

CREIGHTON

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CL and Rachel Werner
CENTER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
COLLEGE OF NURSING
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES

2023
MDG



**A NEW HOME FOR THE
HEALTH SCIENCES**

A Student-Focused Collaborative
Learning Environment

Building a Better Future

Each fall brings with it a prevailing sense of transformation. Not only do we experience nature's splendor through changing leaves and falling temperatures, but we also find beauty in joining together with loved ones; reflecting on all that we have accomplished; and anticipating what is yet to come. This is also true of the past few months for the Creighton University community, as a new academic year has provided many reasons for excitement.

In August, we welcomed a new incoming class of more than 1,000 first-year students, around 400 of whom arrived at Creighton as the inaugural residents of Graves Hall. As Creighton's first new student housing complex since the 1960s dedicated exclusively for first-year students, it was a joy to watch families drop their students off to begin their new Bluejay adventures.

Our incoming classes were warmly welcomed by our returning students, as well as our faculty and staff, on both the Omaha and Phoenix campuses during Welcome Week. In having the opportunity to meet members of the Class of 2027, it was incredibly gratifying to know that even in these early days, they were quick to seek out new friends and mentors, developing communities that reflect Creighton's mission to foster leaders in the Jesuit tradition of living for and with others.

This sense of belonging would not be possible without the work of our dedicated faculty and staff. It was with extreme gratitude for these contributions that I was honored to celebrate 145 years of Creighton serving students this September, just days after having the University's commitment to Jesuit values reaffirmed by the Society of Jesus. It is a foundation that not only bolsters us in times of change but allows us to delineate a clear path forward as an institution.

One of the ways Creighton is seeking to change the future is through our recently announced Institute for Population Health. This University-wide institute marks a significant step forward for our University in a growing field of research and experiential learning, leveraging Creighton's expertise in both the health sciences and humanities. The Institute for Population Health will serve as a hub for students, faculty, and staff across all schools and colleges to identify ways in which we can create a healthier world.

We also opened the new CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education on the Omaha campus, providing bold new approaches to interprofessional learning. Using the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Building in Phoenix as a blueprint, the Werner Center brings together the School of Medicine, College of Nursing, and School of Pharmacy and Health Professions so that our students can experience care for the whole person. Leveraging innovative technologies, simulation spaces, and a collaborative care model, this Creighton facility is a catalyst for healthcare that is more affordable, more efficient, and more personal.

I am excited for you to read all about these and so many other accomplishments in this issue of *Creighton* magazine. It is my hope that as you learn more about the work happening in Omaha, Phoenix, and beyond, it inspires you — as it does me — to continue our work in building a better future.

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President



Follow me:

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CreightonPresident

© Creighton students
Dillon Riedmiller (pushing
the cart), Mary Perkins,
left, and Isa Rosario, right,
have some fun in between
helping new students
move into Graves Hall in
August.



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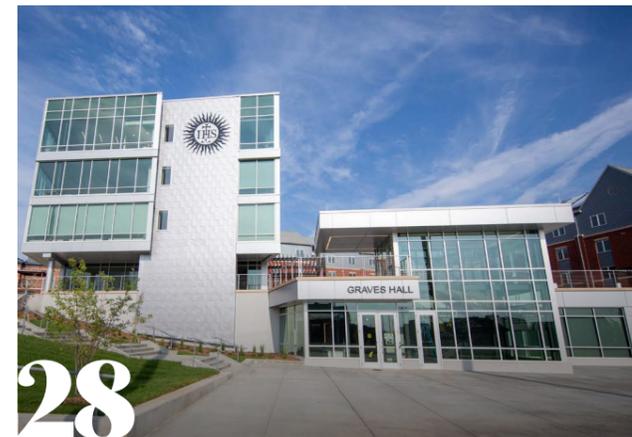
A NEW HOME FOR THE HEALTH SCIENCES

Creighton opened the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education in August. The new home for the School of Medicine, the facility embraces Creighton's commitment to interprofessional education, bringing future physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, pharmacists, physician assistants and paramedicine (EMS) technicians all together to learn and work under one roof.



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ABOUT THE COVER

Creighton health sciences students gathered outside the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education this fall. The group also is pictured above on the second floor overlooking the lobby. From left are: Eric Melrose (Physical Therapy), Arsalan Ahmed (Medicine), Alicia Hogan (Nursing), Karla Marquez-Cell (Paramedicine/EMS), Sarah Benton (Occupational Therapy), Rachel Bohnenkamp (Physician Assistant), Isaac Finn (Paramedicine/EMS), Krista Chang, BS'21 (Nursing), and Aiden Brock (Pharmacy).

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CREIGHTON MAGAZINE'S PURPOSE
Creighton magazine, like the University itself, is committed to excellence and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms. The magazine will be comprehensive in nature. It will support the University's mission of education through thoughtful and compelling feature articles on a variety of topics. It will feature the brightest, the most stimulating, the most inspirational thinking that Creighton offers. The magazine also will promote Creighton, and its Jesuit, Catholic identity, to a broad public and serve as a vital link between the University and its constituents. The magazine will be guided by the core values of Creighton: the inalienable worth of each individual, respect for all of God's creation, a special concern for the poor and the promotion of justice.



Battle Against Epilepsy Finds Leadership at Creighton

BY EUGENE CURTIN

A Creighton husband-and-wife team has formed a long-term relationship with the National Institutes of Health for the purpose of researching aspects of epilepsy

Each year, according to the Epilepsy Foundation, approximately one person in 1,000 living with controlled epilepsy dies suddenly from a seizure, while one in 150 suffering uncontrolled seizures experiences the same fate.

It is called SUDEP — Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy — and since 2011 the National Institutes of Health has turned to a Creighton husband-and-wife research team to help figure out what can be done.

Timothy Simeone, PhD, and Kristina Simeone, PhD, both associate professors in the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, along with selected undergraduate and graduate students, have been continuously funded by the NIH and its National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for the past 12 years. The total entrusted to the Simeones so far stands at

\$5.6 million, with the latest grant of \$1.8 million funding a 4½-year study titled “Autoresuscitation and SUDEP.”

SUDEP is neither well known nor much publicized, even though, according to the Epilepsy Foundation, more people die annually from it than from fire and from the much better known Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, combined.

SUDEP, says Kristina, has not often been a topic of conversation between clinicians and individuals suffering from epilepsy, probably because it is so unsettling, but transparency is important.

“After we started communicating with parent advocacy groups, we really tried to move the field away from secretiveness and make SUDEP something that, under certain stipulations, neurologists make sure their patients know about,” she says. “There are indicators they need to be on the lookout for.”

The Epilepsy Foundation reports that victims of SUDEP are often found dead in bed, often lying face down. Sometimes, there is no indication of a recent seizure, and sometimes there is. Researchers suspect irregular heart rhythm and breathing difficulties.

The Simeones’ new study, which addresses these issues, adds three Creighton undergraduate student researchers to the five already working on prior NIH studies, and focuses on whether the defense mechanisms that prevent sudden death deteriorate over time among epileptics; whether the circumstances that permit SUDEP

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We hope to figure out what is causing sudden death. Our findings lead us to suspect something is wrong with autoresuscitation, the ability of the body to kickstart breathing and heart function after a prolonged apnea.

”

TIMOTHY SIMEONE, PHD

are progressive; and, if these circumstances can be identified, proposing treatment strategies to prevent, or at least postpone SUDEP. Key to this effort will be identifying what the causes of breathing cessation might be and how people might snap back to normal breathing rates.

The Simeones use a genetic mouse model in which mice will develop spontaneous seizures, and all will die of SUDEP. The average age of death of these mice is known, so as they age it is possible to monitor for changes

in respiration that indicate the onset of SUDEP.

“We hope to figure out what is causing sudden death. Our findings lead us to suspect something is wrong with autoresuscitation, the ability of the body to kickstart breathing and heart function after a prolonged apnea. The hope is to develop therapies or different manipulations that increase survival and lifespan,” Timothy says.

Gavin Latona, BS’23, a neuroscience graduate from Seattle, was among the undergraduate researchers. Latona says his involvement in undergraduate research gave him opportunities he never anticipated.

“Research has improved my critical thinking skills and has helped me become more attentive to details,” he says. “It has really improved my ability to communicate complex ideas in a simplified and digestible way.”

Shruthi Iyer, MS’16, who completed her Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences at Creighton and has since enrolled in the doctoral program in pharmacology and neuroscience, is assisting in the research. Closely involved in the SUDEP study, and charged with monitoring undergraduate researchers, Iyer had a big moment in 2020 when a research paper she authored was selected as the best basic science research paper of the year by *Epilepsia*, the premier journal for all aspects of epilepsy.

“We have developed a 70-second respiratory test that challenges the system,” she says. “It helps determine if brain circuitry and respiratory circuitry are working well, enhancing the likelihood that the mice will autoresuscitate.”

Drugs are also being tested. “We have given different types of drugs to see if we can improve the likelihood that they will recover,” Iyer says. We have found a novel treatment that increases their ability to autoresuscitate, so we are really excited about its potential in postponing or preventing SUDEP.”



GAYLA STONER, PHD ▶
Gayla Stoner, PhD, is the dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Education.

Helping Professionals Navigate a New World

Today’s professionals know change is rapid and incessant, and keeping up is a must.

Gayla Stoner, PhD, dean of Creighton’s newly organized College of Professional and Continuing Education, can help.

“Our goal is to create a lifelong learning hub, recognizing that learners should be served through continuing education, professional development and opportunities to develop competencies and upskilling,” she says.

The College of Professional and Continuing Education is both the new home for adult and professional education at Creighton and the guardian of its reputation for helping professionals navigate changing worlds.

The Department of Interdisciplinary Studies faculty within the college will continue to offer an online undergraduate degree in leadership studies as well as graduate degrees and certificates, Stoner says, while a wider focus on real-time and emerging needs will serve those progressing in the workplace.

Creighton alumni, already aware of the University’s wealth of expertise and wide choice of programs and certifications, will find a familiar home in the college.

“We are very proud to serve the lifelong learning needs of Creighton’s alumni,” Stoner says. “Our courses and programs deliver enhanced leadership skills and in-demand knowledge, as well as new and expanded professional and personal networks.

“Our catalog of offerings includes professional development for increasing knowledge, as well as continuing education courses. We also offer executive education and customized employee training programs, including an Executive Fellowship in Healthcare Management and Leadership Development Programs.”

The college also invites the wider



ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2023

Fabian Herbers, BSBA’17 (men’s soccer); Christina Lunceford (softball), BA’96; Marissa Janning Murphy, BSBA’16, MS’17 (women’s basketball); and Dave Schrage, BSBA’83 (baseball), were inducted into the Creighton Athletics Hall of Fame on Nov. 10. The group is the 55th Hall of Fame class.

professional world to benefit from its educational offerings.

“The other piece of our mission,” Stoner says, “is partnering with employers, corporations and businesses for executive education, customized training, identifying gaps in professional development and helping them retain and even recruit employees.”

It is often the case that an adult learner possesses a degree but needs training in a specific competency, Stoner says, which is precisely what the college is designed to provide.

“Having high-quality competencies taught in a way that is responsive to industry needs and the individual needs of learners is critical,” she says.

The College of Professional and Continuing Education supports all Creighton’s schools and colleges by providing adult and professional continuing education.

“Within our college, we house interdisciplinary adult-learning degree programs, but we also support all the schools and colleges in their executive education programs or industry-identified partnerships,” Stoner says.

“We work collaboratively with all the deans and faculty to be certain that we are providing professional development opportunities for their learners.”

Following an extensive national search, Provost Mardell Wilson, EdD, and the Creighton community welcomed Stoner in February 2023 as a leading expert in the field of professional and executive education with a history of program development success.

As a first-generation college graduate who began her own educational journey as a teenage wife and mother working full time, she has a firm grasp of the barriers confronting adult learners.

“My personal educational and career

path has provided me with distinct opportunities to support and counsel others,” she says, “including teenage mothers, working professionals and homeless community members as they pursue formal education.”

Mission Week Kicks Off Academic Year

At the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, Creighton celebrated the annual University-wide Mission Week. This year’s series of campuswide events, held Aug. 25-31, provided the Creighton community the opportunity to gather and reflect upon the University’s unique Jesuit, Catholic heritage and values.

The theme focused on the fourth Universal Apostolic Preference — Caring for Our Common Home. These preferences serve as points of reference

© The traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit was held on the Omaha campus at St. John’s Church as part of Mission Week on Aug. 30. The Phoenix campus also celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit on Aug. 16.

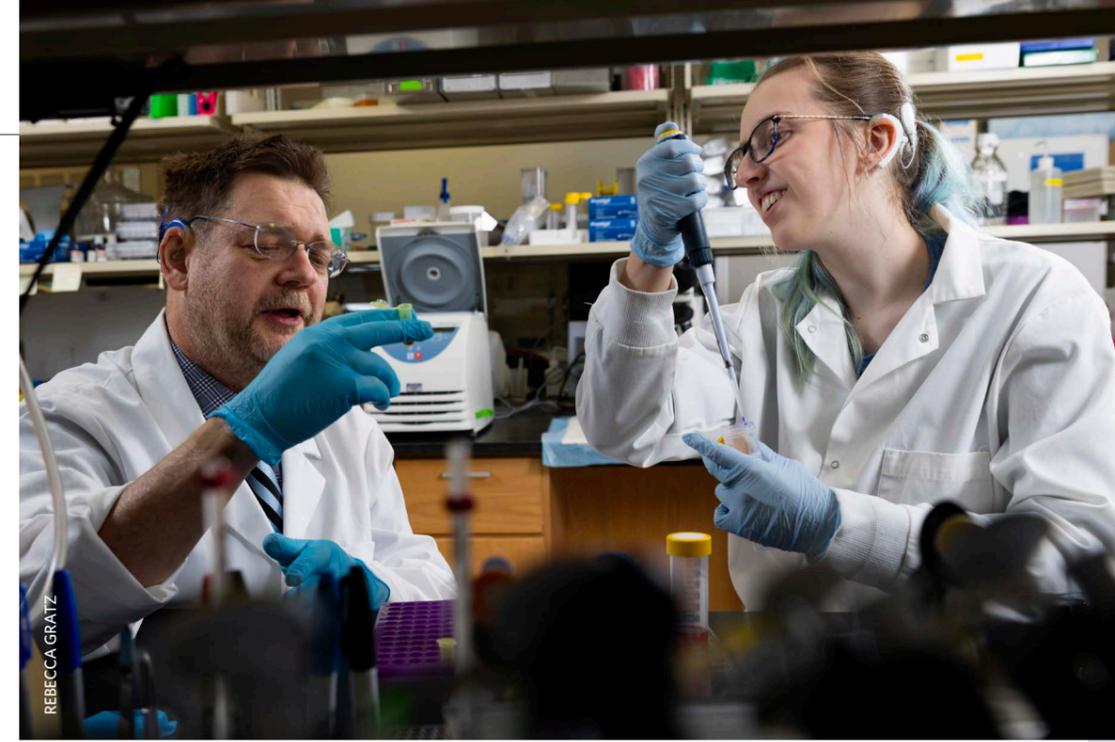
guiding the work of the Jesuits and lay colleagues worldwide through 2029.

The keynote address, “Do No Harm: Climate Change, Healthcare and Net Zero Emissions,” invited exploration of the mission-centered call to care for our common home through focused considerations of the healthcare industry’s role in addressing the realities of climate change.

The event was moderated by Scott Shipman, MD, MPH, executive director of Creighton’s new Institute for Population Health and the CyncHealth Endowed Chair for Population Health. Jesse Bell, PhD, Claire M. Hubbard Professor of Water, Climate and Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, discussed the health impacts of climate change, emphasizing the opportunity for healthcare to mitigate these effects through institutional net-zero commitments. Shelly Schlenker, executive vice president and chief advocacy officer of CommonSpirit Health, CHI’s parent company, who has made an industry-leading commitment to net-zero emissions by 2040, discussed the mission-based and financial case for healthcare providers to make net-zero commitments.

Creighton also commemorated the 60th anniversary of the civil rights March on Washington and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s iconic “I Have a Dream” speech, which took place on Aug. 28, 1963. King’s speech was played in its entirety and was followed by a panel discussion of this landmark event. Panelists included Rev. Portia Cavitt, senior pastor, Clair Memorial United Methodist Church in Omaha; Erika Dakin Kirby, PhD, professor of communication studies at Creighton; and Keith Station, deputy chief of staff for diversity, equity and inclusion for the city of Omaha.

Other highlights included the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit and presentations by Creighton students, who shared their experiences on how they have incorporated sustainability into their academic work and lives.



REBECCA GRATZ

Hearing Center Named for Pioneering Alumnus

When Creighton biology student Izzy Shehan was a baby, her parents banged pots and pans just a few feet behind her. She didn’t jump or cry. That was the day they learned she had profound hearing loss.

Shehan — who uses cochlear implant devices to hear — was born with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, though it possibly worsened during infancy. The causes are unknown, which has remained a point of curiosity all her life. She has theories, of course, but the data has always been insufficient.

When Shehan first arrived at Creighton, she knew she wanted to do three things: pursue undergraduate research; learn more about, and from, the deaf and hearing-impaired community; and help people with hearing loss.

Fortunately, Creighton has a translational hearing center dedicated to all three.

Shehan has worked in the lab of Peter Steyger, PhD, professor of biomedical sciences and director of the center. With Steyger’s team of researchers, Shehan is helping to identify interventions that will allow clinicians to treat patients with aminoglycosides (a type of antibiotic) without the side effects

© Peter Steyger, PhD, director of the Dr. Richard J. Bellucci Translational Hearing Center, left, and Creighton student Izzy Shehan, who works with Steyger and his team of researchers.



RICHARD BELLUCCI, MD'42

Bellucci was one of the most influential conductive hearing loss clinicians and researchers of the 20th century.

that can come with them: inner ear dysfunction, hearing loss and, ultimately, profound deafness. In the U.S., about 100,000 people are treated with multiple doses of aminoglycosides every year.

Steyger’s relationship to the research is highly personal. When he was 14 months old, he contracted bacterial meningitis. Aminoglycoside antibiotics saved his life but took his hearing in the process. Like Shehan, Steyger hears with the aid of a cochlear implant.

Through her work, Shehan says she is “discovering what kind of physician I want to be before I’m in medical school. I’m already thinking I want to be an ear, nose and throat physician who specializes in cochlear implants.”

Steyger, Shehan and dozens of other Creighton professors and students across several labs in multiple schools and colleges are profoundly aware of the potential life-changing practical applications of their research.

Through what is perhaps the premier center for translational hearing loss research in the nation, they continue the work and legacy of a Creighton alumnus who never stopped asking, “Why do people lose hearing? How can we preserve it? How can we restore it?”

In May, Creighton’s translational hearing center became the Dr. Richard J. Bellucci Translational Hearing Center, named for Richard Bellucci, MD’42, [▶](#)



DON DOLL, SJ

who died in 2005. He was one of the most influential conductive hearing loss clinicians and researchers of the 20th century.

As the chair of otolaryngology at the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital in his native New York City, Bellucci was renowned for his work in stapedectomy, a surgery in which a prosthesis is inserted into the middle ear to improve hearing, and many other achievements.

“Richard’s greatest joy in life was helping people; it drove him in everything he did,” says Kevin O’Leary, Bellucci’s friend and the president of the Bellucci DePaoli Family Foundation, whose recent gift to the hearing center continues the foundation’s transformative support. The foundation’s 2019 grant created the hearing center.

Like Bellucci himself, the center focuses on the translational aspect of

“

Richard’s greatest joy in life was helping people; it drove him in everything he did.

”

KEVIN O’LEARY

research, which translates laboratory discoveries into practical treatments and therapies for patients.

Bellucci Translational Hearing Center faculty scientists across multiple disciplines train the next generation of hearing researchers. Together, they seek solutions to preserve and restore hearing through the study of sensory cell regeneration, gene therapy and drug intervention. At front of mind, Steyger says, is the real-world impact hearing loss has on people’s lives, the untold amounts of energy they have to expend every day to participate in the broader world.

Since 2019, the hearing center and the Department of Biomedical Sciences have hosted the annual Bellucci Symposium on Hearing Research, sponsored by the Bellucci DePaoli Family Foundation, at which researchers and clinicians from across the country come together to share and discuss the latest findings in their field.

Creighton Welcomes New Board Members, Honors Outgoing Trustees

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, announced in July the names of five new members of the Creighton University Board of Trustees.

The individuals, elected at the May Board of Trustees meeting, are Clark Lauritzen, president and chair of First National Bank of Omaha; Melvin Palalay, BS’86, MD’91, a hematologist and oncologist at the Hawaii Cancer Center; Karrin Taylor Robson, founder of Arizona Strategies; Kevin Travers, BA’95, strategic advisor for Acosta; and Karen Soulliere Van Dyke, BSBA’88, president of Educate Uganda.

In addition, Fr. Hendrickson shared the names of four outgoing trustees, who were recognized with emeriti status for their years of service: Nick Turkal, BS’78, MD’82, former president and CEO of Advocate Aurora Health, who served as a trustee since 2015; Gary Gates, MBA’91, former president of Omaha Public Power District, a trustee since 2006; Patrick Zenner, BSBA’69, former president and CEO of Hoffmann-LaRoche Inc., a trustee since 1995; and Bruce Lauritzen, HON’23, chairman emeritus of First National of Nebraska, the Lauritzen Corporation and First National Bank of Omaha, a trustee since 1987.

“I am grateful for all that our outgoing trustees have contributed throughout their years of service, and I am excited to begin working with these newest members to the Board of Trustees,” Fr. Hendrickson said.

The Jesuit Chronicler

Award-winning photographer Don Doll, SJ, is donating his entire collection to the Creighton archives. The 50-plus year collection records the global work of the Society of Jesus as well as major events in the history of Creighton University.

The Rev. Don Doll, SJ, isn’t letting up. Just one month past his 86th birthday, on Aug. 12, he photographed nine Jesuit novices taking their first vows. His cameras await further duty. His trusty bicycle, on which he continues to travel thousands of miles, is part of his office furniture.

It is a can-do attitude that for more than a half a century has seen him recording Jesuits in mission while building a vast photographic record of native peoples and cultures. This extensive collection, numbering tens of thousands of photographs, has been inherited by Creighton University. It is a major gift from the Society of Jesus, and from Fr. Doll, to the University he has served for 54 years.

“We are excited to have Fr. Doll’s photography collection,” says Pete Brink, University archivist.

“First of all, our mission is to ensure that his work is not only preserved for posterity

but also made available to our University’s faculty, staff and students, as well as the broader community. We will also work with Fr. Doll on exhibits and other projects that may develop from the collection.”

Fr. Doll’s work as a photographer has won national and international acclaim, not least of all in the pages of *National Geographic* magazine, a fact that bears sufficient testimony to the importance of his work. The Kodak Crystal Eagle Award for Impact in Photojournalism followed in 1997, and then the Artist of the Year award at the Nebraska Governor’s Awards luncheon in 2006, followed by the International Understanding through Photography Award of the Photographic Society of America in 2014.

Thank-you notes rest here and there throughout his Creighton Hall office, sent by grateful friends and former students after photographing various life events. His shelves are filled with folders containing the negatives and contact sheets of many thousands of photos beginning in 1962 and concluding in 2001 when



DAVE WEAVER

In addition to his photography, there is his videography, preserved like the rest of his work at magisproduction.org, where he displays documentary footage of Jesuits battling injustice globally.

While a major acquisition for Creighton, the collection is also a natural one. Fr. Doll arrived in 1969 after completing his theology studies and ordination. Before that, he had spent three years teaching seventh- and eighth-grade students at St. Francis Mission School on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota. While there, he felt a call to study photography.

It was there, he once recalled during celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, that he heard that quiet internal voice that has inspired so many.

“I took a walk on the prairie one evening and asked myself, ‘What am I going to do as a Jesuit?’” he remembered. “And a voice came to me and said, ‘Stay with the photography. Stay with the teaching. And if it takes 10 years, it takes 10 years.’”

“That’s a voice I’ve listened to a lot in my life and the voice we pray about in discernment, asking ourselves, ‘Is this really the Holy Spirit nudging me to do these things?’ And it usually is.”

Fr. Doll came to Creighton hoping to teach his newfound passion. Instead, he was told that no funds were available to establish a darkroom. Nevertheless, after a little persistence, funds were found and he later served as the Charles and Mary Heider Endowed Jesuit Faculty Chair and professor of journalism, today professor emeritus.

Fr. Doll is eager that the images of people, cultures and events that he captured during five decades should be properly preserved for posterity. The agreement transferring his collection to Creighton requests that all funds generated by his photos and videos be used to manage and maintain what will be known as the Don Doll, SJ Photographic Collection.

Revenue generated from the Fr. Doll collection will not only be used to manage and maintain his 50-plus years of work but will also benefit Native American students. Half of the proceeds from the sale of photos and videos will be added to the perpetual endowment of the Joseph and Marie Doll Vision Quest Scholarship Fund Fr. Doll helped establish.

— BY EUGENE CURTIN



E. STAR

May Graduates Making an Impact Through Volunteer Service

Creighton is one of the top four producers of volunteers for post-graduation service work with two Jesuit Volunteer organizations: Jesuit Volunteer Corps and JVC Northwest.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps places young leaders in full-time roles of service within marginalized communities across five countries. Similarly, JVC Northwest offers volunteer opportunities in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Four Class of 2023 graduates are serving in placements across the country through the JVC: Erin Hebert, BSChm'23 (Chicago), Obinna Okoye, BA'23 (Baltimore), Kate Tietjen, BSBA'23 (New Orleans), and Jordanne Orłowski, BS'23, in the JVC Northwest.

Tietjen is a program assistant at Café Reconcile, a nonprofit daytime restaurant serving Southern staples cooked by at-risk youth receiving job training.

"I believe working with diverse populations, living in community with others, and navigating new cities and cultures is critical for those who want to make an impact in the world," she says. Tietjen found the inspiration to join the JVC after participating in Schlegel Center service and justice trips and hearing stories from former Jesuit volunteers.

Okoye shares that feeling. "It would seem hard to start off in a new place without the communities I was a part of in the past, but to be honest I was really happy that only a few came along in this next chapter. It gave me the push to immerse myself in this new community and role," says Okoye, a service and ministry coordinator at Cristo Rey High School in Baltimore with JVC. "I learned that I want to see students succeed."

© Kate Tietjen, BSBA'23, outside Café Reconcile in New Orleans, where she serves as a program assistant through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

In the past five years, 14 Creighton graduates have engaged in life-changing volunteer service through JVC domestic and international communities, according to a self-reported first destination survey from Creighton's John P. Fahey Career Center.

"Our students are primed to continue deepening their lived commitment to the four pillars of JVC — spirituality, simple living, community and justice — because these have been cornerstones of their Creighton experience," says Cynthia Schmearsal, EdD, vice president of Mission and Ministry.

Other members of the Class of 2023 also are spending a year after college in service and religious programs.

Jackson Fox, BS'23, Grace Cote, BA'23, Anna Cloonan, BA'23, and Seth Miller, BA'23, are faith and service volunteers with the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) in the Dominican Republic.

Before his senior year, Fox took part in the ILAC Summer Health Program. As an *ayudante* in a medical clinic in the Candillar *campo*, about an hour east of the Haitian border, Fox worked "as a medical, dental and pharmacy assistant and translator." In a way, it mirrored his life as a busy Creighton student, but Fox says, "volunteering in the DR was one of the most impactful experiences of college."



LEADER OF THE YEAR

Steve Purves, president and CEO of Valleywise Health in Phoenix, was named a 2023 "Leader of the Year" by *Arizona Capitol Times* in August. Valleywise Health is part of the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance in Phoenix.

In Denver, Elizabeth Wunn, BS'23, is a Colorado Vincentian Volunteer, a program rooted in the Vincentian Catholic identity and committed to social justice and companionship with people who are marginalized. Wunn works at the SAME (So All May Eat) Café, a nonprofit promoting accessible food through the participation model: Guests donate time, money or produce in exchange for a healthy, locally sourced meal.

"I wanted to take a meaningful gap year before medical school," Wunn says, "so I could grow as a person and learn how I can incorporate this passion for serving others and working for justice into my everyday life and future career."



COLIN CONCES

STUDENT RESEARCH

Research Enhances Dental Education

As a Creighton graduate student and now as a dental student, **Brandon Nelson, MS'21**, has conducted research on the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and developed an educational model for teaching TMJ to dental students.

IN A WORLD IN WHICH HEALTHCARE OPTIONS are as diverse as the ailments they address, Brandon Nelson's journey stands as a testament to the power of research in shaping a dental professional's experience. Nelson explored different healthcare career paths, but it was the promise of hands-on work, direct patient interaction and easing discomfort and pain associated with dental issues that led him to dentistry.

Nelson's decision to attend Creighton was influenced by his understanding of the unique patient population the School of Dentistry serves. The acute cases, diverse challenges and promise of exposure to a range of conditions drew him to Creighton. But his path to dentistry wasn't conventional. Nelson pursued a master's degree in anatomy and oral biology before entering dental school. This route allowed him to delve into research exploring the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) — an often-misunderstood source of pain for many.

Nelson focused on developing an educational module for teaching TMJ to dental students. He crafted a comprehensive resource that sheds light on TMJ's function, pain sources and symptom relief strategies. By bridging the gap between anatomy and pain management, Nelson's work benefits dental education and treatment, introducing novel approaches to better serve patients.



HEALTH BRIEFS

Investigating Medication-Resistant Asthma

“Refractory” asthma, which is asthma that does not respond to current medical treatment, is the subject of a Creighton research project funded by a \$1.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.



The recipient is **Yaping Tu, PhD**, professor of pharmacology and neuroscience in the School of Medicine. The grant, titled “A Novel Approach to Target Neutrophilic Airway Inflammation and Airway

Hyperresponsiveness in Therapy-Resistant (Refractory) Asthma,” will be addressed by Tu and a team of researchers consisting of Creighton experts as well as undergraduate, medical and graduate students.

It asks Tu and his team to determine the mechanisms by which a key protein modulates the components of asthma and whether that protein can be inhibited, thus ameliorating the airway inflammation and hypercontraction that are the hallmarks of human refractory asthma.

The grant reflects Tu’s standing in the field of asthma research, which has seen his work funded by multiple NIH awards and by the American Asthma Foundation and the state of Nebraska.

The long-term objective of Tu’s research is to understand the molecular mechanisms of therapeutic resistance and to develop new strategies to overcome such resistance in refractory asthma.

CDC Asks Creighton to Boost Health Awareness in Minority Communities



The Creighton Center for Promoting Health and Health Equity (CPHHE) has received \$1.02 million in CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) funding to address public health.

According to **Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, MD, MBA’05**, associate vice provost and professor of surgery, preventive medicine and public health at the School of Medicine, that amount funds the first year of a five-year cooperative agreement under which the center agrees to promote four health priorities among Omaha’s Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino communities. The health emphases are nutrition, physical activity, immunizations and breastfeeding support.

For Kosoko-Lasaki, the CDC’s focus is familiar. As founder and director of the Health Sciences-Multicultural and Community Affairs Department at Creighton, and a co-founder and

co-director with John Stone, MD, PhD, of the CPHHE, she has led many such projects.

Over the past 24 years, Creighton has built trust in minority communities, Kosoko-Lasaki says, which is why various governmental agencies continue asking Creighton to collaborate with Omaha-area minority communities in advancing their health. The federal agencies include the CDC, Department of Defense and Health Services Research Administration (HRSA), plus the Douglas County (Nebraska) Health Department.

The new funding was awarded under the CDC’s Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, which aims to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic populations deemed to be at highest risk.

The CDC has now twice provided REACH funding for Creighton’s CPHHE. Between 2014 and 2018, the center deployed \$3 million in REACH funding to promote Black/African American physical activity. Approximately 56,000 Omaha community members received training, activities and messages related to physical activity and cardiovascular health. Kosoko-Lasaki hopes to double those encounters with the new funding that expands REACH educational and health promotion goals to Hispanic/Latino communities.

Creighton Researcher to Probe Puzzle of Infectious Prions



Jason Bartz, PhD, professor of medical microbiology and immunology, has received a \$2.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to research infectious prions.

Prions, which, like bacteria and viruses are infectious agents, are especially troubling because they are composed solely of protein, lacking the genetic material that offers an avenue of attack against bacteria and viruses.

“These infectious proteins cause fatal neurodegenerative diseases that affect a variety of animals, including humans,” Bartz says. “One of the many challenges in fighting prion diseases is that it is unknown how a protein-only infectious agent causes disease.”

Prions can be transmitted between species and can develop resistance to drug treatments. How this resistance develops is unknown, although Bartz says current thinking suggests that subtle differences in the shape of the prions may play a role.

That thinking has been formed largely by research undertaken at Creighton by Bartz and his undergraduate and graduate students, who provided the first evidence that prions

may adjust their shape in response to chemical intervention.

“Specifically, we are tasked with examining the consequences of these prion folding variants — referred to as substrains — on how prions rapidly adapt to a new host species,” Bartz says. “Our findings will provide a better understanding of how protein-only infectious agents can rapidly evolve. This work will also be important for assessing if prion diseases like chronic wasting disease of cervids (deer, moose, elk) can transmit to other species, including humans.”

\$1.7 Million NIH Grant Recognizes Creighton Research into Lyme Disease



Travis Bourret, PhD, has received a four-year \$1.7 million National Institutes of Health grant to study how the bacteria that causes Lyme disease senses and responds to its environment in a manner that permits it to be

transmitted by ticks to humans.

Vector-borne sicknesses such as Lyme disease, which is, according to the NIH, the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S., cause significant illness worldwide and account for more than a sixth of infectious disease cases in humans.

“The long-term goal of this project is to identify useful targets for the development of antimicrobials that could be used to treat Lyme disease,” says Bourret, associate professor of medical microbiology and immunology.

This is not Bourret’s first foray against *Borrelia burgdorferi*. He and his student researchers have

established a reputation for analyzing how Lyme disease develops. The \$1.7 million grant builds on previous achievements of Bourret and his graduate and undergraduate research students.

The data used to support the new grant award was produced by three PhD students and a master’s student who trained under Bourret during the past eight years. He says the new grant will permit the continued training of undergraduate, graduate and professional students who are interested in understanding how Lyme disease progresses.

Previously, Bourret says, his laboratory discovered that a gene regulatory protein known as DksA, plays a central role in the ability of *B. burgdorferi* to cause infection.

The work funded by the new four-year NIH grant will allow Bourret and his student researchers to determine how DksA’s gene regulatory activity is affected by oxidants produced by the tick, and how that contributes to its ability to cause infection.

AI-Refaie to Test Whether AI Can Improve Postoperative Care



Waddah Al-Refaie, MD, chair of the Department of Surgery at Creighton and CHI Health Clinic, is partnering with his former employer at the Maryland-based MedStar Health Research Institute and Georgetown University

School of Medicine to test whether patients recovering at home from gastrointestinal cancer surgery might benefit from communicating with an enhanced Alexa-like device.

Designed to recognize accent and cadence, and to provide real-time and case-relevant

responses, the voice-assisted, remote patient symptom monitoring system device aims to improve postsurgical recovery by encouraging adherence to dietary and medication schedules and improving communication with healthcare providers.

The five-year, \$3 million study involves patients selected from high-risk populations who are recovering from high-risk operations. It is funded by the National Institutes of Health, which, Al-Refaie says, proved interested in comparing results from urbanized East Coast locations, and a largely rural Midwestern state like Nebraska.

Minority populations, which tend to have less access to support services, will be a particular focus of the study. Black and Hispanic patients are twice as likely as white patients to experience complications after GI cancer surgery, and earlier research indicates that these disparities may be driven by adverse events when patients are recovering at home, potentially under difficult socioeconomic conditions. Rural populations suffer similar complexities.

NIH Grant to Explore the Survival Mechanisms of Cancerous Tumors

The effort to understand the structure and survival mechanisms of cancerous tumors underlies a new National Institutes of Health grant to Creighton’s vice provost for research and scholarship.

Julie Strauss-Soukup, PhD, BSChm’93, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, has received a three-year, \$440,999 grant to investigate the overproduction of polyamines in cancerous tumors, including prostate, breast and skin cancers. Polyamines, which are essential for cell growth and differentiation, are organic compounds whose functions, if properly understood, could help develop anticancer drugs for humans and antibiologic agents for other organisms, such as antifungal agents and even pesticides.

Titled “Riboswitch RNAs as Potential New Targets for Antibiological Agents,” the project will provide further opportunity for Creighton undergraduates to engage in important research, enhancing a tradition of service that is central to a Creighton education.

Research Enhancement Award (R15) grants, such as the one received by Strauss-Soukup, are given to institutions that educate a significant number of America’s scientists and which expose students to the procedures and practices of scientific research.

© While a student at Creighton, Rhiannon McCracken, BSChm’23, worked in the lab with her faculty mentor Julie Strauss-Soukup, PhD, BSChm’93.



COLIN CONGES

Preparing Young Jesuits for Their Next Big Step

Creighton has always welcomed the opportunity to serve young men nearing ordination as Jesuit priests. An unusually large class of 11 Jesuit regents, drawn from three of the four U.S. provinces of the Society of Jesus, recently prepared for the challenging task of teaching high school.

The month-long “Summer Teacher Preparation for Jesuit Regents” course is taught by experienced high school teachers who are also adjunct professors in Creighton’s Department of Education.

As Jesuit regents, the students have completed the two- to four-year first studies period of their formation process and have entered the two- to three-year regency stage, which almost always involves teaching in a secondary school.

In the fall, the 11 began teaching at Catholic high schools in seven states (Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and South Dakota) and Puerto Rico.

“The classes were immensely helpful,” says Travis Neuman, SJ. “I had no idea what to expect, but the classes are full of information from enthusiastic and experienced teachers.

“The first week of class dealt with the basic tools necessary to create a successful lesson plan. That is foundational to what teachers do, so it was incredibly useful.”

As happy as Creighton was to host the 11 regents, the regents were happy to be on campus.

“The first thing that stood out to me was how strong the Catholic and Jesuit identity is at Creighton, with all the different kinds of statues, and the branding, with IHS appearing on every building, a real sense of being a Jesuit school, which is very cool,” says Phil Cooley, SJ.

“It is very evident. Not overbearing, but appropriate.”

Justin Prom, SJ, also found the Jesuit charisms to be vigorous, saying, “... it is so clear that the spirit of St. Ignatius and the commitment to God and the Church run so deep in the people at Creighton.”

“It is so clear that the spirit of St. Ignatius and the commitment to God and the Church run so deep in the people at Creighton.”

JUSTIN PROM, SJ



Jesuit regents Justin Prom, SJ, left, and Joseph Nolla, SJ, studied at Creighton this summer. Prom is teaching at Red Cloud High School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, and Nolla at Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

REBECCA GRATZ

The Stages of Jesuit Formation

Becoming a Jesuit priest or brother is a long, thoughtful process. It can take anywhere from eight to 13 years, and involves a 30-day silent retreat, years of study and service to the poor and marginalized.

Source: beajesuit.org, the Society of Jesus in Canada and the United States

NOVIATE

The journey begins in late August in the U.S., in a rite of passage known as Entrance Day, when new recruits — known as novices — arrive at novitiates in California, New York, Louisiana or Minnesota. At this time, they are already considered Jesuits.

At the novitiates, they learn more about the Society of Jesus, live in community and pray. They meet regularly with a novice director and companion Jesuit, known as a *Socius* (Latin for “comrade” or “ally”), who guides their formation. They engage in a variety of “experiments,” working in Jesuit ministries and performing service, and complete the 30-day Spiritual Exercises, a silent retreat created by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

At the end of the two-year period, the novices pronounce perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.



From left are Jon Herrington, BA'23; Taylr Bahr, BSBA'22; and Chris Kinkor, BSBA'16.

Recent Creighton Graduates Enter Society of Jesus as Novices

For more than a century, Creighton has been animated by the work of the Society of Jesus, so when students decide to follow in the Jesuits’ footsteps, it is a praiseworthy occasion.

This summer, three recent alumni took the first step on their journey to becoming Jesuit priests. Jon Herrington, BA'23, Taylr Bahr, BSBA'22, and Chris Kinkor, BSBA'16, entered the novitiate and will spend the next two years engaged in study, prayer and service.

Jesuit formation often lasts more than a decade, and the novitiate sets the stage for what the rest of that journey will look like.

Bahr, Herrington and Kinkor join a long list of those with Creighton connections who have gone on to enter the Society of Jesus. The Rev. Eric Immel, SJ, Midwest Jesuits vocation promoter and former Creighton Greek life assistant director, says students, alumni, former staff and others in the University community represent 24 entrants into the Jesuits in the last 20 years.

“It is a significant contribution,” he says.

Herrington, who was a student worker for Campus Ministry, says, “I met a lot of really cool people, a lot of fantastic Jesuits and people who really nurtured me to be myself. It was in front of Creighton Hall, on those rocking chairs, that I told one of them, ‘I want to do what you do.’ He got me connected with the Society and the rest is history.”

STUDIES

Following the novitiate, they move into academic work as a brother or a scholastic (a person preparing for the priesthood). They study philosophy at a Jesuit university, either completing a bachelor’s degree or working on an advanced degree. This stage usually takes three years.

REGENCY

During the regency period, which typically lasts three years, they work full time in a Jesuit ministry and live in a community of Jesuits. Many teach at Jesuit high schools or universities, and learn to balance full-time apostolic work with a life of prayer and community living.

THEOLOGY

After regency, Jesuit scholastics study theology at the graduate level, usually for three years. After

completing these studies, they are ordained to the priesthood, marking the end of around a decade of studies and preparation. Jesuit brothers may study theology for a shorter amount of time, and then enter ministry or go on to receive another advanced degree.

TERTIANSHIP

Several years after ordination, Jesuits revisit the foundational documents of the Society of Jesus and make the 30-day Spiritual Exercises retreat again. They also participate in an approximately nine-month program of additional spiritual training.

Only after completing tertianship can a Jesuit brother or priest be eligible to be called by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus to profess final vows, where they reaffirm their commitments, made as novices, to poverty, chastity and obedience.

Building Resilience in Schoolchildren

BY EUGENE CURTIN

Back in 2014, when Jan Powers, PhD, was a school counselor striving to build resilience among students, she encountered a concept called trauma-informed practice. It was a life-altering discovery that spurred her to earn a doctorate in counselor education and supervision while becoming a leader in the effort to impress upon counselors the importance of understanding the often-devastating impact of trauma on the lives of schoolchildren.

Today an assistant professor of education at Creighton, Powers addresses the problem of trauma through a tool she helped devise called ARCCH (pronounced Arch).

It all began when, struck by the potential of trauma-informed practice to benefit her students, Powers asked researchers at the University of Iowa to help guide research pioneering creation of a trauma-informed school, which was new to education in 2014.



Jan Powers, PhD

So successful was that effort that other team members encouraged Powers to pursue her doctorate so that the concept could be spread more widely.

“The one thing that has stayed with me was the development of this resilience tool called ARCCH,” Powers says. “Initially it was published as part of a chapter describing our work in building trauma-informed schools. We continued to develop and research the model and just recently ARCCH was published as a conceptual model in an open-access journal.”

That exposure caused a research team in Florida to ask Powers to serve as an expert

reviewer as they scale the ARCCH model to measure its impact on student bodies.

“I am very excited about that, because, as a school counselor and a counselor educator, this model is really helpful to me, and if I can get it into other people’s hands, what a cool way to affect the world for the better,” Powers says.

Another way she accomplished this was through the National Catholic Education Association, in which Powers presented a webinar to Catholic school counselors on how to use the ARCCH model with their students, staff and schools.

ARCCH stands for Attachment, Regulation, Competence, Culture and Health. Each of these components are well-researched topics, making it a complex model.

Upon implementation, however, Powers says, it becomes a simple conceptual tool for helping build strengths in self, students and school systems to address any areas that need support.

ARCCH is shaped by concepts developed by neuroscientist Dan Siegel, MD, who believes resilience reflects integration of neuron connections across separate regions of the brain. In addition, Michael Unger, PhD, principal investigator for the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, recently published on the concept of

multisystemic resilience, a concept demonstrated by ARCCH, which is a flexible model that can be used to build resilience across systems, as well as among individuals.

Individuals encountering ARCCH are asked a series of questions concerning where they feel they are strong, such as where and with whom they feel the safest attachments, and what’s working well. Next, ARCCH is used to identify where they need support. The success of that exploration will reflect the degree of trust the counselor has established with the student, Powers says, something she is confident about given that trust-building is a central skill of trained counselors.

Based on this student input and reflection with the counselor or other trusted adult, a short, simple but effective plan is drawn up to guide the student toward success.

The ARCCH model, Powers says, was developed from an earlier ARC model, which is a tool used in a therapeutic setting. Powers and her fellow researchers broadened each component to apply holistically to a school setting.

“We broadened the definitions of each of the components of attachment, regulation and competence, and then added health because of the research on the negative effects of trauma on health,” she says. “Next, we added culture because clearly in our society we have been facing the effects of racism. We need to continually examine our biases and how we treat people with cultures different from our own.”

Powers continues to research ARCCH in other areas, including a new project with the Creighton research team of Jean Hearn, EdD’16, associate professor of education, and Jiwon Kim, PhD, assistant professor of education. Having recently received approval from Creighton’s Institutional Review Board, the project will invite Catholic schools across the nation to use ARCCH to build resilience in their teachers and hopefully address the nationwide problem of teacher retention.



A New Home for the Health Sciences

IN AUGUST, CREIGHTON opened the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education — the new home for the School of Medicine and a state-of-the-art facility embracing Creighton’s commitment to inter-professional education.

Located to the east of U.S. Highway 75, the 145,000-square-foot, five-story facility brings future physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, pharmacists, physician assistants and paramedicine (EMS) technicians all together to learn and work under one roof. An estimated 5,900 students, faculty, staff and visitors will use the building every year.

The CL and Rachel Werner Center is student focused, with nearly every square foot of the facility dedicated to classrooms, collaboration and hands-on learning for the School of Medicine, the College of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. Most offices for faculty and staff are located in the Criss Complex, which is connected to the CL and Rachel Werner Center via the FNBO Bridge.

Creighton’s innovative approach to interprofessional health sciences education embraces team-based care, drawing on all disciplines to treat the whole person. Systems are streamlined, efforts integrated, silos squashed.

“This facility is a platform that opens up so many possibilities for the development of team-based education,” says School of Medicine Dean Robert “Bo” Dunlay, MD’81. “And it’s a platform as good as you’re going to find anywhere in the country. As are the simulation spaces, the learning spaces and the socialization spaces.”

On the next few pages, take a closer look at the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education.



REBECCA GRATZ

“This really is the best possible environment we could have created for all our students.”

ROBERT “BO” DUNLAY, MD’81
Dean, School of Medicine

Creighton health sciences students gather in the fifth-floor student socialization area. The facility’s large, all-encompassing windows and open spaces invite a significant amount of natural light into the building, leading to greater energy efficiency and, ultimately, lower operating costs per square foot.

© **Front:** Ariana Wise (Paramedicine/EMS); **Middle (from left):** Carly Gray (Physical Therapy), Emily Callahan (Medicine), Lauren Zorovic (Nursing), Grace Varga (Nursing), Alli Goetzinger (Occupational Therapy), Olivia Kent (Nursing), Mare Kinsel (Occupational Therapy) and Kayla Nedved (Physician Assistant); **Back (from left):** Dani Sasek, BSEMS’23 (Nursing), and William Jones, BS’21 (Physician Assistant).

THE BUILDING

BEYOND THE FIRST FLOOR'S glass-encased entryway, there are debrief and pre-brief rooms, socialization spaces and a 90-seat classroom. Classrooms of the same size or larger can be found on most floors, open to use for students from multiple programs and offering students the space and flexibility to work together as teams.

The second floor houses the rehabilitation science research labs, which bring together faculty committed to improving the rehabilitation, health and wellness of patients. The labs' ceilings include support structures that can hold lifts, zero-entry treadmills and other tools designed for working with paraplegic and quadriplegic patients.

The home care lab is designed to resemble a small apartment. Replicating the inherent challenges found in a typical living space, the home care lab allows students to train within a natural environment through such simulations as fall emergencies, home health visits and patient rehabilitation. The lab reveals the power of treatment and rehab sessions in a nonclinical setting.

In the acute care lab, students can quickly move from course content to practice and back again, all within the lab environment. The lab's flexible structure facilitates individual and small-group learning among students, while hospital beds and exam tables let them practice manikin-based or peer-to-peer skills.

The virtual reality room is a three-wall projected space faculty and students can interact with via touchscreens. This state-of-the-art technology is capable of immersing learners in countless combinations of settings and scenarios. Complementary equipment, such as manikins designed specifically for the VR

room, allow faculty to flip the space from clinic to hospital bed to triage experience and back again, all in a matter of minutes.

The third floor is home to the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center, a collection of 10 high-fidelity simulation rooms and one high-fidelity operating room simulation suite representing a number of unique hospital environments.

The simulations (which incorporate high-fidelity manikins) present scenarios in obstetrics, general medicine, trauma care, surgery and intimate care settings such as hospice. Instructors in the control room monitor students and manage each simulation as the scenarios unfold, helping to prepare students for real-world experiences.

The third floor also contains the David Vesely, MD, PhD, BS'67, Task Training Lab. This flexible environment houses tabletop trainers for low-fidelity skills therapy. The lab is available for self-directed learning outside of class time so students may increase the number of repetitions and develop competencies. The lab converts into a classroom, providing additional active learning space.

In the floor's 14 high-fidelity patient exam rooms, students train by treating standardized patients (actors or faculty members role-playing as patients).

The FNBO Bridge connects the CL and Rachel Werner Center to the Criss Complex over Burt Street. This skywalk links research to practice, and undergraduates to professional students in each of the health sciences disciplines. This prime architectural feature was supported by the Lauritzen Family, the John and Elizabeth Lauritzen Foundation and First National Bank.

"I appreciate how much more interprofessional this building feels already. We interact so much more. We're working more closely with medical students and OTs and PTs, professions we will work alongside the rest of our careers."

CHARLES CLAPP
College of Nursing Student



Photo left: Medical student Arsalan Ahmed, left, and nursing student Dani Sasek, BSEMS'23, in the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center outside the exam rooms on the third floor.

Photo bottom left: Occupational therapy student Alli Goetzinger works with a standardized patient in the home care lab on the second floor.

Photo bottom right: Physical therapy student Devin Bedke with a standardized patient in the rehabilitation science research lab for physical therapy and occupational therapy located on the second floor.

PHOTOS BY COLIN CONCES





THE NUMBERS

The need for this state-of-the-art space couldn't be clearer. On Creighton's Omaha campus:

60%

freshman undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a health sciences career

3,500+

students are enrolled in professional health sciences programs across all campuses

1,500

students pursuing undergraduate degrees leading to professional school admission

80%

of Creighton undergraduates come from outside Nebraska



Photo top left: Nursing student Grace Varga in a high-fidelity simulation room in the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center.

Photo top right: The fourth-floor learning commons provides a gathering space for studying and collaboration. Pictured are medical students Kurt Parker, left, and Emily Callahan.

Photo bottom: Medical students, from left, Amrita Purkayastha, Bridget Hickey and Vikram Murugan on the outdoor Mutual of Omaha Terrace, located just outside the 3,000-square-foot learning commons on the fourth floor.

THE DONORS



An Investment in Creighton, Its Students and the Community

The new facility's namesakes, CL and Rachel Werner, see their lead gift to the building as an investment in the students, the University and the surrounding communities.

"Rachel and I are excited to see how this new facility will form a generation of future leaders in healthcare," says CL Werner, HON'18, founder, board chairman emeritus and the former longtime CEO of Werner Enterprises.

This fall, CL and Rachel joined dozens of alumni, friends, faculty, staff, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen to celebrate the facility's opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"We thank God for the life and accomplishments of a business icon and his wife, who chose to share with us this phenomenal facility," Fr. Hendrickson said. "Thanks to the generosity of alumni, friends and foundations, each campus addition has propelled the University forward, expanding our mission of academic excellence and service to others."

The donor-driven project's cost, which included renovations to the Criss Complex, was \$90 million.

© Pictured above from left are the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, CL Werner, HON'18, Rachel Werner, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen.

The plight of the honeybee

BY EUGENE CURTIN

Dogs get good press, but the truth is that humanity's best friend is probably the honeybee, which pollinates fruits and vegetables and delivers, according to *Statista*, an online platform specializing in data collection, some 13.6 billion quarts of honey every year across the globe.

They do this despite being burdened by the parasitic varroa mite, human impact on their foraging environments, the disruption of their winter sleep patterns by warming seasons, their colonies constantly being trucked here and there to facilitate pollination, and, by no means least, agricultural dependence on pesticides.

Carol Fassbinder-Orth, PhD, professor of biology in the College of Arts and Sciences, is a big fan of the honeybee, and honeybees have reason to be a big fan of hers. Having grown up part of a beekeeping family in Elgin, Iowa, and today managing some 50 colonies of her own in Glenwood, Iowa, the buzz of the honeybee is decidedly part of the soundtrack of her life.

© The entrance of a hive on the remote Chatham Islands of New Zealand. The beekeeper uses an iridescent Pāua shell for natural water collection so the bees have a source of water at their entrance.





And so, as the bee's best buddy, she has taken on the critical mission of understanding why their populations are declining so dramatically in the industrialized world and what might be done about it.

There is no substitute for the European honeybee, Fassbinder-Orth warns. While not native to North America, since the 17th century it has alone proven itself capable of multiplying in the numbers necessary to pollinate the foods necessary to sustain large human populations.

She recently visited New Zealand, the Chatham Islands, set some 400 miles off the coast of New Zealand, and the island of Mo'orea in French Polynesia in the South Pacific. In these far-flung locations, where many of the practices damaging to bee populations are less intense and where the lethal varroa mite has not yet penetrated, Fassbinder-Orth monitored the health of honeybee colonies that experience much lower rates of loss than elsewhere in the world.

Her journeys are part of a yearlong sabbatical funded by Creighton's Dr. George F. Haddix President's Faculty Research Fund and by a program called Future Bees NZ, a government-funded program aimed specifically at studying the health of bees in New Zealand.

"I went to New Zealand because it's the southern hemisphere, and the differences in seasonality allowed for interesting parallel comparisons to my American bee colonies, but also because they are one of the biggest exporters of honey in the world, and beekeeping is a very important industry," Fassbinder-Orth says.

"Globally, if you look at honeybee health, and how many colonies are dying every year, the United States is among the worst in the world. I wanted to go somewhere that provided a stark comparison to see if improvements are possible."

The story of honeybee population decline, Fassbinder-Orth says, is longstanding and complicated, and while the use of pesticides is certainly part of the story, honeybees face many problems, not the least of which is the varroa mite. The varroa mite is a large parasite that inserts itself, pretty much inextricably, beneath the honeybee's abdominal plate where it feeds on the fat that gives the bee life. This large parasite, she says, in a striking illustration, is the equivalent of a human being walking around with a squirrel constantly sucking its blood.

"Globally, if you look at honeybee health, and how many colonies are dying every year, the United States is among the worst in the world. I wanted to go somewhere that provided a stark comparison to see if improvements are possible."

CAROL FASSBINDER-ORTH, PHD

The varroa mite is an Asian mite, to which the Asian honeybee, she says, had long accustomed itself. But when, in the course of human commercial interaction, the mite in the late 1940s jumped to the European honeybee, it found a new, defenseless, host and has become a major source of colony devastation. It does not appear, Fassbinder-Orth says, that the varroa will be permanently dislodged by chemical or other means, so the European honeybee, like its Asian cousin, must learn to live with it. Given this bleak reality, it is perhaps unsurprising that the European honeybee sounds a bit dejected.

Fassbinder-Orth knows this because she listens to them. In collaboration with her daughter, Amara, a sophomore at Stanford University who in 2022 won a \$50,000 science prize for her research into the sounds and acoustics of honeybee colonies, Fassbinder-Orth monitors the health of colonies by installing listening devices.

"Sound can tell us a lot about health," she says. "Just like somebody's voice, and how you can tell whether somebody is nervous or upset or sick in some way if you have a baseline of what they usually sound like, the same applies for bees."

Fassbinder-Orth says her research suggests that a holistic approach to studying bees — detecting the presence of numerous fungal, viral and bacterial pathogens, the presence of the varroa mite, and the ailing sounds of an infected colony — can alert beekeepers three months in advance that a given colony is likely terminal.

The question is what to do with this early warning system. Is it possible, or might it eventually be possible, to intervene and save infected colonies? That is an urgent question, and one that Fassbinder-Orth says she hopes will be answered as her research advances.

The urgency is reflected in the numbers.

"Prior to the arrival of the varroa mite and these more intensive agricultural practices, the annual colony loss rate tended to be about 15%," she says. "Now, annual loss rates can climb as high as 40% to 60%. In a good year, perhaps the loss is only 30%, but the numbers are significantly beyond what they were."

"In the Chatham Islands, and Mo'orea and New Zealand, those annual loss rates were lower. In New Zealand, the annual rate was 14%, but in the Chatham Islands and Mo'orea it was below 10%."

So, what to do?

"We can't get rid of the parasites," she says. "We have chemicals that can reduce them, but it is very difficult to find something that completely kills the mite but doesn't hurt the bee. The best option is that the bees learn to live with these parasites."

"We should incorporate integrated pest management into our farming practices, which is a broad-based approach that minimizes pesticide use and incorporates ecologically sound practices such as reintroducing naturally occurring predators that eat the bad insects."

"Pesticides are a short-term fix. If you keep using pesticides, you're going to develop resistance, and then you need new pesticides, which is just not a sustainable process."

The honeybee needs help, Fassbinder-Orth says, and a lot of it.

"They already have these parasites to deal with," she says. "Maybe they can handle a parasite. But they can't at the same time handle poor nutrition because their foraging environment is diminishing, or pesticides, or the stress of colonies being moved around for pollination purposes, or climate change. This is the bundle of problems that the honeybee is facing."



© Top: Carol Fassbinder-Orth, PhD, collects bees to analyze levels of varroa mites in the colonies at Midlands Apiaries, Ashburton, New Zealand. Bottom left: The bee colonies in the Chatham Islands of New Zealand. You can see the microphone cords hanging out of the front of the hives. Bottom right: Fassbinder-Orth, left, and Kaai Silbery, a beekeeper in the Chatham Islands, who is also the director of a local women-led beekeeping cooperative.



A New Hall to Call Home

Welcome to Graves Hall! At the start of the fall semester, 400 students moved into Creighton's first residence hall built since the 1960s dedicated exclusively for first-year students. This is a hall that offers its residents a whole new kind of Creighton experience.

SIMPSON FAMILY COURTYARD

Students gather at the Simpson Family Courtyard during Welcome Week in August. The Simpson Family Courtyard serves as an active social space with a bevy of features — artificial turf (part of which can easily be converted to a volleyball court), two fire pits, multiple areas for lounge seating, a small stage for events, two ping pong tables, a bocce ball court and more.

AJ OLINES



PETE QUINN MCINTYRE

The four-story Graves Hall is a living and gathering space unlike any the University has seen before, a home for thousands of students and a backdrop for countless Creighton experiences.

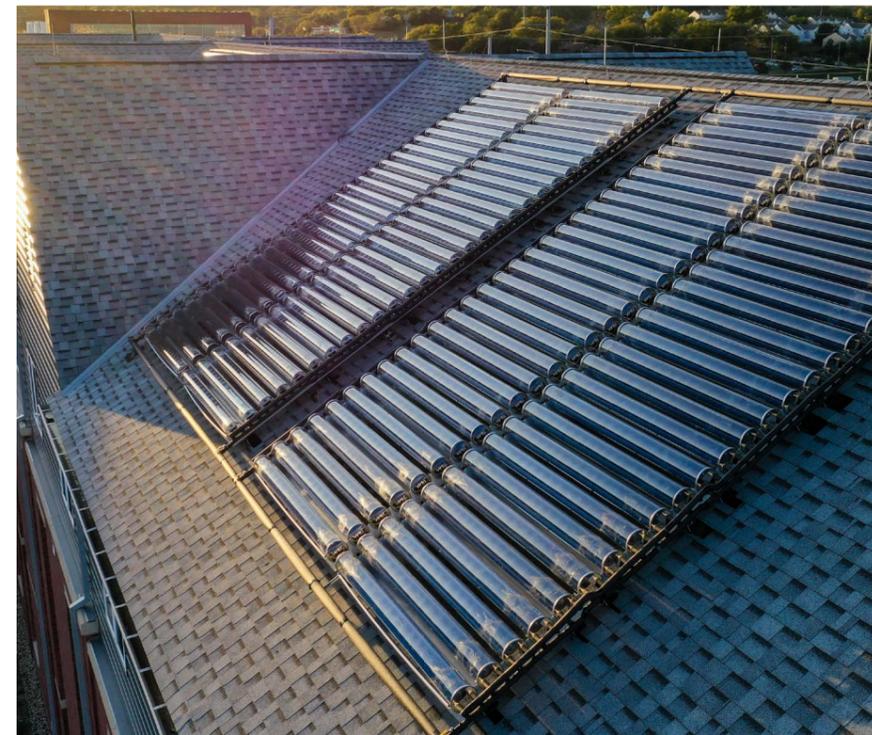
Photo right: Students gather to study in the first-floor lobby. Pictured, from left, are Macy Davis, Eliza Loecke and Marin Conrad.

Photo below: The upper floors of Graves Hall feature study and socialization areas. Pictured, from left, are Katie Carlson, Remi Marealle, Maddie Barger, Maia Fassbind, Parker Crouch and Anderson Kelly.



Graves Hall is comprised of mostly four-person suites, each with two living spaces, two bedrooms and a shared bathroom. Each floor has kitchenettes and spaces dedicated to study, socialization and recreation, while the hall's lower level provides spaces for interfaith programming, student development, wellness, academics and more.

Photo left: Creighton students Abigail Stanosheck, left, Avery Kitzmiller, middle, and Ashlyn McDaniel, right, in one of the suite-style residence rooms.



Graves Hall is also innovating in the area of sustainability technology. Graves Hall is the first building in North America to use Virtu^{HOT HD}, a solar-powered system produced by Naked Energy and implemented by ELM Companies that will heat all water used in the residence hall.



“You build these lifelong relationships that grow out of the nucleus of the people you live with on campus. With this new building, Creighton can give students an even greater opportunity to create the connections they’ll carry with them for the rest of their lives.”

LEE GRAVES, BSBA’80, JD’83

“When you have the opportunity to do something good, you have to take it. You just never know all the amazing things it might lead to and all the lives you might change.”

JIM SIMPSON, BA’80

A Foundation of Friendship

The names behind Graves Hall and the Simpson Family Courtyard are donors Lee C. Graves, BSBA’80, JD’83, and his wife, Judy Graves, and their close friends Kathy and Jim Simpson, BA’80.

Jim and Lee have known each other since they were Creighton students (and Phi Kappa Psi fraternity brothers) themselves. For them, this day was more than 40 years in the making, a tribute to a Creighton friendship that will now create countless more friendships.

A few days before the fall semester started, the Graves and Simpson families joined a few hundred alumni, faculty, staff and friends for a grand opening and ribbon-cutting celebration. During the event, Lee spoke about the day his parents dropped him off at his first residence hall: Swanson Hall.

“When it came time to go, mom cried, we hugged, and they took off and left me with my Creighton family. I’m sure they’re up in heaven now looking down upon us. I envision with Graves Hall a future of family drop-offs with tears and hugs, and a great future in the new beginnings based in this fabulous hall and courtyard.”

© Pictured above from left are Lee Graves, BSBA’80, JD’83, Judy Graves, the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, Kathy Simpson and Jim Simpson, BA’80.

Meet the Residents

During Graves Hall move-in in August, a few new Creighton students shared their thoughts about the new residence hall.

Top: Aimee Vierra and her father, John Vierra. John is a Creighton student himself, working on his Master of Education degree remotely from the family’s home in O’ahu, Hawaii. Aimee is a Heider College of Business freshman planning to attend the School of Law after.

“I want to eventually be a lawyer specializing in adoption law, because I’m adopted myself,” Aimee says. Aimee was looking forward to being one of the first students to live in Graves Hall. “Just being part of a new space to live in and explore, and to gather and socialize ... it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

Middle: Freshmen Kate Tax (from Phoenix), left, and Maia Fassbind (from Santa Barbara, California) are part of the Freshman Leadership Program, members of which live on Graves Hall’s fourth floor.

The roommates said that “being some of the first students to live in this hall is weird, it’s exciting, it’s all the feelings. The hall still has that new smell to it, and everyone has been so welcoming. It’s going to be a great community space for students who live here and for students who visit.”

Bottom: Graves Hall roommates Max Hafner (from Green Bay, Wisconsin), left, and Dylan Hinson (from O’ahu, Hawaii) are eager to make use of the hall’s many amenities — fire pits, pool tables, a volleyball court. But just as impressive as the building itself is the community that’s greeted them.

“When I came to Creighton for my campus visit, I felt like I was a priority,” Dylan says. “I felt that way moving onto campus, too. You guys put me first. Some of the other schools I visited treated me like a number. Creighton treats me like a person.”



‘I can do this’

BY Eugene Curtin

Littleton Alston, Creighton’s renowned professor of sculpture, became the first African American sculptor to place a statue in the U.S. Capitol Building’s Statuary Hall. His “Willa Cather” marked a milestone in a professional career that traces its earliest origins to a determined and believing mother.



CHERRISS MAY, NDEWAY MEDIA GROUP

Littleton Alston, MFA, immortalized Willa Cather in June, cementing his reputation as a sculptor of renown, but the journey to that moment began long ago when a very different woman saw past the poverty of his childhood, past the trials of a Black kid growing up in Washington, DC, and past the angry uprisings that followed the 1968 assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

It took a teaspoon of hope and a cupful of faith, but Gilbertha Alston believed that in her son’s scattered drawings accumulating in the basement of their rickety house near Washington’s 14th and F streets there shined bright promise.

And that made all the difference.

Alston, beginning in 1990 as an assistant professor of sculpture in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Creighton, is today a full professor and an accomplished sculptor whose seven-foot bronze of Cather was unveiled at Washington, DC’s National Statuary Hall June 7, making him the first African American sculptor to place a work there.

In 1970, however, for 12-year-old Littleton Alston, Statuary Hall was a magical, inspirational trip to another world, far removed from the poverty and danger of life where he lived. Here, free of charge, and open even to a poorly dressed neighborhood kid, was a landscape of glory, of heroes, of achievement and, like the Capitol dome itself where the Statue of Freedom watches over her domain, a sign of what might be.

“My family was not solid,” Alston recalls during a short break from the newest sculptures taking shape in his campus studio. “It was broken. We were seven children, but once divorce happened it was all very broken.”



© Littleton Alston in 2019 while working on the scale model of Willa Cather in his studio. Inspiration materials of Cather line the walls.

His story was an emerging one for African American families during the years surrounding the civil rights triumphs of the 1960s. Absent fathers, struggling mothers, neighborhoods abandoned not just by white flight but also by educated Blacks for whom changing attitudes opened new vistas. Only the poorest remained. Whites, when they ventured into his neighborhood, were almost always there to shut off utilities for nonpayment or to deliver street talks about the dangers posed by various species of rats.

“Poverty was a very interesting thing,” Alston says. “If you are really poor, you don’t go around as a child thinking that you are poor. You really don’t. You just sort of rely on your

friends and your community. You exist in an environment, and you relate to that environment the best you can. Poverty is an oppressive condition that can cause you either to shut down or to blossom.”

That he blossomed, Alston attributes to Gilberta, who quietly and unobtrusively gathered the many sketches her son drew from a pile of old *National Geographic* magazines discarded by his elementary school librarian. Junior high was rough, he recalls, a place where real violence occurred, and where, inevitably, he was occasionally forced to defend himself with his fists. It was with a sinking feeling, then, that a day after a fight, he responded to an intercom message calling him to the principal’s office. But

“I need to have a connection in some manner to enter a competition, and I had that with Willa Cather. I knew her writings, and I felt this was something I could do.”

LITTLETON ALSTON, MFA
Professor of Sculpture

there, sitting in a chair, was his mother, cradling a makeshift portfolio of his drawings, composed of two pieces of cardboard held together by Scotch tape.

She wanted her boy out of there. She wanted him enrolled in the Duke Ellington School for the Arts, a recently founded public school whose glorious neoclassicist architecture thundered its mission of nurturing artistic genius. The middle school principal helped move the process along, including, Alston suspects, handing his mother the bus fare to the school, which was located in the tony and previously unexplored district of Georgetown.

Alston picks up the story:

“We got there, and there was this big white building up on a hill,” he recalls. “Still the same, painted white. You showed them your portfolio, and then you sat at a round table where in the center was a still life with paper and containers of pencils. I was supposed to draw that still life. I turned to my mom, and I said, ‘I can do this. I’ve been drawing from *National Geographic*.’ So, I drew the still life and got in.

“I transferred into Duke Ellington because of my mother. She pulled it together. She always knew. She just knew.”

ALSTON CAME TO WASHINGTON, DC, AS A CHILD, from Petersburg, Virginia, site of one of the great battles of the Civil War. His father, at this point still at home, had secured a job in the shipping and receiving department of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a circumstance that led to Alston’s first encounter with the wonder of sculpture.

It’s a story he has told many times, how he accompanied his father one day to his workplace only to be struck by the towering Works Progress Administration-era sculptures of workers and horses that announced such agencies as the Federal Trade Commission where

Michael Lantz’s “Man Controlling Trade” towered impressively. Fearful of showing up late for work, his father impatiently answered his son’s query about the origin of the statues with the odd assertion that they were made by convicts. From that moment on, Alston recalls, he knew he wanted to be a “convict,” whatever that was.

The seed was sown, and in the years thereafter Alston and one of his brothers could reliably be found pedaling bicycles cobbled together from old broken bike parts to the Capitol building, the beckoning tip of the dome just visible from his neighborhood. There they encountered not just art but the people of the world, drawn to the museums and artifacts of the Smithsonian Institution.

“I was astonished at what was there,” Alston says. “It was as though my bicycle was a magic carpet that had whisked me into some place where people were living different lives, speaking different languages, had different skin colors.

“It was the world. Here was this kid coming out of his rundown, dilapidated, rat-infested world and riding his bike to this other world, having previously supposed that his block was the world, that his four or five blocks were the universe.”

The years, of course, were slipping by, and the days of carefree meandering around Statuary Hall, utterly unaware that one day the work of his hands would be on display there, of splashing illegally in the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, of buying penny candy at the corner store, were numbered. He had lived through the wreckage of the riots after the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and remembered well the flickering, threatening light cast by burning buildings, and the flooding water from firehoses trying to quell the conflagrations. He knew of food deserts before the term was coined, of neighborhood “stores”

where the primary product was liquor, with a side of overpriced white bread.

But that world was receding. Ahead lie a scholarship to Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in sculpture, and from there to the Maryland Institute College of Art’s Rinehart Graduate School of Sculpture in Baltimore where he earned a Master of Fine Arts and received the school’s top honor, the Rinehart Award.

In 1989, he was accepted to the artist residency program at Omaha’s Bemis Center of Contemporary Arts. A year later, he joined Creighton’s faculty where he now serves as full professor of sculpture after filling Omaha’s civic scene with striking images of Martin Luther King Jr., St. Ignatius of Loyola, baseball great Bob Gibson, ARTS’57, football great Gale Sayers, a jazz band tribute to North Omaha’s musical heritage and so many others. Then, in 2019, he won a nationwide contest to create the Cather statue.

Alston has, he says, just one great regret: His mother, whose advocacy planted the seed of his success, had long passed by the time leaders of the nation and the state of Nebraska gathered on June 7, 2023, to unveil his “Willa Cather” at Statuary Hall. How he wishes she could have been there.

But then ...

His older sister did attend. Again, let Alston pick up the story:

“She sat beside me, my eldest sister, who used to change my diapers,” he says. “We were to go up and pull a rope to unveil Willa. Everybody’s up there. (House Minority Leader) Hakeem Jeffries is up there. The speaker of the house is up there, and all the dignitaries from the state of Nebraska. She leaned into me and said, ‘She’s here.’ I just about lost it, but I felt it.

“It was very real.”

A Game Changer for the College of Nursing

A new scholarship program created by one of the largest gifts ever made to Creighton's College of Nursing will help meet a critical need for Nebraska nursing leaders.

The Harper Scholars Nursing Program — established by a \$5.2 million gift from the Harper Family Foundation — is a nearly full-tuition scholarship in the College of Nursing that will help fund the education of 30 nursing students across four cohorts, from their arrival on campus to the day they don their cap and gown.

The Harper Scholars program seeks to form academically talented students into clinic-ready nurses, through hands-on learning, enrichment opportunities and a curriculum rooted in the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*. Creighton is now recruiting students for the first cohort of Harper Scholars, who will begin in the 2024 fall semester.

The gift will support students' formation from multiple angles: a leadership program led by faculty; a senior fall break trip to the Institute for Latin American Concern in the Dominican



© From left, nursing students Kya' Willis, Megan Forrestal and Emma Tight examine a manikin in a simulation room of the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation Simulation Center in the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education.

Republic; and a research and travel fund. The gift also creates a position for a program director, who will provide mentorship around research and clinical placement.

The scholarship program's namesakes are the late Charles M. "Mike" Harper, HON'95, and his wife, Joan F. "Josie" Bruggema Harper, who moved their family to Omaha in the 1970s when he became the CEO of Conagra. Josie was a nurse.

Betsy and Chris Murphy (Harper Family Foundation trustees and Mike and Josie's daughter and son-in-law) say their family has

been "blessed to be involved with Creighton over all these years" and to make a major impact across multiple schools and colleges.

For the College of Nursing, the future Harper Scholars and the patients and communities they will one day serve, there couldn't be a more impactful gift — a nationally competitive scholarship drawing the best nursing students in the nation to Creighton.

"Our hope is that for nursing students around the country, this scholarship will be the scholarship to go for," Chris says. "That it draws students who are aligned with the mission of the program and who will become, to borrow a phrase from Mike Harper, 'quarterbacks for the care of patients and their families.'"

Betsy says that both her parents would be extremely proud to see the creation of a program in their name that's preparing the next generation of nursing leaders.

"Beyond my mother being a nurse, our family has had some personal experiences that have shown us just how special nurses are. Nurses are on the frontline, and there continues to be such a great need for them."

— BY MICAH MERTES

© The new College of Nursing scholarship program honors the late Charles M. "Mike" Harper, HON'95, left, and his wife, Joan F. "Josie" Bruggema Harper.



ALUMNI NOTES

Send Us Your News

Penned your long-awaited novel? Traveled around the world? Received that awesome promotion? Earned a prestigious honor? If so, we want to hear about it. Share your memories and milestones by emailing us at alumninews@creighton.edu.

55 Dr. George D. Byrne, BS, Burlington, Wisconsin, celebrated his 90th birthday with his wife and seven children in June in Lyons, Wisconsin. After graduating from Creighton with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and minors in physics and philosophy, Byrne furthered his education with a Master of Science and a PhD in applied mathematics from Iowa State University and a career that included research at White Sands, Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory and ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Company, and professorships at the University of Pittsburgh, Southern Methodist University and Illinois Institute of Technology.

Connie Kostel Spittler, BS, Omaha, released her latest book, *Turkey Creek Preserve: A Sacred Journey*. The coffee table book contains more than 200 full-color pages contributed by five Nebraska nature photographers to illustrate the restoration of the preserve's more than 900 acres back to a natural habitat. Spittler was commissioned to write this environmentally important book by the steward of Turkey Creek Preserve, Mary Lou Chapek. Still writing, Spittler is currently working on new fiction.

59 Kent R. Weber, BA, St. Augustine, Florida, was elected to his fourth three-year term as director of the Liftside Regime at Smugglers Notch Resort in Jeffersonville, Vermont. The regime manages the common property of its buildings. Since

moving to Florida, Weber is mostly retired, except for occasional consulting jobs, which have taken him to Mexico, Canada and Italy.

60 Sr. Grace Swift, BS'56, MA, Maple Mount, Kentucky, is celebrating her 75th year of religious life in 2023. A native of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, she was an Ursuline Sister of Paola, Kansas, prior to the merger with Mount Saint Joseph in 2008. She received a doctorate in Soviet Area Studies from the University of Notre Dame in 1967. She served as a history professor at Loyola University in New Orleans from 1966 to 1998. She was elected to the Ursuline Council (1998-2002). She is retired at the Motherhouse in Kentucky.

62 Barbara Cianciaruso Lyons, BS, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, was awarded the People of Life Award by the secretariat of pro-life activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in recognition of outstanding leadership on life issues, especially those dealing with end of life.

74 Thomas J. Sanders, BSSoc, Wichita, Kansas, was elected chair of the board of Guadalupe Health Clinic in Wichita.

76 Enno F. Heuscher, MD, Grand Junction, Colorado, was elected to the Colorado Medical Society board. He also was re-elected for another three-year term as director of the Delta Montrose Electric Association Cooperative. **Daniel E. Monnat, JD,** Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat &

Spurrier, Chartered, was ranked by Chambers USA 2023 among Kansas' top litigators in the areas of white-collar crime and government investigations. His practice was cited particularly for work in healthcare and financial investigations. Monnat also was honored by *Best Lawyers in America 2024* for the 36th consecutive year. This year he was recognized for his work in criminal defense-general practice, criminal defense-white collar, bet-the-company litigation and appellate practice.

79 Dr. Blaine McCants, MA, Vienna, Virginia, has written his first novel, *The Hands that Rock the Triggers*, volume one in an alternate earths adventure/military/mystery science fiction trilogy.

80 James B. Betterman, BA, Kansas City, Missouri, senior counsel in the Kansas office of the law firm Lathrop GPM, was recognized in *Chambers High Net Worth 2023* legal guide in private wealth law.

84 Timothy D. Houlihan, BSBA, Charlotte, North Carolina, was recently appointed to enterprise director of behavioral science at Truist Bank in Charlotte. Truist's mission is to inspire better lives and communities and is among the most pro-social organizations in the financial services industry. In this role, Houlihan serves Truist's 50,000 employees as well as millions of customers, mostly in the Southeastern United States. Also, his science communication

podcast, "Behavioral Grooves," was named the best podcast for behavioral science by the Global Association of Applied Behavioral Scientists. **Deborah Johnson Petersen, BSBA'81, JD,** Council Bluffs, Iowa, an attorney at Petersen Law PLLC in Council Bluffs, was the recipient of the Gertrude Rush Award from the Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys (I.O.W.A.) in July 2023. The award recognizes a lawyer who demonstrates leadership in the community and the legal profession and advocates for human and civil rights. The award is cosponsored by I.O.W.A. and the Iowa Chapter of the National Bar Association.

85 David J. Ceci, BA, East Hampton, New York, finished writing a full-length play, *Sundown*. This science fiction drama was selected by the Skeleton Rep, a New York City-based developmental theater company, for a presentation during its 2022 Salon Series. This first public reading of *Sundown* took place as a livestream event in December 2022. An archived recording of the reading is available on the Skeleton Rep's YouTube channel. Ceci developed *Sundown* through his work at Primary Stages' Einhorn School for the Performing Arts, as well as at the PlayGround Experiment, another New York City-based developmental theater company. In 2022, Ceci also created a website, www.davidceci.com, to promote *Sundown* and his other work as a playwright, librettist and lyricist.

87 Patrick A. Casey, JD, Archbald, Pennsylvania, an attorney and partner in the law firm Myers, Brier & Kelly, LLP, was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the nation's most prestigious legal member organizations. **Raymond S. Hoffman, MD,** Maryland, left his position as director of the mental health and substance abuse division at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis, Maryland, and became the director of the Psychoanalytic Training Institute of the Contemporary Freudian Society in Washington, D.C.

88 Thomas D. Barry, BSBA, Stamford, Connecticut, was appointed as the chief financial officer of SiriusXM Holdings, Inc., in New York.

91 Dr. James G. Taylor VI, BS, Oakton, Virginia, is the 2023 recipient of the John Benjamin Nichols Award from the Medical Society of the District of Columbia in recognition of outstanding contributions toward improving the health of the community. Taylor is a professor in the departments of medicine and microbiology/immunology, and director of the Center for Sickle Cell Disease at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and adjunct professor of food and nutrition sciences at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

93 William E. O'Farrell, BSBA'89, JD, Ambler, Pennsylvania, who currently serves as chairman, CEO and co-founder of Premia Holding Ltd., a global reinsurance company, was appointed to the board of the Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers (ABIR). ABIR member companies are leaders in bringing together the capital and talent to find solutions for the world's most complex risks, including coverage for natural catastrophes, cyber, mortgage, specialty and legacy purposes.

94 Kathleen A. Weber, JD, Paradise Valley, Arizona, was promoted to vice president and assistant general counsel at JPMorgan Chase Bank, where she practices consumer finance and regulatory law. Weber also recently completed programs with Phoenix-based Valley Leadership,

which trains and organizes Arizona's leaders to tackle the state's biggest issues.

95 Dr. Steven C. Cunningham, BSChM, Ellicott City, Maryland, has received recognition for his book *It's Considerate to Be Literate About Religion*. The book has been named a finalist for the prestigious Ben Franklin Award, which is given by the Independent Book Publishers Association for excellence in a variety of categories, and the book received first place in the social change category of the Next Gen Indie Book Awards.

Sandy Henderson Knight, JD, Albuquerque, New Mexico, had her book *Heaven by Morning* published by Xulon Press. **Kate R. Williams, BFA,** Omaha, earned a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Nebraska Omaha.

96 Jennifer Frey Scully, BSOT, Golden, Colorado, is a hand therapist at UCHealth Sports Medicine in the Denver area. **Hughleen M. Thorsen, BA,** Omaha, is a U.S. 20th century military historian who is documenting and archiving the history of those members of the U.S. armed forces, from Douglas County, Nebraska, who were KIA or MIAs during the Vietnam War, and their Gold Star mothers who survived them. She also is on the board of the Honor and Remember Nebraska Chapter as the volunteer historian, archivist and public relations contact for the organization's mission and goal of publicly and perpetually honoring and remembering Nebraska's fallen members of America's Military and First Responders from the nation's inception, who have died while on active duty or as the result of serving, as well as honoring their families sacrifice.

97 David S. Davis, JD, Ballwin, Missouri, was appointed director of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, St. Louis District, in August 2023.

00 Dr. Jeffrey D. Kingsley, BA'92, MS'96, MD, Kansas City, Missouri, a pediatric/neonatal hospitalist, was elected in 2023 as chairman of the board of trustees for the Platte County

(Missouri) Health Department in the northwest Kansas City metro area. He also was elected president of the board of directors for the Platte County Board of Services for the Developmentally Disabled, also in the northwest Kansas City metro area. The Platte County Health Department is ranked No. 1 of the 114 counties in the state of Missouri for health outcomes for the fourth year in a row. In addition, Kingsley oversaw the construction and utilization of a new state-of-the-art Platte County Health Department building which opened in June 2023.

01 Ryan M. Zabrowski, BSBA, Omaha, received the Creighton Prep Hall of Fame Award, which is given to individuals who have displayed distinguished service to Creighton Prep as teachers, staff, coaches, board members, alumni, parents and friends. The primary consideration is to honor those who have provided direct service to Creighton Prep and who are good examples of living personal lives of faith and service.

02 Richard D. Winders, JD, Springfield, Missouri, has joined the law firm Baker Sterchi Cowden & Rice as a senior attorney in Springfield.

04 Sarah Watson Carstensen, BA'01, JD, Aurora, Nebraska, joined the law firm Woods Aitken LLP in the Lincoln, Nebraska, office, focusing her practice on labor and employment law. Prior to joining the firm, Carstensen served as Deputy County Attorney-Civil Division Lead in Hall County (Nebraska).

05 Dr. Aaron M. Harper, BA, Wheeling, West Virginia, published the book *Sport Realism: A Law-Inspired Theory of Sport* on the philosophy and ethics of sport. **Col. Kristen B. Nichols, BS'01, DDS,** JBBSA-Lackland, Texas, assumed command of the sole Dental Group in the Air Force, where she leads more than 125 dentists across 13 specialties, delivering \$28 million in care and treating over 129,000 patients annually. Additionally, Nichols leads the Air Force's Postgraduate Dental Education

and oversees the educational platform for six residencies, one fellowship and more than 60 weeks of continuing education, culminating in the conferral of over 20 master's degrees each year. **Anand K. Rajani, BA'01, MD,** Palo Alto, California, recently accepted a position as associate professor of pediatrics in the Division of Neonatal-Developmental Medicine at Stanford University. As a neonatologist, Rajani will focus on critical care of newborns at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and artificial intelligence technologies in the neonatal ICU.

08 Dr. Matthew L. Reznicek, BA, Minneapolis, hosted the Irish ambassador to the United States, Geraldine Byrne Nason, and the Irish consul general of Chicago, Kevin Byrne, at the University of Minnesota as president of the American Conference for Irish Studies in August 2023. Reznicek is an associate professor of medical humanities at the University of Minnesota.

11 Jacqueline Clement DeLuca, BA'08, JD, Gretna, Nebraska,

will join the federal bench in January 2024 as a U.S. magistrate judge. DeLuca currently is the litigation counsel at PayPal. Prior to that, she was a partner at the law firm Fraser Stryker in Omaha. She is a former law clerk to U.S. District Judge Richard Dorr of the Western District of Missouri. **Esther H. Lee, JD,** Denver, was elevated to partner at the national law firm Fox Rothschild in the Denver office.

12 Kelsey J. Schmidt, BSBA, Arvada, Colorado, was elevated to a partner at the national law firm Fox Rothschild in the Chicago office.

15 Theodore L. Wheeler, MA'08, MFA, Omaha, is the author of *The War Begins in Paris: A Novel* that published in November 2023.

18 Maria L. Nord, DDS, Omaha, completed her certificate in oral maxillofacial surgery from Nova Southeastern University in June 2023. She is now practicing at Village Pointe Oral Surgery & Dental Implant Center in Omaha. **Benjamin C. Rogers, nSJ, BSBA,**

Chicago, professed his perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the Society of Jesus in August 2023. He is now enrolled in graduate studies at Loyola University Chicago.

19 Mary Jane Glade, BSN'05, MS'07, DNP, Lincoln, Nebraska, recently opened the clinic Wellity that specializes in cancer survivorship, high-risk management and cancer risk assessment as well as women's health. **Dr. Zachary R. Grossmann, BS,** Wichita, Kansas, completed medical school at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine and has entered residency at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita.

20 Kiley A. Fleming, EdD, West Des Moines, Iowa, is the author of the book *Conflict Imagery: Developing a Reflective Practice*. **Julia Hartnett Adams, JD,** Lawton, Iowa, has been made a partner at Klass Law Firm, LLP, with offices in Sioux City, Iowa, and Sioux Center, Iowa.

21 Jade E. Herman, EdD, Rapid City, South Dakota, chief of staff at South Dakota Mines, has been accepted into the 2023-2024 cohort of the Millennium Leadership Initiative hosted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). According to AASCU, the Millennium Leadership Initiative was launched in 1999 as a premier leadership development program designed to diversify and enrich the American college presidency. The yearlong initiative is rooted in preparing higher education leaders from traditionally underrepresented communities with the skills, philosophical overview and networks necessary to advance to the highest ranks of postsecondary education. Herman is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and grew up in Mission, South Dakota.

WEDDING

22 Marguerite M. Hendrickson, MAC, BSBA, and **Jackson E. Stamper, BSBA,** Aug. 19, 2023, living in Kansas City, Missouri.

HONORING OUR ALUMNI



The Creighton University Alumni Achievement Citation is the highest all-University award presented to Creighton alumni. This year's recipient, **Mimi Feller, BA'70,** began her corporate and legislative career in Washington, DC. She joined Gannett Co. in 1986, where she oversaw

public affairs and government relations. She retired in 2003 as senior vice president of Gannett.

2023 ALUMNI MERIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Alumni Merit Award recognizes outstanding alumni from the schools and colleges. The following were honored at this year's Evening of Honors event held in August.



Annie Burns, BA'83
College of Arts and Sciences



James Greisch, BSBA'80
Heider College of Business



Susan Bon Tiede, DDS'91
School of Dentistry



Patrice Washington, MBA'22
Graduate School



Michaela Sims, JD'96
School of Law



Tim Burd, MD'96
School of Medicine



Elizabeth Lenke, BSBA'86
College of Nursing



Jennifer Junker, OTD'12
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions



Neena Nizar, EdD'18
College of Professional and Continuing Education

2023 RECENT ALUMNI AWARD

The Recent Alumni Award recognizes significant professional achievement, personal responsibility, and service to Creighton and community by an alumna or alumnus during their first 10 years following graduation.



Clayton Vanderheiden, BSBA'18
Heider College of Business

Read more: Visit alumni.creighton.edu/ama-2023 to read more about each recipient.

Forever Grateful

In the fall of 2021, his heart was failing, and it was failing fast. One moment, **KEITH VRBICKY, MD'79**, was in seemingly perfect health. The next, he was hooked up to a life-support system in the ICU, with his heart giving out (due to a rare, rapidly developing cardiovascular disorder) and other organs following suit.



Only a heart transplant would save his life. And within a very short window. Due to his quickly declining condition, he only had 48 hours to find a match. Vrbicky and the Nebraska Medical Center team caring for him knew that the odds of finding one that soon would be slim.

But — for Vrbicky and for his wife, Karyn, and their six children and many grandchildren and for the thousands of families Vrbicky has cared for over the past 40 years at his obstetrics-gynecologic practice in Norfolk, Nebraska — within 12 hours of going on the transplant list, an ideal match came up. About 24 hours after that, he was on the operating table.

A few months later, Vrbicky was once again caring for women and delivering babies. He's delivered more than 13,000 since he started at his Norfolk OB/GYN practice nearly 40 years ago.

And last fall, about a year after his surgery, Vrbicky walked his daughter Michaela down the aisle at St. John's Church. One of the best moments of his life was holding her in his arms during the father-daughter dance at the reception, swaying with her to Sinatra's *Just the Way You Are*, profoundly moved by the simple fact of being alive to experience that moment.

Now, Vrbicky (with co-author Leo Adam Biga) has written and published a book about the experience called *Forever Grateful: The Gift of New Life from Organ Donation*.

The book chronicles Vrbicky's harrowing journey from perfect health to near death. One of the main reasons he wrote *Forever Grateful*, Vrbicky says, was to advocate for organ and tissue donation.

"I believe God allowed me to live for a higher purpose," he says. "With every breath I have left, I want to impress upon the public the need for organ and tissue donors so that people don't have to die needlessly while on the donor list waiting for a transplant."

Since his own donor's family chose to remain anonymous, Vrbicky doesn't know whose heart he has. But his physicians say it's "a young and very healthy heart." As a tribute to his donor, to all donors, Vrbicky says he's going to make the most of every beat it's got left. — **BY MICAH MERTES**

BIRTHS

02 James M. Pakiz, BSEvs'99, JD, and Elizabeth Lighthipe Pakiz, BA'03, a son, Benjamin, Feb. 24, 2023, living in Omaha.

05 Christopher B. Wachal, BA, and Jennifer A. Kratochvil, BSBA, a daughter, Allison Grace, May 2, 2023, living in Chicago.

08 Nathan E. Tracy, BA, and Emily Tracy, a daughter, Grace Eleanor, March 23, 2023, living in St. Paul, Minnesota.

12 Edward M. Saito, PharmD, and Dr. Karen Heisler, a daughter, Ellie Ann Mitsue, March 6, 2023.

13 Daniel J. Fellman and Sarah Nathan Fellman, BA'10, OTD, a son, Nathan, April 27, 2023.

DEATHS

46 Lucille Janecek Larson, SJN, Omaha, May 17, 2023.

47 Frances Mysicka George, SJN, Santa Monica, California, March 21, 2023.

48 LaVera Wagner Granity, SJN'46, BSN, Sierra Vista, Arizona, May 15, 2023. **Richard T. Jordan, ARTS**, Boone, Iowa, Feb. 28, 2021.

49 Dorothy Fonfara Chapman, SJN, Omaha, July 25, 2023. **Phyllis Campbell Haller, ARTS**, Omaha, April 15, 2023. **Elizabeth Murphy Rindone, SJN**, Omaha, April 19, 2023. **Walter J. Sullivan, BS**, Omaha, April 20, 2023.

50 Max J. Burbach Sr., BS, Omaha, June 21, 2023. **Ernest T. Hobza, BS**, Omaha, June 7, 2023. **Marguerite Keber McQuade, SJN**, Bellevue, Nebraska, May 26, 2023. **Ernest W. Spangenberg, ARTS**, Hudson, Florida, May 28, 2023. **Rolland J. Sutton, BS**, Bella Vista, Arkansas, May 3, 2023.

51 Robert S. Schweiger, BUSADM, Milwaukee, Dec. 14, 2021. **Patricia McCarthy Sullivan, ARTS**, Centennial, Colorado, Aug. 30, 2021.

52 Donald M. Heese, BS, Tampa, Florida, April 7, 2023. **Pauline Sasse Kreifels, SCN**, Nebraska City, Nebraska, March 11, 2022. **Carol Pryor Lavoie, BSMT**, Burlington, Vermont, June 2, 2023.

53 W. Richard Bay, BA, Amarillo, Texas, July 3, 2023. **William H. Heyden, BS**, Omaha, July 6, 2023. **Philip J. Maschka, DDS**, Omaha, April 17, 2023. **John R. Quinn, MD**, Sandpoint, Idaho, March 22, 2023. **Richard G. Schoessler Sr., DDS**, Northridge, California, Nov. 4, 2022. **Richard J. Stehno, JD**, Lapeer, Michigan, May 25, 2023. **John J. Stiles, BA**, Clinton, North Carolina, March 6, 2023. **Louise Pazderka Vayda, SJN**, Annapolis, Maryland, March 5, 2023.

54 Catherine A. Corboy, SJN'53, BSN, Omaha, May 26, 2023. **William H. Condon, JD**, Richardson, Texas, May 4, 2023. **Sr. Patricia J. Miller, SJN'52, BSN**, Davenport, Iowa, July 1, 2023.

55 Jacquelyn Johnson Kallman, BSMT, Bellevue, Nebraska, June 17, 2023. **Charles J. Tull, BS**, South Bend, Indiana, May 2, 2023.

56 Donna Ward Beard, BS, Fort Collins, Colorado, Jan. 11, 2023. **Bernard M. Bogatz, DDS**, Omaha, March 26, 2023. **Mary Donahue Erlbacher, SJN'53, BSN**, Omaha, April 13, 2023. **Kenneth E. Gard, BS**, Omaha, April 18, 2023. **Norman G. Giebler, DDS**, Olathe, Kansas, May 15, 2023. **Anne Marie Hayes, MD**, Eugene, Oregon, Jan. 14, 2023. **Janet Wais Lee, SCN**,

Gretna, Nebraska, April 21, 2023. **Robert T. O'Donnell, BS**, Elkhorn, Nebraska, Aug. 30, 2023. **Edward T. Schnoor, BS'52, MD**, Silver Spring, Maryland, Dec. 7, 2022. **Robert P. Zammit, MD**, Winston Salem, North Carolina, Oct. 20, 2022.

57 Frederic M. Ashler, MD, Hamburg, Iowa, May 19, 2023. **Rev. Charles P. Bormann, MSEDu**, Phoenix, Dec. 5, 2022. **Warren C.M. Chee, BS**, Honolulu, Sept. 29, 2022. **Betty Jennings Cook, SJN**, Omaha, April 12, 2023. **Kenneth C. Maschka, ARTS**, Ashton, Nebraska, April 18, 2023. **Dr. Joan Gullickson Norris, SJN**, Omaha, June 21, 2023.

58 Morris J. Bruckner, JD, Freeland, Washington, June 24, 2023. **Charles C. Ching, MD**, Honolulu, Aug. 24, 2023. **Roger J. Holzman, BSBA**, Houston, March 5, 2023. **John L. Kestel Jr., BS'54, MD**, Dallas, April 2, 2023. **Carmelita Siekaniec Lennon, MS**, Lilydale, Minnesota, April 12, 2023. **Thomas F. McGowan, BSBA**, Omaha, March 27, 2023. **Betty Topf McManaman, BSPha**, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, June 26, 2023. **Dr. Joan Sokolik Meisner, SCN**, Omaha, March 6, 2023. **Allan F. Petricek, BSPha**, Norfolk, Nebraska, April 12, 2023. **Dr. George E. Rejda, BSBA'57, MA**, Lincoln, Nebraska,

April 28, 2022. **Gerald L. Richards, BSBA**, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, April 6, 2023.

59 Donald Y. Beard, MD, Fort Collins, Colorado, Nov. 21, 2022. **Kenneth F. Conry, MD**, Waukee, Iowa, July 15, 2023. **David L. Duren, BUSADM**, Omaha, July 10, 2023. **Michael J. Higgins, BSBA**, Parkville, Missouri, May 5, 2023. **Barbara Bronn Murray, BA**, St. Louis, July 25, 2023. **Robert H. Sueper, MD**, Elkhorn, Nebraska, July 10, 2023. **Donald W. Torre, DDS**, San Rafael, California, May 1, 2023.

60 Mary Joy LeClair Anderson, BA, Omaha, July 24, 2023. **Luke J. Coniglio, BSPha**, Omaha, April 4, 2023. **Maureen Upington Kenealy, BA**, Silver Spring, Maryland, June 30, 2023. **George M. Ludvik, MA**, White River, South Dakota, July 26, 2023. **Eldon C. Pape, BSBA**, La Vista, Nebraska, May 5, 2023. **Patricia A. Ruth, SJN**, Omaha, July 30, 2023. **Thomas F. Sheeren, BSBA**, Omaha, March 13, 2023.

61 Richard R. Book, BUSADM, Marne, Iowa, Feb. 19, 2023. **Mary Ann Bergman Chladek, ARTS**, Bellevue, Nebraska, July 26, 2023. **Dr. Barbara A. Sorensen, MA**, Kingsville, Texas, April 15, 2022. **Vivian Young, MLN**, St. Louis, Jan. 1, 2023.

Find Bluejay-Owned Businesses *Right Here*

Thanks to a new effort by Creighton alumni and the Alumni Relations office, finding Bluejay-owned businesses just got easier. The recently launched **Bluejay Business Network** offers a nationwide directory to connect Creighton alumni and friends seeking services.

Creighton-educated professionals who own a business providing services in healthcare, law, business, education, the arts, etc. — and all Bluejays interested in using those services — are encouraged to **sign up today (it's free)**.

bluejaybusinessnetwork.com

BLUEJAY
BUSINESS NETWORK
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62 Eldon F. Andre, BSBA, Arlington, Texas, May 29, 2022. **Elizabeth Douda Dynek, BA,** Lincoln, Nebraska, March 18, 2023. **John V. Fangman, BSBA,** Omaha, June 26, 2023. **Thomas M. Gaherty, BA,** Omaha, June 21, 2023. **Martin J. Joye, BS'58, MD,** Davis, California, Oct. 21, 2022. **Joan Orcutt O'Keefe, SJN,** Norfolk, Nebraska, Aug. 31, 2023. **E. Phil Vondrak, BSBA'59, JD,** Sioux City, Iowa, June 7, 2023. **Duane F. Wurzer, BA,** Fort Collins, Colorado, April 21, 2023.

63 Dr. Lawrence C. Bausch, BS, Lincoln, Nebraska, Aug. 10, 2023. **Roger A. Erftmier, BS,** Bellevue, Nebraska, June 3, 2023.

64 Denise Bentley Billingsley, BA, Lufkin, Texas, March 11, 2023. **John F. Bolamperti, BS'61, DDS,** Gunnison, Colorado, Aug. 16, 2023. **Mary Lee O'Keefe Coco, BA,** Omaha, April 16, 2023. **Sr. Rita Mae Fischer, FSPA, MSEdu,** La Crosse, Wisconsin, June 4, 2023. **Anthony N. Mendesh, MD,** Santa Barbara, California, April 8, 2023. **Rev. Dennis Sefcik, MSEdu,** Pocahontas, Iowa, May 24, 2023. **Mary Goodwin**

Williams, BUSADM, Fillmore, Indiana, Aug. 17, 2023.

65 Anita Hart Balliro, BA, Swampscott, Massachusetts, July 23, 2023. **Donald F. Cain, BUSADM,** Cumming, Iowa, July 3, 2023. **James H. Gaudreault, BS,** Rockville, Maryland, April 12, 2023. **Carole Dierker Herbert, BS,** Santa Cruz, California, May 31, 2023. **William N. Koster, JD,** Edina, Minnesota, Sept. 1, 2022. **Ronald G. Mayne, MBA,** Omaha, Aug. 19, 2023. **Richard H. Mimick, BSBA,** Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, March 9, 2023. **Gregory B. Minter, JD,** Omaha, April 18, 2023. **Gerald G. Schram, DDS,** St. Petersburg, Florida, May 3, 2023. **Carol Sweeney Steininger, BA,** Alameda, California, Feb. 6, 2023. **James A. Tompsett, BSPha,** Elkhorn, Nebraska, Aug. 18, 2023.

66 Joseph M. Freimuth, BSBA, Castle Pines, Colorado, Aug. 4, 2023. **Barry L. Gerken, BSBA,** Omaha, July 16, 2023. **Lois Dargen Heying, BA,** Portland, Oregon, Feb. 23, 2023. **Daniel J. Kubat, BA,** Omaha, March 24, 2023.

David M. Lammers, BA, Pipestone, Minnesota, May 26, 2023. **Dr. John H. Neu, BACLS'60, JD,** Rancho Palos Verdes, California, April 5, 2023. **Sr. M. Andrea Polt, OSB, BS'59, MSGuid,** Norfolk, Nebraska, May 19, 2023. **Mary Hills Vacanti, BSN,** Phoenix, May 12, 2022. **Phyllis Gilg Weinacht, BS,** Omaha, July 18, 2023.

67 Robert W. Decker, BSBA, Omaha, July 21, 2023. **Howard A. Kaiman, JD,** Omaha, April 11, 2023. **John G. Langdon, BS'63, MD,** Winter Park, Florida, July 1, 2021. **Stephen H. Nelson Sr., BSBA,** Fort Myers, Florida, July 16, 2023. **Thomas G. Pautler, MD,** Seattle, Jan. 5, 2022. **Dr. Carole A. Whittaker, MS,** Scottsdale, Arizona, June 30, 2022.

68 Robert E. Bottger, BSBA, Hastings, Nebraska, March 23, 2023. **Julie Showalter Daly, BS,** Park Ridge, Illinois, Dec. 21, 2022. **Louis T. Forlano, MD,** Tampa, Florida, May 26, 2023. **Patricia M. Mailander, BSN,** Atlantic, Iowa, April 25, 2023. **Sr. Elizabeth R. Muscha, SMP, MA,** Mandan, North Dakota, July 20, 2023.

Eugene J. Snitily, BS, Omaha, March 2, 2023. **Sr. M. Pierre Vorster, OSB, MSEdu,** Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 22, 2023.

69 Gerald C. Brundo, DDS, Omaha, Sept. 29, 2023. **William C. Glowacki, BS'65, BSPha,** Davenport, Iowa, March 8, 2023. **Jane Ohman Herceg, BA,** Aberdeen, South Dakota, May 13, 2023. **Michael J. Jackson, BSBA'58, MBA,** Omaha, April 15, 2023.

70 Donna J. Healy, BS, Newberg, Oregon, March 20, 2023.

71 Ronald L. Harshbarger, MSEdu, Paullina, Iowa, April 6, 2023.

72 M. Colleen Philbin Ernesti, BSMth, West Point, Nebraska, July 25, 2023. **Fred J. Nesler, BA'69, MBA,** Omaha, May 28, 2023. **Raymond F. Skryja, DDS,** Forestville, California, May 5, 2023. **Dolores A. Wells, BSMT,** Annandale, Virginia, June 26, 2023.

73 Nancy Kirsch Beacom, SJN, Rochester, Minnesota, June 24, 2023. **Dr. Barbara J. Braden, SJN'66, BSN,** Omaha,

June 24, 2023. **Ronald L. Eggers, BA'71, JD,** Omaha, Aug. 10, 2023. **Dr. Lawrence K. Kaczmarek, BS,** Oklahoma City, July 30, 2023. **The Hon. Thomas G. McQuade, BA'69, MA'71, JD,** Omaha, April 15, 2023. **Arnette Payne, BA,** Omaha, March 29, 2023.

74 Frank G. Mancuso, BS'70, DDS, Omaha, Aug. 13, 2023. **David J. Matteucci, MD,** Kenosha, Wisconsin, July 15, 2023. **Michael L. Pattee, BS'70, MD,** Walnut Creek, California, March 21, 2023.

75 Susan Wimmer Mimick, BS'68, MBA, Omaha, April 22, 2023. **Peter R. Nash, MD,** Fountain Hills, Arizona, April 14, 2023.

76 Connie Schneider Eastlee, BSN, Flower Mound, Texas, Aug. 17, 2023. **Mark R. Madsen, ARTS,** Omaha, May 28, 2023.

77 Timothy P. Masterson, BS'72, DDS, Centennial, Colorado, July 25, 2023.

78 Diane Levien Daley, BA, Eugene, Oregon, March 9, 2023. **Dr. Kirk K. Livermont Sr., MBA,** Dayton, Wyoming, Oct. 5, 2021.

79 Col. Linda M. Beulke, MA, Norfolk, Virginia, May 24, 2023. **John W. Furey, BA,** Omaha, April 9, 2023. **Kim M. Hawkins, JD,** Omaha, April 28, 2023. **Rev. Jerome Spenner, MS,** Omaha, March 10, 2023.

80 Selvoy M. Fillerup, MD, Farmington, Utah, June 26, 2023. **William F. Giles III, ARTS,** Omaha, April 20, 2023. **Gene Tracey Hallinan, BA,** Olathe, Kansas, May 2, 2023. **Sr. Valerie Usher, OSF, MChrSp,** Rochester, Minnesota, July 22, 2023.

81 Gerard T. Ortner Jr., DDS, Rancho Murieta, California, March 20, 2023. **Thomas M. Regan, BSSOC'78, JD,** Prior Lake, Minnesota, Feb. 23, 2023.

82 Patricia A. Ries, BA, Kansas City, Missouri, Dec. 3, 2022. **Regina E. Udo-Inyang, BSPha'80, PharmD,** Grosse Pointe, Michigan, March 7, 2023. **Timothy M. Walsh, BSBA,** St. Paul, Minnesota, Feb. 21, 2023.

83 David R. Stuva, BS'79, MS, Omaha, July 13, 2023. **Jeff T. Worthington, BUSADM,** Austin, Texas, June 1, 2023.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Skar Returns to Creighton as New Chair of Pediatric Dentistry

Success as a pediatric dentist, says **BRYAN SKAR, BS'04, DDS,** depends on a few key qualities: a positive attitude and an endless amount of flexibility and adaptability, because every kid is different.



Bryan Skar, BS'04, DDS, left, and Gaylord Huenefeld, DDS'58. Skar is the inaugural holder of the Dr. Gaylord G. Huenefeld Endowed Chair in Pediatric Dentistry.

You also have to like working with children. Even the ones afraid of going to the dentist.

"For as long as I can remember, I've enjoyed working with kids," says Skar, department chair, associate professor and the newly installed inaugural holder of the Dr. Gaylord G. Huenefeld Endowed Chair in Pediatric Dentistry in the School of Dentistry. "When I was in high school and later as an undergrad at Creighton, I would work as a coach or lifeguard or swimming lessons instructor."

When it came time to choose a career, Skar's two main interests — healthcare and working with families — converged in pediatric dentistry.

After receiving his Creighton bachelor's degree in biology, Skar earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery and certificate of specialization in pediatric dentistry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. He then worked in a private pediatric dental practice for a few years — alongside Creighton-educated pediatric dentist Vince Rothe, DDS'02, and his wife, orthodontist Laura Rothe, DDS — before becoming an assistant professor in UNMC's pediatric dentistry residency program.

Now, nearly 20 years since he graduated from Creighton, Skar has returned to his alma mater.

"It's a great honor to be the inaugural chairholder," Skar says. "For what we want to accomplish as academicians and as a department, endowed chairs open doors and resources

for collaboration and provide opportunities to expand the services we offer our patients and the educational programs we offer our students."

These opportunities were precisely what the late Gaylord G. Huenefeld, DDS'58, intended when he made the gift that established the position through his estate. Huenefeld, a World War II veteran, enjoyed a successful career as a general dentist in Florida, where he was known for his excellent, compassionate care. After two decades, he retired from dentistry to pursue his other passions: growing oranges and raising thoroughbred horses.

Huenefeld never forgot his alma mater. More than 50 years after graduating from Creighton, he decided to give back to the dental school.

"I wanted to give to some place where my gift would do the most good," Huenefeld said in 2010. "My dental school did more for me than anything else, so why not help Creighton?"

In addition to the endowed chair, what drew Skar to Creighton as a professor were the same things that drew him to the University as a biology major: a wide variety of healthcare programs and opportunities on campus, a strong academic reputation and the school's foundation of Jesuit values.

"Those grounding principles serve as a north star for how we deliver education, interact with our students and fellow faculty, and provide our patients care," Skar says. — **BY MICAH MERTES**

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- Partnerships with employers, corporations and businesses for executive education and customized training to address gaps in professional development including project management, leadership development, finance for non-financial managers, and communicating through conflict
- One-day classes, professional certifications and degree completion to meet the needs of working professionals, such as healthcare continuing education

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84 **Mary L. Head, BSMT,** Omaha, July 3, 2023. **Emmet Tinley III, BSBA'68, MPA,** Omaha, June 21, 2023.

85 **Dr. Michael P. Dunn, BA,** Santa Cruz, California, April 1, 2023.

86 **Sherri Curtis Banks, BA,** Beaverton, Oregon, March 1, 2023. **Phillip J. Ernst, BS'82, DDS,** Columbus, Nebraska, March 5, 2023.

88 **Kenneth G. Hermann, PharmD,** Oswego, Illinois, March 21, 2023. **Dr. Glenn M. Ihde II, BSChM,** Bay City, Texas, March 6, 2023.

90 **Sr. Marion M. Beagen, OP, MChrSp,** Caldwell, New Jersey, May 30, 2023. **Mary Briseno Dinneen, MS,** La Vista, Nebraska, April 2, 2023. **Sr. Marian A. Klostermann, MMin,** Dubuque, Iowa, April 2, 2023.

91 **Jean M. Golka, BSBA,** Honey Creek, Iowa, Feb. 28, 2023. **Scott R. Goos, ARTS,** Manhattan, Kansas, April 15, 2023.

92 **Marie V. Roney, SC, MA,** Mount St. Joseph, Ohio, June 1, 2023.

93 **Melissa A. Bartness, BA,** Sparks Glencoe, Maryland, May 6, 2023. **Heidi M. Peltzer, BA,** Wichita, Kansas, June 22, 2023.

94 **Randall W. Chaffee, PharmD,** Racine, Wisconsin, April 11, 2023. **Jeff T. Courtney, JD,** Omaha, Aug. 1, 2023. **Ira L. Philson Jr., BA,** Aurora, Colorado, March 16, 2023.

Dr. Steve E. Winfrey, BA'91, MS, Ames, Iowa, April 19, 2023.

95 **Charles L. Manning, MS,** Glenwood, Iowa, June 14, 2023. **Nancy A. Wood, BSBA'92, JD,** North Liberty, Iowa, July 16, 2023.

96 **Mary Sparr Holiday, MS,** Omaha, May 2, 2023. **Natasha Boelter Oakman, BS,** Omaha, June 1, 2023.

98 **Judith L. Bisig, BA'84, MS'88, MA,** Omaha, June 11, 2023.

00 **Sr. M. Rosellyn Theisen, MA,** Toledo, Ohio, Aug. 7, 2023.

03 **Jose A. Garcia, MD,** Berlin, Maryland, Aug. 11, 2023.

04 **Jean L. Lengowski, BS,** Omaha, May 10, 2023. **Craig A. Mead, MBA,** Omaha, May 25, 2023.

06 **Kallol K. Saha, BS'00, MD,** Collierville, Tennessee, Aug. 7, 2023.

08 **Sarah Skoog Saldi, BSN,** Omaha, May 4, 2023.

11 **Luke S. Christiansen, MBA,** Omaha, April 12, 2023.

15 **Elizabeth A. Elliott, BA'99, MA,** Harlan, Iowa, April 27, 2023.

19 **Jessica Kennedy Matthews, GRAD,** Valley, Nebraska, Aug. 28, 2023.

20 **William B. Hanna, ARTS,** Elkhorn, Nebraska, June 30, 2023.

23 **James C. Baird, GRAD,** Sandy, Utah, April 15, 2023.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Combining a Love for the Environment and the Law

TRICIA O'HARE JEDELE, JD'98, became passionate at an early age about the power of words and the role they could play in protecting nature and the environment.

"As a child, I enjoyed cross-country camping trips with my family," says Jedele, who has been focused on environmental law and energy policy issues for more than 20 years.

"We would set off for weeks every year and drive around the country with a pop-up trailer, camping in many national and state parks. My favorite part of camping was going to the ranger campfire programs at night. In about an hour's time, a ranger could make people from all walks of life, who were visiting for different reasons, become stewards of the park. It was storytelling with a purpose."

The School of Law reaffirmed for her that environmental law was a viable career path and the best path to protecting people and nature.

"Professor Eric Pearson offered a terrific environmental law survey course. Not only did I learn how to read highly cross-referenced and challenging environmental statutes, but we studied landmark environmental law cases," she says.

"That class really opened my eyes to how important a role the law plays in improving environmental and health outcomes."

She says she also made "incredible friends" in law school, including her husband, Bret Jedele, JD'98, who also practices environmental law in Rhode Island.

In 2021, Jedele became the Atlantic Coast offshore wind policy manager for the Nature

Conservancy (TNC), a nonprofit environmental organization. In this role, she coordinates and leads TNC's offshore wind energy efforts from Maine to North Carolina.

Previously, she was a special assistant attorney general in the Environmental Unit at the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, later returning as chief of the Environment and Energy Unit. She represented Rhode Island in litigation involving challenges to federal environmental regulations and laws in state and federal courts and before the U.S. Supreme Court.

She also was vice president and director of Conservation Law Foundation's Rhode Island office and formerly private legal counsel to the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island and the Fishermen's Advisory Board, representing both in complex negotiations to identify appropriate compensation for commercial fishing interests associated with offshore wind development.

She has spent more than a decade on ocean-use planning and was a key voice in developing Rhode Island's Ocean Special Area Management Plan, which supported the siting decisions for the country's first offshore wind projects.

At TNC, she works with developers and federal and state agencies to identify the best

"That class really opened my eyes to how important a role the law plays in improving environmental and health outcomes."

TRICIA O'HARE JEDELE, JD'98
Referencing the *Environmental Law Survey* course in the School of Law

approaches to support deployment of offshore wind. She was recently appointed to the National Academies of Sciences standing committee on Offshore Wind Energy and Fisheries, which provides insights to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on a variety of issues. She was asked by the UN Global Climate Compact to co-lead the creation of principles to guide government and developer action on biodiversity and offshore wind. The work was presented at the Offshore and Floating Wind Europe Conference 2023 in London and the 28th United Nations Climate Conference, COP 28, in Dubai.

Her work over the decades has only deepened her resolve: "What we do in terms of energy policy today will determine whether

all of our efforts to protect the environment and improve health outcomes over the past four or five decades have been worthwhile or for nothing."

Does she ever feel pessimistic? In a word, no. "Pessimism is not an option. We will have to meet and defeat some significant challenges over the course of the next decade, not the least of which is successfully overhauling our electricity transmission system and holding back the ocean at the coasts.

"To do this work, we have to believe we can succeed. I work with the most inspirational, intelligent, resourceful and committed people who make me believe every day that success is possible." — **BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA'74**

IN REMEMBRANCE

We remember Creighton University faculty and Jesuits who have recently passed.*

Lawrence Johnson, PhD, former associate professor, Department of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, Dec. 22, 2022

Reloy Garcia, PhD, former professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, March 14, 2023

John Thein, MFA, former associate professor, Department of Fine and Performing Arts, College of Arts and Sciences, May 8, 2023

Edward Cohn, MD, former associate professor, Department of Otolaryngology and Human Communication, School of Medicine, July 5, 2023

Michael Buckley, former instructor, Department of Modern Languages, College of Arts and Sciences, July 13, 2023

*Faculty and Jesuits who are Creighton alumni are listed in the *Alumni Deaths* section of the magazine.



Shipman Leading New Institute for Population Health

More and more money is being invested into the U.S. healthcare system but results commensurate with that investment aren't coming. Enter Creighton's Institute for Population Health and its executive director, **Scott Shipman, MD, MPH**. A pediatrician by training, Shipman was named the inaugural holder of the CyncHealth Endowed Chair for Population Health at Creighton in 2022, and he is now busy with the launch of the Institute for Population Health. *Creighton* magazine asked Shipman about establishing the institute and the opportunity for Creighton to be a leader in the field of population health.

For those who are not familiar with it, how do you describe population health?

Population health takes the traditional focus on individual, personal health and reframes it in a collective, community-based perspective. We focus on disparities in health within the population first through focusing on the healthcare system and efforts to improve access to high-value care, and second, by looking at community-based population health initiatives.

You mention "high-value care." Can you explain what that means?

High-value care basically means providing services with a focus on increasing quality and controlling costs.

Healthcare in the U.S. is too expensive, and it has too many gaps in quality, caring and effective communication. Life expectancy in the U.S.

is declining in real terms. Disparities in health are growing. Costs keep rising. Meanwhile, some with vested interests resist reform. Physicians and nurses are struggling with the burden, and often they are as frustrated in the system as their patients. The current state of things is not sustainable. Our work will focus on better and higher-value methods and models of delivering care, with an emphasis on driving change and scaling it across the healthcare system.

You are trained as a pediatrician. What led you into the field of population health?

It is a bit of a circuitous route. Pediatrics was the perfect field for me. A pediatrician provides care to the child, sure, but does so in the context of the family and the community. A child's health and well-being are completely linked to the health and well-being of the family as well as

the community resources that support ongoing growth and development.

In time, I found that I could be more effective in improving health of children, families and communities if I focused my expertise on studying and improving health policy and care at a system level.

The move to population health is a natural next step. If our focus is only on the healthcare system, we risk ignoring the policies and social systems that truly have the most impact on health in our communities. Engaging the health system and the community together opens new pathways to better health.

The IPH will be focused specifically on health inequities. What are some of the areas on which you will be focusing?

Health inequities are getting worse in our country. Barriers to access to healthcare, unsafe neighborhoods, economic instability and associated housing and food insecurity, lack of transportation and the digital divide are all factors that impact these trends. The IPH will work to elevate awareness of these problems, to produce evidence to support the best possible policies to address them and to work with existing community-based organizations to help in their efforts to overcome these disparities in health. There are also inequities in access to healthcare, trust in the healthcare system and quality and outcomes of care. There is a need to prioritize awareness and understanding of these healthcare disparities and to put in place new and sustained efforts to overcome them.

What makes this a unique opportunity for Creighton?

Creighton has a core mission that focuses on service and justice. Creighton faculty from across all schools and colleges have a history of impressive work and commitment to the community. Most students at Creighton bring a passion for service and a sense of altruism to campus. Creighton produces a disproportionate number of healthcare professionals and other service-minded leaders. Our neighbors in north and south Omaha are among the most diverse in the state. Our affiliations with CHI Health, Dignity Health, CommonSpirit Health and Valleywise in the Midwest and Southwest regions of the U.S. create opportunities to test, study and scale clinical innovations that can have tremendous impact. Put these factors together, and it presents an amazing opportunity for Creighton to excel.



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“Creighton is a place where people genuinely care about each other, where people value the whole person and make sure everyone has the best education and the most meaningful experience. And I wouldn’t be here without the help of scholarships. I couldn’t be more grateful to the donors who made it possible.”

ANIAH MOBLEY,
CLASS OF 2024