

CREIGHTON

FALL 2024 • Volume 40 Issue 2



PANDEMIC IN HINDSIGHT

Lessons Learned as
 COVID-19 Turns 5

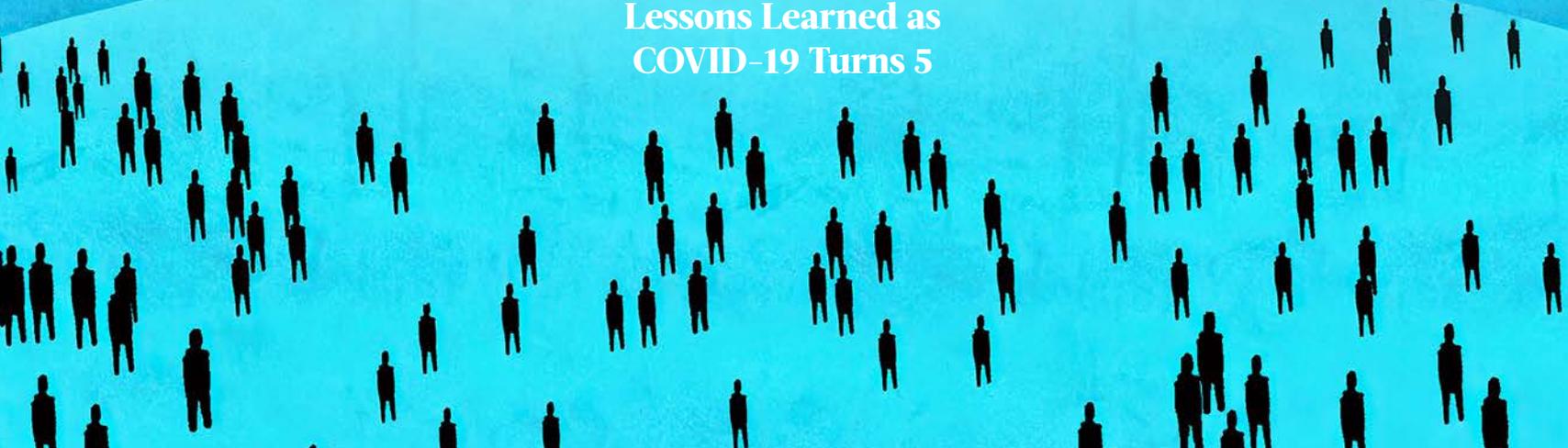




PHOTO BY DAVE WEAVER

Pushing the Boundaries of Possibilities

The past year has been one of remarkable achievements and meaningful growth for our University. In this issue of *Creighton* magazine, you will see examples of how our students, faculty, and staff, as well as fellow alumni, are continuing to push the boundaries of what is possible.

I am especially excited for you to read about the strides we have made in undergraduate research, the national recognition we have received for developing future leaders, and the critical steps we are taking to address healthcare equity in our country and beyond. These efforts are a direct result of the foundation you have built through your engagement and support; however, this is still only the beginning.

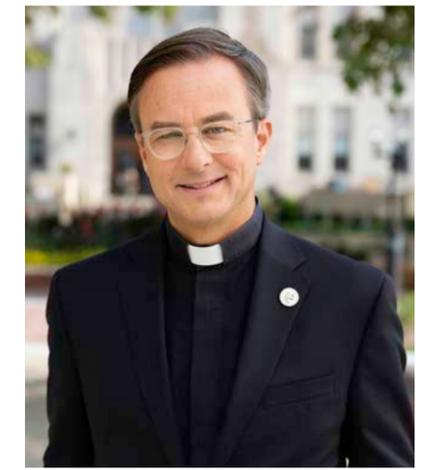
This fall, we welcomed 1,126 new Bluejays with the Class of 2028. This is the third largest incoming freshman class in our history, even as other universities are experiencing declining enrollments. With retention and graduation rates well above the national average, we see the enduring impact of a Creighton education. Our mission, focused on developing leaders who serve others, has stayed consistent since our founding.

While our values remain constant, we see transformational change occurring on our campuses. In the past six months, we finished construction on the St. John's fountain and plaza; opened the Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence; expanded the Kiewit Fitness Center; dedicated the Norton Foundation Success Center in the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building in Phoenix; and broke ground on a new sophomore residence hall, which is set to open in 2026. With last year's openings of Graves Hall, serving our freshman population, and the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education, as well as upcoming east campus projects, among others, it has been six decades since Creighton has seen development of this scale in such a short period of time.

Creighton is expanding globally as well. We are reaching completion of a new "Global Classroom" as part of our long-standing partnership with the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) that will enhance the work of students, staff, and faculty like those I visited this past summer in *campos* across the Dominican Republic, who provided medical care to 900 individuals. Additionally, just last year, 265 of our students studied abroad, with another 125 set to experience the world this semester.

As we reflect on the fifth anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, which you can read more about in this issue, we are reminded of how interconnected we truly are. Despite physical distances, we share more in common than what separates us. This notion remains close to my heart, and I know it resonates deeply with our students.

Though the global and national landscapes may continue to bring challenges as we approach the close of 2024, let us focus on the opportunities ahead and find strength in community and loved ones. As we look forward to the new year, I am hopeful about the positive changes we can bring to one another, just like the shared vision that, nearly 150 years ago, began the journey that has brought us together to be a part of a truly unique and extraordinary university community.

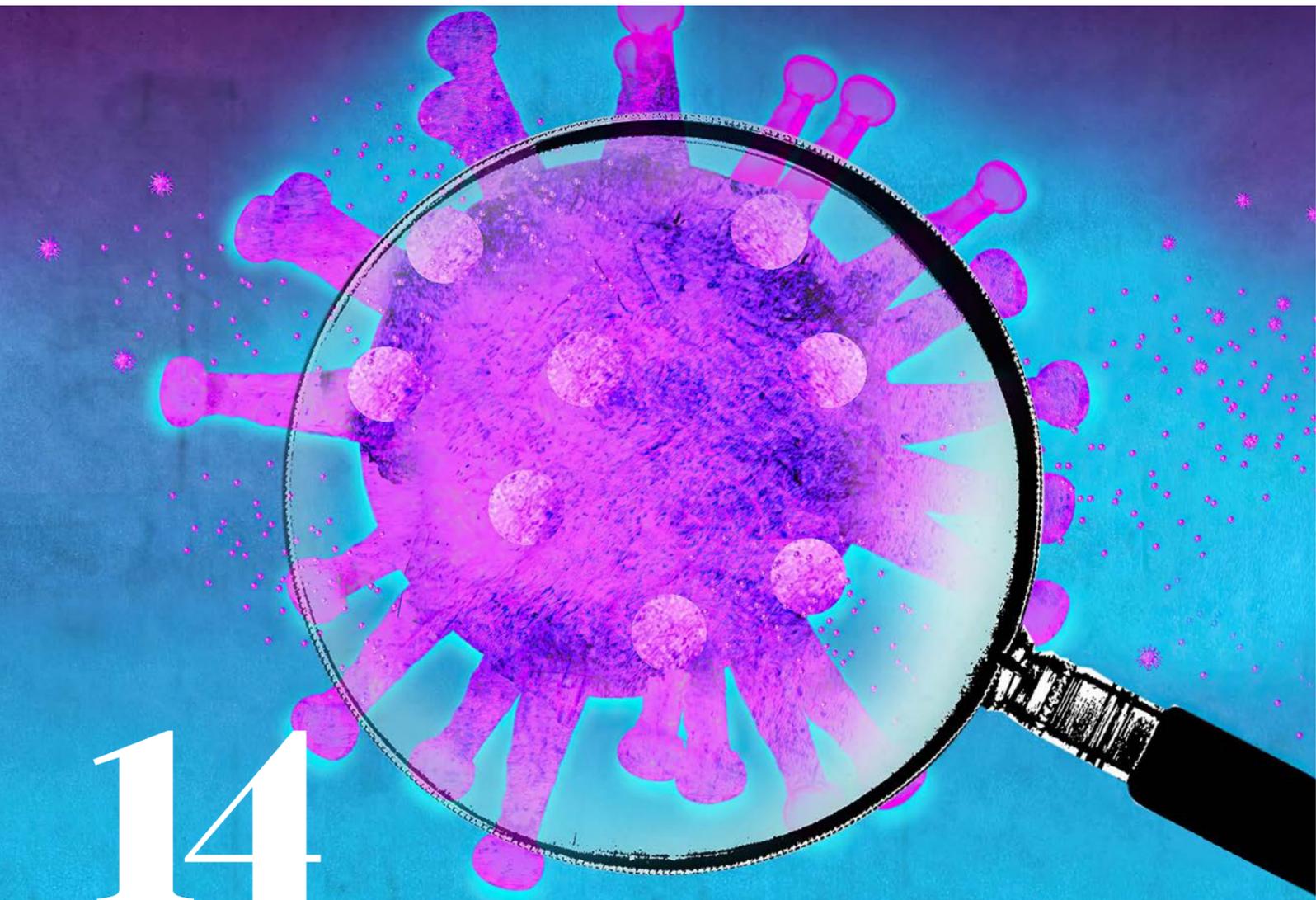


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© The newly renovated St. John's Fountain and plaza.

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President



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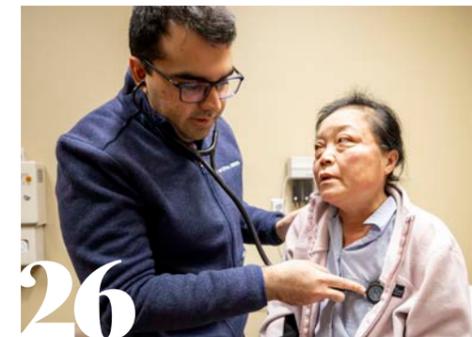
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Educating leaders for public good is a tradition at Creighton, and the University is one of just 25 colleges and universities nationally — one of only 10 private institutions — to be awarded the inaugural Leadership for Public Purpose classification from the Carnegie Foundation.



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As healthcare, public health and community-based organizations; governmental organizations; and educational institutions acknowledge the impact of social inequities on health outcomes, Creighton's Institute for Population Health has embraced and promoted this approach as it helps guide medical and healthcare education toward access and equity.

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What can people learn from St. Ignatius about raising the level of public discourse, and enhancing dialogue among family, friends and colleagues? His advice over 500 years ago can serve as a guide for engaging in respectful dialogue today, even when the conversation has the potential to be contentious.

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Scholarship and financial support through donor-funded programs help Creighton student-athletes in cross country, track, soccer, rowing, tennis and golf reach their goals athletically, academically and personally.

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Rajesh Tampi, MD, chair of the Department of Psychiatry, Bhatia Family Endowed Chair in Psychiatry and professor of medicine, discusses the growing crisis of caring for the mental health needs of older Americans as reports show those 65 and older are experiencing the largest percentage increase in mental health diagnoses.

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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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Pioneering Lung Cancer Surgery

BY MOLLY CARPENTER GARRIOTT, BA'89

When Erin Gillaspie, MD, MPH, joined Creighton as chief of thoracic surgery at CHI Health, she not only brought cutting-edge procedures that have ushered in a new era of thoracic healthcare, but she also breathed new life into the patients she and her colleagues serve.

Until Creighton University and CHI Health recruited Erin Gillaspie, MD, MPH, as associate professor of surgery at the School of Medicine and chief of the newly created Thoracic Surgery Department, respectively, mesothelioma patients requiring pleurectomies and decortications had to seek treatment outside Nebraska. The surgery takes from 10 to 14 hours and involves the removal of the entire inside lining of the chest; the outside lining of the lung; the diaphragm, with reconstruction; and the sac around the heart, with reconstruction. But Gillaspie says it is worth it “to get to celebrate cancer-free anniversaries.”

“I still remember the day that I booked the first case,” Gillaspie says. “My nurse manager started crying because for decades we had been sending these patients to Chicago to receive treatment.”

Treating mesothelioma patients is

just one of the advances Gillaspie has brought to Creighton, CHI Health and the greater Nebraska region. Enhancing lung cancer treatment has been her primary goal. She initiated an expansion of surgical offerings to include a robotic lung cancer program that performs lobectomies, robotic sleeves for the sections and double-robotic surgeries that include robotic bronchoscopies followed by robotic lung resections.

“In this setting, I am taking out only a portion of the lobe so that we can save more lung for the patient,” Gillaspie says. She performed the double-robotic surgery within a few weeks of her arrival in November 2023 from Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Since then, nearly 25 more patients have benefited from the surgery, the first of its kind within the CHI Health system and among the first in Nebraska.

Gillaspie is excited to bring the robotic lung cancer surgery, which she

studied as a fellow at the Mayo Clinic Rochester, to Creighton. She believes it is revolutionizing patient care. Though many of her patients initially assume a robot is performing the surgery, in reality, it is all Gillaspie, using highly mechanized “robotic” tools. She manipulates four pedals with her right foot, three pedals with her left and four robotic arms with her hands to make just four, 8-millimeter incisions. She likens the robot’s appendages to miniaturized versions of her own hands because the robot replicates her movements.

Her passion for treating lung cancer is coupled with an equal passion for rural medicine practice. The ability to explore the two is why Gillaspie jumped at the chance to join Creighton’s School of Medicine and CHI Health.

“Nebraska as a whole, Omaha included, has high rates of lung cancer,” she says. Increased exposure to radon and less access to early lung cancer detection and treatment are some of the reasons it disproportionately affects rural populations, she says.

To address this situation, Gillaspie is focusing on increased screening efforts and access to care in partnership with physicians throughout the state. Awareness — letting pulmonologists know that this program is at their disposal — is the first step. Concentrating on getting patients into the system follows.

Gillaspie created a survey to help local doctors determine whether their patients qualify for lung cancer screenings.

“Cancer care should transcend hospital borders,” Gillaspie says.

In the time that Gillaspie has been at Creighton and CHI Health, she also has started to build a complex airway program that includes tracheal resections; a thoracic outlet syndrome program to manage patients who cannot use their hands effectively because the thoracic inlet is squeezing their arteries and nerves; and a complex chest wall program to care for patients with congenital chest wall abnormalities.

Law School Receives Historic Gift from Alumnus

The School of Law has received the largest gift in its 120-year history.

The estate of James Menehan, JD’63, has given Creighton \$9.7 million to support the law school’s students, faculty and programs. Menehan — who died at the age of 85 in October 2023 in Monroe, Wisconsin — was an attorney who worked at CUNA Mutual in Madison before retiring to care for his parents.

“His generosity will create a legacy of support that will create numerous meaningful experiences for our law students for years to come,” says Joshua Fershée, JD, dean of the School of Law. “This gift will create scholarships, support our students and faculty, and help provide the tools necessary for a next-generation law school. We are excited and grateful for the countless possibilities this will create.”

New Student Life, Global Engagement VPs Named

Creighton recently welcomed new vice provosts for Student Life and Global Engagement.

Eric Baldwin, DMin, was named vice provost for Student Life, arriving at Creighton in June. Baldwin brings more than 30 years of experience in student affairs to the position. Prior to Creighton, Baldwin was vice president for student development at the University of Lynchburg in Virginia, where he oversaw and managed all aspects of student life through the Division of Student Development.

Baldwin received his undergraduate degree in political science from Appalachian State University. He later earned a master’s degree in student personnel administration from James Madison University before completing a Doctor of Ministry from Virginia Theological Seminary.



TREE CAMPUS DESIGNATION

Creighton University was honored with the 2024 Tree Campus Higher Education designation from the Arbor Day Foundation for its commitment to providing natural spaces and trees that benefit the environment and add to the health, vitality and beauty of campus.



NEW VICE PROVOSTS

Eric Baldwin, DMin, top, and Kari Costello, DBA, recently joined Creighton.

Kari Costello, DBA, joined Creighton in September as vice provost for Global Engagement. Costello has more than a decade of leadership experience in global operations within higher education.

Costello, who worked at DePaul University in Chicago for more than 12 years before joining Creighton, most recently served as assistant vice president of International Admission and Recruitment at DePaul. Before joining DePaul in 2012, Costello served as director of international programs for the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

Costello earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin, a Master of Business Administration in international business from the Thunderbird Global School of Management at Arizona State University and a Doctor of Business Administration from DePaul University’s Kellstadt Graduate School of Business. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Poland and spent time working and studying in the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia.

Adaptive Yoga Program in Phoenix Provides Values-Based Clinical Experience

Physical therapy students at the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix typically start volunteering with the adaptive yoga program to gain hands-on experience with patients; however, they stumble upon an experience that encapsulates the spirit of Creighton.

“The students are getting us to that next level of healing,” says patient Robert Dopp. “Each one of them is their own version of an angel, and they’re just students.”

Creighton’s Phoenix campus hosts weekly adaptive yoga classes in partnership with Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center Barrow Neurological Institute. Physical



Watch a video about the yoga class.

NADER, ABUSHHAB

therapy students carefully assist patients under the guidance of licensed practitioners.

James Lynskey, PhD, PT, associate professor of physical therapy and chair of the physical therapy program in Phoenix, has been a champion of the program since the beginning. “Our students must be comfortable with talking with their future patients, talking with people in the public and helping them with exercises and proper movement patterns,” Lynskey says. “The adaptive yoga classes give them that practice.”

Student Jade Vella-Wright has found this experiential learning and interaction with licensed physical therapists to be beneficial. “I learn by doing, and it supplements what I’m learning in the classroom,” Vella-Wright says.

Amid intensive courses and clinical practice, the students volunteer their time at the adaptive yoga class. “Seeing my students take their personal time to help others makes me humble. The adaptive yoga program is a great example of *cura personalis* and men and women for and with others,” Lynskey says.

Youth Sports Injuries Getting Worse, but There are Solutions

Along with rising participation in youth sports is a rise in injuries, especially among kids who concentrate on a single sport. One of the issues is that they never get to rest.

“Even professionals get an offseason, but our kids do not,” says Stefany Shaibi, EdD, DPT, PT, associate professor of physical therapy on the Phoenix campus. “The kids sports stuff, it can be a little bit crazy.”

Parents need to watch out for their kids’ health, especially with ever-expanding options for kids to participate in sports including school leagues, rec leagues and travel teams, says Shaibi.

“We are seeing a rise in overuse injuries and chronic use issues in kids,” she says.

A push is coming for children to diversify their participation in different sports and not specialize in a

© Physical therapy student Jade Vella-Wright, left, helps a patient during an adaptive yoga session at Creighton’s Phoenix campus.



STEFANY SHAIBI, EdD, DPT, PT

Stefany Shaibi is an associate professor of physical therapy on the Phoenix campus.

single activity, especially at a young age. Repetitive motions can lead to injury, but taking a break from one sport to play another can be helpful. It’s also important to play different activities within those sports. A baseball pitcher might not want to be a football quarterback, two positions that involve lots of throwing, Shaibi says.

“This is a national issue,” she says. And it goes beyond physical stress on the body. Kids get burnt out, too.

Parents often put pressure on children to perform at a high level to advance to college and professional athletics, but the percentage of children who become collegiate or pro athletes is so incredibly low that it’s not very realistic, Shaibi says. She wrote an article for *AZ Big Media* titled “The Dangers of Overzealous Parents in Youth Sports,” where she encouraged parents to take a practical approach to sports.

Shaibi’s recommendations included looking for signs of burnout such as disinterest, moodiness and chronic fatigue; encouraging children to explore other sports; consulting medical professionals for preventive care during the offseason; and allowing plenty of time for rest and recovery during the season, especially after practices and games.

It’s also important to have tough conversations, she says. Kids may not want to hear they need to take time off to recover from an injury or to take downtime between seasons, and they may even resist that advice, but parents and healthcare providers need to be responsible in having those conversations.

It’s an important part of what she teaches students at Creighton.

“Having those conversations can be difficult,” she says. “I do think sports are important. It helps with not only physical development but teamwork.

“There are so many positives to playing sports. We just need to be a little bit smarter with our kids.”

Wait ... What?

At Creighton, undergraduate students play a hands-on role in research that moves big ideas forward. Here’s a snapshot of one student’s research project.

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

Autonomous Humanoid Robotics in Unstructured Environments: Enhancing AiNex’s Precision in Ball Kicking with Deep Learning Algorithms

STUDENT RESEARCHER:

Ariana Mondiri, senior computer science major; member of the women’s soccer team; Paris, France

FACULTY MENTOR:

Steven Fernandes, PhD, assistant professor of computer science, design and journalism, College of Arts and Sciences

WHAT IT MEANS:

A Dean’s Summer Undergraduate Research Scholarship has allowed Mondiri to delve into the expanding field of machine learning. Her research centers on teaching robots to behave intelligently within specified environments, with practical applications such as self-driving cars and robotics. The project involves training a robot to accurately track a soccer ball — a task that showcases the transferable nature of machine-learning techniques. By gathering and annotating thousands of images, Mondiri is working to refine the robot’s ability to recognize and interact with its surroundings autonomously. This methodical approach is paving the way for robots to learn and execute tasks independently, with potential applications ranging from sports robotics to industrial automation.



PHOTO BY DAVE WEAVER



Creighton Offering New Course in Health Informatics

The amount of data created, captured and consumed worldwide is staggering — reaching 62.4 zettabytes in 2020 — and leaping higher every year. The health-care industry makes up just about 30% of the global data volume, with an expectation to grow 36% by 2025, according to a study by Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society and Arcadia.

“Healthcare is a data-driven business,” says Joy Doll, OTD’03, program director of the Health Informatics Program at Creighton.

“When a person goes to their primary care provider, they get weighed, their blood pressure is taken — these are all metrics and data points put into an electronic health record (EHR). EHRs give an opportunity to input and

collect lots of patient data. For example, the trend of blood pressure over time is easier to track. And if you get your blood pressure taken at one clinic, and then you go to another, is that data going to come through and be the same data point and have the same information?”

This discernment of health data has a crucial role in transforming health-care. Unlocking data, understanding it, then applying it to health systems is health informatics: “creating knowledge and wisdom out of the data to tell a story and make informed decisions,” explains Doll.

With informed decisions, healthcare professionals can provide the best care for patients.

Doll is the instructor for a new online, on-demand course offered by the College of Professional and Continuing Education. Introduction to Health Data and Informatics will take participants through topics including data



JOY DOLL, OTD’03
Joy Doll leads the Health Informatics Program at Creighton.

governance, health system infrastructure and health data visualizations. At their own pace, participants will engage with modules that ask: What is health data? How do you use it safely and accurately? What are the ways to apply it?

The introductory course will provide clinicians, health professionals and others looking to impact healthcare to apply insights to their work and explore next steps in their career.

Health data — and its potential for big impact — reaches across the health-care system.

“Everyone working in healthcare is impacted by health data and technology,” Doll says. “Understanding how health data is used and processed can be helpful to clinicians to better understand the impact of health data on their daily practice and be more proactive in a patient’s care.”

Visit lifelong.creighton.edu for more information.

Creighton to Build New Residence Hall for Second-Year Students

Creighton sophomores will soon have a new place to call home. In September, Creighton formally broke ground on a new 400-student residence hall for sophomores, set to open in the fall of 2026.

The hall will be located on North 21st Street between Cuming and Burt streets. The 151,000-square-foot building will house 400 second-year students and include communal study spaces for residents and common recreational areas for all students.

The new hall’s announcement follows three consecutive years of changes to campus housing. In 2022, the University demolished longtime residence hall Gallagher Hall. Last year, Creighton opened Graves Hall, the first residence hall built exclusively for first-year students since the 1960s. This summer, Kiewit Hall, another of the University’s oldest residence halls, was demolished.

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, said upgrading student housing has been one of the University’s central priorities in reimagining campus.

New Board Leadership, Trustees Announced

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, has announced new leadership for its Board of Trustees and has welcomed seven new members.

Diane Duren, BSBA’81, was elected as chair, becoming the first woman to serve in the role. She succeeds Nizar Ghoussaini, BS’75, MS’76, who had been chair since 2021.

A member of Creighton’s Board since 2019 and vice chair since 2021, Duren is a former executive vice president and chief administrative officer at Union Pacific, where she spent 32 years



© An architectural rendering of the new sophomore residence hall being built on 21st Street between Cuming and Burt streets.

holding a variety of finance, marketing and sales positions, including vice president and general manager — chemicals in marketing and sales.

“Diane continues to be a valued leader on our Board of Trustees as someone who embraces the Creighton mission and has fostered such a distinctly broad range of relationships across business and civic communities,” Fr. Hendrickson says.

Mark Henkels, BSBA’83, joins Duren in a leadership role as vice chair. A member of the Board since 2019, Henkels is a managing director at Moelis & Company, a global independent investment bank based in New York City, where he serves clients in the industrials sector.

The newly named trustees are Todd Foje, BSBA’87, CEO of Great Plains Communications LLC; John Graham, chairman and CEO of Sunbelt Holdings; Lee Graves, BSBA’80, JD’83, founder and chairman of ELM Companies; Robert Greenwood, BSPHA’77, owner of Greenwood Pharmacy; Elizabeth Lenke, BSN’86, a licensed therapist working in the nonprofit sector; Ann Schmitt, vice president of enterprise consumer payments at the Walt Disney Company; and Jim Simpson, BA’80, former president of strategic initiatives for Sirius Computer Solutions.



DIANE DUREN, BSBA’81
Diane Duren is the first woman to serve as president of Creighton’s Board of Trustees.

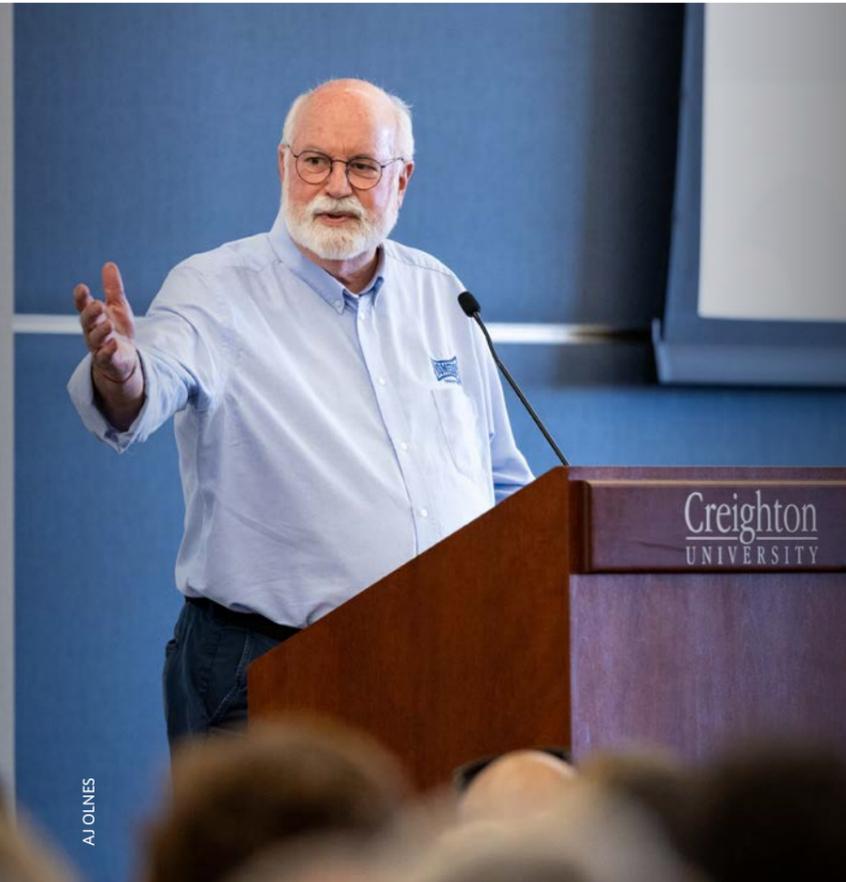
Fr. Hendrickson also named three trustees being recognized with emeriti status: outgoing chair Ghoussaini, former senior operational partner for Triton; Frank Hayes, BSBA’75, majority owner and president of Hayes & Associates LLC; and outgoing vice chair Gail Werner-Robertson, BA’84, JD’88, founder and CEO of GWR Wealth Management LLC.

Creighton Forms Council of Regents

Creighton University has formed the Council of Regents, a select group of 33 University ambassadors and benefactors.

For the inaugural council, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, and University leaders have selected a wide-ranging group of alumni, parents and friends from across the country.

They were chosen for their leadership in their respective communities or professions, for their capacity to bring diverse and unique perspectives to the work of the University and for their ability to serve as Creighton’s most effective ambassadors. Each regent will serve a three-year term. The



“People are longing to live in a house where there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’; there’s just us.”

THE REV. GREG BOYLE, SJ
FOUNDER, HOMEBOY INDUSTRIES

Celebrating Mission Week

The Rev. Greg Boyle, SJ, is the founder of Homeboy Industries, which, for more than three decades, has served high-risk former gang members through programs, services and job training. The Los Angeles-based organization is the largest gang rehabilitation program in the world. Fr. Boyle, who in 2024 received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, spoke at Creighton in August as part of the University’s Mission Week celebration.



Watch Fr. Boyle’s Mission Week keynote address.

Council of Regents is not responsible for governing.

In establishing the Council of Regents, Creighton joins other Jesuit institutions with a tradition of prestigious and impactful Regents programs, including Georgetown University, Boston College, Santa Clara University and Fordham University.

“Through the Council of Regents, this group will deepen their relationships to Creighton’s mission while growing their roles as some of the University’s most pivotal ambassadors,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “They will do so at one of the boldest and most exciting moments in Creighton’s history. The Council allows us to bring together some of our best minds to see where Creighton is today and imagine where it could be headed tomorrow.”

Council of Regents co-chairs Mike Meehan, DDS’92, and Deb Doubek Meehan, PHARM D’91, (who live near Chicago) say they are excited to be “part of a group that can contribute to transformational changes for the University.

Higher education institutions will face numerous challenges in the decades ahead. We hope the Council of Regents can assist the University in positioning itself ahead of these challenges.”

Combatting Racial Bias in Maternal Healthcare

Joseph Maurice, MD, professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the School of Medicine, is spearheading a project that employs virtual reality (VR) technology to increase racial sensitivity among medical students.

In collaboration with Charee Thompson, PhD, associate professor of communications at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an expert in DEI communication, Maurice aims to tackle the pressing issue of health disparities in Black maternal health through innovative training.

This study will test VR-based cultural competency training to improve Black



FR. LANNON RETURNS TO CREIGHTON

The Rev. Timothy Lannon, SJ, EdD, BS’73, former president of Creighton University, has returned to his alma mater as superior of the Omaha Jesuit Community. Fr. Lannon returns to Creighton from the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus, where he served as treasurer since September 2020.

maternal health outcomes.

“Ongoing health disparities for Black pregnant and postpartum women are unacceptable,” Maurice says. “Implicit bias and poor cultural competency drive ineffective, inappropriate and racist communication between these women and their providers.” Through this research, Maurice is seeking to provide evidence-based, cost-effective training to address these implicit biases and cultural competencies.

The project received initial funding in 2022 and has since developed into a comprehensive training program that includes a pretest, an immersive VR video viewed through Meta Quest Virtual Reality Headset glasses and a post-test to measure the participants’ learning outcomes.

The training, which will eventually extend to residents, is designed to help medical students recognize health inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) patients, identify and manage their own implicit biases and communicate with BIPOC patients in a respectful and trust-building manner.

At the heart of this research are dedicated Creighton medical students who are integral to the project’s execution and success. “We all play a role in coordinating and executing the study, completing data analysis and manuscript writing,” says fourth-year medical student Kamron Karimi Zand.

The collaboration between Maurice, Thompson and students exemplifies the strategic partnerships necessary to create meaningful change in medical education. The impact of the training is profound. By immersing themselves in the VR simulations, the students understand how implicit bias can erode the physician-patient relationship and lead to poor health outcomes.

“Our hope is that this evidence-based, efficacious and cost-effective approach can be a game-changer for eliminating implicit bias in clinical practice and nurturing cultural competency for many marginalized groups in our country,” Zand says.

© Joseph Maurice, MD, right, with medical student Claire Malhotra during a VR-based cultural competency training session.



AJ OJLINES

Creighton Retention Rate Hits 94%

In an ever-changing world, Creighton is adapting to create the best possible experience for its students. It is this emphasis on the holistic student experience that encourages Bluejays to stay at Creighton and graduate as future leaders.

Across the nation, private four-year institutions retain 79% of students from their first year of college to their second year (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, June 27, 2024). In 2024, Creighton hit an all-time school record with a retention rate of 94%. Retention rate is a measurement of first-year students who returned for their sophomore year. This is up from the University’s average of 89.5% before 2020 and 92% over the past four years. And places Creighton retention rates among prestigious institutions such as Duke University, Princeton University, Case Western Reserve University, Wake Forest University and Boston University.



COLIN CONICES

Members of the Class of 2028 line up to touch the beak of the Billy Bluejay statue located outside of the Michael G. Morrison, SJ Stadium during the annual Pathway and Convocation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 academic year.

MEET THE FRESHMAN CLASS

Creighton welcomed the third largest freshman class in history to campus this fall. Here are some facts about the class.



1,126
freshmen



40%
coming from
400+ miles away



12%
first-generation



42% | 58%
male | female



19
international
students



15 States
with more than
10 students each

Engaging in Respectful Dialogue

BY MOLLY CARPENTER GARRIOTT, BA'89

The Council of Trent and your holiday table may not seem like they have much in common. But they do.

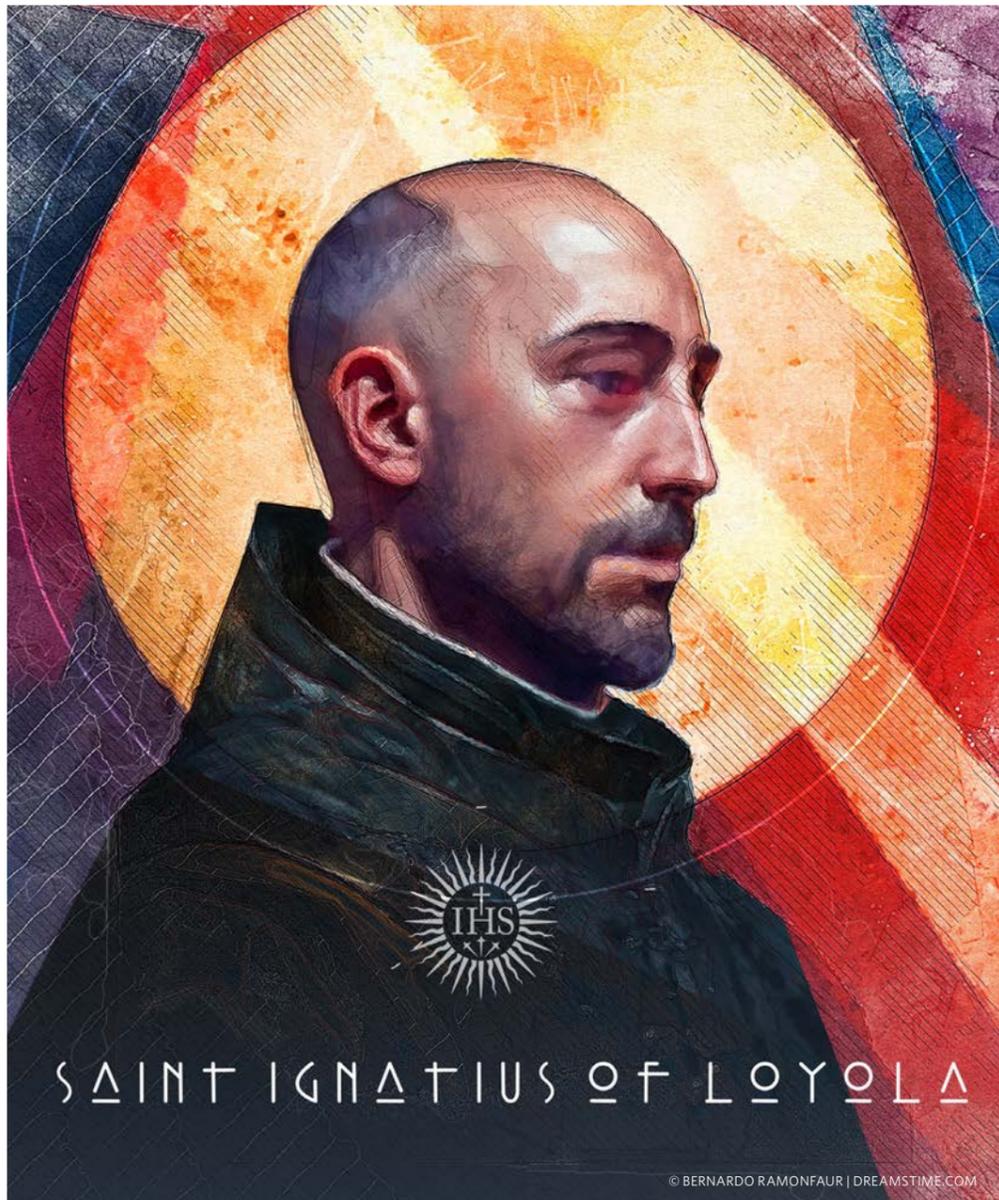
The 16th century, when the Council of Trent was held, was a time of expanding worldviews in Europe. The Reformation was dramatically disrupting the status quo, and the Council of Trent was the Catholic Church's response. It was a time of reflection and action in a fraught society — not unlike the sense of instability we, and our institutions, are experiencing today.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit religious order, wrote a letter (letter writing plays a significant role in the Jesuit tradition, with Ignatius penning more than 7,000 in his lifetime) to his fellow Jesuits who were attending the Council of Trent. Knowing that emotions would be running high, St. Ignatius offered these (slightly edited) words of advice:

- Be slow to speak. And when you do, be deliberate and loving.
- Listen attentively, holding space for silence.
- Seek the truth in what others are saying.
- Engage disagreement with love.
- Allow the conversation the time it needs.

His advice over 500 years ago can serve as a guide for engaging in respectful dialogue today, even when the conversation has the potential to be contentious. Especially if the conversation is a verbal walk through a field of land mines.

Increased societal tensions; news coverage that often reduces pressing, complex issues to soundbites; echo chambers that reinforce



“If you can walk away and still see the humanity in that individual, that’s a true outcome of respectful dialogue.”

SARAH WALKER, PHD

“Assume the best in the other. We are all God’s beloved. If God loves us profoundly, it’s incumbent on us to love one another as well.”

CINDY SCHMERSAL, EDD, MA'13

“ ... every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbor’s statement than to condemn it. Further, if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means it. If that meaning is wrong, one should correct the person with love ... ”

THE PRESUPPOSITION OF
THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
BY ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

existing notions; and disagreements resulting from discordant perspectives and worldviews make civil dialogue challenging.

Cindy Schmersal, EdD, MA'13, vice president of Mission and Ministry, and Sarah Walker, PhD, vice president of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, who recently piloted a campus program titled Ignatian Conversations, believe insights from St. Ignatius may provide some good guidance.

Viewed from an Ignatian perspective, love underpins all conversations, both easy and difficult. Seeing the person with whom you are conversing as a child of God and not your opponent goes a long way to ensuring productive dialogue. “Assume the best in the other. We are all God’s beloved,” Schmersal says. “If God loves us profoundly, it’s incumbent on us to love one another as well.”

Easier said than done, you say, when “intolerant” Aunt Ida or “naive” nephew Nick are pushing your buttons over the buttered rolls. Do what Harvard professor and author Arthur Brooks advises in his book *Love Your Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America from a Culture of Contempt* — refuse to categorize entire groups as evil or awful or whatever sweeping generalization you want to use because, chances are, someone you love belongs to that demographic. You love your grandpa but disagree with his views on the free market. You adore your daughter but think her political beliefs are ill-formed.

It’s not a zero-sum proposition. We can maintain our differences and simultaneously see our shared values. “If you can walk away and still see the humanity in that individual, that’s a true outcome of respectful dialogue,” Walker says. Plus, she adds, one difficult conversation



Cindy Schmersal, EdD, MA'13, left, and Sarah Walker, PhD

often segues into additional conversations on different topics, which can lead to new learning.

Tempering our goals is necessary. Schmersal says it’s important to remember that the point of respectful dialogue is not to win someone over to your point of view or for both parties to completely agree. Rather, it’s to come to a better understanding of each other’s perspectives, to learn more about those with whom we engage, to glean insights into what makes them the people we love.

As difficult as respectful dialogue can be when the subject matter is hot and emotions are high, we need to still have them. “We’re socialized not to have hard conversations,” Walker says, “but how do we learn the skill to talk about difficult topics if we avoid them?”

Approach the conversation with curiosity, she advises. Enter with the mindset that you want to learn, not teach. Then you will spend more time truly listening and not just biding time until you can get your two cents in at the pulpit.

If St. Ignatius could expect this of his Jesuit companions in such a formal, significant event as the Council of Trent, we can certainly follow suit at the family table over holiday meals.

Remember, as St. Ignatius might say: God is in all things, including difficult conversations.

PANDEMIC IN HINDSIGHT

Lessons
learned as
COVID-19
turns 5

BY Glenn Antonucci

ON DEC. 12, 2019, a cluster of patients in Wuhan, China, began experiencing pneumonia-like symptoms that didn't respond to standard treatments. By Jan. 19, 2020, laboratory-confirmed cases of the "2019 novel coronavirus" appeared in three other Asian countries.

The following day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first confirmed case in the U.S. By February, the outbreak had a new name — "COVID-19" — and a month later it was declared a pandemic, with more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries.

Since then, there have been more than 800 million reported COVID-19 cases, resulting in more than 7 million deaths worldwide. Health officials globally now consider it an endemic disease; here to stay. Creighton researchers and health professionals have been on the frontlines of studying and fighting COVID-19.

As the world marks the fifth anniversary of the disease's emergence and global spread, we asked five of them to reflect on lessons learned from the pandemic, the pitfalls it exposed, where the disease stands now and what it all means for future public-health crises.

Maureen Tierney, MD, MSc

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL RESEARCH
AND PUBLIC HEALTH

TIERNEY SPENT THE FIRST SIX MONTHS of the pandemic at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, focused on the deadly situation unfolding at long-term care facilities and helping determine how best to keep vulnerable residents out of COVID's reach.

"There was a lot of death," she says. "It was probably the toughest time in my professional life, emotionally and physically."

Another focus for Tierney in those early days of the crisis was on keeping the state medical community informed through webinar updates she held three times a week. That reinforced for her a tenet of public communication: "If you don't know, say you don't know."

"People whose job it is to communicate public health need to never overreach in terms of what they're communicating," she says. "You have to protect credibility."

From a scientific standpoint, Tierney says, a major pandemic takeaway is the successful use of messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) — technology that had already been in the works for years — for rapid development of the vaccines that would protect so many against the emergent COVID-19.

"Had mRNA technology not been where it was, there's no way the vaccine would have been developed that quickly."

And that, she says, underscores a broader lesson: the vital importance of ongoing scientific study.

"The continual study of vaccine science, how to prevent illness, is absolutely key," says Tierney, who in 2020 was awarded the inaugural McKnight Prize for Health Outbreak Heroes. "We don't know exactly what the next virus is going to be, but we have to be ready."

As for the COVID-19 virus, "It's with us forever," she says. "It's endemic. We'll probably have twice-a-year peaks, in the summer and late winter."

Which, she says, makes continued vaccination so important — at a time when there is decreasing confidence in vaccination in general. The decrease in vaccination rates are resulting in increases of pertussis and measles nationwide.

"How to get public confidence back about vaccination is, to me, the most immediate call for public health," Tierney says. "What are the two most important things that have led to improvements in health and life expectancy? It's clean water and vaccination."

Christopher Destache, PharmD'84

PROFESSOR OF PHARMACY

THE PANDEMIC EVOKES FOR DESTACHE memories of healthcare providers working together "with the common goal of protecting patients and protecting each other."

That early camaraderie and common feeling of purpose gave way, for many, to burnout.

"That was particularly true for the ICU nurses and physicians," Destache says. "And so, because of the pandemic,



"How to get public confidence back about vaccination is, to me, the most immediate call for public health."

MAUREEN TIERNEY, MD, MSC

we've since seen a dramatic reduction in ICU nurses."

The main lesson learned, he says, is that public health systems must be upgraded to keep track of serious, life-threatening viruses — wherever in the world they may originate.

"It's a big lost art," he says. "All public health comes from the federal government, so it's important for them to understand that if we don't track these viruses worldwide, we're going to be late to the party."

Resources, or lack thereof, play an outsized role in the ongoing fight against novel viruses, Destache says. "The CDC is always looking at what's out there, but the number of investigators who can look at an outbreak is somewhat limited because of funding."

Another lesson learned, he says, is the role of misinformation, particularly on social media.

"There was a lot of misinformation, and a lot of people who followed that misinformation, to their detriment," Destache says. "We still have some of that, but I think it's gone down quite a bit."

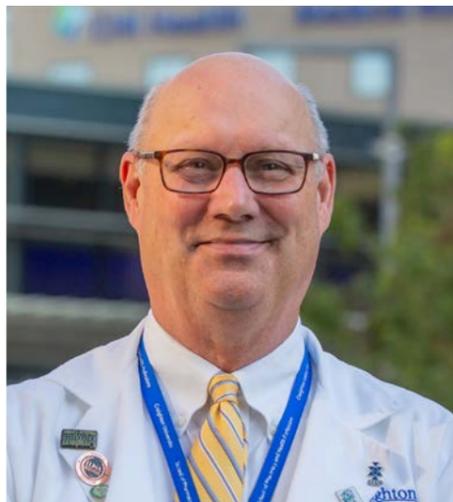
"On social media, so many people are considered experts because they have a following," he says. "You have to really think hard before you start posting, particularly if you are a leader — political, national or the leader of an organization — because you're going to have followers, and you've got people who are panicking, and they want some guidance."

"It's really important to get your facts straight."





© Anne Mardis O'Keefe, MD, MPH, left, and Christopher Destache, PharmD'84



Anne Mardis O'Keefe, MD, MPH VICE CHAIR, PUBLIC HEALTH

AS THE SENIOR EPIDEMIOLOGIST for the Douglas County (Nebraska) Health Department from 2006 to 2022, prior to her arrival at Creighton's School of Medicine, O'Keefe is keenly aware of the importance of accurate communication during a public health crisis. Her role at Douglas County included communicating and coordinating with healthcare providers and the public during disease outbreaks, including COVID-19.

That work drove home huge lessons.

"If you lose trust early, it's really hard to get it back," she says. "The rule is 'be first, be right, be credible.' If you're not the first out there, others will get that credibility."

COVID-19, she says, was novel in more ways than one. It marked the modern advent of "health as a political weapon." Because of federal politics, the CDC didn't have the resources it needed to properly lead the pandemic response, she says. So, much of that task was left to state and local agencies.

In the pandemic's early days, O'Keefe says, "We had to figure it out ourselves. And we had to be out there communicating. 'How big is it? Is it here yet? How ill are people getting, and who's getting killed by it?' (In the absence of federal

guidance) we had to find out that information locally."

Today, she says, COVID-19 is still prevalent, but most of the population has either had the disease or been vaccinated. However, that doesn't mean the threat is gone.

"It's still killing people," she says. "It's worse than flu. Babies who were born after the pandemic have no immunity."

Just as worrisome is the lingering political dynamic, O'Keefe says. "There's still this idea that vaccines are killing people, when it's actually COVID that's killing people. And global politics still hinder pandemic response. We're vulnerable to these information wars."

That's had a chilling effect on dialogue about the disease, she says.

"People don't want to talk about COVID. Health departments are afraid to talk about it, because they got so much hate."

On the positive side, O'Keefe points to several scientific advancements as fruit borne from the pandemic.

"We've bounded forward. We were able to speed up clinical trials and reduce barriers. And mRNA technology can now be used for other diseases," she says.

"Another big thing that came out of it was wastewater testing," she adds. "It's the best way to know what's happening in the community."

Zachary DePew, MD'07 DIVISION CHIEF AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE AND SLEEP MEDICINE

DEPEW'S PANDEMIC TAKEAWAYS largely center on preparedness. He remembers talking with colleagues about COVID-19 just as it was hitting the U.S. coasts and speculating about what it might look like as it spread across the country.

"I don't think we were accounting for volume," he says. "The volume and severity of illness, and just how overwhelmed the whole system was."

He remembers, too, how quickly overtaxed the hospitals became in the early months, both in terms of available beds and medical supplies.

"I never thought I'd show up to work one day and be without basic equipment and supplies," DePew says.

That experience made for a practical pandemic lesson: "Don't even take the basics for granted. Don't assume limitless supplies, even of simple things, like masks and gowns."

"Remember, a million Americans died," he says. "That's about one in every 400 people. It did a number on our population. If we find ourselves in another big crisis, we learned we don't have the bandwidth to absorb it."

Beyond healthcare capacity and preparedness, DePew says he was struck by how quickly the "tone of society" can change.

"I remember the summer of 2020, driving around on empty streets and seeing signs in tribute to 'our healthcare heroes,'" he says. "But that tone changed rather abruptly."

Those "heroes" became objects of scorn, a turnabout stoked by politics and a breakdown in civility, he says.

"We started out thinking the pandemic was going to be a shorter-term thing — 'We can get through this in a matter of weeks or months.' Then it was years. Then it got into politics," he says. "Healthcare really has nothing to do with politics."

As for the virus itself: "The overwhelming majority of people have either been vaccinated or had the virus, which is why we're not seeing as much severe disease," DePew says. "But COVID's not gone. It's still there. And now we've seen a swell on the back end."

The lesson for all of us? "Try to stay healthy," he says. "As much as you can."

Rev. Kevin FitzGerald, SJ, PhD, PhD CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL HUMANITIES

REFLECTING ON THE DIRE DAYS of the pandemic, Fr. FitzGerald remembers first the resiliency of Creighton students.

"It was amazing how our students handled it," he says. "They rolled with the punches, and they wanted to get back in person. It's one of the things that made me grateful to be here. They said, 'OK, what do we have to do to continue our education and make this work?' They adapted. We all adapted."

Getting back in person wasn't readily possible, of course.

"The pandemic really separated people, which is a horrible thing," Fr. FitzGerald says. "But it also rapidly expanded our adeptness at being online."

He acknowledges, too, the societal divisions exposed in a crisis like COVID-19 — divisions that are still coming to light.

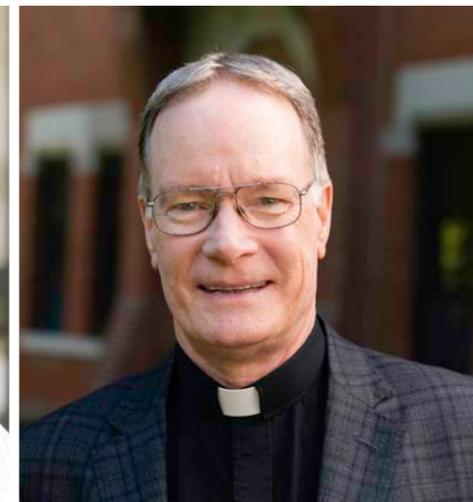
"I'm not sure we've learned all the lessons yet. We're still learning," he says. "The biggest, which continues to evolve, are the lines of fracture that became apparent in society. The common good, doing things for others, being aware of how one's actions impact others."

"The pandemic really brought out some areas where people significantly disagree. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' It became more about me, me, me. The different ways people responded to each other with aggression."

Another aspect of the pandemic that people are still coming to grips with, Fr. FitzGerald says, is the balance



© Zachary DePew, MD'07, left, and the Rev. Kevin FitzGerald, SJ, PhD, PhD



between protecting physical and mental health.

"In a pandemic, the public health takes priority," he says. "But were we understanding the impacts on certain vulnerable people, those with compromised immune systems vs. those impacted by isolation?" In the campus setting, for example, there were "people who can't learn well via the internet, asynchronously. They were better in person."

Like DePew, Fr. FitzGerald notes a societal shift toward aggression, a "darkness" that has since moderated, he adds — while acknowledging that it's still unclear what exactly led to that aggression. Underneath it: an undeniable presence of fear.

"It's interesting to see what fear did to our world and society," he says. "It's kind of shocking. You want to hope that, under extreme circumstances, people's best selves will come out."

Faith plays a part, too.

"Why do I continue to be hopeful and engaged? We belong to a Catholic community of well over a billion people. Christians account for over 2 billion. And if you consider all religions, that's the vast majority of people on the planet," Fr. FitzGerald says. "All religions' values say that you cannot forget others. It's not just about 'me and my group.' All religions work against that."

"It's interesting to see what fear did to our world and society. It's kind of shocking. You want to hope that, under extreme circumstances, people's best selves will come out."

THE REV. KEVIN FITZGERALD, SJ, PHD, PHD



TRACKING COVID-19 VARIANTS

Renuga Vivekanandan, MD, professor and associate dean for clinical affairs in the Creighton School of Medicine, and an infectious disease expert, was interviewed by *Parade Magazine* in October to discuss the rise of the new XEC COVID-19 variant.

Vivekanandan, recently named vice president and chief medical officer for the Physician Enterprise at CHI Health, said that while the variant is still in the early stages of its spread, its presentation is similar to earlier strains: cough, fever and respiratory symptoms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a COVID Data Tracker for the latest information on COVID-19 trends at covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker.

Advancing Research

Whether exploring the effects of age on load-velocity profiles in women or studying the limb symmetry of red-tailed hawks, Creighton students are conducting meaningful research alongside faculty mentors through the Ferlic Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

BY Micah Mertes

The important thing is to keep moving. Through repetition, trial and error, and the careful gathering of data, people just might discover that they are capable of far more than they thought.

This is true in science, in work, in life itself, says Devon Stoffel, a senior exercise science and prehealth professions student at Creighton.

Stoffel is an undergraduate student researcher in the College of Arts and Sciences who, along with her faculty mentor, Mitchel Magrini, PhD, is exploring the influence of age on women's load-velocity profiles. (The load-velocity profile is a metric commonly used to assess athletic performance; it measures the relationship between how much a person can lift and how fast she can lift it.)

During their research, they found something unexpected. And, for some, possibly life changing.

For the study, conducted over the summer of 2023, Stoffel and Magrini invited 32 young, middle-aged and elderly women into their lab in the Criss Health Sciences complex. There,

the participants put the belt of a squat machine around their waists, bent down into a squat and continually pushed their legs up as fast as they could. The initial load of the rack was 31 pounds, with the load resistance increasing by 20% of the participant's body weight with each subsequent set.

The machine's screen displayed the load-velocity profile of every squat, the number taking into account both the resistance and speed of each movement.

When the load increased, the participant moved slower. Older women were weaker and moved slower when compared to younger, yet there was no difference between the older and middle-aged women.

"We discovered that between our middle-age and older-age groups, there were no significant differences between how fast someone is able to lift weight and the load of the weight they're able to lift," Stoffel says.

In other words, elderly women don't have to decline in muscular function and physical abilities at the steep rate that is commonly accepted.

The study's overarching theory is that with proper fitness training — promoting not just

endurance but speed of resistance lifting — older women can slow their physical decline. They can pick up their grandkids or climb a set of stairs without difficulty. They can decrease their odds of falling and injuring themselves.

"That's our story," Magrini says. "As you age, you're not just losing strength and velocity or movement speed. You're losing both. We're now trying to figure out how to harness this really simple relationship into a training program and inform older people to keep moving fast and lift light loads quickly.

"We're trying to break through the barriers of the thinking that, 'If you're old, you're also slow.' But no. It doesn't have to be that way. Can we stop the decline 100%? No, Father Time is undefeated. But if we can mitigate the decline, then we can maybe feel better, move faster and be more functionally able over a longer period of our lives."

Their research continues.

Stoffel's study was part of the 2023 Ferlic Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program, which each summer gives 14 Creighton undergraduates the opportunity to conduct and later present a research project.

Over nearly two decades, the Ferlic program — established by donors Randolph Ferlic, BS'58, MD'61, and Teresa Kolars Ferlic — has awarded nearly 250 students the time, finances and resources to spend a whole summer in the lab, slowly but surely adding to the pool of knowledge across dozens of STEM fields. Three in four Ferlic fellows have gone on to attend graduate or professional programs. There's also a significant benefit to many of the fellows' faculty mentors who secure subsequent grant funding from external sources.

The Ferlic program has helped to spark a University culture fully committed to the practice of undergraduate research. Today, more than half of Creighton's College of Arts

© From left, Devon Stoffel, Mary Conway, instructor of exercise science, and Mitchel Magrini, PhD. Conway participated in Stoffel's research project.



REBECCA GRATZ

and Sciences undergraduates participate in research. More than 400 students present their findings at conferences every year. More than 200 faculty members mentor students through CURAS (the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship).

“The whole University has bought into undergraduate research,” says Julie Strauss-Soukup, PhD, BSCHM’93, vice provost for Research and Scholarship. “What’s really unique about Creighton is these students are doing truly high-level projects.”

At bigger schools, Strauss-Soukup says, undergraduate students might be part of a research project but in a limited capacity. They might be entering data, cleaning the lab or washing dishes. At Creighton, the students are given the responsibility of leading their projects as independent researchers.

“Creighton is kind of a unicorn,” says Ashley Fricks-Gleason, PhD, who joined Creighton this June as the director of CURAS. “At the big R1

research institutions, undergraduate students contribute to high-level research in a limited way. At smaller, primarily undergraduate institutions, the students might be doing the entirety of the research work, but they’re not resourced to do projects that are the caliber of what Creighton students are doing.

“Creighton really has this unique niche middle ground where the support, mentorship and independence are aligned in a way that you don’t see almost anywhere.”

Giving undergraduate students the experience of graduate-level research so early in their education ties into one of the University’s core values: discernment.

Creighton encourages every student to keep asking: What are my strengths? What do I care about most? What path should I take? How will my research make a meaningful and lasting difference in the world?

“With the support of such people as the Ferlics, Creighton can present this great

opportunity to students to figure out what they want to do or don’t want to do in their future career,” says Amanda Holman, PhD, associate professor and previously the interim CURAS director. “Some of our students will be majoring or minoring in a particular area, and then their summer research project will take them in a whole new direction they hadn’t considered exploring.”

In this way, the entire apparatus of undergraduate research at Creighton is itself a form of research and development, one that allows students to test-pilot different lives.

Thanks to the influence of a few undergraduate research projects, Ferlic fellow Julian Garcia, BS’24, steered his career down a different path.

Garcia, who majored in biology, came to Creighton on the premedicine track. He immersed himself in a few research opportunities early on, including going to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands to conduct intensive field research projects in ecology, evolution and conservation. (“If you look and ask around, you will never lack for opportunities at Creighton,” Garcia says.)

In the summer of 2023, Garcia was awarded a Ferlic fellowship grant. He used it to study fluctuating asymmetry in the red-tailed hawk. Under the mentorship of associate professor of biology Gabriel Rivera, PhD, Garcia compared levels of symmetry between and within limbs in 43 specimens, the hawks’ bones on loan from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Kansas.

“That summer project, in particular, was such a blessing,” Garcia says. “Having my own project has given me the confidence to pursue a career in research. It helped me see that what I’m most passionate about is science and its discovery. So, I thought, ‘Why not make a career of that?’”

Currently, Garcia is conducting graduate research in neuroscience and neuroimmunology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

“If it weren’t for my Ferlic grant and summer project, I’m not sure I would have known to go in this direction,” Garcia says. “It’s been a

© Maisie Laughlin, BS’24, right, discusses her research with Randolph Ferlic, BS’58, MD’61, center, and Teresa Kolars Ferlic, far left, at the 2023 Ferlic Summer Research Fellows Poster Presentation.



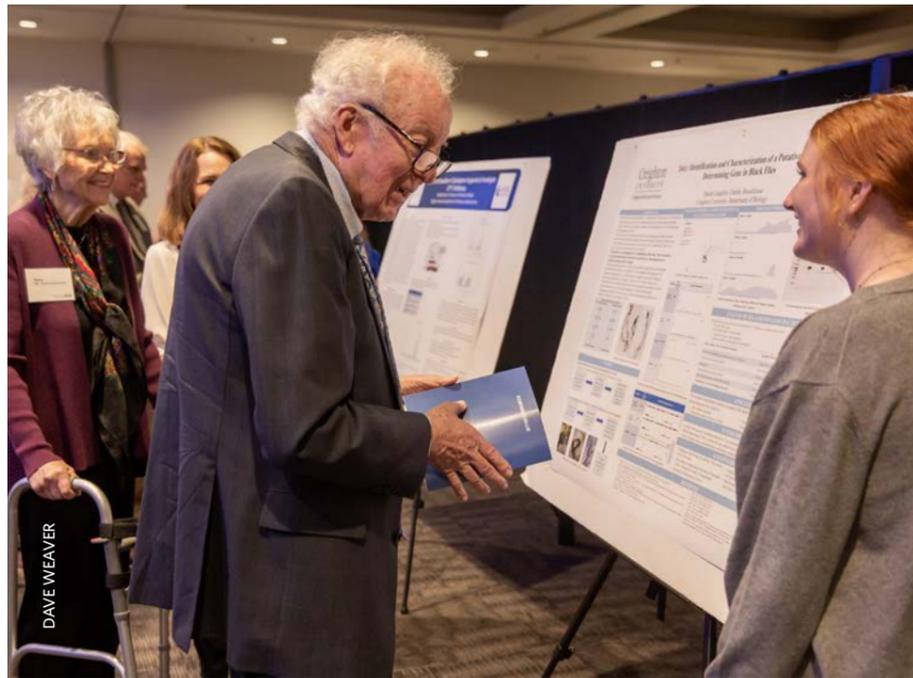
© Julian Garcia, BS’24, studied the bones of red-tailed hawks through his Ferlic fellowship.

“Having my own project has given me the confidence to pursue a career in research. It helped me see that what I’m most passionate about is science and its discovery.”

JULIAN GARCIA, BS’24

“The students aren’t just being used as an extra set of hands. These projects belong to them. They’re contributing to the research and, ultimately, to their field of study.”

MITCHEL MAGRINI, PHD



great exercise in the scientific method, observing how my thinking has continued to change sequentially.

“I see things so much differently than I did when I started at Creighton.”

Stoffel came to Creighton on a prephysical therapy track and had little interest in research. That changed when she sat in on a few training sessions of a Magrini-led study. (She would later continue and adapt his research in her Ferlic summer project and beyond.)

Over the past few years, Stoffel hasn’t just found that she enjoys research. “No,” she says, “I’ve discovered that it was the missing hole in my heart all along.”

Working with participants, running code, analyzing data, presenting results, writing manuscripts – these are the things Stoffel wants to spend her career doing.

“More specifically, I’d love it if I could just work with middle-aged females for the rest of my life,” she says. “They’re awesome to work with. And they laugh at all my jokes.”

As she prepares to graduate in May, Stoffel has already found her career niche: researching women’s health. She decided this after she heard a surprising and troubling statistic: From 2007 to 2014, only 6% of research in health science and exercise-related research was done on females only. (“That’s insane, right?” Stoffel says.)

Stoffel, who is from New Jersey, says most

of her hometown friends are studying in the healthcare field. They can’t even grasp the number of opportunities and level of independence she’s had.

“This isn’t something I would be doing almost anywhere else without a master’s or PhD,” Stoffel says. “We are so lucky. We have endless opportunities to find that thing that sparks everything else and to find the career you love so much it makes you think, ‘I don’t know why people would want to do anything but this.’”

Magrini laughs. “As you can see,” he says, pointing to Stoffel, “the passion is there. My job as a faculty mentor is easy. I’m just here to help guide her.”

“Or reel me in,” Stoffel says.

Magrini allows his research students to be as hands-on as possible, to get a feel for what it’s really like to do research and develop a program, work with participants, write a paper and present findings.

“The students aren’t just being used as an extra set of hands,” he says. “These projects belong to them. They’re contributing to the research and, ultimately, to their field of study.”

“I love this part of Creighton. It’s why I signed on to teach and conduct research here. Could I go to a place where a grad program would make the research go a little faster? Probably. But would it be as impactful? No.

“These students are the future of research, and they’re already making major progress.

How many other 21-year-olds are making an impact on the world like this? What other schools are doing this?”

When Stoffel presented the poster of her summer research project at the Ferlic Fellows reception last fall, her favorite person to present to was the man who made her project possible: Randolph Ferlic.

“He’s awesome,” Stoffel says. “He came up to my poster and fully grasped the conclusion and purpose of my project. Exercise science isn’t his main interest or background, but it all made perfect sense to him.”

That was also the case with the 13 other Ferlic presentations being made that day, in topics that ranged from bacterial viability to cochlear amplification, from healthy brain aging to Garcia’s investigation of the red-tailed hawk’s limb symmetry.

Ferlic seemed to delight in seeing the students not only advance their education but also contribute to the fount of knowledge in a dozen different spheres.

“I hope he knows what he’s made possible for us,” Stoffel says. “Because of his support, he’s shown us that this, this is it. This is how we could spend our careers. This is a real picture of what our lives can look like and what paths we can take to get there.”

To see what other discoveries await, the research continues. The important thing is to keep moving.



DAVE WEAVER

Vanessa White, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, is a member of the Next Generation Leaders Program at Creighton.

LEADING FOR GOOD

BY EUGENE CURTIN

Developing leaders who serve the public good – which recently earned the University a prestigious new national designation – has long been part of the fabric of a Creighton education

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY'S HISTORICAL COMMITMENT to advancing the common good through education has been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The 115-year-old institution bestowed its inaugural Carnegie Leadership for Public Purpose Classification on Creighton in recognition of the University's educational commitment to pursuing the "collective public good, including justice, equity, diversity and liberty."

The designation, which was announced in June, identifies Creighton as one of 25 universities across 19 states that demonstrate leadership for public purpose through learning, teaching and research missions, and by preparing students for "lives of leadership for public purpose."

The designation emerged from a collaboration between the Carnegie Foundation, the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University and the American Council on Education. The fundamental question posed was "What would an institution that is committed to leadership for public purpose look like, act like and be like?"

Jennifer Moss Breen Kuzelka, PhD, associate professor of interdisciplinary studies, EdD Program in Leadership, says she is thrilled that the Carnegie Foundation found that Creighton answers those questions.

"Earning this award indicates that the institution invests in the development of leaders in a way that goes beyond instrumental reward," she says. "Rather, Creighton develops leaders who seek to serve others both inside and outside the University."

That approach, Kuzelka says, is embedded in Creighton's Jesuit pedagogy.

"This recognition indicates that Creighton effectively develops faculty, staff and students into leaders who not only lead effectively, but also lead in the spirit of St. Ignatius through *cura personalis*, *magis* and care of our common home," she says.

Creighton's institutional commitment to serving the common good impacts many fields, encompassing, among others, healthcare, the war on global poverty, the military, management and even tax planning.

ANTHONY HOUSTON, EDD'21

ANTHONY HOUSTON, EDD'21, IS PRESIDENT of Dignity Health's Arizona market, a position that requires him to guide eight acute care hospitals, a medical group, graduate medical education programs, imaging centers, specialty hospitals and other activities critical to Dignity's mission.

Having earned his doctorate in education from Creighton and a master's in healthcare administration from Xavier University in Ohio, Houston says he is deeply familiar with the Jesuit commitment to the public good, a familiarity that guides his professional career.

"I have been blessed to immerse myself in the Jesuit way," Houston says. "I love being able to practice leadership in a ministry that strives to reveal the healing presence of God to others, with special preference for serving and advocating for vulnerable populations while promoting social justice."

The Jesuit commitments to service, to living for the sake of others, and to *magis*, or becoming ever more the person God intends one to be, along with powerful lessons drawn from Chris Lowney's *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World*, guide Houston daily.



NADER ABUSH-HAB

© Anthony Houston, EDD'21, at Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix.

"The Jesuits focus on continually reflecting on what is working well, where and how they are finding God in all things, and where they have fallen down or missed the mark and how they can improve," Houston says.

"I incorporate that reflective approach in my daily living, which allows me to explicitly connect with my values: Who am I? What do I stand for? What are my hopes and dreams? How is Jesus working in my life? How am I living and serving for and with others?"

JOSIE POLITICO ABBLOUD, BSN'95

FOR THE PAST 28 YEARS Josie Politico Abboud, BSN'95, has brought Creighton's ethic of service to Methodist Hospital and Methodist Women's Hospital in Omaha, where she currently serves as president and CEO.

It is a substantial responsibility, made more so by her role guiding the entire Methodist Health System as executive vice president. Oversight of four hospitals, more than 30 clinic locations, a medical supply distributorship, an educational institution and more than 8,000 employees provides ample opportunity to encounter what she calls "the full dynamic of human service."

"I have always believed in the Golden Rule of treating others as you would have them do unto you," she says. "Treating others with kindness,



© Josie Politico Abboud, BSN'95, is president and CEO of Methodist Hospital and Methodist Women's Hospital in Omaha.

Nichols says she takes inspiration from the observations of two famous Americans: Albert Einstein, who said, "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile;" and Benjamin Franklin, who said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

"Public servants have the opportunity to tell, teach or involve those they lead," Nichols says. "I have found that those who involve, mentor and guide their organization will have a team that is successful, engaged and eager to serve others."

DONALD MONTGOMERY, BSBA'84, JD'89

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY FOR 28 years benefited from the Creighton credo carried into his work by Donald Montgomery, BSBA'84, JD'89, as has for the past four years Synchrony Financial, the largest provider of private-label credit cards in the U.S., where Montgomery is senior vice president and senior tax counsel responsible for general tax planning, mergers and acquisitions tax, international tax and tax audits.

A native of Maywood, Illinois, where he says his childhood was guided by family members, friends and teachers who encouraged his academic, athletic and spiritual journeys, Montgomery says he encountered a similar community at Creighton.

"I saw those same attributes in the coaches, players and the individuals I met in the broader Creighton community," he says. "It was clear that the Creighton faculty and staff focused on growing the whole person and the betterment of the communities in which they lived.

"Leadership development was in the DNA, and the opportunities to develop and display leadership skills were unlimited."

Montgomery was recruited to the Creighton baseball program and, together with his wife, Paris, has since established the Donald and Paris Montgomery Endowed Baseball Scholarship.

"Being a leader should not be about receiving personal accolades or compensation or be measured by whether one finishes first or at the top," Montgomery says. "Instead, leaders should be agents for sustainable positive change and impact for the benefit of all.

"Creighton's core mission is to develop educated individuals who depart the University with these core attributes and go on to positively impact the communities in which they live and work."

JAMIE VAN LEEUWEN, PHD, BA'96

EAST AFRICA, TOO, IS FEELING the impact of graduates imbued with a Creighton service ethic.

For Jamie Van Leeuwen, PhD, BA'96, Creighton proved a natural extension of an upbringing guided by parents who were educators in underserved and underrepresented communities. In 2009, Van Leeuwen founded the Global Livingston Institute, which introduces students and community leaders to best practices community development in Uganda and Rwanda.

Creation of the institute took place simultaneously with his work with John Hickenlooper, former Colorado governor and current U.S. senator, and with philanthropist Laurene Powell Jobs, where Van Leeuwen focused on building out Powell Jobs' youth and community engagement work connecting young people around the country to paid internships.

"My professional career has been shaped by Jesuit values and innovative and compassionate leaders who understand the value of giving back and investing in community," Van Leeuwen says.

"Creighton anchored the values that I leaned on to shape the Global Livingston Institute.

"Good public service means that you: Listen. Think. Act. There has never been a more important time for institutions like Creighton to invest in and shape the next generation of public servants by mentoring and ensuring that every young person has a seat at the table."

Creighton, of course, has never rested on its laurels. If its past is full of graduates who exemplify the commitment to leadership in public service recognized by the Carnegie Foundation, its future promises no less.

SAIGE CHRISTEN AND VANESSA WHITE

SAIGE CHRISTEN, A JUNIOR FROM Harvey, Louisiana, who is a member of the women's cross country team and is pursuing a double major in psychology and philosophy with a minor in criminal justice, is a member of the Next Generation Leaders Program, a four-year leadership course that seeks to positively impact the culture of equity, diversity and inclusion on Creighton's campus and in the future careers of its members.

She is joined in the Next Generation program by Vanessa White, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences studying criminal justice and cultural anthropology.

White, a member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska and president of Creighton's Native American Association, says she is driven by a desire to serve Indigenous communities.

"Public service has always been a passion of mine," she says. "My

time at Creighton has shaped and guided me toward that purpose. From Day 1, public service was woven into the fabric of every course, fostering students dedicated to serving their communities.

"As a proud member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, I've been driven by a desire to serve Indigenous communities and with the encouragement and guidance of my mentors and peers, I helped reintroduce the Native American Association on campus."

Christen is a lifelong volunteer who quickly recognized that Creighton was a place that valued and encouraged that commitment.

"Throughout high school, I spent my weekends serving," she says. "Whether volunteering at the Louisiana Audubon Zoo or helping at the Second Harvest Food Bank, giving back to my community was a large part of what made me feel whole.

"So, my acceptance as a Next Generation Leaders scholar at Creighton — a program that rests on public service — was the catalyst to my decision to enroll here."

In addition, she has volunteered with SAVE, a nonprofit organization serving elementary students in the Omaha Public Schools system, as well as Open Door Mission, a shelter for those experiencing homelessness.

"Creighton calls us to be 'women and men for and with others,' and they provide every opportunity to answer that call," Christen says. "From the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, ensuring athletes like me have access to service opportunities, to the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice to the professors and people that surround us with service opportunities, it is impossible to not be able to answer that principal Jesuit mission.

"Creighton has emphasized that our education is not just to get a fancy degree or a lot of money, but to help us be trailblazers of change in our communities."

compassion and empathy is integral in helping them be better versions of themselves, inspiring them to pay it forward and help others too. That makes for a better community for all."

Abboud cites Creighton's Magis Core Curriculum as foundational to her approach.

"Creighton challenges you to serve in the community with and for others," she says. "Its Magis Core Curriculum provides critical-thinking, problem-solving, communication and ethical decision-making skills that help you see the whole person's emotional, spiritual, physical and social self rather than their individual facets."

COL. KRISTEN NICHOLS, BS'01, DDS'05

CREIGHTON'S LONG REACH CARRIES into the military, where Air Force Col. Kristen Nichols' embodiment of a service ethic sees her overseeing the Air Force's largest dental service. As commander of the 59th Dental Group at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, she oversees 400 medical personnel serving almost 130,000 patients a year.

Like Abboud and Houston, Nichols, BS'01, DDS'05, attributes the ethic of service that guides her career to Creighton's Jesuit commitment to educating the whole person.

"For me *cura personalis* and being men and women for others were two values that aligned when I chose to join the Air Force as a dentist following my graduation from Creighton dental school," she says. "Dentists play a vitally important role in military readiness. Approximately one in five disease nonbattle emergencies during deployment are dental related. The call to care for America's heroes is a direct reflection of my education at Creighton."

"It was clear that the Creighton faculty and staff focused on growing the whole person and the betterment of the communities in which they lived."

DONALD MONTGOMERY, BSBA'84, JD'89



Saige Christen, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences and member of the women's cross country team, tutors a local high school student as part of the Trio Program at Creighton.

"Creighton calls us to be 'women and men for and with others,' and they provide every opportunity to answer that call."

SAIGE CHRISTEN



Health Equity

The Next Frontier in Healthcare

BY Eugene Curtin

Brought into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic, government agencies and healthcare systems are looking more closely at the importance of social determinants of health in health outcomes. And Creighton is helping lead the way.

A quiet revolution in the way healthcare is managed in the United States is gaining ground as healthcare, public health and community-based organizations; governmental agencies; and educational institutions acknowledge the impact of social inequities on health outcomes.

It is a reshaping of America's approach to healthcare that Creighton's Institute for Population Health (IPH) has embraced and promoted as it helps guide health sciences education and healthcare delivery toward greater access and equity.

Scott Shipman, MD, MPH, CyncHealth Endowed Chair for Population Health and executive director of the Institute for Population Health, says he is encouraged by recent moves by public and private accreditation agencies to gather data on how healthcare institutions address health-related social needs.

"They are not yet requiring anything other than screening for social needs and reporting that the screening has been done, on how many patients it's been done, and the percent of patients that were positive for the various things that are being screened for," he says.

What regulatory requirements eventually emerge from this data collection, and whether a more holistic approach to healthcare develops, is something Shipman is monitoring closely.

"This opportunity to coordinate healthcare and community health more overtly very much aligns with the Institute for Population Health's work partnering with others to improve health equity and improve the health of our communities," he says.

The IPH, which launched in 2023, serves as a hub and a source of Creighton health initiatives designed to help underserved communities attain better health outcomes. Pointing out that 80% of factors affecting health outcomes are social and economic rather than issues typically handled by healthcare systems, Shipman advocates a wider approach.

REDUCING HEALTH INEQUITIES

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the federal agency that provides health coverage to more than 160 million Americans, along with two private accreditation agencies, the Joint Commission and the National Committee for Quality Assurance, are leading the effort to identify new requirements that could reduce health inequities, which are known to be pronounced among racial and ethnic minorities.

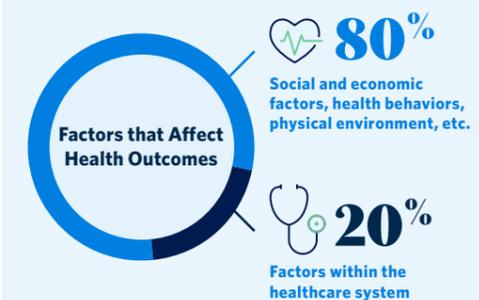
The factors that may contribute to worse health outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities are many, Shipman says, and unmet health-related social needs are prominent sources of inequities.

Difficult questions must be asked, he says, if a true picture is to emerge of the impact of social needs on health outcomes. And they must be asked with personal and cultural sensitivity.

Among these questions are patients' ability to provide adequate food for themselves or their families, the availability of transportation, whether bills are going unpaid or exposure to domestic violence. Who asks those questions, how they are asked and whether the

The U.S. spends the most on healthcare yet has unacceptable outcomes.

The U.S. spent \$4.3 trillion on healthcare in 2021 — 18.3% of its entire gross domestic product (GDP). Per capita, the U.S. spends a full 60% above the average among affluent G7 countries. Yet, among these nations, U.S. life expectancy is the lowest.



A more holistic approach is needed to improve overall health outcomes in the U.S. and to resolve disparities in health across different communities: a population health approach.

interviewer appears rushed due to a heavy workload, will all play a role in obtaining honest data, without which effective solutions cannot emerge.

“And then,” he says, “if a patient screens ‘Yes, I have trouble putting food on the table,’ then a follow-up question is, ‘Do you want help with that?’ If the patient says no, what is the protocol for the hospital? Do you just ignore the problem, or do you do something to help the patient get more comfortable with seeking help?”

Healthcare institutions need guidance on such matters, and Shipman says he expects the data assembled for the regulatory agencies will catalyze a way forward.

RESEARCHING HEALTH-RELATED SCREENINGS FOR SOCIAL NEEDS

Creighton is in the vanguard of such efforts, not only through the work of the IPH, but also through the work of its researchers.

Joy Doll, OTD’03, associate professor and director of the Health Informatics Program, says a team of Creighton researchers has joined with CHI Health to address health-related screenings for social needs. The research is funded by a grant from Creighton’s Dr. George F. Haddix Presidential Faculty Research Fund.

In addition to Doll and Shipman, the team includes Waddah Al-Refaie, MD, chair of surgery for the Department of Surgery at Creighton and CHI Health, and Rebecca Ann Davis, BSN’00, DNP’13, assistant professor of nursing.

The federal mandates, which were issued in 2024, require screening hospitalized patients for a fixed set of social needs. Clinical workflows have been redesigned, Doll says, and coding systems created, to screen for these needs and to support what the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services terms “community health integration.”

“One area where patients often need support is after a surgical procedure,” Doll says. “To recover, patients need a safe and stable environment, which can be impacted by social needs.”

She says the research team conducts interviews with clinicians involved in these new processes and will review the data collected.

“The approach is to use the lived experience of the clinicians and patients, along with health data, to provide guidance on many unanswered questions surrounding these new requirements,” Doll says. “The project began this summer with results arriving in the next few months and a goal to improve the patient and clinician experience while optimizing care and building infrastructure that can impact health disparities.”

FIRST STEPS BEING TAKEN

The development of social needs awareness among healthcare institutions and practitioners will be a long journey, says Ashley Carroll, but first steps have been taken.

Carroll directs the healthy communities team at CHI Health, while also serving as a member of the IPH team.

“We are leveraging screening data to derive insights for our population health efforts,” Carroll says of her work at CHI Health. “Broadly, the healthy communities team translates insights from social-needs’ screening into action in the community.”

Such action involves working with other health systems and with social service agencies such as food pantries and shelter services.

It is important, Carroll says, that those partnerships be built while bearing in mind what she terms the “fragility” of partners such as food pantries and shelters, which typically have limited resources to serve the patient population of large healthcare institutions.

The construction of health systems and community programs and partnerships is an important aspect of the push to address social inequities, Shipman says, and bodes well for the future, as health systems and higher-education institutions with health

sciences programs such as Creighton’s embrace social needs’ concerns.

“All of this, almost without exception, is outside the general training of today’s physicians, nurses and others,” he says. “It will become increasingly critical to understand how to think holistically about a patient’s needs.

“You might be the best diagnostician in the world and have all of the right resources at your disposal to prescribe the right medications, the right treatments, imaging, etc., but if your patient can’t reliably get transportation to go and get that imaging or doesn’t have the ability to pay for a prescription, your best efforts to help the patient get healthier will be thwarted.”

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Creighton’s health sciences programs need no push from private or federal agencies to acknowledge the importance of social determinants of health, says Kevin Fuji, PharmD’07, associate professor of pharmacy sciences in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and faculty research lead for the IPH.

“Regardless of any accreditation requirements there is an overall recognition that we cannot treat our patients in the most effective way unless we understand the context of their daily lives and their ability to care for themselves and for others,” he says.

“Addressing social determinants of health is a core part of *cura personalis*, and when Fr. Hendrickson [Creighton president] talks about how a ‘Creighton physical therapist’ or a ‘Creighton nurse’ or a ‘Creighton pharmacist’ is different, this aspect of training is a large part of what I believe he is talking about.”

This difference, Fuji says, is exemplified in clinical efforts that serve diverse and underrepresented populations, such as Creighton’s dental clinic; the Magis Clinic, established by medical students, which provides free healthcare and referral services at the Siena Francis House shelter in Omaha; and the School of Law’s Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic, which offers public office hours at the Creighton Highlander community center in north Omaha.

It is also found in research projects, such as the Cura Project, which addresses social determinants of health related to financial stress and food insecurity in local individuals with type 2 diabetes. Fuji and Nicole Gillespie White, PharmD’10, associate professor of pharmacy



HEALTH DISPARITIES REMAIN A CHALLENGE IN U.S.

A STUDY PUBLISHED in 2024 by KFF, formerly known as the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, found that healthcare disparities rooted in racial identity remain a challenge for the U.S. healthcare system. The report found that “Black, Hispanic and AIAN (American Indian and Alaskan Natives) people fare worse than white people across the majority of examined measures of health and healthcare and social determinants of health.” Among the study’s key takeaways:

UNINSURED

Nonelderly AIAN (19%) and Hispanic (18%) people were more than twice as likely as their white counterparts (7%) to be uninsured as of 2022.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

AIAN (67.9 years) and Black (72.8 years) people had a shorter life expectancy compared to white people (77.5 years) as of 2022, and AIAN, Hispanic and Black people experienced larger declines in life expectancy than white people between 2019 and 2022. However, all racial and ethnic groups experienced a small increase in life expectancy between 2021 and 2022.

INFANT/PREGNANCY MORTALITY

Black (10.9 per 1,000) and AIAN (9.1 per 1,000) infants were at least two times as likely to die as white infants (4.5 per 1,000) as of 2022. Black and AIAN women also had the highest rates of pregnancy-related mortality.

FOOD INSECURITY

AIAN (24%) and Black (21%) children were more than three times as likely to have food insecurity as white children (6%), and Hispanic children (15%) were over twice as likely to have food insecurity than white children (6%) as of 2022.

practice, serve as lead investigators on the project.

All of these efforts, and others similar, build student awareness of the impact of social needs on health outcomes, Fuji says.

Shipman welcomes this embrace of social determinants of health factors.

“Increasingly, the world that finances healthcare is recognizing that these things matter,” he says. “So, if our next generation of clinicians and other healthcare professionals are not ready for it, are not recognizing it, are not understanding the nuances of it and are not able to better work between the health system and the community than we do today, we are not going to take many steps forward.”

In a word, Shipman says, the incorporation of social needs into overall healthcare is going to become systematic.

“New regulations, by virtue of being requirements, will force health systems to be more systematic and to look for and understand health-related social needs that the patients have,” he says.

“Previously, this was done sporadically by

some systems, and by some individual clinics, but this is a more systematic push, at least for inpatients — people who are in the hospital. Like any big change in healthcare, how it’s implemented really is critical to whether this is ultimately valuable or not.”

Speaking as the director of an institute that recognizes and seeks to reduce social inequities in healthcare, Shipman says the accreditation agencies are addressing issues that did not come into full view until the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think there was always a widespread recognition, but really put into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic, that there are unacceptably large disparities in health and healthcare — access to care, quality of care, outcomes of care — across different groups of individuals, and certainly leading in those disparities are racial and ethnic disparities.

“There is now a push to act on these disparities as being unacceptable. It’s a very complex, multifactorial challenge, but it’s a challenge that some payers, including Medicaid and many health systems, are taking on.”

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The Social Determinants of Health are defined as nonmedical contributors to health outcomes. While lists may differ slightly, they often include:

- 1. Healthcare** – It’s estimated that one in 10 people in the U.S. is without health insurance and therefore may not be able to afford necessary healthcare services and medications.
- 2. Behaviors** – Individual behaviors such as smoking, substance use, diet, physical activity, sleep and risky sexual activities all contribute to health and mortality.
- 3. Physical Environment** – Neighborhoods with high rates of violence, unsafe air or water and other risks have a negative effect on health. Racial and ethnic minorities, and people with low incomes, are more likely to live in such places.
- 4. Social Elements** – Discrimination or trouble affording life’s necessities can impact health and safety. Positive relationships at home, at work and in the community can reduce these impacts.
- 5. Economic Influences** – It’s estimated that one in 10 people in the U.S. lives in poverty, unable to afford healthy foods, healthcare and housing. People with steady employment are more likely to be healthy.

(Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health)



CREIGHTON
BLUE JAYS

Welcome to the FitNest

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Kiewit Fitness Center — a facility that was conceived in 1974. In 2024, the facility has undergone a remarkable transformation with the addition of 7,000 square feet of centralized space featuring new fitness equipment. The name of the new space — FitNest — was created by students with the holistic Creighton experience in mind.



Marcos Gonzalez, BS'24, is a recipient of the Parker Family Foundation Athletic Scholarship.

IMPACT

The Drive to Strive for Greatness

When you know someone is looking out for you, says graduate student and cross country and track runner **MARCOS GONZALEZ, BS'24**, “you want to give it your all every day and never take anything for granted.

“The best part of being awarded a scholarship is that it allows me to accomplish my goals while knowing I’m a part of a community that cares about me. When I think back to the beginning, that’s the main reason I committed to Creighton. Because I felt wanted here. I felt valued.”

Gonzalez is one of half a dozen student-athletes awarded the Parker Family Foundation Athletic Scholarship each year.

The scholarship — established in 2018 by Dave and Sandy Parker — is provided to student-athletes who participate in cross country, track, soccer, rowing, tennis or golf.

In addition to financial support, donor-funded programs like the Parker Family Foundation Athletic Scholarship give Bluejays the drive to strive for greatness — athletically, academically and personally.

Like most Parker scholars, Henry Slagle, a Class of 2025 business student who runs cross country and track, has shared a meal with the Parker family.

“The Parkers live and breathe Creighton athletics,” Slagle says, “and it’s incredible to have their support behind me. I’m forever thankful to them. The relationships, memories and competitions that I’ve shared with my teammates and coaches are something I’ll never forget.”

Ana Paula Martinez, Class of 2026, says the Parkers made her dream of playing D1 tennis

possible. “I couldn’t be more grateful and honored to be a part of this amazing community and team,” she says.

Graduate student and soccer player Omar Ramadan, BSBA'24, says the impact of the Parker Scholarship is far greater than the support it offers to the individual recipients.

“The Parker Scholarship is essential for many programs because it not only provides opportunities for the athletes, it also enriches Creighton athletics as a whole, promoting diversity and inclusion in sports.”

Maintaining the Creighton experience for thousands of students — athletic and otherwise — is a team sport, one that trains future graduates in the art of working together for a common goal. That holistic commitment to community and belonging has given Ramadan a sense of purpose on and off the field.

“As a player, I’ve grown not only in skill but in character, learning the values of teamwork and resilience,” Gonzalez says. “As a student, I’ve been empowered to explore my passions, wherever they might lead me.” — **BY MICAH MERTES**

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.

68 P. Rodney Morris, BA, Omaha, was interviewed on Spirit Catholic Radio, part of the EWTN network, about his book, *The Second Killing of Christ*, a thriller about an ISIS attempt to clone Christ. The interview took place on July 10, 2024, with Bruce McGregor and Jen Brown.

74 Barbara O'Donnell Semerad, BSMT, Elkhorn, Nebraska, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). Semerad founded the Volunteer Courier Program at NMDP in 2004,

establishing a training program for couriers who transport donations throughout the U.S. and the world to the patients' hospitals. Through her leadership, the program experienced rapid expansion of the volunteer group, with a few dozen volunteers in 2004 to more than 500 today. Semerad was recognized as a relentless champion of this valuable program, with one courier noting that Semerad always reminded couriers of one thing — that they are there to serve the patient and donor, and to be part of a team that brings hope to the patient, their family and loved ones.

76 Daniel E. Monnat, JD, Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered, was ranked as one of the top-tier Kansas litigators by Chambers USA for white-collar crime and government investigations. Monnat's work in healthcare and financial investigations has earned him a place on Chambers' top-tier list for 14 consecutive years.

78 Dr. Bruce E. Burnett, BS, Minneapolis, received the Earl G. Young, MD Physician of Excellence Award from the Park Nicollet Foundation. Burnett worked for Park Nicollet for 38 years before retiring in February 2024. The award is presented annually to a physician epitomizing Earl Young's standards of unwavering dedication, kindness, compassion and professional excellence. Burnett is a leader in the field of anticoagulation and thrombosis care and research. **Stephen W. Kay, JD,** North Platte, Nebraska, worked to get the Nebraska Legislature to pass a Medigap bill providing disabled Nebraskans under age 65 the opportunity to purchase a Medigap plan. His efforts were realized when LB852 passed Final Reading (46-0) and was signed by Nebraska Gov. Jim

Pillen in April 2024. Kay also had the article “Chinese and Japanese Immigration and Nebraska's Anti-Interracial Marriages Law” published in the spring 2024 issue of *Nebraska History Magazine*.

80 Judy A. Schweikart, BA'71, MSGuid'72, JD, Omaha, received the Nebraska Lawyers Foundation Robert M. Spire Pro Bono Award. Schweikart was a partner at Kutak Rock's Omaha office, where she worked in the public finance and general corporate department. She has been a tireless advocate for providing legal services for low-income Nebraskans. She was a stalwart volunteer at the Douglas County Self-Help Desk and in 2022, as a board member of the NAACP Omaha Chapter, was instrumental in establishing the Volunteer Lawyers Project's free civil legal clinic held in partnership with the NAACP. Over the past few years, the clinic has served hundreds of Nebraskans living in poverty.

81 Stephen P. Grifka, MD, Los Angeles, has become one of the top witnesses in the U.S. in his specialty of otolaryngology/head and neck surgery after again being involved in a large medico-legal case. A primary issue in this

recent case was traumatic brain injury. The recent case settled for approximately \$125 million. He has been an expert witness in many multimillion-dollar cases. Over the last decade, Grifka has been an invited guest speaker at conferences, where he has presented to thousands of people. **Dr. Laure Marshall Marino, BSN,** Charleston, West Virginia, has been named West Virginia Nurse Practitioner of the Year 2024. She also was recently appointed as clinical associate professor and program coordinator for the doctoral program in executive nurse leadership at Baylor University. She is the president/CEO of the Concierge NP, LLC, a preferred access primary care practice located in Charleston. **Anthony J. Sorrentino, BSBA'76, JD,** Elkhorn, Nebraska, won the May 2024 primary election for the Nebraska State Legislature, District 39.

83 Dr. Elizabeth Freund Larus, BA, Fredericksburg, Virginia, professor emerita of political science and international affairs at the University of Mary Washington, has been appointed nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Global China Hub with co-affiliation with the Atlantic Council's Indo-Pacific

Security Initiative in Washington, D.C. Larus' involvement includes participation in closed-door roundtables and public events, publishing commentary in the *New Atlanticist* and wargaming. **Larry D. Mansch, JD**, Missoula, Montana, has published his sixth book, *Hometown*, which is available at [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com).

84 Mary C. Ambrose-Gerak, BA, Lake Barrington, Illinois, and her husband, Justin Gerak, founded Operation Veteran Success in 2023. A charitable organization dedicated to supporting veterans facing financial hardships, Operation Veteran Success recognizes the need for swift intervention to prevent veterans from spiraling into financial despair due to delays in benefits and unforeseen circumstances. **John C. Sciacotta Sr., BSBA**, Chicago, was installed as the Chicago Bar Association president in June 2024. Sciacotta is a partner at the law firm Aronberg Goldgehn and is a commercial litigation and business attorney.

85 David J. Ceci, BA, East Hampton, New York, completed a new full-length play, *Unfamiliar: A Maidstone Tale*. This supernatural horror drama was selected by the Playground Experiment (PGE), a New York City-based developmental theater company, for a presentation during its First Reads Festival. After a two-month development process, PGE produced a virtual reading of the next draft of *Unfamiliar* as a livestream event in March 2024. Ceci developed *Unfamiliar* through his work at PGE, as well as at Primary Stages' Einhorn School for the Performing Arts. Ceci promotes *Unfamiliar* and his other work as a playwright, librettist and lyricist via his website.

88 David Andrews, BA, Gurnee, Illinois, completed the Tokyo Marathon in March 2024, the sixth of the World Marathon Majors (WMM) he has competed in, and earned the WMM Six Star Medal. The six world marathons are: Chicago, Boston, New York, Berlin, London and Tokyo.

89 Yvette Kasper Heintzelman, BA'86, JD, Amery, Wisconsin, was honored by the

Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police with a Presidential Recognition Award. Heintzelman was selected for the honor in special recognition as a token of appreciation for her continued support, commitment and tireless effort to the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and its mission. Heintzelman is a member (partner) at Clark Hill law firm's Chicago office, where her practice is focused on labor and employment issues and litigation.

90 Laura Harvey Essay, JD, Lincoln, Nebraska, is the author of *Side Effects Are Minimal*, her debut novel.

91 William "Trey" DeLoach III, JD, Coppell, Texas, a partner at Bell Nunnally in Dallas, was recognized in the banking and finance category in the 2024 Chambers USA guide. **Rusty T. Komori II, BA**, Honolulu, is the author of *Superior: Creating a Superior Culture of Excellence*. This is Komori's third book on leadership.

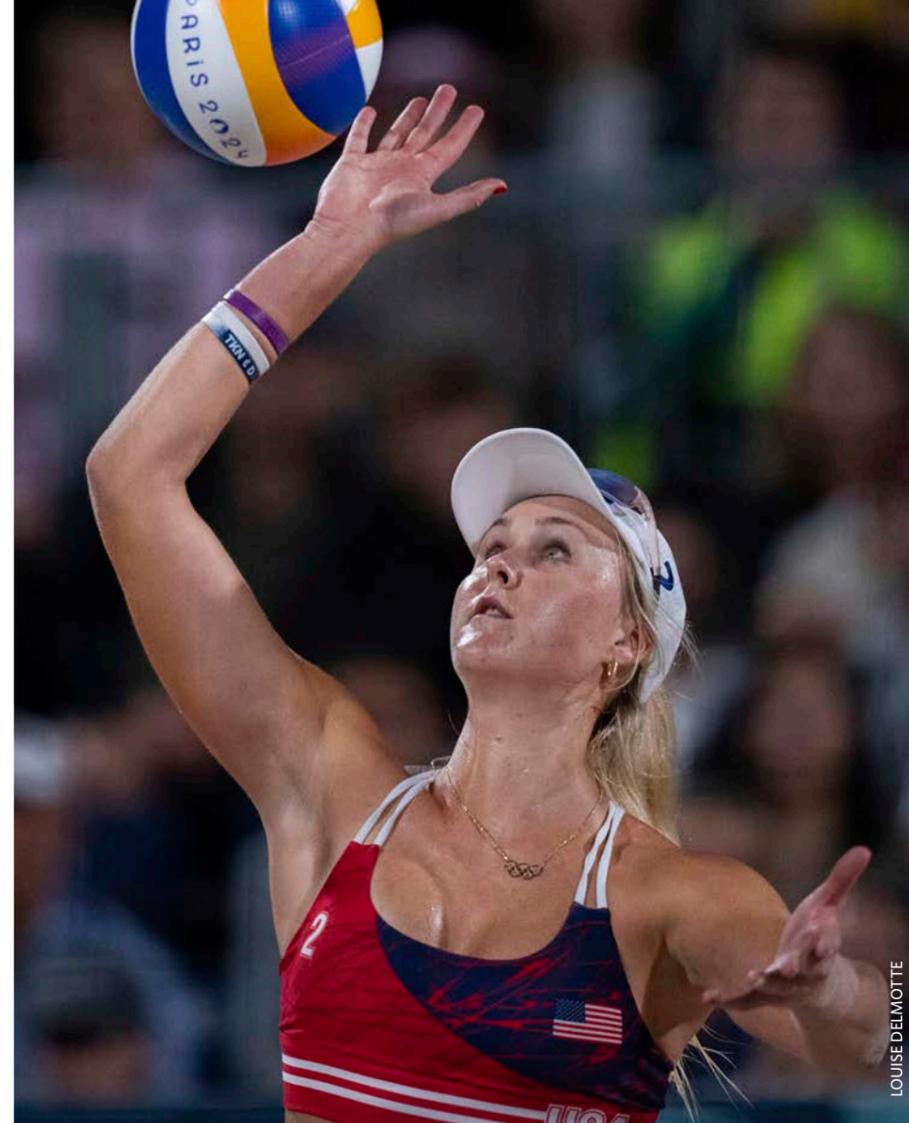
92 Lisa A. Foster, BA, Seattle, is a communications advisor at the Seattle Municipal Court (SMC). In this new role, she supports seven elected judges and promotes internal and external communications for SMC. Previously, Foster worked as a senior public information officer for the Washington State Legislature in Olympia, where she supported the external communications needs of 13 members of the state House of Representatives. **Christopher J. Kneer, BSBA**, Brandon, Florida, is a career banker and published his first fiction novel, *Bluebird*. **Susan M. Maryott, BA**, Chicago, was recently named vice president of remote production at the Big Ten Network and will help oversee the 650-plus games covering the league's 18 teams. Maryott had the opportunity to oversee the "Volleyball Day in Nebraska" production, which documented the world record attendance for a women's sporting event (over 92,000 fans). She also covered the college career of former University of Iowa women's basketball player, Caitlin Clark, who broke both the men's and women's national scoring records in NCAA Division I basketball.

Kloth, McGuire Compete at Paris Olympics

Former Bluejays **TARYN KLOTH, BSBA'18**, and **DUNCAN MCGUIRE, BUSADM'24**, represented the United States at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Kloth and her teammate, Kristen Nuss, were one of the two beach volleyball teams representing the U.S. at the 2024 Olympic Games. At Creighton, Kloth was a two-time first-team All-BIG EAST performer and an honorable mention All-American in volleyball. Kloth played on Creighton's 2016 Elite Eight team and helped the Bluejays win eight BIG EAST regular-season and tournament championships. Kloth made the switch to beach volleyball after graduating from Creighton.

It was the first time in 16 years that the U.S. qualified a men's soccer team for the Olympics and McGuire made the squad (in men's soccer, it's an under-23 competition at the Olympics). McGuire had one of the best individual seasons in Creighton history in 2022, leading the Bluejays to their sixth NCAA College Cup appearance. He won the MAC Hermann Trophy, earned All-America honors and was named the BIG EAST Offensive Player of the Year. McGuire was drafted by Orlando City FC in 2023.



LOUISE DELMOTTE



ULRIK PEDERSEN

"The entire Olympic experience was a dream come true. Playing underneath the Eiffel Tower. Meeting the world's best athletes. Spending time with friends and family. We didn't get the result that we wanted, but I was honored to represent the United States and I am proud of what my teammate, Kristen Nuss, and I accomplished together."

TARYN KLOTH

PARIS 2024



"You grow up dreaming for opportunities like that, to be an Olympian and compete against some of the best players in the world. It was an honor to represent my country and I will never forget it. We fell short of our ultimate goal, but I am grateful to be part of the first U.S. men's team to qualify for the Olympics in 16 years and I am excited for everything that comes next."

DUNCAN MCGUIRE



JIM FACKLER

HONORING OUR ALUMNI

The Creighton University Alumni Achievement Citation is the highest all-University award presented to Creighton alumni. This year's recipient, **Patrick Zenner, BSBA'69**, is the retired president and CEO of Hoffmann-La Roche Inc. and Creighton University trustee emeritus. Zenner is a recognized leader in the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries. Throughout a career that spanned five decades, Zenner inspired healthcare innovations, supported underserved populations, and made significant contributions to community health and wellness. Zenner is pictured above, left, with Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.

2024 ALUMNI MERIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

Thomas Kirsch, MD, MPH, BA'80
College of Arts and Sciences

Joseph Barsetti, BA'77, DDS'81
School of Dentistry

Mary Jo Jerde, BSN'80
College of Nursing

The Hon. Susan Larson Christensen, JD'91
School of Law

Christopher Kelly, BSBA'69, MBA'70
Graduate School

Andrea "Andy" Holden McGuire, BS'78, MD'82
Daniel McGuire, MD'82, BA'20
School of Medicine

Martha Wilcoxson, MS'15, EdD'19
College of Professional and Continuing Education

Merrill Landers, PhD, DPT'97, PT
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions

Todd Foje, JD, LL.M., BSBA'87
Heider College of Business

2024 RECENT ALUMNI AWARD

The Recent Alumni Award recognizes significant professional achievement, personal responsibility, and service to Creighton and community by an alumna or alumnus during their first 10 years following graduation. **Jack (Petty) Pettyrock, BSBA'19**, graduate of the Heider College of Business, was this year's recipient.

Read more: Visit alumni.creighton.edu/ama-2024 to read more about each recipient.

94 Andrea L. Gallagher, BA, Lincoln, Nebraska, is a senior public affairs specialist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Omaha Branch.

96 Dr. Jamie Van Leeuwen, BA, Denver, was named managing director of the nonprofit BuildStrong Education Foundation, which focuses on housing affordability and workforce development.

99 Dr. Jannie Sharee Eggleston, BA, Austin, Texas, earned her doctorate in higher education leadership and organizational change as part of St. Edward's University's first cohort. She is the first Black female recipient of this degree in the spring graduating class of 2023. Eggleston also received the university President's Award. Her doctoral dissertation is titled "Real and Perceived Financial Barriers to Higher Education in the United States." It is published in ProQuest. She has had the opportunity to present her research at conferences.

00 David J. Wenthold, BSBA, Shakopee, Minnesota, is a fiduciary and financial planner at Prudential Advisors and was awarded the 2023 Leader in Fee-Based Financial Planning.

01 Susan L. Reff, BA'97, JD, Omaha, received a 2024 Visionary Award from the Nebraska State Bar Association (NSBA). These awards are presented to outstanding attorneys for their service to further the mission of the NSBA or their dedication to programs sponsored by the Nebraska Lawyers Foundation. Reff has volunteered in all Nebraska Lawyers Foundation Volunteer Lawyers Projects programs: case referrals, clinics and the Tenant Assistance Project. She is a partner with Hightower Reff Law.

02 Jess W. Hoeme, JD, Cheney, Kansas, a criminal defense attorney at the law firm Joseph, Hollander and Craft in Wichita, Kansas, appeared on an episode of the A&E Network series *Accused: Guilty or Innocent?* The episode, "Murderous Mother or Protective Parent?" aired nationally on May 2. A film crew followed Hoeme for three weeks during the summer of 2023 as he worked

through pretrial preparation and courtroom strategy, using Kansas' Stand Your Ground defense to win dismissal of a charge of second-degree manslaughter and save his client from a possible 41-year prison sentence. The client, Ashley Pearson, was a frequent victim of domestic violence by her boyfriend and accused of fatally stabbing him in 2018 in a bid to defend herself and her child. The pretrial hearing for *Kansas v. Ashley Pearson* took place on Aug. 8, 2023, and was televised live by Court TV.

12 Kelsey J. Schmidt, BSBA, Arvada, Colorado, is a partner at the law firm Haynes and Boone in the Denver office in the labor and employment group.

13 Amanda Sellers Smith, MS, JD, Derwood, Maryland, joined the law firm K&L Gates in the firm's healthcare and FDA practice in Washington, D.C.

14 Brittany J. Faulkner, BA'11, JD, Seattle, joined Pacifica Law Group's construction and procurement practice group in Seattle. **Kathleen M. Sawtell, BSW**, Indianapolis, joined the Indianapolis office of Ogletree Deakins as an associate. Her practice focuses on labor and employment litigation.

16 Joseph J. Borghoff, JD, Omaha, was promoted to vice president, Nebraska director of trust services, within the private client services team, at Security National Bank in Omaha.

21 Tyler D. Baker, JD, Denver, joined the Denver office of Ogletree Deakins in labor and employment. She also defends clients during Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Colorado Civil Rights Division administration processes. In addition, Baker also represents employers accused of violating state and federal health and safety regulations. **Anthony A. Houston, EdD**, Phoenix, was named president of the Arizona market of CommonSpirit Health.

22 Joseph D. Chimienti, BSBA'07, MBA, Tucson, Arizona, was awarded Faculty of the Year in May by the Catholic University of America Metropolitan School of Professional Studies. Chimienti

teaches at the university's satellite campus in Tucson. **Ron K. Patterson, EdD**, Chadron, Nebraska, was appointed the 12th president of Chadron State College by the Nebraska State College board of trustees in April.

WEDDINGS

13 Michelle Voudrie and Jamin M. McQuillan, BS, May 24, 2024, living in Belleville, Illinois.

14 Claire Vesier and Dr. Anthony Quagliano, BS, April 7, 2024, living in Jacksonville, Florida.

BIRTHS

07 Dr. Mohammed K. Zakaria, MS'07, and **Dr. Justyna Dobrowolska Zakaria, BS'06**, a son, Milad Gabriel, Jan. 29, 2024, living in Berwyn, Illinois.

16 Alexander Smith and Jessica Sheldon Smith, BSBA, a son, Daniel "Archie," Nov. 13, 2023, living in Kansas City, Kansas. **Ryan Swift and Jennifer Free Swift, BSBA'13, MBA**, a daughter, Sophie Celeste, May 23, 2024, living in Roswell, Georgia.

DEATHS

46 Aldo A. Battiste, DDS, Pueblo, Colorado, May 24, 2024.

48 Norman H. Denenberg, JD, Omaha, June 6, 2024.

49 Charles Mesersmidt, BS, Omaha, July 17, 2024.

50 Jeanne Parle Brenner, BS, Anchorage, Alaska, Feb. 28, 2024. **Theresa Frodyma Copenhagen, SJN**, Omaha, Aug. 1, 2024. **Regina Van Buren Hoody, ARTS**, Omaha, March 28, 2024. **Charles L. Long, ARTS**, Beloit, Kansas, April 8, 2024.

52 William J. Egan Jr., BA, Omaha, March 30, 2024. **Donald G. Plambeck, ARTS**, Omaha, April 7, 2024. **Guido S. Rindone, BSPha**, Omaha, March 17, 2024. **Irene Armknecht Treaster, SJN**, Omaha, Aug. 30, 2024.

53 Rosemarie Morbach Mailliard, SJN, Chicago, May 3, 2024. **James J. Schutz, BSPha**, Ralston, Nebraska, June 25, 2024. **Frank A. Weathers, BS**, Omaha, June 9, 2024.

54 Thomas J. Bartek, ARTS, Omaha, April 27, 2024.

Joyce Houtby Duffy, SJN, Omaha, May 29, 2024. **Mary Lou Schwery Holmberg, BSN**, Omaha, July 4, 2024. **Dr. Laurence P. Kerrigan, BS**, Elkhorn, Nebraska, Aug. 14, 2024. **Patricia Engler Locksley, SJN**, Hacienda Heights, California, May 14, 2023. **Carroll D. Satterfield, BS**, Tomball, Texas, Aug. 5, 2024.

55 R. Robert Castillo, MD, Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 30, 2024. **Shirley Lyman Hermanek, SCN**, Omaha, March 28, 2024.

56 Joseph V. Cunningham Jr., BS, York, Nebraska, June 23, 2024. **Yvonne Nelson Lambros, SCN**, Fresno, California, June 8, 2024. **Rita Schram Ramm, SJN**, Scottsdale, Arizona, April 16, 2024. **Marjorie Masek Tello, BS**, Fort Collins, Colorado, March 8, 2024.

57 Robert S. Gross, BS, Omaha, July 12, 2024. **Dr. Patrick J. Kirlin, BS**, Mansfield, Texas, Aug. 12, 2024. **R. Joseph Kranz, BSBA**, Grand Island, Nebraska, Feb. 29, 2024. **H. Arthur Mayer, BS**, Iowa City, Iowa, July 1, 2024. **Geraldine Suiter Rizzuto, BS**, Omaha, July 8, 2024. **Grant E. Yates, ARTS**, Boulder, Colorado, April 8, 2024.

Experience Making a Difference

Are you called in retirement to live out the Jesuit tradition of service in the world?

Through the **Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC)**, hundreds of people are choosing to put their leadership experience, skill and wisdom into service for others.

- IVC animates the expertise of individuals over 50 who have the passion and commitment to direct their attention to issues impacting the world. Members of IVC's service corps use their time and experience, one or two days a week, to give back and make a difference.
- IVC matches seasoned professionals with charities and nonprofits seeking skilled volunteers. Build community through monthly faith sharing meetings, occasional retreats and opportunities for one-on-one spiritual reflection in the Ignatian tradition.

Learn more about the Ignatian Volunteer Corps:
Opportunities in your area: ivcusa.org/ivc-offices
General information: ivcusa.org



Mayo CFO: Embracing Change in Healthcare

JIM WILSON, BSBA'91, was recently appointed to oversee the operational budgets of 16 hospitals within the prestigious Mayo Clinic Health System after spending more than three decades as a healthcare financial strategist. Yet he still feels like a novice. And he loves that feeling.

In healthcare, Wilson says, it is not uncommon. Every day, there's the potential to pursue a new, innovative solution to improve people's lives. Just when you get comfortable, everything changes.

"In a way, I understand how that could be frustrating for some, but I get to work with



incredibly smart people who are inspired to change the world, to examine what we did yesterday and make it better," Wilson says. "You don't know exactly what tomorrow's

going to bring, but you have a vision and passion for what it could bring."

This has always been Wilson's motivator.

Wilson is the chief financial officer of the Mayo Clinic Health System, the Mayo Clinic community healthcare division that operates 16 hospitals and 44 clinics in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He stepped into this role in 2022. He was the system vice president for finance at the Rush University System for Health in Chicago. He's worked as an executive at investor-owned and academic/nonprofit hospital systems in Tennessee, Illinois and Florida.

At each stop, he's embraced challenges with a similar approach — find a way to help

someone, even if you have to navigate through a bit of uncertainty temporarily.

Wilson's parents engrained this altruistic principle during his upbringing. His time at Creighton helped reinforce it.

Wilson, as an undergraduate, ultimately decided to shift away from his premedicine track and explore offerings in the Heider College of Business. But he was the kid who worked part time as a paramedic throughout his undergraduate time at Creighton. He knew he was destined for a career path tied to healthcare, no matter the major he chose.

He took a required business ethics course at Creighton that he remembers repeatedly reinforced this notion: What you do is not as important as how you do it.

Wilson shares that thought with students in the executive MBA programs he instructs and with administrative fellows he mentors at Mayo. It's a guiding principle in his own work too.

"I take care of people who take care of patients," he says. "I don't think of my job to be someone who's only assessing numbers, profit potential and other financial factors. It's a balancing act where we all work collaboratively, managing our resources, to find the right answers and deliver results that benefit people." — **BY JON NYATAWA**

58 Richard A. Bolamperti, MD, Omaha, March 12, 2024. **Thomas J. Ferguson, BSBA**, Greensboro, North Carolina, May 16, 2024. **Dr. Klemens E. Gustafson, BSMT**, Dallas, May 9, 2024. **Willa Tillotson Milone, SCN**, Omaha, June 11, 2024. **Mable Fiala Pekarek, ARTS**, Columbus, Nebraska, March 11, 2024. **S. Ross Pirruccello, MD**, Los Angeles, May 19, 2024. **William F. Stessman, BSBA**, Charlotte, North Carolina, Dec. 23, 2022.

59 Ronald J. Evert, BSBA, Dallas, Aug. 19, 2024. **John F. Glaser, BSMT**, Omaha, June 16, 2024. **Janice Schaefer Kilbride, SJN**, Louisville, Kentucky, April 14, 2024. **John M. Peck, BUSADM**, Columbus, Nebraska, July 16, 2024. **Michael J. Regan, BA**, Denver, Dec. 18, 2023. **John T. Riordan, BA**, League City, Texas, March 24, 2024.

60 Sebastiano Caporale, JD, Wichita, Kansas, Jan. 2, 2024. **James B. Cunningham, DDS**, Rapid City, South Dakota, July 15, 2024.

61 Herman J. Blankenau, DDS, Valley View, Texas, March 16, 2024. **Thomas L. Moran, BS**, Rockville, Maryland, April 19, 2024. **Herman D. Weist, BUSADM**, Omaha, Aug. 28, 2024.

62 Dr. James E. DuBe, BSPha, Omaha, July 24, 2024. **Mary Novotny Halgard, MA**, Omaha, May 20, 2024. **David S. McCage, ARTS**, San Leandro, California, June 8, 2024. **Gwendolyn Harry Showers, ARTS**, Omaha, Aug. 17, 2024.

63 Marla Artzer Fossett, ARTS, Reno, Nevada, May 19, 2024. **Marianna L. Kruse, BSN**, Enid, Oklahoma, March 28, 2024. **Daniel P. Nastali, BA**, Kansas City, Missouri, March 4, 2024.

Gregory Naughton, MD, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 24, 2024. **Anthony S. Politi, DDS**, Prescott, Arizona, Jan. 28, 2024. **Michael J. Rose, BA**, Omaha, April 10, 2024. **Denis F. Walsh, BA**, Omaha, July 4, 2024.

64 Frederick J. Hass, MD, San Rafael, California, April 28, 2024. **Patrick A. Miller, BSBA**, Portland, Oregon, April 18, 2024. **Thomas J. Willenborg Sr., BSBA**, Queen Creek, Arizona, July 25, 2024.

65 Bro. Matthew Cunningham, FSR, ARTS, Reno, Nevada, June 24, 2024. **Mary Scholz Dobseha, BSN**, Eugene, Oregon, Sept. 17, 2022. **John J. Finn Jr., MD**, Covington, Louisiana, March 24, 2024. **Leroy B. Gerchman, MS**, Allentown, Pennsylvania, July 20, 2024. **Thomas J. Guilfoyle, JD**, Valley, Nebraska, April 8, 2024.

James J. Hubschman, BA, Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, May 28, 2024. **Roberta Conway McCampbell, BSPha**, Lake Bluff, Illinois, June 23, 2024. **James J. Phalen, BA/CLS'61, MD'65**, Omaha, September 2024. **Michael L. Saracino, DDS**, Denver, June 16, 2024. **Joseph T. Walbran, BA'64, JD**, Minneapolis, June 13, 2024.

66 Norman L. Bleicher, BA, Dallas, June 26, 2024. **Robert F. Carretta, MD**, Naples, Florida, Nov. 1, 2023. **Karen Reisdorff Dhar, BA'63, MA**, Iowa City, Iowa, July 27, 2024. **Kieran J. Fitzpatrick, MD**, Sacramento, California, Nov. 26, 2023. **Robert J. Kosalka, BSBA**, Omaha, March 20, 2024. **Paul F. Peters, BA'64, JD**, Fort Pierce, Florida, May 23, 2024.

67 Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William L. Doyle Jr., MA, Papillion, Nebraska, Aug. 1, 2024. **Maribeth Walsh Fitzgerald, BS**, Centralia,

Washington, April 30, 2024. **Lynn K. Griffith, DDS**, Oregon City, Oregon, April 10, 2024. **Cassie C. Heim, SJN**, Blair, Nebraska, April 27, 2024. **Robert J. Huck, JD**, Bellevue, Nebraska, April 27, 2024. **Thomas S. Manion, MD**, Kansas City, Missouri, June 30, 2024. **James C. Stuppy, BSBA**, Kansas City, Missouri, May 19, 2024. **Jerome F. Weihs, BSBA**, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, March 10, 2024.

68 Michael J. Burke, BSBA, Casper, Wyoming, Aug. 29, 2024. **Charles R. Hannan IV, BA'65, JD**, Council Bluffs, Iowa, July 20, 2024. **Kathleen A. Hughes, SJN**, Omaha, April 25, 2024. **Sheila Stephen Thomsen, BA**, Spokane, Washington, March 7, 2024. **Thomas N. Walinski, MD**, Scottsdale, Arizona, April 25, 2024. **John P. White, BSBA**, Sun City West, Arizona, Nov. 23, 2023.

69 William M. Clifford, BS, Bradenton, Florida, March 4, 2024. **John S. Elliott, BSBA**, Omaha, April 23, 2024. **Patricia McGovern Kisicki, BA**, Olney, Maryland, April 3, 2024. **Margaret Morrow Richardson, BS**, Palm Harbor, Florida, Dec. 1, 2022.

70 James G. Cummins, BA'66, MD, Collinsville, Oklahoma, April 4, 2024. **Marilyn Price Curran, BSN**, La Vista, Nebraska, Aug. 6, 2024. **James A. Haut, DDS**, Susanville, California, March 15, 2024. **Gregory P. Hoelck, BS**, Hastings, Nebraska, March 19, 2024. **Edward J. Kros, ARTS**, Roswell, Georgia, July 16, 2024. **Thomas E. Kurth, BA**, McKinney, Texas, Jan. 29, 2024. **John E. Robben, BSBA**, North Little Rock, Arkansas, July 31, 2024. **Alfred M. Suarez Jr., JD**, Omaha, April 22, 2024.

71 Sr. Marjorie Cordes, MSEdu, St. Louis, July 23, 2024. **Elaine Finn Cotton, BA**, Omaha, June 29, 2024. **Patricia Tierney Crean, ARTS**, San Diego, July 30, 2024. **Anne Maynard Gudenrath, BSN**, Omaha, April 2, 2024. **Lawrence J. Kelley, DDS**, Blair, Nebraska, March 12, 2024. **Thomas L. Mailander, BA**, Bennington, Nebraska, June 21, 2024. **James B. Maynes, BS**, Trimble, Missouri, April 21, 2024. **Dr. Glenn L. Millerd Jr., MSGuid**, Elkhorn, Nebraska, April 17, 2024. **R. Dennis Porch, MD**, Irvine, California, Aug. 17, 2024. **Bernadette "Bonnie" Maxwell Pryor, MSEdu**, Omaha, Sept. 4, 2024.

Philip D. Quinley, DDS, Carmichael, California, June 15, 2024. **Dr. Gary E. Ross, BA**, Otisville, Michigan, April 19, 2024. **Kenneth J. Schlueter, BA**, Omaha, March 17, 2024. **Albert E. Sukut, DDS**, Costa Mesa, California, Aug. 12, 2024.

72 William E. Kennedy, BUSADM, Janesville, Wisconsin, June 28, 2024. **James W. Martin, BSBA**, Papillion, Nebraska, June 16, 2024. **Michael E. Rock, BA'69, JD**, Bettendorf, Iowa, May 5, 2024. **James Silhasek, BA'69, JD**, Paradise Valley, Arizona, June 8, 2024. **Joseph J. Vap, DDS**, Manchester, Iowa, April 27, 2024.

73 J. Robert Planalp, BSBA'71, JD, Bozeman, Montana, March 11, 2024. **Sr. Patricia A. Reno, OP, MS**, Shelbyville, Kentucky, April 5, 2024.

74 Ronald R. Geibert, BFA, Beavercreek, Ohio, Feb. 5, 2024. **Philip A. Marquard, BSBA**, Omaha, June 24, 2024. **Robert A. Munroe, JD**, Beverly, Massachusetts, March 7, 2024. **Carl V. Noto, DDS**, Carmel, California, May 1, 2024. **Diane Vonachen Pietro, BA**, Omaha, April 16, 2024. **Ermin E. Snitily, BS'68, MA**, Papillion, Nebraska, July 12, 2024.

75 Wayne R. Padrnos, BSBA'63, MBA, Omaha, Aug. 24, 2024. **Marie E. Rourke, ARTS**, Omaha, July 26, 2024. **Diana Romero Wehr, BA**, Sigourney, Iowa, July 23, 2024. **Sr. Katherine A. Wildt, CPPS, BA'70, MA**, St. Louis, Jan. 28, 2024.

77 Patrick J. Travis, BSPha, Lakeland, Florida, May 21, 2024.

78 John J. Fiarde III, BA'75, JD, Oakton, Virginia, July 11, 2024. **Mariel Kohn Oftelie, MSEdu**, Omaha, May 12, 2024. **Dr. Margaret A. Schlientz, MChrSp**, Newaygo, Michigan, May 11, 2024.

79 Barbara C. Tacke, BA'70, MSGuid, Council Bluffs, Iowa, June 24, 2024.

80 James W. Crampton, BA'74, JD, Omaha, March 15, 2024. **Dr. Scott D. Marrs, BS**, Schertz, Texas, March 2, 2024. **Kimberly A. Yelkin, JD**, Mountain Brook, Alabama, Dec. 3, 2022.

82 Eugene G. Lawhon, BSPha, Overland Park, Kansas, March 23, 2024. **Daniel J. McClean, JD**, Dyersville, Iowa, Aug. 19, 2024.

Sr. Jeannette Roy, RSR, MChrSp, Portland, Maine, March 3, 2024. **Daryl R. Stovall, ARTS**, Bellevue, Nebraska, May 1, 2024.

83 Julie Williams Keffeler, BS'79, DDS, Omaha, March 7, 2024. **Maria Ridgway Moran, JD**, Omaha, April 3, 2024. **Hon. William C. Peterson, JD**, Round Rock, Texas, Dec. 30, 2023.

84 Sr. Lucille M. Beaulieu, OSM, MMin, Omaha, June 22, 2024. **Steven A. Maril, JD**, Wheeling, Illinois, July 24, 2024.

85 Marilynn Gaughen Herek, BA, Omaha, May 18, 2024. **Alan B. Moy, MD**, Iowa City, Iowa, April 8, 2024.

86 Catherine Smith Tirone, BA, Phoenix, April 12, 2024.

87 Jennifer Baumgartner Vance, BS'85, BSN, Kennewick, Washington, April 5, 2024.

89 Michael A. Rowley, BSPha, Lubbock, Texas, Aug. 3, 2024.

90 Lt. Col. Debra S. Lee, BA, Robins, Iowa, Aug. 7, 2024. **Loretta D. McDonald, JD**, Omaha, April 22, 2024.

91 Rev. George P. Burns, MChrSp, Helena, Montana, May 13, 2024. **Allen N. Hess, BSAS**, Morgan, Utah, June 5, 2024.

92 John J. Ahern Jr., BS'88, DDS, Parker, Colorado, May 8, 2024. **Sr. Jeanine Kuhn, PBVM, MA**, Dubuque, Iowa, March 23, 2024. **Verne E. Rupright, JD**, Wasilla, Alaska, May 26, 2024.

94 Mark J. Baldeck, BA'85, MD, Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 8, 2024.

John C. Kuhlman, BA, Omaha, June 17, 2024.

97 Pamela M. Sprenkle, PhD, Valentine, Nebraska, Aug. 21, 2024.

98 Jason T. Vogel, BA, Rockville, Maryland, March 4, 2024.

99 Robert J. Franek, JD, Grand Lake, Colorado, June 6, 2024. **Nicole M. Rimac, BSN**, Boise, Idaho, Dec. 29, 2023.

00 Scott S. Green, DDS, Omaha, March 25, 2024.

01 Douglas R. Switzer, JD, Omaha, April 12, 2024.

03 Mandy Odell Trout, JD, Papillion, Nebraska, May 26, 2024. **Brian L. Fisher, BA'99, JD**, Omaha, May 1, 2024.

04 Jeff Mathew, BSEvs'00, MD, Wesley Chapel, Florida, April 22, 2024.

06 Edwin E. Pearson, BSBA, Omaha, March 2, 2024.

07 David M. Bergner, BSBA, Castle Rock, Colorado, April 14, 2024.

12 Rev. Anand R. J. Pereira, SJ, MS'10, EdD, Kohima, India, June 9, 2024.

14 Ellyn Thompson, DDS, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Jan. 20, 2024.

17 Denise N. Scales, BS, Omaha, June 19, 2024.

18 Chase C. Bonsall, BSBA, Chicago, July 26, 2024.

23 Vy N. Do, BSBA'19, PharmD, Lincoln, Nebraska, April 19, 2024.

IN REMEMBRANCE

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

M. Chad McBride, PhD, professor, Department of Communications Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, April 21, 2024

Thomas H. Zepf, PhD, professor emeritus, Department of Physics, College of Arts and Sciences, June 2, 2024

Rev. Thomas N. Schloemer, SJ, former assistant to the president (the Rev. Michael G. Morrison, SJ) and student advisor Kiewit Hall (1997-2004), June 18, 2024

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



DAVE WEAVER

Mental Health of Older Adults

A 2024 report by the nonprofit FAIR Health found that between 2019 and 2023, the age group that experienced the largest percentage increase in mental health diagnoses was seniors, age 65 and older — with a 57.4% spike.

The finding is not surprising to **Rajesh Tampi, MD**, professor and chair in the Department of Psychiatry and the Bhatia Family Endowed Chair in Psychiatry, who has authored more than 250 publications on psychiatry and geriatric psychiatry and, in 2024, received the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry's Diversity Award for innovation and sensitivity in serving elderly minorities or underserved populations. *Creighton* magazine talked with Tampi about this growing crisis.

What is the concern?

Dementia is a growing problem in the U.S. and globally. For the first time in the history of the world, we have more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 5, and by 2034-2035, we will have more people above the age of 65 than under the age of 18. We are an aging society. Because of improvements in healthcare, people are living longer, but not necessarily living better. Soon, all baby boomers, people born between 1946 and 1964, will be enrolled in Medicare, and 1 in 5 will have a diagnosable

mental illness. Our healthcare systems are not geared to take care of this increase in the geriatric population. My goal is to empower people to take control of their lives, developing healthy strategies toward a healthy brain. We talk about heart health. I think it's also time that we talk about the brain.

What factors affect mental health in seniors?

There are social determinants of health, non-medical factors, including income, race, education, living environments and loneliness, that significantly impact health and longevity, including cognitive and functional decline.

Many people are also inaccurately diagnosed, receive the wrong medications and have limited access to care. The gap in care is greater in racial and ethnic minority groups, including Blacks and Hispanics, and women are also disproportionately affected and represent a higher number of patients and caregivers.

Is it the same worldwide?

People are living longer all over the world. American society has its own issues, though. Obesity has gone up. Our families are small and intergenerational relationships are not there. Many older adults are living by themselves without any extended family and support. These are

all risk factors for cognitive decline and functional decline. Human beings are social animals. Isolation becomes a problem.

What can we do?

Families and immediate support systems can encourage people to follow a healthy lifestyle. Many of these things you can do by simple lifestyle modifications, such as exercising, eating healthily, not drinking alcohol and not smoking. Prevention is always better than cure.

People 65 and older can do other things that impact cognition. Planning ahead in your life is very important. We all go through different phases, so make sure that you're financially stable, take care of your health, continue to educate yourself as much as possible and stay connected to things that give you meaning. And learn a new skill. If you're getting older, that doesn't mean that you cannot learn new things. So, pick up a new hobby, watch different kinds of movies, read new books, do puzzles and travel.

What about overcoming loneliness?

With access to 5G networks and devices, people are more connected than ever before, but are doing more things isolated, separated from people. If you can, at least sometimes, do connected activities to get human connection, such as talk with friends and family on Zoom, participate in group activities or exercise, attend a church or prayer meeting, even psychotherapy. Get a pet, too, if you're able to do that.

What advice do you give to medical residents caring for older adults?

Every interaction, even if it's for two seconds, is a human interaction. Be respectful of everybody. Hear what people have to say. Listen to understand. If a human being is coming to us in trouble and pouring out their heart, we need to respect that. It's all about how we can help another human being. We all have a shelf life. What we leave behind is a legacy of who we were and the little things that we have done.

There are many ways of improving your quality of life, and that's what I am working on training the next generation of physician leaders. It's not always about medicine. There's not always a pill. We have to work together to make sure we can care for these individuals and help improve the cognitive health of older adults. We have a personal, family, health system and societal responsibility.

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