

# WHEATON

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50 Years of Arena Theater

In Defense of Leisure

Wheaties Have Fun



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### On the Cover

Marilee Melvin '72 at her desk in 1988 during the first year of her tenure as vice president of alumni relations. Melvin retires this summer after 35 years of faithful service to Wheaton College.



PHOTO BY LISA MAXWELL RYKEN '88



## ¿Qué Opinan de Nuestros Estudiantes?

*Dr. Philip Graham Ryken '88  
President*

**T**he trip was delayed because of COVID, but finally, this spring, I visited Wheaton in México.

Wheaton in México is a 17-week program that combines language practice, interdisciplinary coursework, and cultural immersion to give students a unique opportunity to experience the people and cultures of Mexico.

The program is based in Querétaro—a historic highland city that is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

“¿Qué opina de Querétaro?” This was the first question that many locals asked. They wanted to know what visitors thought of their sunny skies, soaring spires, vibrant plazas, and delicious cuisine.

Querétaro is a treasure. So are its people. At the heart-beat of the program are the host mothers. From the moment our students arrive, *las señoras* welcome them as their own children, hugging and kissing them, serving them meals, giving them advice, and blessing them on their way out the door.

Our students need all the encouragement they can get. Cultural immersion is as grueling as it is rewarding. After full days of Mexican art, history, language, and literature at a local university, our students need at least nine hours of sleep every night. All of them also serve once a week

in local schools or ministries and get actively involved in local churches.

They also play hard, just like their classmates back in Wheaton. Some take dance classes or compete in local soccer leagues. They also find time to go out with friends for tacos and churros. And they go to parties, including the annual *Baile del Presidente*, their smaller adaptation of the College's Prez Ball back in Wheaton, this one complete with *piñata*.

After telling our hosts how much I enjoyed their fair city, I had a question for them in return: *¿Qué opinan de nuestros estudiantes?*

Simply put, they find our students to be exceptional: kind and loving, thoughtful and respectful, filled with faith and laughter. They told it me was *un privilegio* to welcome Wheaton students into their classrooms, their churches, their homes.

The goal of study abroad is to help students gain life-changing perspective. I gained new perspective too, as I saw our students through the eyes of their hosts. Wheaton students *are* exceptional—in Querétaro and everywhere else they go in the name of Jesus. ●

PHOTO BY DARREN HAUCK

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# News & Profiles

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## New CVC Director: Olivia Zimmermann Lorimer '11

Words  
Bella McDonald '24


Photo  
Diana Rowan

**O**livia Lorimer '11 returned to Wheaton College in the fall of 2019, joining the Center for Vocation and Career (CVC) as the STEM career coach. She quickly moved through the ranks to become the associate director of career education in March 2022 and then interim director in August 2022. In January 2023, she was promoted to the role of director. After more than 10 years of experience in various leadership roles in nonprofit ministry, Lorimer is now serving the CVC team as they seek to equip all Wheaton College students with the tools they need to discover and launch into their next steps post-college. After completing her studies in interpersonal communication and economics at Wheaton College in 2011, Lorimer moved to upstate New York, where she began her career at a leadership development program in the Adirondack Mountains. Her love of the outdoors then brought her to Laramie, Wyoming, to work as a course support manager for a nonprofit ministry. She accumulated more than 80 days in the mountains over three summers as an instructor, leading 20-day backpacking and rock climbing expeditions. Lorimer moved back to the Chicago area in the spring of 2019, where she currently resides with her husband and children.

 Visit [wheaton.edu/cvc](https://wheaton.edu/cvc) to read the annual "Life After Wheaton Report"

### New Memorial Plaque

In January, Wheaton College unveiled an updated plaque honoring missionaries Jim Elliot '49, Ed McCully '49, Nate Saint '50, Roger Youderian, and Pete Fleming, who were slain in 1956 while carrying out the Great Commission with indigenous peoples of Ecuador. Based on the inscription of the plaque given to Wheaton College by the Class of 1949, the new and updated plaque was rededicated in the lobby of Edman Chapel, where it remains permanently. Its message commends the five men and their faithfulness to "go to the mission field willing for 'anything, anywhere regardless of the cost.'" Dr. Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84—whose mother, Olive Fleming Liefeld, is the widow of Pete Fleming—led the wording task force last year that developed the plaque's new inscription.

 View an image of the plaque online at [wheaton.edu/memorialplaque](https://wheaton.edu/memorialplaque).

### Urbana22

Chaplain Angulus Wilson led a group of about 100 students to the Urbana Student Missions Conference in Indianapolis from Dec. 28–31, 2022. Hosted by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship every three years, the conference held multiple worship sessions and over 150 group breakout sessions about vocation, missions, and the global church. Urbana22 was originally planned for 2021 but was rescheduled due to the pandemic. There were more than 5,500 Urbana22 participants, and 1,300 of them pledged their lives to global missions.

### New Academic Programs

Wheaton College announced its new four-year engineering program in fall 2022. In addition to the successful 3-2 dual degree engineering program, the Department of Physics and Engineering now offers a four-year general engineering program. Wheaton also announced three new science majors: neuroscience, biochemistry & molecular biology, and conservation & ecological health.

### Richard D. House Geological Endowed Fund

An endowment of \$1 million from the estate of Richard D. House '52 will support geological education at Wheaton College. Thanks to House's donation, the department will cover all student expenses for field trips to provide experiential learning. The endowment provides scholarships for required summer courses at the Wheaton College Science Station in the Black Hills of South Dakota. As a student, House shoveled coal into the campus steam plant to pay his tuition. His geology instructor, Cordelia Erdman Barber '46, visited the plant to read House's textbooks to him as he worked, inspiring his generosity. House later earned a master's in geology from Northwestern University.

### Michael Gerson Memorial Panel

On April 18, the Center for Faith, Politics, and Economics hosted a celebration of the life and legacy of Michael Gerson '86, a journalist, White House speechwriter, and inaugural FPE Fellow. The event featured a panel of people who knew Gerson best: David Brooks, Peter Wehner, and Scott Baker '86.

### Dr. Marlene Wall: 2023 Commencement Speaker

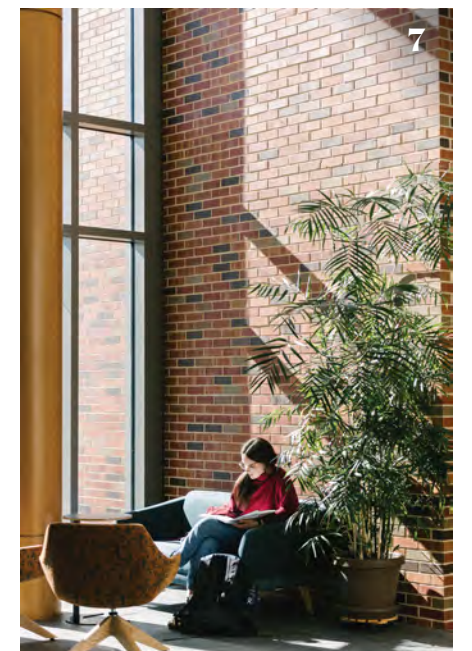
Dr. Marlene Wall addressed the members of the Graduate School and the undergraduate class of 2023 at Wheaton College's 164th Commencement ceremonies on May 6 and 7, respectively. Dr. Wall is the president of LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania, where 200 Ukrainian students study alongside Russians and Belarussians and are pursuing reconciliation in a time of war. She earned her master's in linguistics at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction at Kansas State University.

### Ballet 5:8 at Wheaton College

On September 15, 2023, in the Edman Memorial Chapel, the Wheaton College Artist Series and the Wade Center will present Ballet 5:8, a professional ballet company in Chicago. Ballet 5:8 is dedicated to engaging communities in conversations of life and faith through innovative storytelling. Ticket holders are invited to attend Grace Notes, a pre-show talk, from 6:30–7:00 p.m. Since its founding in 2012, Ballet 5:8 has performed more than 45 critically acclaimed ballets in Chicago, the Midwest, and across the nation.

 Read more Wheaton stories at [wheaton.edu/news](https://wheaton.edu/news)

# #MyWheaton



1 Students play tug of war in a class-on-class competition, by Josiah Rood '25. 2 Student performers pose for a photo after the Lunar New Year celebration in Coray Gym, by Zachary Lee '23. 3 Students gather for prayer in the Center for Vocation and Career, located in the recently renovated Student Services Building, by Tony Hughes. 4 The 360-degree camera in Lower Beamer takes a spin around two students at the 2023 annual WheatonGives celebration, by Diana Rowan

5 Lounging on the Blanchard lawn, by Diana Rowan. 6 Spending time with canine friends in Lower Beamer, by Diana Rowan. 7 A student enjoys the natural light streaming into the Armerding Center for Music and the Arts, by Tony Hughes.



## Steadfast Service

Words  
Abby Dorman '17

Photo  
Tony Hughes

When Abygale Ahn '23 isn't in the classroom working on pre-med course requirements, you might find her meeting with fellow student chaplains to plan the next All-School Communion. If she's not there, she could be leading the weekly *Tolle Lege* campus Bible study for students who want to connect over Scripture and prayer. Still not there? Check the tennis courts, where the two-time, All-CCIW First Team women's tennis selection practices alongside her teammates.

Ahn is the first to admit that her schedule is full but also humbly attributes her capacity for so many activities back to God. "I have learned so much dependence on the Lord through this season of balancing both tennis and chaplaincy," she said.

Ahn's impact was felt on the tennis court immediately when she helped her team to a CCIW conference title in

her freshman season. Now her disciplined time management and trust in the Lord's strength each day help her be present as a co-captain of the 2022-23 women's tennis team while representing the program in #3 singles and #1 doubles. As one of the few juniors and seniors on the team, Ahn's role is as multifaceted as her life outside tennis. She helps lead captains' practices, sets the team culture, and facilitates team prayer time.

"She leads by example and uses the abilities the Lord has blessed her with—a bright mind, a love of people, and the desire to serve him well in everything," Coach Jane Nelson reflected.

Whether on the tennis court, as a chaplain, or preparing for a medical career, Ahn focuses on pointing the people around her to the Lord. ●



**4**

Seasons of number 1 doubles.

**51-22**

Career record in doubles play

**49-21**

Career record in singles play

### Throwback: Carol Elsen '82

Carol Elsen '82, 1999 Hall of Honor inductee, had a successful track and field career at Wheaton. In 1982, she earned All-American honors and helped the women's team secure a seventh-place finish out of 40 teams at the NCAA Division III track and field championships. After graduating, Elsen pursued a literary career, eventually serving as the collections manager and reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater's Andersen Library. In 2011, she was named as one of *Library Journal's* 2011 Nonfiction Reviewers of the Year.





## Stretching the Limits of Media

*“Technotexts” Exhibit in the Walford Galleries Creatively Transforms How We Encounter Language and Literature*

*Words & Photo*  
Kailin Richardson '20

At its opening on February 9, 2023, the “Technotexts” gallery invited many hands to play with words and their mediums. Hands stamping symbols into clay, clacking Hebraic letters on a typewriter, swirling white marks across black paper. This experience mimicked that of the Technotexts classroom, where Professor of English Dr. Richard Gibson and Associate Professor of Art Jeremy Botts help their students explore texts and their physical forms through lectures, discussions, and hands-on making.

A one-of-a-kind course offered at Wheaton, Gibson dreamed up Technotexts for an English seminar class in 2016. Students would study the development of textual technologies over time, covering medieval illuminated writing, the print revolution, digital media, and more.

“What I really wanted was a class that would unite my interests in book history and the digital humanities,” Gibson said.

But the class wouldn’t become what it was meant to be until Botts joined four years later. With a rich background in lettering, he gave students a chance to actively work with different media while asking complex questions.

“A really good artist or designer is somebody who’s thinking about the medium and pushing the boundaries,”

he said. “This is great in print, but what else could you make it into?”

The gallery showed off this ebb and flow between what Gibson called “the physicality of a letter or word and its ability to signify.” With projects like elegant calligraphy of the Psalms, a “sky scroll” thrown up to the ceiling in dialogue with God, and towering, laser-cut pillars made of a single letter stacked over and over, students and professors worked together to stretch the limits of media.

Each unique piece asked viewers to realize that “technology is mediating everything we see,” as Botts explained. While they might sound foreign, technotexts surround us.

“The benefit that I see beyond just the aesthetic pleasure and the knowledge you improve by taking the class is an awareness of the fact that we have choices about media,” Gibson said.

With options inspired by oral cultures, print alternatives, and a variety of languages, the “Technotexts” exhibit served as a reminder that there are all sorts of ways to interact with and transmit the texts around us. ●

Left: The “Technotexts” Art Exhibition in the Walford Galleries in February was curated by Jeremy Botts and Richard Hughes Gibson.

## Celebrating Faculty Legacy

*In February, the Board of Trustees approved the following faculty members for promotion, tenure, or emeritus status. Nine emeriti have left a profound impact on students, staff, alumni, friends of the College, and their peers throughout their many combined decades of service.*

### EMERITI

#### Dr. Lee Joiner

*Associate Professor of Music Emeritus  
(40 years of service, 1983–2023)*

Dr. Lee Joiner, a graduate of Julliard School of Music and Eastman School of Music, brought his expertise in strings to the Conservatory, where he taught violin and chamber music for 40 years. Dr. Joiner is known to many on campus for his string performances in the annual Faculty Artist Series.

#### Dr. Gary N. Larson M.A. '83

*Associate Professor of Communication Emeritus  
(39 years of service, 1984–2023)*

Shortly after receiving his master's degree from the Graduate School, Dr. Gary N. Larson became a faculty member and debate team coach at the College. In 2020, he was presented the Distinguished Service to Alma Mater Award for his years of service to the College as a faculty member, dean, administrator, parent, and donor.

#### Dr. Laura M. Montgomery '78

*Professor of Anthropology Emerita  
(14 years of service, 1984–1987, 2012–2023)*

Dr. Laura M. Montgomery returned to Wheaton College's Department of Anthropology, Sociology, and Urban Studies after two decades of teaching elsewhere. During her career at the College, she held several leadership roles, including the dean of global programs and studies.

#### Dr. Douglas J. Moo

*Kenneth T. Wessner Professor of New Testament Emeritus  
(23 years of service, 2000–2023)*

During Dr. Douglas J. Moo's time at Wheaton, he primarily worked with graduate students, especially those within the biblical exegesis program and various Ph.D. programs. Dr. Moo is also known for his service as an elder, Bible study leader, and teacher at his local church.

#### Dr. A. Scott Moreau '77

*Professor of Intercultural Studies Emeritus  
(32 years of service, 1991–2023)*

As an undergraduate student at Wheaton College, Dr. A. Scott Moreau studied physics before going on to

complete his graduate work in missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In 1991, he returned to the College, where he taught intercultural studies and oversaw the Graduate School as the academic dean.

#### Dr. Stephen O. Moshier

*Professor of Geology Emeritus  
(32 years of service, 1991–2023)*

After completing his doctoral work at Louisiana State University, Dr. Stephen O. Moshier came to Wheaton College, where he has served as the chair of the Department of Geology and Environmental Science, director of Wheaton in the Black Hills at the Wheaton College Science Station, and professor of geology.

#### Dr. Clinton S. Shaffer '84

*Associate Professor of German Emeritus  
(27 years of service, 1996–2023)*

After studying German at Wheaton College, Dr. Clinton S. Shaffer earned graduate degrees from Middlebury College and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He began teaching at Wheaton College in 1996 and eventually served as the German section coordinator. He and his wife, Virginia, have two kids, Bill and Sarah, both of whom have participated in the Wheaton in Germany program and minored in German.

#### Dr. Mark R. Talbot

*Associate Professor of Philosophy Emeritus  
(31 years of service, 1992–2023)*

Dr. Mark R. Talbot began his career at Wheaton College just after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He was an instructor of philosophy for 31 years, teaching classes about suffering and joy, the nature of humanity, and Augustine's writings.

#### Dr. John H. Walton M.A. '75

*Professor of Old Testament Emeritus  
(22 years of service, 2001–2023)*

After 20 years of teaching at Moody Bible Institute, Dr. John H. Walton returned to Wheaton College to teach the Old Testament. Dr. Walton has written over two dozen books about the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East. He has won numerous awards for his work from organizations like *Christianity Today* and the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA).

### TENURE

#### Dr. Denise Daniels '91

*Hudson T. Harrison Professor of Entrepreneurship*

#### Mr. Andrew Mangin '99

*Associate Professor of Theater and Communication*

#### Dr. Esau McCaulley

*Associate Professor of New Testament*

#### Dr. Rochelle Scheuermann

*Associate Professor of Evangelism and Leadership*

#### Dr. Timothy Taylor

*Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations*

### PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

#### Dr. Aubrey Buster '09, M.A. '11

*Associate Professor of Old Testament*

#### Dr. Matthew Forsstrom

*Associate Professor of Economics*

#### Dr. Michael Hakmin Lee

*Associate Professor of Ministry and Leadership*

#### Dr. Emily McGowin

*Associate Professor of Theology*

#### Dr. Sarah Miglio M.A. '04

*Associate Professor of Core Studies and History*

#### Dr. Rob Ribbe '87, M.A. '90

*Associate Professor of Outdoor and Adventure Leadership*

#### Dr. Jordan Ryan

*Associate Professor of New Testament*

### PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND TENURE

#### Dr. Stephanie Gates

*Associate Professor of Spanish*

#### Dr. David Hsu

*Associate Professor of Engineering and Physics*

#### Dr. Andrew Luhmann '06

*Associate Professor of Geology*

### PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO PROFESSOR

#### Dr. Danilo Diedrichs

*Professor of Mathematics*

#### Dr. Richard Gibson

*Professor of English*

#### Dr. Matthew Milliner '98

*Professor of Art History*

#### Dr. Amy Peeler

*Professor of New Testament*

## Isis Toldson '24

*Undergraduate Student*

Isis Toldson '24 is serious about what she does—but she doesn't take herself too seriously. She laughs at her own jokes and explains her story with a sense of humor that revels in irony. As a poet, theologian, and debater from a young age, though, it's clear she knows both how to appreciate absurdity and how to care deeply: tenets of a good storyteller.

Toldson started asking big questions as early as age seven. Even then, she knew she was called to ministry and would debate with her dad's friends about Calvinism. As a teenager, she was excited to start conversations about Christology and quick to be inquisitive about identity and race.

She started writing poetry at age 12 when she discovered she could capture so much of her life's meaning in just a few words. "Everything means something to me, which is so

annoying 90 percent of the time," she said. She laughed at this intensity and teased her middle school self for a misplaced notebook of poetry, even comparing it to the lost Ark of the Covenant. "I think God took my black notebook because it is probably the most embarrassing compilation of things that I've ever written in my life," she said. Nonetheless, this early work helped her discover something about herself: "I am, for better or worse, an artist."

Eventually, after processing her time working for an Anglican church in England, conversations at her home church, and COVID, this need to ask questions and seek out answers brought her to Wheaton to study theology. She wants to pursue "storytelling as a way of communicating the gospel." She's done this through performing spoken word poetry at Wheaton's Christmas Festival and MLK Jr. Symposium and by

serving as a devotional poet with Storytelling Project, a team of creatives making art based on Wheaton student life. She also serves as a program leader for the intentional, multiracial living-learning residence, Shalom Community.

"I really care a lot about my generation being able to track their theological or spiritual heritage," she said as she thinks about what she'll do next at the intersection of theology and storytelling. "I really care about people being able to see themselves in the gospel." ●

*Words*  
Kailin Richardson '20

*Photo*  
Tony Hughes



## Amraa Jargalsaikhan M.A. '23

*Graduate Student*

**B**orn and raised in the predominately Buddhist culture in Mongolia, Amraa Jargalsaikhan M.A. '23 was far from home when he first heard the gospel. Sitting beside his foreign exchange program host mom at her church in Salem, Oregon, Jargalsaikhan locked eyes with a visiting evangelist pastor who began to prophesy over him.

“He said God would come into my life ... just hold on to God, and he will take me to places I’ve never seen,” Jargalsaikhan said. This moment, he believes, is what first opened his heart to Christ.

But it wasn’t until Jargalsaikhan returned to Mongolia—after a visa denial prevented him from starting pre-med studies at Oregon State University—that his faith really became his own. Early on New Year’s Day in 2006, cold and tired from a night of festivities with friends, he stumbled

into a church to warm up and felt like he’d come home.

“Listening to a sermon in your own language—it just hits you in the heart, deep down,” he said.

Now, after over a decade of pastoral work in Mongolia, Jargalsaikhan is back in the United States pursuing his master’s in systematic theology at Wheaton. While the journey was not easy, he has seen God’s provision every step of the way. Jargalsaikhan and his wife welcomed a fourth child in September 2020, making travel delays due to COVID-19 almost a blessing in disguise. Moving a family of six overseas in the summer of 2021 was nothing short of a miracle, and here in Chicagoland, Jargalsaikhan and his family have even found a second home at a local Mongolian church. When the pastor began a second round of cancer treatments this past December, Jargalsaikhan was able to fill the pulpit in his stead.

“I think this is God’s timing that I’m here—to help the church out and be whatever I can be,” he said.

Jargalsaikhan plans to return to Mongolia with his family after graduation and is excited about sharing his new theological understanding with his home congregation. He believes Christianity in Mongolia—currently only four percent of the population—is on the brink of a new wave of growth, and often thinks back to those prophetic words spoken over him all those years ago in Salem.

“That’s how God took me in his hand,” he said. “His promises are alive in my life.” ●

*Words*  
Carolyn Waldee '18

*Photo*  
Tony Hughes



## Hanmee Kim

*Associate Professor of History*

As a historian focusing on Asian studies, Dr. Hanmee Kim often has Asian-American students take her classes in hopes of gaining a richer understanding of their heritage.

“One of the greatest parts of teaching is when students come into my office after class is over and they tell me how the course has impacted them personally, which is to say, ‘I finally understand my parents or why my grandparents do this or why they’ve said these things,’” she explained. “I think that’s wonderful. The course content is fostering intergenerational understanding.”

Kim experienced similar epiphanies as her studies led her to a better understanding of her own Korean heritage. She grew up in Evanston, Illinois, but occasionally traveled to Korea to visit relatives.

“I don’t completely fit into Korean society, and growing up I wondered if I didn’t fit into American society,”

she said. “There was always a desire to understand where I was situated. Engaging in history was one of the ways I was trying to ultimately understand myself a little better.”

As an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, Kim had an internship at the Field Museum that first inspired her interest in Asian studies and U.S.-Korea relations, thanks to a paper she wrote on the museum’s Korea collections.

Kim compares learning about history to learning about a foreign country. As students uncover differences, they consider why the differences exist and what they can learn from them. Kim emphasizes that, ultimately, studying history, like studying cultures, encourages self-reflection and a posture of humility and empathy.

“I’ve been doing this for a long time now (I was in grad school for 11 years), and the more I do it, the more I realize how little I know,” she said. “You

can’t approach history with the posture of ‘I know everything, therefore I will weigh in,’ but rather a posture of constantly learning.”

Even as a teacher, Kim is still learning. Students regularly ask questions that prompt Kim to reconsider her assumptions.

“I teach a lot of students who don’t have much background in Asian studies, so the lenses with which they look at the past and at Asia are very new. Sometimes they ask questions about things that I might be taking as a given, because I’ve been doing this for a long time, and it forces me to deal with them afresh,” Kim said. “I really enjoy engaging with my field through the eyes of students in the classroom. ●

*Words*  
Melissa Schill Penney ’22

*Photo*  
Tony Hughes



## Josh Okerman '07

*Director of Digital Communications and Alumni Programs*

Growing up as a missionary kid, Josh Okerman '07 lived in Japan for the first 18 years of his life. His desire for rigorous academics and Christian community led him to Wheaton College after high school graduation. Although Okerman only expected to be at Wheaton for college, God would call him back later to be a bridge builder for a familiar community of students: third-culture kids (TCKs).

After graduating with a degree in business/economics, Okerman took a year to travel the globe, visiting friends spread across a range of countries. This odyssey fostered his love for community—a foundational element to the work he would be doing just a couple of years later.

In 2013, Okerman returned to Wheaton College to serve on the Alumni & Parent Engagement team overseeing the College's digital communications to alumni. Now, he also manages alumni reunion programs.

Early in his Wheaton career, he and his now-wife Mara began hosting twice-monthly dinners for the Wheaton College TCKs, students who have spent a formative part of their lives in a culture different from their parents' and their own passport country. These nights earned the name "family dinners," describing a fellowship of TCKs, alumni, grandparents—and now toddlers—over a meal. The size of these dinners grew to 100 people and eventually rounded out to a regular group of 30–40 people.

The Okermans undertook the ministry in response to a felt need for cross-cultural community on campus—during a time when Mu Kappa was only a student club and the International Student Programs (ISP) office had yet to be established. With a knack for connecting people to each other, Josh could welcome students without strong support systems on campus and bridge the gaps. Through the Okermans' cultivation, family dinners became a place

where students could expand their network and be in community with other international students.

"From my own experience, sometimes you just need a space to meet other people," Okerman said. "That's always been the thought behind these dinners: to create the environment."

Eventually, with the forming of the ISP, changing roles, and new kids in the family, family dinners turned into monthly Sunday night dinners. Even as more spaces for community become available, Okerman hopes that others will continue to pass the torch.

"Community is something that is intentionally built and fostered—but it's also a gift that can be received," Okerman said. "Giving the gift of friendship is a powerful thing." ●

*Words*  
Bella McDonald '24

*Photo*  
Tony Hughes



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# Features

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# 50 Years of Arena Theater

*A Celebration of the Program That Brought  
Over 100 Stories to the Stage*

Words Cassidy Keenan '21

Photos Casper Carter, Buswell Library Archives & Special  
Collections, *Tower* Yearbooks

Once, I sat in an acting class as a member of Arena Theater. A classmate stood before us, getting ready to present her project. She told us she was scared to perform because she was scared she wouldn't be enough. We all hummed and nodded and took several deep breaths, as was our custom.

Our professor and director, Mark Lewis, leaned forward in his seat and answered kindly, "Okay, what if you're not? What would it be like to accept the fact that you're not enough, to give yourself permission to not be enough? And then to do it anyway?"

Arena Theater is many things. Over the last 50 years, Arena has been a performance space, a classroom, a sanctuary, and a refuge. Plays have come to life on chapel stages, in houses, basements, and small black box theaters, in the old gymnasium of a refurbished elementary school, in parks and courtyards. Fifty classes of students have come and gone. Professors, directors, beloved faculty members, and college presidents have entered the Wheaton College stage, performed their roles, and then exited. Through it all, the theater has remained constant: deeply and indescribably cherished, passed down with breathtakingly gentle hands from each generation to the next.

Defining Arena is an impossible task, and I am not up to it.

So I will simply tell a story. That's what I think Arena is at its core, and it is the place where I learned to tell stories, after all. It is a story of community and love, of people coming together to be bodily present in a room and to see each other. It is a story of curiosity, hope, fighting cynicism, and encountering Christ. The story includes twists and turns, lines and shapes and colors, observing how the structure of the environment around us shapes our perception of the world. The story has heroes and heroines, all of whom came together, however briefly, to be part of something bigger than themselves. The story is fragile, no single chapter of it has ever been guaranteed, and no one yet knows how it might eventually end. But it has continued on for a full 50 years, and that is remarkable.

It is an impossible task. I am not enough for it. Let's do it anyway.

Although we are celebrating the 50-year anniversary of Arena, it is important to note that theater existed at Wheaton College longer than that.

The true beginning of our story dates back to the 1960s, following earlier rebuffs from College administration. For example, President Raymond Edman prohibited theater on campus throughout his tenure on account of what he deemed theater's "worldliness" and the "unsavory" nature of the acting profession, as he wrote in a 1955 statement to the *Record*. Once drama was officially authorized as a creative art at the College in 1965 under President Hudson Armerding's leadership, theater took root and bloomed in unexpected nooks and crannies of campus. Performances were staged in Plumb Studios, which is now the basement of Buswell Library, and in Edman Memorial Chapel. Grainy,





Previous Page: *Secret in the Wings*, 2007

Above, Left to Right: *The Crucible*, 1973; *The Rope Dancers*, 1982

black-and-white photos of costumed students dramatically silhouetted against the chapel stage began appearing in the pages of the Wheaton yearbooks.

Theater was enthusiastic but still new, with no dedicated performance space and scant supporters.

Enter Jim Young.

Jim Young is perhaps the first great hero of our story, arriving on campus as a visiting professor in 1972. By the end of that year, he had cleared out the storage area in the basement of Fischer Hall as a theater space, established a company of just over 30 students to form a core ensemble, and begun rehearsals for a production of *The Crucible*. Here, in the fall of 1973, is where “Nystrom” Arena Theater was truly born, named after Dr. Clarence Nystrom, a former communication professor at Wheaton.

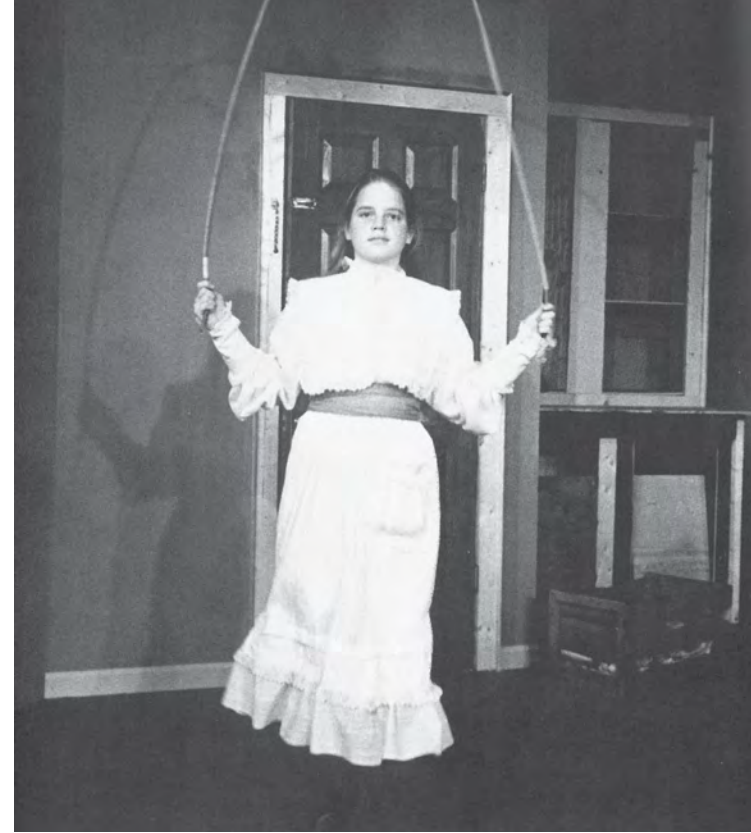
Students gathered with varying degrees of wariness for the first meetings of “Workout,” a theatrical company inspired by the lower-east-side ensemble structures in 1960s New York. Workout: a name that had appeared to Young in a burst of inspiration like it was written in the sky. It’s a holy name, based on the charge offered in Philippians 2:12 (NIV) to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Gary Sloan ’74 was a student among this brave new class of pioneers who found themselves standing in Arena Theater in the fall of 1973—a low, long, dusty, windowless, concrete storage space in the basement of a student dormitory.

In this most unlikely of places, our thespians created indescribable magic. Under the watchful and ever-enthusiastic eye of Young, 30 to 35 students gathered to experience the world of theater in a way they had never known. They learned about Beckett and Shakespeare. They watched films by great directors like Ingmar Bergman, with performances by great actors like Marlon Brando. And they met in the basement twice a week for the very first company rehearsals of Workout.

The weekly Workout meetings are perhaps the hardest aspect of Arena to describe. This is partly because of one of the very few concrete rules of Workout: There are no observers. Everyone in the room must be a participant, though anyone has absolute freedom to say no to any game or exercise at any time (another rare rule). It is hard to explain to someone who has not experienced it personally. This part of the story is better lived than told.

A technical description of Workout might read something like this: The company of students gathers twice a week, and they play games or exercises to explore their physicality, imagination, and emotion, getting in tune with themselves and each other.

However, the reality of Workout is infinitely more tender, spiritual, and complex. In it, for 50 years, students have done all manner of nonsensical things. They have stood face-to-face with each other, forming “mirrors,” and spent five minutes mimicking each other’s motions exactly, learning how to observe and honor each other. They have raced around the room, freezing in various poses in games of “moving statues.” They have returned to childhood, singing old songs, playing pretend, building castles, and hatching dragon eggs. They have thrown “nets” or “stones” together in order to cast off trauma and fear. They have told stories in five sentences, repeated important words that other people have offered them in the past, or even just sat in the room and cried.



The key to all of this is that no one is doing it alone. Whatever game they play becomes the work of the ensemble. The rest of the company listens to the stories being told, repeats the words back to the speaker, or comes alongside the crier, holding them tight. Students witness, accompany, and sometimes even lovingly oppose each other.

Stories are told, and they are told together.

Although so many of the people who knew him speak of him with reverence, humor, love, and awe, Jim Young proves almost as difficult to define as Arena itself. Sloan described him as “a man full of prayer and insults.” Randy Petersen ’78 spoke of his enormously deep and genuine heart, the singular care he had for every person he encountered. He also emphasized how Young loved and challenged his students in equal measure, encouraging them even to break tradition: “He was postmodern before postmodernism was cool.” Jane Cook Tawel ’81 recounted how Young came up with a specific and unique nickname for each person in Workout.

I’ve heard so many stories about Young, told through laughter and through tears. Once, Sloan finished performing a scene for a class and looked to Young for commentary, only for the professor to slam his clipboard down and yell, “You are so frustrating because sometimes you can be so good!” In the ’80s, Tawel starred in a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. To prepare her for the role, Young got approval for two actors playing the guards to bang on her dormitory door unexpectedly in the middle of the night and march her across campus. Young, people agree, was not always easy.

But more than anything else, Young emulated and embodied Jesus’ love. He cared for each student with an unwavering passion and invited them to encounter Christ

time and time again. He loved the bodily presence of theater because it mirrors the incarnation of Christ. He began one of the most cherished theater traditions that has continued to this day: At the beginning of each year, every class of Workout placed their hands on the walls of the Fischer basement and prayed into the space.

I don’t have words for this type of legacy, but I invite you to consider what it must be like—to enter Arena, to touch the walls, and to know that nearly 50 years of prayer uphold you.

Another vital character comes in the form of Michael Stauffer ’70. First an enthusiastic theater student, he later joined the faculty of Wheaton as a speech professor in 1979. In doing so, he became one of the pillars of Arena. This is a key turning point in our story because the theater staff at Wheaton had undergone a monumental change, expanding from one person to two. Stauffer’s is another legacy that cannot be understated. He provided an entirely new and essential component to theater by introducing Wheaton students to the world of stage design.

No longer did Arena take an exclusively Peter Brooks-esque approach to theater, nothing but an actor walking across an empty stage in front of an audience. Stauffer brought ideas about costumes, set, lighting, and props. He encouraged actors in Workout to explore color, lines, geographical space, and how to enrich the story just by crafting a specific kind of world on the stage. One only has to consider his 2011 production of *The Odyssey*, where he filled the entire stage with gallons of sand to bring a real-life deserted island straight to his audience, or his 2019 production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, where he incorporated everything from puppets to sword fights to giant moving sailboats to actors literally lifting each other off the ground and “flying.” Stauffer eventually became a theater professor, director, and stage designer at Wheaton, helping students learn many valuable lessons. Theater is more than just entertainment, theater is more than just acting, and most of all, theater requires attention and engagement from artists and audience members alike.

Our story has not been without conflict. From the very beginning, Young, Stauffer, the students of Arena, and so many others fought to keep the theater alive. There were many moments of tension as they grappled with a lack of space, resources, and funding. To make ends meet, Young’s and Stauffer’s wives stepped up to manage the box office as volunteers. Young supplemented whatever the College could afford for productions with money out of his own pocket. Stauffer once spent 372 hours working on a single production to ensure that the play was successful. Both professors regularly swept and cleaned the theater themselves in the absence of custodial staff.

Even amid opposition, the theater continued to grow. Practices became traditions, and each generation of

Workout—especially seniors—taught the patterns and games to the students who came after them, handing the theater down through the years. A shared culture, a common language, and a generational legacy were beginning to form.

Furthermore, there were principal moments of triumph alongside the conflict, such as the acquisition of a new performance space in the early '80s. Clifford Elementary School went up for sale. Through an enormous amount of prayer, a generous bid from the Wheaton College administration, and nothing short of a miracle from God, the property became part of Wheaton's campus. That building is now known as Jenks Hall, the home of Arena for nearly four decades.

After the first spring play performed in Jenks Hall, Jim Young invited back every graduate of Workout since 1973. At least 30 to 40 alumni formed a processional from Fischer Hall to Jenks, lifting the generations of prayers out of the old walls and carrying them together all the way across campus to place them in the walls of the new space.

**T**he arrival of one Mark Lewis in the winter of 1994 marked a new chapter to the story. After serving as a guest director for a play that season, Lewis officially joined the staff as a director at Arena and as Young's replacement as director of Workout. Although he did not feel himself to be the likeliest choice, having never attended Wheaton or been a part of Workout himself, Lewis' chapter of the story has been every bit as meaningful in new and unexpected ways.

Lewis did not send students to drag each other out of bed in the middle of the night for the sake of a show, but he began to impress upon students the weight and value of their own individual stories. In the new Workout rehearsal room in Jenks Hall, dubbed "Setzuan," students walked back and forth in the light from the enormous windows as Lewis guided them to wrestle with disbelief and practice radical empathy. They walked through doorways and stood wordlessly in front of their entire company, leaving themselves vulnerable to be "reconsidered." Lewis encouraged students to learn how to receive one another, to hold each other's stories well, to linger longer in moments when the speedy pace of life encourages us to rush. Workout was entirely new—and entirely the same in the ways that mattered.

Jenn Miller Cribbs '99 and Felicia Bertch '02 were part of Mark's first class. Both of them have expressed the intense atmosphere of spirituality, permission, and acceptance they received in the space. Cribbs learned that the work of both actors and Christians does not happen from a solely intellectual place and that it is possible to stand before God completely as you are, no strings attached. "God does not love you in spite of anything," she explained, "but in the midst of it." Bertch found purpose and community at Arena, learning to value relationships and people over product. She reminisced on the joy of re-entering childlike spaces, allowing herself to play and be curious about things.

Naphtali Fields '10 emphasized the way Arena served



From Left to Right: *Julius Caesar*, 2022; *Middletown*, 2013

as a counternarrative to her life before college. Through strange and sometimes inexplicable acting exercises, such as standing before her entire acting class with an enormous wooden anchor to represent her life on a fishing boat in Alaska, Fields found magic and possibility. She found the ability to reveal something about herself and to extend an invitation for others to respond.

Another member of Lewis' first class was Andy Mangin '99, who eventually joined Arena staff as its first official technical director. This also marked the development of "crews," one of the most important and communal experiences at Arena. It is tradition for every member of Workout to belong to a stage crew for each show, whether it is building sets, sewing costumes, hanging lights, or gathering props. This service model of theater is unique and immeasurably priceless—not to mention extremely bonding. Some of the closest relationships in all of Arena might have been forged while making hundreds and hundreds of frantic, tiny stitches for the perfect Victorian-era *Pride and Prejudice* dress, with opening night looming closer by the minute.

**A**nd so, after all this, we find that the story continues. Arena was and is a space of community the likes of which many of its members had never experienced before. Stauffer began teaching more



classes, such as Theater Survey, Scenography, Directing, and Church and Theater, offering students a well-rounded theatrical experience. Mangin became a full-time director in addition to his professorship and technical position, forming a third pillar of Arena between Stauffer and Lewis. Season after season of heartfelt, challenging, thought-provoking plays came to the stage and left again.

New traditions and Workout games blossomed. Students lifted one another to the Lord. They created special ceremonies to welcome new members to Workout and to say goodbye to graduating seniors. They regularly ate together, singing a prayer of thanks hand in hand before every meal. They exchanged heartfelt, handmade, specific gifts in a ridiculously elaborate game of Secret Santa each Christmas. At the close of each show, the members of Arena spent all night disassembling the set together, cleaning the theater, and preparing the space for its next adventure, always and without fail sharing a meal together afterward. Arena expanded even further by adding different programs, such as trips to the Black Hills and Shakespeare in the Park, which attracts thousands of Wheaton-area community members each year. Alumni from all years of Workout still return to teach and perform in the latter.

The story moves on through countless more chapters. Some are full of heartbreak and loss, like Young's death in 2012. Some are overwhelmingly, inexpressibly, universally difficult, like the arrival of COVID-19. Yet even these had their own silver linings, such as the experiment of the first-ever virtual, multigenerational Workout, or the year Workout temporarily relocated to Pierce Chapel and everyone attempted to perform with masks, six feet apart. Some chapters were bittersweet, like Stauffer's eventual retirement in 2022.

Through it all, through generations of members and actors and artists, Arena has remained. It is more than just the performances, more than the classes, more than Workout, even more than all the extremely unlikely people and the relationships themselves.

Somehow, in some way, and for 50 years now, Arena has become something greater than the sum of its parts.

**A**rena Theater is impossible to describe. I have no ending to offer because the story continues. Never has that been clearer to me than as I prepared to write this article. When I spoke with Lewis, Stauffer, and Mangin for hours about the beauty and meaning of Arena. When countless alumni leaped at the chance to speak with me about it, so eager to share their stories, whether they've been graduated for a dozen years like Fields or almost 50 years like Sloan.

The last person I spoke to was Parker Ohman '23. I concluded our interview by asking him what he wished more people knew about Arena. He paused, his eyes thoughtful.

"That it exists," he said after a moment's consideration, and we both laughed. "It grieves me to know that there are a lot of people who go through their Wheaton experience who would really benefit from the theater and don't ever realize that it's a possibility for them. It is not a perfect place. But whoever you are, whatever your background is, whatever your regrets and your joys, there is a place for you here."

Arena exists. Not only does it exist, but it is also treasured. It is valuable. It is essential. It is an ongoing story, and we have no idea where the story will go from here.

But it has lasted 50 years now. And that is remarkable. ●

# A Time for Every Matter Under Heaven

*In Defense of Leisure, Play, Fun, and Amusement*

Words Jen Pollock Michel '96 with reporting by Peter Biles '20  
Photo Sheldon Till-Campbell '15

I was a freshman at Wheaton when I read my first time management book. Although the book purported to be a basic introduction to the spiritual disciplines, the larger, looming context was time. Its scarcity. Its preciousness. One thing was clear: Time shouldn't be wasted or misspent, certainly not "dawdled" away by mindless television watching. (This was 1992.)

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul enjoins Christians to exercise wisdom for "making the best use of the time, because the days are evil" (ESV). Throughout the Bible, we're reminded that human life is as brief and beautiful as a blade of grass—and time, like all of creation's gifts of God, should be received with gratitude and returned in worship.

The injunction to "redeem the time" (Ephesians 5:16, KJV) might seem straightforward enough, but in our zeptosecond age of atomic clocks and Apple watches, we surely understand this command differently than the letter's original recipients. The assumption that time can be "managed" requires a relationship to timekeeping that is more historically recent. In fact, Jeremy Taylor's 16th-century *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living*, which begins with a meditation on time, the "first general instrument of holy living," might be best understood as advice growing up alongside the pocket watch.

"We must remember," Taylor writes, "that we have a great work to do." According to the Anglican clergyman, time must be carefully stewarded for fulfilling a range of obligations: to children, friends, the poor, the sick, "our private and our public cares, and duties of the world." Such time-seriousness raises the question: if the resource is as precious and scarce as we're taught to believe, and if there remains a "great work" to be done *for Christ and his kingdom*, what sound defense can be made of time free from obligation and occupation? Of leisure, play, fun, and amusement?

Are we derelict in our Christian duties if we ever make time to "dawdle"?

## WHAT'S SERIOUS ABOUT PLAY

Associate Professor of Art and Communication Joonhee Park held suspicions about play before his wildly successful exhibition, "Hold Your Breath," late last year, which consisted of over 2,000 balloons blown up by members of the Wheaton College community.

Park was raised in Korea and educated in what he calls their "utilitarian" model. When he became a documentary filmmaker, he was "obsessed" with producing work he considered complex and profound. "I captured the struggles of North Korean refugees, the identity of international adoptees, the story of nomadic Christians in the Mongolian desert, and the process of reconciliation and healing after the Rwandan genocide," he recounted.

"Hold Your Breath" had initially been intended to express the individual and collective anxieties experienced in the wake of pandemic lockdowns, the murder of George Floyd, the rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans, and political unrest. Park wanted the balloons to represent exhaled stories, secrets, and prayers, even the animating breath of God within us. "Could you un-hold your breath?" Park wanted to ask.

What surprised Park was how his "seriousness became playfulness"—as the gallery filled with students, local residents, even small children, who took joy in playing with the balloons. Influenced by Johan Huizinga's 1938 book *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, Park has grown to understand that play isn't just a "pastime, something children do. It's an important part of human culture. It's the basis of philosophy, poetry, art."

These endeavors, on which the liberal (or "free") arts are built, mimic the creative play of God, who delighted to make the world—in all its artful, inefficient array—and called it good. To be made in the image of a playmaking God, whose labor is not motivated by economic obligation but delight, is to suggest that play is not as incidental or optional as might be considered when productivity, in today's economy, acts as time's definitive measure.

Neurobiologist Dr. Nate Thom, Associate Professor of Biology, has done extensive research on the important connection between exercise and the brain. Unsurprisingly, it is good for children and adults alike, promoting physical, emotional, and mental health. Thom has studied athletes, soldiers, and other high-functioning people and has found that exercises—which oftentimes include play—are linked with mood improvement. (Play, in its earliest English usage, suggested the brisk movement associated with activities like fighting, fencing, dancing, and leaping.) Similarly, Dr. Corey Bolton M.A. '17, Psy.D. '20, whose doctoral work focused on neuropsychology, sees the importance of play



"HOLD YOUR BREATH," ART EXHIBITION BY JOONHEE PARK. PHOTO BY SHELDON TILL-CAMPBELL '15

and leisure in the treatment of his patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

"Play is innate to being human," Bolton said. "We think of it with kids, of course. As we grow, play is an important way that we learn things. It motivates us to repeat activities. Play activates the dopamine reward system that helps us to find things enjoyable and worth doing more of. If you can integrate play with other things that are known to help with memory loss, it can be an effective way to promote behaviors that are useful."

Bolton wasn't just thinking of crossword puzzles and word searches when he referred to the benefits of cognitive exercise. "Think about what you enjoy doing," he said. "That's the best thing you can do because it's likely something you're going to stick with. Play, leisure, enjoyment—these can all help prevent the clinical manifestation of the disease."

In our conversation, Bolton also referred to a meta-analysis published in the academic journal *Neurology* last year that found that people who engage in leisure activities (activities whose purpose was primarily enjoyment and well-being) were 17 percent less likely to develop dementia. Although Bolton is quick to establish this wasn't a causal link, he underscores that leisure is correlated with improved health. "It could just be that people who have the time, the life circumstances that allow them leisure activities, are at lower risk than people living more stressful and chaotic lives," he said. "We can't say for sure that it's the leisure activities providing the health benefit, but we do know stress is bad for the brain."

#### WHO IS FREE TO PLAY?

The link between leisure and health reinforces the fundamental human good provided by forms of play, amusement, and fun. When asked what meaningful distinctions exist between these words, Dr. Leland Ryken, Professor of English Emeritus, revealed that "the etymology of the word *leisure* contains the idea of 'that which is permitted.' Leisure is time free from the necessities of life—a time in which we are allowed to do what pleases us. Play and fun name the spirit in which we should undertake our leisure pursuits."

Similarly, Dr. Jason Long, George F. Bennett Professor of Economics, emphasizes that the principle of autonomy stands at the center of a narrowly specialized economic understanding of leisure. "Labor is the time you get paid for. Leisure is everything else," he said.

To play, then, requires the capacity for exercising freedoms from certain kinds of burdens: oppression, persecution, or poverty, for example. According to Dr. Jennifer Powell McNutt, Franklin S. Dyrness Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, this is one reason we might not immediately think to look to the Reformers to teach us about these matters. "If they're not talking enough about fun and leisure, this is why: Many of them were severely persecuted," she said.

Still, according to McNutt, John Calvin championed life's delights more than we might initially think. "For Calvin, it becomes problematic when food and drink are seen only

as necessities," McNutt said. "He rejects utilitarianism and embraces the gifts of creation as evidence of God's fatherly kindnesses, as reasons 'for delight and good cheer.'" Calvin's injunction to enjoy is especially meaningful, she added, given his audience's deprivation of the safety and comfort afforded to many in modernity.

Today, as throughout history, there are far too many places where leisure and play are impossible, given the beleaguered quality of everyday life. Dr. Michael McKoy, Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations, remembers the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. King lamented having to explain to his daughter why she couldn't go to the public amusement park advertised on television. "Among the civil rights King was fighting for was for all kids to have the same right to play. This was personal for him," McKoy said.

As director of Wheaton's Peace and Conflict Studies program, for which he's traveled to Israel and the West Bank, McKoy has seen these pressures in even bolder relief. "When you go into the West Bank, it's essentially an open-air prison," McKoy said. "It's a physically stressed-out place. I've heard Gaza Strip is ten times worse, especially because it is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. In Gaza, people are regularly under aerial attack."

In places like these, McKoy asks, "How do we expect peace to happen?" He wonders what might happen to the hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians if they could play together and develop the trust that happens in shared recreation. The suggestion sounds idealistic for consequential negotiations of land and power-sharing, but it reinforces the necessity of leisure for collective human flourishing.

To be free to play is to afford the kind of time required for imagining a world different—and better—than this one. As with most privileges, leisure involves agency. It is self-directed, not mandated, and it assumes a degree of economic stability many don't enjoy.

In the early 20th century, American economist John Maynard Keynes predicted that as productivity increased, leisure would increase in equal measure. "He was correct about the economy and incorrect about human choice," said Long. "We haven't chosen to enjoy our leisure." As earnings have increased, material living standards have "gone up and up and up. That's how people are choosing to take advantage of productivity." For the privileged, leisure will be theirs to choose or theirs to forfeit, either by a preference for overwork, greed for consumer goods, or the indulgence of counterfeit forms of recreation, which do not renew the body, enrich the community, or provide true rest.

Privilege, in and of itself, is nothing to apologize for, added Dr. McKoy. "I tell my students, 'Don't feel bad about being privileged.' We just need to ask: If this is a blessing, why doesn't everyone get it? You should have leisure. It's a God-designed, good thing. How can we expand this?"

#### AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH

In his book, *Redeeming the Time* (Baker Books, 1995), Leland Ryken underscores that neither work nor leisure

can be understood or practiced independently. Both are gifts of God; both are callings from God. Ryken said we must "regard ourselves as stewards who are responsible to God for the quality of our work and leisure."

As an octogenarian retiree, Ryken better understands the dynamic relationship between work and leisure, his knowledge having now been life-tested. "Two statements in my books have become somewhat haunting to me," he said. "When I wrote them, I knew them to be true but was also aware that my knowledge on the subject was purely theoretic and based on hearsay. They now have existential immediacy for me."

"The first statement is that leisure by itself, without work to balance it, quickly loses its luster," Ryken explained. "The other is that many retired people feel that they have too much leisure." His writing on work and leisure presents the two as sides of a coin. "We will never solve our problems of work and leisure unless we consider them together."

The problem—of too much leisure, either for today's retirees or today's college students, who engage, on average, 3–5 hours of screen media entertainment—would have been unrecognizable for most people throughout history. But as the nature of work has changed in recent centuries, the "freedoms" of leisure have expanded beyond the landed and the wealthy. According to Long, average workers in the United States today enjoy far more leisure than their counterparts in early industrialization. "Hours were a lot longer in those six-day workweeks," he explained. "Fighting for the second weekend day was a big task of organized labor."

Associate Professor of Communication Dr. Read Mercer Schuchardt emphasizes what's historically new about the excess of leisure. "Mere physical survival was quite hard for most of human history," he said. "Now that less than one percent of Americans are in farming, and physical survival is a perceived Constitutional right, we find that our appetite for distraction has grown to monstrous proportions."

According to Schuchardt, we don't know how to inhabit the leisure we've been afforded. "It's almost like we need to be distracted from the easiness of life," he explained. "It's a rare person who will use those extra 72 hours of leisure in a week to learn piano or a new skill set or improve themselves in their economic condition by working two jobs . . . giving up the hours currently spent on smartphones, laptops, and television."

Schuchardt, who studied under media theorist Neil Postman, is especially interested to understand the role technology plays in the contemporary pursuit and experience of leisure. "Postman's take on the ease of technological life was that television and subsequent technologies did no harm by amusing us, but that there was a danger when the media forms converted all aspects of life—education, business, politics, religion—into a form of amusement, or silliness; then we would be at risk of 'amusing ourselves to death,'" Schuchardt said.

In other words, though technological sophistication has delivered us from many onerous burdens, with its many gifts have come new problems, including a growing appetite for vacuous forms of amusement—and time to "kill."

#### BE AT LEISURE—AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

Although the United States is one of the most technologically sophisticated and economically productive countries in the world, Americans also work more—and vacation less—than their global counterparts. Sabbath rest is also on the decline when compared to figures from recent decades.

Dr. McKoy often devotes the last class session of his senior international relations seminar to the subject of Sabbath. "It's about reflection, renewal," he said. "There is so much going on in the week. When do we ever take the time to ask the deeper questions like *what did we learn*, and *what do we still need to learn*? We're constantly in motion. But God rested and looked upon the things he had made and saw that they were good. He did this every day of creation, then particularly on the Sabbath."

McKoy tells his students to practice Sabbath as a form of Christian obedience and discipleship. "It's a time to be restful and joyful, so enjoy that. But then let your desire for that [rest and leisure] for others increase." In other words, we can't eschew leisure because it suggests the inequities of common life, but we can commit to working for justice so that all might rest. Our labor can provide leisure for others.

The Wheaton College Chaplain's Office plans to address the importance of rest in an upcoming Chapel series. President Philip Ryken '88 will speak on the nine pillars of the College's spiritual formation framework, *Life with God Together*, including the pillar of rest. Chaplain Rev. Dr. Angulus Wilson said, "This is one of the most critical elements of the disciple-driven life. We try to teach Sabbath as a mode of play and enjoyment so that students can see the beauty of God in every area of their life." Like all spiritual disciplines, play involves learning and practice, even the setting aside of other ambitions.

Thirty years ago, I would have benefitted from a chapter on leisure in the time management book I plucked from my college roommate's bookshelf (and never returned). I learned time was scarce and precious, and this served as a reason to get busy with the "great work" to which I and other Christians were called. Sadly, I lacked appreciation for the invitation in the ancient Sabbath command. I failed to grasp that "redeeming the time" could include the leisure of an unoccupied day.

The command to rest told a story of time counter to the myths of the ancient world. Because Israel's God had worked on behalf of his people to make a world in six days (and rested on the seventh), they could trust in his provision and imitate his example. And because God had not left his people to suffer under Egyptian taskmasters but delivered them, they had new freedoms to enjoy.

The Sabbath command—which is to say, the story—was instructive about the people's relationship to God and also to time. God's people could rest—because they were no longer slaves. God's people could be at leisure—because he is God. ●



## Wheaties Have Fun

*How Wheaton Students Have Fostered Joy and Amusement Over the Years*

Words Bella McDonald '24

Photos Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, *Tower* Yearbooks

**T**hroughout the years, thousands of young adults have traveled from near and far to attend Wheaton College. Despite their varying backgrounds, they have found many things in common—faith, vocational pursuits, extracurricular interests, overlapping life experiences, and as displayed in the following pages, the simple pleasure of having fun together. This feature explores the lighthearted side of campus culture, highlighting just a few of the many events and social activities that have produced belly-aching laughter and joyful grins on the faces of Wheaties for more than a century.

### I. Larks

It is a long-held belief that Wheaton students are a serious bunch, spending hours each week poring over their books and immersing themselves in theological conversations. But they are not strangers to merry, carefree adventures. For decades, students have banded together to brainstorm silly, good-natured mischief and hatch their schemes, sometimes to both the entertainment and the chagrin of their peers. Even the first president of Wheaton College, Jonathan Blanchard, was a fan of humor and often found himself the beloved target of friendly pranks in the College's early years. Students' larks have resulted in timeless memories, still passed down to current generations of Wheaton students by their older classmates. They also serve as a reminder that even college presidents were once students too: At Wheaton, one was the executor of the then-senior class's greased-pig scheme, a successful attempt to outdo the then-junior class's rodeo roundup. Still other larks were enjoyed by the entire campus, especially one in which a student replaced the original description of Perry Mastodon's exhibit with a creative backstory for the creature. The phony tape recounted Perry's harrowing experiences before reaching his exhibit, including run-ins with a cafeteria as he made his trek to the College. Multiple pranks have even graced annual Town Hall Chapels, providing what some might call a visual aid for New Testament parables.

**Opposite:** 1996, Juniors and seniors liven up a late-night skate with country attire.

**Top:** 1941, Five seniors—including Dr. Hudson T. Armerding '41, pictured fourth from the left—borrow a pig for the annual rodeo roundup hosted by the junior class. **Middle:** Posing with President Ryken are the six Wheaties who worked together to lower a student from the ceiling of Edman Chapel to illustrate the story of the paralyzed man. **Bottom left:** Guests gathered around the Perry Mastodon exhibit to hear the newly recorded narration created by five students from the classes of 1976 and 1977 during their Thanksgiving break in 1975. **Bottom right:** In 1976, students climbed the Blanchard bell tower and managed to place nearly a dozen rubber tires (weighing over 600 pounds) around the flagpole.





## II. Spirit

Swim meets, soccer matches, basketball games, and many other athletic activities at Wheaton draw students out of their dorms and alumni back to their *alma mater*. But one sport in particular bonds the community together with an historic rivalry: Wheaton College football. Dressed in blazing orange and navy blue, Wheaton fans pack McCully Stadium on any given fall Saturday afternoon—especially when the opposing team makes the drive from Naperville, Illinois. The official rivalry between North Central College and Wheaton College dates back to at least 1946, but the mischief started long before then. Legend has it that a New England family, in their travels westward, brought a little brass bell to DuPage County. Years later, a local farmer gained possession of the bell. When he passed, his estate was divided between his two sons: one a North Central College student and the other a Wheaton College student. The son attending North Central inherited the bell, but it moved back and forth between the two colleges for several years before disappearing altogether. Although lost for years, it was rediscovered in the attic of a Naperville home in the early 1940s. To this day, the bell is a symbol of school spirit, awarded to the winner of the annual Wheaton College vs. North Central football game, the “Battle for the Little Brass Bell.”

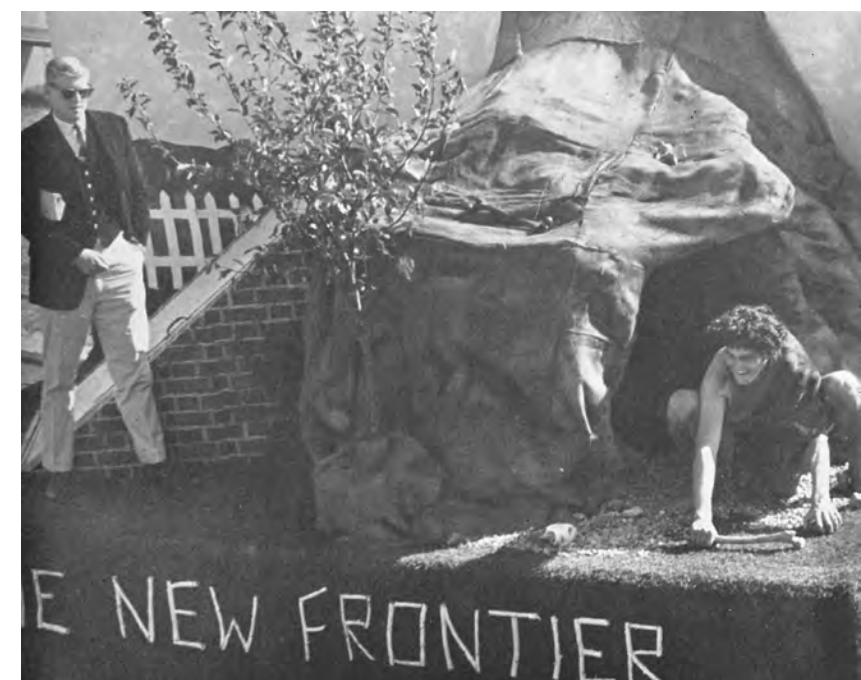
**Top:** 2019, Students sell Thunder spirit gear outside a football game at McCully Stadium. **Right:** David G. Robb '62 holding the Little Brass Bell.



## III. Festivities

Wheaton students may be beginning their adult lives, but that doesn't mean they have to give up their childlike spirit and imagination. The College's history of festivities goes back to its earliest banquets and balls. Students dressed to the nines and arrived with a date, similar to the current annual President's Ball (Prez Ball). Some events became less formal, with the addition of festivities that brought simple fun to the campus, especially the Campus Fair. At this biannual event, students packed the quad for an amusement park experience complete with inflatables, bumper pool playoffs, booths, and displays. The fair phased out in the early 2000s, but a wide variety of on-campus events have taken its place. College Union, the student organization behind these larger events, has planned roller disco nights and Air Jam, a lip-sync contest similar to “Battle of the Bands,” in which groups of students perform lip-synced music mash-ups and choreography complete with props and costumes. Their peers show up in swarms to cheer and vote for their favorite ensemble.

**Top:** 1996, A junior navigates the velcro obstacle course at the College Union-sponsored Fall Fest. **Middle:** 1964, Students gather to watch the bumper pool playoffs at the Campus Fair. **Bottom right:** Juniors showcase their float, “The New Frontier,” in the 1963 Homecoming parade. **Bottom left:** Karen Bartlett Nelson '65 (a 1988 Hall of Honor inductee) and Daniel Chrouser '64 skate on a Saturday night at Rollarena.



#### IV. Class Escapades

Each fall, another senior class begins their final year of studies. Preparing to walk at graduation is a feat, but nine months provides plenty of time for some fun along the race to the finish. For decades at Wheaton, seniors were ushered in with the longest-standing senior tradition: the Senior Bench rivalry. Oral tradition indicates that the class of 1912 commenced the tradition by obtaining a concrete slab, painting it to leave their class's mark, and passing it on to the next graduating class. High jinks quickly ensued when the junior class decided to join in the fun for the first time in 1949, starting the decades-long rivalry between the two classes over possession of the bench. In 1925, the senior class began another historic tradition: burying a fruit cake underneath the campus on their first day of class. But it wouldn't be a senior tradition without taunting the juniors. The junior class was given the entirety of the school year to locate the hidden dessert. If they did not "take the cake," the reigning seniors would unearth it on their last day of classes. Although this tradition is no longer practiced today, buried cakes were left to decompose beneath the College lawns, and the class of 1939 memorialized their cake with a plaque to mark its location outside Blanchard Hall. Another ritual of days past was the Senior Sneak, in which the senior class fled to a place of solitude each spring, organizing their own worship services, creating brochures, and of course, getting into some shenanigans. Before HoneyRock was the College's offsite camp, the Jack and Jill Ranch was one of several favorite getaway destinations. Located in Michigan, the 650-acre lakeside property offered horseback riding, swimming, boating, and canoeing.

**Top:** 1963, Juniors with the stolen bench. There were several attempts to possess the prized rock—including a struggle with retreat-bound seniors at a 30-second train stop, which turned into a much longer delay—and sources differ on which class had ultimate success. **Bottom right:** 1953, Seniors next to the Jack and Jill Ranch sign at their senior sneak. **Bottom:** 1937, A couple of seniors unearth the class cake after a successful year of hiding it.



#### V. Cut a Caper

For 143 years, most forms of dancing were banned at Wheaton College. Students were not allowed to participate in any form of social dancing off campus, and except for the occasional square dance, there were no dances held on campus. However, in the fall of 2003, the College's policy changed to reflect biblical truth instead of merely cultural preferences, and the College sponsored its first dance. College Union, the student organization responsible for large event programming, planned meticulously for the historic event, which attracted news crews from across the nation. Wheaton students skipped and swayed for the first time altogether in one place, and since getting the go-ahead to start dancing, they haven't stopped. In addition to the annual formal held on Presidents' Day, students can literally light up the dance floor at the campus-wide Glo Dance each fall. Zoe's Feet, a ministry of the College that communicates and worships through dance, continues in a tradition of

liturgical dance at Wheaton that precedes the social dancing policy change. Other dance-related clubs were founded after the policy change, including the Swing Dance Club, which hosts weekly swing dance evenings with lessons and open dancing on Mondays for anyone interested. Currently, there is a dance studio in Armerding Center for Music & the Arts and, tucked away behind the cardio room in Chrouser Sports Complex, is another, where students can jump and twirl and stretch and kick if they have a hankering to practice their moves. Nearly 20 years after the College's first hop, Wheaties still know how to cut a caper.

**Top left:** 1976, Students dance in a ladies chain (a common square dancing call) at the College Union-sponsored square dance. **Bottom Left:** 2008, The women of College Union take a moment to pose for a picture at the campus dance they helped organize. **Right:** 2022, Students cut a rug at the annual Glo Dance held in Coray Gym.





## VI. Rites

As part of completing their four years at Wheaton, undergraduate students undergo standard rites of passage, from orientation (now aptly called “Passage”) to graduation. But the experiences in between—ringing the tower bell or going “up the tower” to celebrate an engagement, participating in class-on-class competitions, and learning the class song before the first All-School Communion—are practices that have become so ingrained in undergraduate culture that most are campus-wide rites of passage. These unique experiences make Wheaton College one’s *alma mater*. Students have inherited the fun from their predecessors (former students), without whom the beloved customs would no longer be in practice today. The Blanchard Bell, which was cast in copper and tin in 1872, is the source of one prominent school tradition to celebrate newly engaged couples, who often leave behind souvenirs and signatures in the tower to make their mark amid the growing collection of memorabilia. On top of schoolwork, extracurriculars, and personal

life, numerous generations of students have poured their time into organizing class-on-class competitions, including decades of tug-of-war to see who will be the reigning champion that year. But at the end of the day, rivalries are set aside and unity is restored. The Orientation Committee kicks off the year by welcoming the new Wheaties with their very own class song, composed by upper level students and gifted to the freshmen as they prepare for their first All-School Communion. These freshmen will navigate four years of college life together, and at graduation, they will sing this same song together again at their last Wheaton College Chapel service.

**Left:** Students compete in tug-of-war competitions at Orientation 2022’s rec night in Joe Bean stadium. **Top right:** 1985, A group of students and guests ring the Blanchard Bell. **Bottom right:** 1995, First-year students learn their class song at the first All-School Communion service of the academic year.

## VII. Pastimes

Free time at a college with rigorous classes and countless student involvement opportunities is seen by many as a luxury. But throughout the week, Wheaties occasionally find themselves unburdened by deadlines or schedules, searching for recreation or amusement of some kind to fill their unoccupied time. Long known as the campus hotspot, The Stupe has been the site of student pastimes for decades as a campus dining option, a hangout spot, a place to chat over a warm drink, and the location of a handful of College Union events. Adjacent to The Stupe, now in Lower Beamer, is a full-fledged rec room with ping-pong tables, foosball, pool, and shuffleboard. But before the Beamer Center was the major commons, students gathered in the Memorial Student Center (MSC), where students ate in the old Stupe, friends crammed into the X-room to watch sports and (eventually) play video games, and everybody checked their mailboxes at the old College Post Office (CPO). For years, students have made their own fun. When the nights are too quiet, they participate in residence life, dressing up in costumes and raiding their brother or sister floors. In the ’90s, a group of students created a weekly production of skits called *The Salad Years*, entertaining their peers with riffs on popular culture and enticing them to come back for more every Friday. ●



**Top:** The 1996 members of the Wheaton College Archaeological Society pose for their yearbook photo with some added flair. **Middle:** 1996, The senior women’s floor hockey team after their Wheaton College intramurals championship win. **Bottom left:** 1996, Doran Stambaugh ’96 plays guitar for the on-campus band Paperman Jake, which also included a drummer, bass guitarist, violinist, and vocals. **Bottom right:** 1976, Students share a milkshake in The Stupe.



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# Alumni News

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## Radical Hospitality

*For their faithful service to the most vulnerable in Wheaton, and for their commitment to Christlike community living, Chris and Carlene Ellerman are the 2023 Alumni of the Year for Distinguished Service to Society.*

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*Words*  
Jenna Watson '21

*Photos*  
Tony Hughes

**“W**hen I was 23 we started a home where we took in teenage boys,” Carlene Ellis Ellerman '77 recounted. “We were foster parents. At 23 and 25.”

Chris '75 and Carlene Ellerman were recent Wheaton College graduates and newlyweds, and now foster parents to five teenage boys. Living just down the street from the College, the Ellermans and two friends started a group home that would become a staple in one of the City of Wheaton’s most thriving ministries and in their family life. They didn’t know that at the time: It was just the type of radical hospitality and love for their local community that has always characterized their lives.

Chris and Carlene met in the lobby of Fischer Hall when an R.A. introduced them, but their friendship was given space to deepen through their involvement in the International Students Club. Chris, from Vancouver, Canada, and Carlene, originally from Jamaica, did not think twice about dating interracial. “But it was sure a big deal on campus,” said Chris.

It was the early seventies, not long after interracial marriage was legalized in the United States. “At the time,” said Chris, “there were only about 20 African American students on campus.” “Twenty, max,” Carlene added.

By and large, the couple felt supported by their friends and the administration. Only a few students challenged them. “But shortly after we started dating, we decided that we could either respond in love or we could respond negatively,” said Carlene. “We chose love.”

This attitude of working across different beliefs would characterize their ministry and family life over the years. Their life together contained many forms of Christlike witness, and their relationship was consistently one of them. “For me, our marriage across race and culture was a witness,” said Chris, speaking of the union across differences found within the kingdom of God.

Although it was their first testimony together, it was not their only or last. While Carlene was finishing her degree at Wheaton and Chris was pursuing

*“There were only a handful of years when [the Ellermans’ children] did not grow up surrounded by teens or neighbors who needed a place to stay. One time, a single mother needed a temporary home for two weeks. She ended up staying for five years.”*

graduate studies in social work from George Williams College, they were already talking about where their ministry work would take them.

“By that time, I was passionate about a calling to home missions and a holistic approach to doing mission work among the most vulnerable,” said Chris. The question was: where?

That’s when Chris connected with Outreach Community Ministries (OCM), an organization newly formed by the Wheaton Ministerium, which comprised Catholic, Protestant, and evangelical churches. OCM was a ministry responding to the needs of teenagers in Wheaton and neighboring suburbs without homes or stable family lives who had found themselves in situations of addiction, poverty, risk of school dropout, and other challenges. With the support of 21 churches, OCM started out with two part-time workers, but within two years, services came to a halt. “By the end of ’74, both workers and 15 out of the 21 churches were gone,” Chris said.

Rather than close down, OCM decided to give it one last shot with a Wheaton graduate returning to the area with a master’s degree in social work: Chris.

Although Chris had his eyes initially set on urban missions in Chicago, following the footsteps of his friend and role model, Wayne Gordon ’75, he and Carlene felt God steering them toward suburban work in Wheaton through this internship. So Chris jumped into OCM’s 300-square-foot office on Main Street, proposing a new business plan with an executive director and a sustainable fundraising model. Not long after, he was hired as that executive director, and within a year, three ministries were up and running.

First, there was the street outreach that was the staple of OCM’s model, inherent in its name. This was as simple as hanging out at the places where local teens congregated, like a 24-hour coffee shop on the corner of Geneva and Schmale. Second, there was the transitional home that Chris and Carlene ran alongside two college friends, Randy Ellison ’77 and Paul Holmes ’77. Third, there was a summer youth employment program for at-risk teenagers. It started with 14 students in 1978. Within five years, there were 70.

Although Chris was the official face of OCM’s ministry, anyone involved knew that Carlene was the community builder in the neighborhoods. In the first years, she was “right in the thick of things,” as mother to the teens in the group home. When she and Chris moved out of the transitional home down the street to start their own family, in a sense, their group home ministry never ended. They went on to have four children of their own, but there were only a handful of years when those kids did not grow up surrounded by teens or neighbors who needed a place to stay. One time, a single mother needed a temporary home for two weeks. She ended up staying for five years.

“For 40 of the last 46 years of our marriage, we have hosted somebody else as a guest in our home,” Carlene said.

While her home was the site of her most ongoing ministry, Carlene’s service extended into the surrounding neighborhoods too. She threw block parties to build relationships with neighbors. She hosted progressive dinners, Easter egg hunts, and Bible studies. She served faithfully at the elementary school down the block, increasing its attention to practices of diversity and multicultural celebration. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer, it was after 13 years of this faithful community service, and at what was supposed to be a small gathering of women showing support to Carlene, 50 women showed up. Each one had been touched by her ministry—that is, touched simply by the way she lived her life.

“Carlene’s impact in the community, in a very quiet, loving, strong way, has been very potent in ways that are more subtle,” said Chris, speaking of how Carlene’s ministry complemented OCM’s. As they reflected together, this type of life is created by simply living with hands open in surrender. “It’s living your life for Christ but living it outwardly. It’s asking the question, ‘What do you have for us to do, Lord? How do we use our gifts and talents to make a difference in our community?’”

Just as this humble surrender and creative stewardship characterized Carlene’s ministry, so too did it distinguish Chris’ leadership at OCM. During his 44 years as executive director, Chris was frequently recognized for his innovative

approach to suburban ministry. In 1992, he was selected as Social Worker of the Year by the Illinois chapter of the Association of Social Workers for the creative ways he brought urban ministry models into the Wheaton area.

“Over the years,” said Chris, “everything I thought I was interested in doing in the city, we’ve come to do in the suburbs.”

Although he describes this in easy terms, it was no easy task and had little precedent, according to Vanessa Roth, the current chief operating officer of OCM (now Outreach). Chris recognized that setting up centralized services and expecting those in need to come to them would be ineffective. Rather, the services had to be brought to the neighborhoods where they were most needed.

“Nobody was doing it at the time,” said Roth. “But now we’ve got five of those neighborhood resource centers, and other organizations are realizing how effective a model that is.”

The model, Chris explains, is drawn from the settlement house famously founded by Chicago’s own Jane Addams in 1889. What was novel was the way Chris brought it into suburbia. And yet, Chris and Carlene asserted, the City of Wheaton could not have been more receptive, thanks in part to the presence of Wheaton College.

“One of the things you need to know about the City of Wheaton,” Chris reflected, “is that it’s been one of the most generous, most diverse, most compassionate communities in the county for a long time. Most people don’t know it, but there are numerous group care homes here. Wheaton is a community that has always been wide open to creating opportunities for others, and that has a lot to do with the compassion of people who have settled in Wheaton after graduating from the College, and their calling to change the world.”

It is thanks to this broad community support and to the Ellermans’ faithful presence in the community for so many decades that OCM has been able to put down deep roots with lasting impact.

“I think of Outreach Community Ministries as a mature ministry,” said Dr. Philip Ryken ’88, President of Wheaton College. “Over time, their impact has spread in part because they’ve noticed all the needs the community has and tried to meet as many of those as possible.”

Now one of the most thriving ministries in DuPage County, Outreach serves around 4,000 individuals annually, with nearly 1,000 volunteers and strong church support. It offers services in crisis intervention, counseling, case management, transitional housing, summer school, mentoring programs, youth leadership, job assistance, and more.

“The Ellermans knew from the beginning that this ministry had to become bigger than them,” said Roth. “They were always doing it for the Lord.”

Yet Carlene and Chris still remember the early days, just out of college, when their most important job was ministering Christ’s love to teenage boys—not always an easy task.

“We had one boy, David, who would bring his friends over and say, ‘This is my mom and dad. They’re Jesus



freaks, but they’re really nice,” Carlene remembered with a smile. Years later, one Mother’s Day morning, the doorbell rang. It was David, no longer a teenager, coming back to thank them. He was now a Christian. Another boy, Carlene recalls, was particularly difficult for her to parent, yet he was the one who stayed up all night when Carlene went into labor, making sure she was alright. These boys, and the young women, single mothers, and others whom the ministry later expanded to serve, were the faces and names of OCM’s early days and the ones still quietly carrying Chris and Carlene’s impact now wherever they go.

Seeds this deep, sown with such care, will not go to waste. For the public ministry of OCM, the private ministry of community living, and the shared ministry of their faithful marriage and family life, Chris and Carlene have impacted the City of Wheaton in ways that will not be soon forgotten.

“Their work has had an impact over many decades,” said Dr. Ryken. “They have also built something that’s built to last. Their legacy will continue for many years.” ●



## Carrying in the King

*Marilee Melvin Retires after 35 Years of Serving Wheaton College*

Words Liuan Chen Huska '09

Photos Tony Hughes and Marilee Melvin '72

PHOTO BY TONY HUGHES

When Marilee Melvin '72 transitioned in 2006 to become the executive assistant to the president after nearly two decades as vice president for alumni relations and executive director of the Alumni Association, some colleagues thought she was sabotaging her career. "It was a countercultural decision," Melvin said.

Melvin herself felt some angst, moving from a high-visibility leadership role to serving Wheaton's president behind the scenes. "It's so clear that God's call has been on me to do this," she said. "But I've had to deal with my desire for greatness, attention, and credit."

At a key moment during her career transition, a friend reminded her of the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. "If I sometimes feel unseen, serving in humble tasks behind the scenes, I remind myself that I am actually helping to carry in King Jesus." Melvin is now retiring after 35 years of serving in three senior roles at Wheaton College.

"She will not be possible to replace," said President Philip Ryken '88, whom Melvin has assisted for his entire presidency. "Marilee brings an exceptional passion for the mission of Wheaton College, an unrivaled knowledge of our alumni, and a nice balance of rigorous thinking and heart-felt compassion."

For Melvin, her decades of serving the College have been relationally rich and helped to form in her a Christlike character. "Which is what I wanted," she said. "I just didn't know how to get there."

### EARLY YEARS

Marilee Melvin grew up in old Oak Brook, Illinois, as the second of nine children. Her parents, Dr. Arthur '41 and Marian Bulander Melvin '44, met in Blanchard Hall during Alumni Weekend 1946. From an early age, Melvin established herself as the family writer, penning stories, poetry, letters, and journals. She recalls family dinners every evening followed by devotionals led by one of her parents.

Starting in the mid-1960s, Melvin's parents developed an inductive method for clarifying basic human rights, which they taught in seminars around the country. Helping her parents share this curriculum would provide a framework for Melvin later on, when she entered Wheaton as a student in the tumultuous late '60s and then started a career.

Melvin's undergraduate years at Wheaton were filled with rich conversations with classmates and faculty, made deeper, she believes, without the ability to text or email. After graduating with a B.A. in philosophy, she went on to receive an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Chicago.

In 1976, Melvin took an administrative assistant role with several think tanks in Washington, D.C., focused on political terrorism and on the role of the judiciary in a democratic society. Three years later, she joined the Presidential Correspondence unit as a civil servant in the Carter administration

the week American hostages were taken in Iran. In 1981, Melvin moved to the West Wing to serve as a political appointee on the staff of Ronald Reagan's counselor, Edwin Meese III. Melvin continued to work for Meese as a special assistant when he became the Attorney General. She received the Justice Department's Award for Sustained Excellence in 1987.

"Much of my exciting, glamorous, and historical D.C. experience came to me unexpectedly," said Melvin. She now sees how each role prepared her for the next, eventually landing her back at Wheaton College as its first female vice president and later in her role assisting two Wheaton College presidents.

"I found that my experience as an assistant in D.C.—training to become a leader—and then my experience as a leader at Wheaton where I was gaining insights that helped me become a more useful assistant—have not only expanded my usefulness at Wheaton College but have also deepened and enriched my experience of work," Melvin said.

Some of Melvin's career moves may look from the outside like going "down the ladder," but Melvin believes that pursuing fame and glory is ultimately meaningless: "For a Christ follower, the most exciting vocation imaginable is meaningful service that advances Christ's kingdom," she said.

### LEARNING TRUE LEADERSHIP

In 1986, at the height of her D.C. career, Melvin joined her recently widowed father at Wheaton for his 45th class reunion. She was so moved by the relationships she witnessed among alumni that she wrote a piece for this magazine (*Wheaton Alumni*, Volume 54, Number 2, March/April 1987, page 6) on enduring Wheaton friendships and the lasting value of a Wheaton education. Wheaton would soon be looking to fill the newly created role of VP for alumni relations, bringing the Alumni Association under College governance. The search committee saw Melvin's essay and decided she was right for the job.

Dr. David Gieser '71, a College trustee since 1989 and then-president of the Alumni Association, interviewed Melvin when she applied. "Notwithstanding the high-pressure, demanding role she played in our government, during her interview, she was warm, cordial, and open," Gieser said.

Melvin's post as vice president for alumni relations became a crucible for learning true leadership. "I was 37 years old when I was appointed VP," Melvin said. "Some people made a bit too much of the title. Yes, I had great experiences in D.C., but I actually did not know yet how to effectively manage and take care of my employees the way I should have. I was sometimes more interested in the results we would achieve together than I was interested in them as persons."

Melvin remembers being held accountable for these failings, painfully, but also receiving life-giving words from



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARILEE MELVIN '72

Titus 3: Left to ourselves, we are caught in the sin cycle, even hating others and being hated, but Christ came to set us free. “This isn’t just religion,” Melvin realized. “This is actual, human-sized help for how to both lead and follow.”

That marked a turning point in Melvin’s leadership, which also gave her discernment with other leaders. “I have observed that sometimes otherwise good or successful leaders treat other people in a way that is discourteous or insensitive, and it may flow from a lack of understanding or patience with those parts of themselves that have been wounded,” she said. “Knowing that Christ our leader was a Man of Sorrows, we can let his Spirit illuminate those parts of ourselves that are wounded and need his healing, and trust him to do it. He is doing it for me.”

Following this difficult time of becoming more self-aware, Melvin served as vice president for alumni relations for another decade. In this role, Melvin and her team strengthened volunteer involvement in class reunions and initiated alumni groups around the world, an alumni travel program, and an online community for alumni. She also encouraged reunion class gifts and special groups like alumni in business, alumni of color, and alumni in urban ministry. Melvin’s team produced two devotional volumes written by alumni and a book on alumni in missions. She also regularly contributed articles and editorial support to *Wheaton* magazine.

“No one alive has more connections with the Wheaton family than Marilee Melvin,” said Cindra Stackhouse Taetzsch ’82, Chief Alumni Officer and Executive Director of the Alumni Association. “She knows alumni from every decade, from her parents’ era through her time as VP and the many years since as the president’s special assistant.”

In the early 2000s, when the Board of Trustees saw that the president needed more support, Dr. Duane Liftin, then president, asked Melvin if she could help. At first, she said, “No, I love my job.” But Melvin realized that God had been preparing her for just such a role through her time serving federal leaders and then as a leader herself. She transitioned to the role of executive assistant to the president in 2006, the same year she received the Alumna of the Year Award for Distinguished Service to Alma Mater.

“If it’s for the right kind of leader with clear accountability, you can offer this unique form of service where you can remain fairly invisible and work to advance their agenda because it’s good and you believe in it,” Melvin said. “It’s what I hope I’ve done.”

Clockwise from top left: 1985, Melvin in the Office of the Attorney General; 1992, Melvin with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Wheaton’s 6th president, Dr. Richard Chase, when Carter spoke at the Pfund Lecture; 1993, Melvin with Ruth Graham outside the newly renovated Williston Hall; 2021, Melvin with fellow Senior Administrative Cabinet officers; 2014, Melvin with mentees Elise Vadnais ’13 and Jessica Min ’12 (Mrs. Heewon Chang); 1983, Melvin aboard Air Force One, greeting President Ronald Reagan.

### DOING THE KING’S WORK

Since 1988, Melvin has been a member of the College’s Senior Administrative Cabinet (SAC). Sustaining a longer tenure on SAC than any other Wheaton administrator, Melvin has become a keeper of institutional memory. “She often provides a historical background to a person, to a policy, to any other aspect of our work as a college. I value that,” said President Ryken. “To know where you are and where you’re going, you have to know where you’ve been.”

Melvin has witnessed the challenges faced by the College to remain faithful to a vision of Christ-centered liberal arts education while responding to the needs of a changing world and embracing biblical kingdom diversity. She worked alongside the administration during key changes, like Dr. Litfin’s decision to abandon the Crusader mascot a year before the September 11, 2001, attacks and Dr. Ryken’s decision to move the Office of Multicultural Development from the Student Services Building to the Beamer Center, symbolizing its centrality to Wheaton’s mission. More recently, Wheaton’s passage through the existential moment created by the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest, national polarization, and a shrinking college-bound demographic has demonstrated to Melvin more of God’s grace: “Wheaton College will come out of this challenging period stronger, leaner, and more mission-focused than ever.”

Melvin’s time at Wheaton has also held gems. As a student, she watched a piano key fly off during the renowned Van Cliburn’s performance in Edman Chapel. As vice president for alumni relations, she planned for Billy and Ruth Bell Graham’s 50th class reunion in 1993. Last year, Melvin co-chaired her class’s 50th reunion. “Marilee, for many, is their lifelong connection to Wheaton College,” said reunion co-chair Philip Hubbard ’72, a College trustee for 24 years. “She has been the one constant through three of the eight college presidents.”

Melvin also cherishes her mentoring relationships with students, which started in the mid-’90s when she taught a section of the Freshman Experience course. Since then, she has met regularly with young women in a group she calls “Pilgrim’s Rest,” named after her home. “Connecting with them has reminded me how professors and adults poured time and attention into me during my Wheaton College days,” Melvin said. In particular, she remembers her mentors Chaplain Evan ’27, D.D. ’55 and his wife, Olena Mae Hendrickson Welsh ’41, and Dr. and Mrs. Clyde and Martha Kilby.

In the coming years, Melvin hopes to follow up with the students she has mentored, as well as capture the Melvin family story in writing for her 29 nieces and nephews and many great-nieces and -nephews.

Retirement from full-time work, for Melvin, marks another passage, like her transition to different career roles. Since the beginning, Melvin reflects, God has asked her to do her work well and then to let it go. “I was called to serve for a season,” she said. Quoting Acts 17:28 (ESV), she reflected, “In him we live and move and have our being.’ It’s not so much the work I’ve done but his work that I got to do. And I’ve helped to carry in the King.” ●



## Faith in Harmony

David Hamilton '86

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Words  
Grace Kenyon '22

Photo  
Tony Hughes

Picture a dim, high-ceilinged rehearsal room where the members of Metallica stand in a semicircle around a grand piano. David Hamilton '86 turns pages for celebrity classical pianist Lang Lang as he plays bombastic chords in a cadenza that Hamilton composed.

They are rehearsing the opening arrangement of the band's popular number "One," which would be performed for the 2014 GRAMMY Awards. Hamilton nods emphatically with the pulses of the chords. At some point during the rehearsal, the manager steps over and reveals some details of the staging to Lang Lang. There's going to be fire.

Hamilton, by this point a well-established, Nashville-based arranger and composer, was connected to Lang Lang through a friend who was hired to produce that segment of the GRAMMYS. Hamilton didn't start out with GRAMMY-sized gigs, though. After graduating from Wheaton with a degree in piano performance, he returned home to Florida to earn a master's degree in studio writing and production from the University of Miami. When he first arrived in Nashville in 1989 with dreams of producing music, he took every odd job he could, like copying orchestra parts or playing in demo recordings. He took every opportunity to sit on couches in the backs of studios and learn from the artists around him.

"If you do a good job with a small thing, then people will talk, and someone's gonna hear about that," Hamilton said.

He gets asked all the time about how to make it in an industry that is notoriously competitive. His answer? Grit and humility. One job at a time, be faithful with what you are given.

Hamilton said this is one of the things he picked up at Wheaton. He recalled hearing former Dean of the Conservatory Dr. Harold Best give a talk at a Gospel Music Association

conference in Nashville. Best gave a piece of advice that Hamilton has never forgotten: "Shine where God plants you."

At Wheaton, Hamilton says he also adopted an ethic of continually learning new things.

Most recently, this has meant an opportunity to work on some of his own music. In June of 2022, he released his first album, *Good Things*, a 10-track venture into the world of contemporary instrumental jazz. This genre shift can be traced to his time in graduate school, where he received training and inspiration from the strong jazz program at the University of Miami. As someone who has spent most of his career writing and arranging for other artists, he said he is relishing the opportunity to work on his own music.

"It was really good for my soul to make this music myself," he said.

Hamilton will keep creating and learning, straddling the space between secular and sacred artists. He hopes that his faith is evident simply in the way he does his work and in small moments where he gets to share a bit of truth.

"I'm trying my best to be salt and light," he said. "I'm trying to show people a little glimpse of who Jesus is." ●

# Wheaton College Alumni Association 2022–2023 Annual Report

*Each year the Alumni Association’s Board of Directors awards financial and nonfinancial grants and awards to faculty, students, and alumni. Funds for these grants flow from the annual Wheaton Fund, which also supports every faculty member’s salary and every student’s academic program.*

## Faculty Awards

### ALUMNI FACULTY GRANTS AWARDED FOR 2023–24

Brita Beitler '04  
*Education*

Sharenda Barlar  
*Modern and Classical Languages*

Dr. Aubrey Buster '09, M.A. '11  
*Biblical and Theological Studies*

Dan Haase '97, M.A. '02  
*Christian Formation and Ministry*

Dr. Jon Laansma  
*Modern and Classical Languages*

Joonhee Park  
*Communication*

Dr. Allison Ruark  
*Applied Health Science*

Dr. Kim Sasser  
*English*

Science Division Block Grant for Faculty/Student Summer Research

### JUNIOR ALUMNI FACULTY GRANTS AWARDED FOR 2023–24

Dr. Muhia Karianjahi M.A. '03  
*Mission, Ministry, and Leadership*

Dr. Charles Liu '08  
*Psychology*

### FACULTY MISSIONS PROJECT 2023–24

Dr. Mandy Kellums Baraka M.A. '13  
*Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy*

Dr. Scott Ickes  
*Biological and Health Sciences*  
Kenya – Timothy R. Phillips Scholarship

Dr. Matthew Milliner '98  
*Art*  
India

Dr. John Trotter  
*Conservatory*  
Kenya – Timothy R. Phillips Scholarship

Dr. Terri Smith Watson M.A. '86  
*Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy*

## Distinguished Service Awards

### FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO SOCIETY

Chris '75 and Carlene Ellis Ellerman '77

### FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO ALMA MATER

Dr. Ruth Lewis Bentley '55, M.A. '58

## Student Awards

### JUNIORS AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THEIR SENIOR YEAR

Fiona Balfe '24  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
*Biblical and Theological Studies and Environmental Science*

Lucy Browning '24  
Chaska, Minnesota  
*Applied Health Science*

Christina Castro '24  
Sahuarita, Arizona  
*Secondary Education and English*

Enoch Lui '24  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
*Psychology*



Alumni Association Senior Scholarship award recipients with Board directors, from left to right: Manette Galvan Turner '92, M.A. '98, Enoch Lui '24, Christina Castro '24, Priscilla Barclay Kibler '12, Association President Eric Fowler '81, Lucy Browning '24, Fiona Balfe '24, Brian De La Cruz '21

## Alumni Association Board of Directors



**ROW 1 (L-R):** Manette Galvan Turner '92, M.A. '98, Doug Goebel '90, Barbara Bates Alexander '77, Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84, Jerard Woods '12, Jeffrey Shafer '96, Mary Ashley Miller '69

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Priscilla Barclay Kibler '12, Noah Chung '12, Elisabeth Verseput Jones '08, Kari Shook Anderson '91, Stephen Franz '09, Rebecca Gray Jordan '88, Jim Wilkes '79, Jim Black '94, M.A. '99

*Not Pictured: Brian De La Cruz '21, Eric Fowler '81, Leigh Naraine Pylman '08*

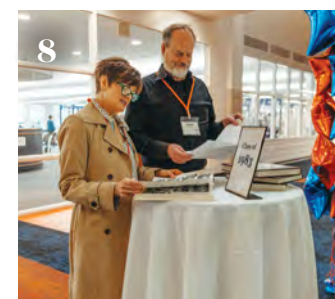
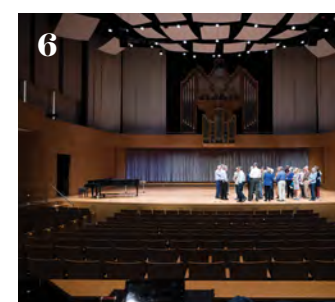
 **Send us your nominations for Alumni Board members.**

All alumni are invited to suggest Wheaton graduates for the Alumni Association Board of Directors by submitting an online form to the nominating committee. The committee will take into account graduation year, vocation, gender, race/ethnicity, and demonstrated commitment to Wheaton. Job description and nomination forms can be obtained and submitted online at [alumni.wheaton.edu/boardnomination](http://alumni.wheaton.edu/boardnomination).

PHOTO BY MIKE HUDSON

# Alumni Weekend 2023

*Classes of 1948, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, and 1983 were welcomed home to celebrate reunions.*



1 Wheaton welcomed alumni back to campus May 5–6 for Alumni Weekend. 2 Retired Wheaton College architect Bruce Koenigsberg leads the Class of 1973 on a tour of campus. 3 Randy Pfund '71, Marilee Melvin '72, Ward Rau '73, and Kerry Pfund '74. 4 Linda Cook Courtney '73 and Jay Courtney '73.

PHOTOS BY ALYSON KEEN

5 Two members of the Class of 1963 laugh during the Alumni Welcome Reception. 6 Alumni explore the Concert Hall in the new Armerding Center for Music & the Arts. 7 Reunion alumni search for classmates in old yearbooks. 8 Amy Wasson Throw '86 and Daniel Throw '83 look through attendee names at reunion check-in.



## Alumni Weekend 2023: Class Reunions

Photos Alyson Keen



### Class of 1983

40-Year Reunion

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Brian Duggan, Cathi Rentschler Duggan '84, Brad Sommerfeld '84, Judy Thompson Sommerfeld, Denise Shepard Liechty, Eric Liechty, Marcy Kennedy Massot, Randy Massot, Paul McNamara, Margaret Nelson McNamara, Debbie Birkey Rassi, Scott Rassi, Bev Hohm Smith, Karen Ebey-Tessendorf.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Dave Helm, Lisa Schmid Helm '84, Kim Hawthorne, Kari Ann Martin Hawthorne, Deb Tanis Greve, Bert Greve, Bill Bolthouse, Steve McKenna, Lisa Barlett McKenna, Jane Howard, Bob Kopp, Mary Syzduk Kopp '83, M.A. '91, Ellen Boberg Fee '88, Craig Fee.

**ROW 3 (L-R):** Stephen Olsen '82, Julie Nelson Olsen, Melissa Urban Craig, Elaine Cable Bergman, Mark Schulenburg '85, Carol Nordlof Schulenburg, Molly McCartney Preston, Tammy Kemp Lewis, Beth Hesterberg Fulton, Kevin Ritchie, Linda West McGregor, Bruce McGregor, Tom Thornton, Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84, Jonathan Hancock.

**ROW 4 (L-R):** Mark Myers, Karen Peterson Myers '82, Brian Adam, Douglas Colber, Susan Johnston Ness, Daniel Ness, Paul Wahlbeck, Bruce Gin, Bill Peterson, Ernest Horace, Ana Penman Aguilar, Nancy Hayden Hueber, Tom Hueber '82, Dan Spradley.

**ROW 5 (L-R):** John Nystrom, Bonnie Nystrom, Jeanne Mawhorter Stewart, Chris Stewart, Jeffry Davis, Daniel Throw, Amy Wasson Throw '86, Beth Christiansen Struwing, Jim Struwing, Steve Thonn, Pam Bean Thonn, Jimmy Dodd, Drew Gosling, Rob Pitkin.

**ROW 6 (L-R):** Mark Phillips, Jacquie Phillips, Curt Ganther, Nancy Radant Ganther, Julie Weeldreyer, Brian Weeldreyer, David Schleicher, Nate Smith, Heidi Smith, Lea Lamb, Del Lamb.



### Class of 1978

45-Year Reunion

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Gary Knosp '76, Carol Pearson Knosp, Barbara Hoppell Keeney, Cynthia Eng, Doreen Antonik Herman, Linda Klett, Kathleen Connon Parsons, Lane Kasen, Terri Hilt Kasen '79, Nadine Heitz, Mark Bleeke.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Daniel Yelovich '79, Janet Hornaday Yelovich, Debi Hayden Inch, Pris Blair Strapp, Peggy Jackson Katterjohn '79, Mark Katterjohn, Roger Brace, Liz Allen Hannema, Chuck Hannema, John Erickson, Jane Hatfield Erickson, Nancy Swider-Peltz '81.

**ROW 3 (L-R):** Paul Slayton, MaryAnn Ehresman Slayton, Brent Hansen, Jaye Bergquist Hansen, Mary Kruse Zambrana, Carol Ahlquist, Mark Ahlquist, Kevin Murphy, Lynette Farhart Alford, Bill Alford, Alia Braaten, Gary Braaten.

**ROW 4 (L-R):** Jim Van Yperen '78, M.A. '81, Sharon Anderson Van Yperen, Sue Penner Bowen, Sheff Crowder, Melodie Kosik Mull, Steven Mull, Bill Seitz, Dawn Berger Seitz, Beth Howard Miller, Joanne Zimmermann Erickson, Richard Erickson '72.

**ROW 5 (L-R):** Tom Futrell '77, Lyn Edwards Futrell '78, M.A. '81, Diane Swartz Anderson, Laura Montgomery, Sheri Swanlund Kraakevik, John Kraakevik '80, Dave Bishop, Linda Brandon Bishop, Kurt Tillman, Bob Koci, David Cassel.



**Class of 1973**

*50-Year Reunion*

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Charles Gibson, Margaret Briberg Gibson, Susie Wing, Becky Ostrom Rosser, Carol Gottschall Pfund, Stephen A. Erickson, Mark Lovik, Connie Reum Lovik R.N. '75, Karen Batty '73, R.N. '69, Janet Newlin Burgess, Roger Burgess '74, Wilma Gehret Fast, James Fast, Nancy Matteson Pettit, Connie Moberg Schuh, Liz Fiess Walstrum, John Walstrum, Sue Blair Befus, Jill Wahlgren Murchie, Tim Howard.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Kerry Pfund '71, Deanna Lawrence Van Elswyk, Kevin Van Elswyk, Dave Kroeze, Linda Carter Kroeze, Dave Wessner, Patti Throw Wessner, Gayle Anderson Djikas, Quentin Schultze, Barbara Hoekenga Schultze, Ellen Davies Mosher, Art Mosher '71, Warren Schuh, Debbie Enns Hoops, Cynthia Wiese Ryder, Phil Murchie '72.

**ROW 3 (L-R):** Dan Musick '73, M.A. '79, Jean Kendall Musick, Christopher David '21, Melody Parker David '13, Paula Parker, David Parker '73, M.A. '74, Virginia Logan Vagt, Peter Vagt '71, Dorothy Forsberg, Joy Daily Wagner, Paul Mathews, Shirley Fraser Mathews, Tim Smick, Betsy Koop Thompson, Gordon Thompson.

**ROW 4 (L-R):** Scott Bolinder, Jill Gulbransen Bolinder '74, Margaret Toms Anderson, Bonnie Van Laan Robinson, Karen Baker Kletzing '73, M.A. '08, David Kletzing '70, Jay Courtney, Linda Cook Courtney, Helen Paris, Nancy Wilson Newbrander '73, M.A. '75, Bill Newbrander, Debbie Oerth Rodgers, Ted Rodgers, Nancy Dunkerton Babson, John Babson, Keith Hale M.A. '75, M.A. '09, Colleen Sullivan Hale '73, M.A. '75, Ruth Johnson, Roger Johnson '73, M.A. '12.

**ROW 5 (L-R):** Greg Miller, Jinny Corbly Miller, Linda Criswell, Dave Ferwerda, Sandy Ferwerda, Dave Lynn, Dawn Lynn, Kay Henderson Ford, Marlene Swanson Rau '74, Ward Rau, Sylvia Gazarian Tereschuk '75, Jim Tereschuk, Sharon Haburn Dilling '71, Bob Dilling, Cindy Putnam, Ren Putnam, Jeannie Dunlap Hochstettler, Bill Hochstettler '74.

**ROW 6 (L-R):** Scott Strote, Cindy Sager Strote '73, M.A. '79, Tim Weeden, Pete Ploegman, Jan Ploegman, Jonathan Lauer '74, M.A. '84, Cathleen Cody Lauer, Tom Meloy, Richard Sorensen, Lois Remington Sorensen, Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, Jake Jacobsen, Catherine Douglas Kistler, Charles Svendsen, Mary Hopper Welander, Peter Welander '76.

**ROW 7 (L-R):** Larry Gavette '72, M.A. '74, Elaine Watt Gavette, Steve Erickson, Larry Brown, Bob Dye, Joan Hedstrom Dye, Mark Charbogian '74, Becky Montgomery Card, David Card '72, Marcia Kennedy, John Kennedy, Gary Appleton, Teresa Appleton, Doug Felch, Susan Weimer Felch '72, M.A. '74.

**ROW 8 (L-R):** Gordon Koppin, Martha Baumann Koppin, Kathleen Kage Rowell, Tim Rowell, Sandra Watkins May, Judi Guth Haugen '74, Philip Haugen, Karen Rutherford Rust '76, Willy Rust, Rich Butman, Atsuko Marutani Pickens '74, Stanley Pickens, Rick Claybrook, Laurelyn Domeck Claybrook.

**ROW 9 (L-R):** Sinclair Hollberg, Daniel Harris, Robin Cook, Teri Cook, Randall Kelloway, Ronda Kelloway, Carl Westberg, Lynn Mayhall Westberg, Jenny Stuckey Davis, Clyde Davis, Gail Mostrom Parker, Patsy Elsen Hubbard, Phil Hubbard '72, Jan Lang '74, Larry Absheer.



**Class of 1968**

*55-Year Reunion*

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Frank Dusek, Faith Ballman Dusek, Carreen Armerding Smith, Carol Mostrom Collins, Barbara Ziah, Mickey Ziah, Cynthia Bohstedt Kenyon, Beth Vroon, Judy Smith Norman '69, Nancy Walker Ediger '70.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Ron Sipp '63, Susan Festian Sipp, Ron Salzman '67, Nancy Turner Salzman, Walter Hansen, Robert Vroon, Dan Norman, Charles Moffett.

**ROW 3 (L-R):** John Black '67, Nancy Weller Black, Diane Hagen Jerdan, Becky Stam Beebe '69, R.N. '67, Gary Beebe, Ivan Ediger, Sharon Bullock Williams, David Williams, Tom Arnold, Evvy Hay Campbell, Gary Campbell M.A. '02.

**ROW 4 (L-R):** David F. Carlson, John S. Jauchen, Doug Utigard, Pat Gamble Utigard, Nancy Crawford Lowe '69, R.N. '67, Wayne Lowe, Mark Noll, Maggie Packer Noll '69, Julie Gregg Hatch '69, Nathan Hatch.



**Class of 1963**

*60-Year Reunion*

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Mac Airhart '61, David J. Watkins, Phil Fogle, Betty Fogle R.N. '64, Sally Hargrave, Yvonne Fittz Malstead, Carol Smith Calleia, Bob Dresdow, Judi Hamer Whitecotton '64, Neal Whitecotton.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Vonla Burman Airhart, Mary Zuber Macaluso '63, R.N. '61, Marshall Macaluso '62, Don Philgreen, John Wilkinson, Sandy Fruin Bell '65, Nicholas Bell, Susan Festian Sipp '68, Ronald Sipp.

**ROW 3 (L-R):** Marla Rogers Dahlstrom, Dave Kemna, Paul Sugarbaker, Bill Roundy, James Oakes, John Innes, Rindy Burrell Bennett '64, Gerry Bennett.

**ROW 4 (L-R):** Elliot Larson '61, Marty Bihlmeier Larson, Joan Ball Allison, John Allison, Al Bender, Carole Bender, Gary Keyes, Janet Nyberg Keyes '65, Howie Whitaker, David Rhoads.



**Class of 1953**

*70-Year Heritage Reunion*

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Betty Behn Fernandes, Ruth Bartel Stough '54, Luci Deck Shaw, Faith Dugan Wiesner '52, Georgia Evans.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Frank Fernandes '52, Bill Stough, John Hoyte, Jim Anderson, Don Evans, David "Buzz" Salstrom.



**Class of 1958**

*65-Year Heritage Reunion*

**ROW 1 (L-R):** Jack Robinson '58, M.Div. '63, Theo Meyer Robinson M.A. '58, Mary Ann Shook Miller, Anna Green Graham, Barbara Schultz McLennan '60, James McLennan.

**ROW 2 (L-R):** Ron Brushwyler, Chuck Hogren, Jerry Stromberg, Dean Miller.



**Class of 1948**

*75-Year Heritage Reunion*

Phyllis Acken Jensen and Betty Heiser Pennington



## A Word with Alumni

*Eric Fowler '81, President, Wheaton College Alumni Association Board of Directors*

**I**t's been a long time since I graduated from Wheaton. The Wheaton I knew as a student was defined by a quiet carrel in the back of the library surrounded by math and science books. It was defined by my tennis and intramurals teammates and by the roommates I had over the four years. Chapel, a small set of close professors, and ministries in which I participated provided definition too. It was also shaped by the things I brought with me to campus: my upbringing, my home environment, my church, and my earlier education.

Serving on the Alumni Association Board for the past five years, I have seen that my Wheaton experience was often very different from the Wheaton that other alumni remember. Each graduate had different courses, different extracurriculars, and different friend groups, and they came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, experienced Wheaton from different ethnic backgrounds, and more. All of these things uniquely shape a college

experience. While we each experienced a different Wheaton, we also experienced something very much the same.

Although my optics have changed, the Wheaton I know today is still for Christ and His Kingdom. It is still focused on the holistic development of students with Christ at the center. It still produces graduates that engage in society in meaningful ways and have the ability to bring the hope of Christ into places that are unique to them—just as you are doing. It's still a place of wholesome fun, just like it was when you were a student. And I'm always inspired and humbled each time I look through the alumni rolls to see the noteworthy ways Wheaton alumni have been engaged in society. Yet we all know that most kingdom work goes unnoticed and without accolades.

My hope is for Wheaton to continue to attract students and generate alumni who are different from one another and who also help fulfill the mission of the College by bringing honor to Christ in unique and distinguished ways—visible or not. ●

**Vice President for Advancement, Vocation, and Alumni Engagement** Dr. Kirk D. Farney M.A. '98 **Chief Alumni Officer** Cindra Stackhouse Taetzsch '82 **Alumni Association President** Eric B. Fowler '81 **President-Elect** Jerard Woods '12 **Past President** Dr. Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84 **Executive Director** Cindra Stackhouse Taetzsch '82 **Alumni Trustee Representatives** Eric B. Fowler '81, Jerard Woods '12, Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84 **Board of Directors Serving through 2023** Kari Shook Anderson '91, Brian De La Cruz '21, Dr. Elisabeth Verseput Jones '08, Rebecca Gray Jordan '88, Jeffrey Shafer '96 **Serving through 2024** Barbara Bates Alexander '77, Mary Ashley Miller '69, Leigh Naraine Pylman '08, Manette Galvan Turner '92, M.A. '98, James Wilkes '79 **Serving through 2025** Noah Chung '12, Priscilla Barclay Kibler '12 **Serving through 2026** Jim Black '94, M.A. '99, Stephen Franz '09, Doug Goebel '90



PHOTO BY MIKE HUDSON

PHOTO BY TONY HUGHES

I PERCEIVED THAT there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

ECCLESIASTES 3:12-13 (ESV)