RESILIENCE

The Body that Leads
Together
page 12

By the
Grace of God
and the
Goodness of Others
page 5
Sisters and Brothers,

This fall semester’s Opening Weekend was unlike anything we’ve experienced before as a college. Move-in was spirited but guarded. New and returning students and their families were screened before being allowed on campus. Those students moved into single person dorm rooms with strict COVID protocols in place. Instead of costumes, the primary fashion accessory on display at Mod Olympics was masks.

I spoke on Friday evening of Opening Weekend. The campus community sat spread out across Sieber Field. I told the people gathered there that night that “we are Hesston College.” What I meant was that Hesston College is made up of its people, not its buildings or grounds. No matter how the dorms or dining room looked, Hesston College would go on because of its people.

This is where true resilience comes from. We bear each other up in the spirit of Christ-centered community. We extend grace from the first through to the last. We care like crazy. We hold ourselves and each other accountable. And we remember that we are strong so long as we hold to our sisters and brothers, both near and far away.

As Kalen Haynes ’19 suggests in his alumnus profile (page 8), Hesston College’s resilience is a function of its spirit. Whether you graduated in 1950 or 2020, the spirit remains the same. The physical campus could be open to all or shuttered completely, and we would endure. To be sure, there are things that can do harm to the spirit of a community. The pain and loss experienced by friends and family hurts us deeply. We pray for hope and healing for all those affected by COVID-19. The pandemic is cruel, but the bonds we share as sisters and brothers in Christ keep us going.

So we are Hesston College, and we are resilient. We have been resilient, and we will continue to be resilient as we navigate through challenges and opportunities, COVID-related or otherwise. And the good news is that as a member of the community, wherever you are you can draw on the strength of Hesston’s collective spirit, the root of which is Jesus Christ.

What I said on Opening Weekend in August remains true now: We are Hesston College, you and I. I hold you in my heart as you hold me—and all our community—in yours. Our love for each other as sisters and brothers in Christ keeps us resilient. As long as that love endures, so does the college. Thank you for the love you have for your community. It means the world.

Peace,

Dr. Joseph A. Manickam ’87
President
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“Honestly,” said Deb (Swartzendruber) ’83 Roth, vice president of Student Life, gazing into her computer’s video camera, “I wish I was dealing with curfew violations and messy bathrooms. We know how to handle a student who’s sleeping through class. But a pandemic…” She stops and sighs. “That’s something else.”

Nowhere on campus have the pressures of addressing the worldwide COVID crisis been greater than in the Student Life office in Erb Hall. In addition to the normal stresses of trying to attend to the needs of nearly 400 students, from mental health issues to interpersonal conflicts, Roth and her team of resident directors, resident assistants and support staff have been working overtime to keep the COVID pandemic away from the college’s doorstep, all while trying to maintain the active, involved campus culture that has defined the Hesston Experience for decades.

It’s a balancing act, and it’s not always easy to pull off. “We stumble sometimes,” says Roth. “We’re human. Of course we do. But we get back up, we refocus, we say a quick prayer for grace and understanding, and then we try to take care of what’s
Even in these tough times, God came through in a big way and for that I am grateful.

important, which is the same as it was before the pandemic: the wellbeing of our students.”

Roth has relied on the help of Angie (Maury) ’94 Teeter, the college’s quarantine coordinator. When a student in isolation needs a meal delivered, Angie’s there. When someone’s running a fever or has lost their sense of taste and smell, Angie masks up and drives them to get a test. She tracks symptoms, test results, close contact lists and quarantine schedules.

“Having the right tools for the job is important,” says Roth. “We’ve developed systems and safety nets. But without good people putting in long hours—I’m talking about Angie here, as well as Terrence (Jones, RD) and Makenna (Grow ’15, RD)—we’d be lost.” She pauses and laughs a little in disbelief. “I’d be lost. Many times, it seemed, that just when we were finding a groove of sorts, new COVID-19 information was revealed by the Centers for Disease Control or a unique contact tracing scenario came our way and we’d have to make adjustments, regroup and keep going.”

Roth was appointed to run the college’s Student Life department in the spring of 2019. Before that, she worked for 17 years in Student Success and supporting students in their academic work and career decision-making, while also providing oversight to academic advising and the ACCESS Lab, which Roth coordinated from its beginning. That commitment to student service made her an obvious choice for the Student Life position. But nothing could have prepared her, or anyone else at the college, for the impact of COVID-19.

With a semester of running Student Life during a world-historical pandemic under her belt, Roth pauses to reflect on what got her through and what keeps her going.

“The endless encouragement of my colleagues; students who do their best to do the right thing, even when it involves tough choices; community partners who are always a phone call away and encourage us to ‘work our plan,’ even though it may look different from other institutions’; the countless hours Angie and the rest of the Student Life staff put in. The COVID Response Team also provides ongoing regular support as we share COVID-related updates three times per week. We aren’t perfect, but we’ve been ‘perfect enough’ to reach this point in the year. All of these things give me the courage to face the semester to come.

“And God’s grace,” she says. “I prayed for God to be ‘big’ and ever-present in our decision-making, especially when fatigue seemed to be getting the best of us. Even in these tough times, God came through in a big way and for that I am grateful.”
Manickam was named as the ninth president of Hesston College in fall of 2016 and assumed office on July 1, 2017. Previous to his appointment, Manickam served as director of the Institute of Religion, Culture and Peace and faculty member for peace studies at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Manickam and his family moved to Hesston from Thailand in 2017.

During his first four-year term, Manickam oversaw the completion of a major capital campaign, the construction of new and refurbished buildings on campus, and the creation of new four-year programs in nursing and aviation. Under Manickam’s leadership the college will further explore offering four-year degrees in business and engineering, as outlined in the college’s “Vision 2025” growth plan.

Manickam’s reappointment signals a continued commitment on the part of the college’s leadership to Manickam’s vision of an expansive, inclusive, globally engaged Hesston College. Primary among his tasks has been evolving Hesston from a “college for Mennonites” to a “Mennonite college for all.”

“The board’s unanimous vote to reappoint Dr. Manickam to his second term is not just an affirmation of the work he has done for Hesston College in the past four years, but a vote of confidence and endorsement of the strategic direction for the next four years,” said Ken G Kabira ’81, Bartlett, Ill., chairperson of the Hesston College Board of Directors.

“Under President Joe’s leadership, we are confident Hesston will not just survive the current pandemic but emerge stronger and more capable of living its mission to educate and nurture every student in a Christ-centered community.”

BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTS DR. JOSEPH A. MANICKAM TO SECOND FOUR-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL TERM

Hesston College’s Board of Directors voted unanimously to appoint Joseph Manickam to a second four-year term as president during the college’s fall board meetings, held virtually in late October 2020.

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MANICKAM'S APPOINTMENT SIGNALS CONTINUED COMMITMENT...
KEVIN WILDER TAKES ON A NEW CHALLENGE

It’s been a dozen years since Kevin Wilder moved from behind the pulpit as Hesston College’s campus pastor and into the classroom, teaching in the social sciences and Bible and ministry departments. It’s unusual for him to stay in any one role for this long. He’s a restless soul with a hungry mind, and it’s well past time for him to hop on his bike and see what’s over the next hill.

Wilder grew up in Marion, a city located in the industrial heart of Indiana. His father was a self-made man, working his way up in a glass factory, eventually becoming an industrial engineer. Much of his family worked hourly jobs in the automotive plants nearby. From them Wilder learned his work ethic: “You should be the first to work and the last to leave.”

He was also taught to be a pragmatic, direct communicator. “In my house you didn’t use a lot of words,” Wilder recalls. “You spoke directly.”

Wilder’s first encounter with Hesston College came when he and his wife Marilyn were attending Valparaiso Mennonite Church in Indiana. Wilder was in seminary in Chicago at the time, and was offered a youth pastor position at Grace Community Church in Newton, Kan. When he told his fellow church-goers about his new job, several of them responded by saying, “You’re going to be really close to my alma mater: Hesston College!”

Wilder was new to the Mennonite Church at the time, and wasn’t familiar with places like Hesston. As he and his young family prepared to move to Kansas, he tucked the name away in the back of his mind.

If you define resilience as the ability to stand alone, then I don’t think I’m resilient at all, Wilder says.

But if your definition of resilience means standing with others, then I think I’m very resilient.

Kevin Wilder in the Bontrager Center dining hall. Some of Wilder’s best moments at HC were spent connecting with students over a meal.
A few Hesston College staff and faculty attended Grace Community Church, and through them Wilder’s familiarity with the campus grew. But it wasn’t until Bible professor Marion Bontrager ’57 invited him to sit on a committee tasked with establishing a youth ministry program at Hesston that Wilder experienced extended contact with the college.

At that point, Wilder had been involved in youth ministry at Grace for about seven years. He has many talents, but staying still is not one of them. The itch to move on to something new began in him, and he felt an affinity with the college. So when the position of campus pastor at Hesston came open, he jumped at the opportunity.

Wilder’s approach to pastoring his campus flock included inspiring curiosity and a kind of radical vulnerability. He made himself available to whatever was coming, and encouraged students to do the same. He brought the same approach to teaching, modeling a version of resilience that finds its strength in community rather than individuality. “If you define resilience as the ability to stand alone, then I don’t think I’m resilient at all,” Wilder says. “But if your definition of resilience means standing with others, then I think I’m very resilient.”

Wilder learned resilience in a community context as a kid. “I have a learning disability, so I’ve always had to rely on other people to proofread my work,” he recalls. “But in return I have always tried to figure out what I can contribute to the team, and do that the best I can. When I played basketball I knew I could set picks and play defense and hustle for the ball, so I got to play because I figured out how I can contribute.”

On his office wall hangs a poster that reads: “Life is like riding a bicycle—in order to keep the balance you must keep moving.” Wilder tries to impart that lesson to his students. “Just keep showing up,” he tells them. “Be as durable and as bright as you can be.”

He’s tried to pass down a similar message to his children. “I told them: Wilders are durable and smart. You might not have the most talent on the team, but you’ll be there when you’re needed, and you’ll know what to do when your chance comes.”

Wilder lives the values he preaches. He puts himself where he’s needed, and when an opportunity arises, he’s prepared to step up. So when Whitestone Mennonite Church began its search for an interim pastor, he was there, ready and eager to get to work. Whitestone is the Wilder family’s home church, so it made sense for him to train for future interim pastoral positions in a place he knows well.

Wilder hopes this final decade of his professional life is filled with opportunities to take on traditional roles like the one at Whitestone. For faith-based organizations that need transitional leadership, he is ready to step in. It’s exactly the kind of work he’s been preparing for his whole life.

He’s got to keep moving.
I remember exactly where I sat in Kevin Wilder’s Gen Psych classroom. It was far enough in the back of Kropf 150 that (hopefully) he wouldn’t hear me whispering to my friend Jason or, heaven forbid, call on me.

But the hopes of that introverted 19-year-old were dashed. As much as I wanted to fade into the background and just marinate in my introvertedness, Kevin drew me out. He asked about the band on my T-shirt. I found out he was a John Mellencamp fan. He told some eye-rolly dad jokes. He won me over. I ended up finding a lot of joy in that classroom.

You don’t have to spend more than a few minutes with Kevin to see how likable, kind and authentic he is, but it’s not until you’re in his classes that you see how that translates to learning. When I became Kevin’s colleague a few years after graduating from Hesston, I rushed to put my advisees in those classes. I wanted them to experience what I did: active, engaging class periods that inspire a deep curiosity and wonder about human behavior.

As Kevin’s friend and colleague, I had lots of opportunities to learn from him as a teacher, but some skills can’t be learned. One of Kevin’s most distinctive attributes is “WOO,” a term coined by the strengths-based personality tool Hesston uses in their First Year Experience program. “Winning Others Over” is hard for most of us to do, so here are a few ways you might emulate Kevin Wilder and practice WOO in your own context:

Institute “Tie Tuesday” in your workplace and insist that others join you.

**Let a student** shave your head for a good cause.

**Leave random stuff** in your colleagues’ offices: giant teddy bears, thrift store finds, weird antiques...really anything that initiates a widespread conspiracy about how that thing got there and why.

**Take numerous selfies** on your colleagues’ phones when they aren’t looking.

**Dress up** as Chris Farley’s “Lunch Lady” from Saturday Night Live and monitor the trash area in the cafeteria, gently pestering students who ignore the campus food waste initiative.

**Always be the first** faculty member chosen as a Mod Olympics sponsor and/or mod parent.

**Celebrate the art** of asking great questions with “Curious Student Awards” (plush stuffed monkeys that emit an ear-ringing scream when slingshotted across the room.)

**Bring in empty donut boxes** to illustrate the Pavlovian response. But then for crying out loud, bring in some actual donuts, too.

For every one of Kevin’s quirky, fun-loving WOO-based stunts, I could name ten more. Those little moments enlivened my time at Hesston and drew me out of my introverted corner of Kropf Center. But here’s what I’ve really learned from Kevin about what it takes to win others over: support people, but never by throwing others under the bus. Be patient, especially when it’s hard. Offer grace to those who, at first glance, might not deserve it. And always be on the lookout for joy.

Kendra Burkey ’00
formr professor of communication and suitemate of Kevin Wilder at Hesston College.
Is this the end of church as we know it? From the Reformation to the first congregations, Michele (Schrock) ’81 Hershberger and Jessica (Schrock) ’02 Schrock-Ringenberg of Hesston College’s Center for Anabaptist Leadership and Learning (CALL) talk through what a resilient church might look like in an age of polarization and pandemic.

What do we mean when we talk about the “resilient church”?

Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg (JSR): This is one of my favorite topics. As a pastor, I remember having this incredible sense of hope and excitement about what was happening on an individual and collective level, seeing people in our congregation just blossom. But hovering over the top of all of that was this sense that the structure of what we called “the church”—the building and the programs and the budgets and the attendance, the ways we’ve always defined success of the church—that’s where I despaired. I see all these good things happening in the people who are here, but what we believed to be the successful version of this church is no more. I really struggled with that. So what does it mean to be the resilient church? It’s the people, not the programs or the budgets or the buildings.

It gives us permission to be helpless, and it’s in that state of helplessness that beautiful new things emerge.

- Michele Hershberger
Michele Hershberger (MH): It’s been a tough year for the church. Well, shoot, it’s been a tough couple years. We’re talking about how people aren’t going to church, we’re talking about climate change, we’re talking about political division, and then—surprise, surprise—here comes COVID. But in the midst of really tough times lies a great opportunity for church leaders (and leaders in higher education, as well) to get permission to try new, out-of-the-box, crazy things. And those new things will bring renewal! Sometimes we don’t want to make difficult changes. But we have this wonderful opportunity with COVID and all these other disruptive elements, which in a sense gives us permission to try. It gives us permission to be helpless, and it’s in that state of helplessness that beautiful new things emerge.

What “difficult changes” must the church make in order to become more resilient?

MH: In the last 100 years we have become a consumeristic church. (I actually think in some ways this is also true of higher education.) So the church gets a hired gun called a “church leader,” and he or she does ministry for us on our behalf, and then we wonder why we’re disinterested, dissatisfied and feel lifeless.

COVID is forcing us as church members to take responsibility for our own faith formation and the faith formation of others. It’s more biblical to understand that everyone is a minister in their own right. I’m not saying, “Get rid of paid professionals.” (I mean, CALL helps to train people for that!) But we've forgotten that the primary job of those trained professionals is to equip everyone to do their ministry. We say those words, but we’ve long ago lost the passion to actually follow through.

We also need to talk about converting our concept of “church.” I hear people say, “Oh my goodness, COVID is taking away church!” I’m like, “Are you kidding me? You and I are both Christians, we’re here sitting outside at Lincoln Perk, we just prayed for each other three minutes ago! What are you talking about? COVID can’t take away real church! We’re in church right now!”

JSR: You know, Michele, it’s funny you say that. I remember learning in your Anabaptist History class about the Reformation and how priests were paid to be holy on behalf of the people. We learned that the Reformation reclaimed the believer’s identity as a disciple. That meant going back to church as those in Scripture did it: the priesthood of all believers, doing church the way Jesus did church. As a church we’ve returned to the place where one voice in the front of the church tells everybody what to do and what to believe. They’re the only one that reads their Bible and they’re only one that’s supposed to be faithful, which is really just a return to the space we were in before the Reformation.

So it’s exciting to see how during the pandemic house churches are springing up everywhere. People are like, “Okay, we can’t meet en masse, so we’re just going to have church in our home. We’re all going to read our Bibles together. We’re all going to pray for each other.” The ministry has been put back in the hands of the people. It’s almost as if COVID made it necessary, and honestly it’s so incredibly exciting to see that happen. I like the saying that “the pain of not changing must become greater than the pain of change.” I actually don’t think we’re there yet. I think we’re in the wilderness and we’re longing to go back to Egypt. I almost wonder if the church needs to stay in this painful space a little longer!

MH: That’s exactly right, Jessica. We’re not creating something new or hoping for something new; we are hoping for something that is more biblical. Every time the church is under threat, it blossoms. Every time the church looks like it’s ending, God intervenes. That’s the big story: God makes a way where there is no way.

What does leadership look like in the resilient church?

MH: A key both in the church and in higher education is that leaders must be willing to step into the chaos. We have to embrace the mess. We need to give up some of our perceived power so that we can learn and do new things. I think one of the beautiful gifts CALL offers is that we try to help our pastors and our future pastors not see themselves as sages on the stage. It can’t be about us anymore. While that can seem really scary and awful and threatening, there is a gift in being helpless. It seems counterintuitive.

JSR: Kansas Leadership Center defines leadership as an activity, not a position. That’s similar to what I was being taught about the body of Christ, in which people who are gifted in different ways work together for the benefit of the body. The authority is in the body, not necessarily in a democratic system but more through spiritual discernment. Not everybody should have an equal voice in spiritual leadership. If you walk in off the street and become a church member after a year, you don’t
necessarily have as strong of a voice as the church member who has been working at deep discipleship for years and is a part of leadership. There has to be a discernment process and intentional discipleship. When I say intentional discipleship I mean creating intentional practices on a regular basis that really work at spiritual growth, self-awareness, introspection and holding each other accountable to look more and more like Jesus. Once the church adopts an intentional discipleship process, I believe leadership will blossom. More and more people will say, “I thought it was going to be a lot harder than that, but it turns out even I can grow in my spiritual discipleship. Even I can be a leader in the church.” That’s really what we’re looking at trying to develop: the capacity for discipleship in everyday people. Those disciples make up the body that leads together.

MH: Well said! I just want to add that I think we’re living in a paradox. First, we’re living in a postmodern world. The authority of the office no longer means anything to anybody. You earn your authority through your integrity and who you actually are. That’s a good thing! Somehow we need to understand that all people are called. One special calling would be a pastoral or a professional calling, but that calling starts to look different when you think about leadership as an activity. In that sense, anyone can be a leader.

Leadership and authority is gained from one’s integrity and from one’s ability to help people do difficult things that they don’t really want to do. Anabaptists 500 years ago understood that the greatest power is the power of submission to God, the power of love, the power of nonviolence. The Mennonite Church of the last 50 years has become a vanilla mishmash of servant leaders. We do everything for people but we never just speak our mind and help people do tough stuff. I used to be all for servant leadership. I’m not anymore. We have trained our Mennonite leaders in the past 50 years to be great servants. We have not trained them to be real leaders. I’m working on training people who are leaders and not just managers. There’s a huge difference.

JSR: We are trying to train people who see their job is to equip other leaders. Leaders who make leaders. I’m not successful if I’m doing it all by myself and everybody’s watching me. But if I am able to grow the capacity of leadership in the people around me, then I’m a good leader. It’s not a one-person show. The voice of the church has to be multifaceted. It has to include every gift, every walk of life. It needs leaders who are able to read the scripture, interpret the scripture, preach, minister, be present in their communities. It’s really about being able to develop the capacity of what we would call “the people in the pew.” But hopefully they’re not going to be in the pew! Hopefully they’re going to be out and about, serving their communities and making disciples as they go. COVID is going to create a vacuum and the true leaders have got to step up.

What does the resilient church look like in the real world?

MH: As it was 500 years ago, we might see a lot of our own empty cathedrals as the church finds its way elsewhere. We need to help people to see that church is Thursday afternoon, Tuesday morning, Saturday night. There are those appropriate times where we gather just as Christians in small groups to work on our own faith formation, but that’s only a small part of church. I have my neighbors over and we just talk about the Kansas City Royals, but I’m building a relationship so that they know that if they get sick I’m going to come bring food even though I’m half scared of COVID, and that somehow everybody in the church is doing that. I’m in Dillons and the person in front of me can’t pay her food bill, and I pay it forward—literally!—and then never see the person again. We can give up Sunday school and some of the other things so dear to us, but we can start to understand that what happened at Dillons was church, too! That means that pastors need to do some retraining. I don’t think anybody’s hardly good enough of a leader to do this without some emergency like COVID, but now? We’re going to start to do it.

JSR: It really does have a lot to do with getting back to the basics. In Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, Ruth Haley Barton talks about how Moses had to go into the wilderness first by himself before he could lead the children of Israel out. He went out into the wilderness to discover who he was. Was he Hebrew? Was he Egyptian? For the children of Israel, going out into the wilderness is a deep identity search, too. I think that this is our wilderness. The church needs to do a deep identity search to say, “Okay, what is the church? Who are we? Why are we here?” Then we need to begin to remove the pieces that we have set in stone that we don’t need anymore.

MH: I use the analogy of cancer. When cells that are supposed to die, don’t die, and then continue to clump on top of each other, that’s where the tumor forms. Now you have this mass that shouldn’t be there. We have all these extra parts we added to the church for a moment in time, but we can’t let them die. We’re too afraid to let them go, and now they’ve entombed us and we can’t move. We’re stuck in what has been and we don’t know what else is there for us. So we really have to be able to
do that deep identity search in the wilderness and say, “Okay, what is unnecessary? Can we let it go? Can we have a memorial service for all of those things that we’re trying to keep alive when there’s no life left, and then see what happens?” What’s left after that is the resilient church. We pastors have to repent of our need for our identity in the church to stay the same. Yes, we want control. Our egos get stroked. It’s about us. And it’s never supposed to have been about us. It’s God’s mission, not ours. It just goes to show, we can do really good things for really lousy reasons.

JSR: That’s one of the things I love about CALL: we really do focus on helping people accept their belovedness and their identity in God, because that’s the only way that you can do the hard change. We need to reframe our minds. We need to risk failure. Our CALL class just finished up yesterday. We read through Mark, which is my favorite gospel. I love it because the disciples fail and fail and fail and fail. Even to the very end they look like absolute failures. But Jesus still believes in them. He gives them a lot of latitude to figure out who they are in ministry, and they still fail. I think that’s a very important book for us in this time and space. We need to learn to say, “You know what? We don’t know what we’re doing, but it’s okay if we fail. Jesus still sticks with us.” A resilient church keeps at it.

We need to remember that Jesus had 12 disciples and somehow he made a movement out of that. For some reason we have this idea that we need the masses in order to be the church. The Tampa Underground Movement has this saying that, “As long as the missionary lives then you still have a church.” So we may close the door of this building, but as long as the people that were still attending there are still alive you still have a church. We need to get out of the scarcity mindset. There might only be 15 people attending, but those are 15 people. That’s more than Jesus had! So how do we start seeing the potential in the people that are here with us and then investing ourselves into developing their gifts? If you do that, you have not just 15 attenders but 15 equipped ministers of the gospel. It’s just a mentality shift.

“We need to learn to say, “You know what? We don’t know what we’re doing, but it’s okay if we fail. Jesus still sticks with us.” A resilient church keeps at it.”

Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg
It hasn’t been an easy year for a lot of folks. And the performing arts have had an especially hard time. When you make your livelihood with your body and your breath, and when your audience has traditionally gathered in confined, close quarters to hear and see you, finding ways to entertain others while keeping everyone safe can be a challenge.

So, in a year when everything changed, Hesston’s long-running arts and music series made some changes as well, including shifts in partnership, a new name, and for the first time in its history, a postponed season.

As it was when the series first began in 1982, Hesston College is now the sole presenter of the 38-year performance series. What was then known as the Hesston Performing Arts (HPA) series was then expanded to include a new partner in 1998: Bethel College. Hesston-Bethel Performing Arts (HBPA) shows alternated between the two campuses for two decades until, after the 2019-20 season, Bethel left the partnership. This new arrangement meant the venerable arts series needed a new name. Working with stakeholders and the college, executive director Holly Swartzendruber decided on a new name for a new era: the Sunflower Performing Arts at Hesston College, or SPA. Swartzendruber says that “the name ‘Sunflower Performing Arts at Hesston College’ both acknowledges the beloved state flower of Kansas, and signifies a fresh start for the series.”

Though the series has a new name and a new configuration, its long history of excellence will continue. “HPA and HBPA established a tradition of providing world-class artistry for Harvey County and the surrounding area,” said Swartzendruber. “The performing arts should reflect society: help us see who we are and who we can be. With the series, we hope to highlight especially the vocal/choral and theatre arts, as Hesston College has strong academic programs and performing opportunities in both of those areas.”

While Sunflower Performing Arts may not be a familiar name as yet, the series has a long history and many loyal patrons. And Swartzendruber intends to put together seasons that keep them coming back.

“Personally, finding a balance of familiar favorites and the new and unexpected in each season is one of my favorite aspects of my job as director,” Swartzendruber said. “I compare creating a season to putting together a jigsaw puzzle—occasionally challenging, always rewarding.”

Swartzendruber looked forward to experiencing a first under the name Sunflower Performing Arts alongside her fellow music and theatre lovers. But the COVID-19 pandemic forced a change of plans.

“While we were obviously saddened to do so, we decided to postpone the 2020-21 season,” Swartzendruber said. “We felt this was the safest route to take.” The scheduled slate of performers, including Canadian Brass and Mad River Theater Works, will return to Kansas for the 2021-22 season.

The first concert of the 2021-22 season, featuring renowned chamber ensemble Canadian Brass, will occur on Dec. 5 at Hesston Mennonite Church. Further scheduling information can be found at the SPA webpage—sunflowerarts.org—or at the series’ Facebook page @SunflowerPerformingArtsHC.
The Facts
HESSTON COLLEGE FALL 2020

STUDENT BODY

TOTAL ENROLLMENT
363

23 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED ON CAMPUS
Albania, Australia, Bahamas, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, New Zealand, Taiwan, Province of China, The Republic of Korea, The Republic of Kosovo, Rwanda, Poland, Spain, United States of America

STUDY ENROLLMENT

28% international students
34% U.S. students from outside of Kansas
53% students from Kansas

AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GPA new students fall 2020
3.36

UNIQUE PROGRAMS IN KANSAS
One of two FAA-approved flight training programs.
Only FAA-approved Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative program.
Overall nursing licensure rate of 99% in more than 50 year history. Offers bachelor of science in nursing (BSN), and LPN to BSN programs.
Only faith-based disaster management program.

AVERAGE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE
99% of students receive some kind of aid
$24,500+

FINANCIAL AID

Aid:
- Average financial aid package: $24,500+
- 120 endowed scholarships
- About 325 available campus jobs
- Kansas dorming students with a 3.0 GPA are guaranteed 60% off tuition with the Go State Promise

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

82% Dorming students participate on a sports team or in a performing arts group

LARKS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

STATES AND TERRITORIES REPRESENTED ON CAMPUS

23 Christian denominations and world religions on campus
19% of students are Mennonite
30 chapels required per semester for on-campus students
30 student-led Campus Worship services offered per year

OUTCOMES & ACCOLADES*

- 67% students transfer to complete an undergraduate degree
- 33% complete Hesston College career programs

*Of college graduates who attended Hesston College

IN THE TOP 10

of all Kansas institutions for median salary of graduates 10 years after starting college
Profiles

A HOME IN HESSTON
I graduated high school in 2016 and went to a baseball academy called The Complete Showcase in McKinney, Texas. The goal was to continue developing baseball skills without losing a year of college eligibility. In early 2017, I was recruited by Hesston baseball coach Kyle Howell. He took three of us to dinner and invited us to their game against Richland College. I went in the HC dugout and just started talking to people and I had the most fun I’d ever had. I was talking to guys who were funny, who were cool, who were just happy to see me and meet me. I was just like, “You know what? They play again tomorrow. I’m going to come back and see what it’s like.” I never even heard about Hesston; I just felt good about it. A month later we drove up to Hesston. I remember going through the town of Hesston and pulling up to the front of the college and thinking, “This place is kind of crazy!” It was a small town feel that I genuinely resonated with—the humbleness, the smallness of it. Then I met the people on campus and I was just like, “I think this is where I’m supposed to be.” I signed with HC in March and got a lanyard that said “Hesston College.” I put that on my keys and was like, “This is where I’m going to school.”

Fast forward to my sophomore year: Todd Lehman was the campus pastor, and he asked me to host a Sunday campus worship. I planned it along with Jaden Hostetter ’19 and David Ladwig ’18. I was worried nobody would come, but we did some traditional gospel songs that I learned—Kirk Franklin, Marvin Sapp—and we did “Because of Who You Are.” My good friend David Berzins ’19 spoke on overcoming adversity. I felt a sense of joy and a sense of family that whole night from people walking in. I was greeting people, getting on the microphone, talking, breaking the ice and being emcee, and then starting to lead worship and sing songs. There were like 200 people in the Keim Center basement, and I was so overwhelmed with joy and felt like everybody had a good time. Todd told me after that he was really proud of me and I thought, “This is something I will always remember.”

ON GIVING TO THE PROTECT THE LARKS FUND
Thinking back on times like that—times where we lead worship or a talent show, or playing baseball games, thinking back on all the people I had fun with—I just felt called. This is my place, a place where I can always come back. I went to school here, and I’ll always be able to connect with the students here even though it’s a two-year college and there’s so much turnover. Even though there’s so much stuff going on, I feel like the essence of Hesston is always going to be there, so that’s why I was like, “Yeah, I’m going to do something [when the call went out to donate to the Protect the Larks Fund].”

REGARDING RESILIENCE
Hesston taught me to be myself. The reason I truly felt called to give to the Protect the Larks Fund is for the next generations of students that are going to come in. At two-year colleges the turnover is so rapid. When I went back to see some of my friends I only knew the second-years and I didn’t recognize any of the first-year students. But I could still see on their faces the things I felt my freshman year. That’s what made me think about giving: that resilience. The resilience [of the Hesston

ALUMNUS
Kalen Haynes ’19
Major: Communication, Sports Management

Go Everywhere: Active in baseball, music and sports video production at Cameron University, Lawton, Okla.
Anna Banman ’22
Lenexa, Kan.

Major: Music
Activities: Bel Canto Singers, Student Ambassador

COVID, CLASS AND CARING
The second weekend of the semester I got COVID. I got it pretty bad; I was in isolation for 14 days, and then I ended up getting pericarditis as a result, which is a heart inflammation. It was really hard for me to keep attending classes and staying up on it while I had that heart condition because it was very random and infrequent. I had to miss quite a bit of Kevin Wilder’s classes and was falling behind with homework and I was just getting really stressed out. We were talking every day and he was giving me the tips that I needed, pushing my deadlines, making sure that I was comfortable, and asking me what I prefer instead of just saying, “You need to do this to stay caught up.” He was really tending to my needs and letting me put my health first without falling behind in his class.

WHERE I BELONG
During isolation I was feeling very lonely. It was the second week and I [was diagnosed with COVID] two days after classes started and I was feeling really sad and lonely, and just the thought of being able to go back to such a wonderful place was making me feel better. I knew that God was just pushing me through it and letting me know that this was all worth it. Pushing through the quarantine and then coming back better than I was before because I had built up strength and I had been trying to stay on top of everything, and then coming back being with my friends again, being with Bel Canto, being back in classes...it was just an overwhelming sense of, “This is where I belong. This is where I’m happy.” I would definitely say that was God reminding me that this is my home.

Protect the Larks is a special COVID-19 relief fundraising effort initiated in June 2020. To date, Hesston College alumni and friends have contributed $24,000, surpassing expectations. The Protect the Larks Fund continues to help Hesston College and its students by addressing increased expenses brought on by the pandemic. The fund helps the college take additional proactive measures to protect our Larks and campus community. Kalen was the youngest alumnus to donate to the fund.
For nearly 30 years, Goldy the Couch has been a mainstay of student life at Hesston College. From the apartments of resident directors to the dorm rooms of students to the grassy sidelines of Sieber Field, Goldy has provided a comfortable, welcoming spot for Larks of all stripes to sit and fellowship.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Jacob Mullins ’22, Chris Lichti ’21, and Ethan Klassen ’21 enjoy an autumn sunset on Goldy from the center of Sieber Field.
As the COVID-19 pandemic raged across the globe, the ways in which Hesston has enacted its commitment to “Christ-centered community” have changed. And nowhere is that change more apparent than on the worn cushions of Goldy the Couch. On Oct. 7 of this year, the current stewards of Goldy were informed by Hesston College athletic staff that Goldy wasn’t welcome at that evening’s Hesston men’s soccer scrimmage, as social distancing guidelines had not been strictly observed on previous outings.

In order to understand this shift in fortune, Goldy’s former and current caretakers agreed to reflect on the life and times of this iconic piece of campus furniture.

ENTER THE COUCH

Caretaker oral tradition places Goldy’s arrival at Hesston College around 1992. Early caretaker, HC resident director and noted sitting enthusiast Brent “Dogg” Brockmueller ’01 traces his first encounter with Goldy to 10 years later, during his post-college life when he lived with Blake Buhrman ’01. “I don’t know if [Buhrman] owned it in college, but when we were done with college we shared a house and he had the matching loveseat and couch,” Brockmueller recalled. From there, the Goldy and its sibling—a matching loveseat, now lost to time—moved into the Erb Hall RD’s apartment, joining four other couches in the space. “I actually didn’t own the couches until I moved into the dorm and Blake let me have them,” Brockmueller said, noting that he built lofts and risers to accommodate the furniture.

The chain of couch stewardship gets a hazy from there. Brockmueller sold Goldy to a Hesston College student, though he can’t recall precisely who. The couch bounced around until it came under the wing of Jeff Kauffman ’18, who bequeathed stewardship to Chris Lichti ’21 several years ago. Lichti, a senior aviation student, passed Goldy to Ethan Klassen ’21.

“The best memory I have of Goldy is when [Jacob] Mullins and I first brought it out to a soccer game at the beginning of the year,” Klassen said. “We could hear the commotion from people in the stands as we passed by them and set it down right in front. Not only did we get right up close to the action happening on the field, but we were also supremely comfortable.

“It was nice not to have to sit on the hard concrete bleachers to watch the game.”

Klassen, however, faced a dilemma when Goldy grew too large for his dorm room. He chose to pass Goldy to Jacob Mullins ’22. “Mullins was an obvious choice as the next owner of the couch,” Klassen said. “He embodied the spirit of Goldy like no other person.”

THE SPIRIT OF THE COUCH

But what is “the spirit of Goldy”?

Klassen, Lichti and Brockmueller’s answers share similar themes: Community. Fraternity. And whatever it is that drives 55 HC students to cram themselves into an RD’s apartment to participate in a screening of the Pixar movie “Up.”

The trouble, though, is that the spirit of Goldy—the camaraderie, the friendliness, the togetherness—runs counter to life during a pandemic. Physical proximity is dangerous. Students are discouraged from visiting each other’s rooms.

And, as HC athletic department COVID guidelines state, students are to sit six feet apart while attending outdoor sporting events, even though the couch can comfortably (albeit snugly) seat four.
**THE COUCH’S CALL**

Though Hesston is a dry campus, Goldy is permitted despite reports of the couch’s almost intoxicating effect on those who rest upon it.

“I have countless memories of people coming over to watch movies or just hang out and we would all pile on to Goldy,” Lichti said. “I’ve watched tons of Netflix, taken many great naps, and had great conversations with lifelong friends on Goldy. I always made it a goal to have one of the classiest rooms on campus so I could host all the hangouts; naturally, Goldy played a big part in that.

“Having a comfy couch is the basis of any good dorm room.”

“I remember [Lichti] granting me the great privilege of being able to have a seat on it,” Klassen said. “Despite its age, I remember how comfortable my body felt in its cushions that day.”

“I was hooked from that point on.”

Perhaps it was a combination of youthful exuberance and the couch’s siren song that led to a moment of unsound judgment, which forced the hand of HC athletic department officials. And so it was that Goldy wasn’t welcome at the next Lark soccer scrimmage.

Klassen understands the decision.

“Because of the close proximity of people to each other when sitting, Goldy does not provide a COVID-safe environment with a couchful of people,” he said. “It was best to heed the college’s regulations regarding social distancing.”

With the distribution of COVID vaccines underway, the days when Goldy is welcome back on the Sieber Field sidelines edge ever closer. Until then, the couch resides safely in a Kauffman Court dorm room, awaiting the day Larks can alight on it once again.
Update

Hesston College School of Nursing

Achieves Perfect NCLEX-RN Pass Rate

In late October, Becky Bartell, director of Nursing at Hesston College, announced that HC’s 2020 graduating students achieved a 100% NCLEX-RN pass rate this fall, with nearly 91% of students passing the rigorous licensing exam on their first attempt.

“A 100 percent pass rate would be extraordinary under any circumstances,” said Bartell. “But given the massive disruption in in-class and clinical instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, never mind the enormous challenges experienced by our students over the last 10 months as they’ve worked to maintain momentum in their studies, this accomplishment seems all the more impressive. It’s a testament not only to the skill, energy, intelligence and persistence of the students in the School of Nursing, but also to our incredible faculty and staff. I couldn’t be more proud.”

Hesston College School of Aviation

Invited to Join Prestigious Intercollegiate Organization

Hesston College’s School of Aviation has been invited to join the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA). Membership in NIFA offers Hesston College aviation students invaluable opportunities to compete and network with students from some of the largest and most prestigious collegiate flight programs in the United States.

NIFA was formed to advance aviation education and provide opportunities for collegiate aviation communication, cooperation and competition.

Hesston College received its formal invitation to join NIFA as a member of Region VI, which spans much of the northern Great Plains and upper Midwest. Other member schools in Region VI include K-State Polytechnic, Iowa State University, the University of North Dakota and the University of Wisconsin.

Three juniors—Jessica Buckwalter ’21, Ellie Yoder ’21 and Austin Kunert ’21—participated in two NIFA competitions, both conducted virtually. Hesston College aviation students will prepare for additional competitions to be held nationwide in February and March 2021. Due to COVID-19, all flight skill competitions have been canceled for the remainder of the academic year.
Hesston College Athletics had a very unusual semester, as we didn’t have any normal fall sports competing. Men’s soccer, women’s soccer, volleyball, men’s basketball and women’s basketball all had their seasons moved to spring 2021 due to COVID-19. With practice restrictions set by the NJCAA, Lark Athletics tried to find new ways to practice during the pandemic. Many teams spent their practice days practicing in pods and weren’t able to practice as a full team due to COVID restrictions. This gave our coaches a great opportunity to go out and recruit more than normal this semester which has resulted in many sports almost completing their recruiting class for the 2021-22 season.

This fall semester four new coaches joined our coaching staff: Matt Hiebert ’14 (men’s basketball), Michael Smalley ’07 (women’s basketball), Taylor Littleton (volleyball) and Kyle Olsen (baseball). Each of these coaches have brought positivity to our department and to their respective teams.

In September, the KJCCC passed a new rule that allowed teams to play in fall scrimmages with outside competition. This was exciting news for Larks Athletics, as many of our teams were able to begin preparing for their spring seasons by playing outside competition. Our softball team played many scrimmages in fall, and was able to take advantage of the newly-opened Bess Mullet Field. Our athletes also made good use of the weight room that was added to the newly renovated Yost Center.

This semester was a challenge for our athletic programs, but our student-athletes and coaches were able to meet that challenge and better themselves for their upcoming seasons in the spring.
Alumni
DEATHS
1940-49
Paul Shenk Ac40 ’42, Latrobe, Pa., July 10, 2013
Mahlon Buckwalter ’40, Palmyra, Mo., March 16, 2019
Gladys (Winn) ’42 Swartzendruber, former employee, Kingsburg, Calif., Jan. 27, 2017
Violet (Eicher) Ac43 Troyer, Harper, Kan., June 19, 2020
Keith Erb, spouse of Helen (Marner) Ac47 Erb, Glendale, Ariz., Oct. 29, 2020
Dorothy Harder, spouse of Willis Harder Ac48, North Newton, Kan., Nov. 4, 2020
Faye (Hooley Taylor) Ac49 ’51 Swartzendruber, Hubbard, Ore., Sept. 17, 2020
Mel Yoder, spouse of Betty (Burkey) Ac49 Yoder, Goshen, Ind., Nov. 3, 2019

DEATHS
1950-59
Mary Alice (Shaum) Ac50 ’52 Whittaker, Rocky Ford, Colo., Sept. 22, 2020
Gene Swartzendruber Ac50, spouse of Velma (Ewy) Ac50 Swartzendruber, Hesston, Kan., Oct. 3, 2020
Lola (King) Ac51 ’53 Boyce, Stevensville, Mont., March 31, 2020
Royce Brunk Ac53 ’55, spouse of Ardith (Freyenberger) ’55 Brunk, Hesston, Kan., Oct. 12, 2020
Betty (Hostetler) Ac53 ’55 Schmidt, Littleton, Colo., Sept. 11, 2020
Stanley Boyer Ac54, spouse of Marylin (Ebersole) Ac54 Boyer, Madison, Wis., May 25, 2020
Maria (Rivera) ’54 Snyder, former employee, Hesston, Kan., Aug. 10, 2020
Beulah Mae (Graber) ’54 Swartzendruber, Elk Run Heights, Iowa, Nov. 21, 2018

DEATHS
1960-69
Eileen (Zimmerly) ’60 Loeffler, Sherwood Park, Alberta, June 17, 2019
Wesley Richard ’60, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 6, 2020
Audrey (Gusler) ’60 Swartzendruber, Hancock, Mich., July 31, 2017
Jerald Hadley, spouse of Karen (Bontrager) ’61 Hadley, Larned, Kan., July 8, 2020
Melinda (Jantz) Ac62 Gerlofs, Fountain Hills, Ariz., April 3, 2020
Philip Hartzler ’62, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 19, 2020
Dwight Grieser ’63, spouse of Carol (Hartzler) ’63 Grieser, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 25, 2019
Jake Van Pelt ’63, spouse of Marilyn (West) ’64 Van Pelt, Lincoln City, Ore., May 10, 2020
Tony Ramirez ’64, spouse of Linda (Birky) ’65 Ramirez, Foosland, Ill., Aug. 5, 2020
David Jantz Ac65, Estes Park, Colo., March 2, 2013
Daniel Longenecker ’65, Lititz, Pa., July 2, 2020
Lynn Loucks ’65, North Newton, Kan., Nov. 22, 2020
Roberta (King) ’65 Mathes, Decatur, Ga., Sept. 30, 2016
Margaret (Burkey) Ac57 ’59 Martin, spouse of Del Martin Ac59, Sun City, Ariz., June 30, 2020
Arlene (Lugeanbeal) Ac57 Jones, San Jose, Calif., June 10, 2020
Larry Stauffer ’58, spouse of Betty (Bourn) Ac57 Stauffer, Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 17, 2018
Bert Voth ’58, Minneapolis, Kan., Sept. 19, 2020
Duane Ac63 ’65 and Lois (Gingerich) ’66 Beck, Harrisonburg, Va., moved to Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community in July.
“Howard was literally a lifelong supporter of Hesston College. He said on several occasions that he knew every Hesston College president. Howard and Martha personify the values we seek to teach. He was a rock for me and other presidents before me. His straightforward words, good humor and constant encouragement were given in humility and strength. His name and reputation were a great help to me in connecting with people in business and across the church. He was one of a few people I called on when I needed perspective or had difficult decisions to make. I honestly do not remember his specific advice, but I do remember and now miss his sense of calm and his ability to help me think clearly. We have lost a friend and retain his legacy.”
-Dr. Howard Keim ’72, President (2005-16)
John McCarthy ’65, spouse of Anna (Peachey) ’68 McCarthy, Huntersville, N.C., Sept. 22, 2019

Ruth (Richert) ’65 Rose, Wichita, Kan., May 29, 2015

Clair Frank ’68, Portland, Ore., June 10, 2019

Cathy (Holderread) ’68 Passmore, Corvallis, Ore., May 31, 2020

Weldon Diener ’69, Bradenton, Fla., June 12, 2020

Kathy (Yoder) ’69 Weaver, Elkhart, Ind., Sept. 17, 2020

Dave ’70 and Darlene (Nofziger) ’70, Sisters, Ore., enjoy pickleball and cycling (Dave) and hiking and kayaking (Darlene) in retirement.

Dwight Bitikofer ’71, St. Louis, Mo., and his business partner, Don Corrigan, have been inducted into the St. Louis Media History Foundation Media Hall of Fame in recognition of accomplishments in the print industry in St. Louis and nationwide. Bitikofer is retiring after 42 years publishing community newspapers in the St. Louis area.

Venita (Goerzen) ’72 Schroeder, Newton, Kan., retired from her role as director of nursing at Bethesda Home, Goessel, Kan., in 2019.

DeAnn Diller ’75, Wichita, Kan., works for Hamilton Relay, a voice recognition captioning service for the hearing impaired.

Dale Kempf ’75, Libertyville, Ill., retired from his role as a senior research fellow at AbbVie, a pharmaceutical company. He keeps busy with volunteer advisory capacities with various organizations in several tropical infectious diseases and also now COVID.

Patsy (King) ’75 Unruh, Perryton, Texas, retired in spring after 29 years in the Perryton Independent School District, working in the office at Wright Elementary School for the last 22 years.

Lowell Peachey ’76, Hutchinson, Kan., retired in summer after serving 13 years as president and CEO of Mennonite Friendship Communities in South Hutchinson, Kan.

Jenny Cressman ’80, Huntsville, Ontario, completed her first novel, Cuban Kisses, an adventure and romance novel which was released by Ripple Press in January. It’s the first in a three-book series with Cuban Wishes also arriving in early 2021 and Cuban Missus later in the year.

Curt Bechler ’78, Hudsonville, Mich., continues to work at Venture International, a crisis management company he launched in the 1990s.

Denise (Stuckey) ’80 Birky, Gibson City, Ill., has worked for Gibson Hospital for 39 years in a variety of roles. Currently she is assistant director of case and risk management.

Cheri (Hadley) ’80 Kaufman, Moundridge, Kan., is director of social services with Kansas Christian Home in Newton, Kan.

Kevin Mast ’80, Charlotte, N.C., was recognized by Charlotte Business Journal as “CFO of the Year” for his work at Mountain Real Estate Group. Mast is among a select group of honorees across a range of industries who were chosen based on their abilities to lead and make a meaningful difference at their companies and organizations.

Jeff Wintermote ’80, Hillsboro, Kan., graduated in May with a master’s in social work from Newman University (Wichita) and began work as an addictions counselor and therapist in September. He previously worked as a kinship specialist for a child welfare agency.

Cal Zehr ’80, Tiskilwa, Ill., helps develop and assist in the operation of Hungry World Farm, a non-profit organization to inspire and educate about food while caring for the earth.

James Miller ’84, San Antonio, Texas, retired in January from USAA after more than 20 years with the company.

DEATHS

Paul Cormier, spouse of Gini (Zeiset) ’81 Cormier, Lititz, Pa., May 4, 2019

Terry (Bramdeberry) ’84 Brandeberry, El Paso, Texas, Oct. 19, 2020

Sherwyn Smeltzer ’84, Harrisonburg, Va., May 23, 2020

1990-99

Jaqui Eicher ’90, Corvallis, Ore., paints commissioned portraits of pets. A recent solo gallery show featured portraits of her dog, Pearl, in historical settings matching the styles of portraits by female painters throughout history.

Alan Kauffman ’90, Lewistown, Pa., accepted a seventh three-year appointment as pastor of Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa., with plans to retire at the end of the term.

Rhonda (Good) ’90, former employee, King, Mechanicsburg, Pa., left her work in higher education after more than 20 years spanning jobs at Hesston College, Emporia (Kan.) State University and Messiah College (Mechanicsburg) in summer 2019 to become a stay-at-home mom for her daughters, ages 6 and 4.

Susie (Lambright) ’91 Cassel, Irving, Texas, graduated from Dallas Baptist University in May 2020 with an M.Ed. in higher education administration.

Mark Schroeder ’92, Louisville, Ky., works for UPS as the flight operational quality assurance analyst, analyzing flight data to contribute to full flight safety for UPS Airlines.

Bronda (Willard) ’95 Boley, Wichita, Kan., is working toward ordination in the Church of the Nazarene.

Francis (Lopez) ’95 Lopez de Rosa, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, teaches high school.

Michelle (Galle) ’95 McClure, Colwich, Kan., is a full-time paraeducator at an elementary school and part-time logistics associate. She and her husband, Brian,
are active members of Pathway Church in Valley Center.

Angie (Moyer) ’95 Swartz, Overland Park, Kan., started a professional organizing business – Aim to be Organized – in 2017. She assists customers with home organization projects.

Melody (Miller) ’96 Stuckey, Wichita, Kan., began as special education coordinator for Goddard (Kan.) Public Schools in August.

Stacey Eason ’97, Wichita, Kan., a Certified Nurse Midwife, began seeing patients in September. After completing a master’s in nursing degree with a focus on midwifery at Frontier Nursing University in 2019, she practices at Mid-Kansas Women’s Center with two other CNMs and three doctors.

Bobbi (Griffin) ’98 Schrag, Moundridge, Kan., completed a master of science in nursing and works as a family nurse practitioner.

Bethany (Freed) ’98 Umble, Ephrata, Pa., completed her commercial driver’s license and drives school bus for Hinkletown Mennonite School.

Jenae (Leatherman) ’06, ’07 and Matt Yoder, Sutton, Alaska, serve at Victory Bible Camp and Conference Center in Glacier View. As nurse coordinator, Jenae schedules summer camp nurses and works in the health center.

Erica (Yutzy) ’07 Clymer, Harrisonburg, Va., opened a private counseling practice, Ivy Sage Therapy. Her practice focuses on children, teens, support for moms and body-food relationships.

Aaron Gingerich ’08, Kalona, Iowa, started as a physical education teacher at Faith Academy, Iowa City, this fall. He previously taught at Hillcrest Academy/Iowa Mennonite School.

Tyler Lucas ’09, Gretna, Neb., is a teacher at Gretna Elementary School.

Erin Hershberger ’10, San Antonio, Texas, completed an M.S.N. in nursing education at Wichita (Kan.) State University in 2019. She teaches pre-licensure B.S.N. students at Galen College of Nursing.

Chris Moyer ’10, Goessel, Kan., is the shop and maintenance manager for Ag Service in Hillsboro, Kan.

Naomi Nussbaum ’10, Happy Valley, Ore., served with Mennonite Central Committee’s SALT program in Bangladesh 2018-19.

DEATHS

Vicki Johnson ’92, Inman, Kan., Nov. 23, 2020

Judi (Helfer) ’94 Burkett, spouse of David Burkett Ac66, Newton, Kan., May 21, 2020

Fawn (Tedder) ’95 Wilson, Ottawa, Kan., July 5, 2017

BIRTHS

Marc is director of a homeless day shelter.

Caleb Ediger ’01, El Dorado, Kan., started a new role in October as associate dean of nursing and allied health at Butler Community College.

Dustin Galyon ’04, former employee, Hesston, Kan., started as men’s golf coach and director of golf at Friends University (Wichita, Kan.) in January, 2021.

Philip ’05 and Aimee (Stutzman) ’05 Kauffman, Haven, Kan., do foster care. Amy homeschools the two younger kids. Philip works at King Solar in Yoder.

Liz Sowers ’06, Overland Park, Kan., leads the Ottawa (Kan.) University women’s flag football program as head coach. The program is in its first year.

Grant Baker ’07, Goshen, Ind., completed an Everesting — riding up and down a hill until he had climbed the height of Mt. Everest (29,029 feet) without stopping to sleep. The task took 27 hours and 21 minutes and Grant rode 227.8 miles and climbed 29,627 feet on June 13 and 14.

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DEATHS

Laura (Sommers) ’00 ’01 Steenerson, Terre Haute, Ind., June 6, 2020

BIRTHS

Marc (Schlegel) ’00 and Jenna (Preheim) ’05 Schlegel-Preheim, Boise, Idaho: Charlie Otto Schlegel-Preheim, Nov. 8, 2019

Melinda (Jantz) ’01 and Nathan Hiebert, Newton, Kan.: Isaiah Colton Hiebert, born June 13, 2017, received for adoption, July 9, 2020

Troy ’02 and Sara Jantz, Hesston, Kan.: Harrison Parker Jantz, June 8, 2020

2000-10

Jenna (Preheim) ’05 and Marc (Schlegel) ’00 Schlegel-Preheim live in Boise, Idaho. Jenna is a stay-at-home mom and part time psychotherapist.
Heidi (Swartzendruber) Swartzendruber Hine ’01 and Charley Hine, Denver, Colo.: Tyler Kirtland Hine, Sept. 24, 2020

Erica (Shirk) ’05 and Adam Bowen, Coronado, Calif.: Ruthie Josephine Bowen, Aug. 30, 2020

Jared Widmer ’05 and Angela (Stauffer) ’06 Stauffer-Widmer, Washington, Iowa: Ivy Sue Widmer, Oct. 10, 2020

Brenda (Imhoff) ’06 and Matthew Selay, Washington, Ill.: Isaac Mark Selay, March 28, 2020

Chris ’07 and Eliza Burkholder, Salem, Ore.: Brielle Katherine Burkholder, Aug. 7, 2020

J.D. ’07 and Liz (Arriaga) ’07 Doty, Kenora, Ontario: Rose Amelia Doty, July 27, 2019

Hannah (Gillham) ’07 ’12, former employee, and Chris Dunlap, Hebron, Neb.: Rollins Russell Dunlap, Sept. 15, 2020

Richard ’07 and Angelina Idler, Bear, Del.: Ellinor Blythe Idler, July 24, 2020

Jamie (Leichty) ’07 and Ryan Reynolds, Ankeny, Iowa: Oakley Evan Reynolds, Sept. 18, 2020

Matt ’07 and Rachel (Kauffman) ’07 Ropp, Sturgis, Mich.: Andrew Isaiah Ropp, Oct. 30, 2020

Michael ’07, employee, and Jen (Birky) ’07, former employee, Smalley, Hesston, Kan.: Carsen Wayne Smalley, June 26, 2020

Garrett ’07 and Kourtney Yoder, Kalona, Iowa: Tripp Cutler Yoder, Nov. 7, 2020

Caleb Detweiler ’08 and Heidi (Gingerich) ’08 Gingerich Detweiler, Parnell, Iowa: Ingrid Detweiler, Aug. 17, 2020


Kimberly (Friesen) ’08 Friesen Kulp and Micah Kulp, Madison, Wis.: Wesley Floyd Kulp, May 31, 2020

Aaron ’08 and Midori Gingerich, Kalona, Iowa: Daniel Aaron Gingerich, June 29, 2020

ShaRae (Wadel) ’08 and Jeff Harden, Colwich, Kan.: Kyla Harden, April 21, 2020

Nozomi (Suzuki) ’08 and Naoya Iriomote, Osaka City, Japan: Naommi Iriomote, May 8, 2020

Elisa (Schrag) ’08 and Thomas Milam, Lewisville, N.C.: Mia Remsy Milam, May 7, 2020

Meredith (Kliwer) ’08 and Caleb Sarver, Ellis, Kan.: Cameron Aaron Sarver, Feb. 19, 2020

Ryan ’08 and Emily (Kirk) ’05, former employee, Stauffer, Milford, Neb.: Nash Barry Stauffer and Georgia Jean Stauffer, Oct. 12, 2020

Caleb ’08 and Joilyn Waidelich, Stryker, Ohio: Axel Herman Waidelich, Aug. 27, 2020

Marcus ’09, former employee, and Lynae (Wright) ’10 Maust, Mount Sidney, Va.: Creighton John Maust, April 26, 2020

Chris Snyder ’09 and Amanda Connor, Akron, N.Y.: Curtis Snyder, May 5, 2020

Abigail (Roth) ’09 and Kevin Von Seggern, Grand Island, Neb.: Malachi George Von Seggern, Oct. 25, 2020

Lance ’09 and Kristin (Nussbaum) ’09 Wenger, Rockingham, Va.: Reagan Lynn Wenger, July 15, 2020

Jessica Cleveland ’06, former employee, and Darrin Biegert, Salina, Kan., July 11, 2020

Brett Troyer ’06 and Bailey Schrock, Washington, Iowa, Feb. 1, 2020

Stephanie Kanagy ’08 and Kyle Ferlic, Charlotte, N.C., March 22, 2020

Todd Stutzman ’08 and Jessica Fey, Gunnison, Colo., July 24, 2020

2010-19

Colby Troyer ’12, Kansas City, Mo., is director of global trade analytics at Dairy Farmers of America in Kansas City.

Denver Coblentz ’16 Blythewood, S.C., is an F-16 pilot with the Air National Guard.

Dustin King ’14, Wichita, Kan., earned a doctor of optometry degree from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Boston).

Amanda (Parker) ’15 Bennett, Akron, Ohio, works as a program manager for Upreach LLC. Upreach provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Victoria Cortez ’15, Moreno Valley, Calif., earned a B.F.A. in cinema sound.

Christina Hershey ’15, Durham, N.C., is a student at Duke Divinity School.

Quinn Kathrineberg ’15, Memphis, Tenn., completed a master of urban education degree in May 2019 with the Memphis Teacher Residency. She teaches high school English in Memphis.

Dani Klotz ’12, Goshen, Ind., is the first executive director of Anabaptist World Inc., the new independent journalistic ministry formed by the merger of Mennonite World Review and The Mennonite. She takes on this new role after serving as director of marketing and communication for Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) and previous roles as development associate and content team manager for MMN.
Alaina Beatty ’16, Waukee, Iowa, completed her master’s in accounting at Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa) and is studying for the CPA exam.

Alice (Maldonado) ’16 Maldonado-Zahra, South Bend, Ind., attends the Center for Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, working on a master’s degree in transformational leadership. She works as a restorative justice practitioner at the Center for Community Justice.

Karli Rodriguez ’16, Reno, Nev., graduated from Siena College (Loudonville, N.Y.) in 2018 with a B.A. in sociology and is the new varsity volleyball coach at Sage Ridge High School, Reno.

Meredith Spicher, ’16, Sioux Center, Iowa, graduated from Northwestern College with a degree in elementary education and is teaching K-2 resource at a Christian school in Sioux Center.

Riley Kingsley ’17, Harrisonburg, Va., is an associate at Brown Edwards, an accounting firm in Harrisonburg.

Emma Etizen ’18, Goshen, Ind., manages the Ten Thousand Villages store in Goshen. Ten Thousand Villages is a fair trade store that brings the work of artisans from around the world to shoppers in the U.S.

Shaelyn Headrick ’18, La Junta, Colo., graduated from University of Colorado with a B.A. in education and human development.

Luke Hertzler ’18, Wellman, Iowa, graduated from Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) and works as a paraeducator in a preschool classroom at an elementary school.

Kylie (Brenneman) ’18 Hollern, Fort Worth, Texas, works in human resources at BNSF Railway headquarters.

Mackenzie Miller ’18, Goshen, Ind., completed a summer internship for LNP Media Group, Lancaster, Pa., before returning to Goshen College and serving as fall semester executive editor of The Record, the college’s student newspaper.

Sadie Winter ’18, Wichita, Kan., a biomedical engineering major at Wichita State University, had a summer 2020 internship in Asia lined up but it was canceled because of the pandemic. She instead found an opportunity to help produce disposable stethoscopes for Wichita-area healthcare workers as part of a team with the WSU Center for Entrepreneurship.

Lori Bingham ’11 ’13, Wichita, Kan., July 18, 2020

Tim Bixler ’13, Indianapolis, Ind., Nov. 22, 2020

Dmitry ’10 and Rachel (Weaver) ’11 Bucklin, Hesston, Kan.: Leo Dmitry Bucklin, July 20, 2020

Danielle (Minder) ’10 and Jerad Carmichael, Sedgwick, Kan.: Wyatt Duane Carmichael, Aug. 6, 2020


Donovan ’10 and Kassidy Krehbiel, Topeka, Kan.: Annabelle Marie Krehbiel and Clara Jane Krehbiel, Nov. 12, 2020

Malerie (Hertzler) ’10 and Stuart Manche, Sabetha, Kan.: Jackson Dwight Manche, Dec. 6, 2020

John ’10 and Denay Murray, Saint Paul, Minn.: John David Murray, Nov. 20, 2020

Devan ’11 and Ciera Kirkpatrick, Columbia, Mo.: Dysen Willis Kirkpatrick, May 9, 2020

Luci (Eash) ’11 and Mathew Miller, Hutchinson, Kan.: Paul Garrett Miller, Nov. 8, 2020

Danielle (Stauffer) ’11 and TJ Werner, Burlington, Iowa: Maddox Lee Werner, July 21, 2020

Kyle ’12, former employee, and Erika (Dorsch) ’13 Albrecht, Newton, Kan.: Norman Andrew Albrecht, June 4, 2020

Kendra (Mast) ’12 and Joel Edinger, Millersburg, Ohio: Owen Charles Edinger, May 23, 2020

Meredith (Roth) ’12 and Richard Erdkamp, Exeter, Neb.: Jay William Erdkamp, Nov. 23, 2020

Kenny ’12 and Mara (Short-Miller) ’12 Graber, Bellingham, Wash.: Aliza Dawn Graber, Oct. 22, 2020

Daniel ’12 and Kirsten Jones, Argonia, Kan.: Colson Casey Jones, Oct. 16, 2020

Taylor (Hoover) ’12 and Jeff McKenney, Harleysville, Pa.: Jaxon Jeffrey McKenney, Aug. 7, 2020

Josh ’12 and Stefanie (Ruhs) ’12 Musser, Harrisonburg, Va.: Jacob Scott Musser, March 21, 2020

Joe ’12 and Heather Smith, Olathe, Kan.: Emmie Rose Smith, April 5, 2020

Josh ’12 and Kara (Ropp) ’12 Yoder, Kalona, Iowa: Molly Lynn Yoder, June 17, 2020

Jeptha ’13, former employee, and Alyssa (Rychener) ’13 Miller, Newton, Kan.: Lynden Louise Miller, June 27, 2020

Oliver ’15 and Karli (Mast) ’15 Denlinger, Newmanstown, Pa.: Monte Justice Denlinger, Oct. 24, 2020

Alix (Rodriguez) ’15, ’20 and Logan Miller, Halstead, Kan.: Cash Maverick Miller, Sept. 21, 2020

Maggie (Beckham) ’15 and Trevor Painter, Bentonville, Ark.: Beckham Rhett Painter, May 8, 2020

Kendal (Slabach Brubaker) ’15, former employee, and Robin (Morris) ’15 ’19 Slabach, Hesston, Kan.: Jayden Paul Slabach, Oct. 28, 2020
**MARRIAGES**

Celine (Gregor) ’16 ’18 and George Blazek, Denison, Iowa: Francis Henry Blazek, July 2, 2020

Sarah (Hoover) ’16 and Justin Scott, Elbing, Kan.: Michael Craig Scott, Nov. 5, 2020

Luccas ’18 and Addie (Swartzendruber) ’19 Schmucker, Lincoln, Neb.: Mila Rae Schmucker, Aug. 22, 2020

Scott ’19 ’20 and Courtney Brazil, Hillsboro, Kan.: Laken Dawn Brazil, Aug. 20, 2020

Sarah (Hoover) ’16 and Justin Scott, Elbing, Kan.: Michael Craig Scott, Nov. 5, 2020

Luccas ’18 and Addie (Swartzendruber) ’19 Schmucker, Lincoln, Neb.: Mila Rae Schmucker, Aug. 22, 2020

Scott ’19 ’20 and Courtney Brazil, Hillsboro, Kan.: Laken Dawn Brazil, Aug. 20, 2020

**MARRIAGES**

Rickey Vick II ’10 and Brooke Ashleigh, Edmond, Okla., Dec. 2, 2019

Jon Wilson ’10 and Emily Kaberline, Hutchinson, Kan., May 9, 2020

Jenna Bliss ’11 and Jesse Wellman, Derby, Kan., July 13, 2020

Becca Erb ’12 and Brandon Kelley, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 12, 2020

Jordan King ’12 and Alexis Santora, Stow, Ohio, May 30, 2020

Andrew Penner ’12 and Jennifer Little, Fresno, Calif., Sept. 19, 2020

Erin Banman ’12 and Drew Thornton, Lawrence, Kan., June 26, 2020

Dawson Waltner ’12 and Mallory Wedel, North Newton, Kan., June 20, 2020

Brooke Beckerman ’13, ’19 and Dylan Anderson, Hesston, Kan., Aug. 29, 2020

Natalie Young ’13 and Michael Claassen, Wichita, Kan., March 28, 2020

Olivia Miller ’13 and John Reimer, Hesston, Kan., Sept. 21, 2019

Mindy Yoder ’13 and Quentin Young, Kansas City, Mo., April 5, 2020

Morgan Martin ’14, former employee, and Zach Batson, McPherson, Kan., July 24, 2020

Tasha Drake ’14 and Megan Spencer, Manhattan, Kan., July 11, 2020

Matt Hiebert ’14, employee, and Katy Benson, Hesston, Kan., Sept. 12, 2020

Rachelle Haarer ’14 and Brooks Hochstetler, Goshen, Ind., June 27, 2020

Laura Baker ’14 and Kyle Pletcher, Millersburg, Ind., May 24, 2020

Josh Thomas ’14 and Ambra Rowles, Johnstown, Pa., Oct. 3, 2020

Amanda Parker ’15 and Kyle Barnett, Akron, Ohio, July 25, 2020

Savannah Sizer ’15 and Corey Clarkston, Saint Augustine, Fla., Sept. 26, 2020


Grant Walker ’15 and Riley Cochran, Newton, Kan., Aug. 1, 2020

Erin Coffman ’16 and David Betts, Vassar, Kan., July 11, 2020

Collin Loutensock ’16, former employee, and Kelsey Unruh ’17, former employee, Hesston, Kan., Oct. 3, 2020

Kaden Vanderpool ’16 and Mikala Potts, Manhattan, Kan., June 19, 2020

Evelyn Lazaro ’17 and Blake Aitchison, Wichita, Kan., June 27, 2020

Nevin Lehman ’17 and Aleshia Melendez, Rockingham, Va., May 23, 2020

Logan Swartzendruber ’17 and Renee Buckwalter ’17, Goshen, Ind., July 12, 2020

Adele Hofer ’17 and Steven Thomas, Greenwood Village, Colo., May 31, 2020

Sadie Prowell ’18 and Chase Gourley, Overland Park, Kan., June 19, 2020

Luke Hertzler ’18 and Cassidy Bontrager ’17, Wellman, Iowa, Aug. 1, 2020

Josie Noll ’18 and Brooks Mize, Atchison, Kan., March 11, 2020

Guhyoun Nam ’18 and Rebecca Reutzel ’18, Lawrence, Kan., May 24, 2020

Curtis Oesch ’18 and Sarah Miller ’18, Caldwell, Idaho, Oct. 24, 2020

Terin Hiebert ’18 and Kayl Warne, Derby, Kan., June 13, 2020

Therin Smith ’19 and Autumn Gehman ’20, Clarksville, Tenn., Oct. 4, 2020

**2020-**

Mio Hirata ’20, Philadelphia, Pa., is studying hospitality management at Temple University (Pa.)

**BIRTHS**

Autumn Lungwitz ’21 and Nathan Spears, Wichita, Kan.: River Layne Spears

**MARRIAGES**

Chloe McNiel ’20 and Levi Kindel, Valley Center, Kan., July 18, 2020

Brinkli Jones ’20 and Dylan Mortensen, Hyde Park, Utah, June 20, 2020

**Employees**

Rita Peters, employee, defended her dissertation June 30 to complete a Ph.D. in nursing education from University of Northern Colorado (Greeley).

Kevin Wilder, employee, was one of eight recipients of a regional Journey Award from Everence Financial. The award highlights what people of faith are doing as stewards of their God-given gifts. Kevin designated the college’s “Protect the Larks” COVID-19 fund and Camp Mennoscah (Murdock, Kan.) as his chosen charities for the $500 award.

**DEATHS**

Lois (Blosser) Amstutz, former employee, Newton, Kan., Aug. 4, 2020

**BIRTHS**

Scotty, former employee, and Natalie Friesen, Waco, Texas: Jesse Paul Friesen, March 18, 2020

Terrence, employee, and Breetta Jones, Hesston, Kan.: Adonis James Jones, Oct. 29, 2020

Peter, employee, and Kimberly Lehman, Hesston, Kan.: Asher Henry Lehman, Aug. 6, 2020

Jessica, employee, and John Miller, Hesston, Kan.: Renee Alina Miller, born March 7, 2018, received for adoption Sept. 24, 2020
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