

Forester

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SUMMER 2023



Four-Year Nursing
Program Launches

Concordia
University
Chicago

Summer 2023

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“CHRIST TELLS US THAT WHEN WE SERVE THE LEAST AMONG US WE SERVE HIM ALSO. BY LOOKING OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES AND SERVING OTHERS, WE NOT ONLY HELP OUR COMMUNITY, BUT WE GROW SPIRITUALLY.”

—Jeremiah Schultz, current CUC student, [Service Saturdays](#), p. 26



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War, Women & the Classroom

Elvira Preuss BA '44 remembers her time at CUC.

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MISSION Steadfast in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, Concordia University Chicago promotes academic rigor in its liberal arts and professional programs; grounds students in objective truth, integrity, and excellence; and practices faithfulness to the Confessional teachings of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as it forms students for vocations in church, family, and the world.

VISION Concordia University Chicago is a Christ-centered Lutheran university where truth, freedom, and vocation form students for lives of influence and service for the common good.

CORE VALUES We at Concordia University Chicago embrace these Core Values as essential to living together in a vibrant and influential Christian academic community and as productive citizens of the Church and world.

- **CHRISTIAN FAITH.** The Christian faith is an integral part of our community.
- **THE INDIVIDUAL.** As a member of God's creation, each person is unique and is blessed with inherent worth.
- **EXCELLENCE.** We strive for excellence in who we are and what we do.
- **INTEGRITY.** Our community demonstrates the accord between our beliefs and practices.
- **SERVICE.** Recognizing and addressing the needs of others is a response to God's love for us, and a reflection of God's love for them.

President's Column

Four years ago, I was called to lead Concordia University Chicago. The opportunity to guide an institution dedicated to helping students grow in the faith and prepare to use their God-given talents to serve others has been immensely fulfilling. One aspect I wasn't expecting was the remarkable pace at which time would seem to pass. While it feels like only yesterday that I was stepping onto campus for the first time, I recognize that the University has achieved a great deal across these four years. This last year has been no different.

Much of the credit for our recent accomplishments goes to our highly dedicated faculty and staff, who have been particularly prolific during the most recent academic year. Their work has been significant in both its forward-facing vision and its role in creating momentum for the University as we enter our 160th year of educating students. The pace quickens.

This spring, for instance, we cut the ribbon on a new, state-of-the-art nursing simulation lab. This showcase teaching space is the key to providing learning opportunities that mirror those in real hospital settings for the students enrolled in our new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. While CUC has partnered with other area universities to offer nursing degrees since 1982, the BSN will be the first health care degree offered entirely on our campus. This not only provides a single, clear pathway to program completion, but also ensures that students receive a Christ-centered education throughout their college careers. In just a few short months, the BSN is already providing momentum for the creation of future health care degrees within our College of Health, Science & Technology. (Read more on page 18.)

We also recently welcomed our first esports coach to the Athletics Department. He is busy building CUC's

first team within the nation's fastest-growing varsity sport. Although students participating in esports might not fit a traditional definition of a student-athlete, you should have no doubt that matches are physically and mentally challenging, as well as highly competitive. CUC continues to be at the forefront of providing a robust campus experience for tomorrow's students.

From a leadership perspective, the final pieces of an exceptionally strong, permanent executive team fell into place as the spring semester ended. With a potent mixture of Concordia-Chicago veterans and individuals who bring fresh perspectives to the table, this group is faithful, smart, energetic, and cohesive. As I begin my fifth year at Concordia-Chicago, I thank God for these partners in the work of developing new academic programs; determining creative ways to serve our community; strengthening our service to students, alumni, and donors; and carrying out our strategic plan.

I recognize that all of this sounds like a lot of change, and it is. But change is necessary to best serve our students and all members of the Concordia-Chicago community in an increasingly competitive higher education environment. Still, there is one aspect of our University that will not ever change—our unwavering dedication to the faith. In fact, it is our firm grounding in the truth as revealed in the Scriptures and expounded in the Confessions that guides us as we explore exciting new ways to spread the Word, live out our mission to form students, and serve the greater good. The Lord continues to provide very well for Concordia-Chicago. May He continue to bless our efforts and unify us for the good work He calls us to do.



“ I THANK GOD FOR [OUR] PARTNERS IN THE WORK OF DEVELOPING NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS; DETERMINING CREATIVE WAYS TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY; STRENGTHENING OUR SERVICE TO STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND DONORS; AND CARRYING OUT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN.”



Russell Dawn, DPhil, JD
President

University Events

Summer & Fall 2023

JULY

28 Undergraduate Summer Preview Day

AUGUST

28 Opening Service of the 160th Academic Year

SEPTEMBER

17 Community Sing

25-Oct. 01 Homecoming Week

28 Distinguished Lecture - Dr. Gene Veith

29 University Band Concert

30 Athletic Hall of Fame Induction

OCTOBER

09 Undergraduate Visit Day

14 Maroon & Gold Gala

15-17 Lectures in Church Music

19 Lectureship in Christianity, Humanities and Public Life - Dr. Wilfred McClay

20-22 Kapelle and Wind Symphony Tours

27 Wind Symphony Home Concert

29 Kapelle Home Concert

NOVEMBER

04-06 Chamber Orchestra Tour

11 Undergraduate Visit Day

19 Chamber Orchestra Concert



Homecoming Week

We're excited to welcome alumni and friends home to River Forest this fall! During Homecoming 2023 you can cheer on our Cougar athletes, participate in the Alumni Association Annual Meeting, worship together and enjoy special celebrations. Registration opens July 5. Visit CUChicago.edu/homecoming for further details.

September 25-October 1

DECEMBER

02-03 Service of Lessons and Carols

08 University Band Christmas Concert

15-16 Fall Commencement Weekend

Lectures in Church Music

The annual Vi Messerli Memorial Lectures in Church Music returns to campus with several concerts, a keynote address, workshops and choral reading sessions. Check CUChicago.edu/music this fall as registration opens and schedules are announced.

October 15-17



Visit CUChicago.edu/events for the most current schedule and full event details.

CUC News



“ TRAIN UP A CHILD
IN THE WAY HE
SHOULD GO;
EVEN WHEN HE IS
OLD HE WILL NOT
DEPART FROM IT.”

—Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

English Department Re-Launches Caesura: A Journal for Young Writers

Caesura, a digital journal that publishes the creative work of fifth through eighth graders from Lutheran schools, was delighted to announce its return this spring. Shortly after its founding in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived and disrupted priorities both at CUC and across grade schools.

The journal is edited by Professor Andy Pederson, Dr. David Rogner and Visiting Assistant Professor Anton Jones, all Concordia-Chicago English faculty members. “We deeply value the voices of young writers and seek to give them greater exposure,” they said in an introductory statement. “We believe that creative writing is a gift bestowed upon us by God to reflect, and reflect on, the world He has given us. We want to encourage and promote these talents of your young writers by sharing them with the world at large.”

The editors continued, “In poetry, a ‘caesura’ is a break, or a pause in the line. We have taken this as our name because we view writing in that way—it is break from the hectic world in which we live, a world that increasingly seems to disregard the thoughtful and the beautiful.”

Free Enterprise Center Receives Book Donation, Director Named to Scholarly Council

The Free Enterprise Center (FEC) of the College of Business received an in-kind gift from the Liberty Fund of their entire book collection. The 400 volumes are estimated to be worth a total of \$10,000. The Liberty Fund is “a private educational foundation established to enrich the understanding and appreciation of the complex nature of a society of free and responsible individuals.” The books are now housed in a seminar room, which will serve as a multi-purpose space for small gatherings and club meetings, near the College Business main offices in Brohm Hall.

In other FEC news, center director Rachel Ferguson, assistant dean and professor of business, was named to the Scholarly Advisory Council of the Faith and Liberty Discovery Center, a museum in Philadelphia that focuses on the impact of the Bible on the people who shaped America. Ferguson will be a contributing writer for the organization as a member of the council.

Dr. Steven Gerner to Lead Two New Centers on Campus



Concordia University Chicago’s College of Education named Dr. Steven Gerner assistant dean and director of its forthcoming

Center for Christian Education. Gerner is also executive director and CEO of the Milwaukee-based Center for Urban Education Ministries (CUEM), which moved to Concordia-Chicago’s campus from Mequon, WI this spring.

The CUEM is a national nonprofit organization where the vital mission is to “relentlessly strengthen urban education”

through “Recruitment, Resources, and Recognition.” While the CUEM will remain independent of Concordia-Chicago, the two organizations will work together to develop comprehensive resources for urban Lutheran educators throughout the U.S. Separately, the University’s new Center for Christian Education will serve as a catalyst for the discovery, creation and growth of faith-fueled educational opportunities in America.

Gerner has extensive background and experience as an educator, school administrator, professor and consultant. As a leading expert on urban education, he speaks and provides professional development to the community on the topics of teacher quality, city education and classroom management.

Rev. Dr. Chad Kendall Serving as Assistant Provost for Mission & Identity



The University welcomed Rev. Dr. Chad Kendall as assistant provost for mission & identity and visiting assistant professor of theology over the

winter. He will play a key part in ensuring that the University continues to live out its mission faithfully.

His responsibilities include recruiting qualified, mission-minded faculty and administrators, as well as leading employee development in regard to the intersection of faith and the academic enterprise. Kendall comes to Concordia-Chicago from St. John Lutheran Church in Wheaton, IL. He completed his doctoral degree in missiology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Kendall is currently the chair of the LCMS Northern Illinois District taskforce on multiethnic mission and ministry.

“The love of Christ is incarnate—in our midst! This defines my approach as pastor, professor and now assistant provost,” he says. “I am looking forward

to working with everyone as we share the love of Christ together and work toward goals as a nurturing community that will help bring a bright future to Concordia University Chicago!”

Athletics Hires First Esports Coach

Concordia-Chicago announced the hiring of the University’s first head esports coach, Joshua Mol, who will be leading the team’s inaugural season as a part of CUC Athletics. Esports is a form of video game competition that has become overwhelmingly popular on college campuses in recent years, with nearly 200 universities across the country adding esports to their athletics departments. Bringing in this new sport helps CUC serve the interests and needs of today’s students, and expands the idea of what sports can be.

Mol comes to CUC after holding a position as esports coach at Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE). He also served as the esports coordinator at Harper College. In both of these roles, Mol oversaw all actions with the esports team including schedules, practices, promoting and recruiting. “I am glad to be able to plant the seeds of esports at Concordia-Chicago,” Mol states, “and I am confident they can grow into something large and successful.”

CUC will be running under the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) for all of their games and tournaments. Within the NACE, they will have leagues that are held during both the fall and spring seasons, as well as circuit tournaments and one-off tournaments with select titles. Currently there are six NACC schools that have esports teams already.

The first season for esports will be held in the fall of 2023. Some of the potential games that CUC will be sponsoring include League of Legends, Rocket League, Overwatch and Super Smash Brothers Ultimate.

“ THANK YOU
CONCORDIA-
CHICAGO,
AND SOLI DEO
GLORIA!”

—Pastor Jeff

The Programs, the People and the Presence of Christ: Giving Thanks for 21 Years of Ministry

By: *Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Leininger*, University Pastor

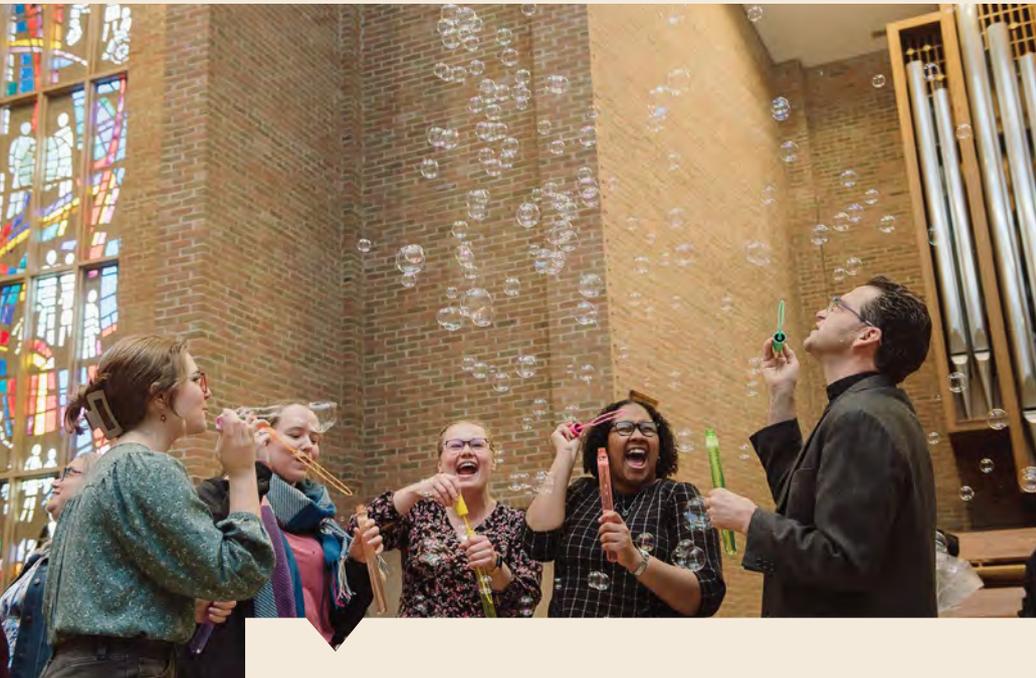
In the summer of 2002, my wife Rachel and I returned from our time at the University of Cambridge to begin a new chapter at her alma mater, Concordia University, River Forest. Twenty-one years later, the Spirit now leads us to a new ministry at First St. Paul's Lutheran Church, on the North Side of Chicago. My predecessor at Concordia, Steve Smith, had previously served as the beloved campus pastor here for six years. As I unpacked my books and read through his well-organized files, I remember thinking: “Six years! That’s a legacy I’ll never outlive!” Now more than three-times that mark, I reflect with great joy and thanksgiving the work we’ve done together at what is now Concordia University Chicago.



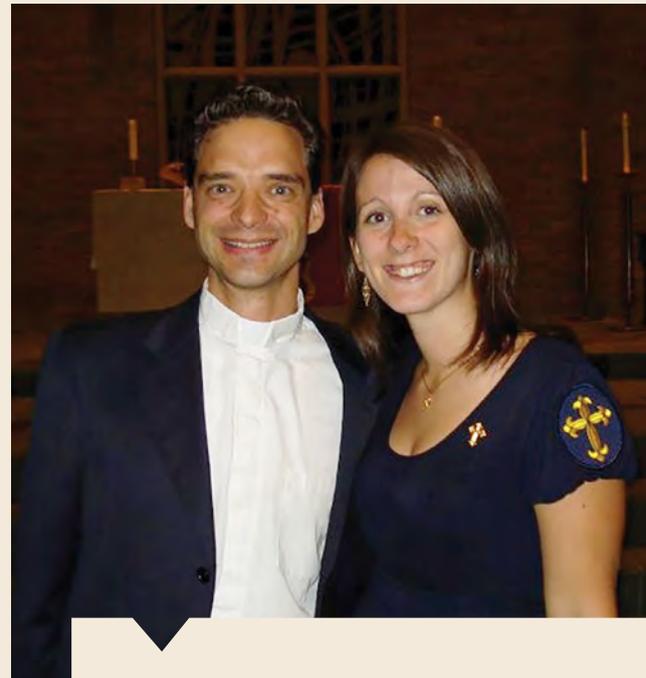
Pastor Jeff and Michelle Frerking BA '22 strike a Shakespearean pose after Baccalaureate, Spring 2022.

Programs

Through the support of CUC's administration and by harnessing the endless energy of our students, we developed new programs for the spreading of God's word. We re-envisioned the way campus ministry was done by developing a student leadership team to facilitate all the Spiritual Life activities on our campus. An annual Epiphany Mission Festival welcomed speakers and organizations onto campus from around the globe. We attended yearly and even hosted three times the Beautiful Feet Mission Conference, a gathering to energized and equip mission-minded students from all the Concordias for global gospel work. In 2010 we added a full-time ministry position, ably and joyfully filled by Deaconess Betsy Dodgers BA '08, MA '18. Three significant anniversary years arose during my tenure: the centenary of Concordia's River Forest campus (1913); the 150th of our founding at Addison (1864); and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (1517). The many academic, historic and spiritual activities of the 500th were hailed as one of the premier observances in the nation. With the support of CUC's Foundation Office, we funded new scholarships to support church professional students. Countless retreats (and indeed, "Attacks!") encouraged fellowship, service and the study of God's word. Monthly "Focus Fridays" brought all Concordia's student-athletes together to hear the gospel. New, creative events such as the Christmas Tree-Lighting Festival, St. Nicholas Day treats in our shoes and the Spring "Marty Party" gathered an increasingly diverse campus together for fun and fellowship. These and countless other programmatic additions helped form relationships while filling the academic year with energy and activity.



Students celebrate after the DCE placement service, April 2023.



Pastor Jeff with Deaconess Betsy Dodgers BA '08, MA '18 at her Commissioning, August 2010.

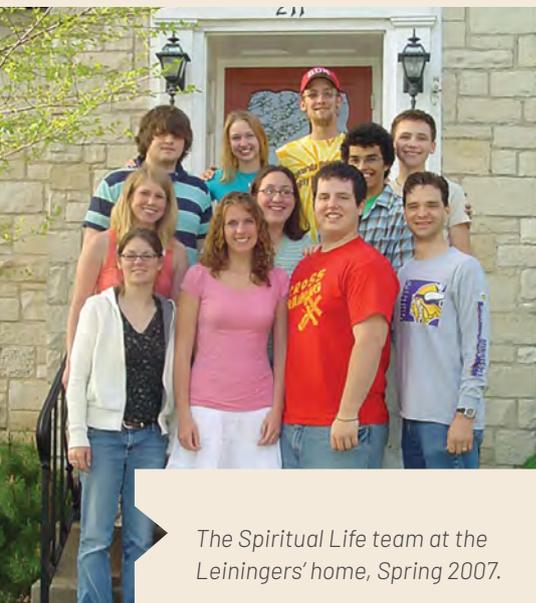
People

But ministry must always remain about people rather than programs. I am filled with thanksgiving for the individual Christians—gifts of God—who have crossed my path. The comradery and collaboration with Concordia's excellent faculty, especially our outstanding music department, has been particularly gratifying. I have spent countless hours over the years in meetings and committees with CUC's dedicated staff, thankful for their diligence and

competence. Most importantly, of course, are the students with whom I have served. The memory of hundreds of students, many of whose weddings I've performed and with whom I now serve the broader Church, fills me with great joy and affection. A campus pastor has the unique opportunity to shape young people at a crucial developmental stage of faith and life. I am thankful to have been able to help walk with future Christian leaders during their formative college years.



Pastor Jeff discusses ministry with Pre-Seminary students.



The Spiritual Life team at the Leingers' home, Spring 2007.

Presence of Christ

3,360 Daily Chapel services, 670 mid-week communion services, well over 150 Sunday Divine Services, 250 Summer Chapel services, and many dozens of University Festival worship services have shared God's word and proclaimed Christ for this community. Christ lives in us by His Spirit, shown forth through word and witness and worship. It is indeed a humbling mystery to recognize that, through His Word and Sacraments, the Lord of the Church works through ordinary servants to bring the gospel. In reflecting on 21 years at Concordia-Chicago, I am most thankful for the remarkable privilege of being the heart and hands of Jesus

for people. In the end we can only trust the promise that God's word does not return empty, but accomplishes the purposes for which it is sent (Isaiah 55:11). That this frail, sinful human being has been able to be the presence of Christ in this community is truly a reason for both humility and thankfulness.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Thank you Concordia-Chicago, and *Soli Deo Gloria!* ▲



The 1928 Chorus, the first touring choir at Concordia-Chicago (known as Concordia Teachers College at that time).

Honoring a Century of Concert Choral Music

By: [Jonathan Kohrs BA '85, MCM '93](#), Music Department Chair, based on original material by the late Dr. Carl Schalk HS '47, BS '52

With the spring 2023 tour of The Kapelle, the University honored a significant milestone. The choir of today can trace its inception—the beginning of concert choral music at Concordia-Chicago—to a century ago. Music has been an important part of life at Concordia-Chicago since its founding in 1864. Back then, every graduate was expected to be capable in organ, piano, vocal music and violin. In addition, there were many extracurricular and ad hoc choral and instrumental groups in the early years. The Schubert Chorus, the Euphoria Glee Club and a variety of special choruses, quartets and clubs were among the choral variety. While music was ever-present from the start, organized, faculty-led, concert-level singing at Concordia-Chicago did not begin until more than 50 years after its founding.



From the Library of Congress, Weimer Pursell's poster for the 1933 World's Fair held in Chicago. The CTC choir was one of the performers at this historic festival of science and art.

With the organization of the College Chorus in 1922, a male choir of more than 180 voices, Albert Beck (1894–1962), a graduate of the first class from River Forest in 1914, began the new era of concert choral music at River Forest. The spring of 1928 saw the first choir tour from River Forest as the group traveled by the steamer Saugatuck across Lake Michigan to St. Joseph, MI, and the surrounding area.

The choir also made appearances at the “Century of Progress” 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago. With the Great Depression in the 1930s, touring became increasingly difficult, but continued on a more limited basis. The 1938–39 school year saw the beginning of co-education at River Forest, and women were added to the choir. Beck spent his entire career—48 years—at Concordia-Chicago, longer than any other instructor in the history of the school at that time.

The second conductor of touring concert choirs was Victor Hildner (1917–2001), who served as choral conductor for 13 years from 1944 to 1957. He originally served as director of the High School Choir at River Forest (1944–49), which undertook extensive touring activities, and took over the College Chorus with Beck’s retirement in 1948. The Hildner years were marked by a dramatic increase in touring, together



For decades, the CUC choir has been a global sensation with international tours every four years. The left image shows Kapelle on their 2016 tour of Poland, which included a performance at the Hall of Mirrors in the Von Promnitz mansion in Pszczyna. The right image shows Kapelle at the Bangkok stop of their world tour in 1969. This mega tour included stops in Tokyo, Bombay, Jerusalem, Berlin and many more.

with many appearances on network radio and television, and in the production of various recordings of the choir. Hildner was particularly effective in the promotion of the choir and college, and brought the Concordia name before a wide variety of audiences for whom it was largely unknown. In 1954, the College Chorus made history with its first appearance at Orchestra Hall (now Symphony Center) in Chicago.

When Hildner stepped down as a director of the College Chorus in 1957, he was succeeded by Thomas Gieschen (1931–2006), a young graduate of the



In 1966, the Choir had the honor of traveling to Washington D.C. and performing for several important dignitaries, including President Lyndon B. Johnson and his family.

school just five years before, who had served Lutheran parishes in Detroit and Milwaukee before becoming conductor of what is now known as The Kapelle. In 1966, at the invitation of President Lyndon B. Johnson, The Kapelle sang at the lighting of the national Christmas tree in Washington, D.C.

Together with numerous appearances on National Public Radio, the Public Broadcasting System on television and the regular appearance of recordings of the choir, the fame of the choir continued to spread throughout the country. In the summer of 1969, the choir embarked on a world tour of Southeast Asia, India, the Holy Land and Europe. In 1981, The Kapelle began what is now its annual tradition of the “Service of Lessons and Carols” held in the University Chapel each year during Advent. Gieschen served as director of The Kapelle for 36 years. During two different sabbatical leaves by Gieschen, renowned composer Carl Schalk (1929–2021) conducted, lending his own unique voice to the group’s work.

Following Geishen’s retirement in 1993, Kurt Amolsch (b. 1956) became director. Coming from a sister school, Concordia-Ann Arbor, Amolsch brought a new vigor and enthusiasm to the great choral tradition at Concordia-Chicago. He introduced a widening repertoire, including folk and art music from various countries and secular music of the

highest standards. An excellent singer and pianist, Amolsch explored the repertoire of great literature with piano or organ accompaniment as well as maintaining the excellent a cappella sound of the choir.

The current conductor of The Kapelle, Charles P. Brown (b. 1969), joined the faculty in the fall of 2000. Dr. Brown brings a superior knowledge of the voice and choral repertoire to the group as exemplified in the choir’s beautiful tone and its creative programming. Under his leadership, The Kapelle has toured internationally numerous times and produced a variety of fine recordings. A talented soloist and experienced music educator, as well as a church musician, Brown is dedicated to enabling students to develop their highest potential as singers and choir members, future teachers and church musicians.

Please join all of us at Concordia-Chicago in giving thanks to God for a century of sharing the Gospel of Christ through song and in praying for our Lord’s blessing on the next 100 years of choral excellence. We are grateful that over the last century thousands of people have experienced the music sung in concert by thousands of dedicated students, led by their respective directors, each vibrant and inspiring in their own ways. We count it a privilege to be a part of this long tradition and look forward to its continuance at Concordia-Chicago. ▲

Pulling Out All the Stops



Spring was alive with music from the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest. Concordia-Chicago's Wind Symphony embarked on their spring tour, which included stops in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri before coming home to Illinois for their home concert in our very own Chapel of Our Lord. Kapelle proudly helped us celebrate the 100th anniversary of concert choral music by performing in California, Oregon and Washington before their home concert. These events highlighted our talented students and brought alumni and friends together to celebrate our music programs. Wind Symphony and Kapelle are integral to both our formative student

experience and distinctive Lutheran identity. Your generous gifts make it possible to bring hope and joy through music to audiences, provide scholarships, underwrite travel expenses and continually strengthen the ministry our talented music faculty and students provide.



In honor of the 100th anniversary of choral music at Concordia, the Kapelle proudly donned commemorative pins while on spring tour. CUC Foundation staff member, Jeanne Doherty, lovingly made the pins.

The College of Health, Science & Technology celebrated the announcement of our new undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program (read the full story on page 18). All four years of the program will be taught exclusively on the Concordia-Chicago campus in our new 4,500-square-foot, state-of-the-art Nursing Simulation Center. The Foundation thanks Dr. Eli Hestermann, dean of the College of Health, Science & Technology, Kristen Bayer, associate professor and director of nursing, as well as numerous donors including Regents, alumni, CUC staff, corporations and foundations for making this program and simulation center a reality.

The Foundation appreciates your support whether attending a performance, cheering on a team or donating to scholarship through our important appeals and numerous ways to give. We have more academic programs and capital projects in the near future and we look forward to collaborating with you—our alumni, donors and friends!

God's blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff".

Jeff Hynes
Foundation President and CEO
Vice President for University
Advancement



Dr. Steve Gerner, assistant dean of the College of Education and director of the Center for Christian Education, addressed attendees at the CUC-hosted breakfast at the ALSS conference in San Diego, CA.



President Dawn greeted alumni and friends at our Popcorn with the President booth during the Best Practices for Ministry Conference in Phoenix, AZ.

CUCelebrates alumni gatherings were held in Chicago, Fort Wayne and St. Louis. (Top) Chicago gathering attendees included **Bonnie Libka BA '73, MA '79**, **Bob Libka BA '75, MA '78, EdD '12** and **Jorge Palacios '19**. (Middle) Ft. Wayne gathering attendees included **Ken Schilf '66**, **Sally Schilf '67** and **Kristen Schilf Labahn '98** with her son. (Bottom) St. Louis gathering attendees included **Charlie Henrickson BA '74**, **John Schnack BA '75** and **Deb Schnack BA '75**.

A Note from Alumni Relations

By: *Emily Kober BA '09*, Senior Director of Alumni Relations

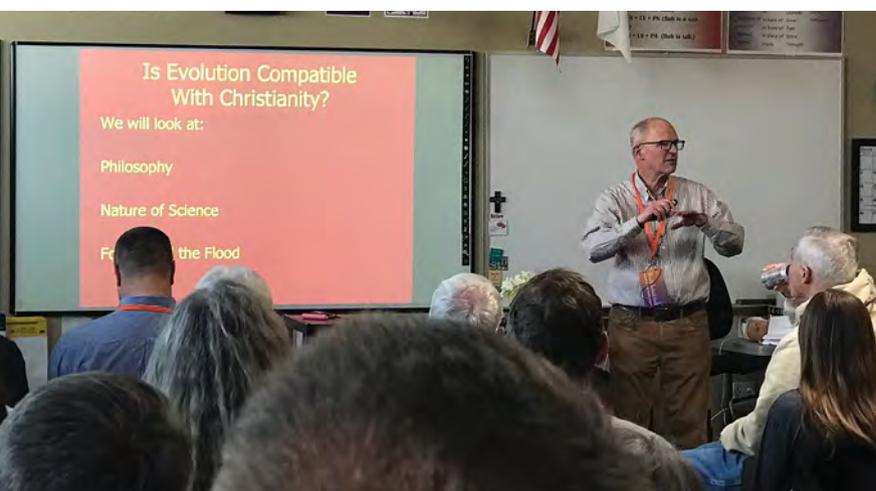


It has been a pleasure connecting with so many alumni throughout the spring at numerous events, worship and ministry opportunities, music performances, and community celebrations. We are proud to witness firsthand how God is working through Concordia-Chicago

alumni and how the CUC experience prepared and guided each to succeed in their individual vocations.

During the Best Practices for Ministry Conference and the LEA National Administrators Conference in Phoenix, AZ, as well as the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS) Annual Conference in San Diego, CA, we were reminded of how many education alumni are leaders in their fields. Separately, the Kapelle and Wind Symphony shared music with alumni and friends while traveling throughout the nation. We were also thankful to those who joined together in fellowship at the various CUCelebrates Happy Hour Gatherings in Chicago, St. Louis and Fort Wayne, and at other local Cougar Connect activities. Your engagement in these types of activities remains key to connecting past, present and future generations of Cougars.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at upcoming events this fall. Save the dates for Homecoming on September 25 – October 1, the Athletic Hall of Fame on September 30 and Maroon & Gold, our signature scholarship fundraising gala, on October 14. ▲



Photos from the Best Practices for Ministry Conference, Phoenix, AZ. We are proud of all our alums who attended and led sessions including *Phil Grimpo BA '98* (top), *Chris Gieschen BA '77* (center) and *Courtney Burns MA '18* (bottom).

To consult with a CUC Foundation philanthropic advisor, **call toll free at 866-448-3867** or email foundation@CUChicago.edu. Meet the entire Foundation team at CUChicago.edu/Support.

Remembering Dr. Ralph Reinke BS '49



Concordia-Chicago is celebrating the life of Dr. Ralph Reinke BS '49, who was called home on April 27, 2023. Dr. Reinke's storied life began in Elmhurst, IL in 1927. He earned his BS from Concordia Teachers College in 1949 followed by a master's degree from Northwestern University in 1952, and postgraduate work at the University of Chicago. To top off the degrees, Concordia Seminary conferred on him Doctor of Letters in 1972. He came home to serve his alma mater in 1956 when he was called to be an associate professor of psychology and education until 1968.

From 1968-1986, Dr. Reinke served as the president and CEO of Concordia Publishing House. Ralph's next call to serve was in 1986 as president of Concordia University in Seward, NE until his retirement in 1990. In 2003, Ralph was called out of retirement to return to Concordia-Chicago as CEO. As a result of Ralph's deft abilities and those of his successive leaders, Concordia-Chicago will soon begin our 160th year by God's grace.

CUC praises and thanks God for Dr. Reinke's extraordinary life. We pray for the Holy Spirit to bring deep peace and comfort to his wife, Carole, and children, Sharon, Stephan and Janice, and to everyone who was blessed to know this truly gifted educator. Memorials can be made to the Dr. Ralph L. Reinke '49 Education Leadership Scholarship Endowment at CUChicago.edu/Support. ▲

Photo courtesy LCMS Communications

“ HIS MASTER SAID TO HIM, 'WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A LITTLE; I WILL SET YOU OVER MUCH. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR MASTER.' ”

—Matthew 25:23

Save the date

Maroon & Gold

A Million Dreams...

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Plan now to gather with alumni and friends for a special evening to celebrate and sustain CUC scholars.

Give for Scholarships, Become a Sponsor and Purchase Tickets at CUChicago.edu/Maroon-Gold

Lifelong Teacher, Lifelong Learner

Alum's Career Path to Illinois State Board of Education

By: [Martina Reese](#), Communications and Marketing Assistant

Since entering the teaching profession as a high school science teacher in 1985, Dr. Steven Isoye MA '95 has risen through the ranks from classroom educator to chair of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), which administers K-12 public education throughout the state of Illinois. Along the way, he served as a science department chair, curriculum leader, high school principal at Warren Township and Maine East, and superintendent in two high school districts—Oak Park–River Forest District 200 and Niles Township District 219.

As an educator and school administrator, Isoye has embraced every opportunity to learn from students, colleagues and leaders. “The students that I have taught or have had an opportunity to interact with as an administrator had a huge influence on me throughout my career,” he explains. Isoye also gives much credit to his fellow teachers for his development as a successful educator. “My peers helped me improve my craft of teaching and understand how to enhance my lessons to best engage students,” he recalls. “They made an impact by having me focus on knowing my students as individuals so I could better connect with them.”

Along the way, the administrators who led the schools where Isoye was a staff member took note of his potential. “[They] saw me as a leader, gave me teacher-leader roles, and then further mentored me into administrative roles,” he says. “They pushed me to consider the broader impact of education by focusing on serving entire communities.”

Isoye recognized that his new focus required additional training, which led him to pursue a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Concordia-Chicago. “To be a good teacher, continuous personal growth is a necessity,” he says. “It clearly made sense to dive deeper into my understanding of curriculum and instruction with my work in the classroom at the time.”

Isoye chose Concordia-Chicago for his master's degree because it was recommended by his teaching colleagues and highly regarded within the profession. In addition, he appreciated the opportunity to earn an advanced degree in lockstep with his peers from neighboring districts throughout north Cook, Lake and McHenry counties.



Dr. Isoye gives remarks at the 2023 Teachers of the Year Reception in Bloomington on Feb. 25.

**“ TO BE A GOOD TEACHER,
CONTINUOUS PERSONAL
GROWTH IS A NECESSITY.”**

—Dr. Isoye MA '95

The mid-career educator says CUC's program was well aligned with many of the real-world challenges schools were facing at the time. Isoye found that the instructional design and reading emphasis made him a more effective teacher. The business management aspect of the program prompted an aspiration to work in school administration that led to his pursuing a succession of higher degrees. “[My CUC master's in curriculum and instruction] was a foundation that helped me in my leadership roles,” Isoye reflects. As his career advanced, Isoye proceeded to earn MEd, EdS and EdD degrees from Northern Illinois University.

Upon retiring in 2022 from a distinguished 37-year career, Isoye received an unexpected tribute to his achievement as an

educational administrator when he was singled out by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and appointed chair of the ISBE. For a lifelong learner like Isoye, working with ISBE provides a thrilling opportunity to impact policy across the 852 districts that provide K-12 public education across the state.

Still relatively new in the role, Isoye's longstanding commitment to improving opportunities for students and teachers remains steadfast. “I am confident that the decisions of the Board and the support we give to the State Superintendent will continue to improve education in Illinois, support all students and be a model for other states,” he says.

As career educators like Isoye retire, new generations enter the profession, inspired to motivate and encourage young learners to fulfill their potential. “I am inspired by those that enter the profession,” Isoye says. “The enthusiasm of those becoming teachers or administrators, and the many success stories I hear happening in classrooms and schools across the state inspire me to continue to give back in my role on the State Board of Education.” ▲



A Work of Heart:

Four-Year Nursing Program Launches

By: **Anna Seifert**, Communications Associate
Illustrations by **Andi Whipkey**, Graphic Designer

At the opening ceremony for the University's new Nursing Simulation Center, program director Kristen Bayer spoke with joyful anticipation of CUC's future nursing graduates and the positive impact they will make in health care. "Nursing is truly a work of heart," she said, just before the ribbon was cut with a giant pair of scissors.



(left to right) **President Dawn**, **Dr. C. Ross Betts**, **Charlie T. Cougar**, **Dr. Eli Hestermann** and **Kristen Bayer**, officially opening the Nursing Center at CUC.



“EVERYONE...HAS BENEFITED FROM THE CARE OF OUTSTANDING NURSES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO BECOMING A PREMIER PROGRAM, TO PREPARE NURSES TO GO INTO THE WORLD WITH THEIR GOD-GIVEN VOCATION TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO THE WELFARE OF THEIR PATIENTS.”

—President Dawn



Concordia University Chicago will begin offering an undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in the fall of 2023, with all four years taught exclusively on the Concordia-Chicago campus. The third floor of the Christopher Center has been fully renovated into the new 4,500-square-foot simulation lab, built specifically for the program.

“I am incredibly excited to begin offering this program to students who are called to the profession of nursing. These future BSNs will be catalysts of change in today’s health care environment,” says CUC nursing director Kristen Bayer, MSN, APN, FNP-C. “We have deliberately considered what is necessary for students to grow in confidence, and develop and refine their skills. Our program will remain at a ‘boutique’ size, so that each student receives customized, one-on-one instruction and graduates practice-ready.”

Concordia-Chicago has a long history of educating Chicago-area nurses, with more than 1,000 graduates since 1982. Previous nursing degrees were offered jointly with other area universities and academic medical centers, which provided a majority of the health care-focused coursework. “The University’s rich partnership history, paired with the exceptional new facilities and outstanding faculty, has allowed us to develop this four-year program that will ensure a seamless learning experience for our students throughout their program,” says Bayer.

Bayer brings a wealth of knowledge to the program, having previously led the nursing programs at Dominican and Resurrection Universities. She also has significant clinical experience working as a hospital-based RN in the emergency department, in labor and delivery, and as a family nurse practitioner specializing in women’s and adolescent health. This combined knowledge informed an entirely new academic



Charlie T. in his custom scrubs, celebrating with local EMTs.

curriculum, which Bayer and Dr. Eli Hestermann, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, worked together for over a year to develop. As a result, students will benefit greatly from coursework and experiences that reflect the latest industry knowledge base and prepare them to graduate ready to meet the needs of today’s health care system.

The University’s new nursing teaching facility is a bright and airy modern space dedicated to providing real-world nursing and medical-based learning opportunities that mirror those seen in the hospital setting. It features a skills attainment lab, multispecialty intensive care spaces, a health assessment learning center and a simulated home environment. Each space is complete with state-of-the-art, lifelike patient simulators, realistic practice models and hospital-grade equipment, to close the gap between coursework and hospital-based clinical rotations.

At the ribbon cutting on March 16, President Dawn spoke on the importance of the nursing vocation. “Everyone in this room has benefited from the care of outstanding nurses,” he said. “We look forward to becoming a premier program, to prepare nurses to go into the world with their God-given vocation to devote themselves to the welfare of their patients.”

This rigorous program will prepare students to serve on the front lines of health care and take on the daily challenges of a rewarding career caring for others. Through robust theoretical and experiential learning, students will meet the eligibility requirements necessary to successfully gain licensure as a registered nurse generalist through completion of the National



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The maternity room, with simulation mother and baby.



Students will practice skills in the sim lab before moving onto real patients.

Council State Board of Nursing Examination (NCLEX-RN). Upon successful completion of the NCLEX, CUC nurse alumni will be prepared to assume the role of the registered nurse and help enhance the profession by becoming future nurse leaders.

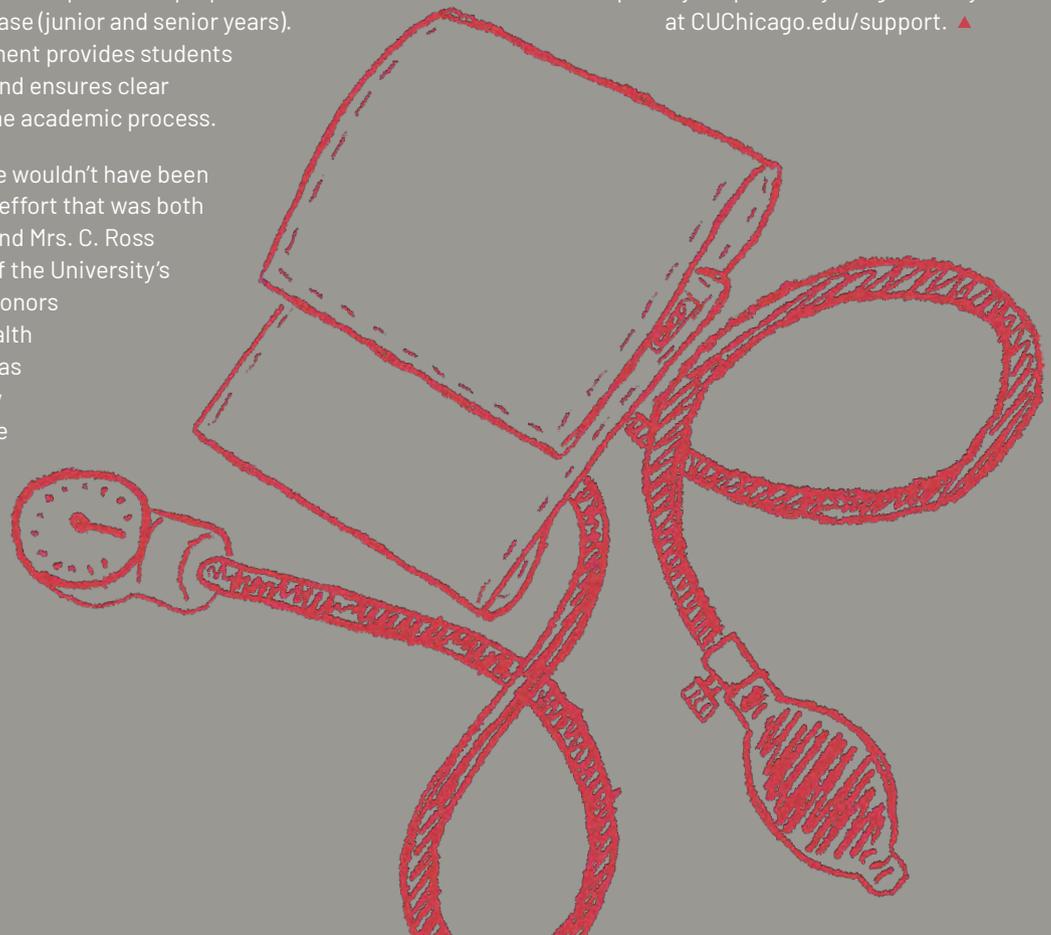
As Bayer explains it, all incoming pre-nursing students will be assigned a dedicated nursing professor as part of their advising team. They will be encouraged to join the CUC Student Nurses Association and take part in the events to acclimate them to the University and the program. Once in the pre-professional phase of the program (sophomore year) they will meet regularly with nursing faculty to gauge their readiness and help with the preparation for admission to the professional phase (junior and senior years). This one-on-one faculty involvement provides students with much-needed mentorship and ensures clear guidance through each step of the academic process.

The new lab and classroom space wouldn't have been possible without a philanthropic effort that was both ambitious and rapid. Led by Dr. and Mrs. C. Ross Betts, a physician and member of the University's Board of Regents, gifts from 21 donors were received to support the Health Sciences/Nursing initiative. "It was truly encouraging to see so many University leaders and staff come together to develop funding proposals and participate in discussions with potential donors," notes Jeff Hynes, Foundation president and CEO.

Donors reflected a broad cross section of Regents, alumni, CUC staff, corporations and foundations, with major

contributions from Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Schultz, also a member of the Board of Regents, and Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Mumme, a 2001 CUC alumnus and physician. The Westlake Health Foundation of Oakbrook Terrace, IL, contributed funds enabling the University to acquire simulation and clinical equipment and supplies.

Prospective students interested in learning more about the program, touring the new simulation center and meeting the program director should visit CUChicago.edu/nursing. The Concordia University Chicago Foundation continues to seek funding to further strengthen and expand this strategic University priority—explore ways to give today at CUChicago.edu/support. ▲



Studious and Servant-Minded Senior Honored with Statewide Award

By: [Anna Seifert](#), Communications Associate

When Caleb Gustafson BA '23 found his dad waiting for him in President Dawn's office last fall, he wondered if he'd done something wrong. Dean of Students Kathy Gebhardt and University Pastor Jeff Leininger were there too—"Did something bad happen?" he thought. To his relief, it was quickly revealed that Gustafson was being honored as a Student Laureate of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois. The Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Awards are presented every year to a student from each of the four-year, degree-granting institutions in Illinois, for excellence in both curricular and extra-curricular programs.

Gustafson was nominated by Concordia University Chicago undergraduate faculty, who recognized the countless hours he spent studying with his professors, collaborating with classmates on group projects, and volunteering on campus and in the community. The award consisted of a Student Laureate medallion, a \$500 check and a certificate of achievement signed by the governor. "I wouldn't have been nominated for this award without the encouragement and support I received from my family, my program director, and my drive to strive for excellence," says Gustafson.

Gustafson graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in nonprofit business management and plans to attend seminary in the fall. "I was pleasantly stunned when I won the award. Even more so because my dad surprised me—he had driven all the way from (my hometown of) Merrill, WI to be there!" he says. "Winning the award put me in shock for virtually the rest of the day."

During his time at CUC, Gustafson played on the men's tennis team and served as president of the Spiritual Life student organization, through which he helped start "Service Saturdays" (see page 26 for more).

"When I look back upon my college experience, I can't help but think of all the amazing moments that I've had here. What I've been most thankful for is the community and fellowship," he says. "I came into this university knowing nobody, yet I was able to form my own friendships, my own relationships with professors and coaches—and it's because of my incredible friends, professors and coaches that I've been able to grow in my faith and as a Christian." ▲

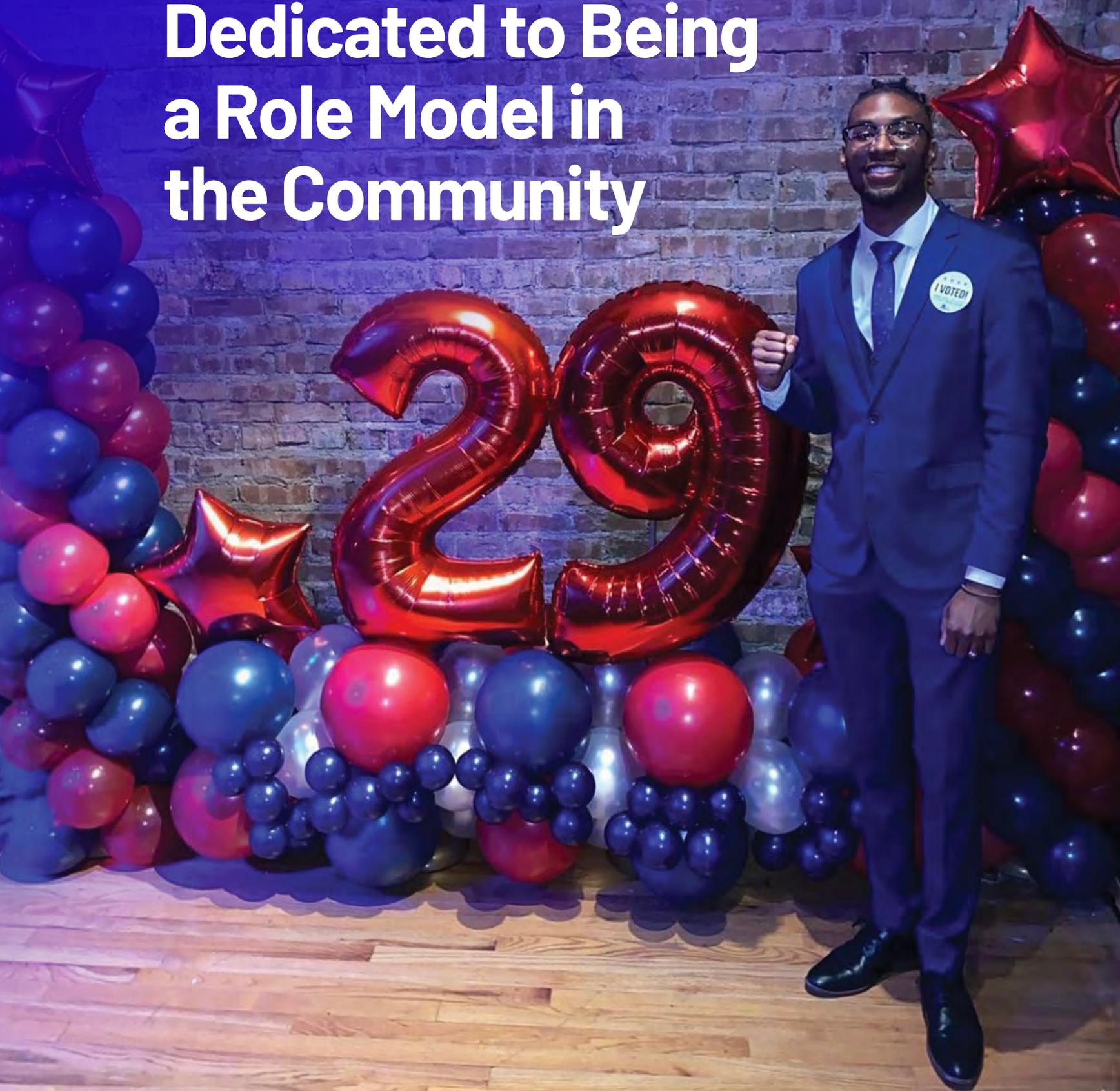
“WHAT I’VE BEEN MOST THANKFUL FOR IS THE COMMUNITY AND FELLOWSHIP...I CAME INTO THIS UNIVERSITY KNOWING NOBODY, YET I WAS ABLE TO FORM MY OWN FRIENDSHIPS, MY OWN RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROFESSORS AND COACHES—AND IT’S BECAUSE OF MY INCREDIBLE FRIENDS, PROFESSORS AND COACHES THAT I’VE BEEN ABLE TO GROW IN MY FAITH AND AS A CHRISTIAN.”

—Caleb Gustafson BA '23



Caleb Gustafson and his father, celebrating his Lincoln Laureate award.

Cougar Football Alum, Gun Violence Survivor Dedicated to Being a Role Model in the Community



By: [Sydney Paulauskis-Lauher BA '22](#),
Assistant Director of Athletic
Communications

Growing up in Dallas, TX, Corey Dooley BA '20 dreamed of becoming an elite college football player and aspired to play in the NFL. Those dreams were dashed at the age of 15 when he was hit by gunfire while in the car in his Dallas garage, forever changing his life. But that ended up being just the start of his story.

"My dream was to be an All-American, go to the University of Texas and eventually get drafted into the NFL," says Dooley. "But I was shot four times and my mother twice, all while my brother witnessed from the backseat. Doctors gave me less than a 1% chance to live." Thanks to the care of dedicated medical providers, he and his mother survived the unthinkable incident. But beyond survival, Dooley faced a particularly long and challenging road to recovery. After healing from his injuries enough to return to football, he graduated from South Grand Prairie High School and joined the CUC Cougars football team.

During his collegiate career, Dooley excelled and helped the team to many victories. As a wide receiver, he amassed 1,209 all-purpose yards, 83 receptions and four touchdowns. His largest single-game high came in 2018 against Aurora University, when he completed 123 reception yards.

"I was taught to work collectively in a team setting; it kept me in excellent physical shape. I built long-term relationships and I learned to balance my life—school, work, social life and other obligations." But transitioning those lessons to life post-college proved an unexpected challenge for Dooley. "After football I found it hard to navigate a life without sports. When I played football, my schedule was always set for me. I was always told where to go, what to eat, when to work out and how to study. After sports I had to find my own purpose and my own identity."

Always the optimist, Dooley began to refocus his energy on lifelong learning and service.



▲ **Dooley** working with Chicago residents and campaigning for positive changes.

After graduating with a BA in political science from CUC, Dooley earned a master's degree in social justice and human rights from Arizona State University. He's also working on his second master's degree from ASU online. At the same time, distance learning has helped him to stay deeply involved in his west side Chicago community.

Whether creating jobs within the neighborhood or developing youth programs, Dooley is dedicated to making strides in his community and the city. He also aspires to be a role model that younger generations look up to as a leader, which is partly what led to his run for alderman of the 29th Ward on Chicago's west side earlier this year. Ultimately he didn't win the election, but finished a respectable third out of five candidates—an exceptional outcome for one of the youngest candidates ever to run for Chicago City Council. The loss, however, hasn't slowed his work to find ways to make Chicago a better place for all residents.

He attributes much of his success in life to the coalitions he built as a

student-athlete at CUC. For instance, he notes the connection he made with UIC's John Marshall Law School, "which connected me with the Austin African American Business Networking Association (AAABNA), the College Mentoring Experience, the Chicago Police Department, City of Chicago and the State of Illinois."

When asked about his advice to young student-athletes looking to become leaders, Dooley advises, "Create a diverse network by building and keeping relationships with the people around you and the people you meet each day. In life, it is not about what you know, but who you know." He adds that the sayings, "Show me your network and I will show you your net worth," and "You are an average of the five people you hang around the most" are words of wisdom that brought him from student-athlete to political candidate.

After the recent Chicago aldermanic race was called on election night, Dooley took to Instagram to post, "Together we can still achieve hope and change in the 29th Ward and beyond." To learn more about Corey Dooley and his continued activism, check out his Instagram @CommunityCorey or his website communitycorey.com. ▲

◀ **Corey Dooley** ready to keep striving toward making Chicago's 29th Ward a better place for all residents.



CUC students add some greenery to First Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, in the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago.

Students Embody Christ's Love on Service Saturdays

By: [Anna Seifert](#), Communications Associate

Service to others and the common good—it's one of the University's core values, in support of the mission and vision. But how does that play out as a part of the student experience and in our campus culture? Fortunately, you don't have to look far to find students serving others as they live out their faith.

Every Saturday during the past academic year, up to a dozen Concordia-Chicago students ventured off campus to serve the community. While service projects are nothing new to the Spiritual Life team, adopting the official name "Service Saturdays" this fall added a little extra structure. Some of the ways they've served include tutoring at a school in Chicago's Austin neighborhood, serving meals to the homeless, planting and gardening at churches in the city, and



Students participating in Service Saturdays are ready to tackle any project, from library-organizing to tutoring and much more.

making tie blankets for Project Linus for foster kids, hospitalized kids and others who need the comfort that comes from a blanket.

For these students, there's no hesitation about utilizing their free time to volunteer. "As we look at the example of Christ, we see how vital the idea of service truly is," explains senior Caleb Gustafson. "While we fail to mirror his example completely, we try to use service as a means to first serve our neighbor, but also to engage and connect with the communities and neighborhoods of Chicago."

Pastor Jeff Leininger, who oversaw the program during its first year, says, "I'm thankful that CUC students model the service of Christ on and off campus. When so much of our world is trapped in the inward spiral of self-absorption, to have future leaders pouring out their time and energy to others, brings a cheerful hope."

They have partnered mainly with First Saint Paul's Lutheran Church near downtown Chicago, helping them with landscaping, cleaning the pews in their sanctuary, reorganizing their library, and volunteering at their homeless foot clinics and meal services. The foot clinics are led by a podiatrist in their congregation and volunteer medical students who help minister to the health of homeless people in the area. The meal service involves giving out lunches and serving hot coffee while getting a chance to talk with the people.

"We're also starting a new service there where we help homeless people recover their missing identification and birth certificates while also helping them gain access to Medicaid and other benefits," says sophomore Jeremiah Schultz. This spring they held a training session for students to learn how to be civil representatives at the legal aid clinic at the Trinity Galewood congregation.

“ AS EACH HAS RECEIVED A GIFT, USE IT TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD’S VARIED GRACE.”

—1 Peter 4:10

The Service Saturdays team has big plans for the future. "We're hoping to establish a relationship with a recovery center and volunteer in support of those struggling with addiction," says Schultz.

"There's a project in the works to partner with L'Arche Chicago, helping those with disabilities. Another idea we have in mind is helping expecting mothers at an event called Breakfast with Baby," adds Gustafson. "We're trying to reach people in all Chicago communities, and are always open for suggestions for better ways to serve them."

Schultz is grateful for the high turnout they've been seeing on Service Saturdays. "Christ tells us that when we serve the least among us we serve him also. By looking outside of ourselves and serving others, we not only help our community, but we grow spiritually," he says. "Why would anyone want to miss out on an opportunity like that? When serving in faith and love we become more like Christ." ▲

WAR, WOMEN AND the Classroom

*Member of First Class of Women Students
Reflects on Her Pioneering Concordia Experience*

By: [Martina Reese](#), Communications and Marketing Assistant
Illustration by [Andi Whipkey](#), Graphic Designer

When Moses wrote, “The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away” (Psalm 90:10), he hadn’t met Elvira Preuss BA ’44. As she celebrated her 100th birthday on January 23 at the Lutheran Community Home in Seymour, IN, toil and trouble were the last thing on Elvira’s mind. Surrounded by well-wishers and family members, the vivacious centenarian with a sharp sense of humor looked back with gratitude on a long and fruitful life. From her earliest days in Seymour as a middle child in a family with deep, intergenerational ties to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Elvira went on to attend Concordia Teachers College (Concordia-Chicago’s name from 1913 to 1979), earn a teaching degree, and pursue a 41-year teaching call that took her to classrooms in New York, Illinois, Texas and Indiana.



GENERAL
Rev. C. F.
Benjamin
F. G.
Rev. F. Pfote
President
John Ahlschlager



W. Kieser MA '00.



Olivia (center) with her students in 1950.



IN HER FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

Elvira's father, William Frederick Preuss, was a profound influence on her as a young girl, inspiring her to pursue teaching as a profession and pointing her toward Concordia Teachers College (CTC) as the destination of choice for earning the necessary credentials. A graduate of Concordia's teacher training program himself, William served for many years as the principal at Seymour's Immanuel Lutheran School as well as organist and choir director at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

After graduating from high school in 1940, Elvira traveled the 227 miles from Seymour to the campus in River Forest. Her arrival coincided with a significant milestone in the College's history: Elvira was among the first group of women to attend CTC, which had been an all-male institution since its establishment in 1864 as Addison Teachers Seminary.

DEPRESSION-ERA ECONOMICS DRIVE CHANGES FOR LUTHERAN TEACHERS

The decade leading up to Elvira's admittance at CTC produced seismic changes for Lutheran schools and educators. Historically, the employment of women teachers in Lutheran schools had been slow to develop. Despite the traditional barriers, women teachers became more common in Lutheran schools during the Great Depression because they could be hired for much lower salaries than male teachers. However, because of limited training opportunities, female teachers often lacked the background and education to teach effectively.

In 1934, some concerned CTC faculty members wrote a letter to the Rev. Henry Grueber, chairman of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's committee on higher education, warning of the danger of believing that teaching in the lower grades did not require special training. At that time, adequate training

for teaching in Synod schools could be given only in the Synod's colleges, further complicating the issue. It took nearly four years of discussions with the faculty, but permission to provide coeducation was finally granted to Concordia Teachers College by the Synod in 1938.

ELVIRA ARRIVES ON CAMPUS

Elvira remembers feeling nervous while playing "Solfeggietto" for her required piano audition prior to admission. In that era, all teachers-in-training at CTC were required to take music courses and demonstrate keyboard proficiency, an indication of music's important role in Lutheran classroom education and religious tradition.

As campus culture adjusted to the new presence of women students, Elvira suspected that many members of the all-male faculty assumed that most women were "just out catching a fella," rather than seeking to become excellent teachers. The male students, on the other hand, welcomed the arrival of their female classmates. Because women comprised a small percentage of the CTC student population, Elvira recalls with a grin, "there was competition over the limited supply of girls."

As college women became active in student organizations in 1939-40, they founded a club to lead the cheering at athletic games. Elvira remembers going to every one of the games. Her good friend Vangel "Vanjy" (Mathwick) Schlake BA '44 was a cheerleader, and the two friends enjoyed penning some of the "yells" that roused team spirit among the Concordia spectators. One that they originated, "Hit them, smack them, we don't like them!" still makes Elvira chuckle and remains a fond memory from her years at CTC.

The first women college students to arrive on campus lived under the watchful supervision of Miss Lulu Noess. A list of regulations for the residents of Girls' Hall for the 1942-43 academic year, which Elvira has kept to this day, includes restrictions such as, "Beds must be made by 8:30 a.m. week-days and 12:30 p.m. on



week-ends. They must be made neatly and uniformly with square corners.”

In the same period during which CTC was opening its doors for the first time to Elvira and her cohort of female students, four-year degrees were increasingly adopted as a minimum standard for educators in both religious-affiliated and secular schools. The Synod approved a fourth, noncompulsory college year in 1939. By 1940, about half of CTC students were completing four-year degrees. Elvira's aspirations kept pace with the times: after earning her three-year diploma, she attended an accelerated program on Saturdays and during the summer in order to fulfill the requirements of a bachelor's degree in less than four years.

MEANWHILE, A WAR



Attending between 1940 and 1944, Elvira and her fellow CTC students felt the reverberations of a global conflict. She remembers that many of the “boys” left the campus and went to war; some never returned. The female students, she says, coped with a shortage of nylon stockings by mending runs with a crochet hook. Nearly 100 students contributed to a 1944 blood drive, one of many held on campus by the newly formed Concordia Defense Organization in support of war efforts. Despite the anxieties and pressures of the wartime era, Elvira and her fellow students continued to prepare themselves for their future teaching careers.

A CAREER OF SERVICE TO LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Freshly graduated from CTC in 1944, Elvira's first call was at St. John Lutheran School in Johnsbury, NY, where she stayed three years. On her arrival, she was the first female teacher the school had ever hired. From New York, Preuss moved to Chicago for a five-year stint at St. John Lutheran School. Now an experienced

educator, Preuss was tasked with the responsibility of establishing a brand-new Lutheran school in Tyler, TX, housed within a former army barracks building. She spent two years there.

Subsequent posts took Miss Preuss, as she was called by her students, to Trinity Lutheran School in Elkhart, IN; Grace Lutheran School in Indianapolis; and Riley Elementary School in Seymour—her only non-Lutheran post. The last 11 years of her career saw her return to Immanuel Lutheran in Seymour.

THE SCHOOL-FAMILY CONNECTION ENDURES

While Elvira was the second member of her extended family to earn a Concordia degree, she was not the last. Members of succeeding generations of the Preuss-Kieser-Sipes family have chosen what is now called Concordia University Chicago to pursue their education.

Elvira's niece, Phyllis Droege Ellis, graduated with a BA in education in 1980, later working as a teacher and principal in Lutheran schools in Michigan and Minnesota.

Rev. Stephen W. Kieser, Elvira's great nephew, earned his MA in school leadership from Concordia-Chicago in 2000. He moved on to Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne and attained an MA in theology in 2005. Stephen currently is called as headmaster and associate pastor of Faith Lutheran Church and School in Plano, TX. “Aunt Elvira was one of the teachers at Immanuel Seymour while I was a student there,” Steve says. “She was considered a strict teacher, but the love she has for Christ Jesus was always evident both inside and outside of the classroom.”

Jacob Sipes, Elvira's great-great nephew, also a Seymour, IN, native, enrolled in Concordia-Chicago's pre-seminary program and completed his BA in English

in 2019. He is now in his fourth and final year at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. “While I was at CUC,” Jacob remembers, “one of the slogans was ‘Your world opens up from here.’ The things I learned at CUC both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities formed me into who I am today.”

COEDUCATION TRANSFORMS CONCORDIA TEACHERS COLLEGE

In 1949, five years after Elvira Preuss and her pioneering fellow women classmates had moved into their post-collegiate lives, then-President Arthur Klinck reflected on the benefits of coeducation to Concordia Teachers College. He wrote that coeducation had “done much in the eleven years of its existence at Concordia to prepare not only our women for whom it was intended, but our men as well for their place in Christian congregations as teachers of the boys and girls, counselors of the youth of both sexes and co-workers with their colleagues of both sexes and with men and women of their constituencies.”

The College's opening to female students preceded its later opening to female professors. Gloria Bonnin, the College's first full-time female professor, began teaching biology in 1959.

PASSING THE TORCH

By the time she retired, Elvira Preuss' career as a schoolteacher spanned four decades, seven schools and hundreds of young lives touched through Lutheran education. Today, as the long-retired teacher reflects back on an eventful century, Concordia-Chicago's highly regarded College of Education maintains its steadfast commitment to preparing teachers who will educate, guide and inspire future generations of students. ▲

Footnote:

The historical content of this article is drawn from “Faithfully Onward, Ever Upward: 150 Years of Concordia University Chicago,” by Hannah Kohut, 2014, and “College with a Cause: A History of Concordia Teachers College,” by Alfred J. Freitag, 1964.

Summer 2023

Class Notes



1950s

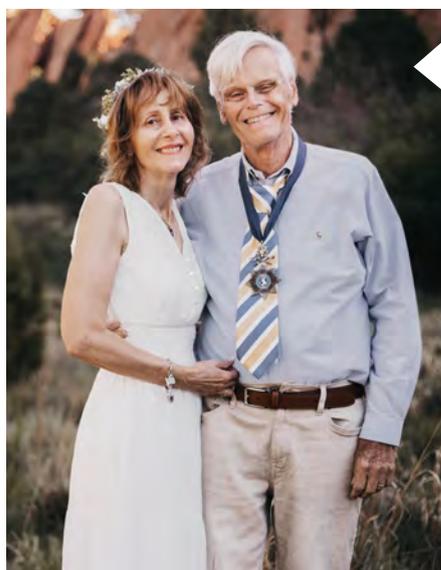
For **Don Israel BS '54**, Concordia University Chicago was more than a school. It was home for eight years—Don had the privilege to be a member of the last graduating high school class in 1950, then staying to earn his college degree. Wife **Lois (Moede) Israel BS '53**, and daughters **Doris (Israel) Schuchard BA '78**, **Phyllis (Israel) Kramer BA '81**, **Kathy Israel BA '82** and **Paula (Israel) Fransone BA '85**, all completed their education at Concordia—different decades and experiences, but all share good memories of their time here.

Author of *Thank You Lord for the Privilege*, **Eunice Redeker Hausler BA '56**, shares the details of her ministry in her book, from growing up on a small farm in Southern Illinois to teaching in the U.S., Papua New Guinea and China. She was the first in her family to attend high school. Her book was published in 2021 and is available online and in bookstores.

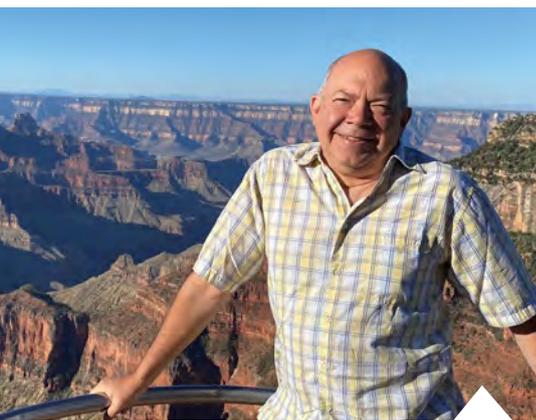


1970s

On Feb. 19, 2023, The Greater Cleburne Carnegie Players from Cleburne, TX produced a play written and directed by **Jay A. Cornils BA '72**, titled *A Litany of Angels*. The play is a stage adaptation of Cornils' 2002 novel of the same name.



Dennis Scheck BA '73 and **Maggie (Zoebi) Scheck BA '72** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 18, 2022. Dennis is wearing the "Aaron and Hur" medal awarded to him by the Army Chief of Chaplains. Maggie, EMDR Doctoral award winner, retired as a clinical psychologist. They have three children and five grandchildren.



1980s

Paul Snyder BA '81 retired March 31, 2023 from Concordia Plans, where he worked full-time for more than 40 years. Paul will continue to work part-time for several months, and will also continue in his other capacity as part-time director of worship for Immanuel Lutheran in Olivette, MO. Paul hopes to have more time to pursue his hobbies, which include traveling to as many new places as possible, skiing and watching Cardinals baseball.

2000s

Dawn (Pawlowski) Sprengel BA '01 was named one of five finalists for a Peary award in the area of "Growth Guide." Peary Awards celebrate outstanding educators who encourage students to engage with teachers, classmates and new ideas every day.

Rev. Ch. Capt. Keith Witte BA '05 graduated from Officer Training School and Basic Chaplain Course on Feb. 3, 2023. He is fully qualified as a reserve chaplain in the United States Air Force, and is still serving as a full-time pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School in Fairborn, OH.



Jesse Smith BA '06 has been named head football coach for Glen Lake Community Schools in Maple City, MI. He is the school's first Black head coach. He and his wife **Amanda (Melke) BA '08** moved to Traverse City, MI in 2020 where Jesse is professionally developing his coaching career. He led the Northern Michigan Wolves semi-professional football team to a state championship title in 2021.

Matthew Frick BA '07 married Anna Wurdeman on June 10, 2022 in Westfield, IN. The wedding party included **Matt Nieman BA '94** and **Tim Gullicksrud BA '07**. More than 20 CUC cougar alumni attended, including trumpet player **Matthew Rasmussen BA '07, MA '09**. Matthew teaches at Lutheran High School in Indianapolis and his wife is an ABA therapist. The couple resides in Zionsville, IN with their two dogs, Sugar and Luna.

Scot Kerns BA '09 won re-election to serve the constituents of House District 23 (Great Falls) in the Montana House of Representatives. He currently serves as a pastor of two LCMS churches after leaving the military in 2020.



2010s

Latavia Hinton BA '13, MA '18 of Daniel Boone Elementary School, **Brian Horner MA '14** of Meadow Glens Elementary School, and **Donna Puccini MA '14** of Edgebrook Elementary School were selected as finalists for the 2023 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching in the state of Illinois.



Jessy (Brouillet) Dinkelman BA '13 is releasing her first children's book alongside independent fantasy author **Jess L. M. Anderson BA '16**. *Caligo's Crow: An Unlikely Friendship* follows a younger version of Caligo, "Cal," from *The Keepers* series as a young prince learns to express his emotions with the help of his new friend Nex the Crow. This is the first children's book in *The Keepers* series and was released to online retailers in March.

Neil Lesinski MA '13 will be the next superintendent of Crystal Lake High School District 155 beginning July 1. Lesinski is currently Principal of Cary-Grove High School.



Emily Daub MA '15 is among the six Golden Apple of Rockford teacher award recipients for 2023. Award recipients are recognized for making a difference in their communities through their commitment to educational excellence. Emily teaches kindergarten at Ellis Elementary School in Rockford, IL.



Rebekah (Thoelke) Pauls BA '17 and husband Nathan, welcomed their first child, Penelope on June 20, 2021 in Fort Riley, KS where Nathan works as an engineer officer for the United States Army. Proud Cougars include grandparents **Mark Thoelke MCM '99** and **Teresa (Thur) Thoelke BA '91**, aunt and uncle **Bethany (Thoelke) BA '15** and **Brennick Christiansen BA '15**, and uncle **Daniel Thoelke BA '21**.

Katherine Doherty MA '19 was recently appointed as special education coordinator at ESD 159 in Matteson, IL. She is also nearing completion of a PhD in special education at Concordia University Chicago. She was recently appointed to adjunct professor roles at both Governors State University and Lewis University, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in speech-language pathology.

2020s

Elizabeth Ehrhart MA '20 was recently appointed assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction at the Downers Grove Elementary School District 58 in Illinois.

Sara (Pustz) Szewczyk MA '20 has been named as the 2023 South Suburbs Regional Teacher of the Year by the Illinois State Board of Education. She is in her 12th year of teaching middle school English language arts.

Elizabeth A. Caparelli-Ruff EdD '22 has been elected superintendent of the Will County Illinois Regional Office of Education.

Taylor Vassey MA '22 and **Rocio Alvarado-Patlan MA '22** were honored in March by the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Cook County Coordinating Council. Vassey was honored as Student Teacher of the Year for Secondary Education, and Alvarado-Patlan was honored as Student Teacher of the Year for Elementary Education.



About Class Notes

Information listed reflects details received as of **March 24, 2023**. The University welcomes news in the lives of our alumni. To ensure accuracy, information should be provided by the featured individual, rather than another party. Photos are welcome, whether prints or electronic files, however we do not return prints. Submission of a Class Note or image does not guarantee publication. The University reserves the right to edit submissions for style, length and content.

Submit a Class Note! For submission consideration, please send information and optional photo to Alumni@CUChicago.edu.

Condolences

“BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

—1 Corinthians 15:57

FACULTY & STAFF

Minnie (Weeke) Gnewuch – January 20, 2023 Education

John L. Haubenstricker – March 13, 2023 Physical Education

Ralph Reinke BS '49 – April 27, 2023 Education, Psychology and CEO Concordia-Chicago

ALUMNI

Ivan Augustin BS '53 – September 2, 2022

Amy P. Baio MA '12 – May 30, 2022

Charlene (Lukes) Baker BS '65 – April 25, 2022

Leonard G. Berghaus BS '61 – January 10, 2023

Ruth (Borgelt) Bernard BS '60 – January 24, 2023

Elaine (Petzold) Bickel BA '70 – January 10, 2023

Grayson Brottmilller BS '43 – November 27, 2022

Carolyn (Ernst) Brueggemann BA '66 – November 15, 2022

Lynn (Heidmann) Christian BA '75 – October 1, 2022

Eugene K. Fiedler BS '58, MA '64 – December 12, 2021

Cynthia (Clardy) Fischer BS '61 – July 26, 2013

Jerry F. Freyholtz BA '66, MA '67 – March 27, 2021

Charles A. Gabler BA '67 – December 29, 2022

Richard R. Gaichas BS '62 – July 31, 1999

Minnie (Weeke) Gnewuch CQ '95 – January 20, 2023

Rev. Kurt H. Gremel BS '65 – December 13, 2022

Larry H. Grothaus BS '54 – October 4, 2022

John L. Haubenstricker BS '54 – March 13, 2023

Douglas D. Hensley BS '64 – November 12, 2022

Charles E. Hoger HS '48, BS '52 – December 6, 2022

Mary (Brower) Holdeman BA '72 – November 10, 2022

Marvin Hopp BS '51 – January 3, 2023

Ruth (Stevenson) Hummel BS '51 – February 3, 2023

Frederick F. Jackisch HS '40, BS '44 – October 12, 2022

Kathryn L. Johnson MA '94 – June 11, 2022

Raymond H. Knauff BS '51 – November 21, 2022

Betty (Schneider) Koch BS '59 – November 14, 2021

David M. Kroll BME '96 – November 27, 2022

Kenneth E. Markworth HS '45, BS '49 – December 26, 2022

Steven A. Menke BA '81, MA '89 – December 16, 2021

Ellen (Weaver) Nelson MA '14 – December 30, 2022

Glenn W. Offermann BS '58 – January 15, 2023

Barbara J. Ostrander BA '85 – December 18, 2013

Alvina (Guettler) Perkins BS '54 – October 20, 2022

Luann (Elitt) Prosek BA '70 – November 10, 2022

Irene (Rich) Przeklasa MA '84 – February 11, 2023

Lawrence R. Rast, Sr. CQ '59 – November 22, 2021

Rev. Maynard H. Saeger HS '43, BS '47 – December 11, 2022

Maynard P. Schilling MBA '13 – January 3, 2023

Ralph Schlueter BA '74 – February 4, 2023

James P. Selle BA '69 – September 26, 2022

Ruth (Lassanske) Strubel BS '57 – November 14, 2022

Gail A. Sullivan BA '72 – June 30, 2021

Alleane (Roegge) Taebel BS '54 – February 12, 2023

Keturah (Kay) Thunder-Haab BS '59 – March 16, 2023

Carol (Hoffmann) Van Behren BA '73 – June 17, 2022

James F. Wiedman MA '63 – February 11, 2023

Crystal L. Williams BA '06 – January 28, 2023

Elmer L. Wuensche BS '64, MA '67 – March 3, 2021

Michael E. Younghouse BA '75 – December 28, 2022



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