

# CREIGHTON

FALL 2021 • Volume 37 Issue 3



## The Gift of Creighton

Students are at the center of the most ambitious campaign in the University's 143-year history





# The Light of Creighton Burns Brightly

**W**e held a Town Hall at the beginning of the fall semester, in person in Omaha and virtually for our campus in Phoenix and those living and learning at points far afield. I related my gratitude for the Creighton community — students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, friends, and partners. I shared how, in the darkness of what was a very difficult year, the light that is Creighton continued to burn brightly.

It is no secret how proud I am of how Creighton navigated the pandemic. It is difficult to imagine another time in my life where such determination and resolve have been so enduring and innovative. I would not presume to say we are in the clear, because the pandemic remains quite real, but the energy I have witnessed gives me discernible hope, even as we remain vigilant and committed to health and safety.

The following pages of *Creighton* magazine reveal many of the reasons for my hope, pride, and enthusiasm for Creighton's next chapter.

I first want to call your attention to Forward Blue — the largest, most comprehensive fundraising campaign in the University's history. This campaign supports our students first, prioritizing scholarships and the most pressing needs of each of our schools and colleges.

The University has a long legacy of giving that changes lives, starting with the Creighton family. Forward Blue continues that legacy in an uncertain time. There are many changes looming in higher education, but, with your help, Creighton is prepared to face the challenges ahead. We stand ready to step forward, boldly, carried by the momentum of innovation that in so many ways, over the course of so many decades, defines this University. Read on to learn how you can be part of this historic moment.

Also in this issue, we highlight the opening of our new health sciences campus in Phoenix. Just over three years ago, we announced plans for the campus, an expansion that solidified Creighton as the largest Catholic health professions educator in the country. This semester, our aspiration became a reality, and we welcomed the inaugural classes and incredible faculty and staff. In Omaha, with construction soon beginning on the CL Werner Center for Health Sciences, and in Phoenix, Creighton is addressing a real need for equal access to health care and improved patient care.

We also broke ground on our first residence hall exclusively for first-year students since the 1960s, and the first new residence hall of any kind since 2006 — a modern, inclusive facility with dedicated interfaith spaces and amenities that support student development, wellness, and academics.

Following a national search, we are so pleased that Marcus Blossom is our new McCormick Endowed Athletic Director. As I said in making the announcement, we found a collaborative, passionate leader who is called by faith, grounded in mission and family, familiar with Jesuit higher learning, and committed to excellence.

And as we approach the holy and heartwarming holiday season, please know that you and yours are in my prayers, and that I am grateful to God that you are a member of the Creighton community.



*Follow me:*  
@CreightonPres  
CreightonPresident

© Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, speaks with student Eliana Rodriguez on stage at the Forward Blue campaign launch event in October. The campaign's No. 1 priority is supporting opportunities for scholarship recipients like Rodriguez.



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on the cover  
**THE GIFT OF CREIGHTON**

Just as the University was founded through the Creighton family's generosity, it has flourished because alumni and others believe in the transformative power of a Creighton education. Now we embark upon Forward Blue, Creighton's largest, most comprehensive fundraising campaign, to celebrate the University's mission and ensure its future.



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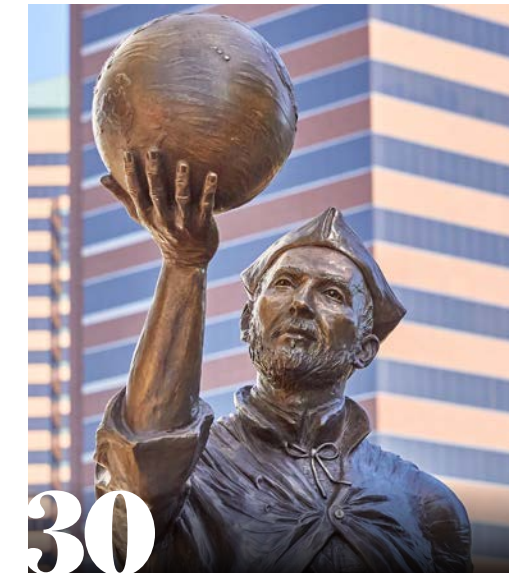
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**PUBLISHER**  
Creighton magazine is published in the spring, summer and fall by Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178-0001.

**PRESIDENT**  
Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**  
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**WRITERS**  
Kevin Coffey  
Eugene Curtin  
Kate Malott  
Micah Mertes  
Blake Ursch

**ILLUSTRATION**  
Chris Gash  
Dean Rohrer  
Eva Vázquez

**CONTACT**  
Address all mail to University Communications and Marketing, Attn: Creighton Magazine, 780480 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178-0480. Postmaster: Send change of address to Creighton Magazine, P.O. Box 3266, Omaha, NE 68103-0078.

Send alumni news (births, weddings, promotions, etc.) to [alumninews@creighton.edu](mailto:alumninews@creighton.edu).

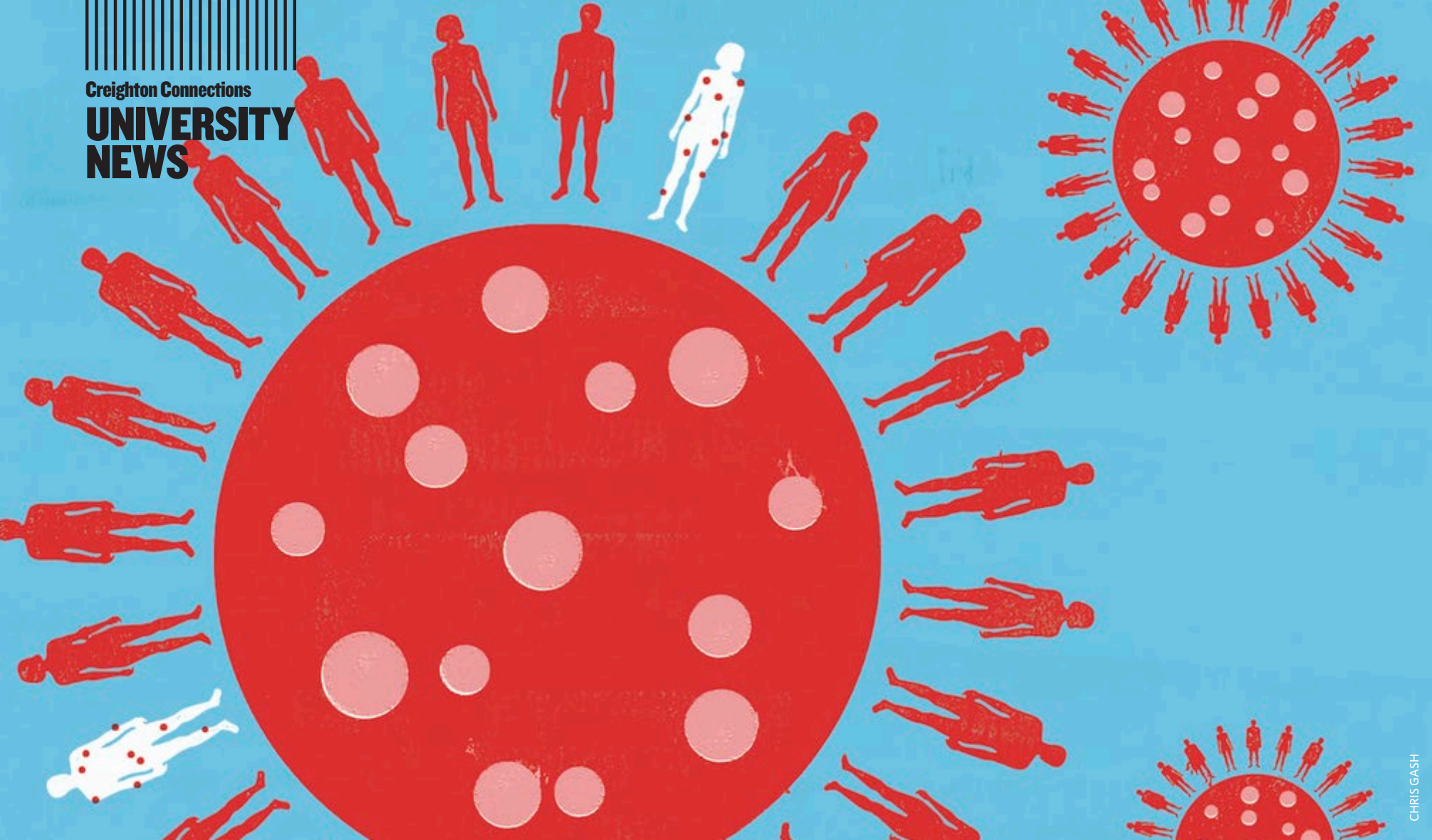
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**CREIGHTON MAGAZINE'S PURPOSE**  
Creighton magazine, like the University itself, is committed to excellence and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms. The magazine will be comprehensive in nature. It will support the University's mission 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.

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CHRIS GASH

# Studying COVID-19

BY BLAKE URSCH

## CDC Taps Creighton, CHI Health to Partner in National Study

Creighton University and its clinical partner CHI Health were selected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to participate in a study about the effects of COVID-19 following acute illness.

The study, “Clinical Characteristics of Post-Acute COVID-19,” involves examining the effects of COVID in those who exhibited significant symptoms of the disease, says Maureen Tierney, MD, chair of the Department of Clinical Research in the Creighton School of Medicine and medical director for clinical research for CHI Health. Tierney is serving as the

principal investigator of the study for Creighton/CHI Health.

The study, Tierney says, aims to take a broad look at the epidemiology of post-acute COVID to determine what percentage of people exhibited symptoms, including neurologic or pulmonary issues, after a clinical case of COVID-19. The study will review the course of the disease in several hundred patients beginning four weeks after hospitalization or acute illness.

The CDC chose three partner institutions to participate in the study: CHI Health Creighton University



Maureen Tierney, MD

Medical Center – Bergan Mercy, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and Mount Sinai Medical School and Health System in New York City. Partner institutions will provide medical data to the CDC, which will analyze the information and draw conclusions.

“I think the fact that we’re one of three sites being chosen for this is a real honor and a real opportunity,” Tierney says. “We were chosen because of the combined academic and clinical partnership, and, most importantly, because of the large number of

patients treated for COVID-19 who came from diverse ethnic and geographic backgrounds.”

CHI Health has a vast footprint in Nebraska and southwest Iowa with 14 hospitals in metro and rural settings. In 2020, CHI Health/Creighton providers led the care of COVID-19 patients across the state.

“I think there was an interest in looking at individuals who had acquired the virus in communities where meatpacking is prevalent, and also because those communities were diverse in terms of location, ethnicity and occupation,” Tierney says.

Other CHI Health physicians and Creighton faculty involved in the study include: Renuga Vivekanandan, MD; David Quimby, MD; Nikhil Jagan, MBBS; Salam Salman, MD; Rima El-Herte, MD;

Ryan Walters, PhD; and Venketraman Sahasranaman, MD.

The investigators will work with a small team of medical students and internal medical residents. The clinical research coordination team will be led by Kayleen Joyce, research director for CHI Health. Sandy Byers, MSN’14, program director of the Creighton School of Medicine’s Clinical Research Office, and her team will also provide support.

In addition, Creighton also played a crucial role in detecting COVID-19 variants for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Beginning in April, the University served as one of three sites in the state identifying variants of the virus. Positive samples from CHI Health COVID-19 testing sites were examined at Creighton’s labs through a state-of-the-art sequencer that can identify known and unknown variants of the COVID-19 virus.

Approximately 960 samples were tested between early April and late May.

The efforts “led to the detection of variants of concern that aided DHHS in their efforts to monitor the presence of these variants in the state and perform contact tracing,” says Michael Belshan, PhD, a virologist and professor of medical microbiology and immunology at Creighton’s School of Medicine.

This contract has recently been renewed for the next year.

### Law School Opens New Juvenile Justice Clinic

Joy Suder’s sons sometimes ask her, “Did you win in court today, Mom?”

But that’s a hard question to answer for someone working on juvenile cases, says Suder, JD’08, a former Douglas County assistant public defender and current assistant professor of law at Creighton.

“This kind of work is all about redefining your ideas of success and victory. I will sometimes say:



#### U.S. NEWS NATIONAL RANKINGS

In U.S. News & World Report’s 2022 “Best Colleges” rankings, Creighton ranked No. 103 in the prestigious National Universities category, putting the University in the top third of national universities. Other undergraduate national rankings included: No. 13 in Undergraduate Teaching; No. 43 in Best Nursing Programs; and the Heider College of Business ranked in the top 20% in the country, with the finance program ranked No. 15 and the accounting program ranked No. 34.

“Today we won because this child wasn’t removed from their home. Today we won because my client made it through a hearing without yelling at their mom. Today we won because my client opened up to me in a way they haven’t before.”

Suder is the director of the School of Law’s newly established Juvenile Justice Clinic, which trains law students through a hands-on and holistic experience serving the client and their family from all angles.

The grant-funded clinic will serve as a small firm, with student-attorneys providing free legal services for youth in the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County. The clinic is funded for five years by a nearly \$1 million gift from anonymous donors.

The clinic will be staffed each semester by third-year law students certified as student-attorneys under the Nebraska Supreme Court student practice rule. Each student will enroll in a semester-long class, receive intensive training to advocate for their clients and serve as lead attorneys on a variety of cases.

“With the clinic, we hope to set a foundation where graduates have a baseline skill set to know where to start, how to go forward, what questions to ask,” Suder says. “The clinic’s mission is to create better outcomes for everyone involved, most especially the children we’re serving.”

School of Law student Sidnea Brown, among the clinic’s first cohort, says she’s eager to gain hands-on experience in the legal field she’s considering.

“Through the clinic, I’ll be getting the experience to build relationships with my clients, to gain their trust and meet their needs,” Brown says. “We’re learning the law in the classroom, but we’re getting to apply the law in real-world scenarios in the courtroom. To get that experience before I graduate is amazing.”

With the help of student-attorneys like Brown, the clinic aims to



JOY SUDER, JD’08

As director of the School of Law’s Juvenile Justice Clinic, Joy Suder leads a team of student-attorneys who provide free legal services for youth in the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County.



help reverse a number of concerning trends in the juvenile court system. A 2019 study by Voices for Children in Nebraska, for instance, demonstrated issues in delinquency and status offenses, excessive detention, education needs and racial inequity for youth involved in juvenile court in Nebraska.

The study found that prosecution of felony offenses for youths has increased by 142% since 2015. While African Americans represented 12% of the population in Douglas County, they accounted for 55% of people in the juvenile court system.

Creighton's School of Law is well-suited to house a Juvenile Justice Clinic, says Dean Joshua Fershée. The school's Milton R. Abrahams Legal Clinic serves clients in need through cases in domestic violence, immigration, and civil and housing matters.

"Our experiences serving the community and our strong relationships with the judiciary, local attorneys and area nonprofit organizations will allow the new clinic to have an almost immediate impact," Fershée says. "This is truly an opportunity to live our mission — educating attorneys in the Jesuit tradition."



**CREIGHTON APP**

Creighton recently introduced the Creighton App, a mobile phone and web application designed to consolidate dozens of campus resources into one easy-to-use platform. The app initially focuses on students, but updates will include features for faculty, staff and alumni.

© From left, the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, Nicole Piemonte, PhD, and Tracy Leavelle, PhD, director of the Kingfisher Institute at Creighton.

**Piemonte Receives Kingfisher Award**

When Nicole Piemonte, PhD, accepted this year's Kingfisher Award, she related how surprised she was when she first learned that her background in medical humanities would be extremely valuable at Creighton.

A leader in medical humanities, Piemonte has created and implemented new curricula for Creighton's two campuses, including the new Master of Arts in Medical Humanities.

As assistant dean of student affairs for the medical school in Phoenix, assistant professor of medical humanities and the Peekie Nash Carpenter Endowed Chair in Medicine, Piemonte has been instrumental in making humanities a core element of Creighton medical student formation.

"I am so, so grateful, honored, humbled and shocked to be receiving this award," she said, recalling when a now-colleague asked to meet with her at a national conference after hearing that she held a PhD in medical humanities.

"I'd been hired as an academic support person for third- and fourth-year medical students in Phoenix, and I

thought perhaps my academic work in the medical humanities would just be a minor part of my everyday work," Piemonte said.

She learned that day that the medical humanities "are critical to medical education at Creighton" and that the medical school's dean, Robert "Bo" Dunlay, MD'81, is a "huge supporter of the medical humanities and wanted more of it in the curriculum."

The medical humanities help future physicians and health care professionals see that medicine is about more than biological functions; it is a study of the human condition, she said.

The Kingfisher Award is presented annually by the Office of the President in partnership with Creighton's Kingfisher Institute to recognize faculty and staff who demonstrate the creative application of humanities principles and practices and integrate the humanities and other disciplines or professions.

Piemonte is the author of two books, *Afflicted: How Vulnerability Can Heal Medical Education and Practice* and her most recent, *Death and Dying*.

This year's Kingfisher Award also was given for the first time in an honorable mention category. Matt Seevers, PhD, professor and associate dean, and Debbie Wells, PhD, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Accounting and Business Intelligence and Analytics, both of the Heider College of Business, and Rebecca Murray, PhD, BSSOC'96, professor and associate dean, Amy Wendling, PhD, professor, and Holly Ann Harris, PhD, professor and associate dean for the natural sciences, all from the College of Arts and Sciences, established the newly created Kingfisher Concentrations, part of the Heider Mindset Curriculum, connecting otherwise separate areas of study.

Through the leadership of Seevers, these concentrations enrich the academic experience for both business and arts and sciences students, giving them greater exposure and space to explore other fields.

**'Privilege of My Lifetime'**

**Rasmussen Retires as Athletic Director After 41 Years at Creighton**

Bruce Rasmussen retired as Creighton's McCormick Endowed Athletic Director on Aug. 16. Rasmussen had been at Creighton for 41 years, the last 27 as the director of athletics. At the time of his retirement, he was the fifth-longest serving active Division I athletic director in the country.

Rasmussen said his decision to retire, announced in July, came after months of thoughtful and prayerful consideration.

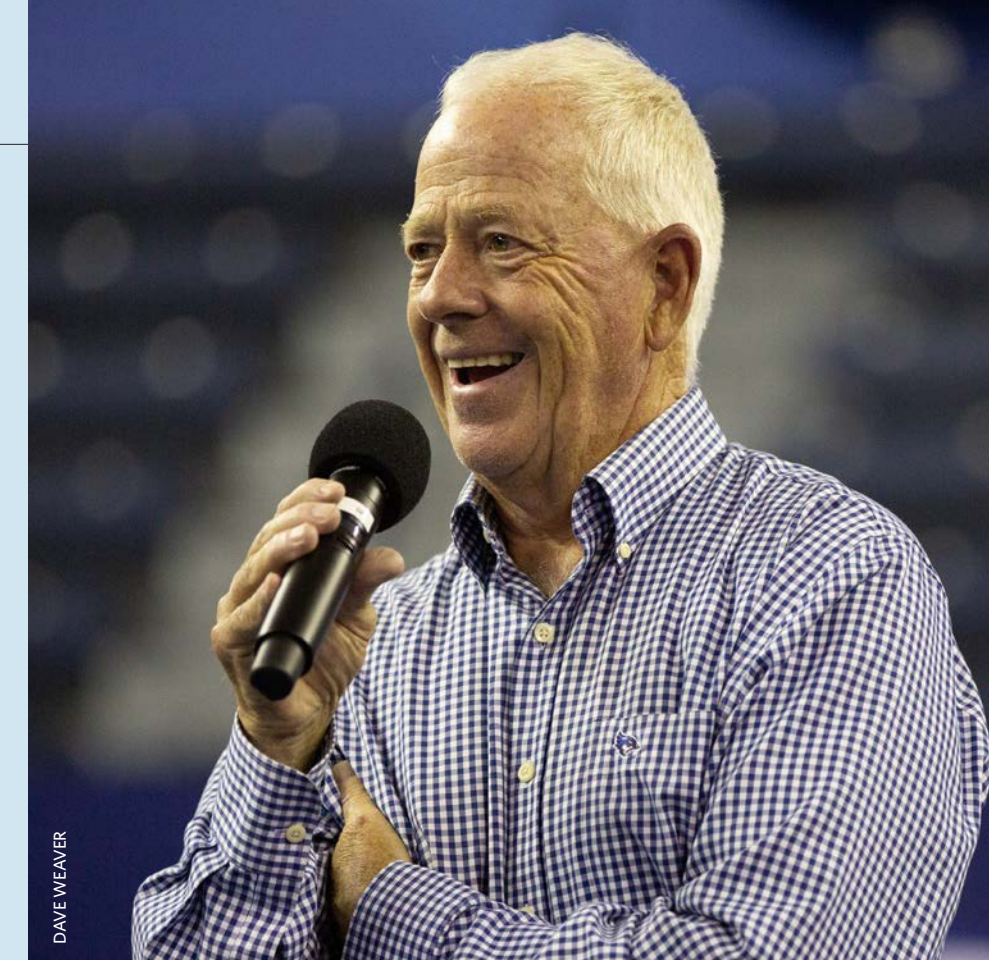
"My focus will shift to my family and other passions that have been on my heart for years," Rasmussen said in his announcement. "Being the athletic director at Creighton University has been the privilege of my lifetime."

Under Rasmussen's leadership, Creighton athletics has risen to national prominence in a number of areas. His legacy includes 43 regular-season conference titles and 43 conference tournament titles; the hiring of successful coaches; the construction of new facilities in nearly every sport; academic accolades for student-athletes; Creighton's historic move to the BIG EAST Conference in 2013; and record-breaking fundraising campaigns.

Rasmussen recently celebrated 50 years in education, as a teacher, coach and administrator. Before coming to Creighton, he was a successful high school girls basketball coach in Iowa.

"Bruce has been participating in the lives of student-athletes, in one capacity or another, for half a century — creating an incredible legacy of success, revealed in the lives of those he has touched," said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.

"I want to express my deep gratitude to Bruce for his more than four decades of service to Creighton University and his 27 years as athletic director. Through his leadership, Creighton athletics is poised for continued success."



DAVE WEAVER

**"None of what we have achieved could have been accomplished without the collective efforts of everyone who loves the University and our athletics program."**

BRUCE RASMUSSEN

Rasmussen came to Creighton in 1980 to coach the women's basketball team. He would guide the Bluejays to school records for wins in five of his 12 seasons. He then stepped into athletic administration and was named athletic director on Aug. 1, 1994.

He served as chairman of the highly esteemed NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Selection Committee in 2018 in his final year of a five-year term on the committee, and he assisted in keeping the College World Series in Omaha and its move to TD Ameritrade Park through his work with College World Series of Omaha Inc. and the CWS Oversight Committee.

In 2019, Rasmussen became the first four-time recipient of the Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year Award. That same year, he was presented with the Gary Cunningham Lifetime Achievement Award from the Division I-AAA Athletic Directors Association.

Creighton's reputation as one of the nation's top academic institutions is reflected in the success that Bluejay student-athletes have had across the board in the classroom during Rasmussen's service as athletic director. Bluejay student-athletes have achieved GPAs of 3.30 or above in 27 straight semesters entering the fall of 2021.

"None of what we have achieved could have been accomplished without the collective efforts of everyone who loves the University and our athletics program," Rasmussen said. "To all of you, I extend my heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for your encouragement, wisdom and support."

"It has been an extraordinary honor to have served Creighton University — a special place with special people — and being a part of something bigger than myself has been one of the joys of my life."





## Creighton Remembers Walter Scott Jr.

**Accomplished business** and community leader Walter Scott Jr. died on Sept. 25 at the age of 90. A true friend to Creighton and generous benefactor, Scott served on Creighton's Board of Trustees from 1980 to 2001 and was named an emeritus trustee.

"An important reason Creighton stands as one of the finest faith-based universities in the nation today is due to what I consider the 'Scott-Morrison era,'" said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. "Walter Scott, as chair, and the Rev. Michael G. Morrison, SJ, as Creighton's president, prepared us for phenomenal growth, particularly in the area of academic reputation. During this era, we achieved 16 consecutive years as the top university in the Midwest, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Today, we rank in the top third in the prestigious National Universities category."

Scott and his philanthropic partner and wife, Suzanne, who preceded him in death, invested in numerous areas at Creighton, including the construction of the Hixson-Lied Science Building, the Rev. Michael G. Morrison, SJ Stadium, the new School of Dentistry building and the Heider College of Business.



◀ **WALTER SCOTT JR.**

Walter Scott Jr., former chairman and CEO of Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc., died on Sept. 25. He and his late wife, Suzanne, left a lasting legacy at Creighton through the funding of scholarships and facilities.

© An architectural rendering of the new freshmen residence hall, which will house 400 students.

The Scotts received the Manresa Medal from Creighton in 1998. Creighton's Manresa Medal is presented to those individuals who, like St. Ignatius of Loyola, demonstrate inspirational leadership while overcoming obstacles to enduring achievement.

"Of this there is no mistake — Walter and Suzanne Scott loved and believed in their community, enough that they gave everything back to it. And Creighton University will forever be blessed by that singular commitment. May God bless them both," Fr. Hendrickson said.

## New Residence Hall for Freshmen

**The University broke ground** in mid-September on the first residence hall built exclusively for first-year students since the 1960s, and the first new residence hall of any kind since 2006.

The \$37 million hall will be built on 23rd Street, south of Burt Street, just north of McGloin Hall, and will accommodate 400 students. The new residential facility will offer a significant number of suite-style rooms, which permit more independent living and have become the preferred option for students around the nation.

The residence hall will reflect Creighton's commitment to diversity

and inclusion with dedicated interfaith spaces and spaces for wellness and academic support programs. Socialization will be encouraged by construction of an elevated outdoor courtyard for gatherings and events. Completion is expected in time to welcome freshmen for the fall 2023 semester.

## Creighton Hosts Virtual Conference on *Laudato Si'*

**Creighton co-sponsored** a virtual conference on "*Laudato Si'* and the U.S. Catholic Church" this summer with the Catholic Climate Covenant, a non-profit based in Washington, D.C., that attracted more than 2,500 attendees worldwide and featured Cardinal Blase Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, as the keynote speaker.

The biennial event, which focuses on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on climate change, explored the reasons U.S. Catholics have been slow to address the climate crisis with necessary urgency and discussed ways to incorporate climate stewardship into several areas of Church life.

Cardinal Cupich spoke of resisting divisions in today's contentious political climate to find common ground on the issues that matter most.

"Each of us must reject all attempts

to divide us as a people," Cupich said. "We have to understand, as the Holy Father reminds us, that we are faced with ... one complex crisis, which is both social and environmental."

The conference featured several breakout discussions led by teams of ministry leaders about how to more faithfully incorporate *Laudato Si'* into eight areas of the U.S. Catholic Church: advocacy, colleges and universities, communications and media, creation care teams, environmental justice, preaching for creation care, parochial school education and youth and young adults.

## Mission Week 2021 Focuses on Expanding Our Circle of Compassion

**Creighton hosted its** second Mission Week — a celebration of the University's Jesuit, Catholic mission — in September. This year's theme was "Expanding Our Circle of Compassion."

Events included the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit on Creighton's Omaha campus and, for the first time, on the recently opened Phoenix campus. It also included the dedication of the St. Ignatius Chapel on the Phoenix campus.

Creighton's Mission Week keynote address was presented by the Rev. Kevin FitzGerald, SJ, PhD, PhD, who presented in both Omaha and Phoenix. His talk, "Walking with the Excluded: The Significance of the Creighton Approach to Integrating the Humanities with Science and Health Care," focused on the second of four Universal Apostolic Preferences animating the work of the Jesuits worldwide — Walking with the Excluded.

Fr. FitzGerald is an associate professor of medicine, chair of the Department of Medical Humanities and interim dean of the Graduate School. He also is the John A. Creighton University Professor and a nationally recognized molecular biologist and bioethicist.

# Presidential Lecture Series to Focus on Race

**D**uring the spring 2022 semester, Creighton will host four lectures that will focus on race as part of the Presidential Lecture Series. The lecture series is presented in partnership with the Kingfisher Institute for the Liberal Arts and Professions, the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Creighton Intercultural Center. Save these dates to hear from the speakers below. Registration information will be available in early 2022. For more information, please contact [kingfisher@creighton.edu](mailto:kingfisher@creighton.edu).



**Edwidge Danticat**  
Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022 | 7 p.m.  
Hixson-Lied Auditorium, Mike and Josie Harper Center

Edwidge Danticat is the author of numerous books, including *Claire of the Sea Light*, a *New York Times* notable book; *Brother, I'm Dying*, a National Book Critics Circle Award winner and National Book Award finalist; *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, an Oprah Book Club selection; *Krik? Krak!*, a National Book Award finalist; *The Farming of Bones*, an American Book Award winner; *The Dew Breaker*, a PEN/Faulkner Award finalist and winner of the inaugural Story Prize; and *Everything Inside*, a Reese's Book Club pick and winner of the Story Prize. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, she has been published in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times* and elsewhere.



**Damon Tweedy, MD**  
Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022 | Time TBD  
Norton Ballroom  
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building  
Creighton University Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix

Damon Tweedy, MD, associate professor of psychiatry at Duke University School of Medicine and a staff psychiatrist at the Durham Veteran Affairs Health Care System, is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Black Man in a White Coat*.



**Colson Whitehead**  
Tuesday, March 1, 2022 | 7 p.m.  
Hixson-Lied Auditorium, Mike and Josie Harper Center

A versatile modern voice, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner Colson Whitehead is the author of, most notably, *The Underground Railroad* (recently adapted for Netflix) and *The Nickel Boys*.



**Isabel Wilkerson**  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022 | 7 p.m.  
Wayne and Eileen Ryan Athletic Center/DJ Sokol Arena

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Humanities Medal, Isabel Wilkerson is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Warmth of Other Suns* and *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.







## Rowing Through the Storm, Women Share Cancer Journey

BY EUGENE CURTIN

The rising sun, an oft-used metaphor for renewal and hope, carries vivid meaning for a group of women who gathered at 5:30 a.m. twice a week, for six weeks, during the summer.

Stronger Together Rowing is a three-year-old program led by two Creighton rowing coaches and by members of the current women's rowing

team. They invite women survivors of cancer, and women currently being treated for cancer, to gather for support, friendship and a dose of healthy exercise courtesy of the ancient sport of rowing.

As the rising sun paints pink and golden hues across the landscape, they gather at the edge of Carter Lake near Omaha's Eppley Airfield while their younger members, or Creighton rowing student-athletes, carry the heavy boats from the boathouse to the water.

Joy Dobrauc, BA'02, and Bree Rochford, BSW'09, both formerly competitive rowers for

Creighton and now associate rowing coaches at the University, monitor the proceedings. They're not looking to develop competitive rowers, of course. They are simply building a support team in the face of a health challenge that statistics show will impact 17% of women.

"We work with women who are survivors of all sorts of cancers, and also women who are in treatment for cancer," Rochford says. "Most people don't have any rowing experience, so there is an introduction to the equipment and to technique before we do any rowing at all.

"Some people ask if it's a support group.

I think of it as an active recovery group. We're not standing in a circle and talking about our experiences, although that of course can certainly happen. But it's not the main focus. The focus is on coming together, teaching one another and learning from one another."

Dobrauc, while a coach, is also a survivor. Diagnosed with breast cancer about two years ago, she joined the Stronger Together Rowing program and found a group of women deeply committed to encouraging one another on the path to recovery.

"This was a nice group of ladies already there to help support me on my journey, and so that first summer I participated as both a participant and a coach," she says. "It's a great group of women — cool, just a cool experience. Cancer's a terrible thing, but this is an opportunity to participate in something special."

Stronger Together Rowing is modeled after a Chicago-based national program called Recovery on Water, Dobrauc says. Unlike that program, however, it is not limited to women who are survivors of breast cancer but is open to women survivors of any cancer.

"We wanted to be a little more inclusive," Dobrauc says. "But we pretty much copied what they do — imitation, I suppose, being the highest form of flattery."

Stronger Together Rowing is sponsored by Nebraska Cancer Specialists, one of Nebraska's leading oncology practices, a sponsorship that has enabled the purchase of training equipment as well as helping to cover operational costs.

"They are very supportive of wellness programs for survivors and individuals who are battling cancer," Rochford says.

Although little data exists from randomized trials detailing the relationship between cancer survival and physical exercise, observational studies suggest a clear advantage, according to Peter Silberstein, MD, professor of medicine in the Creighton School of Medicine and chief of hematology/oncology at CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center — Bergan Mercy.

"In multiple observational studies in breast cancer survivors there is a 50% reduction in the overall death rate and a 28% reduction in death from breast cancer in the most active versus the least active survivors," he says.

“

The very best part, other than the fact that none of us fell out of the boat, was the amazing people, every single one of them, who were so kind, so caring, so encouraging and so funny. We laughed a lot, sometimes so hard it was difficult to row.

”

JUDY GALE, DPT'02

"In people with colon cancer, studies showed about a 50% reduction in colon cancer mortality in those patients with higher levels of physical activity. These studies were controlled for stage, colorectal risk factors and Body Mass Index (weight)."

Judy Gale, DPT'02, now retired but formerly an associate professor and vice chair for Creighton's Department of Physical Therapy, stepped in the boat just this year — 17 years

after a pancreatic cancer diagnosis. Informed about the program by a friend, Gale says she was happy to join a program stressing physical exercise.

"As a physical therapist, I know how important exercise is in dealing with cancer to maintain strength, flexibility and mobility," she says. "However, I didn't know exactly what to expect that first morning of rowing as we gathered in the dark.

"What I found was a wonderful group of women. There were the cancer survivors, the coaches, many of the young women currently on the rowing team, and even some alumni of the team. All were there to share the experience, and quickly became my friends."

Rowing, an Olympic sport since 1900, has its techniques, of course, and Gale says learning those was part of the fun.

"It's hard to describe the feeling of slowly — very slowly in my case — learning to row, learning the language of rowing, using muscles not frequently tapped, moving in unfamiliar ways, finding joy in occasionally actually rowing correctly and synchronously," she says.

"The very best part, other than the fact that none of us fell out of the boat, was the amazing people, every single one of them, who were so kind, so caring, so encouraging and so funny. We laughed a lot, sometimes so hard it was difficult to row.

"And all this as the sun came up."

Interested in learning more? Contact Bree Rochford at [brianna.rochford@gmail.com](mailto:brianna.rochford@gmail.com).



© From left are Dianna Hite; Joy Dobrauc, BA'02; Christine Billings, BA'00; Rhonda Sell; Judy Gale, DPT'02; and Mary Illig.



# Meet the Freshman Class

Creighton welcomed its second-largest freshman class in University history this fall, with an impressive group of 1,130 first-year students. Here are some facts about the class.

## ACADEMICALLY

**36%** ranked in the top 10% of their high school class

**More than 45** were either a valedictorian or salutatorian

**Nearly 40%** had a high school GPA of 4.0 or higher

**A quarter of the class** had an ACT score of 30 or better

## BIOGRAPHICALLY AND DEMOGRAPHICALLY

**57%** are female, **43%** male

**28%** enrich the class with racial and ethnic distinction

**26%** are Creighton legacies, having had parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents or siblings attend Creighton

**12%** are first-generation students, or the first in their families to attend college

**80%** participated in volunteer service in high school

## GEOGRAPHICALLY

**More than 40%** come from more than 400 miles away

**15 states** are represented with 10 or more students

**States** with the greatest representation:

- > Nebraska: 260
- > Minnesota: 159
- > Colorado: 105
- > Kansas: 71

**61** students are from Hawaii

**16** students are from international locations



“Class of 2025, let us have a great journey together. Dive into your hearts and minds. Reach out widely, and curiously, and compassionately. And as you journey, be blessed.”

REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ, PHD



# From 9/11 to COVID, Exploring Loss and Grief During Times of Tragedy

Creighton experts discuss grieving for loved ones lost to mass tragedies

BY BLAKE URSCH

**T**he death of a loved one is a devastating blow under any circumstances.

But in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks, all too many Americans learned what it was like to lose someone in the most public and tragic of ways. It's a reality that millions more are facing today, as the death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed more than 700,000 Americans so far, continues to rise.

These events have become permanently embedded in the national discourse. They are regularly covered in the media, and they crop up in daily conversation. So, for those who have experienced a loss because of these tragedies, the process of working through grief, while always unique, can be a little more complicated.

"When you start thinking about two of the biggest national disasters we've ever had, one of them was 9/11 and the other is COVID-19," says Ronn Johnson, PhD, professor in the School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and associate dean for Diversity and Inclusion. "They're both public tragedies, but the issues underlying them psychologically are a lot different."

The immediate aftermath of 9/11, Johnson says, was characterized by a widespread feeling of national solidarity. The narrative, expressed in news reports from across the country, was one of a nation, united in grief, coming together to support one another as neighbors and friends.

"We could all see 9/11 happening before our eyes. We could all see the planes flying into those buildings, and in a very real, very public way, you could see the anguish people were experiencing," Johnson says. "That was the last time I can recall seeing the nation as



a whole rally around a particular incident and feel a sense of Americanism."

That's quite a different story from the narrative that has emerged from the pandemic, which has been awash in political invective almost from the beginning. And the tone of the national discourse could, indeed, impact the personal process of grief for someone who lost a loved one in either tragedy.

But more important than media coverage, Johnson says, working through grief hinges on having a personal network of support: "You get your support from the people who are closest to you, from your friends and your family members," he says.

Mourning in community is a tradition found in almost all human cultures, says Jill Brown, PhD, professor in the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences. The process always involves a commonly accepted series of rituals.

Mourning rituals, even simple ones, help a person re-encode a devastating experience in the brain, Brown says. The outward expression of mourning adds new layers of experience to the initial shock and heartache, making it easier for the grieving person to move forward.

Studies have shown that mourning rituals, even nonreligious ones, can have a positive impact on people working through grief, Brown says.

In the West, mourning has traditionally meant wearing black or dark clothing, with friends and neighbors coming together to bring meals to the grieving family. But for decades, even these basic traditions have been on the decline as the idea of formal public mourning fades away.

"Even our funeral rituals are so divorced from real human connection," Brown says. "We take the bodies to a professional. We don't know



© Jill Brown, PhD, professor of psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, left, and Ronn Johnson, PhD, professor in the School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and associate dean for Diversity and Inclusion.

what happens to them. They make them look like they're still alive, and we don't get to touch our dead."

Within this context, Brown says, the idea of public mourning in the wake of mass tragedies such as COVID and 9/11 could offer some measure of comfort to affected families. Memorial events, such as candlelight vigils, prayer services and benefit fundraisers, can stand in for the formalized mourning rituals of the past, she says.

And in the face of contentious political narrative or unwelcome news coverage that serves as a difficult reminder of the initial loss, that sense of ritual can serve an even more essential function.

"Maybe that's when ritual becomes even more important," Brown says. "It's a public acknowledgment of what's happening. These public rituals and remembrances might be more important at a time when things are so polarized.

"I really do think that there's something about how these rituals help us retell the story of loss. That's what growing is. You're reworking the story from something so terrible and painful to something more manageable."

"We could all see 9/11 happening before our eyes. We could all see the planes flying into those buildings, and in a very real, very public way, you could see the anguish people were experiencing. That was the last time I can recall seeing the nation as a whole rally around a particular incident and feel a sense of Americanism."

RONN JOHNSON, PHD





Creighton University started with a single gift. It continues – today, tomorrow, always – because of your generosity.

# The Gift of Creighton

BY Micah Mertes

Creighton University was built on a foundation of generosity. Every gift given since, no matter the size, has paid tribute to this bedrock belief – that the legacy we leave lies not in ourselves but in the moments we’ve lived for others. That in the end, it’s our acts of kindness and compassion that endure.

Members of the Creighton family achieved great success in their lifetimes. But today they’re remembered not for what they gained but what they gave. To the University, to the city, to the state.

The Creightons are remembered, wrote historian Alfred Sorenson, for a university that will “ever remain a deserved, noble monument” to its founders. Their generosity lives on in the spirit of our alumni and in the faith and service of the many donors who make sure Creighton continues to thrive.

As a private university, Creighton has always relied on the generosity of its alumni and friends to maintain this level of education. Donors make the Creighton experience possible – by funding scholarships, supporting their school or college and making gifts to the essential programs,

services and facilities that thousands of students depend on every day.

Large and transformative gifts like those of the Creighton family have marked much of our history. But each year, thousands of donors show their love for Creighton through smaller gifts, and it all adds up to a huge collective impact for our students.

A commemorative at the University’s 100th anniversary said it best: “Creighton University has gone far beyond the expectations of a pioneer’s dream. It was a bright and fascinating vision, transformed today into a shining monument by the faith and efforts of those who believe in our mission.”

We call on the Creighton community – join us in the Forward Blue campaign. Together, we will share the gift of Creighton for generations to come.



Long before she left the gift that founded the University, **Mary Lucretia Creighton** (top left) would go to the poorest parts of Omaha to give money to those most in need. Her horse (named “Billy”) was known throughout the city.

**Edward Creighton** (top right) regretted his lack of education and often expressed his dream to start a college. After his death and before her own, his wife, Mary Lucretia, fulfilled his wishes, committing a gift that would go on to establish a Jesuit, Catholic university in the frontier town of Omaha.

Visiting the University (then Creighton College), **Sarah Emily Creighton** (bottom left) was distressed by the Jesuits’ accommodations. She and her husband, John (Edward’s brother), made a gift to build them a new residence, erecting a south wing to the main building.

At his 75th birthday party, instead of receiving gifts, **John Creighton** (bottom right) gave one to the University. He reportedly told his guests: “I have one child, and that is Creighton University.”



# What to know about making a gift to Creighton's campaign.

## WHAT IS FORWARD BLUE?

It's the largest, most comprehensive fundraising campaign in Creighton's history. (See the attached publication for more details about Forward Blue.)

## WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN?

The Forward Blue campaign is a concentrated effort over an extended period of time to celebrate Creighton's mission, while raising funds to ensure that mission endures.

Creighton launches fundraising campaigns no more than once a decade. In past campaigns, thousands of donors have made gifts. Creighton is what it is today largely because of the alumni and friends who have supported successful campaigns along the way.

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW CAMPAIGNS HAVE SHAPED CREIGHTON?

Many of the campus buildings still standing today were constructed during campaigns. To name a few: Deglman, Gallagher, Kiewit and Swanson residence halls, Becker dining hall, the Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library, the Rigge Science Building, the Criss Complex, and the Kiewit Fitness and Skutt Student centers.

But campaigns are about more than buildings.

Look back to 1950, and you'll see a university in crisis. Post-war, enrollment had dropped. Campus facilities were dilapidated. Creighton President the Rev. Carl M. Reinert, SJ, began his tenure with a commitment to transform the University. The best way to do so? Deepening Creighton's ties to its surrounding community and dedicated base of alumni and friends.

It led to vital community partnerships and donor support of scholarships, operational expenses and academic and spiritual programs. Over the next few decades, Creighton embraced its base and grew significantly — both in the number of students and programs. Yet the University never lost sight of its Jesuit, Catholic identity.

## WHY SHOULD I GIVE TO CREIGHTON?

It's this simple: Creighton depends on its donors.

As a private university, Creighton can't rely on federal or state funding. The University needs the support of donors to continue giving our students a top-tier education in the Jesuit tradition. Donors support our students through gifts to scholarships, academics, programs, mission and improvements to our campuses in Omaha and Phoenix.

Every gift to Creighton is actually multiple gifts — a gift to our students, a gift to the University, a gift to our surrounding communities. Creighton and Omaha's roots are forever interwoven, and our great partnership continues. Each year, Creighton brings thousands of out-of-state students to Omaha, many who then start their careers here, enriching the region's workforce across multiple fields.

In the years ahead, Creighton will continue to boldly extend its reach and influence while preserving the mission, values and community ties that define us. Donors like you will make this possible.

## WHY ARE GIFTS TO CREIGHTON NECESSARY IF STUDENTS ARE PAYING TUITION?

Tuition alone doesn't fully cover what it costs to educate our students. It covers about two-thirds of it. The cost to run Creighton each day is \$1.153 million.

## WHY DOES IT COST MORE TO RUN CREIGHTON THAN WHAT TUITION IS COVERING?

A Creighton education costs more because it gives more. And we mean that quite literally.

Each year, Creighton budgets nearly twice as much for each student's instructional expense as public institutions nationwide. Creighton also budgets 65% more for student services than the national average. And it shows.

Our faculty and staff have the time and space to focus on teaching and serving our students first. We give our students a markedly more

personalized education, through smaller class sizes — an 11:1 student-to-faculty ratio — and the programs and services that help them flourish.

"Creighton has a myriad of degree programs, outstanding faculty, wonderful academic advisors, and tremendous services and opportunities," says Wayne Young Jr., BA'93, PhD, associate vice provost for student retention and student development. "Students and parents know that Creighton is the type of school you never leave because Creighton will help you succeed."

After a deeply challenging year, Creighton's retention rates were among its highest ever for returning sophomores. Creighton also set University records for retention of juniors and seniors. Student graduation rates, meanwhile, are significantly higher than the national averages for public and private universities. And of our graduates, 97% are employed, serving their communities or enrolled in a graduate or professional school within six months of graduation.

## WHAT IS CREIGHTON'S MOST PRESSING AREA OF NEED?

Without question, scholarships. Scholarships are one of the top deciding factors for thousands of students who choose Creighton. In the coming years, scholarships will be even more essential.

After the 2008 recession, the U.S. birthrate declined sharply and has not yet recovered. Colleges and universities will now compete for a smaller number of potential students. Scholarships are our most effective means to continue attracting excellent students to Creighton while maintaining our reputation across nine schools and colleges.

We know what the future brings, and, with your support of scholarships, we plan to get ahead of it.

## Scholarships are Creighton's No. 1 fundraising priority.

When it comes to maintaining Creighton's excellence, nothing is more important than scholarships. Nearly all of our students rely on scholarships or financial aid. They're one of the most important factors in bringing great students to Creighton and sustaining our strong enrollment numbers. When you make a gift to scholarships, you offer our excellent students access to one of the best educational opportunities in the country.

The next generation of Jesuit-educated leaders begins with your generosity.

# The Key to the Creighton Experience

The Creighton opportunity: Scholarship recipients express their gratitude — for the education they're receiving and the donors who make it possible.



**Robyn Acob, BSN'21**  
College of Nursing  
Class of 2021

"Scholarship donors have made our Creighton experience possible. They've made our families proud. They've given us the opportunity to pursue lives full of service and purpose."



**Efren Garcia, BS'21**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Class of 2021

"I can't imagine having picked any other college. I'd be an entirely different person. This education shows you how to harness your own gifts. It shapes your path. It gives you a sense of who you are."



**Jada Glover, BSB'20**  
Heider College of Business  
Class of 2020

"You are supporting so many opportunities, and you are inspiring us to make the most of every one of them. I've worked as a student caller with the Creighton Phonathon, and I will tell you what I told people over the phone: When you make a gift to Creighton, you might not know whose life you're changing, but you are changing someone's life."



**Kahiau Cockett-Nagamine**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Class of 2022

"It really makes me happy to know that there are people out there supporting students like me. Creighton alumni really care about the school and what it did for them. For them to pay it back for our generation is amazing."



**Adrienne Pyle, BA'17, MD'21**  
School of Medicine  
Class of 2021

"Even before I arrived at Creighton, I sensed the University's strong sense of mission and community. That feeling, that dedication to service and justice and advocacy, has only been multiplied and magnified in the eight years since — affirmed hundreds of times over. To donors who give to Creighton, I don't know if I'll ever be able to say thank you enough for making this journey possible."



**Kevin Zeller**  
Heider College of Business  
Class of 2022

"Any college matures students to an extent. But Creighton — with its Jesuit values and amazing professors — sends you into the world fully prepared and ready to do some good."





COLIN CONCES



# FORWARD BLUE

Forward Blue is a call to all our alumni and friends to take part in an extraordinary moment for Creighton University. It's a time that sees state-of-the-art facilities rising across our Omaha campus, the opening of a new health sciences campus in Phoenix and one of the largest freshman classes in Creighton's history.

Forward Blue is the largest and most comprehensive fundraising campaign in our history — a student-focused and mission-driven vision for Creighton's future, prioritizing scholarships, campus improvements and investments in our academics and programs. To keep Creighton thriving — to continue giving our students a life-changing Jesuit education — we need your support.

**To learn more about Forward Blue and how you can make a gift to support Creighton, see the attached publication. Or make a gift to Forward Blue at [creighton.edu/supportforwardblue](https://creighton.edu/supportforwardblue).**

## IF IT'S A PRECARIOUS TIME FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, WHY DID CREIGHTON BUILD A NEW CAMPUS IN PHOENIX? WHY IS CREIGHTON GROWING?

Creighton is making bold moves like building the Phoenix campus largely in response to the changes in higher education. Bringing our singular health sciences education to Arizona not only expands our pipeline of talented health care professionals to an area direly in need of them, it makes a Creighton education a much more prominent option for students in another part of the country. The Phoenix campus is an investment in our future.

Creighton's history is marked by many such acts of courage in the face of uncertainty. We adapt to the times. We find opportunities for the University to move forward without sacrificing our Jesuit, Catholic identity. We will continue to extend our reach. But no matter what, the foundation remains the same.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

Gifts of all sizes make a difference every day, and our students benefit from every act of generosity. Every gift — whether \$10, \$100 or more — adds up to something extraordinary.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

No two Creighton experiences are exactly alike. We know that alumni and friends have their own personal reasons for believing Creighton is an amazing place, their own feeling or memory that connects them to campus. Maybe a favorite professor comes to mind. Or a class that changed your perspective. Perhaps it's as simple as the joy of a happenstance encounter along the mall or a quiet morning in St. John's.

One unifying thread of all Creighton experiences? Someone was there for me. In past surveys, graduating seniors and alumni said the strongest aspects of their Creighton experience were smaller class sizes, access to faculty/staff and the overall sense of community.

To everyone who's ever felt supported by this community, we ask that you be there for our students now. If you love Creighton, if you care about the thousands of students who call it home — join us.

Make a gift. Support Forward Blue. Together, we'll make sure that Creighton remains Creighton — today, tomorrow, always.



KENT SIEVERS

# Celebrating Forward Blue

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, launched the Forward Blue campaign at a special campus event in October.

"With the launch of this campaign, Creighton moves forward with bold determination," Fr. Hendrickson told a crowd of hundreds of donors, alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students. Fr. Hendrickson also announced the fundraising goal for Forward Blue — \$650 million — and the news that Creighton is building a new residence for the Jesuits.

In addition to presentations from Fr. Hendrickson and others, the event featured an interactive experience (pictured above) highlighting Creighton's rich history and bold future. The evening was made possible by the Heider Family Foundation and Scott and Cindy Heider (pictured right).



DAVE WEAVER





DAVE WEAVER

# Creighton Names New AD

Blossom Excited for the Opportunity to Lead Creighton Athletics

BY Rick Davis, BA'88

**M**arcus Blossom was introduced as Creighton's new McCormick Endowed Athletic Director at an on-campus news conference on Aug. 31, and officially began his duties as the senior administrator for Creighton athletics at the end of September.

The former athletic director at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, said the welcome he received from the Creighton and Omaha communities was "nothing short of remarkable." His two young daughters, Maya (8) and Mora (5), apparently agreed.

"I heard one of them say last night, 'This is the best day ever!' Blossom said as he opened his introductory news conference. "When your daughters say, 'This is the best day ever,' you did something pretty cool as a dad."

Blossom steps enthusiastically into the role of athletic director — excited about the opportunity to lead a successful Bluejay program and to compete for BIG EAST and national championships.

"I'm extremely confident that we are going to win BIG EAST championships," Blossom said. "That's one of my expectations.

"And I think if you're winning BIG EAST championships, you're one of the best programs in the country, one of the best teams in the country, and you can make deep runs in the NCAA Tournament and compete for national championships."

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, said, the University has found in Blossom a collaborative and passionate leader, an individual called by faith, grounded in mission and family, familiar with Jesuit higher learning and committed to excellence.

"I am truly delighted to have Marcus directing the future of our program," Fr. Hendrickson said. "Personally, I was struck by Marcus' incredible level of thoughtfulness, preparation, and graciousness. He is clearly and certainly a very capable administrator with a masterful grasp of both the near- and long-term challenges facing college athletics."

Blossom succeeds Bruce Rasmussen as Creighton's athletic director. Rasmussen retired in August after 41 years at Creighton and 27 years as AD. Blossom and Fr. Hendrickson both praised Rasmussen for his incredible legacy of service.

"Bruce's leadership of this department, what he's done for Creighton, his impact on college athletics have been tremendous," Blossom said. "That was one of the reasons that made me attracted to this opportunity."

"I would like to thank Bruce for the blessing of his leadership, his legacy, and his service to Creighton," Fr. Hendrickson said. "He has been the architect of an incredible athletics program here." (You can read more about Rasmussen's legacy on Page 7.)

Blossom's selection as athletic director came after an expeditious yet thorough national search. Creighton trustee and alumnus Mark Walter, BSB'82, co-founder of Guggenheim Partners and chairman of the Los Angeles Dodgers, was a member of the search advisory committee and described the process as "smart, consultative and comprehensive." Fr. Hendrickson said he reached out broadly in the process and thanked the advisory team for their intensive engagement, which, he admitted, included "some late-night calls from their president."

Blossom said he was attracted to Creighton's tradition of academic excellence and its firm commitment to its Jesuit mission and values. In Creighton, he saw a University not only committed to graduating student-athletes, but to "developing leaders through service to others and through a focus on the common good."

During his two years at Holy Cross, Blossom oversaw an athletics program, with 27 Division I sports, that ranked first in the nation in overall graduation success rate, at 99%.

He also made eight head coaching hires, oversaw a football program that won consecutive Patriot League championships and led the development of the athletic department's first strategic plan.

Before joining Holy Cross, Blossom spent five years at Boston College, another Jesuit school, where he served as senior associate athletics director for business and administration. There, he was a member of the executive team and assisted with all aspects of strategic planning and vision execution for the department of athletics.

His former boss at Boston College, current UCLA athletic director Martin Jarmond, told the *Omaha World-Herald* that Blossom is a "natural born leader" and "always sees the bigger picture."

Blossom also served in administrative roles at Providence College, a BIG EAST institution, Brown University and Central Michigan, and worked as an assistant director of championships for the NCAA.

**"I can assure you that we're going to do great things. We're going to do spectacular things. We're going to win championships. And we're going to do it together. And I can't wait to get to work. Go Jays!"**

MARCUS BLOSSOM

The 42-year-old holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Northeastern University, a master's degree in sports management from West Virginia University and an MBA from the University of Rhode Island.

A collegiate athlete himself, Blossom played basketball at Northeastern in Boston, where he was a three-time GTE District I Academic All-American and three-time all-conference selection. A Chicago-area native and the youngest of eight children, Blossom was not highly recruited out of Rich South High School.

At least not to play basketball. He did receive a full-ride presidential scholarship from the University of Illinois for academics.

Instead, he decided to follow his dream and headed to Boston.

Through determination and a strong work ethic — traits that have carried over into his administrative career — Blossom not only earned a starting spot on the team, he led the Huskies in scoring his junior year and ranks 12th all-time among Northeastern's leading scorers.

During the press conference, he reached out to Creighton's current student-athletes and expressed his commitment to providing them with an excellent collegiate experience and an environment that is inclusive, equitable and "consistently lives by our great Jesuit principles on a daily basis."

"I can't wait to support you. I can't wait to meet you. I can't wait to do whatever I can to help your journey," he said. "You're the reason I got into college athletics. I was one of you. Being a positive influence on your journey is extremely, extremely important to me."

To the coaching and administrative staff, he added, "I'll be there. I'll listen. I'll challenge you. And I expect you to do the same for me."

He also praised the Omaha community and the Creighton fan base for their support for Creighton athletics, saying that attendance at men's basketball games, which pre-pandemic consistently ranked among the top 10 in the nation averaging more than 17,000 fans per game, is a "distinguishing factor for us."

Finally, he addressed Creighton's "great alumni" and former student-athletes, both in Omaha and points nationally and around the world. "If you see me, and I have on the Creighton Bluejay polo, please stop and say hello. I want to meet you. I want to get a chance to talk to you."

Before heading off for a tour of campus with his wife, Karli, and two daughters, Blossom expressed his gratitude.

"I would like to thank the entire Creighton family for this amazing opportunity," he said. "I can assure you that we're going to do great things. We're going to do spectacular things. We're going to win championships. And we're going to do it together. And I can't wait to get to work. Go Jays!"





# Putting Our Students First

BY Micah Mertes

Creighton is committed to doing more for our first-generation students, through programs, scholarships and the campus resources our learners need to thrive.



**“At Creighton, it goes beyond school and academics. I’ve been afforded an opportunity not only to go to a great college. I’ve joined a community. I’ve found a home.”**

**ANGELINA MANASAN**  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, CLASS OF 2022

**C**reighton student Angelina Manasan’s liver failed before her first birthday, and every year since has been a fight for the life she wants to lead.

Her mother gave her half of her own liver when a match couldn’t be found. This saved Manasan’s life but left her with an autoimmune disease. Ever since, she’s been in and out of hospitals, her mother by her side.

So, moving from San Diego to Omaha for college — 1,600 miles away from the literal life-support system of her mother — was no easy decision for Manasan, a student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

As a woman of color with a health condition, raised by a single mother (who didn’t go to college herself), Manasan’s odds of attaining a degree were stacked against her. It was vital to find the right school.

She fell in love with Creighton, in part, because even before she was a student, people at the University shared how they could best support her.

Her freshman year, donor-funded scholarships helped her pay tuition and fees. Almost immediately, she was in touch with Creighton’s Disability Services office and TRiO Student Support Services. They’ve been there for Manasan every time she’s needed help. As have her peers and professors. Everyone, she said, has supported her not just as a student but as a whole person.

“At Creighton, it goes beyond school and

academics,” she says. “I’ve been afforded an opportunity not only to go to a great college. I’ve joined a community. I’ve found a home.”

**WHEN IT COMES TO** first-generation Creighton students — a student whose parents or guardians did not obtain a four-year degree from a college or university — Manasan’s story is among the ideal. She’s a student from an underrepresented background who found a support system that helps her thrive academically and become part of a community.

That support system includes scholarships and a network of student services and organizations. It includes a community of faculty, staff and alumni committed to meeting the everyday needs of each and every student throughout their Creighton journey. (This support system now extends to the Southwest. This semester, the newly opened Creighton Health Sciences Campus — Phoenix welcomed its first group of four-year medical students, 1 in 5 of which are first-generation.)

“Creighton University is devoted to the success of first-generation students,” says Mardell Wilson, EdD, Creighton provost. “And our innovative programming has provided a welcoming and supportive environment.”

Because of its many programs designed to ensure the success of first-generation students, Creighton was recently awarded the designation of First-gen Forward by the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in

Higher Education and the Suder Foundation.

As a First-gen Forward institution, Creighton’s faculty and staff will have new opportunities to engage with peer institutions also committed to creating more inclusive environments for first-generation students.

Ideally, the effect of this commitment will be cumulative and self-reinforcing. Creating more opportunities for students from underrepresented walks of life leads to a more diverse campus, ethnically and socioeconomically.

“I would like to see more first-generation students like me at Creighton,” says Diana Rojas-Chavez, a Distance Pathway pharmacy student in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. “Offering scholarships and programs creates opportunities that many first-generation students may have not even thought possible.”

More diversity generates more diversity, creating a richer variety of experiences and an even more welcoming campus. A home.

**CREIGHTON’S RECOGNITION** as a First-gen Forward institution shows the University’s commitment to embracing the ways first-generation students enrich our campus, says Krystal Rice, BA’08, director of TRiO Student Support Services (SSS).

“Across campus,” she says, “we will continue to build programming that lifts these students’ voices and equips campus partners with the resources they need.”

The University recently launched a campus-wide effort to serve first-generation students,



combining programs that are already doing a lot of good — like TRiO SSS — with new initiatives.

Joe Ecklund, PhD, who oversees Creighton’s Educational Opportunity Programs, says Creighton is committed to doing more for first-generation students. Ecklund is the co-chair of Creighton’s newly formed First-generation Forward Council.

“With this council,” he says, “we’re really exploring, ‘What does the social experience for first-generation students look like? What does the academic experience look like? What are the issues our students face?’

“Over this academic year, you’re going to begin to see a lot more initiatives and energy focused on direct services, programs and activities dedicated to supporting first-generation students.”

One initiative is already underway — the Creighton First Community. The program connects incoming first-generation students with

current first-generation students, offering a peer-to-peer support system.

“Through this program, students will know who they can connect with on campus, someone who knows what they’re going through,” says Justin Stoeckle, BSBA’14, assistant director for transitions in Student Life and co-chair of the First-Generation Forward Council.

Stoeckle says that all aspects of the effort to support first-generation students at Creighton — the council, the programs, the coordination of resources — will be designed to provide a more holistic, organic approach. Not to tell the students what they need but to ask them what they need. And then help provide it.

“Above all, there’s this yearning for a sense of community,” Stoeckle says. “For first-generation students, we want to cultivate a space where we can celebrate the fact that what these students are doing is wonderful. That Creighton is lucky to have them and that we’re a better community for it.”

## Learn More, Provide Support

Interested in learning more about the resources and opportunities available for first-generation students at Creighton? Contact [creightonfirst@creighton.edu](mailto:creightonfirst@creighton.edu).

Please consider making a gift to scholarships supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds and first-generation students. Find a list of giving opportunities at [alumni.creighton.edu/diversity-and-inclusion-scholarships](http://alumni.creighton.edu/diversity-and-inclusion-scholarships).



# First-Gen

First-generation students discuss their Creighton experience



“I will take into my community all the skills and values I’m learning. My Jesuit education will inform every encounter with every client I ever serve.”

**CÉSAR MAGAÑA LINARES**  
SCHOOL OF LAW, CLASS OF 2022



**JACOB IDRA**  
Heider College of Business  
Class of 2022

Born in the South Sudan and raised in North Omaha, Jacob says it’s his life’s mission to serve the next generation of children in each of his communities.

“Academically, Creighton has been everything I would want and more. I’ve been challenged in the classroom. I’ve had great professors who I’ve been able to engage with. It’s been great to have many options to utilize as a first-generation student. If I’m really going through a tough time, I’ll know where to find someone I can trust and rely on.”

**More about Jacob:** In 2018, he founded the Omaha-based nonprofit ROSS Leaders, which aims to unify the South Sudanese and Greater African communities through programs dedicated to education, health and cultural awareness. He’s also an advocate for educational opportunities, writing editorials and testifying before the Nebraska Legislature on the topic.

“Everything I’m learning and experiencing at Creighton — it’s all going to go back into supporting my communities,” he says.



**ALISON SUNDRUP**  
Heider College of Business  
Class of 2023

Alison was adopted from China and raised by a single mother. It means everything to her mom that she’s getting a great education.

“Everyone is very supportive at Creighton, but they also don’t treat you like you’re someone at a disadvantage because you’re first-generation. As a first-generation student, I always strive to be

better, because I know so many other people haven’t had the chance to go to college. I pray that in the future I can give back to students wishing to better their lives.”

**More about Alison:** At Creighton, she’s taken part in service projects through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, tutoring children after school. She recently secured an internship in the advisory department of a major accounting firm.

“While we’re getting a great education at Creighton, we’re also learning how to better the world,” she says. “I really love the emphasis on community service at Creighton because it reminds us all that we were called by God to help others and spread love.”



**KRISTINA DAVIS**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Class of 2022

The first semester of her freshman year, Kristina struggled. Her family had no experience with college and managing that transition 400 miles from her hometown had been difficult. Then, during Christmas break, the unthinkable happened — Kristina lost her sister in a car accident.

“It was so hard to come back to Creighton after that. But I remember that next semester, sitting down with Krystal Rice (SSS director), and she cried with me and supported me, and I realized how much love she has for me and her other students. It would have been easy for me to slip through the cracks and not finish college. But she helped me pull through.

“Once I admitted to myself that I needed help, I knew where to find it. People like Krystal and my professors, they’ve helped me in so many ways. They’ve genuinely cared for me as a person. You feel

cared for at Creighton, and I don’t know if I would have found that anywhere else.”

**More about Kristina:** For her final semester at Creighton, Kristina is conducting research in the Psychology Department and doing an internship at a therapist’s office. After graduation, the small-town Nebraska native plans to travel the world, doing research and taking part in volunteer organizations.



**TAYLOR FRY**  
College of Nursing  
Class of 2023

When Taylor was a sophomore in high school, her little sister spent seven months in Children’s Hospital in Omaha being treated for acute myeloid leukemia. (Her sister is now in remission.) Before that moment, Taylor hadn’t really considered pursuing a career in health care. But the way the nurses cared for her sister and family made her want to care for others herself someday.

Five years later, she’s not only a Creighton nursing student, she’s a nursing intern at Children’s Hospital. On her second day of training, she worked on the same floor where her sister was treated and found many of the same nurses who cared for her.

“It’s surreal to now be on the other side of things and get to help take care of families who are in the same position that my family was.”

**More about Taylor:** At Creighton, Taylor says she’s learning to be the kind of nurse that made her want to be a nurse in the first place.

“It can be tough being a first-generation student,” she says. “But Creighton has done a great job of supporting me through everything — from the counselors to the financial aid office to organizations like Student Support Services. People are here to help you, and they’re just really clear about

what you need to get done so you can do what you want to do with your life.

“I’ve still got two years left in the College of Nursing, and I’m already getting to do what feels like my life’s purpose.”



**CELINA PRINCE,**  
MS’16, DDS’21  
School of Dentistry

“Creighton is a really supportive community. My professors were so accessible, and a few have been a huge influence on me. And the support I received from scholarships just reveals that sense of community at Creighton.

“As a first-generation student from a small, rural town, I’ve had a profound experience being surrounded by such brilliant and ambitious people.”

**More about Celina:** When the dental school clinic would get a new patient with high fear or anxiety, they would often send them to Celina. Her personality puts people at ease. She’s not afraid to relate her own experiences. And she’s all the better dentist for it.

This realization has shaped her career plans. One day, she says, she hopes to own her own practice and create “a sanctuary” for patients with high dental anxiety.



**CÉSAR MAGAÑA LINARES**  
School of Law  
Class of 2022

César’s family moved from El Salvador to America when he was 2, and he’s spent most of his life in Fremont, Nebraska, and Omaha. He’s also a first-generation college student who has thrived at Creighton, thanks

to the support of scholarships and the law school’s dedicated faculty and staff.

“I love being a Creighton law student. I love the University’s passion for fighting for the marginalized. I love the talent and dedication of the law faculty, who are always there to offer advice or encouragement.”

**More about César:** During his time in the School of Law so far, César has worked as an immigration activist, a full-time law clerk, a full-time intern for Yale Law School’s Worker & Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic, president of multiple Creighton student groups, a mentor to first-year law students and as a member of the Creighton Scholars Program.



**CHARLES D’ALESSANDRO**  
School of Medicine  
Class of 2022

Initially planning to specialize in psychiatry, Charles changed his career plans after participating in the Project CURA service trip following his first year of medical school. While abroad in Pune, India, he discovered a passion for working with kids and now plans to enter pediatrics after completing his medical degree.

“Working with kids just kind of changed my whole outlook. I was like, ‘Why do I want to go into medicine in the first place?’ To give comfort to people in times of vulnerability and need. I don’t think there’s any way to get closer to that goal than working with children.”

**More about Charles:** A native of Long Island, New York, Charles says moving to the Midwest was a bit of a culture shock, but after three years of medical school, it feels like a second home. He says the mentorship and support he’s found at Creighton have proven invaluable as he navigates medical school and life ahead.



**DIANA ROJAS-CHAVEZ**  
School of Pharmacy and  
Health Professions  
Class of 2023

Diana is a pharmacy Distance Pathway student with two children and a husband in the U.S. Army. Somewhere along the way, through many struggles, Diana says, “I found a fight in me that wouldn’t give up until I had the title of ‘PharmD’ after my name.

“I had some issues last year — I was alone with my children, my husband was stationed across the country, and my mother was in critical condition with COVID. I just reached out to Creighton for help. I contacted the educational department. I called my advisors. I spoke with the chaplain. I met with a group of Creighton students who are military spouses. They all helped me so much. They took care of me not just as a student, but a person.”

**More about Diana:** She is a 4.0 grade-point-average student who works from home offering medication therapy management, primarily for geriatric patients. She also does STEM outreach for elementary students in underserved areas.

“When we take our success back to our communities, back to our roots, to show the upcoming first-generation students that it can be done, it creates a long-lasting effect in those communities,” she says.



# Faith in the Journey

A sculpture of St. Ignatius  
greet students, visitors  
at new Phoenix campus,  
a reminder of the Jesuits'  
global vision of service and  
that life is a journey

BY Eugene Curtin





**THERE HE STANDS**, holding the world aloft, a striking symbol not just of the historical resilience of the largest order of priests and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church but of its founding commitment to serving wherever need arises.

He is Iñigo López de Oñaz y Loyola, known to history as Ignatius of Loyola, the Catholic saint who in 1540 founded the Society of Jesus, an order whose commitment to Catholicism, to education, to serving the poor throughout the world, and to relieving the oppressed has echoed through the centuries.

This particular statue of the great saint enlivens the new Creighton University Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix. Opened in August, the campus is expected to become a key provider of physicians, nurses, occupational therapists and pharmacists — and eventually physical therapists and physician assistants — throughout the southwestern United States and beyond. With the opening of the Phoenix campus, Creighton is now the largest Catholic health professions educator in the nation — a lofty distinction inspired by the life of St. Ignatius, who humbly ministered to the poor and sick during his spiritual journey.

Before the advent of multimillion-dollar medical facilities and a globe-spanning network of educational institutions, however, there was just Ignatius and his six sandaled, sometimes shoeless followers, when, in 1540, Pope Paul III issued a papal bull establishing what the world would come to know as “the Jesuits.” When Ignatius died on July 31, 1556, his tiny band had grown to more than a thousand.

Among those first members was Jerome Nadal, the son of a Spanish lawyer, who overcame early suspicions about the doctrinal orthodoxy of the new order to become its most prominent early theologian, indeed the man charged by Ignatius with traveling throughout Europe to ensure that the new Jesuits lived according to the rules and constitutions of the Society.

It was Nadal who came to mind when the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, president of Creighton, commissioned the globally themed Phoenix Ignatius. It was Nadal, he says, who captured the Ignatian vision of global reach when he said, “The ultimate and even most preferable of dwellings” for Jesuits “are not ... houses but the highways. We identify the Society’s final and ultimate dwelling ... with a journey.”

“The whole world,” Nadal said, “becomes our house.”

## Among the traffic, airplanes and sheer busyness of a world St. Ignatius could not have imagined, his work continues, reflected in the Phoenix statue, the newest tribute to his vision and to his order — St. Ignatius contemplating the world.

Recognizing the idea of journey, the six-foot Phoenix Ignatius is in forward motion — in action — even as he contemplates the world. These two qualities, Fr. Hendrickson says, illustrate the Ignatian ideal of the “contemplative in action” — priests and brothers who eschew traditional monasticism in favor of a prayerful, contemplative but active role in the world.

“Nadal is the one who said our house is not the monastery, our house is the highway,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “I think it’s a beautiful image, the Jesuits on the move around the world. He was also the author of that part of the Society’s constitutions that says Jesuits, wherever they may go, are to work hard to adapt to the cultural realities of that place. I think that’s also quite extraordinary.”

If the Phoenix Ignatius is in motion, then he also is in contemplation, gazing at the uplifted globe with a mix of reverence and curiosity. This, too, is part of the essence of the Society of Jesus and is born of the personal experience of St. Ignatius himself. Known sometimes as a warrior saint, St. Ignatius was born into the Spanish nobility and pursued a military career where, inspired by the popular chivalric novels of his day, he earned a reputation for courage and daring. After sustaining grave injuries from a cannonball during the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, and while recovering at the family estate, he underwent a deep spiritual conversion. Looking for something to read, and light fare being unavailable, he turned to *Lives of the Saints* and to Ludolph of Saxony’s 14th century *Life of Christ*. In contemplating the sacrificial lives of the saints, Ignatius discovered a deeper, more profound heroism, and so began his spiritual conversion, the 500th anniversary of which the world marks this year.

After completing the academic education that would become central to the Jesuit identity,

Ignatius and close associates such as Francis Xavier began laying the foundations of a new religious society, the key characteristic of which would be global evangelization. Xavier, Fr. Hendrickson says, remains the great example of that missionary impulse.

“The very same year the Society was founded, Francis Xavier was already following the Portuguese trade routes around the Horn of Africa, to the edge of India and then to Gao, in India, and from there to Japan where he ended up dying on the shores of China,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “This Society of Jesus, almost immediately after it was approved by the pope, was already spreading its wings and moving abroad.”

This sense of global mission is entrenched deeply at Creighton and embodied on its Omaha campus by statuary of globes urging students to “set the world on fire” with their knowledge and idealism, and of St. Ignatius himself, where, like his Phoenix version, he is represented as a man of learning and of action. This global thrust is reflected in the Creighton Global Initiative, launched by Fr. Hendrickson in 2015, by the new Global Scholars Program, and by the University’s decades-long work meeting the health and social needs of the poor in the Dominican Republic through the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC).

It also reflects the urging of Pope Francis, history’s first Jesuit pope, that the Earth be understood as the “common home” of all its people and that world leaders join forces to preserve its environmental well-being. The development of global awareness, Fr. Hendrickson says, is a key element of the Jesuit, Catholic education offered by Creighton.

“Creighton has been terrific on the global stage for a number of years,” he says. “We have our international programs and all the regular



### Capturing a Saint

The six-foot Phoenix Ignatius is the creation of Jeff Carol Davenport, who has been a professional artist for more than 20 years, holds a master’s degree in fine arts from Northern Arizona University, and has produced many life-size bronze sculptures currently on display in Arizona, New York and Vancouver, Canada.

Among her works is a life-size bronze of Pat Tillman that currently stands at Arizona State University’s Sun Devil Stadium near the entrance to Tillman Tunnel. Tillman was an ASU and Arizona Cardinals linebacker before enlisting in the U.S. Army, where he was killed in action in Afghanistan on April 22, 2004, at the age of 27.

Davenport said her St. Ignatius statue attempts to capture the Jesuits’ spirit of travel.

“I thought it would be good to emphasize the role of world travel in the Society of Jesus,” Davenport says. “He carries a leather book bag with the symbol of the Jesuit order on the front. In all other sculptures depicting St. Ignatius, he usually has his book in arm, but I thought it would be symbolic to show him ‘on the move’ with the book securely held in the book bag, all the while looking up to where his Society would travel next.”

study-abroad programs in Europe and elsewhere. Also, bringing people from other parts of the world to our campus is an important aspect of what we do.

“The global reach of the Jesuits is expressed not only by our half-century relationship in the Caribbean and myriad other ongoing international partnerships, programs, and projects, but also by the efficacy of research, interests, and engagements the Creighton community continually effects both at home and afar.”

Nor does the Society achieve this solely by the labors of its priests and brothers. In harmony with direction emerging from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) promulgating that ministry is the domain of all the faithful, and not just the ordained, Jesuits have embraced lay involvement. Jesuit leaders, including the late Jesuit Superior General the Most Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, who gave an address on Jesuit-lay collaboration during a 2004 visit to Creighton’s Omaha campus, have outlined a partnership of equality in which all are called to holiness and vocation through their various works. This commitment is manifested in the women and men who partner with Jesuits in mission around the world and at all levels of the academy on Creighton’s campuses.

Almost 500 years have passed since the noble Basque warrior-turned-priest received papal authorization to build his order, and 334 years since the Jesuits, in the person of Eusebio Francisco Kino, SJ, first set foot on the territory of what would become Arizona. But there he stands, in 21st century Phoenix, on a thriving, modern campus, his face modeled after the features of St. Ignatius’s death mask, his shoes reflecting those preserved in Rome, his satchel bearing the sunburst and seal of the Society of Jesus, and his cassock showcasing the seal of Creighton University.

Among the traffic, airplanes and sheer busyness of a world St. Ignatius could not have imagined, his work continues, reflected in the Phoenix statue, the newest tribute to his vision and to his order — St. Ignatius contemplating the world.

“This image of Ignatius embraces Creighton’s Jesuit genius,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “It reflects the Society’s ability to reach beyond boundaries, to embrace and understand foreign cultures and customs, and to carry on the legacy of such Jesuit greats as Francis Xavier, Mateo Ricci, and Roberto de Nobili.”



# A Transformational Moment

Creighton officially opens new \$100 million health sciences campus in Phoenix

By Rick Davis, BA'88

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the \$100 million, 95,000-square-foot Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building in midtown Phoenix this September signaled a new era for health care education in the American Southwest and for Creighton University.

With the official opening of the new Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix, Creighton is now the largest Catholic health professions educator in the nation and the only one with two campuses.

“This is a transformational moment not only for Creighton University, but for all who have poured serious thought, effort, time, and resources into bringing this inspired vision to a bold reality,” said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.







© Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego spoke at the Sept. 9 ribbon-cutting ceremony along with Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. Both are grateful for Creighton's commitment to providing health care professionals for Phoenix and the Southwest.

**“So I’m very grateful to have Creighton here and to have so many students who really care about serving their community and who are drawn to Creighton because of the values represented by this type of education.”**

KATE GALLEGO  
Mayor, Phoenix

He cited the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance, and the partners that provide Creighton students with essential hands-on patient care experiences: Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center, Valleywise Health and District Medical Group.

Additionally, he said, Creighton enjoys a strong relationship with CommonSpirit Health, the nation’s largest Catholic health care system, which serves “as a model for professionalism and excellence, and to be sure, care and compassion.”

Among those attending the Sept. 9 ribbon-cutting ceremony were Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, the Most Rev. Thomas Olmsted, along with generous benefactors, health care partners, Creighton trustees, University leadership and other dignitaries.

“It’s hard to believe that two years ago, we were standing here with shovels in our hands for the groundbreaking ceremony,” said Randy Richardson, MD, regional dean for the School of Medicine in Phoenix. “The day has finally arrived — a moment both long-awaited and now joyfully celebrated.”

The Phoenix campus is now home to a four-year medical school and Creighton programs in nursing, pharmacy and occupational therapy. Programs for physical therapists and physician assistants are to be added over the next couple of years. The campus is expected to serve some 900 students annually by 2024.

### **A CRITICAL NEED FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN THE SOUTHWEST**

The growth of Creighton health sciences programs in Phoenix corresponds with a critical need for health professionals in the city, as well as the state of Arizona and wider Southwest.

Arizona currently ranks 44th out of 50 states in total active primary care physicians and surgeons. With the latest census data showing Phoenix as the fastest-growing city in the United States, and the population of Maricopa County expected to double by 2040, the need is acute for more health professionals now and in the future.

Mayor Gallego said she is well aware of the challenges.

“Every once in a while, I’ll have someone call me and say, ‘I have a great challenge, and I need your help as mayor,’” Gallego said. “And that challenge lately has been finding a primary care physician in the city of Phoenix.”

“So I’m very grateful to have Creighton here and to have so many students who really care about serving their community and who are drawn to Creighton because of the values represented by this type of education.”

Gallego and Gov. Ducey said the city and state have invested in health care infrastructure and in health care professionals and are excited about the opening of Creighton’s Phoenix health sciences campus.

“The new campus, right here, will be critical in that effort of developing our future health care workforce,” said Ducey, himself a product of Jesuit education, a graduate of St. John’s Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio.

“Not only is Creighton providing aspiring medical professionals with world-class training, but they are also doing it through a Jesuit education,” he said. “I can say from firsthand experience that it’s the best education that a school can offer. Health care may be science-based but it’s a faith that guides many patients, families and people in need through their toughest challenges.”



### **SHANA OFORI** First Year | Medicine

Shana Ofori knew she wanted to work in health care; she just wasn’t sure what field. “I thought about being a physician assistant or a dentist,” she says. “But eventually I discovered that being a physician was where my passions were, and it was where I felt I could make the most difference.”

Ofori grew up in Phoenix and lives there now with her family, but both of her parents were born in Ghana. She attended Arizona State University and, as an undergraduate, was vice president of the ASU Black Medical Students Association. She also was named Miss Africa Arizona 2020.

She was attracted to Creighton’s medical program, and its Jesuit values, and is eager to pursue her goal to make an impact on health care disparities. As an undergraduate, she did an honors thesis on pre-term births and low birth weight among Black infants, as well as maternal morbidity. But she is leaving her options open: “I’m flirting with OB/GYN, but other specialties are also pulling at my heart.”

— BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA’74

## **Meet Our Students**

Creighton University is committed to bringing well-educated, compassionate health care professionals to the American Southwest, where numbers are severely lacking. The need is especially acute in Arizona and especially in Phoenix, the fastest-growing city in the nation. Read about a few of Creighton’s health sciences students at the Phoenix campus here and on page 38.

**“We are reaching far and wide to bring aspiring health care workers to the state. Already, students enrolled at this campus represent 23 states and four countries.”**

REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ, PHD





### ADRIANNE PUGH First Year | Pharmacy

Adrianne Pugh's passion for science started in elementary school and continued into high school, where her chemistry teacher suggested a career in pharmacy. "Since that discussion, I have been preparing myself for pharmacy school," Pugh says.

Having developed health issues in middle school that required prescription medication, Pugh decided she could help others better understand their prescriptions. Her goal is to ensure others feel comfortable taking their medications to prevent or lessen future health problems.

"I want to learn more about the medications and use my knowledge to create a positive experience with future patients," she says.

Pugh earned an associate's degree at Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, before earning a bachelor's degree with a concentration in biomedical sciences at Arizona State University.

— BY LIZZIE ERFTMIER, BA'18

### KAILA ALLEN January Cohort | Nursing

The more Kaila Allen learned about Creighton's 12-month accelerated nursing program in Phoenix, the more the Arizona native was drawn to its excellent faculty and strong sense of mission. Having graduated from Biola University in La Mirada, California, with a degree in psychology in 2017, Allen had put her dream of nursing school on hold. But she definitely felt a calling, tugging at her from a mission trip to the Philippines as an undergraduate that included working with local health care professionals to set up small clinics in rural villages.

"I remember sitting across from an elderly woman as I took her blood pressure. Although we could not speak the same language, she smiled at me and I smiled back," Allen says. "I realized in that moment that nursing allows you to transcend many common barriers — such as language and culture — and to meet people right where they are and provide them with care."

She says since enrolling in Creighton's accelerated nursing program in January, her experiences have exceeded her expectations, and she is excited to take advantage of all that the new building has to offer, especially the state-of-the-art simulation equipment and opportunities to collaborate with other health professional students. — BY RICK DAVIS, BA'18

### JORDAN ORTIZ First Year | Occupational Therapy

Jordan Ortiz, a first-year student in Creighton's Doctor of Occupational Therapy Phoenix pathway, had grown up wanting to be a teacher — until high school, when a younger cousin awaiting a heart transplant had a stroke, and a new calling tugged at her own heart.

"Watching my 4-year-old cousin struggle so much broke me," Ortiz says, "but seeing all the improvement she was able to make with the help of occupational therapy shaped my future."

"Seeing the progress my cousin made, going from not being able to move the right side of her body to now being able to drive, showed me the importance of having occupational therapy services."

As a single mom with a son, Ortiz has juggled the demands of school, work and parenting. She earned an associate's degree from Brown Mackie College to become an occupational therapy assistant, and has worked in home health care. She then earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Phoenix's Grand Canyon University. Creighton's occupational therapy program is the next step in her journey.

"Deciding to go back to school was a huge decision I was making for both of us," Ortiz says. "Lucky for me, the Phoenix campus came about, and I am able to get a top education while still being at home."

— BY LIZZIE ERFTMIER, BA'18

Gallego also acknowledged Creighton's values-based education and service to the community as important to her city.

"As we lead in cutting-edge areas, we also want to lead in caring for those facing great challenges, and I want to applaud the partnership between Creighton and St. Vincent de Paul, supported by the Piper Foundation," she said. "We are judged as a community by how we care for everyone, and it's a real credit to our city."

Earlier this year, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust announced it would invest \$10 million in a collaboration between Creighton and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix to improve access and quality of care to those most in need. The partnership is designed to reduce growing health disparities that disproportionately affect low-income populations and people of color.

#### A MODERN, TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED FACILITY

A look inside the new Piper Health Sciences Building shows a modern, technologically advanced facility designed not only to provide the latest in health care education and training, but to foster Creighton's pioneering efforts in interprofessional education.

"This new Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building is breathtaking and beautiful and contains some of the latest

technology to educate and train health care providers on the cutting edge of their professions," Fr. Hendrickson said.

"We have created a facility that will serve students, faculty, the health professions, and the Phoenix community exceptionally well in the decades to come," added Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, vice provost of Creighton's health sciences campuses.

"We examined our educational, clinical and support processes to design the most innovative, effective and collaborative approaches we could envision."

The building offers state-of-the-art active learning spaces; simulation rooms; a task training room; a standardized patient suite; and labs dedicated to gait and motion analysis, human performance, home care, rehabilitation, research and more.

It also offers special areas for renewal and building relationships, including a socialization lounge; a community ballroom; and a chapel where students of all faiths can reflect on the connectedness of their academic and spiritual lives.

"Most importantly," Todero said, "it accommodates our interprofessional approach to health sciences education, with an overall emphasis on collaboration and consultation among disciplines, to achieve holistic, patient-centered care. It is this approach

that distinguishes a Creighton health sciences education."

#### ANSWERING THE CALL

Even though the building is new, Creighton has enjoyed a long relationship with the city of Phoenix and area health care partners. The University has had medical students performing rotations in Phoenix for more than a decade.

Fr. Hendrickson said the University's current partnership began in 2005 with a call from Linda Hunt, CEO of Dignity Health, who shared her concerns that Phoenix was lagging in the number of health care workers available to care for its citizens.

"Creighton answered that call," Fr. Hendrickson said, which led to hundreds of calls between health care providers; government officials; nonprofit agencies; local, state and regional contractors; philanthropists; educators; and others, all with a shared conviction to increase the number of health care workers in the region.

"Today, we celebrate a relationship we all have built together — step by step, side by side — based on our mutual concern and our shared successes," Fr. Hendrickson said. "Creighton University extends profound appreciation to all of our partners for their visionary investments. Your faith and belief in this vision have led us to this point in time."

## MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

In the past two years, community partners have made a series of transformative gifts to Creighton's Phoenix campus. More than \$40 million in gifts jumpstarted one of the most exciting moments in the University's history. These donors helped a dream take shape.

*Gifts of all sizes continue to make a difference for Creighton's Phoenix campus. Learn more at [alummi.creighton.edu/phoenixcampus](http://alummi.creighton.edu/phoenixcampus).*

**The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust** contributed \$25 million toward the building's construction and endowed programs that will help the Phoenix campus collaborate with nonprofits in Maricopa County, such as St. Vincent de Paul, to train health professionals and improve care for uninsured, underrepresented communities in the area.

**Dignity Health** made a major gift to establish an endowed fund that will support up to 100 full-tuition scholarships over the next decade for students from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds.

**The Norton Family Living Trust** gave \$5 million to Creighton, toward the Phoenix campus facility and an endowed scholarship program.

**The Maricopa County Industrial Development Authority** gave \$2.5 million to support development of the Phoenix campus.

**The Del E. Webb Foundation** gave \$1.5 million toward a learning commons in the Piper Health Sciences Building.

**The Shoen Family** gave \$1 million to dedicate the building's St. Ignatius Chapel in honor of Anna Mary Carty Shoen.

**The Peter Kiewit Foundation** contributed \$1 million toward the new campus.





REFLECTIONS

## A Familiar Fall Feeling

Students make their way across the main campus mall this fall between classes, passing Creighton Hall (formerly the Administration Building) and St. John's Church. After a compressed fall semester last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic that included no fall break, Creighton returned to a normal academic calendar this fall.





IMPACT

COLIN GONCES

## Developing Confident Leaders

In a new partnership between Creighton University and Union Pacific Railroad, the second cohort of Union Pacific Scholars arrived this fall. Roland Onwona-Agyeman, a sophomore in the Heider College of Business, was one of eight students in the inaugural cohort last year.

“We all screamed — we were so excited. It was crazy.” That’s the reaction that Roland Onwona-Agyeman and his family had when he learned he would enroll at Creighton University.

On that February afternoon in 2020, Onwona-Agyeman had played soccer with his local Polk City, Iowa, club in Omaha. When he returned home, his mother and father were waiting for him with a package from Creighton.

“My parents have always loved Creighton. When my dad handed me my mail, I just knew it was about the scholarship.”

Onwona-Agyeman, one of eight students

in the inaugural class of the Union Pacific Diversity Scholarship Program, says in high school he considered soccer scholarships at other universities, but the UP award solidified his decision to come to Creighton.

“The UP scholarship is one of the most important reasons I’m here,” Onwona-Agyeman says. “I needed financial aid to attend college, so with UP, it all came together. This scholarship gave me so much confidence.”

For the Onwona-Agyeman family, education is a top priority. He says that his parents have always been a source of inspiration for him.

“Watching my parents and knowing their journeys inspires me. They opened my eyes to the importance of education and showed me that school is about more than grades. It’s about access, opportunities and success.”

In 1993, Dr. Ahmed Agyeman and Rhoderline Onwona-Agyeman emigrated from Ghana to Iowa. Both graduated from Iowa universities and are active members in their community. Community involvement became important to Roland, too. In high school, he was active with Youth Congress and Oribas, a project management program that strengthens skills in leadership, problem-solving and communication.

“I learned how to use my voice, and I realized that I can make an impact,” Onwona-Agyeman

© Creighton’s inaugural cohort of Union Pacific Diversity Scholars (from left to right): Christian Purnell, Jayden Liu, Mackenzie Spigner, Ophelie Koffi, Jenna Kristan, Roland Onwona-Agyeman, Rebekah Alvarez and Luke Estrada.

says. “I can’t change the entire world, but I learned that I can really help in my community. And that while I’m helping others, I’m also growing as a person.”

While COVID-19 impacted his first year of college at Creighton, in his second semester he started playing intramural soccer, joined a fraternity and started a role as a campus tour guide. And in May, Onwona-Agyeman began an internship with UP.

With roughly 31,000 employees across the nation, Union Pacific, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in the heart of downtown Omaha, engages students who can articulate and promote workplace leadership in diversity and inclusion for a more just world.

“At Union Pacific, we believe diverse perspectives drive stronger idea generation and spark creativity that, ultimately, fosters innovative solutions in today’s rapidly changing world. This scholarship program is a step toward strengthening our future workforce and creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive community,” says Lance Fritz, Union Pacific chairman, president and CEO.

— BY NICHOLE JELINEK, MA’15

# 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](mailto:alumninews@creighton.edu).

**62 Richard R. Stoughton, MD,** Plant City, Florida, and his wife, Loretta, published their book *Steps Along the Way – A Memoir of 13 Years of Medical Missionary Work in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe*.

**65 Michael G. Busse, BSBA,** Downers Grove, Illinois, has earned a Master’s of Liberal Studies from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois.

**68 P. Rodney Morris, BA,** Omaha, has published a novel, *The Second Killing of Christ*. It is about a small group of retired U.S. special forces tasked by the president of the U.S. with foiling a plot by ISIS to clone Christ. Morris also has been inducted into the Diplomatic Society of St. Gabriel in recognition of his work for the U.S. government in the Middle East and South Asia.

**72 Thomas J. O’Connor, BA,** Omaha, received the 2021 Career Achievement Award from the Omaha Press Club. O’Connor retired in 2020 after working at the University of Nebraska Medical Center for 32 years. He was senior associate director for UNMC Strategic Communications.

**73 The Rev. William J. Fitzgerald, MA,** Scottsdale, Arizona, is the author of two new books: *Irish Tales from Fr. Fitz* and *Together, Prayers and Inspiration*

for *Stressful Times in the Age of COVID*. **David G. Sabott, DDS,** Erie, Colorado, was installed as the president of the American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) in May 2021. Sabott is an associate with Trinity Orthodontics in Arvada, Colorado. First certified by the ABO in 1988, he serves as an examiner for the ABO Clinical Examination. Sabott is a member of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontics.

**75 Dr. Amy M. Haddad, BSN,** Omaha, recently published *The Geography of Kitchens*, a chapbook of her poetry. Haddad is professor emerita in Creighton’s School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and served as director for the Center for Health Policy and Ethics at Creighton from 2004 to 2018, where during her tenure she led the development of a fully online graduate program in health care ethics.

**76 Daniel E. Monnat, JD,** Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered, was named in the 2021 edition of *Who’s Who Legal: Business Crime Defense*. Monnat also was recognized by *Best Lawyers in America 2022* in four areas: criminal defense-general practice; criminal defense-white collar; bet-the-company litigation; and appellate practice. Additionally, he was ranked

by Chambers USA 2021 among Kansas’ top litigators in white-collar crime and government investigations.

**77 Paul S. Hayes, BSN,** Carmel, California, retired at the end of 2020, having spent the last six years as the CEO of Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, the only Level 1 Trauma Center for adults and children serving four states.

**83 James D. Dati, JD,** Naples, Florida, was selected for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America 2022* in real estate law. Dati is an attorney in the Naples office of Bond, Schoeneck & King. **Stephen A. Donato, JD,** Fayetteville, New York, was selected for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America 2022* in the field of bankruptcy and creditor debtor rights/insolvency and reorganization law and litigation-bankruptcy. Donato is an attorney in the Syracuse, New York, office of Bond, Schoeneck & King.

**84 Dr. Christopher J. Loyke, BS,** Chagrin Falls, Ohio, was named dean and chief academic officer of Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in May 2021. In his role, he is leading the operations at the institution’s two sites in Harrogate and Knoxville, Tennessee. Loyke previously served as the associate dean of

clinical affairs and associate professor of family medicine.

**86 Larry D. Schucht, JD,** Tualatin, Oregon, recently completed 30 years of service as a trial attorney with SAIF Corporation. In addition to this work, he is an adjunct professor at Willamette University School of Law and the University of Oregon School of Law where he teaches workers’ compensation law. Schucht has previously been awarded the Workers’ Compensation Professionalism Award for his work with the Workers’ Compensation Section of the Oregon State Bar Association.

**88 Karen Rolf Cronin, BSBA,** Chagrin Falls, Ohio, joined Applied Materials in Santa Clara, California, as a senior human resources director. **Mary Laurel Grogan, BS,** Milwaukee, earned a master’s degree in educational leadership from Marquette University in May 2021. This is her third degree in education (one from Creighton and two from Marquette). Grogan also was elected to the Greendale School Board in April 2021. **Dr. Gregory C. Skaggs, BA,** Tampa, Florida, joined the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2019 as the director of athlete performance. In this newly created role, Skaggs provides



administrative oversight to the areas that influence health and safety of the players. In the 15 years prior to this position, he served as the director of athletic medicine at the University of Oregon, providing primary care to all university athletes.

**90 Julie E. Bear, BSBA'87, JD,** Plattsmouth, Nebraska, recently became a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. Bear is a partner in the firm of Reinsch, Slattery, Bear, Minahan & Prickett in Plattsmouth.

**92 Lisa A. Foster, BA,** Silver Spring, Maryland, joined the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators as its director of communications. She previously worked in internal communications at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.

**93 Dr. Brandy A. Randall, BA,** Rochester Hills, Michigan, was named dean of the Graduate School and professor of psychology at Oakland University

in Rochester Hills. Prior to joining Oakland, Randall was the associate dean of the College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies and professor of human development and family science at North Dakota State University.

**Brenda Maloney Shafer, BSN,** Boise, Idaho, was appointed to the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP). As a member of LAMP, Shafer will aid in fostering the continued growth of the military legal assistance programs; promote the delivery of legal services to military personnel and their family members; and work with other organizations to enhance the scope, quality and delivery of free or affordable legal services to eligible legal assistance clients. Shafer is a former United States Army Nurse Corps officer and served as vice chair of the ABA Health Law Section, Veterans and Military Health Task Force, for five years. She is a partner in the health and life sciences practice group at the national law firm Quarles & Brady.

**96 Hughleen M. Thorsen, BA,** Omaha, is a historian volunteering for the Nebraska Vietnam Veteran's Memorial that will be built in Sarpy County (Nebraska). For information about the project, visit [nvvmf.org](http://nvvmf.org).

**Dr. Jamie Van Leeuwen, BA,** Denver, co-authored the article "A Call for a More Efficient Platform for Funding and Advocacy in International Development" published in the journal *Public Integrity*.

**01 Todd O. Engleman, JD,** Omaha, was appointed by Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts in April 2021 as a district court judge in the fourth judicial district (Douglas County).

**02 Dr. Jeremy Majeski, BS,** Frankfurt, Germany, recently completed his Doctorate in Education in Leadership in Curriculum and Instruction from Aurora University. His dissertation was titled "A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Investigation of the Interactions Between Same-Sex Couples and Their Children's Schools." Majeski currently is principal of Frankfurt

International School's Wiesbaden Campus.

**05 Michael T. Brewer, JD,** Omaha, recently had two articles published in *The Nebraska Lawyer*: "Dealing with Student Loans in Divorce" and "Protecting the Rights of Creatives: An Introduction to Common Issues Facing Content Creators." Brewer is an attorney at the law firm Koenig|Dunne in Omaha.

**06 Emily Do, PharmD,** San Diego, is a patent attorney at FRESH, an advanced IP firm, and will head the firm's San Diego office. **Bridget M. Findley, BA'03, JD,** Leawood, Kansas, recently joined the law firm Kutak Rock in the Kansas City office. She is a member of the firm's public finance department.

**07 Michael J. Sullivan, BSATS,** Ames, Iowa, graduated from the Certified Public Manager Program at Drake University in May 2021. Sullivan is the solid waste and contaminated sites section supervisor at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR). His section manages

the solid waste program for the state of Iowa and the Iowa DNR responsibilities related to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

**08 Eric M. Bodman, BSBA,** Carlsbad, California, graduated with a Master of Business Administration from the University of San Diego in May 2021 with an emphasis in managerial leadership. He also was awarded Beta Gamma Sigma honors given his academic performance. Upon graduation, he joined Facebook as the partnerships compliance program manager in the company's blockchain and cryptocurrency space, where he oversees the compliance onboarding for partners in the Novi digital wallet, whose mission is to increase financial inclusion through making financial services more accessible and affordable for people around the world.

**10 Dr. Erica D. Stewart, BS,** Lawrence, Kansas, has completed her residency training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine - Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program at Wesley Medical Center. She is now practicing with Heartland Community Health Center in Lawrence.

**11 Dr. Zachary P. Stewart, BS,** Manhattan, Kansas, recently joined the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as a U.S. Diplomat in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, where he serves as a technical advisor on agricultural development.

**13 Corey J. Becker, JD,** Washington, D.C., was named legislative director for U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa). Becker previously served as chief counsel to Sen. Ernst on the Senate Judiciary Committee and oversaw the confirmation of Attorney General William Barr and Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett. **Matthew J. Ceppi, EdD,** San Diego, recently joined the American Association of State Colleges and Universities

(AASCU) as the new executive director of AASCU Consulting. AASCU Consulting offers current college and university presidents, chancellors and their executive teams tailored services to navigate big changes and build for the future.

**14 Dr. Kelsey Thies Lee, BS,** Sibley, Iowa, has completed her residency training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine - Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program at Wesley Medical Center. She is now practicing with Avera Medical Group in Sibley.

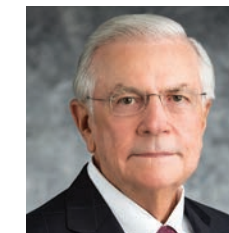
**15 Amanda M. Noonan, BA,** Chicago, joined the law firm Blank Rome LLP in its Chicago office as an associate in the general litigation group.

**16 Halley Faulhaber Hankins, BS'12, DPT,** Waco, Texas, was awarded the professional designation of board-certified clinical specialist in neurologic physical therapy by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) in June 2021.

**17 Casey A. Herron, MIMFA,** Missoula, Montana, recently opened a Charles Schwab branch in Missoula. This is the second Charles Schwab branch in Montana, and the Missoula branch offers investors local access to a range of investing, wealth management and personal finance guidance, tools and products.

**19 Mary Becker Glade, BSN'05, MS'07, DNP,** Lincoln, Nebraska, joined CHI Health in September 2020 to start a high risk oncology-genetics clinic in Lincoln. Glade recently completed the Intensive Course in Cancer Risk Assessment through the City of Hope Division of Clinical Cancer Genomics and has a certificate in Cancer Genetics and Risk Assessment through the National Consortium of Breast Centers. **Natalie M. Williams, JD,** Des Moines, Iowa, recently joined the law firm Dentons Davis Brown as an associate in the firm's real estate department.

# HONORING OUR ALUMNI



The Creighton University Alumni Achievement Citation is the highest all-University award presented to Creighton alumni. This year's recipient, **Robert Reed, BSBA'61**, is chairman of the board at Physicians Mutual, where he previously served four decades as president and CEO.

## 2021 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 September:



Jane O'Keefe Addy, BS'74  
College of Arts and Sciences



Dennis Wiederholt, BSBA'75, MBA'85  
Heider College of Business



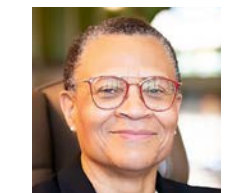
Patricia Greco Wiederholt, BSBA'74  
Heider College of Business



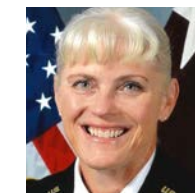
Eugene Low, DDS'67  
School of Dentistry



Jeffrey Gross, BSPHY'93, MS'95  
Graduate School



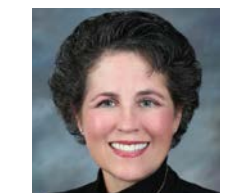
Felecia Turner Epps, JD'83  
School of Law



Mary Fell Link, BSN'83  
College of Nursing



Mary Wolpert-DeFilippes, PhD, BSPHA'63  
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions



Jane Carnazzo, BSCHM'82, MD'86  
School of Medicine

## 2021 RECENT ALUMNI AWARD



Hilary Wething, PhD, BS'11  
College of Arts and Sciences

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.

**Read more:** Visit [alumni.creighton.edu/ama-2021](http://alumni.creighton.edu/ama-2021) to read more about each recipient.

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Pacis Bana, MS'19  
Master of Science in Business Intelligence and Analytics



Rachel Johnson, EdD'17  
Doctor of Interdisciplinary Leadership



Luke Christiansen, MBA'11  
Master of Business Administration



Mindy Simon, MBA'16  
Master of Business Administration



Charles Thomas Jr., MS'09, EdD'14  
Master of Science in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Doctor of Education in Interdisciplinary Leadership



Kamilia Tagi Smith, MD, FACOG, NCMP  
Executive Healthcare Fellowship

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Creighton UNIVERSITY

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## WEDDINGS

**04 Nicole F. Schroeder, BSN,** and **Myshell L. Olds, BSN'07,** June 10, 2021, living in Columbus, Nebraska.

**13 Janessa L. Wolf and Taylor J. Stormberg, BSBA,** Sept. 25, 2021, living in Omaha.

**16 Nicole M. Mueller, BSN,** and **Marc L. Petrykowski, BS,** BSN'19, April 10, 2021, living in St. Louis.

**18 Maren M. Haddad, BA,** and **Zachary Wulbert, BA,** May 22, 2021, living in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

## BIRTHS

**04 Jared J.L. Chong, BS,** and **Kristen Okahashi Chong, BS,** Kaneohe, Hawaii, a daughter, Maya Miekko Gui Hua, April 13, 2021.

**06 Michael E. Brzica, BSBA'03, JD,** and Lindsey Brzica, Alexandria, Virginia, a son, Henry Collins, Aug. 29, 2021. **Elizabeth A. Greisch, BSN,** Omaha, a son, Charles James, April 22, 2021.

**07 Andy Beagle and Amy Patterson Beagle, OTD,** Omaha, a daughter, Ada James, Feb. 17, 2021.

**08 Galen Bernadt and Amy Myers Bernadt, BS,** Lincoln, Nebraska, a daughter, Ellison Lou, Sept. 22, 2020. **John N. Schneider, JD,** and **Christen Carns, JD,** Phoenix, a daughter, Madelyn Ellis, Oct. 1, 2020.

**12 Peter J. Freeze, BA,** and **Kathleen Hart Freeze, BA'11,** Kansas City, Missouri, a daughter, Leah Margaret, April 21, 2021.

**14 Daniel Latus and Kimberly Utzig Latus, BSBA'12, JD,** Madison, Wisconsin, a daughter, Charlotte Sally (Lottie), March 8, 2021.

## DEATHS

**40 Corinne Paulson Engstrom, SJN,** Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Sept. 15, 2021.

**46 Orietha Wagner Kleeman, SJN,** West Point, Nebraska, Sept. 12, 2021.

**47 John F. McGowan, BS,** Columbia, Missouri, July 9, 2021.

**48 Marion Gerow Bianchi, GRAD,** Omaha, July 25, 2021. **Ruthann O'Neil Maschka, BS,** Omaha, July 26, 2021.

**49 Jean Bennett Fenger, SJN,** Omaha, June 22, 2021. **John M. Follman, ARTS,** Tampa, Florida, Aug. 15, 2021. **Donald E. Mehl, BS,** Raymore, Missouri, Aug. 2, 2021.

**50 Donald W. Hemmen, BS,** Belton, Missouri, Sept. 6, 2021. **Jerry Mahoney, BSPha,** Papillion, Nebraska, Nov. 22, 2020. **Samuel J. Marchese, BS,** Omaha, Sept. 3, 2021. **Mary Ann Cruise Mattas, SJN,** Omaha, Sept. 17, 2021. **Cecilia Reinig Tunnell, SJN,** San Luis Obispo, California, May 18, 2021.

**52 Patricia Finegan Cunningham, SJN,** Bennington, Nebraska, July 18, 2021. **Florence Paproski Hoffman, SCN,** Omaha, Sept. 20, 2021. **Willis K. Polite, ARTS,** San Rafael, California, June 1, 2020.

**54 Donald L. Waite, BS,** Saratoga, California, June 17, 2021. **Katherine McLaughlin Waring, SJN,** Omaha, Aug. 1, 2021.

**55 Marilou Witt Kirkland, MA,** Omaha, July 21, 2021. **Patrick G. Nipp, BS,** Omaha, Sept. 7, 2021.

**56 Sr. M. Brendan Conlon, BA'54, MA,** Louisville, Kentucky, July 16, 2021. **Edwin N. Tasaki, DDS,** Kaneohe, Hawaii, June 7, 2021.

**57 Joan Van Ryckeghem Jansen, SCN,** Omaha, Sept. 15, 2021. **Thomas M. Lyons, BUSADM,** Iowa City, Iowa, June 22, 2021. **Daniel J. Rosenthal, ARTS,** Overland Park, Kansas, June 25, 2021. **Agnes Blankenau Schneiderwind, SJN,** Omaha, July 24, 2021.

**58 Donald L. Johnson, BSBA,** Littleton, Colorado, June 30, 2021. **Calvin L. Salem, DDS,** Waconia, Minnesota, March 23, 2021. **George D. Walden, BSBA,** Garden Plain, Kansas, June 25, 2021.

**59 Dr. Richard V. Andrews, BS'58, MS,** Omaha, Jan. 11, 2021. **George E. Castroville, MD,** Farmer City, Illinois, Aug. 20, 2021. **John H. Kleffner, BA'57, MSEdu,** Helotes, Texas, Aug. 21, 2021. **Erna Burbach Utter, BS,** Lewiston, Idaho, Aug. 2, 2021.

**60 Ronald R. Brooks, BS,** Surprise, Arizona, June 19, 2021. **Betty Griffler Owen, BS,** Minneapolis, Aug. 3, 2021. **Louis A. Sojka, MD'55, MS,** Omaha, Sept. 6, 2021.

**61 Cdr. John J. Faricy Jr., BS,** North Smithfield, Rhode Island, Aug. 8, 2021. **Carl A. Ritola Jr., DDS,** Sheridan, Wyoming, July 13, 2021. **Thomas J. Snodgrass, ARTS,** Omaha, June 19, 2021.

**62 Paul K. Briardy, BSBA,** Omaha, July 8, 2021. **Maureen Bodnar Kessler, ARTS,** Omaha, Sept. 8, 2021.

**64 Sharon Burke Emery, ARTS,** Omaha, July 24, 2021. **Mary Zevnik Hill, ARTS,** Stanton, Nebraska, Sept. 1, 2021. **Daniel W. Hughes, BS,** San Diego, Sept. 15, 2021. **John D. Woodbury, BS'60, MD,** Omaha, Sept. 12, 2021.

**65 William W. Coacher, BA,** Omaha, July 26, 2021. **Adam A. Kirchofer, MA,** Omaha, Aug. 3, 2021. **Linda Flucke Mack, BA,** Bend, Oregon, July 27, 2021.

**66 Jay A. DeMars, MA,** Wichita, Kansas, Aug. 12, 2021.



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A Bold Future for Creighton University

**Joseph J. Hemenway, BSBA'58, MBA,** Omaha, July 24, 2021. **Jorge E. Sanmartin, BS'62, MD,** Rapid City, South Dakota, Jan. 30, 2021. **Edward J. Serres, MD,** Oregon City, Oregon, June 21, 2021.

**67 Dr. Joseph L. Aitken, BS,** South Sioux City, Nebraska, Aug. 5, 2021. **Constance Whitmore Armstrong, SJN,** Cedar Rapids, Iowa, June 24, 2021. **John R. Atkins Jr., BSBA'60, MBA,** La Vista, Nebraska, July 6, 2021.

**68 Sr. Dolorita Lutsie, OSU, MA,** Louisville, Kentucky, July 13, 2021. **Thomas F. Ripke, BSBA,** Boise, Idaho, Sept. 2, 2021.

**69 Dennis T. Chapman, BSBA'66, JD,** Omaha, Aug. 15, 2021. **Marvin P. Olson Jr., MBA,** Omaha, Aug. 5, 2021. **Jon A. Sedlacek, BSBA'66, JD,** Blair, Nebraska, July 10, 2021. **Warren F. Scharf, BSBA,** Pine, Colorado, Sept. 4, 2021.

**70 David A. Krause, MBA,** Omaha, Sept. 2, 2021. **C. Dennis Leu, JD,** Council Bluffs, Iowa, Aug. 10, 2021.

**71 Dr. James A. Edney, BS,** Omaha, Aug. 7, 2021. **Patrick S. Garland, BA'64, MBA,** Omaha, July 14, 2021.

**72 Dr. John L. Burt, BS,** Las Vegas, Aug. 22, 2021. **James C. Penna, DDS,** Monterey, California, Sept. 7, 2021.

**73 Joseph F. Matthias, BSPha,** Hastings, Nebraska, July 22, 2021. **David G. Shulman, MD,** San Antonio, Aug. 7, 2021.

**74 Sr. Ellen M. Dolan, BA,** Bellevue, Nebraska, July 14, 2021. **Steven A. Jensen, JD,** Greenfield, Iowa, Aug. 20, 2021. **Kathleen Rogers Vincent, BA,** Riverton, Wyoming, April 13, 2020.

**76 Mary Stamper Goblirsch, ARTS,** Maple Grove, Minnesota, June 11, 2021. **Rev. Melvern A. Wiese, MS,** West Point, Nebraska, Aug. 11, 2021.

**77 The Hon. Michael Boyle, BSBA'73, JD,** Omaha, Sept. 13, 2021.

**78 Sara A. Kersenbrock, JD,** Waterloo, Iowa, Aug. 19, 2021.

**79 Jeanine C. Gazzo, JD,** Des Moines, Iowa, May 22, 2021.

**80 Debra Waldvogel Gainey, BSN,** Manitowoc, Wisconsin, June 28, 2021.

**81 Gregory H. Rhodes, JD,** Omaha, Aug. 1, 2021.

**82 Thomas D. Gootz, PhD,** Estes Park, Colorado, Sept. 8, 2021. **Arthur R. Masoero Jr., BA,** Dunkirk, Maryland, Jan. 18, 2021.

**90 Paul A. Amodeo, DDS,** Peoria, Illinois, Sept. 8, 2021. **Sr. Evelyn A. Gregory, OSB, MSEdu'68, MChrSp,** Atchison, Kansas, July 21, 2021.

**91 Katherine Cook Siewert, BA'77, MA,** St. Louis, Oct. 4, 2020. **Kristin L. Wilson, BSBA'89, JD,** Charleston, Illinois, Sept. 5, 2021.

**93 Timothy P. Flaherty, BSBA,** Fort Dodge, Iowa, Sept. 6, 2021. **Rev. David L. Smith, SJ, MS,** Portsmouth, Iowa, July 9, 2021.

**99 Martina M. Tribulato, MD,** Omaha, Sept. 9, 2021.

**00 Nitin K. Gambhir, BSBA,** Omaha, June 29, 2021. **Carolyn Biede Wilson, BA'97, JD,** Aug. 31, 2021.

**05 Ryan M. Bodner, BA'99, MBA,** Omaha, June 22, 2021. **Rev. Joseph K. Fagan, MA,** Boston, Aug. 29, 2021.

**07 Christopher R. Gradoville, BSBA,** Omaha, Sept. 30, 2021.

**13 Mark S. Kaipust, OTD,** La Vista, Nebraska, Sept. 4, 2021.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

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

**Laura L. Bruce, PhD,** professor and researcher, Department of Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, Sept. 9, 2021

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

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"It doesn't matter at what point you are in your career, you can always learn by hearing from others and where they are. When you think about continuous improvement and evolving where you are at as an individual, education is one way that can help you do that."

—Mindy Simon, MBA'16

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## A New Chapter for Health Sciences

This fall marked the realization of a dream for health care partners in Phoenix and a historic moment for Creighton University years in the making. The new Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building on the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix represents a new chapter in the history of health sciences at Creighton and addresses a critical need for health professionals in the Southwest. **Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72**, shares her excitement on the opening of Creighton's campus in Phoenix.

**In 2019 you were named vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses, in addition to continuing as dean of the College of Nursing. How have you been adjusting to your new role as vice provost?**

It has been keeping me very busy. Initially because of COVID, so much of the planning for the new Phoenix campus was via Zoom. Now that the COVID-19 environment has improved some, I'm spending extended time in Phoenix. It's important to me to have a presence on the Phoenix campus and I'm grateful to have a strong team in Omaha while I'm in Phoenix and vice versa.

**Creighton has had a presence in Phoenix for more than a decade, but the past year has been especially exciting with the opening of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building. How does it feel to see the Phoenix campus come to life? Has there been a particular moment that stands out to you?**

It has been so very exciting. To see the hard work, great ideas and planning over the years manifested gives one such a sense of pride.

The moment that stood out to me was seeing the community come together for the dedication ceremony. Seeing the governor, the mayor, the bishop, many of Creighton's generous donors and supporters who have invested in our ideas — all these people in one place — emphasized for me how important this campus is to the city of Phoenix and the state of Arizona. The welcome into the community has been moving and I'm thankful for the support of so many.

The other moment that stood out to me was when nursing student Kaila Allen gave her address at the dedication. I was bursting with pride for her. What was so special about her talk was that she could compare the Phoenix nursing space that she was in before with that of the

new building, and she shared firsthand how the new campus has helped drive the interprofessional nature that we strive for. She also talked about experiencing the Jesuit values while going through Creighton's nursing program, and I thought she articulated well how Creighton can transfer its mission, values and culture to a branch campus.

**What are your priorities for the Phoenix campus in the year(s) ahead?**

The first priority is to complete programmatic initiatives that we have in progress. These include physical therapy, planned for fall of 2022, and the physician assistant program in the fall of 2023.

Additionally, we're working on developing a dental presence in Phoenix with our partner Valleywise Health for dental residencies and perhaps dental rotations. Another priority will be fine-tuning our operational processes and procedures. We had an idea of how things would work but now that we're in the building we need to tweak some things and develop an in-depth, clarified operational plan. This will be key for the future going forward.

Another priority will be expanding the diversity among our cohorts, while also promoting diverse leaders within our current student population. We want students and leaders of all backgrounds. Phoenix is a diverse community, and I want to see that same diversity reflected in the students we recruit.

**For fun, what are three of your favorite things about Creighton?**

My favorite things about Creighton center on the people.

First, my colleagues — I have a cohort of leaders I work with who I not only respect as colleagues, but I also value as friends. It makes the work especially enjoyable.

Second, the students and alumni — when I talk with our students and alumni who are doing amazing things, it makes me proud to be part of the Creighton community. I feel lucky to be affiliated with Creighton.

And third, the community — we are an institution that celebrates its people, achievements and accomplishments. It always seems that there is a special event going on. It's a good thing. Not every institution does this well. I think Creighton does this really well, and I'm happy to be part of an institution that celebrates its people.



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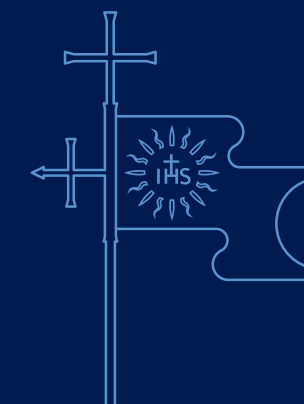
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