

# Arbor Light

The Magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor



## THE BUSINESS OF SPORT

Preparing change-makers in the athletics arena

## CELEBRATE GROWTH

Undergraduate population at an all-time high

## HALL-OF-FAMER

First Athletic Director and coach is honored

FALL/WINTER 2016

# Arbor Light

The Magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor

Fall/Winter  
2016

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## THE VALUE OF EXCELLENCE

MY ASSOCIATION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION encompasses most of my adult life (altogether approaching 30 years of a professional career, plus several more if you count the years as an undergraduate, seminary, or graduate student). Every school with which I've ever been associated strived for excellence. Never once in that time have I heard of any institution of higher learning indicate that its aim was mediocrity.

Excellence is amongst the undergirding values of Concordia University Ann Arbor — part of the solid foundation on which our mission and ministry is built. Of course, you wouldn't expect me to say otherwise. What kind of a college president would settle for anything less? Not me! At CUAA, we strive for excellence.

The use of the term, however, has become rather hackneyed on account of overuse. You read me say "CUAA strives for excellence," and you might just yawn, and look for something more interesting and original, not the same old, tired language that everybody uses almost out of obligation. What's the measure? Who sets the bar? Is excellence something that "you know it when you see it," or is there a better way to determine whether the goal that we strive for is one that we achieve?

Frankly, it's not enough for me to say so. What matters ever so much more is whether or not you say that Concordia University Ann Arbor and excellence belong in the same sentence. For an alum looking back on the CUAA experience, answer the simple question, "Was it worth it?" For a parent paying tuition dollars to send daughters and sons to CUAA, the question is the same: "Is it worth it?" For a donor providing funding for CUAA's campaigns and endowments, the question is, "Is it worth it?" For a student spending hours, days, weeks, months, and years of a life getting a CUAA education, the investment of time, money, and energy is not insignificant. However, if it's excellent, you'll conclude that it was worth it all. So, is it worth it?

Some will answer the question based on the sort of jobs secured at the other end of a CUAA degree. Surely there ought to be some consideration of how much has been learned and experienced along the way. From the University's stated objective, however, the measure that matters most is whether the CUAA education has helped students "to develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world." Ultimately, Concordians — our students and our graduates — are themselves the living, breathing demonstration of our University's excellence. Where are Concordians making a positive difference in the lives of others; in their families, churches, places of work, communities, and wherever else they have a chance to serve? The excellence for which we strive is realized when there's such meaningful and tangible impact. We serve Christ as we serve others.

Is Concordia University Ann Arbor excellent? You answer that question. More than that, perhaps you are the answer to that question.

REV. PATRICK T. FERRY, Ph.D.  
President

On the cover: Concordia's largest incoming class to date shows enthusiasm on move-in day. Photography by: CUAA Alumna Kelly Cieslak

# A Leader in Education



THE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF EDUCATION welcomed a new campus dean in the 2016-2017 academic year.

Dr. Sandra J. Harris, an Ann Arbor native, previously served as the director of the Ann Arbor Center for accelerated degree and graduate programs at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Prior to coming to CUAA in 2014, Harris spent over three decades in the public school education system employed in educator, administrative, and superintendent roles.

“Teachers are my passion, and preparing teachers is something that is near and dear to my heart,” said Harris. “I have worked with teachers in every role I have held in education over the last 30 years.”

Harris earned her Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in educational leadership and administration, a Master of Arts in guidance and counseling, and an education specialist degree in educational leadership (Ed. Spec.) — all degrees received from Eastern Michigan University.

She knew from a very young age that she wanted to be a teacher. After doing so for many years, she was driven into personnel and administration within the education system.

“I wanted to have a say in the type of teachers that came into contact with our students,” said Harris. “Our children are our most valuable commodity, and teachers spend so much time with them. We must have teachers that inspire and support our children, reminding them every day that they can accomplish their goals and dreams.”

Because of her experience in the education system, including school district superintendent, Harris has a heightened sense for what skills and qualities schools expect in student teachers. She is eager to ensure that CUAA School of Education graduates are equipped and well prepared not only for service to their students, schools, and districts, but also for service to Christ in the Church and the world.

– Rachel Ferry, University Affairs

# Together Set Apart

THE FALL SEMESTER IS AN EXCITING SEASON on a university campus, and that’s especially true at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Students arrived at campus, the academic syllabi were distributed, and the first games of the season were played; the beginning of an academic year took shape. Prior to the end of the last academic year, student leaders gathered and prayerfully chose our school theme for the 2016-17 academic year.

The theme *Together Set Apart* is based on John 17:17-21, where Jesus prays: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so

I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

Please pray for the academic year and especially for our students, that they would grow in faith as they engage at a university where Christ is first in everything.

– Rev. Ryan Peterson, Campus Pastor



# New Director of Academic Operations

IN JULY 2016, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY ANN ARBOR announced Dr. Georgia Kreiger as the new director of academic operations. Kreiger joined the CUAA faculty in 2012 as a professor in the English department, instructing courses such as American literature, advanced writing, creative writing, and multicultural American literature.

“Concordia nurtures and supports the ‘whole student’ in body, mind, and spirit, not just in the student’s academics,” said Kreiger. “I am thrilled with the environment and direction of Concordia and desire to support the growth of the University in any way I can through this new role.”

As director of academic operations, Kreiger is responsible for many components that attribute to academic growth and excellence at CUAA, including: leading academic initiatives, facilitating academic advising, supervising student services support staff, managing and coordinating delivery plans for academic programs, and working with the campus deans to execute the strategic academic plan for the University.

Prior to joining the faculty at CUAA, Kreiger received her Ph.D. in American literature from West Virginia University, and held both faculty and administrative positions at Allegany College in Cumberland, Maryland, the city in which Kreiger was born and raised.

“It is an honor to be able to work across campus among faculty, staff, administrators, and students,” said Kreiger. “Between orienting and mentoring faculty, supporting student services, and working with campus deans to promote excellence in and out of the classroom, this role has a significant part in the mission of the University to have a global impact, and that is very exciting.”

– Rachel Ferry, University Affairs



# Land That Bears Lasting Fruit

A HEART FOR MISSION AND ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN the Lord’s ministry led Meta Kaiser and her brother Walter to leave the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) of the Michigan District their beloved legacy: a farm.

Meta was called to her heavenly home in 1970 and left her land near Frankenmuth, Michigan, to the LWML of Michigan to use for charitable purposes. The land has enabled Concordia University Ann Arbor to establish the Meta and Walter Kaiser LWML Michigan District Scholarship Endowment, providing financial assistance to pre-seminary students.

The endowment has been supporting pre-seminary students at CUAA on an annual basis since 1980. Current award recipient Sam Schick, a junior, spoke at the 2016 LWML Convention on July 31 in Boyne Mountain, Michigan, thanking the Michigan District and the Kaiser family for their continued support of students pursuing their calling to ministry.

– Rachel Ferry, University Affairs

## CAMPUS EVENTS

For a full list of campus events, please visit: [cuaa.edu/events](http://cuaa.edu/events)

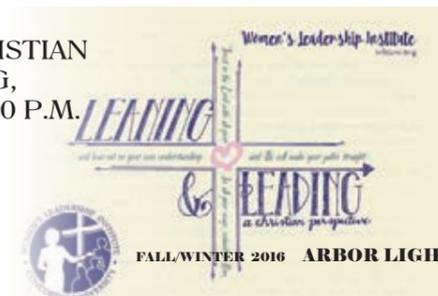
OCT.

**13-16** CUAA THEATER PRESENTS *SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS* BY CARLO GOLDONI, 8 P.M. THURS-SAT; 2 P.M. SUNDAY. *Black Box Theater*



**14** ALUMNI RECEPTION AT LEA NATIONAL CONVENTION, 8:30 P.M. *Immanuel Lutheran Church, 2 Michigan St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503*

**16** LEARNING & LEADING: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE, [WLCUW.ORG](http://WLCUW.ORG), 10 A.M. WORSHIP, 11 A.M.-1:30 P.M. BRUNCH & PROGRAM. *CUAA North Building*



# HEALING OIL, HELPING HEART

WHAT DO BILL GATES, LEMONGRASS OIL, Pepto-Bismol, and Concordia University Ann Arbor have in common? Collin Christensen.

Since the third grade, Christensen, a senior biology major, has wanted to help people feel better.

“I always knew that I wanted to make a lasting impact on other people’s lives,” said Christensen. “So, I focused on medicine.”

Making things better is exactly what Christensen is doing at CUAA, and he’s had plenty of support along the way.

Although not an obvious choice of school for pursuing a medical degree, CUAA became Christensen’s school of choice because of his connection to Lonnie Pries, the University’s athletic director and football coach.

“Once I met Coach Pries, I knew that he was someone that I could both play for and learn from, both on and off the field,” said Christensen, who was a stand-out football player in high school.

Coach Pries wasn’t the only CUAA leader who took special interest in Christensen. Kelsi Anderson, Ph.D., former coordinator of academic operations at CUAA, was Christensen’s biology professor and had many connections in the scientific community.

One of her connections, a senior scientist from Procter & Gamble, introduced the research profession in one of Christensen’s Pre-Healthcare Professional Club meetings.

At Procter & Gamble, the senior scientist works on improving commercial health products like Pepto-Bismol. It was then that Christensen fully realized he could contribute to the overall quality of life through scientific research.

Anderson recognized Christensen’s enthusiasm and invited him to participate in a summer research project that would test the effectiveness of essential oils against *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph infection) growth.

Essential oils are growing in popularity as an alternative treatment for a variety of conditions. They’re often perceived as the natural, least invasive option, despite the limited data to support the oils’ effectiveness.

But do they actually work? Answering that question put Christensen and Anderson on a year-long mission that concluded with them presenting their findings to 11,000 scientific researchers.

Anderson and Christensen began their research by studying the antibacterial properties of three common essential oils: lemongrass oil, tea tree oil, and willow bark extract against *Staphylococcus aureus* growth.

Lemongrass oil showed the greatest promise, so the researchers pivoted from comparative research to strictly focusing on lemongrass oil. Results demonstrated that lemongrass oil does exhibit antibacterial properties against bacterial strains that have become resistant to antibiotics like penicillin.

Because of Anderson and Christensen’s research, there’s a greater understanding of the research-based effectiveness of lemongrass oil.

In summer 2016, Anderson and Christensen presented their findings at the American Society of Microbiology Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, the very same conference where Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, spoke.

“It was incredible to be in that setting,” says Christensen. “I was one of only a handful of other undergraduate students presenting at this important event.”

Christensen is already participating in his next research project. He recently completed a summer research fellowship at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where he focused on finding novel treatments for respiratory disorders like Cystic Fibrosis and COPD.

Upon graduation, Christensen plans to pursue his Ph.D. in microbiology. As he enters his senior year, Christensen is grateful to CUAA and the people who have gone out of their way to help him.

“I always knew I wanted to change lives,” he said. “God put together the right people at the right time and at the right place to help me figure out my purpose.”

—Lisa Liljegren, University Affairs



## CAMPUS EVENTS

OCT.

- 17 VOCAL RECITAL, 7 P.M. *Recital Hall*
- 18 THE CONCORDIA WIND AND STRING ENSEMBLES, 8 P.M. *Black Box Theater*

- 20-21 FALL BREAK, NO CLASSES
- OCT. 25 - NOV. 23  
JEANNE BIERI, RECENT WORK, RECEPTION AND GALLERY TALK: NOV. 18, 7-9 P.M. *Kreft Center Gallery*

NOV.

- 4-6 JR. HIGH SCHOOL “TOOL TIME”



- 26 ROBERT SABUDA, AUTHOR, POP-UP BOOK CREATOR, AND PAPER ENGINEER, 7 P.M. *Black Box Theater*
- 30 THE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY CHOIR, 4 P.M. *Chapel*

- 11 MATT HERSKOWITZ, GERSHWIN RE-IMAGINED, PIANIST, 7:30 P.M. *Recital Hall*
- 11 VETERAN'S DAY CELEBRATION



## LIVING THE MISSION OF SERVICE

**O**UR SINFUL HUMAN NATURE compels all of us to be concerned primarily about our own personal needs—money, food, shelter, health care, family, and the like. However, God admonishes us to focus first on Him, and, secondly, on the needs of others. God calls us to a life of stewardship and service, and compels us to find our God-given gifts to be used in service to Him.

Concordia University Ann Arbor holds as one of our core institutional values the concept of service to others. The concept of service calls us to use our talents, gifts, and abilities to advance the mission of the University “for service to Christ in the church and the World.”

Service to our students—service by students, staff, and faculty, each lending personal skills and abilities to a community—is a core value of our CUAA campus. This reflects what we expect of CUAA students but, more importantly, what God calls us to do. “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Luke 12:48

**CURT GIELOW**  
*Campus Chief Executive*

## A Daily Homecoming

By Rachel Ferry, *University Affairs*

FOR KATHIE PEREIRA, the heritage of Concordia University Ann Arbor’s Homecoming has an entirely new meaning. Reconnecting with favorite professors, walking through the halls of one’s alma mater, and admiring renewed campus amenities is not just a pre-kick-off tradition; she experiences a homecoming every day.

Following the approval for a new School of Nursing by the Michigan State Board of Nursing in fall 2015, CUAA began hiring its first School of Nursing faculty and staff. Pereira, a CUAA alumna, accepted a position as skills lab coordinator and clinical liaison.



“Two of my favorite things have now come together: Concordia University Ann Arbor and nursing,” said Pereira. “When I read in the Arbor Light magazine last year that Concordia was launching a School of Nursing, I knew I needed to be a part of it.”

Pereira graduated from CUAA in 2001 with a double major in art and English, and had a change of heart that led to a change in career. She continued her education at the University of Michigan’s School of Nursing. It was there that she had Cindy Fenkse as a professor, who has since become campus dean of the CUAA School of Nursing.

“After reading the article, I wrote to Cindy and asked, ‘Where do I apply?’ I wanted everything to do with laying the foundation for this program and setting the tone for success.”

Pereira was working as an RN in the cardiac cath lab at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor and teaching

clinicals at the local community college prior to coming to CUAA. Once she was hired, she immediately got to work.

“When you’re starting something from the ground up, you get to leave your thumbprint on every area of what you’re building, and we also feel responsible to be good stewards of this incredible opportunity,” said Pereira. “Witnessing firsthand the resources and amount of care that my alma mater has invested into the new School of Nursing is nothing short of wonderful.”

Pereira says she has a natural love for CUAA, and the years she spent at there were some of her best. She is eager for the first cohort of nursing students to join her as CUAA alumni.

“Concordia nursing students are going to be well-equipped, high-caliber, compassionate, service-oriented nurses because of the rigor and expectation of our program,” says Pereira. “But most importantly, they will be prepared for service to Christ because of our mission.”

### CAMPUS EVENTS

**NOV.**

- 14** VOCAL RECITAL, 7 P.M. *Recital Hall*
- 15** INSTRUMENTAL RECITAL, 7 P.M. *Recital Hall*

**24-25** THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASSES



**DEC.**



**2-4** THE 39TH ANNUAL BOAR’S HEAD FESTIVAL, 7:30 P.M. FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 4 P.M. SUNDAY *Chapel*

**12-16** FINAL EXAMS

**JAN.**

**23** SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS  
**27-28** CONCORDIA INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT *Seward, NE*

# ALL ACCESS PASS

CUAA students plug into the multi-billion dollar sporting industry

By **Rachel Ferry**, *University Affairs*  
Photography by *Kelly Cieslak*

Concordia University Ann Arbor is putting a full court press on experiential learning opportunities for students in the Sport and Entertainment Business program.

Along with the fun of touring locker rooms, visiting front offices, and snapping selfies from the fields of the most well-known arenas in the nation, students are rolling up their sleeves to work internships throughout the country and in Canada at the most renowned events in sports.

For the students in the Haab School of Business Administration's largest program — and Concordia's fastest growing program over the past three years — some of those events have included the NFL Super Bowl, the NBA All Star-Game in Toronto, and the 2016 Summer Olympics with NBC Sports.

“The industry of sport and entertainment business globally produces over \$900 billion per year,” said Joey-Lynn Bialkowski, director of the Department of Sport and Hospitality Business at CUAA. “The layers of this industry are vast, and we educate our students to understand the areas within those layers that are needed to make events, iconic teams, or well-known brands a reality.”

CUAA began in 2012 to offer classes to business students who had an interest in careers in the sport and entertainment realm. Bialkowski has shepherded the program from its start.

Bialkowski was still a full-time professor at the campus in Wisconsin at the time, and together with the Haab School of Business Administration campus dean, she decided to begin offering classes at CUAA. This was before Wisconsin and Ann Arbor had officially become one University.

“What we did to align the curriculum and offer a new program hadn't been done before,” she said. ▶

Professor Joey-Lynn Bialkowski mentors SEB student Brianna Rowe, who participated in program internships including COPA America Centenario and the NCAA Final Four.



Bialkowski used video streaming capability in the beginning stages of the program when only a handful of Ann Arbor students were enrolled in the classes.

“One day, I decided to surprise the Ann Arbor students,” she said. “They were sitting, waiting for class to begin like any other day. This time, instead of appearing on the screen, I walked through the door. I thought they were going to fall out of their chairs.”

It was after that visit that Bialkowski embarked on a new professional lifestyle to do everything she could to build a solid foundation for a program that had vast potential to grow rapidly. Bialkowski rotated her location every two weeks between Wisconsin and Ann Arbor, video conferencing classes back and forth.

Since then, the SEB program at Concordia is as booming as its industry.

A few years have passed since those first classes were held in 2012, and SEB is now one of CUAA’s most popular programs. Bialkowski attributes the success of the program to advisory board guidance and strategy, dedicated faculty on both the Ann Arbor and Wisconsin campuses, and strong relationships with industry professionals.

From the fan and hospitality experience of the NCAA Final Four and College World Series to the blue carpet of the Wisconsin Sports Awards, Concordia students are not only having experiences of a lifetime, they are gaining practical knowledge that they can include on their resumes, giving them an advantage over other applicants for future internship and career opportunities.

“The students challenge me every day. Selfishly, they keep me young, but more

than that I have to remain current in this vocation that I love, so that the information I’m sharing with them is credible,” said Bialkowski, adoringly known by her students as “Professor B.”

In addition to SEB, Bialkowski also chairs at both campuses the Hospitality and Event Management (HEM) program, another industry that produces billions of dollars annually. Both SEB and HEM will often intersect, as do their industries, giving students complete perspective of the vast career opportunities in these fields.

“From human resource management and compliance within hospitality and sport organizations to the facility, fan zones, and food and beverage experiences, the list goes on forever on all of the different facets that students need to be aware of,” said Bialkowski. “Our program is a very comprehensive curriculum spanning all those areas of specialization.”

Bialkowski says that while comprehensive curriculums and internships are preparing students for their careers in sport, it is the mission of Concordia and development taking place in mind, body, and spirit that is preparing students for careers as Christian leaders.

Concordia students’ demonstration of strong character, responsibility, and professionalism at various internships has impressed industry professionals so much that the opportunities for students continue to increase.

“The phone rings and I think, ‘Where are our students going now?’” said Bialkowski. “Every decision I make as the director and chair of this program is to enhance students’ learning, opportunities, and the pathways and pipelines that will lead them to achieve their professional goals and aspirations.” ✦



### ALL ACCESS: MATT KORTE

Matt Korte is in his sophomore year at Concordia University Ann Arbor and has already taken advantage of many of the experiences offered by the Sport and Entertainment Business program.

A couple highlights from his freshman year include an internship under Stephen Howard, an analyst from the New Orleans Pelicans, and a week spent at the NBA All-Star Game in Toronto, where Korte interned with the National Basketball Retired Players Association.

“Before I started at Concordia, I would have been ecstatic to have just one of these opportunities, but to have as many as I’ve already had is incredible,” said Korte. “I am so grateful for CUAA and the SEB program, and can’t wait to see what the rest of my college career has in store for me.”

Korte is also an ambassador for the SEB program, which includes holding a leadership position among his peers in the program, assisting in planning tour series trips to stadiums and arenas, pulling research and initiating discussion on current events in the industry, and sharing his Concordia experience with prospective students.

“I strongly encourage anyone that is interested in a career in sport to check out Concordia,” said Korte. “Between the business curriculum and opportunities we have, SEB at CUAA stands out above any program like it across the country.”

### All Access Opportunities 2015-2016

June 2015  
NBA Alumni & NBA Cares  
Full Court Press Event  
Detroit, Michigan

November 2015  
NBA Alumni  
Legends Conference  
Uncasville, Connecticut



February 2016  
NFL  
Super Bowl 50  
San Francisco, California

February 2016  
NBA  
All-Star Game  
Toronto, Canada



April 2016  
NCAA  
Final Four  
Houston, Texas

April 2016  
Kohler Five Star Forum  
Kohler, Wisconsin

April 2016  
ESPN  
Wisconsin Sports Awards  
Kohler, Wisconsin



June 2016  
USA 2016  
COPA America Centenario  
Chicago, Illinois

June 2016  
NCAA  
College World Series  
Omaha, Nebraska



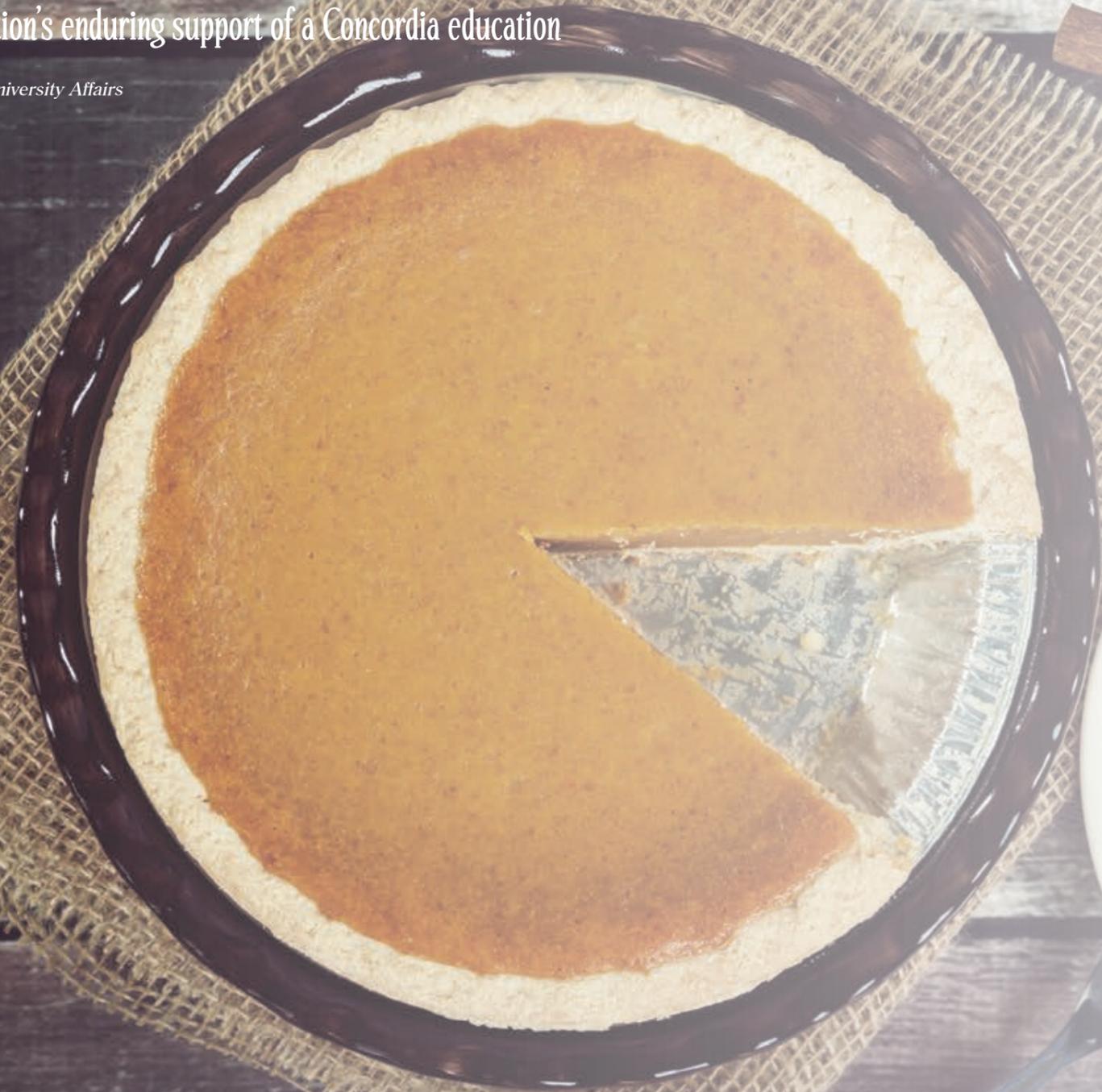
August 2016  
NBC Sports  
Summer Olympics  
Stamford, Connecticut

Coming in 2017  
NCAA  
Rose Bowl  
Pasadena, California

# People, Pies, and Pickles

A congregation's enduring support of a Concordia education

By Kali Thiel, *University Affairs*



The congregants of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cadillac, Michigan, must really love their baked goods. That, or they're really passionate about supporting Lutheran education.

Truth be told, it's probably a bit of both.

Each year on a designated Sunday in June, the 280-member congregation puts on a bake sale during their education hour to raise scholarship money for students within the church who plan to attend Concordia University Ann Arbor, or any of the other schools in the Concordia University System or one of the seminaries.

"Bake sale" is probably a deceptive term, because you won't find your typical brownies from a box wrapped in cellophane and priced at a modest 50 cents a square.

At Emmanuel Lutheran's bake sale, pies and cheesecakes are auctioned off at \$300 a pop, and the now-deceased Mae Elenbaas' legendary six pints of canned pickles go for \$125 a jar.

The congregation raised just over \$3,000 at last summer's hour-long bake sale to continue supporting students, like Mike Salminen, a current CUAA student, and others before him.

Over the past two decades or more, church leaders say they've financially supported more than a dozen students attending one of the Concordias or seminaries.

Before the bake sale, some 20 years ago, there was a trust fund dedicated to the mission of sending Emmanuel

youth to Lutheran higher education institutions. Even though the trust fund was eventually depleted, the church's Board of Education kept its resolve to continue the tradition.

"I really think that our congregation in general has always really valued Christian education, even though we don't have a day school connected to our church," says Beth Menz, a 39-year member and current chair of the Board of Education. "We had a lot of congregants who really got behind our fund-raisers, just because they saw the value of people attending one of the church schools."

A 1971 CUAA graduate, Menz personally knows the value of a Concordia education. Her son Andrew also attended CUAA and now serves in a parish in Coloma, Michigan.

It's not just the monetary support that keeps teens attending Concordia schools, however, points out Rev. Joel Hess, pastor at Emmanuel.

Hess says he makes a point of personally encouraging students whom he thinks would be a good fit for CUAA. He even annually taxis a carload of youth to the Ann Arbor campus on his dime.

"I am pretty proud of the history we have here of sending youth to Concordia," Hess said. "I know that they will be getting not only a good education but a Christ-centered education at Concordia." ✚

## The Church's School

CUAA is a mission-based University that exists to prepare students for service to Christ in the Church and in the world. Congregations and church members are vital to mission achievement. Here are just a few of the ways that congregations help CUAA prepare more students to advance His Kingdom.

- 1) Pray for students
- 2) Refer students
- 3) Financially support CUAA
- 4) Bring students to campus or direct them to [CUAA.edu](http://CUAA.edu)
- 5) Schedule a Concordia Sunday
- 6) Display CUAA literature

For more information about how your congregation can support CUAA please contact John Bush, Director of Donor Relations, at [john.bush@cuaa.edu](mailto:john.bush@cuaa.edu).



Photo courtesy of Emmanuel Lutheran Facebook Page

# PLAYERS FIRST

For athletics pioneer and recent Hall-of-Famer Dave Wenzel, coaching was all about the people

By Kali Thiel, *University Affairs*  
Photography by Kelly Cieslak



Wenzel with his players at the 2016 CUA A Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, from left to right: Steve Tirmenstein 1966, Jim Sorgatz 1965, Rev. Galen Grulke 1965, Doug Primeau 1965, Dave Wenzel, Dr. Ken Haugk 1965, Tom Reck 1965, Dennis Juergens 1965, Rev. Dick Rossow 1965.

**D**ave Wenzel has notched a number of “firsts” in the Concordia University Ann Arbor annals during the five years he worked there (1963-1968): first athletic director, first head baseball coach, first head basketball coach, first intramural director, and first head golf coach.

Wenzel also initiated the development and construction of the field house and baseball field, started the CUA A summer camp program and the Lutheran Grade School Basketball Tournament, introduced tennis and track and field as varsity sports, and was the first to gain membership to the Michigan Community College Athletic Association on CUA A’s behalf.

For his achievements, Wenzel was inducted into the CUA A Athletic Hall of Fame on June 3.

But just a single conversation with the athletics pioneer will reveal he wasn’t in it for the accolades; he did it for the people.

“I had the privilege of working with the finest group of young men you ever saw in your life,” Wenzel said. “They were just a joy.”

With CUA A’s student population at around 250 at the time, Wenzel and his teams did remarkably well for themselves going

up against teams from schools with 60 times that many students. “We won so many games that we had no business winning, and only because these guys were so disciplined,” says Wenzel. “They were so coachable because they were so smart.”

Wenzel recalls one such basketball game they played against Jackson Junior College in 1965. The school had two All-American players around 6 feet 6 inches tall. The tallest player CUA A had was maybe 6 feet tall.

Nevertheless, Wenzel put a plan in place, and the team fought hard. With six seconds left, CUA A was down by one point, and then Gary Campbell sunk a shot to win the game against all odds.

The team whooped and hollered all the way to the locker room — until they learned that someone had messed up the clock. There was still one second left in the game.

The teams returned to the court, filled with nervous adrenaline. Jackson sent a long pass down the court and fired a shot that failed to land. CUA A re-won the game.

“You wouldn’t believe it,” Wenzel said. “The spirit of those kids

in the gym at that time — it was like us against the world.” Wenzel proudly tells how many of his former players are now pillars in the Church. Many have become prominent pastors, teachers, and founders or heads of Christian organizations.

One such former player, Rev. Ken Haugk, Ph.D., spoke at Wenzel’s induction. Haugk (’65) is the founder and executive director of Stephen Ministries, an organization responsible for the training of more than 600,000 pastors, staff, and laypeople who have formally ministered to more than one million grieving or struggling congregants all over the world.

Haugk remembers Wenzel as someone who knew how to motivate people and as someone who showed respect by truly taking time to listen to his players.

Haugk’s admiration for his former coach is so strong that Haugk names Wenzel to his personal list of top 10 most influential people in his life.

“You take Dave Wenzel off that list, and I am much less of a person, both personally and professionally,” Haugk said. “He’s a fine Christian. He lived his faith, and he was a model to us.” ✚



Left: The first and current Concordia athletic directors, Lonnie Pries and Dave Wenzel.

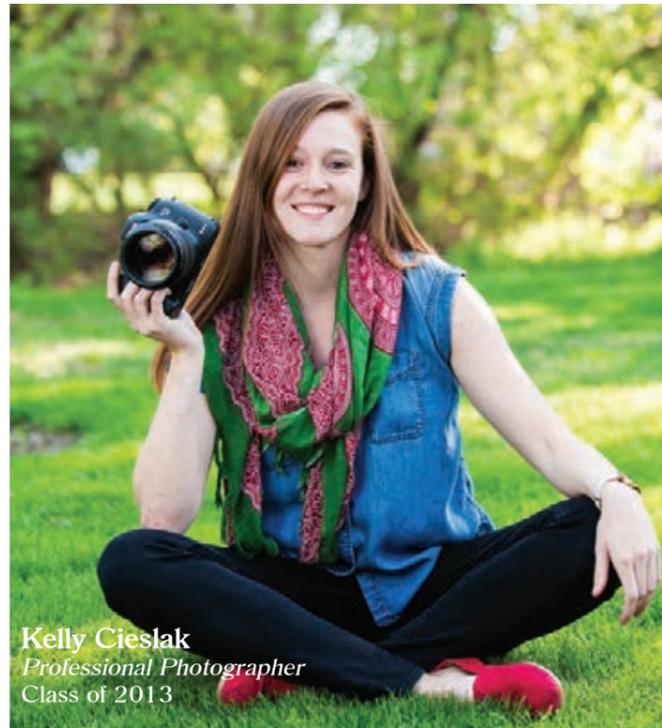
Above: Wenzel coaching the varsity basketball team, 1966.



# Alumni Advancing the Mission

By Rachel Ferry, *University Affairs*  
 Photography by Kelly Cieslak and Jeffrey Phelps

ALUMNI ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY ANN ARBOR FAMILY. MEET THREE Concordians living out their calling for service to Christ through various vocations in the Church and in the world.



Kelly Cieslak  
 Professional Photographer  
 Class of 2013

Optimistic, Creative, Moment Capturer, Photo Editor, Alumna

**Why did you choose CUAA?**

I came to Concordia to play basketball. What I didn't know at the time was how much I would fall in love with the small class sizes and build relationships with my classmates to the point where we became a family.

**How did CUAA equip you for your current vocation?**

I've been very fortunate to work with Concordia on many photography projects. I started by taking photos for athletic events after I graduated, and since then became more and more involved. As an alumna, I love capturing life on campus, and it's awesome that Concordia gives me the opportunity to do that.

**Since graduation, what has been your journey?**

Photography is about relationship building, especially when you have your own business. I have to build trust with my clients. So, with Concordia being the relational place that it is, I have a built-in community of classmates, professors, and friends who call me to photograph their significant life events. It's one of the coolest parts about being a professional photographer, and I'm working on continuing to build on that foundation.



Rev. Randy Raasch  
 Pastor  
 Class of 1978

Inspirational Speaker, Family Man, Baseball Fanatic, Alumnus

**What were some highlights of your CUAA experience?**

I loved playing on the varsity baseball team. My favorite professor was Mark Looker, who's still a professor at Concordia. What I enjoyed most was the relationships that I had there.

**How did CUAA equip you for your current vocation?**

Faculty provided excellent mentoring, and the nearby congregations provided strong support. Again, the relationships that I made have been with me my entire life. I even met my wife of 33 years through my roommate while at CUAA.

**In what ways do you witness CUAA living out its mission?**

Education is the doorway to the Christian culture and the best mission we have. Concordia provides a quality education, safe environment, and people we can trust to help develop students for service to Christ.

I'm proud to say that I'm a graduate of CUAA and appreciate the renewed energy on campus. I'm excited for Concordia's future.

Gregarious, Extroverted, Idea Former, Sinner, Forgiven, Alumnus

**What were some highlights of your CUAA experience?**

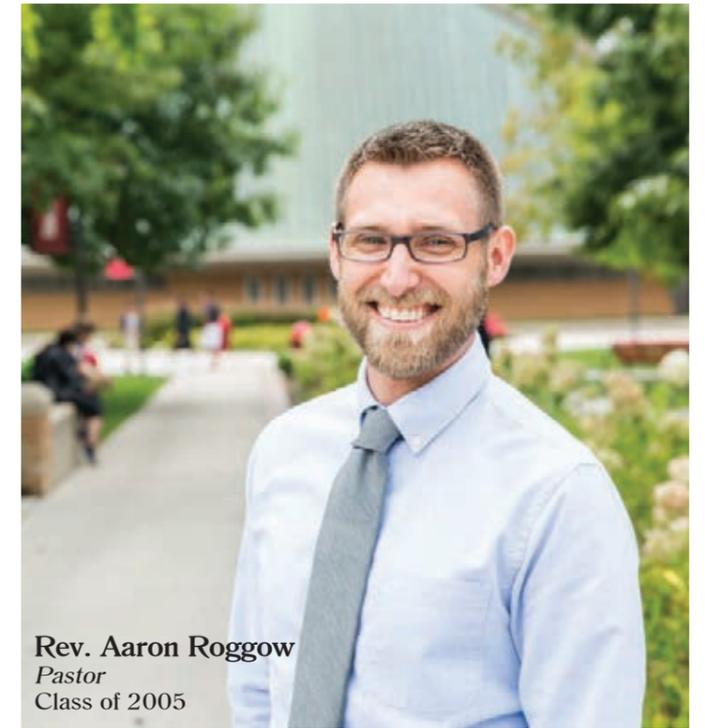
When I think about the highlights of my college career, I think about having terrific friendships; meeting my future wife, Mandy, at freshman orientation; having a blast on the skit team with New Crew; or being the RA in Ruth dorm, where we were known as the "Ruth boys." I also loved my theology and psychology classes, especially those I had with Professor Doyle.

**What advice would you give to current CUAA students?**

Your Concordia moments are going to stick with you the rest of your life. Enjoy them. If I could go back in time, I'd go to when I was a student at Concordia. Those years of community are something that won't be replicated until we're together with Jesus in the new creation. It gives you a glimpse of what it's like to be with Christ together.

**In what ways do you witness CUAA living out its mission?**

I'm thrilled to be so close to campus after moving back to Ann Arbor last December. I get to pop down for chapel and visit all the time! When I'm there, I see a campus that revolves around spiritual life. I see students piling into chapel, and hear announcements about worship opportunities in the evening and how to plug into other areas of campus ministry.



Rev. Aaron Roggow  
 Pastor  
 Class of 2005



On Sunday, May 15, 2016, Concordia University Ann Arbor held its 51st annual commencement ceremony, celebrating a host of graduates joining the alumni family. Welcome, new alumni!

**Your Opinion Matters!**

Thank you to the 534 CUAA alumni who recently completed the alumni survey. We have already begun eagerly seeking new ways in which the University can better utilize its greatest asset: you, our alumni.

alumprofile



Rev. John Nunes, Ph.D.,  
President,  
Concordia College  
New York

'85

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN NUNES

## A GLOBAL DOER

**CUAA alumnus Dr. John Nunes, who is about to take the helm at Concordia College, New York, traces who he is today to his Ann Arbor experience**

**By Gretchen Jameson, Senior Vice President of University Affairs**

On October 22, Rev. John Nunes, Ph.D., will be inaugurated as the ninth president of Concordia College, New York. The CUAA alumnus ('85) has enjoyed a vibrant career, most recently contributing his voice on the intersection of Christian values in public and professional life as the Jochum Professor and Chair at Valparaiso University. Prior to that, Dr. Nunes used his gifts to work to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering worldwide as president and CEO of Lutheran World Relief, a \$49 million global organization, leading staff in 17 countries.

Gretchen Jameson and Dr. Nunes recently discussed diversity, education, and global humanitarian work, considering how Lutheran higher education shapes an individual's lifelong sense of calling to live a life of purpose.

**Q:** As an undergraduate, what were your first impressions of CUAA, and which of those have you carried throughout your career?

**A:** I vividly remember being super intimidated by the academic rigor. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, philosophy — all the new terms, all of these incredibly smart faculty members; but what I discovered were professors who took the time to shape me to make me who I am today. They taught me how to think independently and critically, and to engage tough questions with a Biblical framework. I'm so thankful for people like Mihkel Soovik, may he rest in peace, and Michael Kalmes, Donald J. Mossman, and Jakob Heckert.

**Q:** Now a college president, what do you believe is the most significant role alumni can play in the lives of current students?

**A:** May I offer a series of verbs to describe what alumni can do for alma mater — a beautiful term to describe the environment of care in our church schools. It means “nurturing mother.” We can pray for, volunteer, donate, mentor, advocate, support, defend, visit. In sum, we give back. That's the least we can do for our mothers!

**Q:** Diversity is a majority experience at Bronxville. What does that mean for you personally, but also as a leader within The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod?

**A:** It's no secret that Lutherans have struggled in this regard. We're more white and more English-speaking than any religious group in the United States. Jesus Christ has already broken down the dividing walls, and I believe that my own leadership — but also the entirety of our mission at Concordia College, New York, where white students are our largest “minority group” at about 30 percent — represents a Spirit-inspired opportunity for Lutherans to lean into the 21st century and live up to who we are. Other Concordias may excel at other ways of being Lutheran, but this is the gift that we in New York bring to the whole church — Christ-centered diversity!

**Q:** What is the biggest challenge — and more importantly, the greatest opportunity — facing today's college students?

**A:** The biggest challenges for Christian students are the preconceptions people have about Christians — defining us more by what we're against than what we're for: eternal life, life overflowing. The greatest opportunity is to get busy doing our work of witnessing with civility, gentleness, and respect. Let me put it this way (it may just be a bumper sticker, but that doesn't make it untrue): “Sometimes the best witness is to say, ‘I'm a Christian,’ and then not be a jerk.”

Join us in celebrating Dr. Nunes' inauguration by sharing a word on your favorite social media site using the #CUAA4CCNY. We give thanks to God for Dr. Nunes' leadership and are proud to call him a Cardinal!

# Blessings Abound

By **Kali Thiel** University Affairs  
Photography by Kelly Cieslak

Concordia University Ann Arbor marked a milestone this year with the largest incoming undergraduate class in University history. At a time when most post-secondary schools are battling waning enrollment, CUAA has been blessed with a blossoming student population.

There's a momentum to CUAA, and the data is there to back it up. We celebrate this year not only the groundbreaking undergraduate population, but some of the other CUAA hallmarks and achievements in recent years.



## Growth by the Numbers...

Over the past three years:

Up **48%** in undergraduate enrollment

Up **35%** in total enrollment

Growth rate in **top 5%** of peer institutions

Ranked in the **Top 10 College Towns**  
(2016 bestcollegereviews.org and 2016 livability.com)

**1963** Year Concordia was founded

**4** Academic Schools

### New Undergraduate Programs:

- Bachelor's Degree in Nursing
- New Business Majors
- Athletic Training
- Computer Science

**11:1** Faculty to Student Ratio

**12** Average Class Size

### New Graduate Programs:

- Master's in Special Education
- Master's in Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education
- Master's in Computer Science

### Renovations:

- Kreft Center for the Arts
- Science Building
- Zimmerman Library

**47** Number of Undergraduate Majors

**19** Number of Graduate Programs

**22** Number of Varsity-Level Athletics

### Additions:

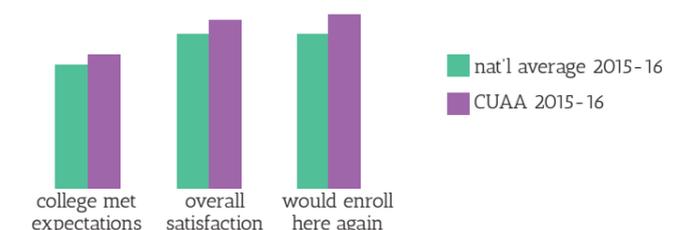
- Cardinal Stadium
- 80,000-square-foot North Building

### Spiritual Health:

- 80% of students have a favorable attitude toward Campus Ministry
- 75% of students say Campus Ministry is important to their Concordia experience
- 195 Average Number of students who attend daily chapel (2015-2016 academic year)

### Student Satisfaction:

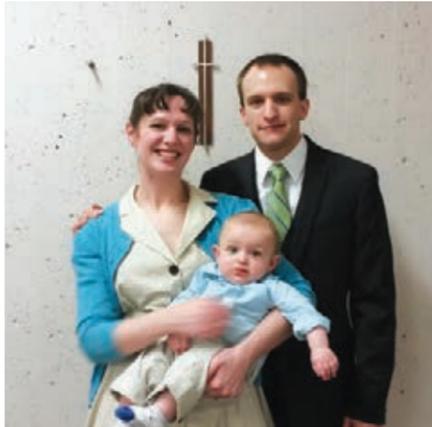
- ...Surpasses national benchmarks
- ...At an all-time high



# alumnnotes

## 2000s

KIMBERLY (FETZ) BAHR ('05) is currently serving as a deaconess at Redeemer Lutheran Church in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She married Chris Bahr on July 26, 2014. They have one son, Josiah.



ALYSSA (HEALY) BORNHEIMER ('09) and ASHLEA WESTON ('09) graduated from Madonna University on May 7, 2016 with Master of Arts degrees in literacy, reading, and early childhood. Both girls currently reside in the Fort Wayne, Indiana, area. Ashlea works at Bethlehem Lutheran School in Ossian, Indiana.



BRYAN OXENDER ('10) is currently working in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as a commercial property manager. He recently sold one of his paintings to the City of Ann Arbor.



## 1980s



MELISA ABIERA CAMERON ('85) has been named Regional Lead, Community Engagement-Northeast for AT&T Public Affairs, Corporate Social Responsibility. In her new role, Melisa helps drive positive change by finding, creating, and leading volunteer opportunities.

DAVID WILSHEK ('80) retired from the USAF Chaplaincy after a 30-year military career. He also recently retired from the ministry of the LCMS. He resides with his wife, Gail, in High Ridge, Missouri.



MATT BERENT ('83) currently runs his own consulting firm, Matt Berent Consulting. His company works mostly with academic institutions and organizations interested in survey research. Matt Berent Consulting recently worked on the American National Election Studies (ANES).

## 1970s

THOMAS CHOPP ('71) currently works with clergy and faith communities to provide spiritual and emotional support in the Marshall, Minnesota, area. He resides in Marshall, Minnesota.

### WANT TO SHARE YOUR NEWS?

If you've had a significant life event or exciting achievement, share it with us. Email your alumni update with an accompanying photo (high-resolution if possible) to: [alumni@cuaa.edu](mailto:alumni@cuaa.edu) or submit online at: [cuaa.edu/Alumni/whatsnewform.cfm](http://cuaa.edu/Alumni/whatsnewform.cfm).

DEBORAH DAVIS ('86) is currently working on her M.S. in mental health counseling and works at Perrysburg High School. She resides in Temperance, Michigan.

## WORD FROM ADVANCEMENT

BEGINNING WHEN CHILDREN ARE VERY young, we teach them to tell the truth. As adults, we understand that truth and integrity are closely linked. For a person to be someone of good character, truth and integrity are essential qualities.

The same is true for organizations and institutions. This should be especially true for places of higher learning, where minds are being filled and formed. And nowhere should this be more true than at a university that claims to teach and follow Jesus Christ. Christian universities are and should be held to the highest standard of truth and integrity in all they do.

At Concordia University Ann Arbor, we consider truth and integrity to be a vital part of the solid foundation upon which we are built. As a place that seeks to "help students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world," Concordia boldly shares the truth of God's love and grace with all of our students.

Many of the University's alumni, friends, and community advocates find this to be one of the reasons why they can confidently recommend Concordia to future students and why it warrants their financial support. In this way, they help advance the mission of Concordia to current and future generations.

To everyone who walks with us in this mission, we extend our heartfelt thanks. We are also bold to request that you continue to encourage prospective students to consider Concordia as they weigh their options for higher education. And we also humbly request that you consider lending your financial support to Concordia so that we can provide the scholarship aid needed to make a Christ-centered education possible. Every gift, whatever the size, helps students reduce the debt that they might otherwise carry.

The truth is, we greatly desire your help and support to fulfill our mission. Please join us in this life-changing quest.

REV. DR. ROY PETERSON  
Vice President of Advancement



CHRIST FIRST IN EVERYTHING

WHEN I WALKED ONTO CONCORDIA University Ann Arbor's campus for the first time just over three years ago, it was the first thing I noticed. Today, I continue to see it day after day in large, bold lettering, widely displayed throughout campus. When I walk into the Cardinal Field House, it's clearly presented above the entrance doors. When I eat lunch with students in the Cardinal Café, I look to the west wall and see it above the glass windows for everyone who gathers there to see. And when I walk into the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, I'm reminded of it as I pass the cornerstone of our beautiful chapel. In 1962, that cornerstone was laid for a building that would soon become the centerpiece of a new college. Many alumni and friends of the University know exactly what phrase I'm describing. It's the defining phrase of our institution, the foundation on which it has been built. It's not only a value of CUA, but its meaning and understanding sets the University apart.

Christ First in Everything.

The apostle Paul wrote beautifully in Colossians 1:17-18: "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent." He is Jesus Christ, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Jesus, who lived, died, and was raised to new life so we may believe in Him, and thus have life in his name.

Christ First in Everything.

As a new academic year has now begun, new students and returning students won't only see this phrase, but will have the opportunity to see this phrase lived out in



our daily chapel services, in conversations in the Café, while practicing their skill in the Kreft Center for the Arts, serving the local community, or from coaches on the field and on the court. I love that our student-athlete handbook is written from this perspective, with Colossians 1:18 on the front cover, leaving no question about who we are and whose we are in Christ.

Next time you're on CUA's campus, notice the phrase "Christ First in Everything" in various places. But more importantly, see how our faculty, staff, and students are living it out. It isn't enough to say that we're merely a faith-based institution. We're Christ-centered. We wouldn't have it any other way.

REV. RYAN PETERSON  
Campus Pastor

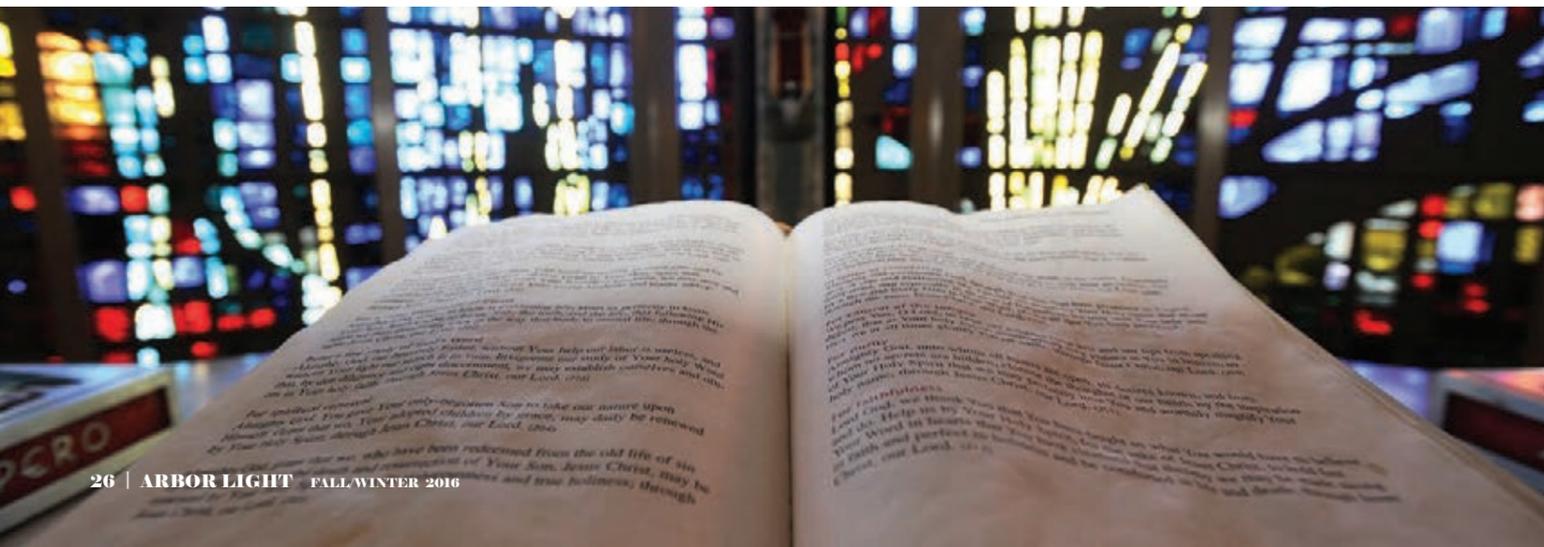
THEN

Concordia students received a knitted beanie when arriving to campus as freshmen in the 1960s.



NOW

Today, the first school spirit wear received by freshmen is a CUA sweatshirt.



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# VISIT DAYS



There is no better way to learn all that Concordia has to offer than to see it for yourself!

Register for Visit Day at [cuaa.edu/campusvisit](http://cuaa.edu/campusvisit)

October 10th  
(optional overnight on the 9th)

November 4th

January 16th

February 20th  
(optional overnight on the 19th)

March 31st

