27, Breeanna Greer '26, and Eric Williams '27, took away a lot from this highly educational session. Explanations throughout the proceeding helped them understand the greater context and significance of the hearing. They found surprising aspects and moments, were fascinated with the argumentation dynamics between the justices and the attorneys to maintain their lines of reasoning, and were impressed by the preparation, precision, commitment, and eloquence of the presenting parties.

EARNING THE FIRST CHALLENGE COIN

Criminal Justice graduates help make the world safer by: preventing and deterring crime, enforcing law, and assuring accountability.

When Schneider arrived in academia, he didn't give up what his police badge signifies to him – he simply found a place of honor to display it: in his office in Briggs Hall. Here, his rich experience in active and administrative law enforcement and his passion for teaching converge. He had just rounded off a fulfilled and accomplished police career with a master's degree when he



© Top: Eric Williams '27 appreciated Chief Justice Christensen's explanation of the various steps involved in an appellate court session. Bottom: Alissa Caruso '27 had a chance to chat with Justice Matthew McDermott at the reception held after the session.

“My personal takeaway is a better understanding of an appellate court and how it works. It was a great experience to witness a proceeding in session, and to be able to talk to the justices afterwards.”

ALISSA CARUSO '27

Criminal Justice & Forensic Psychology major

Hands-on learning in the classroom ensures students graduate not only as professionals, but leaders and innovators in their field.

started at Graceland in the fall of 2022, and initially thought he was taking up an adjunct teaching position, but found himself in it to build it – and that’s what he’s been doing ever since. He cleaned up the Criminal Justice program catalogue, redesigned the curriculum, and – as a tactile learner himself – placed hands-on learning at its core. By keeping it real with “any chance we get in the classroom to get up and out of our seats,” as he says, he ensures that his students graduate not only as professionals, but leaders and innovators in the field of criminal justice.

His most popular class is Criminal Investigation with its weekly labs that simulate authentic crime scene settings. Students assume the role of detectives and identify, collect, analyze, and interpret even the tiniest traces of evidence. Of course, some fundamental courses such as constitutional law and law history remain highly academic in nature and may require some “sitting through” at times, but Schneider supplements concepts that initially seem abstract with real-life cases, a critical look and respectful debate to bring their practical application to life. He wants to make sure that students receive a well-rounded, solid foundation from which they can embark on several professional paths – and provide them with the space for exploration at Graceland they need to be sure that it’s the right one for them.

Immense pride shines through in Schneider for every single one of “his” students who goes on to a law enforcement academy, law school, or officer training school. He just extended a tradition from his active-duty days to his recent graduates and had challenge coins made for them as a token of recognition, stewardship, and camaraderie. With his students’ continued success in mind, he, too, has accepted a challenge: to push ahead with the expansion of the Criminal Justice program. Schneider will be adding courses and knowledgeable colleagues to teach them, such as alumna Lisa Hynden-Jeanes, JD, ’98 who brings in her valuable Iowa Assistant Attorney General perspective. He is also intensifying outreach activities with professional associations for research and publication opportunities, and organizations and initiatives such

as the Iowa Cold Case Unit for internship, practicum, and summer job placements. He further plans to introduce some of the most sophisticated tech tools that are used in the field today, such as drones – along with the required FAA licensing to give students a considerable head start as their law enforcement career takes flight.

DISSECTING THE CRIMINAL MIND

Forensic Psychology graduates help make the world safer by: understanding criminal behavior, improving judicial policies and practices, and providing consultation, advocacy, and training at the intersection of psychology and law.

Last fall, Graceland became one of only a few schools in the nation to introduce a residential undergraduate Forensic Psychology program [read more about this program in the *Horizons* Spring 2024 issue]. Incoming freshmen as well as current students double-majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology benefited from the new offering – and formed “a very bright class,” as Associate Professor of Psychology Nancy King, PhD, profiles the program’s first cohort.

In a unique arrangement, King and Schneider kicked off the program as an interdisciplinary dream team, teaching the inaugural *Introduction to Forensic Psychology* class in tandem and blending their knowledge at the complex intersection of their respective expertise. Schneider contributes the law and legal, and King the psychology perspective, creating a classroom dynamic that inspires the two of them just as much as it enriches the classroom experience for everyone.

The program places high academic standards on Graceland students: they must maintain a GPA of 3.5 in their coursework. King keeps a strict eye on this figure to ensure that graduates are set for success in the highly demanding but equally rewarding professional environments their degree in Forensic Psychology will lead them to.

The personal glimpse that the visiting Iowa Supreme Court judges allowed into their decisive work at the highest judicial level perfectly tied into the

© Left: Matt Schneider lectures on the juvenile court and waivers of jurisdiction during his Criminal Justice class in Briggs Hall. Right: A student focuses on his work in the CSIT lab in Resch Science & Technology Hall.



coursework that also surveys landmark rulings. Students examine their historical significance, the legal precedents and policy implications they set, and dive into questions of principles, norms, and ethics.

DIGGING DEEP INTO DATA

CSIT Cyber & Homeland Security graduates help make the world safer by: protecting critical infrastructure and essential services, identifying data vulnerabilities, and keeping systems secure by shielding, immunizing, and patching them against cyber threats.

When Arup Ghosh, PhD, speaks about basic hygiene, disinfection, immunization, viruses, and patches, one could easily assume his doctorate in a medical field. However, he speaks as the Math and Computer Science Department Chair and Assistant Professor of Computer Science – who can't wait to fill the classes for three new concentrations within the Computer Science & Information Technology major.

Practice-oriented and plugged into a powerful network of industry connections and tech partnerships, the three tracks AI & Data Science, Software & Web Development, and Cyber & Homeland Security are sure to incubate a promising smart bunch of graduates. Ghosh is particularly excited about the Cyber & Homeland Security concentration that covers digital infrastructure and literacy, cyber terrorism and defense, digital forensics, ethical hacking, and penetration testing. To be truly career ready, students can opt in to acquire industry-aligned qualifications as part of their coursework – equipping them with a powerful combination of university degree and practical competencies. Currently, these are the Google Cybersecurity Certificate, Cisco Certified CyberOps Associate, or a CompTIA Security+, CEH (Certified Ethical Hacker), (ISC)² CC (Certified in Cybersecurity), and CISSP (Certified Information Systems Security Professional) certifications.

With the infinite number of possibilities and ways to approach risk assessment and mitigation in the cyber sphere, a “normal” physical three-dimensional classroom setting is not to be expected. In one crucial exercise, students simulate an attacker/defender scenario: “Only if you know how to exploit the system, you understand how to adequately defend it, so before we can teach how to protect a system, we need to teach how to hack it,” Ghosh explains. He looks forward to learning a lot in the process himself, from his students: “Each day will be an opportunity for our students to come up with a novel idea that no one had ever thought of before.”

We can't wait to see those fresh approaches develop on the Lamoni campus in the fall! ■



© Sergeant Dustin Love spoke at a news conference held by The Kansas City Missouri Police Department and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office on Jan. 30, 2025, detailing their investigations into Kinne and announcing the closure of the case.

Conclusion through Time: *A Cold Case Finally Finds Closure*

A cold case file being brought back to light and back into investigative scrutiny often depends on one individual's discovery and willingness to take it on. Graceland alumnus **SERGEANT DUSTIN LOVE '04** is such an individual.

At the beginning of this year, he made national and international news for solving one of the oldest cold cases in the nation – and in May, Jackson County (MO) Sheriff Darryl Forté presented him with a Meritorious Service Award for his remarkable persistence.

The fugitive serial killer, Sharon Kinne, had ruthlessly evaded the law through six decades and across three countries – from Missouri over Mexico to Canada – until she died of old age, but what matters to Love is that he was able to seek and find justice for the victims and closure for the affected families.

It all started with an anonymous tip on Kinne in late 2023. That tip led to office coffee chatter that Love overheard and caught his interest in the case, his supervisor at the Fugitive Apprehension Unit giving him the good-to-go to pursue it, and unstoppable momentum when he joined forces with Intelligence Analyst Darin Lee of the Kansas City Police Department.

How Love and Lee diligently and methodologically proceeded with the case is a suspenseful thriller in itself. They had the benefit not of doubt but of time, as previous barriers to the investigation were now lifted: relationships within the killer's personal circle had changed, data processing and access had progressed, and forensic technology had advanced. Love and Lee could fully dedicate all attention and resources to the evidence, and trace it forward: to the meanwhile deceased Sharon Kinne.

They were able to finally identify her when they subpoenaed for her 2022 fingerprints from the funeral home: they matched the FBI's DNA card from 1960.

When Love recounts his extraordinary work to close the case, he draws another conclusion through time – to his Graceland days as an American History major, where his professors and Faculty Emeriti William “Bill” Russell '60 and William “Bill” Juhnke fostered his passion for historical inquiry, refined his research skill, and inspired the investigative techniques he uses today. – **BY JENNIFER SMITH**



GROWING

BY ANGELA SLOSARSKI

to Meet the Moment

Graceland has always been a place where potential takes root, where students are invited to discover their purpose and are given the tools to pursue it with confidence. That tradition continues this fall as Graceland proudly launches **TWO NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS** on the Lamoni campus: a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

Learn more about these new programs!

Q Visit graceland.edu/MBA
and graceland.edu/NursingLC

Building Leaders: The MBA Comes to Graceland



Graceland's new MBA program is designed for those who want to lead with vision and integrity in an ever-changing world. Whether a recent graduate looking to jumpstart a career or a working professional ready to take the next step, this program provides the strategic, financial, and ethical foundation needed to lead organizations of all kinds.

Housed on the Lamoni campus and offered in a flexible format (in-person, online, and limited hybrid classes), the MBA features a rich curriculum focused on real-world application, critical thinking, and leadership development. Students will gain experience in areas like marketing, data-driven decision-making, organizational behavior, and entrepreneurship. A capstone project in the final semester will challenge them to apply their learning to real business problems, a fitting culmination for a program rooted in practical excellence.

Current Graceland students who are taking classes on the Lamoni campus can be conditionally admitted to an accelerated version of the MBA program before graduation. Once accepted, they will begin graduate coursework during their senior year, allowing them to complete their MBA in only one year after graduating with their undergraduate degree.

As President Joel Shrock noted, "This isn't just about offering another degree. It's about preparing students to be thoughtful, values-driven leaders in whatever path they choose."

☺ **Top:** #ReppinGU An example of the professional growth and valuable connections gained through learning opportunities in the business program: (left to right) business students Joseph Boyce '25 and Ivan Joseph '26 with coach and professor Sehwan Kim, PhD, put their strategic skills to the test at the 2025 National Collegiate Sales Competition (NCSC).

Bottom: A nursing student in our Independence program smiles brightly — we can't wait to see the same enthusiasm on our Lamoni campus!



Nursing in the Heart of Campus Life



For the first time, students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing can now do so entirely from Graceland's Lamoni campus. Until now, Lamoni students transferred to the Independence campus after two years to complete their nursing degrees. Beginning this fall, they can complete all four years, and clinical placements, in and around the Lamoni area.

Dr. Sharon Little-Stoetzel, Dean of the School of Nursing, shared, "We are thrilled to bring this program to Lamoni. The dedicated faculty and outstanding facilities that have been the hallmark of our Independence program will now be mirrored in Lamoni, creating a seamless experience across both campuses."

Prospective students list nursing as one of the programs they want most on the Lamoni campus, so the administration and the School of Nursing delivered, providing students with the ability to be fully engaged in campus life while pursuing their nursing degree. The result will be more aspiring nurses in southern Iowa and surrounding rural areas — communities that are in growing need of compassionate, qualified care.

Additionally, the Lamoni-based nursing program offers students the chance to pair their degree with a second major in Transformational Leadership, a natural complement for those who see nursing not just as a profession, but as a calling to lead and serve.

"Expanding our nursing program to Lamoni builds on Graceland's enduring tradition of preparing exceptional nurses who make a difference in their communities," said Graceland President Joel Shrock, PhD. "This move represents our commitment to meeting student needs and advancing rural health care—two areas central to our mission."

The Lamoni program will be led by Dr. Kathleen "Paco" Cadman '02, a Graceland alumna with expertise in rural health. "Having someone with Dr. Cadman's passion and experience at the helm of this program is key to helping us support future nurses and serve the surrounding community," added Dr. Little-Stoetzel.

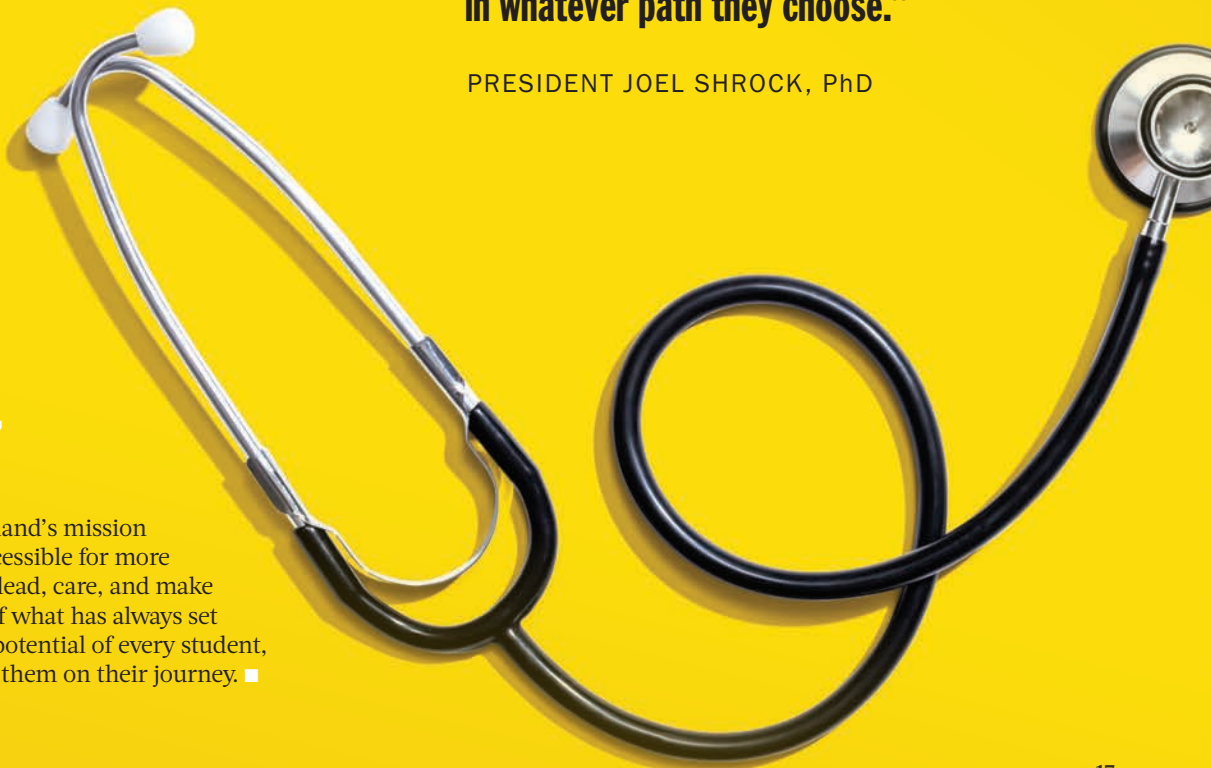
A Graceland Education, Expanded

These two new programs carry Graceland's mission into new spaces and make it more accessible for more students — students who are ready to lead, care, and make a difference. They're also reminders of what has always set Graceland apart: a deep belief in the potential of every student, and a commitment to walk alongside them on their journey. ■



"This isn't just about offering another degree. It's about preparing students to be thoughtful, values-driven leaders in whatever path they choose."

PRESIDENT JOEL SHROCK, PhD





While teaching a lesson on heart attacks, Dr. Voshall began to experience the very symptoms she was describing. Both she and her students quickly recognized what was happening and took swift action. She was transported to Centerpoint Medical Center, where her care team – remarkably – was made up of nurses she had personally taught. In that moment, surrounded by former students who now held her life in their hands, the full impact of her decades of teaching became powerfully real.

A Legacy of Compassion

When **BARBARA PITCHFORD '73 VOSHALL, DNP, RN**, began her journey at Graceland, she likely never imagined the profound influence she would have on the field of nursing education. Over the past three decades, Dr. Voshall has dedicated herself to teaching and mentoring approximately 1,500 nursing students, leaving an enduring impact on both the university and the broader healthcare community.

As a Professor of Nursing at Graceland's Independence campus, Dr. Voshall has been instrumental in shaping the curriculum and guiding students through the complexities of pathophysiology, pharmacology, and adult health care. Her teaching philosophy centers on the belief that nursing is fundamentally about caring – a principle she extends to her educational approach.

Dr. Voshall's dedication to her students was celebrated in Fall 2022 when she received Graceland's Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching. This accolade reflects her commitment to treating students as equal partners in the learning process and her ability to make complex material accessible and relevant. One of her students, Leigh Thomas '23, noted, "Dr. Voshall cares for us as people, as nursing students, and for our futures. She genuinely wants to see us make an impact on the healthcare community and change lives every day."

Her impact as an educator came into sharp focus during a moment that blurred the lines between teaching and lived experience. While teaching a lesson on heart attacks, Dr. Voshall began to experience the very symptoms she was describing. Both she and her students quickly recognized what was happening and took swift action. She was transported to Centerpoint Medical Center, where her care team – remarkably – was made up of nurses she had personally taught. In that moment, surrounded

by former students who now held her life in their hands, the full impact of her decades of teaching became powerfully real. Her classroom had prepared them, and they were now giving back in the most profound way.

As Graceland continues to uphold its mission of creating learning communities where students develop their potential for meaningful and productive lives, Dr. Voshall stands as a testament to this vision. Her unwavering commitment to her students, her profession, and her alma mater exemplifies the values of learning, wholeness, and community that Graceland holds dear.

In reflecting on her career, Dr. Voshall's story serves as an inspiration to current and future students, illustrating the profound impact that dedicated educators can have on individuals and the healthcare system as a whole. Her legacy at Graceland University is one of compassion, excellence, and transformative education.

– GEORGIA SEAGRAVES, MS, '21



Watch the video about Dr. Voshall's story:
graceland.edu/Horizons

Right On Track

BY JENNIFER SMITH

Allied Health major and track runner **GRACE TESTERMAN '26** has many sides: the athletic, the creative, and the caring side. She's happiest where she can be all three, and for her senior capstone project, she found a place that turned out to be just right.

When Testerman reached out to Katie Carnahan '06 Shipley, DPT, to inquire about a job shadowing opportunity for her Pre-Physical Therapy track, she didn't know she would make an instant connection with a fellow Graceland – who gladly offered her insight into her work.

Shipley is a pediatric physical therapist specializing in newborns up to newly walking babies. Working independently or partnering with other health experts across the disciplines, she treats infants with developmental delays, torticollis, neurological disorders, tongue-tie, and nervous system regulation difficulties.

In May, Testerman accompanied Shipley throughout her day of working with her young clients and their concerned parents – at Shipley's office or home, or the families' homes in the greater Kansas City area. "Katie wants people to be able to get help for their kids, so she meets them where they are, both in terms of location and this vulnerable time in their lives," Testerman explains, admiring Shipley's client focus and dedication to making her services accessible and affordable. When a one-and-a-half year-old client finds Shipley, it is almost rather "late," and Shipley wishes she could have seen the child much earlier.

☺ Even as a busy track & field student-athlete, Grace Testerman has been a contributor on Graceland's social media channels — skills she applied during her capstone with Shipley.

☺ Katie Shipley loves supporting babies and families on their journey through her practice, Nurturing Touch.

"Katie wants to reach clients as early as possible in their still tiny lives to get them well on their way. Three weeks to about one and a half years is a critical developmental time, and it's amazing what all you can do with this early intervention, gently correcting and treating what otherwise would be a lifelong impact on quality of life."

Testerman was also impressed by Shipley's communication with the parents, how she memorizes all their names and extended family circle names and little everyday stories, making them feel comfortable and instilling confidence that they're in the right hands.

Alongside learning the manual and social skills that make a good pediatric physical therapist, Testerman contributed her creative competency to Shipley's informational outreach on social media. "Babies have milestones, and those milestones are really important to meet," she says. "So we published a series of 'milestone moments' on what to look out for and do in babies' first few weeks and months." In turn, Shipley was able to offer her guidance and perspective beyond mere graduation requirements: from advice on preparing for furthering studies at PT school, to the reassurance of heading in the right professional direction, solidifying her wish to continue working with kids.

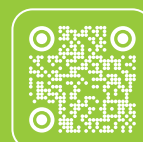
"She's so good at what she does," Testerman sums up her time at Shipley's side. "I'm really glad I found her and that it worked out so well. Katie wakes up every day excited to get to work, and it gives me hope that I can find that for myself in my professional life, too." Although Testerman completed the 100 required senior class hours with Shipley, she wants to keep learning from her, and will return after her current summer internship in social media marketing at Polly's Pop. ■



Know someone who might be interested in pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy?

Check out Graceland's two-year hybrid program that provides students with an innovative and collaborative learning community.

graceland.edu/DPT



It Takes a

TEAM


At Graceland, progress is a collective endeavor. It's the result of alumni, local partners, students, and supporters coming together to invest in a shared vision. This **SPIRIT OF UNITY** is propelling two significant athletic initiatives that embody more than just physical structures; they represent belief, dedication, and the power of community.

“Supporting Graceland through this partnership is incredibly meaningful to me, both as a BTC Bank employee and a proud Graceland alum. It’s an honor to give back to a place that has given me so much, and to help enhance the experience for students, fans, and the entire community.”

KEVIN LLOYD '01
Market President & VP, BTC Bank



We wanted to share a glimpse of the new scoreboard's most exciting feature, a massive video screen. Installation is set for July, just in time for the 2025 fall season!



MAKING PROGRESS Construction has been underway to transform the former pool space into a versatile training facility that will feature weight equipment surrounding a turf area, along with bold finishing touches that showcase our #YellowjacketPride.

A new scoreboard is set to enhance Huntsman Field, made possible through the generous support of **BTC Bank** and Graceland's facilities partner, **National Management Resources Corporation**. Beyond its technological features, this scoreboard symbolizes BTC Bank's commitment to the region and to Graceland's student-athletes, and reflects National's investment in the University community. It's a beacon of community pride, showing how both local businesses and institutional partners are supporting the aspirations of Graceland students. Each display of scores will serve as a reminder of the collective support that fuels every game, every goal, and every victory.

Simultaneously, the Henson Strength and Conditioning Center is taking shape, thanks to the remarkable generosity of donors who have contributed \$1.2 million toward its realization. This state-of-the-art facility is designed to support the holistic development of all Graceland student-athletes, offering advanced equipment and spaces tailored for modern training methodologies. It's more than a gym; it's a space where confidence is built, discipline is honed, and unity is fostered.

The Henson Strength and Conditioning Center will serve as a cornerstone for all athletic programs, providing an environment that mirrors the high standards and ambitions of Graceland athletics. It's a pivotal step in preparing Yellowjackets not just to compete, but to excel.

That same spirit of progress and support has also led to the fully funded training room for Graceland's new Women's Wrestling program. As one of Graceland's fastest-growing sports, the team will now have a dedicated space to train, pursue excellence, and build a strong program for years to come. This investment not only supports the athletic success of our women wrestlers but also reflects the broader commitment to advancing opportunities for female student-athletes at Graceland.

These projects underscore Graceland's deep-rooted commitment to enhancing the student experience, on the field, in training, and throughout campus life. They stand as testaments to what can be achieved when a community rallies behind a shared goal.

At Graceland, we understand that building the future isn't a solitary task. It's a collaborative journey, and every supporter plays a vital role. — **BY ANGELA SLOSARSKI**



A True Gamechanger

Step by step, the new Henson Strength and Conditioning Center on the Lamoni campus is taking shape. Construction is steadily coming along, and on track to meet the completion target by the start of the new school year.

Opening up new flexible and functional space to fit Graceland's continued expansion, the Henson Center will serve all our athletic programs as a premier training facility, housing sophisticated strength and conditioning equipment, as well as classroom options for our Department of Health and Movement Science.

This highly anticipated project kicked off with a lead gift by **Greg '75 and Holly Lennon '78 Henson**, and has been made possible by additional donors and sponsors.

Would you like to assist with getting this project to the finish line? Your contribution will make a lasting impact for our Yellowjackets!
Contact Institutional Advancement:

✉ development@graceland.edu
 🌐 graceland.edu/give





Academic Vision

BY SHANE ADAMS '99

New Leadership Builds on Graceland's Legacy of Innovation

“Academic Affairs has always been the heart of the university for me – it’s where mission meets action... I understand how critical it is to have leaders who can navigate change while staying grounded in purpose.”

JOEL SHROCK, PhD
President

Graceland is entering a new chapter of academic leadership rooted in both experience and vision.

JILL FORT, PhD, joined the university in June of 2025 as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, bringing with her more than 15 years of leadership experience in higher education.

Most recently, she served as Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas, where she led major initiatives in student retention, program development, accreditation, and rural student access, managing over \$6 million in grants to support these efforts. Her commitment to student-centered education, academic innovation, and inclusive excellence aligns powerfully with Graceland's mission.

President Joel Shrock expressed his excitement at Dr. Fort's hiring: “Academic Affairs has always been the heart of the university for me – it’s where mission meets action. Having spent much of my own career in this role, both at Graceland and other institutions, I understand how critical it is to have leaders who can navigate change while staying grounded in purpose. Dr. Fort brings an incredible depth of experience in student success, program development, and inclusive academic leadership. Her passion for rural access and her proven ability to build strong teams make her an ideal fit for Graceland as we look to the future.”

As she began to look for her next opportunity, Graceland stood out as the right fit to Fort: “It was a small, private, faith-based institution with a strong sense of community and purpose. Its location in the Midwest also resonated with me, as I was looking for a setting where I could make a meaningful impact in a close-knit environment. Graceland checked all the right boxes and felt like a natural next chapter.”

As the academic leader of the institution, Fort looks to carry on the work started by President Joel Shrock when he was in the role, especially in the areas of student success and retention. Add rural access to the mix and she will have her hands full, but her experience suggests she is ready to meet the challenge. Each area is deeply connected and plays a critical role in the success of Graceland students and the institution as a whole. Fort shared her excitement, “I’m particularly excited to explore how we can build on Graceland’s existing strengths to create even more inclusive pathways for rural and underserved students, while continuing to innovate around student support and retention strategies. These efforts not only reflect my passion but are also central to our mission.”

Fort is particularly energized to focus on retention, sharing, “I want every student to not only choose Graceland but to feel deeply connected to the experience, and to proudly earn their degree here. Despite only working on campus for only a few weeks [at the time of this interview], it is obvious that Graceland is a special place, and I’m passionate about helping students recognize that from day one and supporting them every step of the way to graduation.”

Dean of the Graceland School of Nursing Sharon Little-Stoetzel, PhD, looks forward to working with Dr. Fort as the academic leader. She said, “I’m particularly enthusiastic about the experience Dr. Fort brings from leading at a similarly sized institution. She understands the unique dynamics of a university like Graceland, and her thoughtful engagement during the interview process reflected a strong alignment with our mission and a clear commitment to student success.”

Her leadership style is rooted in servant leadership. “I believe in leading by example – I’ll never ask someone to do something I wouldn’t do myself,” she said. She also aims to be highly collaborative and team-oriented, valuing engaging with others to spark innovation and drive progress together.

It remains to be seen how many members of the faculty join her for her pursuits of physical challenges. “People are often surprised by how much I enjoy challenging myself and seeing what’s possible when I commit to a goal,” she says, having completed several half-marathons, countless 5ks, 100+-mile bike rides, even completing a full marathon in rollerblades! “It’s not just about physical health and fitness,” Fort claims. “It’s about discipline, resilience, and the belief that with the right mindset, you can go farther than you think.”

Good advice, both in physical challenges and for the work she faces at Graceland, which includes next year’s 10-year accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission, a big milestone for the University.

She will have help along the way, not only as President Shrock mentors her into the role he inhabited for two years, but also from an internal Graceland, who was recently elevated as part of the Academic Affairs team.

Around the same time Fort’s hiring was announced, the University also released that it was investing in internal talent by promoting Rev. Dr. Zac Harmon-McLaughlin ’08 to serve as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs while continuing his work as Dean of the Seminary. A proud Graceland graduate, Dr. Harmon-McLaughlin has led the Seminary through a period of growth and transformation, launching a new graduate program – the Master of Arts in Peace and Social Transformation – and creating the Center for Innovation in Ministry and Mission. In his new role, he will assist Dr. Fort in providing leadership across budgeting, program development, faculty mentorship, accreditation, and strategic planning efforts.

Harmon-McLaughlin sees his new role as an opportunity to bridge innovative thinking with operational strategy, to empower faculty, and to ensure our academic programs are both mission-aligned and future-ready. He said, “This role is a natural progression of the work I’ve been doing – building transformative learning experiences that don’t just serve a student’s vocational goals but shape them as change-makers for the world. For me, it’s about stewarding Graceland’s emerging future with integrity, collaboration, and creativity.”

Dr. Fort immediately got to work on creating a foundation for collaboration and a culture shift toward bold and strategic academic innovation. “Jill brings a visionary clarity and a deep commitment to institutional health, and I’m excited to work with her on building systems that support experimentation, faculty development, and data-informed decision-making. I think we complement each other well – she brings the scaffolding, and I bring the provocation,” Harmon-McLaughlin shared.

President Shrock said about Dr. Harmon-McLaughlin’s appointment, “I’m thrilled that Zac has stepped into the new role of Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. He brings a powerful combination of institutional knowledge and creative leadership – qualities that have already transformed our Seminary through initiatives like the Center for Innovation in Ministry and Mission. His insight and integrity will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen Graceland’s academic offerings and support our faculty in delivering meaningful, mission-driven education.”

Together, Dr. Fort and Dr. Harmon-McLaughlin will help shape the academic direction of the university – building on the strong foundation already in place and embracing the opportunities ahead. ■



Dave
SCHAAL

John
GODFREY

PASSING THE TORCH

INTERVIEW BY SHANE ADAMS

Strongly Rooted and Still Growing: A Conversation Between Student Life Leaders

When **DAVE SCHAAL, EdD, '80** first arrived at Graceland as a student, he couldn't have imagined the lifelong impact the place would have on him – or the role he would play in shaping it for others. Now, more than four decades later, including over a decade serving as Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students, Schaal is preparing to retire, leaving behind a legacy of care, integrity, and deep commitment to student growth.

As Dave steps away, the leadership baton passes to someone who knows firsthand the impact a strong Student Life team can have. **JOHN GODFREY, MA, '06** is returning to Graceland to step into the very role that helped shape his own experience as a student – where he served as GSG

President and was mentored by legends like Marian Garrett '70 Killpack and Tom Powell '73. John brings with him years of experience from San Diego State (where the university housed 8,500+ students over 22 buildings), along with a deep sense of gratitude for the people who invested in him – and a clear vision for investing in the next generation of Gracelanders.

In this conversation, Schaal and Godfrey reflect on what it means to belong at Graceland, how the student experience continues to evolve, and what it feels like to step into a role that's less about authority and more about service, compassion, and community.

On What Brought Them to Graceland — and Why They Stayed

Every Gracelanders has a story of how they found their way to “the Hill” – and what made them stay. For Schaal and Godfrey, it was about more than a campus; it was about finding purpose, people, and a place that felt like home.

DAVE SCHAAL: I know it sounds cliché, but it really was Graceland's mission that brought me back. Helping young adults (and adult learners) discover their sense of call and impact the world for good – that deeply resonated with me. College isn't just about getting a degree. At least not here. It's about discovering who you are and what you're meant to do. And what's kept me here? Relationships. With students. With colleagues. With alumni. It's always the people.

JOHN GODFREY: My journey was a little different. I transferred to Graceland from a community college and was hungry for connection. I jumped into House Council, then became House President, and eventually GSG President. Those experiences changed me. They were foundational to my career in higher ed. I've stayed connected ever since because the people I met at Graceland became family – that's not just a phrase. It's true.

On Radical Belonging

Graceland doesn't just welcome students – it pulls up a chair and says, “You belong here.” Schaal and Godfrey share what radical belonging means to them, and why it's at the center of everything they do.

SCHAAL: Radical belonging isn't just about feeling accepted – though that's important. It's about being needed. About your presence shaping the community around you. It says, ‘We're

trying to make this place better, and we need your voice, your story, your uniqueness to do that.' It's not just 'you're welcome here.' It's 'we're better because you're here.'

GODFREY: That's one of the most powerful parts of the Graceland Experience. When I arrived, I didn't have a strong sense of direction. I wasn't a standout student. But Graceland made me feel encouraged, safe, and capable. I want to make sure every student feels that – seen, celebrated, and equipped to succeed. That's what radical belonging means to me.

On the Dean of Students Office

Forget what you've seen in the movies – at Graceland, the Dean of Students office isn't about discipline, it's about connection. Both leaders reflect on how they've made that space one of trust, growth, and real conversation.

SCHAAL: Movies and television have given the Dean of Students office a bad rap, and is often portrayed as the place students go when they've been caught doing something wrong. The truth is, the Dean of Students office exists to meet students wherever they are—searching, hurting, visionary, fearful, excited, etc. – and then help them move successfully forward. And when they leave, my hope is that they feel heard, cared for, encouraged, and realize that this is a safe place for them to come and talk.

GODFREY: Absolutely. My vision is that students feel welcome and respected the moment they step in. There will be times we navigate conflict, but those conversations should always be grounded in respect. This office will be a collaborative, encouraging space where students know they matter.

On Advice for New Students

If they could sit down with every first-year student, here's what they'd say: lean in, branch out, and don't be afraid to mess up a little along the way. This section is full of wisdom – with a side of encouragement.

SCHAAL: Graceland has become a microcosm of many cultures and peoples, and I would urge students to not confine themselves to friendships with people in their sport or their major. I say this for two reasons. Getting to know people whose life experience is different than ours enlarges our own understanding of life and the world. Also, the friendships that are formed at Graceland can become part of our network of connections that can be so helpful to us professionally and personally in the future.

GODFREY: Yes! You will only be a first-year student once... and that moment is unique. My hope is that every first-year student approaches their day-to-day interactions and activities with this in mind. Take advantage of the opportunities. Do not be afraid to fail early and often and have the confidence and excitement to keep going until you find success. Participating in higher education is a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

On What They Admire in Each Other

Passing the torch isn't just a formality – it's a moment of mutual respect. Schaal and Godfrey reflect on the strengths they see in one another and why that matters for the students at the heart of it all.

SCHAAL: My impression of John is that he is a creative thinker who does not see challenges as threats, but as opportunities to succeed in new ways. When I think about the challenges facing our students, this is a great characteristic for them to

witness and learn from. I'm happy for both Graceland students and employees that they will have an opportunity to work with John, whom I know is coming to Graceland because of his love for the university that so significantly shaped his own life.

GODFREY: Dave has an incredible ability to bring a level of pastoral care and wisdom to every conversation. His ability to connect with students, faculty, and community members is unmatched, and I will be working hard to fill the incredible legacy he has created.

On What Changes — and What Shouldn't

Times change. Technology evolves. But some things – like the power of community and purpose – should always stay the same. Schaal and Godfrey talk about what's next, and what should never be lost.

SCHAAL: The world of work is evolving so fast. Graceland now has to prepare students for jobs that don't even exist yet. That's exciting, but it also means our learning methods need to be flexible and forward-thinking. What shouldn't change? Our values. Learning, community, wholeness, radical belonging – those aren't just slogans. They're lived values that are making a difference in people's lives every day. And they still matter.

GODFREY: Graceland's commitment to student success should never change. The names and buildings might shift, but that sense of purpose – of changing lives – has to stay. That's the legacy we're continuing.

Schaal vs. Godfrey Face-Off

QUESTION	DAVE SCHAAL	JOHN GODFREY
Class Year	1980	2006
House	Agape	Agape
Hometown	Independence, MO	Independence, MO
Favorite Movie	<i>The Da Vinci Code</i>	<i>Ferris Bueller's Day Off</i>
Favorite Snack	Popcorn	Chocolate Chip Cookies
Best Concert Ever	Eagles	Jack Ergo's Homecoming Concert
Most Used Emoji	🕶️ (sunglasses emoji)	👋 (salute emoji)
Morning/Night Person	Morning by nature, night by necessity	Morning person
Can't Live Without	Flyrod	FUN!
Book That Changed You	<i>Walden</i> by Thoreau	<i>On Leadership</i> by John Gardner

Looking Ahead

One chapter closes, another begins – but the story continues. As Schaal looks back with pride and gratitude, Godfrey looks ahead with energy and hope for what's possible on the next page of Graceland's story.

SCHAAL: I'm proud of so much – especially the Student Life team and how they've empowered student leaders behind the scenes. But what stays with me most are the students themselves – their growth, their stories, their resilience. I've learned so much from them. Graceland has shaped me as much as I've shaped anything here.

GODFREY: I'm just excited to get started. Graceland is where I learned to dream big. And now I get to come back and co-create programs that help students do the same. It honestly feels surreal. I'm grateful to President Shrock and the leadership team for believing in me. This isn't just a job – it's a calling. And I'm ready. ■

With John Godfrey '06 returning to the Lamoni campus as Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students, Melissa Sherer '18 took over as president of the Alumni Board, which she has set out to **LEAD WITH INTENTION** alongside fellow alumni to serve their alma mater.



A NEW Constellation

BY JENNIFER SMITH

Charting the Course: A Chat with Alumni Board of Directors Leadership

PRESIDENT MELISSA SHERER '18

"Things just come together and work out at Graceland," Sherer says, and it's been a kind of guiding principle in a lifelong bond that began with her Iowan dad and Canadian mom meeting at Graceland. The Graceland stories she heard growing up shaped her, and a summer at the Community of Christ Spectacular solidified her decision to pursue college on "the Hill." In Business and English, she found the perfect combination of majors, and in her activities in the honors program and student government, for her house (Aponivi forever!) and Enactus, she developed her leadership skills. When she graduated and started navigating the professional world, she felt lost at first, but again, Graceland ties led her way: "I will forever be grateful," she says of the alumni network through which she secured her first job. With her engagement in the Alumni Board's GU4U Committee that links students and alumni for career orientation and opportunities, she put her appreciation into action.

Her passion for bringing people together to create synergies continues on as Alumni Board President, a role which she considers a calling more than simply an appointment. "I wouldn't have taken it on without knowing great people like Alex and Cathy are at my side," she emphasizes, and highlights the power package of the complementary interests and skills across the Board. Sherer sees Graceland at a point of promising momentum, with the best people in the right position to maximize its potential. She is excited for the Alumni Board teams to support this trajectory: by enabling the university leadership's strategic targets, recognizing Graceland's excellent faculty, ensuring that alumni feel connected with their alma mater no matter where they are in life and in the world, and helping graduates find their place in it.

VICE PRESIDENT ALEX CARR '15

Graceland is home for the Lamoni native and legacy alumnus Carr (Orion forever!); he always knew he wanted to return to his alma mater in some form or function. "Everything wonderful that I have in my life is a result of my time at Graceland," he explains the impetus for reconnecting with Graceland after career stops in academia, the military, and business. Now he gets to visit campus regularly – and, in his Alumni Board Vice President role, fulfill the inspirational quote he walked by in Graybill Hall every workday as hall director: "You come to learn, go forth and serve." As a financial planner, his specialist interest lies in all things institutional advancement, but like Melissa, he maintains a special place in

his heart for the GU4U initiative, enjoying the lively coffee talks, workshops, and classroom visits. Just as these activities serve students and recent graduates by showing them what all is possible after graduation, it gives alumni many welcome opportunities to return as guest lecturers or event speakers, and extend their expert knowledge, mentorship, or professional development guidance.

With the Alumni Board teams, Carr looks forward to developing the GU4U platform further, increasing the number of applicants for the Alumni Endowed Scholarship, getting more high school kids to fall in love with Graceland just as he did (he also fell in love at Graceland, with his wife Julia Austin '20 Carr), and building old and new legacy relationships. Carr sees his job very practically in "making sure that the trains run on time." On a broader scale, he hopes to lay down solid tracks for the sustainable success of the Alumni Board: through systems and processes that last longer than individual office holders do – a smart tactical move to position Graceland with an edge in the competitive environment of higher education.

SECRETARY & TREASURER CATHY WOLFE '88 LYSINGER

As Sherer and Carr settle into their first presidential and vice presidential terms, Lysinger's got their backs. She's a true veteran; in her sixth year, she is marking her fourth and final Alumni Board term – and there to support their vision and leadership. With her family background of wide-reaching Graceland legacy roots, she is a valuable resource on Graceland

Alumni Board President Melissa Sherer sees Graceland at a point of promising momentum, with the best people in the right position to maximize its potential. She is excited for the Alumni Board to support this trajectory: by enabling the University leadership's strategic targets, recognizing Graceland's excellent faculty, ensuring that alumni feel connected with their alma mater no matter where they are in life and in the world, and helping graduates find their place in it.

matters, projects, and people, as well as the formal nuts and bolts. She enjoys being a part of Graceland, and doing her part for the University's progress by actively and directly asking the administration, faculty, and students: "How can we be of help?"

What impresses her most about Graceland is how it consistently keeps lengths ahead of other liberal arts institutions. As a trained educator herself, she is amazed over and over again at the speed of response to student needs, and the flexibility in adapting to market needs. Lysinger understands what it takes to maintain the lead especially in curriculum development, and has nothing but praise for the faculty who, on top of everything else, continuously review, revise, and strengthen Graceland's program offerings. The Transformational Leadership program, to her, is one outstanding result of that, and she can't wait to see the very first graduates with this value-added major bring it to fruition. Whatever the next big or small idea is to position Graceland grads for the future – Lysinger and the Alumni Board will be right there asking, "How can we help?" ■

Do you desire an opportunity to reconnect with your alma mater? Consider joining the Alumni Board of Directors, or participate in one of GU4U's networking events!

Find out more:
graceland.edu/AlumniBoard



Lighting the Way BY SHANE ADAMS '99

Jean Witte '63 Holmes Builds Friendship Roads for Graceland

Jean Witte Holmes's story with Graceland is one of connection, curiosity, and lifelong generosity. A 1963 graduate, Jean remembers long talks with roommates, favorite professors like Dr. Velma Ruch '41, and lessons learned even in physics class – where studying ripples in a pond taught her that "every action, big or small, has unending consequences."

She speaks warmly about the "friendly atmosphere with high academic expectations" that shaped her. Her ties to Graceland run deep: she and her brother Lynn Witte '65 attended the school at the same time and would sometimes see each other across the campus, each with their cameras ready to capture the beauty of the bucolic campus. Jean's late husband, Reed Holmes '37, served as an apostle and Presiding Evangelist for Community of Christ (then Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints). Together, they founded the Maine Friendship House to promote interfaith hospitality and understanding – values that Jean still carries with her.

Jean splits her time between Massachusetts and Tel Aviv, and it's clear her passion for Israel has only deepened. She lights up when talking about bringing Graceland students and faculty to experience the Holy Land. "I want them to come with open minds and open hearts," she says. "To breathe the air, talk with people, and get to the heart of things." She describes scents of orange blossoms, ancient vineyards revived from thousand-year-old seeds, and the stark honesty of local conversations. "It's life-changing," she says simply.

That vision led to her funding an international travel initiative for Graceland known as the **FRIENDSHIP ROAD PROJECT**, connecting students and faculty to a journey of learning and cultural understanding. It was in Israel where Jean forged a close friendship with Israeli artist Oren Coheninyo, who, during his time in Lamoni as a visiting artist in the Spring of 2025, designed and created *Wing to Wing*, the striking metal sculpture now adorning the entrance to The Helene Center for the Visual Arts. Jean describes it as a gift to "lift students' spirits," reminding them that they, too, can soar and create. "Every person is unique and holy, with so much potential," she says. "I want them to keep building their own Friendship Roads."

Jean's giving is also deeply personal. To honor her late brother, she fully funded renovations in Hampton Center to launch Graceland's new Women's Wrestling program. "When the idea came up, it just fit," she says. "He would have cheered them on." Her advice to fellow alumni is simple but heartfelt: "Think about what you loved at Graceland. Find what matters to you. Help them along however you can." ■

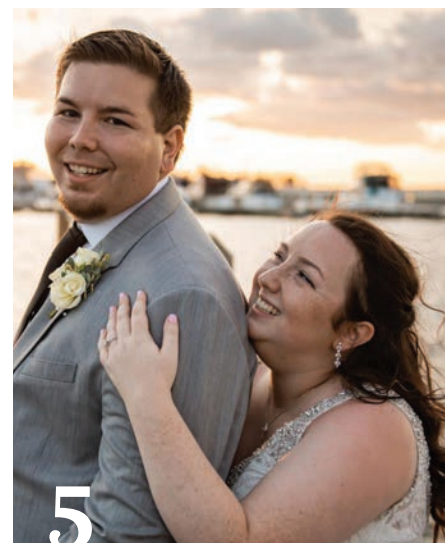
CLASS NOTES

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Completed a degree program? Published a written work? Received that awesome promotion? Earned a prestigious honor? If so, we want to hear about it.

Submissions are included as space permits and may be edited for length or clarity. Send high quality digital photos — 300 dpi and/or minimum of 1,200 pixels on the image's shortest side.

Share your memories and milestones with us here: graceland.edu/classnotes



Class notes submitted between Nov. 23, 2024, and June 12, 2025, are included in this issue.

96 Heather Stanke Campbell, Liberty, Missouri, CEO and Founder of CultureQI, has created the Enlightened Work Podcast with Meena Patel. Defining a leader as anyone who influences others in their daily interactions, they explore essential leadership behaviors in every episode that are crucial for our evolving world. 📍 **1**

01 Micah Hunt, PT, Blue Springs, has opened an outpatient physical therapy clinic, FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers of Jackson Creek, in Independence, Missouri. The clinic specializes in orthopedics, balance, and chronic pain. Hunt shared that opening this clinic has been a dream come true and expressed his gratitude for the foundation that Graceland provided him in this journey. 📍 **2**

02 Cassandra Wood Casey, Sykesville, Maryland, was selected to speak at a TEDx event in Westminster, Maryland. Her topic, "Choose Awesome," focused on how one's attitude and the choices we make

can change the world around you, pulling from her life experiences and living with a facial deformity. As a Coordinator of Personal Enrichment & Youth Programs at Carroll Community College, she is passionate about youth development, positive thinking, and community building.

05 Talia Kinder Brown, Lamoni, Iowa, Chief Information Officer at Graceland University, won the CIO of the Year Award in the OCI & Database Award category for the North America region's 2025 Oracle Customer Excellence Awards. This award honors a CIO working with Oracle® technology, who demonstrates exceptional IT leadership, delivering business results through the creation and execution of a clear IT strategy.

06 Nikki Tinsman, Houston, Texas, J.D. candidate at South Texas College of Law Houston, earned two CALI Excellence for the Future Awards for Legal Research & Writing I and II, given to the highest-scoring student in each class. She was also initiated into the Wood Inn Chapter of the Phi Delta Phi, a prestigious international legal honor society. 📍 **3**

08 Susan Allen, Winston, Missouri, and **Tracy Clark Burke**, Altamont, Missouri, were both recently appointed as

administrators within the Gallatin R-V School District for the 2025-26 academic year. Allen was appointed principal of Covell D. Searcy Elementary and Burke was promoted to principal of Gallatin Middle School. Both were cited for their individual leadership styles, experience in multiple facets of education, and their collaborative team building as key components for their appointments.

18 Katie Bruels, DNP, RN, Overland Park, Kansas, was recently highlighted in "People on the Move" in the *Kansas City Business Journal* as a NextGen Alumni. Bruels was promoted to Division Chief Nursing Executive in June 2024 to lead nursing operations and 3,000+ staff across HCA Midwest Health, Kansas City's largest healthcare provider. 📍 **4**

23 Kursten Kellough, MSN, RN, Kansas City, Missouri, was a DAISY award honoree in April 2025 and received the Novice Nurse of the Year Award in May 2025 at North Kansas City Hospital. (The DAISY Foundation's DAISY Award is a recognition program that honors nurses for their extraordinary and compassionate care.) Kellough will be furthering her education this fall in Graceland's Doctor of Nursing Practice program.

MARRIAGES

18 Mark and Makayla Kutzly '19 McKinney, Lumberton, New Jersey, Aug. 29, 2020. @ 5

19 Allie Weston and Jacob Ross '20, Houston, Texas, May 3, 2025.

21 Liam and Emily McKinney Smith, Runnemedede, New Jersey, May 25, 2022.

BIRTHS

18 Mark and Makayla Kutzly '19 McKinney, Lumberton, New Jersey, son, Carson, born Oct. 29, 2021, and son, Cole, born June 27, 2024.

21 Liam and Emily McKinney Smith, Runnemedede, New Jersey, son, Archie, born April 7, 2025.

ANNIVERSARIES

53 Don and Jan Van Boskirk '54 Keairnes, Lamoni, Iowa, 70 years, Jan. 16, 2025.

66 Jerry "Jake" and Diana Willetts '65 Wiggins, Alto, New Mexico, 60 years, Sept. 25, 2025.

75 Rodney and Colleen Cotton Fowler, Peachtree City, Georgia, 50 years, Jan. 4, 2025.

DEATHS

40 Emma "Marie" Belcher Armstrong, Englewood, Colorado, Dec. 14, 2017.

41 Frances Bullard Benner, Boliver, Missouri, May 12, 2020.

42 Betty Hunter Fogler, Palmer Lake, Colorado, Oct. 28, 2023. Bertha Mae Lorance VanHorn, Adel, Iowa, July 5, 2021

43 Erling "Paul" Crinzi, Redmond, Washington, 2022. Roberta "Bobbie" Thrutchley Crinzi, Redmond, Washington, 2021. Gwendolyn Webb Massman, Newton, Iowa, March 4, 2018. Margery Williamson Wade, Independence, Missouri, Dec. 14, 2020.

44 Hope Reed Ham, La Porte, Indiana, Nov. 27, 2008. Ruth Ralston Holman, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, Jan. 22, 2025.

45 Helen Olds Brotherton, Blue Springs, Missouri, Jan. 2, 2025. Claire Cudworth Campbell, Bryan, Texas, April 9, 2025.

47 Gloria "Margaret" Shreve Butcher, Elyria, Ohio, Sept. 16, 2015. Dorothy Lewis Seaver, Independence, Missouri, March 13, 2023.

48 Bonnie Hampton Barron, Hamilton, Missouri, Nov. 21, 2024. Lloyd Hughes, Plainwell, Michigan, May 27, 2023. Dorothy Outhouse Poling, Fairfax, Virginia, Nov. 28, 2024. Betty Yoder Zonker, Parker, Colorado, Jan. 25, 2025.

49 Doris Marriott Anderson, Centennial, Colorado, Feb. 12, 2025. Calvin "Cal" French, Dallas, Texas, Feb. 6, 2025. Leonard Speer, Glendale, Arizona, March 7, 2025. Dale Swall, Dallas, Texas.

50 Sally Harding Flanders, Springfield, Missouri, March 25, 2025. Elizabeth Fife Knotts, Lamoni, Iowa, Feb. 27, 2025. Dorothy "Dot" Smith Shannon, Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 10, 2024.

51 Margaret Gunderson Shupe, Portland, Maine, Nov. 6, 2024. Murray Smith, Gresham, Oregon, April 18, 2023.

52 Carol Freeman Braby, Mount Dora, Florida, Feb. 18, 2025. Richard Chevelle, Rochester, Minnesota, March 17, 2025. Kenneth Dunn, Tigerville, South Carolina, Feb. 2, 2025. Dixie Strecker Kinney, Joplin, Missouri, May 18, 2024. Ardyce Strong Plumlee, Overland Park, Kansas, Feb. 12, 2025. Marian Robinson Swall, Dallas, Texas.

53 Edith "Joy" Parker Dawson, Wichita, Kansas, Nov. 24, 2025. Shirley Hissom Dzara, Edinboro, Pennsylvania, Jan. 13, 2025. Kay Oeser Skinner, Independence, Missouri, March 2, 2025.

54 Leah Anderson, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Aug. 27, 2024. Gloria Shadel Directo, Independence, Missouri, March 1, 2024. Robert Dow, Boynton Beach, Florida, Jan. 10, 2025. Barry Fuller, Memphis, Tennessee, Dec. 27, 2023. Charles Mader, Lee's Summit, Missouri, Nov. 28, 2024.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Graceland Music Icon Richard "Dick" Clothier '55 Leaves a Lasting Legacy

Graceland University mourns the passing of Dr. Richard "Dick" Clothier, a beloved music professor, mentor, and champion of the arts whose legacy helped shape the university's creative and spiritual heart for nearly four decades. He died June 8, 2025, at the age of 88.



Clothier's Graceland story began early. He arrived on the Lamoni campus as a 16-year-old freshman and never really left. After earning his associate degree in 1955, he went on to complete his bachelor's at Pittsburg State, his master's at the University of Iowa, and his doctorate in music education at the University of Northern Colorado – returning in 1960 to begin what would become a 37-year career on Graceland's music faculty.

Known for his precision, passion, and deep care for students, Clothier taught everything from orchestra to music history, eventually chairing the Fine Arts Division and serving as the inaugural director of the Shaw Center. He was the first to hold the Dwight and Ruth Vredenburg Endowed Chair in Music. But beyond titles and credentials, Clothier simply loved teaching – and his students loved him back.

He was also an architect of opportunity. From coordinating spring break ensemble tours to helping launch Graceland's four-year music education program, he expanded what was possible for music at Graceland. During a seven-year sabbatical abroad, he led the music department at the American School in London, enriching his worldview and the lives of his family and students.

Clothier's ministry through music extended well beyond the classroom. A lifelong member of Community of Christ, he became a leading historian of hymnody and authored multiple works on the church's musical heritage, contributing to both Hymns of the Saints and Community of Christ Sings.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife of 65 years, Louita Good '56 Clothier and the families of his two children, Kathi Clothier '84 Angerth and David Clothier '89. His legacy lives on in the hearts of those who knew him – family, friends, and former students who carry forward his love for learning, his joy in music, and his devotion to serving others.

The family has requested memorial gifts be directed to Graceland University music scholarships.

55 Nancy Gabriel Boyd, Westerville, Ohio, Dec. 7, 2024. Richard "Dick" Clothier, Lamoni, Iowa, June 8, 2025. Philip Olson Jr, Bushnell, Florida, May 3, 2024. Stephen Robinson, Punta Gorda, Florida, Sept. 11, 2022.

56 Sandra Dymond Cline, Independence, Missouri, Oct. 14, 2024. Yang Hahm, Bettendorf, Iowa, Aug. 2024. Herbert Hawley, Independence, Missouri, Feb. 10, 2025. Rolland Hughes, Peoria, Arizona, Oct. 23, 2024. Gary Lubbers, Tucson, Arizona, March 6, 2024.



Pictured, back row,
from left: Joey Williams,
Adam Wade, Matt Frizzell.
Front, from left: Carrie
Welch, Shannon McAdam,
Kat Hnatyshyn.

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Rooted in Faith, Ready to Lead

BY GEORGIA SEAGRAVES, MS, '21

At the 2025 World Conference, Community of Christ joyfully affirmed **THE CALLING OF SIX NEW MEMBERS TO ITS QUORUM OF TWELVE APOSTLES** – all graduates of Graceland University. Their appointments herald a renewal of leadership rooted in diverse experiences, lively faith, and a passion for the church's mission of peace and justice.

This milestone reflects the longstanding and deeply connected relationship between Graceland University and Community of Christ – a partnership rooted in shared values and mutual support. Many church members find their way to Graceland, where their faith and potential are nurtured, and in turn, they often go on to serve and lead within the church and beyond.

MATTHEW FRIZZELL '96

BA, Psychology

Frizzell steps into his apostolic role from his position as Director of Human Resource Ministries. He's been deeply involved with church leadership at

multiple levels – serving as mission center president, dean of Community of Christ Seminary, and a member of the World Church Leadership Council. With ethical and theological insight, Frizzell brings a heart for marginalized communities and a vision for living "Christ's peace" through justice, repentance, and wholeness in congregations and beyond.

KAT BEATTY '04 HNATYSHYN

BA, Speech Communications

Chosen as an apostolic designate in early 2025, Hnatyshyn brings fresh energy and intergenerational leadership. With years of volunteer service – across both congregation and mission center levels –

she embodies stewardship, encourages generosity, and articulates a hopeful vision of Community of Christ's journey into the future.

SHANNON McADAM '03

BA Honors, Information Technology

Also announced as an apostle designate in February 2025, McAdam is celebrated for her bridge-building leadership. Through spiritual discernment and compassionate presence, she advocates for those marginalized by policy or circumstance. Known for skillful administration and joyful optimism, she models the Enduring Principles in daily practice.

ADAM WADE '10

MA, Christian Ministries

Moving from the Council of Presidents of Seventy, Wade joins the Quorum as an apostle recognized for deeply contextual ministry. His work across diverse cultures has equipped him to lead with entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and a profound empathy. Wade's tenderness and conviction promise a ministry marked by compassion and creative engagement.

CARRIE GARWOOD '95 WELCH

MA, Religion; BA, Business Administration

A U.S. Field bishop and team leader, Welch is recognized for her relational leadership and missional insight. She has a track record of connecting people across backgrounds and aligning resources to serve Christ's mission. As she transitions to full-time apostolic work, Welch is expected to guide the church through collaborative discernment, prophetic visioning, and nurturing community engagement.

JOEY WILLIAMS '96

MA, Religion; BA, Music

Also transitioning from the Seventy, Williams brings gifts in intercultural communication, music, and a passion for global solidarity. He is positioned to orchestrate a richer mosaic of cultural voices in the church and to cultivate Spirit-led communities of inclusion and peace, supporting diverse expressions of faith and identity.

These leaders stand ready to guide Community of Christ into its next chapter of mission – anchored in peace, enriched by cultural diversity, and animated by disciplined leadership.

For Graceland University alumni and the broader church family, this moment is a celebration: six of our own have been entrusted with global apostolic ministry. Their journey enriches both the university's legacy and the unfolding story of Christ's peace in action. ■

Sandra Traver Lundquist, Crosby, Minnesota, March 22, 2025. **Alice Marsh McIntire**, Tama, Iowa, April 16, 2015. **James Pierson**, Brainerd, Minnesota, Dec. 30, 2024. **Kenneth Scafe**, Independence, Missouri, Oct. 20, 2024. **Theo “Ted” Scott**, Independence, Missouri, May 26, 2024. **Wanda Carlile Tygart**, Kansas City, Missouri, April 3, 2025.

57 Keith Bowden, Taylor, Texas, Feb. 19, 2024. **Gilbert Chartier**, Kingsport, Tennessee, June 1, 2011. **Lillian Herber Davenport**, Dodgeville, Wisconsin, Sept. 11, 2023. **Moyné Schofield DeLong**, Independence, Missouri, July 17, 2024. **Robert “Bob” Galbraith**, McCormick, South Carolina, March 23, 2025. **William “Bill” Howell**, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 17, 2015. **Luanne Johnson Jackson**, Meridianville, Alabama, Oct. 25, 2021. **Janice Hodges Jimenez**, Redlands, California, March 27, 2025. **David Moe**, Warsaw, Missouri, July 27, 2022. **Edith Carty Scott**, Independence, Missouri, April 8, 2018. **James Shoemaker**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Aug. 12, 2022. **John “Wes” Strange**, Hollister, Missouri, May 24, 2025.

58 Barbara Dean Allen, Crossett, Arkansas, July 26, 2020. **Terry Allen**, Alton, Illinois, July 10, 2023. **Rodney Bobbitt**, Cameron, Texas, June 14, 2022. **Gladys Robertson Courter**, Leavenworth, Kansas, Jan. 25, 2022. **Karen Mumma Davis**, Whiritoa, New Zealand, June 20, 2017. **Betty Jo “BJ” Kerr DeBusschere**, San Diego, California, June 2024. **Raymond Gann Jr.**, Belton, Missouri, Oct. 18, 2018. **Richard “Dick” Harding**, Battle Lake, Minnesota, April 27, 2017. **Fayrene McIntosh Kinney**, Garden City, Michigan, Dec. 16, 2017. **Sandy Traver Lundquist**, Crosby, Minnesota, March 22, 2025. **Oleta King Moe**, Warsaw, Missouri, July 11, 2017. **Thomas “Ted” Navey**, Priddis, Alberta, Canada, Jan. 2, 2016. **Ronald Parton**, Mercer Island, Washington, Aug. 9, 2020.

59 Marlene Deaver Cable, Independence, Missouri, July 4, 2024. **Betty “Ann” Fine Fenley**, Dayton, Ohio, April 3, 2019. **James Gates**, Independence, Missouri, Oct. 21, 2023. **Carol Gunderson Goddard**, Greeley, Colorado, June 3, 2025.

LaVonne Maryott Harris, Chelsea, Michigan, Oct. 20, 2019. **Dora Brenaman Hix**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Jan. 30, 2012. **Leigh Reynolds**, Jasper, Missouri, Dec. 7, 2020. **Howard Slasor**, Weidman, Michigan, April 11, 2025.

60 Barbara Schaefer Canterbury, Polo, Missouri, Dec. 14, 2014. **Wayne Gardiner**, Melba, Idaho, Aug. 7, 2020. **Wesley “Pat” Spillman**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Jan. 2, 2025.

61 Sarah “Sally” Neill Cornish, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 24, 2020. **Ronald Romer Sr.**, Crystal Lake, Illinois, March 16, 2025. **Ronald Trachsel**, Lenexa, Kansas, May 31, 2025. **Terrill Weldon**, Onawa, Iowa, April 22, 2025.

62 Lawrence Cavin, Lenexa, Kansas, Jan. 18, 2025. **Sandra Baird Davis**, Syracuse, New York, May 27, 2025. **Robert Ewald**, Bonita Springs, Florida, Oct. 2, 2018. **Christopher Koehler**, Decatur, Georgia, March 6, 2025.

63 Marty Day, Klamath Falls, Oregon, April 10, 2024.

64 George Fowler Jr., Odessa, Missouri, May 1, 2021.

65 Dwight Crum, Sinking Spring, Ohio, March 4, 2025. **Nancy Yale Kwak**, Independence, Missouri, May 13, 2021.

66 Diana Englebrecht Borders, Lone Jack, Missouri, Dec. 24, 2024. **Judy Mohler**, Jefferson, Iowa, Jan. 4, 2023. **David Yoder**, Delaware, Ohio, Dec. 29, 2024.

67 Lonnie Mair, Sun City, Arizona, April 19, 2025. **Marilyn McNeill Shewmake**, Foley, Alabama, March 27, 2024.

68 Catherine “Ann” Mesle, Kansas City, Missouri, Jan. 3, 2025. **Thomas Meyer**, Osceola, Iowa, Feb. 2, 2025. **Doris Hardy Willis**, Madison, Ohio, Feb. 11, 2025.

69 Pamela Rojewski Barrett, Independence, Missouri, Feb. 7, 2025. **Don Brinser**, Bettendorf, Iowa, July 28, 2024. **Gregory Resch**, Sedalia, Missouri, Oct. 26, 2022. **Diana Geis Vandel**, Austin, Texas, Oct. 20, 2022.

70 Jeanne Kelly Francis, Independence, Missouri, May 19, 2021. **Ward Francis**, Independence, Missouri, Dec. 19, 2024.

71 Robert Adams, San Antonio, Texas, Dec. 24, 2024. **Jacquelyn Tousley Murdock**, Lamoni, Iowa, April 10, 2025.

72 Shirley “Rose” Chuning Bailey, Oskaloosa, Iowa, Aug. 4, 2023. **Danny Ferguson**, West Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 21, 2025.

73 Michael Bryson, Estes Park, Colorado, May 24, 2025. **Deborah Elefson Kienle**, Vancouver, Washington, April 1, 2025. **Andrea “Katie” Axtell Ten Eyck**, West Linn, Oregon, Jan. 7, 2023.

74 Betty Zonker Caruso, Denver, Colorado, Jan. 6, 2025. **James DeVito**, Westport, Connecticut, April 23, 2025.

75 Mark Boyd, Boone, Iowa, Aug. 1, 2019. **Karla Rasmussen Enright**, Bettendorf, Iowa, May 24, 2024. **Mary Ellen Foss Kimball**, Osceola, Iowa, Dec. 20, 2024. **Ronald Kulkulka**, Vandalia, Missouri, March 19, 2020.

76 Robert McDermid, Joplin, Missouri, July 3, 2021.

77 Carol Plumlee Herbst, Walnut Creek, California, March 18, 2025.

81 Gail Ungstad, Slave Lake, Alberta, Canada, Dec. 23, 2022.

84 Ruby Downen Wieners, Amarillo, Texas, Feb. 2, 2025.

85 Ricky Brinkley, Corydon, Iowa, Nov. 27, 2024. **Karen Kolster**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Jan. 24, 2021.

87 Kelly Anderson, Lathrop, Missouri, March 14, 2025. **Kent Roberson**, Independence, Missouri, Feb. 2, 2025. **Comfort Trullinger**, Hannibal, Missouri, July 15, 2015.

88 Arlene “Joyce” Campbell Dufford, Atwater, Ohio, Nov. 20, 2015.

89 Zuniega “Goody” Calugas, Tacoma, Washington, Dec. 28, 2022. **Steve Cross**, Keller, Texas, Oct. 13, 2024.

90 Garnett Sahlberg, Lee’s Summit, Missouri, Dec. 24, 2023.

93 Tonya Harger, Iowa City, Iowa, May 17, 2009. **Connie Pendersen**, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, March 18, 2025.

95 Shelly Mash Cory-Shivers, Dallas Center, Iowa, May 19, 2025. **Carol Morgan Whitsel**, Eddyville, Iowa, June 17, 2012.

96 Barbara Smith Anders, Collinsville, Virginia, Sept. 27, 2024. **JoAnna Young Busscher**, Iuka, Illinois, April 10, 2025. **Beth “Bear” Ostlund-Wood**, Webster City, Iowa, Nov. 23, 2024.

97 Ryan Morgan, St. Louis, Missouri, March 27, 2025.

98 Sandra Sacry, Lee’s Summit, Missouri, Jan. 15, 2024.

99 Diane Engebretson, Slayton, Minnesota, Sept. 21, 2011. **Jerri Wright**, New Haven, Missouri, May 4, 2023.

04 Marica Cope Osborn, Iowa City, Iowa, Feb. 24, 2025.

06 Polly Brown Mehlich, San Antonio, Texas, March 7, 2025.

07 Monica McKay, Tecumseh, Kansas, Nov. 28, 2024. **Darren Uhlenhopp**, Waverly, Iowa, Feb. 28, 2025.

11 Jana Sloan, Blue Springs, Missouri, Nov. 20, 2024.

25 Denali Smith, Wellington, Florida, July 24, 2024.

IN REMEMBRANCE

We honor members of the Graceland community who have recently passed. Their service to the institution had a lasting impact at Graceland and beyond.

***Richard “Dick” Clothier**, Lamoni, Iowa, June 8, 2025.
Laurie Johnson Hale, Raymore, Missouri, April 3, 2025.
Carolyn Mann, McMinnville, Oregon, April 23, 2025.
 ***William Wright**, New Haven, Missouri, May 6, 2025.

*Tributes can be found online for administration, faculty, or staff whose service was 20 years or more: graceland.edu/Horizons

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