

CREIGHTON



SPRING 2024 • Volume 40 Issue 1

A NEW REALITY

How Creighton professors plan to use AI while ensuring it does not compromise the education of their students

Remaining Curious

To say that we live in a globally engaged world may seem simplistic, but it provides a certain clarity on what it means to truly be for and with others. There is incredible value in leaving ourselves open to the lived experiences of those who share our planet but may not have similar talents, beliefs, or traditions. Also, these interactions can happen at any time or place — as long as we remain curious.

This past December I had the immense pleasure to travel once again to Africa where I visited several refugee-owned small businesses supported through Creighton Innovation Grants. As students or graduates of the Jesuit Worldwide Learning program, these individuals are applying their classroom skills and knowledge into self-sustaining projects; Abraham, Deo, Sarah, Sadia, and others showed me how they are raising chickens, running a cafe, and making soap while also changing their lives and affecting their community so positively.

However, it is not necessary to travel the world to be exposed to diverse perspectives. Across our Omaha and Phoenix campuses, Creighton enrolls approximately 200 students from more than 50 countries. Our faculty and staff also bring with them a wide array of cultural backgrounds and lived experiences that influence their work and how they live out the University mission.

This also includes engaging with the stories of the many refugees who find themselves forced to escape political, economic, or physical danger and are members of our extended Creighton community, as students, alumni, faculty, staff, or individuals served by our programs. To paraphrase the late Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, in his address at Santa Clara University 24 years ago, we must let the gritty reality of this world into our lives so we can feel it, think critically about it, and respond to its suffering.

The extent of this intellectual pilgrimage also does not remain confined to geographical boundaries. Technological progress continues to develop at an outstanding pace, bringing billions of people together while also deepening hostilities among groups. Now, with artificial intelligence, there is an emerging frontier that requires us to approach with clarity of purpose and discernment so that the digital divide does not continue widening.

The conclusion of another academic year also means that thousands of Creighton students are completing their studies, some of whom are graduating from their programs of study, before venturing outward. In doing so, they will be tasked with taking all they have learned from their time at our university and using it to guide their paths forward.

As alumni and friends of Creighton you are already on your own paths, but ones that I hope bring you back at times to Creighton — in Omaha, Phoenix, or the Dominican Republic. I invite you to return and see how our campuses have changed and grown alongside the ambitions of our students, and in so doing bring all you have learned back with you. No matter where life may take you, remember that you are Bluejays always.

Have a blessed and wonderful summer

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President



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© In early March, the steel flame outside of St. John's Church was reinstalled after undergoing refurbishing and polishing during the renovation of the fountain and update to the St. John's plaza. The sculpture, "Eternal Flame," was originally installed in 1993, funded by a gift from John Micek, BS'50, and Anna Lou Micek, BA'75.



DAVE WEAVER

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on the cover
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As the AI revolution rapidly changes the world and shapes the future, Creighton faculty from multiple disciplines share how they intend to produce graduates who understand both the technologies that underlie AI and its ethical use.



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DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

From Bolivia to Ukraine, two Creighton professors have built a reputation and expertise in international human rights and bring that knowledge and experience to the classroom.



OPENING DOORS FOR REFUGEES

Creighton students, faculty, staff and alumni are fulfilling one of the Jesuits' Universal Apostolic Preferences by being committed to caring for migrants, displaced persons, refugees and victims of war.

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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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GARY NEILL

Powering Through Space

BY RACHEL BUTTNER STANKO, BA'03

Backed by a NASA grant, a chemistry professor and undergraduate students are exploring improved battery components for aviation technology

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) explores the unknown in air and space, but much of space remains just that: unknown. Can we go farther out there? And stay longer?

The questions arise from NASA's Science Mission Directorate, a division of the agency that "seeks to protect and improve life on Earth and space." But to boldly go where we have never gone before requires a safer, more compact, more reliable electric power source not available — yet. To find some answers to the questions, the Science Mission Directorate connects researchers and resources across the nation's science community to support the development of Earth and space science-related technologies.

"NASA is actively interested in researching alternative batteries for aviation technology," says Angela Devlin, PhD, assistant professor of chemistry. Devlin is exploring a possible alternative

while including undergraduate students in the research. Her work, funded by a NASA Nebraska EPSCoR Grant, explores the use of a novel type of solid-state electrolyte for an energy-dense battery — one that is not the popular, but precarious, lithium-ion battery.

The lithium-ion battery is the "workhorse battery technology," says Devlin. These batteries are part of everyday lives — powering mobile phones, electric cars, laptop computers and devices on the International Space Station. "But they pose some safety risks given that there's flammable liquid inside the battery," Devlin says.

Lithium-ion batteries contain electrolytes in liquid form coupled with significant stored energy. Any abuses to that system — short circuits or exposure to elevated temperatures — can cause an explosive chain reaction known as a thermal runaway.

"This is a phenomenon that has plagued the lithium-ion battery industry

since the beginning," says Eric Darcy, battery technical discipline lead at NASA's Johnson Space Center, on the "Better Batteries" episode of *Houston We Have a Podcast*.

Of all the cells produced by a battery manufacturer, the risk is about 1 in a million to 1 in 5 million of a catastrophic defect, he explains.

"Well, when you're dealing with laptops and you're dealing with small batteries, it's something that you can deal with," says Darcy. "But once you start being in a confined space of a spacecraft with a battery that has many, many cells, thousands of cells, you can't use that approach anymore."

Devlin, who has a special interest in materials chemistry, is considering a more stable electrolyte in a battery.

“

I like to work directly with students, and my hope is that students I train can ultimately feel confident in their skills in the lab.

”

ANGELA DEVLIN, PHD

"The idea is that if we take away the volatile liquid part of the battery and replace it with something solid, you don't have the flammability issues associated with the electrolyte within a lithium-ion battery."

Any sort of failure in the material can be disastrous in a spacecraft mission, or in the technology grounded on Earth.

"As electric cars are becoming more popular, electric everything is becoming more in demand," says Devlin. "That large-scale lithium-ion battery could pose an even greater risk for the types of energy stresses that our world is demanding."

A solid-state electrolyte in a battery

could mitigate the safety issues. The hypothesis is being tested at Creighton, where Devlin and three students conduct experiments with different metal-organic frameworks, which are highly porous crystalline materials, to test chemical interactions that translate into enhanced conductivity. If the hypothesis proves successful, it could lead to the next generation of better batteries.

"The research lab is a new kind of learning. It's messy, it's not always a linear process. We make hypotheses and they might be wrong, or the experiment may fail. And it can be frustrating, sure," says Devlin, "but I like to think of it as good failure training. 'What can we learn from it?'"

The NASA battery subject caught the curiosity of Emma Fredstrom, a Spanish and Hispanic studies major, to participate in Devlin's research. "It is just something so unique that I had never heard of before," says Fredstrom, who is looking to make a deeper impact on an undergraduate research project by picking one to put her time and efforts behind. "I will be able to learn about all parts of the research process, and gain critical thinking and collaborative skills, while contributing to the outcome of the project."

All skills that Fredstrom says she hopes to apply in her future. Her career aspirations include medicine and research and using her Spanish language skills to serve underserved communities.

Devlin values the mentorship relationship within undergraduate research. "I like to work directly with students, and my hope is that students I train can ultimately feel confident in their skills in the lab. And I think it's also a good opportunity for students to see that their professors are also still learning. I have research questions, and I don't necessarily know the answers," says Devlin. "So, certainly, a lot of work still needs to be done, but it's an area that is worth exploring.

"Battery usage affects all of us."



JESSICA CLARK, DNP ▶
Jessica Clark, DNP, began her role as dean of the College of Nursing in January.

Clark Named Nursing Dean

Jessica Clark, DNP, was named dean of the College of Nursing and began her role in January. Clark succeeds Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, who retired last September after serving as dean of the College of Nursing since 2015 and vice provost for Health Sciences Campuses since 2019.

The former dean of the College of Education and Health Sciences at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, Clark had also served as associate dean and director of the Department of Nursing at Bradley.

At Bradley, Clark was instrumental in relaunching a second-degree accelerated nursing program and developing and implementing new programming in psychiatric mental health and two concentrations for adult-gerontology nurse practitioners. She also has extensive teaching experience, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and a proven track record for developing and promoting local and extended partnerships that support quality programs and cocurricular activities for students.

Clark earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, with an administrative/education concentration, from Chatham University in Pittsburgh, a master's degree in nursing administration from Indiana State University, and her BSN also from Indiana State.



FR. HENDRIANTO NAMED WAITE CHAIR

The Rev. Stefanus Hendrianto, SJ, PhD, LLM, was named the incoming holder of the Anna and Don Waite Endowed Chair in Jesuit Education. An expert in comparative law who has held various teaching positions in the U.S. and internationally, Fr. Hendrianto will hold the position during the 2024-2025 academic year within the School of Law.

Success Center Comes to Phoenix

Creighton University Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix has dedicated a large part of a new floor to the academic success, well-being and spiritual growth of its students.

With investments from the Norton Foundation and the state of Arizona, the Virginia G. Piper Health Sciences Building has completed its sixth floor, making way for the Norton



NADER ABUSHHAB

Foundation Success Center, a hub of support providing a more seamless and meaningful experience for Creighton students. The space also contains the Norton Foundation Classroom and the Norton Foundation Center for Counseling Services.

In the Success Center, students in the College of Nursing, School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and the physician assistant program can utilize accessibility services, resources for student formation and belonging, academic success consultants and learning specialists.

“From their first day on campus through the end of their programs, all students have access to the Norton Foundation Success Center,” says Greg Lapriore, academic success coordinator for the College of Nursing in Phoenix. “The dedicated staff of the center can assist them in such areas as studying, note-taking, time management, exam preparation and more.”

The center’s purpose is to foster growth among the students in every area.

“It’s a comprehensive, collaborative space that really demonstrates Creighton’s commitment to student success in all its forms,” says Jennifer Peter, PsyD, director of Student Counseling Services.

As with Creighton’s Phoenix campus itself, Peter says, the Norton Foundation Success Center’s own success depends on all the pieces working in unison. While the Norton Foundation Classroom offers students a prime new space for learning, the Norton Foundation Center for Counseling Services provides a safe, confidential space for students who need support amid the demands of their intensive programs.

“The Norton Foundation Success Center is a huge step in managing the complete wellness of students,” Peter says. “It recognizes that each student is a complex individual with a lot of different components to them, beyond academics and even beyond mental health. This is a space where our students can develop as whole persons.”

Creighton’s Phoenix campus is not a traditional one. Students, faculty and

© Claudia Mares, medical education learning specialist and instructor at the School of Medicine Phoenix campus, meets with a student in the Norton Foundation Success Center.

staff from three different schools or colleges share a single building. This offers unique opportunities for collaboration.

“One of the most beautiful things about our students is that they really want that collaboration with their peers in different programs,” says Valeria Garcia Lara, associate director of Student Formation and Belonging. “They want to engage in interprofessional activities. They want to learn from each other and make each other better.”

The Norton Foundation Success Center and its many components, Garcia Lara says, will create more opportunities for the growth and formation that only come from true connection.

Some of the students who utilize the Norton Foundation Success Center are themselves Norton Scholars, high-achieving students who have received a scholarship to attend Creighton’s medical school or College of Nursing in Phoenix.

The scholarship was established in 2012 by Doris Norton, who died in 2021. Doris and her late husband, John, created a legacy of giving that shaped (and continues to shape) healthcare education in the Southwest.

“The Doris Norton Scholarship Endowment Fund was established to support the remarkably talented students of Creighton University,” says Cheryl Oliver, Norton Foundation president. “The Norton Foundation is pleased to continue Doris’ vision with the addition of the Success Center, which we hope will be utilized as a valuable resource to these future healthcare professionals.”

Future physicians such as Class of 2024 medical student Zachary Creech, who says his Norton Scholarship had “an enormous impact on my education that has contributed to my growth as a future physician.

“With the new Success Center now on campus, I’m confident that the Norton Foundation will continue to impact generations of Creighton-trained healthcare professionals for many years to come.”

Law School Receives \$1 Million Grant to Support Juvenile Justice Clinic

The School of Law and its Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic aren’t just thinking about social problems but taking action to address them.

To support expansion of the clinic and its important work, \$1 million is coming, courtesy of the Byrne Discretionary Community Grant, a program of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant was supported by the office of Rep. Don Bacon, R-Neb., and facilitated by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, whose staff helped compose the application and will track the clinic’s performance.

“

The clinic directly reflects Creighton’s commitment to serving our North Omaha neighbors by meeting the needs of community members that otherwise would go unanswered.

”

JOY SUDER, JD’08

Creighton’s Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic (JJLC) operates like a small law firm. Students gain hands-on legal experience while helping children in need.

An ongoing lack of support for at-risk youth has resulted in high rates of youth violence stemming from poverty, gang involvement, high unemployment and substandard housing, Joy Suder, JD’08, wrote in the grant proposal.

“The clinic directly reflects Creighton’s commitment to serving

Villa Earns Top Teaching Award

The Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award, one of the most prestigious awards given to young faculty teaching the chemical sciences, has come to Creighton for a second time.

Eric Villa, PhD, professor of chemistry, is one of eight 2023 recipients drawn from eight universities across the United States. He follows in the footsteps of Kayode Oshin, PhD, chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, who received the award in 2020.

Two Dreyfus awards in three years is a remarkable achievement, says Bridget Keegan, PhD, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

“Because of Dr. Villa and his colleagues, our chemistry department stands out among fellow primarily undergraduate institutions with the number of our national recognitions,” she says. “Dr. Villa has an impressive research record which has fully integrated undergraduate collaborators.”

The Dreyfus Award honors a complete approach to instruction that includes undergraduate involvement in research.

“I really see it as an acknowledgement both of scholarly production and our work incorporating undergraduates into the lab,” Villa says. “I have published about 21 articles since coming to Creighton, most of those in cooperation with undergraduate students.”

“The beauty is that there is no shortage of wonderful Creighton students to be a part of our labs,” he says. “It is amazing to see where they go from here. Some go into industry, some explore PhD programs in chemistry or biochemistry, some go on to medical, dental or pharmacy school.”



AJ OUNES

© Eric Villa, PhD, left, works in his lab with student Dylan Nill.



© Charles Filipi, MD (far right), and his wife, Frances Ann (far left), in Ouanaminthe, Haiti, check on a food program for street children they initiated with Catholic nuns in 2013. This photo was taken in 2015.

Filipi Receives Humanitarian Award

The humanitarian work of a retired Creighton professor of surgery was honored by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) last fall.

The ACS Pfizer Humanitarian Award recognizes surgeons who have dedicated “a substantial portion of their career to ensuring the provision of surgical care to underserved populations without expectation of commensurate reimbursement.”

Charles Filipi, MD, who from 1992 to 2023 served as professor of surgery in the School of Medicine, is the founder of Creighton’s Global Surgery Fellowship, which seeks to decrease surgical deaths in developing countries by training surgeons whose sense of mission calls them to distant countries.

He is also founder or co-founder of Hernia

Repair for the Underserved; Chronic Care International, which treats diabetes and hypertension in the Dominican Republic; and a food program that supports some 75 street children in Ouanaminthe in northeast Haiti.

During ceremonies held in Boston, Filipi told how his commitment to serving the underserved began in 1978 when he and his wife, Frances Ann, consulted with famed humanitarian Elisabeth Kübler-Ross about their desire to open a nonprofit hospice center. Her promise that the Filipis would attract financial support so long as their project was “an act of love” became the animating principle of all their future humanitarian work.

Since then, a team of colleagues that has included their sons, Joe and Aaron, and their daughter, Christine, has built on the foundation laid by the Filipis.

Filipi joined Creighton’s surgical faculty in 1992. In 2004, he was persuaded by his son Joe to assist the surgical center at the ILAC Center in the Dominican Republic that for 50 years has worked in close partnership with Creighton University.

“I went down there to see potential patients and then later organized a hernia surgical team to perform surgery,” Filipi says. “A long line of sitting patients was waiting on the day of

surgery. One of the patients stood up and gave me a bunch of bananas in an act of gratitude.

“It was a beautiful thing.”

Since then, Filipi told the ACS audience, volunteer surgeons have performed more than 7,000 hernia operations in eight developing nations, all without a death.

“Our trainers are a distinguished group of hernia surgical experts, and they all give freely of their time,” Filipi says. “They have trained 115 developing-country general surgeons to perform modern, effective open inguinal hernia surgery, and of these 115 trainees, 23 have been selected as trainers themselves.”

In 2010, in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake that is estimated to have killed approximately 300,000 people, Filipi, together with Brian Loggie, MD, professor of surgery at Creighton from 2002 to 2022, organized and sent surgical teams to the city of Jimani, Dominican Republic, located about 80 miles from the epicenter of the earthquake.

Their four teams, Filipi recounts, performed 776 acute operations and evacuated 30 patients with the help of the U.S. Navy and the staff of then-U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, HON’92, D-Neb. Nurses at one point were caring for 320 patients, Filipi told the ACS gathering, each one lying on a mattress outside.

And then, in 2011, Filipi learned that 75% of all emergency room admissions to Dominican Republic charity hospitals are due to complications stemming from diabetes and hypertension. In response, with daughter-in-law Linda Filipi, a certified diabetes educator, he founded Chronic Care International.

Two years later, in 2013, after being approached by Catholic nuns from Colombia, Filipi and his colleagues started a food program for lost and street children in Ouanaminthe, Haiti. For the past 10 years, that program has provided one large meal daily to the children Monday through Friday.

The global surgery fellowship began in 2018, and teaches subspecialty surgeries, anesthesia and ultrasound technology. — **BY EUGENE CURTIN**

our North Omaha neighbors by meeting the needs of community members that otherwise would go unanswered,” says Suder, director of the JJLC.

The three-year grant will enable her to form a partnership with Creighton’s Department of Social Work and with Community Connections, a Creighton program that provides access to needed resources and works to prevent youth from becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

Referrals for the programs will flow from a long list of community organizations including school districts and community agencies with which the JJLC has established relationships.

Interventions in these cases can be deeply practical.

“Say you have a teenage daughter, and you want her to go to an after-school program that has a 13-page application that has to be printed off,” Suder says. “Well, a lot of people don’t have printers, but someone from Community Connections can go to the house, help fill it out and get it submitted.”

Transportation is an issue, too.

“How are you supposed to attend a probation hearing if you have no transportation?” she asks. “And if somebody does not have a car, then a food pantry won’t be as effective as it might be.”

Creighton and the JJLC’s holistic approach to legal services considers the many facets of lives lived in poverty. The goal is to avoid court involvement, Suder says, but if legal services become necessary, then the goal is to guide youth through the process towards the most positive outcome.

Founded two years ago on the strength of private donations totaling nearly \$1 million to support the first five years of work, Creighton’s juvenile justice clinic is charged with providing free legal services to minors whose cases are progressing through the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County. Those cases, Suder says, disproportionately impact youth of color.

‘Lab’ Seeks to Make Creighton a Leader in Humanities Research

Creighton’s sweeping commitment to interdisciplinary education includes a new humanities “lab” that will encourage students and faculty to make Creighton “the shining beacon” of humanities research within the Jesuit university network.

Zachary Smith, PhD, associate professor of theology, says the “lab”

First Scholars

ADVANCING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

Creighton was recognized by the Center for First-generation Student Success for advancing to the first-scholars phase of the First Scholars Network. Creighton was chosen based on its commitment to advancing the outcomes of first-generation students through improving both first-generation student success initiatives and institution-wide approaches.

© As an example of a “lab” for humanities research, Creighton students can meet anywhere to discuss projects.

terminology is a nod to Creighton’s prominence in the medical and health sciences, where physical laboratories are an iconic presence.

The humanities lab, he says, like similar bodies in universities across the nation, is a conceptual space that describes the convening of historians, philosophers, theologians, linguists, literatists and other humanists to pursue common research. There is no designated lab space — participants may gather anywhere — and papers, discussions and sharing of research will stand in for Bunsen burners and Petri dishes.

Student-involved research projects built around a common theme will be guided by faculty. The projects will produce papers and presentations that reflect knowledge of subject matter and familiarity with methods of inquiry.

“As we come up with projects, we will bring on board individuals from different disciplines,” Smith says. “As humanists, we tend to have these tiny monastic cells we call our offices where we do our thing.

“The idea of a lab is to break out of that cell, to bring all of us together so that we can achieve not just better research outcomes but achieve funding that will help us achieve those better outcomes and attract students by becoming the shining beacon of humanities research in the AJCU (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities).”

The lab is an initiative of Creighton’s Kingfisher Institute, which seeks to produce professional graduates who address complex challenges with responses guided by the humanities.

Smith says it will build on Creighton’s commitment to undergraduate research already represented by such bodies as the Kripke Center and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.

He is joined in administering the lab by Surbhi Malik, PhD, associate professor of English, who says the lab will enhance the ability of humanities professors to earn research grants.

“We have zero money available”



to do this, but we certainly don't have zero resources," she says. "There are other sorts of resources. Workshops, for example, meaningful discussions, productive collaborations.

"We also want to apply for external grants, maybe an NEH grant, for example, which would be a dream. The existence of this lab will absolutely enhance our ability to apply for grants like that."

Zallocchi Receives \$2.5 Million in Funding for Hearing Research

Two federal grants totaling almost \$2.5 million have been awarded to a Creighton professor whose primary research targets Usher syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes hearing loss.

Marisa Zallocchi, PhD, assistant professor of biomedical sciences in the School of Medicine, has been asked by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the role of Usher proteins during development of the inner ear.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has asked her to study natural compound-based therapies that might guard against noise-induced hearing loss.

The NIH grant is \$2.1 million and

covers a five-year study. The DoD grant is for \$363,750 and funds a two-year study investigating acquired rather than genetic hearing loss.

Graduate and undergraduate students will assist with the research, Zallocchi says, continuing Creighton's long-established commitment to introducing students to the principles of research.

For the DoD, Zallocchi is asked to investigate the properties of *Piper longum*, or the Indian long pepper, to see whether compounds derived from the pepper reduce or prevent noise-induced hearing loss in animals.

Inspiring Underserved Children to Study Medicine, Health Sciences

Last fall, Creighton hosted seven "mini medical schools" designed to help members of underrepresented and underserved communities in Omaha and Phoenix understand that a medical or health sciences education for their children is possible.

"Medical schools historically have been remiss in admitting diverse students," says Ronn Johnson, PhD, senior



CREIGHTON EARNS SILVER STARS SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Creighton was awarded a silver STARS rating by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. STARS, or the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System, is a global sustainability standard created by the association, with more than 350 institutions reporting.

© Medical student Emma Thomsen, foreground, assists a Mini Medical School program participant on the Omaha campus.

associate dean for diversity and inclusion and professor of family and community medicine in the School of Medicine.

"As a result, there is a shortage of physicians, nurses and all kinds of healthcare providers. Yes, there is a shortage generally, but in underserved communities such as reservations and rural communities the situation is on life support — incredible shortages of nurses, doctors, occupational therapists, you name the group."

The four-year-old program is part of a long-term strategy to relieve those shortages by introducing children to the possibility of a medical or health sciences career. Beginning in elementary school and continuing even through the college years, Mini Medical School uses daylong seminars to familiarize children with the language, the equipment and the practices of the medical world.

"We invite them in for a day where faculty and students introduce them to a medical education," Johnson says.

Their parents receive separate instruction about academic requirements, scholarships and the process of enrolling their children, matters with which they are rarely familiar.

"We demystify the process," Johnson says. "These parents may not have had the opportunity to attend college, or the process may have changed since they applied. We lay out clearly for them what it takes to make it happen for their kids."

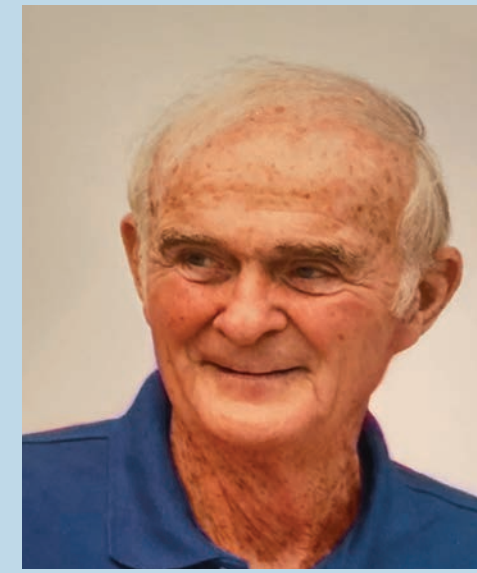
A key participant is the CUES School System, which consists of three Catholic elementary schools in East Omaha where 93% of students are students of color.

Mini Medical School has been "invaluable," says Jim Swanson, BA'86, MS'98, director of student and family support for CUES.

"Our oldest Mini Medical School graduates are now seniors in high school," he says. "We are encouraging them to move toward their goals. Mini Medical School has been a tremendous opportunity for our students and our parents to see a world beyond themselves and to dream for the future."

Creighton Remembers Bill Scott, Bruce Lauritzen

Creighton mourns the loss of two Omaha business leaders, philanthropists and longstanding supporters of the University with the deaths of J. William "Bill" Scott and Bruce Lauritzen, HON'23.



© J. William "Bill" Scott, left, and Bruce Lauritzen, HON'23, died Feb. 27 and Feb. 21, respectively.



Scott's Impact to be Felt for Generations

Philanthropist and business leader J. William "Bill" Scott, a key figure in shaping Creighton's Omaha campus, died Feb. 27 at the age of 93.

"The Scotts' vision and investment have not just enhanced our facilities, but also student scholarships, our athletic programs, and Creighton community-based programs designed to assist Omaha residents in need," said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.

Through personal gifts he made with wife of 73 years, Ruth, or their family's foundation, Bill Scott contributed significantly to the School of Dentistry building, the CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education and the entirety of the east-campus athletic corridor — the Championship Center, the Wayne and Eileen Ryan Athletic Center and D.J. Sokol Arena, The Ruth (named after Ruth Scott) and the Rasmussen Fitness and Sports Center (named after the Scotts' close friend, former McCormick Endowed Athletic Director Bruce Rasmussen).

The Scott family has likewise supported scholarships for medical students and

student-athletes. They've also established innovative services across multiple schools and colleges — from an After-hours Clinic in the School of Dentistry to a financial literacy program in the Heider College of Business to student-attorney-run legal clinics in the School of Law supporting juvenile clients and Omahans filing for bankruptcy.

Beyond Creighton, Scott and his family have given tens of millions of dollars to more than 150 local and statewide organizations, with much of their support extended to higher education.

Lauritzen's Dedicated Service Helped Creighton Grow

Bruce Lauritzen, HON'23, an emeritus member of Creighton's Board of Trustees, died Feb. 21 at the age of 80, leaving behind an indelible legacy at Creighton and in the Omaha community. Lauritzen served on Creighton's Board for more than three decades, from 1987 to 2023.

"Bruce's support for our mission and his service to both students and the community were grand in both scope and longevity," said Creighton President the

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. "Bruce and the Lauritzen family played no small part in helping grow Creighton's physical footprint and visibility on a national scale."

Lauritzen was a fifth-generation banker at First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO), serving as president for 19 years. In the 1990s, Lauritzen's investment in the 45-story First National Bank Tower, the tallest building in Nebraska, redefined Omaha's skyline.

As chairman of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, he helped lead the development of Heartland of America Park and the Riverfront, which led to future enhancements of downtown Omaha.

He and his family were instrumental in establishing Lauritzen Gardens and supported construction projects across Omaha, including the recently opened FNBO Bridge connecting Creighton's Criss Complex and the new CL and Rachel Werner Center for Health Sciences Education.

An Omaha World-Herald Midlander of the Year, honorary king of Aksarben and Omaha Business Hall of Fame inductee, Lauritzen received an honorary Doctor of Business Administration from Creighton in May 2023.



Eye-Catching Campus Updates

It's been a time of construction and renovation projects on Creighton's Omaha campus, and the results have been eye-catching and well received. From a popular new e-gaming suite on the lower level of the Kiewit Fitness Center to renovations to Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library and a new look and food options for the Skutt Student Center, these spaces enliven the student experience.



A HUB FOR E-GAMING

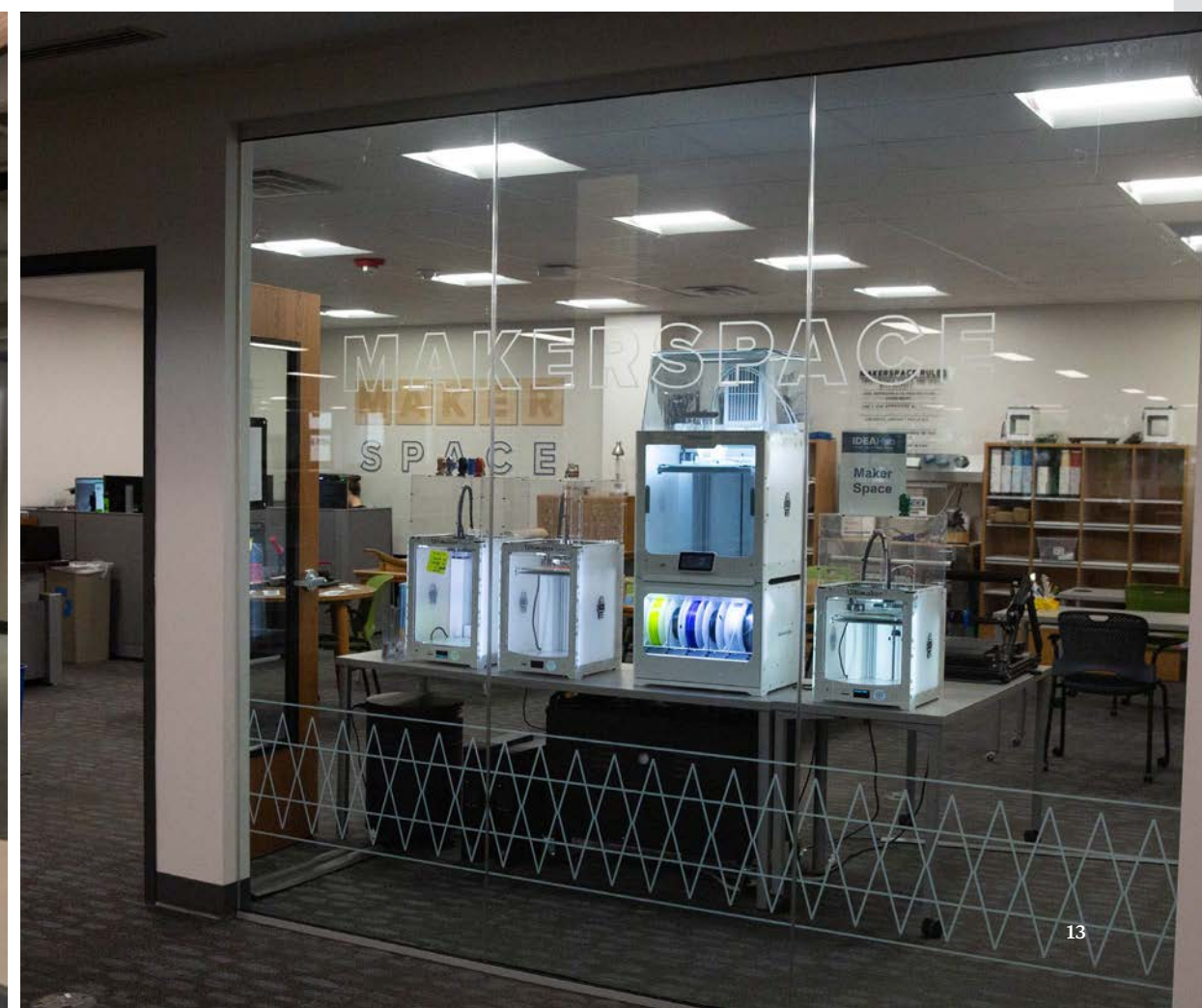
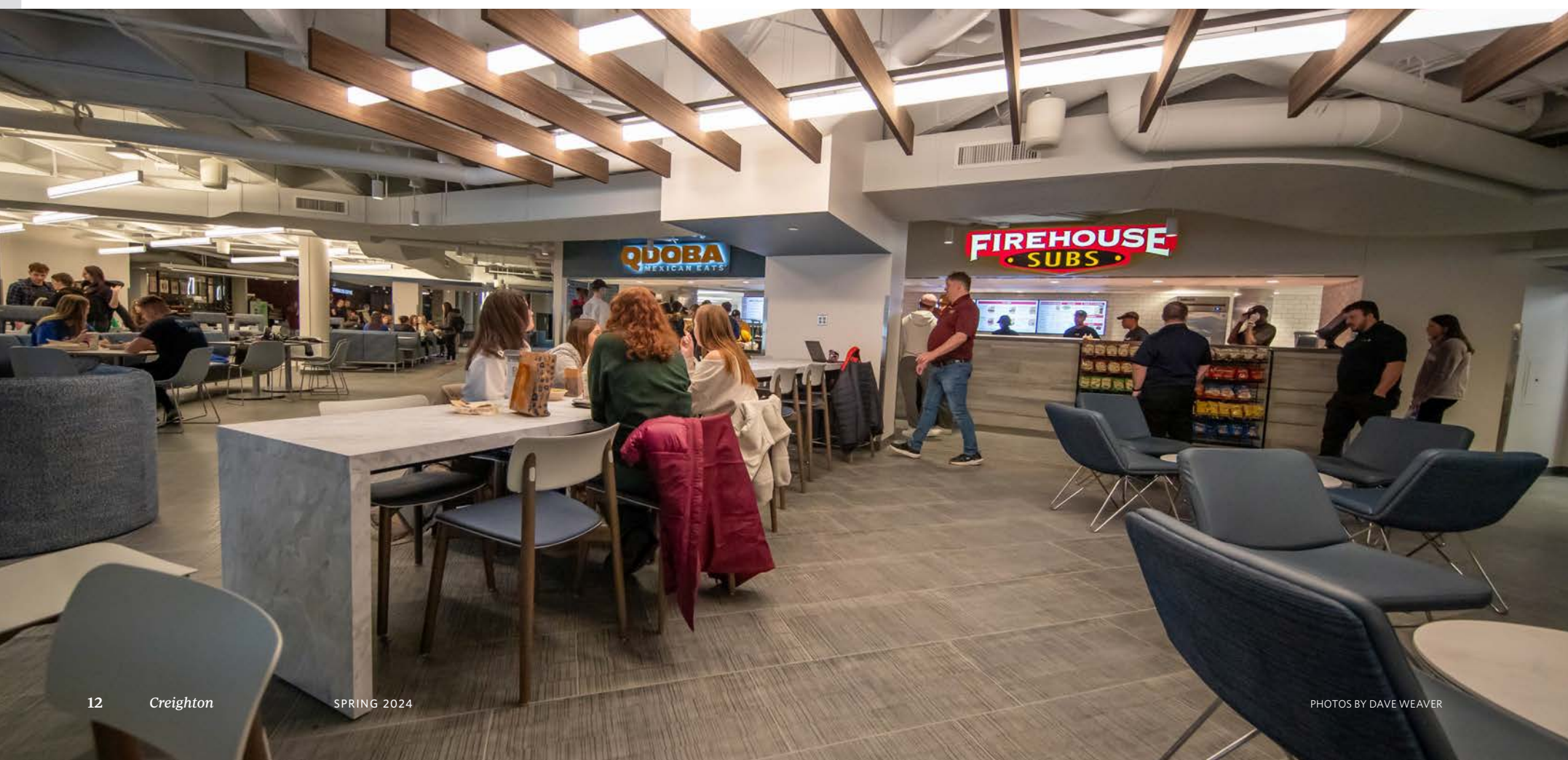
Students enjoy spending time in the new Creighton Recreation and Wellness e-gaming suite (pictured left), which opened in February on the lower level of the Kiewit Fitness Center and features gaming computers and software, along with Playstation, X-Box and Nintendo Switch games. The e-game suite is also home to Creighton's e-sports team.

WAREHAM COURT AND SKUTT STUDENT CENTER REMODEL

After a semester of renovations, Wareham Court dining (pictured below left) in the Skutt Student Center reopened on the first day of the spring semester in January. Food offerings include Qdoba, Firehouse Subs, Mein Bowl and food from Jack and Ed's. Renovations were made to the entrance, dining and seating area, storefronts and the Skutt Student Center information desk.

REINERT-ALUMNI MEMORIAL LIBRARY RENOVATIONS

Renovations to the Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library were completed for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year. Projects that were part of this renovation included enhancing the student experience by modernizing the look of library spaces, increasing the collection space to house materials from the Health Sciences Library, and building more individual study spaces. Another notable addition to Reinert includes the Makerspace by the IDEA Hub (pictured below right), which features several 3D printers, Cricut machines and other state-of-the-art resources.



At the Confluence of Science and Religion

Exploring the intersections of science and faith was the focus of a two-day public conference hosted by Creighton in April at its Omaha campus, with an opening lecture at the Kiewit Luminarium, a new interactive science museum located along Omaha's riverfront.

The conference featured faculty and student presentations and national speakers, including the Rev. Robert Spitzer, SJ, PhD, former president of Gonzaga University, who has written and spoken extensively on the intersection of science, reason and faith.

Prior to the event, *Creighton* magazine had an opportunity to talk with conference organizers **Gintaras Duda, PhD**, professor and chair of the Department of Physics, the **Rev. Chris Krall, SJ, PhD**, assistant professor of theology and neuroscience, and **Tricia Ross, PhD**, a scholar on the history of science and religion and an assistant professor in Modern Languages and Literatures and the Honors program.

CREIGHTON MAGAZINE: How did you become interested in this area of study, both personally and professionally?

DUDA: My research area is theoretical particle physics and cosmology. I grew up looking at the sky and wondering. I also grew up Catholic, and in my research area we're talking about those big questions. We're talking about cosmology and the beginning of the universe. Those are scientific questions, but they are also spiritual, theological, philosophical questions. You're looking at the world with blinders on if you're only thinking about that scientifically or theologically.

ROSS: It was kind of a roundabout route for me. This interplay [between science and religion] fascinated me, in part because it touched on questions I had since I was quite young. I grew up in very conservative Christian circles and, basically, I was scared of evolution. And I didn't want to be scared. I found that through directly engaging it, thinking through it and tracing the relationship over a very long period of time, it helped. It was also just so fascinating.

FR. KRALL: My interest goes back to a bike ride my sophomore year of high school. There was something in the way the wind was going across the trees and the lake and then hitting me. It was like, how does this all fit together? What's the music of the spheres, the harmony

of existence? I came back from that bike ride, and I decided I was going to major in physics and philosophy in college. And I did. [After graduating from Boston College, joining the Jesuits, attending the University of Toronto's Institute for the History & Philosophy of Science & Technology, and completing other studies], I went to the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at Oxford University — where there was more conversation, more dialogue, more engagingness on this whole question. Then, I finally finished off with a PhD at Marquette University in neuroscience and theology. So, I've been studying this for a good while.

CREIGHTON MAGAZINE: How would you describe the relationship between faith and science? Do you see them as complementary or in conflict?

FR. KRALL: The term I use is dialectic. There is a tension, but not a tension in the negative sense. It's like the tension of a trampoline that allows one to jump up and down. Or the tension of a violin string that allows for music to be created. There is certainly some conflict of sorts, but it's helping us in discovering what the universe truly is — a bringing together of the physical and the metaphysical. In Catholic theology, we are incarnational beings. We are necessarily beings with physical and scientific realities, but pointing and drawing us to the one who creates the fullness of all — the way, the truth and the light.

ROSS: I present it very similarly, not as conflict, or even necessarily as a complement, but as conversation. There are these two pursuits of truth — reasonable pursuits of truth — that come at it from different angles. But they are united in this whole common goal, which is for us to understand ourselves and the world in which we live in, and what is the meaning and purpose of it. An apparent conflict might come when there is something that we have not fully understood yet. We don't always completely understand how the two relate. It can lead to intense, productive conversation.

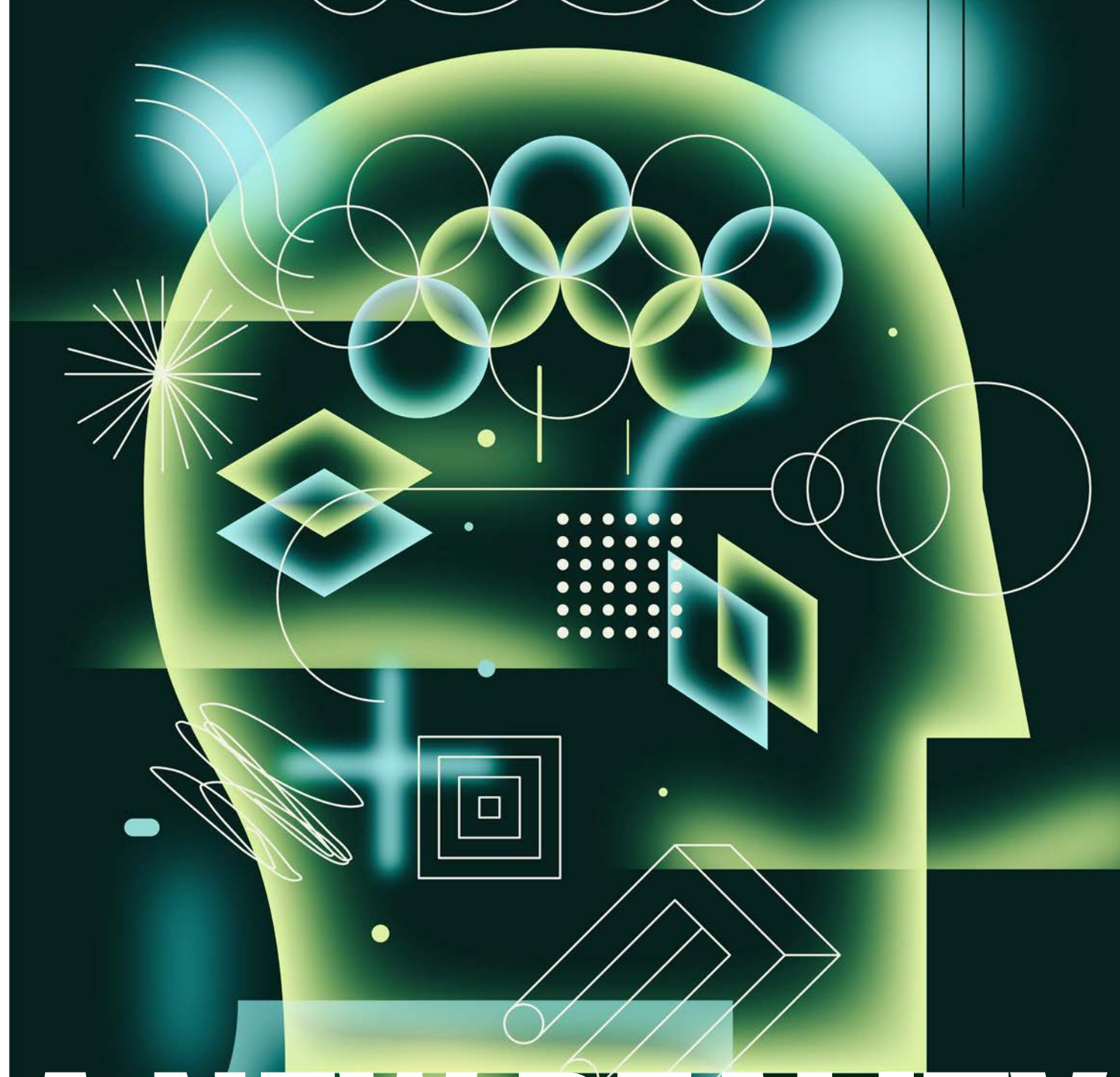
DUDA: I think people compartmentalize these two types of ideas. They have their religious beliefs and their scientific beliefs, and the two don't talk to each other or interact or engage. And that's really not the Catholic model. The Catholic model is that faith and reason are mutually complementary. Through dialogue, through intersection, through consideration of multiple lenses, we arrive at something we understand much better, much deeper, much more fully. And this is a richer understanding of reality. We look at the world in this much more profound way, and we see more rather than seeing less.

Read more about the conference, and this interview, at creighton.edu/creightonmagazine.

New Jesuit Residence Taking Shape

Construction of the Jérôme Nadal, SJ, Jesuit Residence, which stands along 24th Street at the east edge of the Jesuit Gardens and behind Creighton Hall, is nearly complete. The residence will be home to Jesuits who live, serve and work on campus as instructors, pastors, chaplains and University administrators and staff. Once officially opened, the 37,779-square-foot building will be accessible to students, faculty, staff, alumni and Omaha partners for Mass, spiritual counseling and other mission-based programs. The residence includes 28 bedrooms for Creighton Jesuits, as well as a 1,015-square-foot chapel, a dining hall, library and several spaces for spiritual activities.





A NEW REALITY

As the AI revolution advances, Creighton professors plan to use the technology while ensuring it does not compromise the education of their students

BY Eugene Curtin

Standing quietly in a corner of a conference room in Creighton University's Mike and Josie Harper Center are three robots looking for all the world like chastised children sentenced to a timeout.

Their heads slumped, arms hanging loose, it takes just a touch from Natalie Gerhart, PhD, to transform one into a babbling, large-eyed, endearing humanoid. These are Pepper robots, and the acquisition of three of them by Creighton's Heider College of Business is striking evidence of the University's determination to remain in the vanguard of the artificial intelligence revolution.

Quite how the 48-inch-tall robots will be used and what information will be programmed into them are matters of ongoing discussion, says Gerhart, associate professor of business intelligence and analytics, but what is beyond discussion is Creighton's institutional conviction that AI-fueled technologies will shape the future.

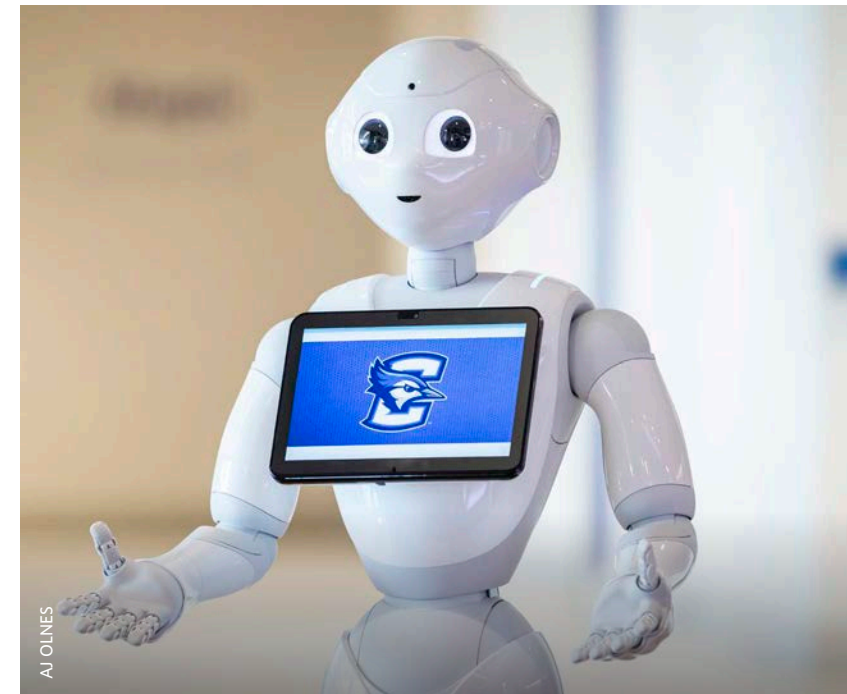
It's an understanding that reaches across campus, touching philosophy, medicine, communications studies, computer science, journalism and more. The world is changing, rapidly, and, as interviews with various professors suggest, Creighton intends to produce graduates who understand both the technologies that underlie AI and their ethical use.

CONCEPTS GAINING IMPORTANCE

ALI DAG, PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR of accounting and business intelligence and analytics, teaches machine learning. Coding, for so long a foundational aspect of the digital revolution, is waning in importance as AI simplifies the process, Dag says. Concepts, on the other hand — ideas about how best to use AI — are gaining importance.

"Previously, we were focusing on maybe 40% coding and 60% concepts," he says. "The direction that I am sensing from a lot of my colleagues and students at conferences is that coding needs to drop maybe to 20% or even 15%. Greater importance is attaching to concepts — ideas for how businesses can use AI.

© One of the three Pepper robots at the Heider College of Business.



"This is a big advantage for our students, by the way, because what really sets them apart is their ability to generate smart ideas and their understanding of how to use AI to the fullest extent."

Gerhart says the word "applied" best represents the business school's approach to AI.

"We are teaching students to enter the business world, so we want them to understand how these tools can best be used," she says. "It's not just coding that must be understood. We want all our business students, and students across campus, to understand how they can use AI: 'I am a whatever major, how is this technology applicable to me?'"

USING AI IN MEDICINE

THE PEPPER ROBOTS, so emblematic of emerging AI automation, find their counterpart at the School of Medicine, where Waddah Al-Refaie, MD, chair of the Department of Surgery at Creighton and the CHI Health Clinic, is developing a remote voice-recognition device that will allow postoperative patients recovering at home to maintain their medicine

schedules and receive medical advice.

Comparing the concept to Amazon's popular Alexa device, Al-Refaie envisions patients benefiting from immediate and accurate information specifically tailored to their condition. Building such technology is a long process, and Al-Refaie only recently obtained permission from an FDA Institutional Review Board to move ahead with the project.

"We're still setting up the platform for the 'Alexa' in terms of voice recognition, how to gather the information and how to educate the surgeon and the team to use it," he says. "Currently, we are discussing how to have AI ask questions of the patients."

He anticipates that program enrollment will begin in the late spring or early summer.

On Creighton's Phoenix campus, 1,300 miles from the University's historic home in Omaha, Manuel Cevallos, MD, is also pushing the boundaries of AI. An assistant professor in the Department of Medical Education, Cevallos is developing TAKAI, which is the acronym for an AI program he has dubbed "Teaching Anatomy with Artificial Intelligence."



© Heider College of Business faculty members Natalie Gerhart, PhD, left, and Ali Dag, PhD, give commands to one of the Pepper robots.

AJ O'LINE

“Risk is involved, but AI is here to stay, and our students need to know the good and the bad, how it all works, and how we can use it positively.”

STEVEN FERNANDES, PHD

“The idea behind TAKAI is to combine the teaching of anatomy with artificial intelligence,” he says. “We will develop an application where we load information for students to access. When you ask a question of ChatGPT it gives an answer that is not necessarily correct. We are going to load correct information — the information that we want — into a ChatGPT-like program. That way, the answer will always be correct.”

The program will eventually recognize photographs and pictures, Cevallos says, allowing it to function like a super-textbook, where students may not only observe anatomy but ask questions and receive explanations.

A key partner in Cevallos’ effort is Steven Fernandes, PhD, assistant professor of computer science, design and journalism in the College of Arts and Sciences. Specializing in deep learning, computer vision and machine learning, Fernandes will use the information

that Cevallos and his colleagues provide to build TAKAI.

The successful deployment of TAKAI would be an example of AI benefiting humanity, Fernandes says. While many others are possible, he warns troubling outcomes are also possible.

“There is always the possibility, when you develop something new, that people might use it in good or destructive ways,” he says. “It is essential that we have some regulatory guidelines. AI could be used to detect cancerous tumors in millions of images, a task that can be challenging for doctors due to the sheer volume and, of course, the limited availability of doctors.

“At the same time, these same AI algorithms could potentially be used in military applications, such as altering the trajectory of a missile, which could lead to unintended damage. While risk is involved, AI is here to stay. It is essential

for our students to understand both its benefits and drawbacks, how it operates, and how we can harness it for positive outcomes.

“These are key aspects of our focus. Remaining ignorant is not a viable option.”

AI AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

UNDERSTANDING RIGHT AND WRONG has, of course, always been a critical element of Creighton’s Jesuit, Catholic education, and the special challenges posed by the development of AI has birthed concerns across Creighton’s pedagogy about how universal access to AI will impact learning.

Jacob Rump, PhD, associate professor of philosophy, says the increasing role played by artificial intelligence raises questions of ethical behavior on the part of students who may be tempted to let it write their papers, but also for educators, who must help their students learn.

“If students rely too much on artificial intelligence instead of developing skills related to critical thinking and reasoning, then in a couple of years they won’t have the skills they need to set themselves apart from generative AI,” he warns.

“So, if you are worried about technology taking your job, then maybe you should try to make yourself the kind of person who can do things that technology can’t. The more you rely on AI, the less you are going to develop those skills.

“Sometimes I tell my students that studying philosophy is about learning how not to be robots, but if they allow a robot to turn in their non-robot homework, they very soon will not be very good at not being a robot.”

Artificial intelligence is not human intelligence, Rump says. AI is indifferent to ethical concerns.

“I think there are some really good philosophical ideas for resisting the idea that artificial intelligence is intelligence, or at least that it is like human intelligence,” he says. “One of the biggest, in my view, is that we as intelligent beings are embodied beings. We have bodies,

we have feelings and experiences. Not just that we have emotions, but we feel.

“Aristotle talks about righteous indignation. You see an injustice, and you feel it. It is not clear to me how artificial intelligence could do that. This is why the humanities are going to become more and more important as AI advances. Understanding what it means to be human is our bread and butter in the humanities, and that is not an issue that society can afford to ignore.”

Guy McHendry, PhD, associate professor of communication studies, wrestles with many of the same questions. It is important, he says, that students understand how AI works, how this seemingly magical technology is just a form of computing, a tool that can help them succeed or get them in trouble.

“How to use it ethically in a way that doesn’t encourage them to cut corners and get into trouble not just in their classes but, later, in their professions,” is a big issue, McHendry

says. “There have been stories already where a lawyer used ChatGPT to cite case law that ChatGPT just made up.

“There are instances where people have tried to use this to do their job and without knowing divulged proprietary company information. So, students need to know what AI is, how it works right now, how to adapt as it changes, and how ethically to use it.”

Given the power and pervasiveness of AI, it is unrealistic to simply forbid its use, McHendry says. The key is to teach its capabilities but also its boundaries and its limits.

“I was talking about that recently in class,” he says. “My students can use it with permission, but they must ask, and we must talk about ethical use.

“I’ve seen students let it write for them, and it just produces bad writing. It’s not their voice. It sounds inhuman. It can create approximations, but it doesn’t sound authentic, and authenticity is very important at Creighton.”



AJ O'LINE



AN APP FOR ANATOMY

Manuel Cevallos, MD, is developing TAKAI, which is the acronym for an AI program he has dubbed “Teaching Anatomy with Artificial Intelligence.” Cevallos, assistant professor in the Department of Medical Education on the Phoenix campus, is working with Steven Fernandes, PhD, assistant professor of computer science, design and journalism in the College of Arts and Sciences in Omaha, on the app.



Meeting a Need

BY MICAH MERTES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AJ OLNES, BA'19

A Creighton donor-funded grant program has helped to create a dozen startup businesses in refugee camps in Kenya and Malawi.

More than 8,000 miles from the University's Omaha campus, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, walked into a chicken coop in the Kakuma refugee camp of northwest Kenya to learn the finer points of raising poultry and selling eggs.

These 70 chickens provide a living for Abraham, a 28-year-old Sudanese native and the owner of Hong Kong Poultry Farm. (Hong Kong is a neighborhood in the Kakuma camp.) The chickens' eggs — which go for 15 Kenyan shillings (or about 10 cents) a piece — offer a valuable resource to Abraham's food-insecure community.

"These eggs are fertile and organic and also very nutritious," he says. "We believe this will solve the problem of nutrition. Although not for everybody, even if two or three families can buy eggs every day, we believe that a problem is solved."

Hong Kong Poultry Farm is one of a dozen businesses to be funded through the Creighton Innovation Grants awarded in 2023. The grant program was established by Creighton donors to support startup businesses in African refugee camps.

All grant recipients are students or graduates of Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL), a program that has provided online higher education courses to individuals in refugee camps around the world since 2010. Along with other members of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, Creighton faculty members teach JWL students thousands of miles from campus.



© Abraham, owner of Hong Kong Poultry Farm in Kakuma, Kenya, where the eggs his chickens produce (above) provide a valuable resource to his food-insecure community.



© Dominic, left, owner of Kakuma Social AgriVentures, tells Fr. Hendrickson about his greenhouse business.

This winter, Fr. Hendrickson led a Creighton delegation of University staff and alumni to see the progress of the businesses in Kakuma and the Dzaleka camp (in Malawi). Besides Abraham's chicken farm, the businesses include a bakery, a soap company, two greenhouses and a restaurant named the Bluejays Cafeteria. The business owners come from a wide variety of African countries.

"It's just incredible to see these refugees, our students in many ways, taking what they've learned in the classrooms and implementing it in these really terrific projects," says Fr. Hendrickson, who has been to the area four times, having also lived in Tanzania for a year. "The students are creating sustainability and revenue and other kinds of investments in their lives and the community around them."

The Kakuma Refugee Camp was established in 1992 following the arrival of the "Lost Boys of Sudan." The camp and the Kalobeyi Integrated Settlement have a population of about 250,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers. More than 50,000 refugees live in the Dzaleka camp.

In both camps, the Creighton grants — ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000 — go a long way.

"For the JWL students," says Melvin Kiruja, a JWL

academic manager in Kakuma, "they make their hopes and dreams come alive.

"The students have entrepreneurial skills they learned within their JWL courses, and (with the grant support) they are now able to implement them in a business that is beneficial to both them and the community at large."

Kiruja's JWL colleague in the Dzaleka camp, Wongani Banda, says the opportunities presented to the students allow them to "go out into the community, spread hope and help others."

And feed others. At the Innovation Grant-funded Bluejays Cafeteria, owners Deo and Sarah, both from Uganda, cater to their fellow students on the JWL campus.

"We serve a need," Sarah says. "Students would stay at school without eating or they would walk long distances to get food elsewhere. So there was a need for them to get something on campus. And because we had the skills in catering, we thought it would be a good opportunity to do that specific business."

On an average day, Bluejays Cafeteria serves tea and chapati (a flaky, chewy flatbread popular in East Africa) to about 40 customers. Deo says they plan to continue expanding, reaching out to several organizations and providing outside catering services.



© Sarah, left, and Deo, owners of the Bluejays Cafeteria, located on the JWL campus in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

Other members of the Creighton delegation to the Africa refugee camps included the Rev. Nicholas Santos, SJ, PhD, associate professor in the Heider College of Business and rector of Creighton's Jesuit community, and Peter Goeckner, BA'17, and Erik Sheagren, BS'18, alumni with international service experience who were invited by Fr. Hendrickson.

"The populations in the camps," Fr. Santos says, "are the poorest of the poor. They have no identity. No status. It's really heartening that there have been donors who have stepped up to support JWL and to support some of these Innovation Grants.

"These businesses demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit of the refugees, who, in spite of many conditions they are faced with, are able to have a sense of agency and a sense of self-worth in what they are doing."

Sheagren says he found the ingenuity of the Innovation Grant projects to be endlessly inspiring.

"One of the projects we saw in the Dzaleka camp is called Alpha Techverse," he says. "JWL students John and Emmanuel (from Rwanda) created a school to give people basic skills in digital literacy, such as graphic design, web design and coding. Once they teach them, they are hoping to help them get contract work with companies in other countries.

"And they're doing all of this in a facility that doesn't even have electricity. They're using a neighbor's generator to power the school. What these students are achieving is remarkable."

One of the core principles of a Jesuit education, Sheagren says, "is being a person for and with others. Nowhere have I seen an implementation of that vision more concretely than here."

The Innovation Grants program is as Creighton as it gets, Goeckner says.

"It's Creighton in a nutshell. It's understanding the realities of this world. It's connecting with others across the globe. It's assisting those in need. It's providing dignity through education and empowerment, and it's being a person for and with others.

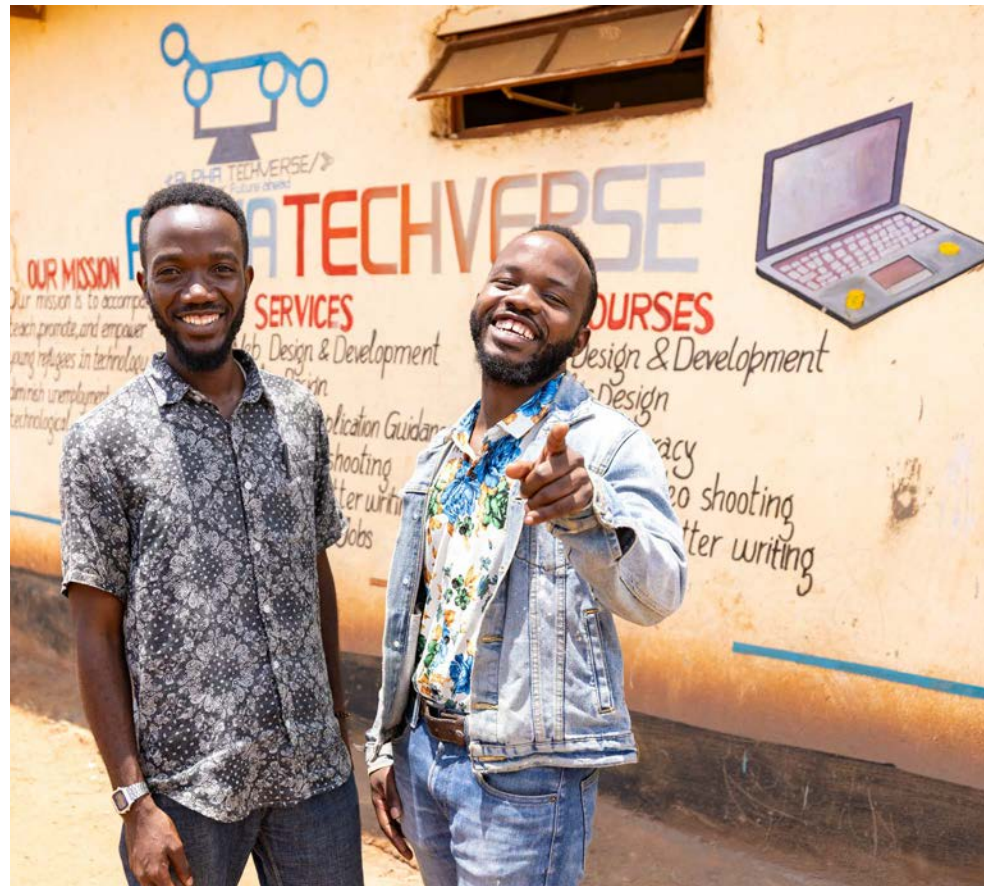
"And it's been beautiful to see."

With every project, Goeckner says, the JWL students are fulfilling the community's most essential needs.

Through the business Shanab Detergent, Sadia (from South Sudan) makes solid and liquid soap in Kakuma.

Through their Life Building Foundation, Prince and Esther (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) raise pigs, provide well water and empower girls in Dzaleka through education and skills training.

Through Kakuma Social AgriVentures and a greenhouse in Dzaleka, Dominic (from South Sudan), Elvis (from Zimbabwe) and Edith (from Rwanda) produce



© Above: Alpha Techverse owners John, left, and Emmanuel in Dzaleka.

© Top right: Sadia, owner of the Kakuma soapmaking business Shanab Detergent.

© Bottom left: Esther, left, and Prince, owners of the Life Building Foundation.

© Bottom right: The Jesuit Worldwide Learning campus in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

okra, kale and other highly nutritious vegetables for the community.

"Our very biggest ambition is to start something that has sustainability," says Edith. "That has been our dream. When we (received the grant from Creighton), that was the greatest achievement of our life."

With continued support from Creighton donors, the businesses now look to expand and form deeper connections in their communities. In nearly every case, the goal of the JWL students and graduates is to do more. To provide more food, more services, more education, more opportunities and, of course, more chickens.

Back at Hong Kong Poultry, Abraham sees great potential in his growing farm. With the purchase of an egg incubator, he says, he can expand his operation, achieve more autonomy and feed more people. He can foster the growth of "a dream I have been dreaming for the last three years.

"I want you to feel, the entire University, the donors, I want you to feel that we are so grateful, and we hope there is a possibility to support even more youths. Because there are many, many others like me who also have dreams."



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

BY Eugene Curtin

From Bolivia to Ukraine, two Creighton professors have built a reputation and expertise in international human rights and bring that knowledge and experience to the classroom



The advance of democracy in nations that just 50 years ago were dominated by political or military dictatorships is a bright spot in world affairs that Creighton professors are at the forefront of studying and encouraging.

Michael Kelly, JD, LL.M., professor of law, has built an international reputation in the field of human rights law, while Erika Moreno, PhD, chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, is a recognized expert on Latin American politics. In particular, she is an authority on how appointed or elected ombudsmen represent a bulwark against a resurgence of authoritarianism throughout Latin America.

Their expertise is a boon to Creighton students whose awareness of global affairs is kept current and relevant in the face of a rapidly changing world.

“Human rights, either in physical space or digital space, are essential to our well-being,” Kelly says. “If we expect our students to answer the Jesuit call to make life better for people by defending rights and pursuing justice, then we must lead by example.”

“Last year, after defending internet human rights at a conference in Kyoto, Japan, and then wartime human rights at a conference in Lviv, Ukraine, I brought those experiences to the classroom, not to task my students with traveling half a world away into a war zone but to demonstrate that you must answer the call that inspires you to action.”

“That’s exactly what St. Ignatius demonstrated for all of us. If you can have a positive impact as a force for good, do it, and maybe set the world on fire a little bit along the way.”

Moreno’s focus on Latin America, though far from the frozen tundra of Russia and Ukraine, is close in spirit to Kelly’s efforts to ensure that human rights prevail in formerly authoritarian regimes.

Through her contributions to academic publications Moreno's scholarly interest in democratic accountability enhances awareness of the transition from autocracy to democracy.

"A lot of the conversation in the developing world is that many elected officials don't really do what they are supposed to do," Moreno says. "Demagogues are elected who block each other, generating gridlock. So, folks begin asking, 'Who is actually running the show?'"

The advent of the ombudsman, an office that exists now in most Latin American nations, was meant to address that question. Ombudsmen are envisioned as standing above party politics. Invested with the power to investigate, to publicize and, as

"A lot of the conversation in the developing world is that many elected officials don't really do what they are supposed to do."

ERIKA MORENO, PHD
Chair of Political Science and International Relations



DAVE WEAVER

Moreno puts it, "to name and shame," they are not judicial or law enforcement bodies endowed with the power to punish. They are, however, respected public voices whose conclusions carry weight.

Sometimes they are elected by legislatures, sometimes appointed by presidents. In some nations their roles are written into law, in others enshrined in constitutions. Although the respect granted the office can vary according to its constitutional standing, Moreno says the office of the ombudsman has proved universally effective not just by publicizing the excesses of elected bodies but also by addressing complaints from individual citizens about everyday matters such as pensions and water quality.

The greatest of these ombudsmen was Bolivia's Ana María Romero de Campero, Moreno says, who proved so effective and achieved so high a reputation that a plaza in the capital city of La Paz — Plaza Ana María Romero de Campero — was dedicated to her memory in 2023.

"People said she should run for president she was so effective," Moreno says. "In the early 2000s in Bolivia when there was a series of presidential crises — presidents in some cases fleeing the presidential palace — the legislature was not able to function, the judicial branch was incredibly slow and not necessarily autonomous of the political will, and so she played an incredibly important role in navigating some very, very tricky political terrain."

Tricky political terrain is always a challenge for societies transitioning from authoritarianism to rule-of-law democracy, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the effort to preserve human rights in cyberspace, and, more terrestrially, in nations such as Ukraine that strive to establish identities separate from neighboring powers such as Russia.

Both these domains are Kelly's focus, which has led to international involvement with academic bodies and with the United Nations.

Last October, Kelly presented his research to the United Nations' internet Governance Forum meeting in Kyoto, Japan. His research took all 30 of the rights and freedoms embodied in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights — such as freedoms of speech, assembly and religion — and mapped them to the internet to create a guide as to how those liberties extend to online lives.

That new matrix adds to Kelly's prominence in international law and reflects his role as co-chair of the American Bar Association's Internet Governance Task Force.

"A lot has changed since the internet started," Kelly says. "It really has taken on a life of its own. A third of people are online constantly, and well over 81% of people pop in and out of the internet all day long."

"So, if we are spending an increasing amount of our lifetime in digital space, then the question becomes, what rights follow us into that space?"

The rise of Big Tech has raised fundamental questions of liberty, Kelly says, as private companies increasingly supplant elected governments in deciding what liberties will be protected.



© Michael Kelly at Ivan Franko University Law School in Lviv, Ukraine, participating in a bilateral summit between the American Society of International Law and the Ukrainian International Law Association on Human Rights Day (Dec. 9). His discussion concerned seizing frozen Russian corporate assets.

"I brought those experiences to the classroom not to task my students with traveling half a world away into a war zone but to demonstrate that you must answer the call that inspires you to action."

MICHAEL KELLY, JD, LL.M.
Professor of Law

"Government control is really the first casualty of moving from physical space to digital space," Kelly says. "Then there is the question of whether we use humans or algorithms to police cyberspace, or perhaps use AI. Artificial intelligence is a sharp sword that can be used to guarantee liberties, but the other side of that sword is just as sharp. China can use AI to repress you much more effectively than with algorithms. Authoritarian regimes are going to use it in a completely other direction."

Kelly's presence at the Kyoto conference and his presence at the Ukraine conference just days later illustrate his strong reputation in the field of international law.

The fate of Ukraine as it battles an expansionist Russia will say much about the future of that region, Kelly says. Ukraine is something of a bellwether since it alone among the republics of the former Soviet Union is trying to build a law-based democracy despite an autocratic history, he says.

"When the Soviet Union ended in 1991 the world got 15 new states, but only Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were sustainable democracies," Kelly says. "The reason those three succeeded in emerging as democracies is because they pre-existed the Soviet Union with a rule-of-law platform. That was embedded in who they were and how they ran things, so they have been able to reclaim that tradition."

"The other 12 nations never had that. Russia was a democracy

for about a weekend under Boris Yeltsin and then it all fell apart. Why? Russia was never a rule-of-law society, and it isn't today. So, its democracy was not sustainable."

Ukraine, Kelly says, is the only one of the former Soviet republics that is eager to jettison its authoritarian past, and, while that effort has moved in fits and starts, the Russian invasion and a desire to join the European Union have strengthened efforts to root out judicial and financial corruption.

"Three things emerged for Ukraine from this invasion," Kelly says. "I think they can be described as resistance, resilience and resurrection. The resistance component is this David and Goliath war where you have a relatively small country fighting off the world's largest nuclear power and two years later is still resisting."

He saw the resilience component at a Kiev hospital where injured children were fitted with prosthetic limbs. Known simply as "Unbroken," the hospital is a beneficiary of international funds.

The resurrection component is a big one, he says. The World Bank estimates that the rebuilding of Ukraine will cost more than \$410 billion, and Kelly would like to see frozen Russian assets help fund that project.

"Resistance, resilience and resurrection encapsulate what they are facing and what my trip to Ukraine was about," he says. "We've got to make sure that foreign aid continues to help this country succeed."

Opening Doors for Refugees

BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA'74

THE WORD "REFUGEE" IS HEARD so often today that it is easy to become numb to the human suffering and trauma it embodies.

It means fleeing home and community because of grave danger, crossing borders at great peril, often living in an overcrowded camp in a different land, and then, ultimately, if one is fortunate, beginning a new life in a foreign country but with few belongings, no source of income, and an unfamiliar language and customs.

The Creighton community's involvement with the refugee experience – on and off its campuses and in its classrooms and clinics – is multifaceted and growing. These pages offer a glimpse of some of the ways Creighton students, faculty, staff and alumni are fulfilling one of the Jesuits' Universal Apostolic Preferences by being committed to caring for migrants, displaced persons, refugees and victims of wars.

PHARMACY STUDENT WANTS TO 'BE THE CHANGE'

FOR OMAIMA AL GARAAWI, a pharmacy student on Creighton's Phoenix campus, the refugee experience is both personal and inspirational. The difficulties she and her family faced escaping Iraq when she was 15 drastically altered her life. They are also shaping her future as a healthcare professional.

"Our decision to leave Iraq was driven by the harsh realities of living in a conflict zone," AL Garaawi says. "The fear of bombings, attacks and the general instability made everyday life a struggle.

"When I was in elementary school, a car bomb exploded near my school. The goal was to kill as many children as possible. Lucky for me, I was still in my classroom.

"I remember all the windows shattered on top of our heads. My best friend got injured and a small piece of glass went inside her beautiful green eyes. I still remember the fear we all faced that day."

The family applied for asylum in the U.S. in 2009, and they arrived in Phoenix four years later after asylum was granted.

"Lucky for us, we had friends who lived in Phoenix. We were able to contact them, and they picked us up from the airport. Not many families are that fortunate to know people in the United States. Many families go to refugee camps and go from there.

"The most difficult aspect of the choice to leave was the emotional toll," AL Garaawi says. "Leaving behind our home, friends and the life we once knew was a heartbreaking decision. The uncertainty of the future and the challenges of starting anew in a foreign land added to the difficulty."

She says she most missed the sense of belonging and "the feeling of being rooted in a place with a shared history and culture.

"The decision to leave was complex, driven by our pursuit of safety and a better future, but it came at the cost of leaving behind a significant part of our lives."

One of those she left behind was her godfather, who later was killed in a terrorist bombing of the carpet-weaving factory where he worked. Despite this great loss, her godfather's advice inspires and shapes her educational and professional journey.

He advised her to "Be the change." He

emphasized the importance of raising awareness and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

"His words served as a guiding light, influencing my decision to pursue pharmacy as a means to contribute to healthcare and bring about positive change."

Her interest in healthcare grew during her family's refugee journey as she witnessed families, especially women and children, struggling to access basic health services. The lack of resources and challenging circumstances made it difficult to receive proper medical attention, highlighting the disparities in access.

One way she has combined her interest in healthcare with her desire to help others is through the American Dream Academy, an initiative to empower people, including refugees, by providing resources and guidance on education and employment opportunities.

She volunteered as a translator and panelist at weekend workshops and continues to serve as a mentor to Syrian high school students. "The American Dream Academy gave me a platform to share my experiences and insights, particularly in the field of pharmacy, with other refugees," AL Garaawi says.

PROFESSOR 'BLESSED' TO CARE FOR REFUGEES

NAUREEN RAFIQ, MD, associate professor in the School of Medicine, feels that same calling. But addressing the health and social needs of refugees wasn't something she envisioned when she dreamed of becoming a physician.

"I never thought of working with the refugee population," Rafiq says. "But when my Creighton residency program allowed me to work with refugees, I felt completely at ease to care for them because I could also see myself in some of the patients."

Rafiq leads medical residents in providing healthcare and screenings to refugees in Omaha. She also recently presented on the



© Creighton pharmacy student Oaima AL Garaawi at the Creighton Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix.



© Naureen Rafiq, MD, (right) and Farzad Effan, MD, (middle) a family medicine resident, assist patient Lah Say, a refugee from Burma, at the CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center - University Campus. Also pictured is interpreter Jonathan Bakyaw (far left).

in-person interpreters and diverse clinic staff members who speak many of the refugee languages. In addition to physical care, she adds, “We have also initiated many programs for mental and dental care. Our program is constantly evolving and looking for better ways to serve our patients.

“Evaluation of mental health and screening for depression and PTSD, with referral to the therapist, is our latest addition.”

Rafiq and AL Garaawi are just two members of the Creighton healthcare community who have found the University’s commitment to caring for those most in need to coincide with their own values.

As AL Garaawi puts it: “My personal experiences as a refugee fueled my passion for helping others facing similar challenges. I believe in the importance of providing support, guidance and resources to refugees as they navigate the complexities of starting a new life. It’s my way of giving back and making a positive impact on the lives of those who have faced adversity.

“I chose Creighton in Phoenix for its excellent pharmacy program, its commitment to community engagement, and because the school’s values align with my own.”

ALUMNUS CHAMPIONS IMMIGRATION LAW

LEAVING THEIR HOME COUNTRY of El Salvador was a “monumental decision” for the family of César Magaña Linares, JD’22. When he was 2 years old, he and his mother joined his father, who had been living in the U.S. His two older siblings stayed in El Salvador with a close aunt and followed later.

“For many families, the decision about bringing some children to the U.S. and not others can lead to bigger family problems, whereby children build resentment or disconnection,” Magaña says. “That did not happen to us. My family had a unified goal in eventually having us all be here with a better life.”

What does he most appreciate about being in the U.S.? “The answer, easily, is a high-quality education,” he says. After graduating from the

ENGAGING WITH THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY

“**ACCOMPANYING REFUGEES** is integral to our Jesuit, Catholic identity and mission,” says Becca Huju, BA’11, program manager for local community engagement at the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice (SCSJ) on the Omaha campus.

She adds that the Rev. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, the 28th superior general of the Society of Jesus and often considered the “second founder” of the Jesuits, named work with refugees a priority for the order and founded the international Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). “And Pope Francis calls on us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees,” she says.

Omaha is home to thousands of refugees from dozens of countries and Huju says students are frequently inspired by building relationships with the hard-working, resilient new community members.

“We have much to learn from our refugee neighbors, and together we work to create a more welcoming community. It’s a mutually beneficial experience for all involved.”

Volunteer and educational opportunities through the SCSJ are plentiful and include direct service, migration justice education, donation

drives, Service & Justice Trips, Faith & Justice Internships, partnering with JRS to advocate for refugees with legislators, and more.

For example, in the weekly semester-long 402 Service Program, students serve as conversation partners with refugees in the community learning English.

“They get to know people and learn about their lives and hopes for the future, and they build friendships. Students also find these cross-cultural experiences valuable for their own professional development, as it gives them skills to work with diverse populations in whatever future career they are pursuing.”

In another service program with the Immigrant Legal Center + Refugee Empowerment Center, Nebraska’s largest immigrant and refugee focused nonprofit that welcomed 425 refugees from around the world in 2023, SCSJ student volunteers help set up homes for refugee families by moving furniture, cleaning, etc.

The SCSJ also offers Refugee Community Orientation a few times each year, a six-hour program for faculty, staff and students. “Participants engage with the Jesuit commitment to accompany, serve and advocate for refugees through learning about, and interacting with, Omaha’s refugee community,” she says.

Participants visit a local agency that serves the refugee community, learn about refugee healthcare needs, help in a naturalization class, or hear a story from a refugee while enjoying lunch from a refugee-owned restaurant.

A new program this year, Mini Refugee Community Orientations, involves the SCSJ partnering with psychology and nursing professors to present in classrooms and invite students to reflect, engage in social analysis and participate in advocacy opportunities.

Creighton staff also have been directly involved with helping newly arrived refugees in the Omaha community through the University’s donation of used furniture.

Hundreds of pieces that furnished the decommissioned Kiewit and Gallagher residence halls were evaluated, prepared, removed and delivered to local organizations the Furniture Project and Restoring Dignity.

Adam Stafford, BA’03, MS’08, director of Housing and Auxiliary Services, says more than 1,500 pieces from Kiewit Hall were donated in 2023, including mattresses, beds, desks and dressers. “Our beds are particularly needed by these organizations, and we’ve provided over 600 beds.”

Are you interested in helping refugees in your community? Becca Huju, BA’11, says alumni interested in getting involved with refugee efforts could participate in the national virtual JRS Advocacy Day annually. She also suggests contacting local refugee resettlement agencies for volunteer opportunities that include home set up, English classes, mentorship, sponsorship of families and more. Alumni who are employers or work in hiring could consider hiring refugees and offering professional opportunities and mentorship.

topic at the Institute for Population Health Symposium held at Creighton in October 2023.

The Department of Family Medicine in the School of Medicine “has had the privilege to care for refugee families since 2008,” Rafiq says, adding that refugee resettlement to the U.S. is traditionally offered to “the most vulnerable cases, including women and children at risk, women heads of households, the elderly, survivors of violence and torture and those with acute medical needs.”

A Pakistani American, she came to the U.S. after graduating from medical school and getting married. “Pakistan lacked the specialty of family medicine at that time, and America gave me the perfect opportunity to be a family physician,” she says. “I completed my residency at Creighton and was offered the position to stay here as faculty. I interviewed at many other places, but wherever I went, I would say, ‘This is a good program, but this is not Creighton.’”

For the last 17 years, caring for refugees as part of the residency clinic has been a

major part of the healthcare she delivers.

“I feel blessed to be part of refugee care. There are about 43 languages that are spoken in our clinic and the patients are from so many parts of the world, including Burma, Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine and more.

“They are scared and worried, harboring dreams of a free and fair world where they can live peacefully. Health literacy is one of the most important aspects of their lives that was neglected while they lived in refugee camps.”

She was particularly touched by an Afghan family recently. “A dad brought his seven kids, six girls and a boy, for physicals. While we were talking, I asked what grades the children were in and the dad looked at me with tears and said, ‘I am here, doctor, because I want my girls to get an education as much as they want. They did not go to school back home. I want to see them become doctors like you one day.’”

Rafiq says the clinic has steadily grown over the years and offers all services under one roof,



© Creighton students Zach Onyszchuk, left, and Addy Lawse help move furniture into an apartment for a refugee family as part of SCSJ programming.



DAVE WEAVER



LISA HELFERT



ABIOLA KOSOKO



School of Law in 2022, Magaña began his career in immigration law.

“My family comes from a rural area with a barebones education system. By all standards, we were considered *campesinos* or ‘people of the field,’ and even that is a misnomer because the area we are from is a rainforest between several hills and mountains. A decent education, let alone a quality education, is reserved for people who come from a higher status and live in metropolitan areas.”

Magaña has family in his hometown who, to this day, he says are “astonished that someone from our rural village would have engaged in competitive speech and debate in high school, college, and then took those skills into law school and went on to become a lawyer.”

Magaña is an attorney at the Immigrant Legal Center + Refugee Empowerment Center in Omaha, a job he feels uniquely called to do.

“I am deeply moved by the immigrant experience,” he says. “I have the mental fortitude to be there for others when they have experienced immigrant trauma, and I have the cultural competence to do so in an approachable and ethical manner.

“When I mix that with my interest in American law, then I would find it disgraceful to not be an immigration lawyer. I truly believe this is my calling and where I am meant to be in the world.”

Attaining his legal education at Creighton was especially meaningful.

“Ignatian spirituality at Creighton helped me identify moral and cosmic reasons to not give up on the goals I set. I think I would have become an immigration lawyer somehow, some way. But Creighton Law helped me do so with a special focus on ‘finding God in all people, things and places.’”

‘FLEEING IRAQ SHAPED MY ENTIRE COMPASS’

NIBRAS MAZIN KHUDAÏDA BASITKEY, BSBA'22, was only 16 when her life as she knew it in Iraq came to an abrupt end. Islamic State fighters were descending upon her village and she and her family fled north, taking no belongings but what they were wearing.

They eventually immigrated to Lincoln, Nebraska; she finished high school, enrolled at Creighton in the Heider College of Business and in 2021 became a U.S. citizen.

“Witnessing the hardships faced by refugees, especially women, ignited a passion in me to fight for their fundamental rights.”

NIBRAS MAZIN KHUDAÏDA BASITKEY, BSBA'22

Her goal was to “make things better for students back home,” driven by her desire to see everyone have the opportunities she had in the U.S.

Her family had always prized education, although attending school as a woman in Iraq was especially challenging. “People didn’t believe that women should go to school,” she notes, remembering one teacher who told her she should “stay in the kitchen.”

People in her village constantly questioned her family for sending her to school, but her father, a strong advocate for education, insisted she go.

After she graduated from Creighton with her business degree, Basitkey took a position with the Atlantic Council, a nonpartisan international development organization, and moved to Washington, D.C. She is currently an assistant director, focusing on women’s entrepreneurship and developing the overall Middle East economy.

“Fleeing Iraq as a refugee wasn’t just a chapter in my life — it shaped my entire compass,” she says today. “Witnessing the hardships faced by refugees, especially women, ignited a passion in me to fight for their fundamental rights.

“And my experiences with limited education and cultural restrictions in Iraq fuel my advocacy for girls’ education,” Basitkey says. “I work in a field where I am able to empower women entrepreneurs in the region through education, mentorship and training, so they can contribute to the society and economy as a whole, for the betterment of all.”

A powerful experience for her was returning to Iraq with her father seven years after leaving: “The conflict was over in our area and our towns were liberated by then.” However, many of the people who had lived there were gone.

“Many houses were destroyed after the

battle with ISIS in Mosul and many more were completely emptied. Even though it was great to visit home, it wasn’t as it used to be. I want to try to make it home a few times a year to see my friends and loved ones.”

CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR OTHERS

BORN IN SOUTH SUDAN, growing up in North Omaha and graduating from the Heider College of Business, Jacob Idra, BSBA'22, has merged his life experiences and educational preparation to create a better future for others.

He started ROSS (Republic of South Sudan) Leaders while still in college. Today the national nonprofit, headquartered in Omaha, serves youth by cultivating community through multifaceted, community-based education, health and wellness, and cultural engagement programs. He serves as founder and executive director.

“Knowing the importance of the work we were doing, I decided to use my business knowledge in the nonprofit space instead of taking the traditional route,” Idra says.

“We were a group of South Sudanese college students and young professionals who felt South Sudanese youth in Omaha were underserved and didn’t have the support nor the resources they needed to reach their goals.”

Many of the youth ROSS Leaders serves come from immigrant households, with parents who are working hard to provide for the family, “and they find themselves on an island, going through major life challenges or achievements themselves.

“Since most staff members came from that reality, we understand the difference a mentor or a group of like-minded peers can make. We’ve created a space where our students are

“What can we learn by reflecting? How do we make sure this never happens again? How do we serve others to create an environment where opinions, thoughts, arguments, discussions, conversations lead to solutions rather than thousands of lost lives and millions displaced?”

ZORAN GRABOVAC, EDD'22

supported by people who share and understand their struggles and cultural background.”

He says the organization is moving away from using “refugee” to describe its students or families. “From our perspective as immigrants, yes, we are children of refugees, but now we are United States citizens. We prefer to use terms such as South Sudanese-American or South Sudanese-African community members.”

ROSS Leaders works relentlessly to ensure students’ futures aren’t hindered because of their financial limitations, and that, instead, “They are uplifted and recognized for the talents and creativity they contribute to the world,” Idra says.

“As mentors, coaches, big brothers and big sisters, we try to make sure our students are prepared for the opportunities life presents to them. That also means making sure we build the right support systems to overcome life’s challenges when they arise as well.”

He will never forget a conversation he had with a community supporter who told him, “It’s like Omaha doesn’t see you guys. You have 20,000 people here, invisible in plain sight.”

“After hearing that,” Idra says, “I made a promise to myself that we would be seen.”

He is especially pleased that many other South Sudanese leaders across the country have expanded the ROSS Leaders mission in their communities, making it unique to their cities and the students they serve.

“There are so many young, motivated, intelligent and resilient South Sudanese leaders who are making monumental moves in their respective communities, and ROSS Leaders has become the platform that keeps us all connected.”

A LESSON IN FORGIVENESS

ZORAN GRABOVAC, EDD'22, was playing happily in his native Bosnia and Herzegovina when long-simmering ethnic tensions tore his childhood apart.

At 9 years old, it was a surreal experience. Having moved with his family in 1993 from his hometown of Trebinje to Serbia, where his father was a professional soccer player and his mother worked in hospitality, life was carefree, consisting of school, neighborhood football fields (European ones), tree-climbing and all the mischief of a happy childhood.

The Yugoslavian civil war had prompted the move to Serbia, and when his parents saw

that things were not improving, they made the difficult decision to move to the U.S. He and his family eventually landed safely in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1998. Today he is a global privacy manager with John Deere, the agricultural machinery and technology organization.

When he was young, Grabovac’s mother urged him to forgive those who spoke evil, even those wishing him death. Their animus was formed by a background of hate and resentment, she said, and it is difficult to overcome such historical influences.

He says he later realized that most people impacted directly by the Yugoslavian conflict fell into three categories: Those who forgot and moved on; those who continued to harbor fear, resentment and anger; and those who wondered what lessons could be learned.

Curiosity, Grabovac says, yields the best fruit.

“What insights can we draw?” he says.

“What can we learn by reflecting? How do we make sure this never happens again? How do we serve others to create an environment where opinions, thoughts, arguments, discussions, conversations lead to solutions rather than thousands of lost lives and millions displaced?”

The importance of finding common ground led Grabovac to pursue a doctorate in interdisciplinary leadership from Creighton, where he could join professionals from around the world in gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of leadership and how to apply that to critical global issues. He graduated with his EdD degree in 2022.

He received the Outstanding Dissertation Award for “Examining the Relationship Between Mental Toughness and Openness to Diversity,” which he is hoping to publish.

His study proposes cultivating mental toughness and openness to diversity and different worldviews in the workplace, schools and other areas of life. “Mental toughness training may prove to be a key ingredient to support increased openness to diversity, so people can constructively work and live with others who are different from them and have divergent ideas,” Grabovac says.

“These skills are foundational to living a healthy and happy life,” he adds, “helping people explore emotions and become aware of how our past experiences shape our emotions, thoughts and actions, and impact us and others around us. They also help us grow and persevere through challenges and ultimately gain confidence.”

PADILLA PRESENTS AT GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

DECADES-LONG RESEARCH on refugee issues took Creighton’s René Padilla, PhD, vice provost for Global Engagement, to Geneva, Switzerland, late last year to present at the Global Refugee Forum.

Padilla’s interest in the plight of refugees began in the early 1990s, documenting disabilities sustained by political prisoners in Latin America for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He then became part of a special evidence review team organized by Madeleine Albright, then-U.S. ambassador to the UN, to analyze data coming out of the civil war in Rwanda.

He came to Creighton in June 1994 after the team finalized its review, which indicated widespread violence between ethnic groups in Central Africa, as evidenced by sharp increases in disabilities such as severe psychological trauma and physical disfigurement or maiming.

“By July of that year additional evidence showed the violence between groups had accelerated to outright genocide, and in less than three months more than 1 million Tutsi were dead and over 2 million had left Rwanda to seek refuge in neighboring countries,” Padilla says.

Although Rwandan refugees didn’t immediately arrive in the U.S., Padilla says he became aware of refugees from other war-torn regions settling in Nebraska.

Because he was teaching courses on mental and community-based health in Creighton’s occupational therapy program, Padilla began collaborating with schools and healthcare and nonprofit organizations on addressing psychological distress and challenges caused by forced migration, displacement or relocation.

In 1999, while studying for his PhD at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he learned firsthand from Yazidi refugees from Iraq about the depth and long-term impact of such trauma.

“They introduced me to something I had not yet truly considered — deep pain and guilt over leaving behind relatives and friends with disabilities. They had hoped their enemies would have mercy, but they learned that rarely was the case, and they often had no idea what had happened with their loved ones,” he says.



COLIN CONCES

Limited mobility, lack of accessible transportation and inadequate infrastructure make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to flee quickly and safely. Scarce resources, including medical care and humanitarian aid, also disproportionately affect people with disabilities, Padilla says.

In 2014, Padilla was accepted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Consultant Roster to work on assessing workforce integration programs for people with disabilities across the world. He has focused mostly on countries where there has been a significant displacement because of war, climate disasters, etc. He was invited to be a member of the UNDP’s Civil Society Advisory Committee in 2018 and has been reappointed for a second five-year term.

“One of the main issues refugees and forcibly displaced persons with disabilities face is that a small fraction of the aid intended actually reaches them,” Padilla says. “Direct and indirect foreign aid across the world each year is around \$300 billion, but it is chipped away through bureaucracy and corruption so that only an estimated 30-50% reaches the intended recipients.”

Padilla attended a conference sponsored by the International Inequalities Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2019 and learned about the emerging field of humanitarian economics. He was awarded a nonresidential fellowship and grant to conduct research on conditional cash transfer

systems as potential vehicles to implement humanitarian aid that could meet immediate needs while also creating long-term opportunities for families and people with disabilities.

All of this led to a series of global collaborative projects Padilla was involved in, systematically reviewing humanitarian aid systems to determine which type works best.

“We have been able to show that specific conditional cash transfer arrangements are successful in getting about 70% of the aid to intended recipients, including people with disabilities. This is accomplished while simultaneously supporting governmental and non-governmental systems.”

Because of this work, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), specifically the Division of Resilience and Solutions, nominated Padilla to speak at the Global Refugee Forum to help country representatives consider how aid could be better implemented.

He presented his workshop, Enhancing Sustainable Humanitarian Chains to Guarantee a Healthy Environment in Refugee Settlements, in Geneva in December, at which time he also had an opportunity to speak one-on-one with nine different groups representing a wide variety of countries.

Going forward, Padilla and collaborators are finalizing several articles on humanitarian economics, and even a possible book, and he is hopeful of involving Creighton students and researchers.



IMPACT

Filling a Critical Need

Omahan Michelle Lucius' mouth hurt for three weeks before she sought care. When she finally did go to an urgent care clinic, they told her she had a tooth that needed to be pulled, but it was too close to the nerve for them to extract. She had a few options:

1. She could go to the emergency room, where she would likely wait for several hours to be seen and then be prescribed an antibiotic and potentially a painkiller until she could schedule a dental appointment.
2. She could go to an emergency dental service, which would cost her more than she could afford.
3. She could go to the After-hours Clinic — a service at Creighton's School of Dentistry offering acute tooth extractions two nights a week.

Lucius chose the third option. Within an hour, she was in a chair in the dental school's After-hours Clinic (which serves as the oral

surgery clinic during regular business hours). Dental student Dakota Baker found the pain — a carious lesion had broken a tooth down past the point of saving — and prepared the procedure.

A short while later, Baker — working with Peter Liang, BS'20, and their professor, Terry Lanphier, BS'78, DDS'82, MBA'10, chair of oral and maxillofacial surgery — had removed the tooth and sent Lucius on her way. Her bill was less than \$100. Elsewhere, simple or surgical extractions can cost two to five times that.

"Our family is strapped for time and money," Lucius says, "so it was nice to find a place that was convenient and inexpensive and could give me everything I needed in one evening. In one hour, actually. I'm so grateful this place exists."

At the School of Dentistry's After-hours Clinic — which opened last summer — fourth-year dental students extract (and sometimes save) the teeth of patients in pain.

Two nights a week, a trio of students, a group of faculty and staff, and a University of Nebraska Medical Center oral and maxillofacial surgery resident run the After-hours Clinic. The clinic takes about 10 referrals, appointments or walk-ins each night, though that number grows as word of the clinic spreads throughout Omaha emergency rooms and urgent care clinics.

An earlier iteration of the clinic launched in 2019 with the support of local philanthropic organizations the Lozier Foundation, the

© Dental faculty member Terry Lanphier, BS'78, DDS'82, MBA'10, left, monitors the work of fourth-year dental students Dakota Baker, middle, and Peter Liang, BS'20, as they extract a tooth from Michelle Lucius.

Willa D. Seeman Charitable Fund and the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation. When the After-hours Clinic went on hiatus during the pandemic, it gave the dental school a chance to refine the clinic's staffing and operations. Now, thanks to community health improvement funds from UnitedHealthcare, the clinic looks to continue expanding its scope of service.

"We never turn away anyone in pain," says Joseph Franco, BA'80, DDS'84, the School of Dentistry's associate dean of clinical services. "If they don't have the money, we're still treating them and, in the process, offering our students a great real-world opportunity."

Fourth-year dental student Yousef Ashour, BS'20, says the amount of experience he's getting at the clinic is significant. "Students at most other dental schools aren't doing what we're doing," Ashour says. "But at Creighton, we're the ones working alongside our awesome professors and delivering the excellent quality of care Creighton's dental clinic is known for. There are so many opportunities to serve here."

— 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.

69 Thomas J. Greco, BSBA, Duncanville, Texas, was named Master Model Railroader No. 744 by the National Model Railroad Association in August 2023. This program, which began in the early 1960s, emphasizes the development of a modeler's skills as well as service to the hobby of model railroading.

75 Robert C. Burdett, MBA, Omaha, published five books during 2023, including *A Catholic Prays Scripture: And Tips for How You Can Too*. The three other books in this four-volume series are subtitled: *Concerning the Sacraments, Concerning Some Biblical Characters and Concerning God's "Word" and the "Future."* The other book published in 2023 was *BS3: Etcetera*, an eclectic collection of fiction and nonfiction.

76 Daniel E. Monnat, JD, Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered, was again recognized on the Top 100 List of Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers for 2023. He has been among the overall Top 100 of Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers for 18 years.

82 Dr. Michael M. Marushack, BS, Wilmington, North Carolina, became president of the North Carolina Orthopedic Association. In addition, he is a member of the board of directors of EmergeOrtho, the country's sixth largest orthopedic group, and he practices in Wilmington. Marushack also serves on the North Carolina Board of Athletic Trainers Examination as a physician member.

83 W. Glenn Major, JD, Weston, Connecticut, joined the law firm Pullman & Comley as a member of the real estate practice.

84 Peter L. Theis, BA, Batavia, Illinois, director of human resources for Libertyville School District #70, was recently named the Herb Salinger National School Personnel Administrator of the Year by the American Association of School Personnel Administrators. The national award follows his being named the Illinois School Personnel Administrator of the Year last year.

87 Brian T. Grogan, BS, St. Paul, Minnesota, was re-elected to a three-year term as a member of the board of directors at the law firm Moss & Barnett in Minneapolis. Grogan serves as the firm's president and chief executive officer and is a member of the business law and communications practice groups.

88 Hon. Geoff C. Hall, JD, Fremont, Nebraska, began his term on the Nebraska State Bar Association Executive Council in October 2023, representing the Third Judicial District. Hall is a district court judge in Dodge County. **Reinaldo "Rey" Pascual, JD,** Atlanta and Sarasota Springs, Florida, was recently appointed co-president of VIVEX Biologics Group, Inc., in Miami. VIVEX Biologics is a leading and fast-growing innovator in regenerative medicine, specializing in the development of naturally sourced

treatment options and solutions that improve clinical, surgical and therapeutic patient care. He is also the founder of Pascual LLC, a specialty corporate law firm providing high-level strategic advice and general counsel services to a select group of entrepreneurial clients. Pascual founded Pascual LLC after 30 years practicing at two of the top law firms in the country, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP and Paul Hastings LLP. Pascual served as general counsel to VIVEX Biologics prior to his appointment as co-president. He also recently completed his third four-year term as trustee of Syracuse University and now serves as life trustee. During his tenure at Syracuse, Pascual served as vice chair of the board, chair of the Student Affairs Committee and as a member of the university's executive committee, among other activities.

90 Lisa Lodin, BA, Minneapolis, is an assistant attorney general in the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General.

92 Lorraine Dutton Gardner, BA, Springfield, Missouri, was selected for the newly created position of lead ELL (English Language Learners) instructor at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield. Gardner has taught in the adult education and literacy department for 17 years. **Susan Todd Peeler, MD,** Crownsville, Maryland, was the co-recipient of the inaugural AACN-Gold Interprofessional Humanism in Healthcare Award, a new honor that celebrates and elevates

the collaboration of physicians and nurses. Peeler and her fellow award recipient, Patricia McMullen, PhD, serve as clinicians at the Neil B. Rosenshein, MD Institute for Gynecologic Care, a women's health initiative of Mercy Medical Center located in Baltimore. Together, they care for women across a range of racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

95 Dr. Steven C. Cunningham, BSChM, Ellicott City, Maryland, graduated from the Harvard Extension School with a master's degree in religion. His thesis was on religious literacy among U.S. healthcare providers. He also recently gave a grand rounds talk at Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital in Baltimore on religious literacy and spiritual care for healthcare providers. Additionally, his article "Why Religious Literacy is Pivotal to Providing Better Healthcare" appeared in *Interfaith America Magazine*. The grand rounds talk and the article are both based on a book he published last year for young and adult lay audiences on religious literacy. Cunningham is the director of pancreatic and hepatobiliary surgery at Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital.

96 Hon. Tricia A. Freeman, JD, Papillion, Nebraska, assumed the post of president-elect of the Nebraska State Bar Association in October 2023. Freeman is currently the presiding judge for the Second Judicial District County Court bench.

06 Alice A. Lugo, BA'03, JD, Washington, D.C., joined the law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as senior counsel in November. Lugo is the former assistant secretary for legislative affairs at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

07 Ida Amelis Long, BA'04, MS, Omaha, was awarded the Inclusive Communities Mart Sedky Corporate Leadership Award at its annual humanitarian awards event held in August 2023. Long was selected as the inclusion and diversity leader at FNBO. **Michael L. Sheran, BSBA,** Minneapolis, a litigation attorney at Maslon LLP, was elected to the law firm's partnership in January. Sheran also was recognized by Super Lawyers as a 2023 Minnesota Rising Star, a distinction given to only 2.5% of Minnesota attorneys each year.

13 Ryan D. Holmgren, BA, St. Paul, Minnesota, was promoted to the Steier Group's management team. He now serves as executive vice president of client services for the Omaha-based fundraising and development firm. **Rory Ogden, DDS,** Schenectady, New York, chief dental officer for Hometown Health Center in Schenectady, helped plan the new community dental clinic that recently opened. The facility features 30 exam rooms, and offers preventive and pediatric care, as well as emergency appointments and oral surgeries regardless of insurance.

21 Arlene M. DeMar, MA, Blue Point, New York, had a second book published, *In the Image of the Gardener*. DeMar also is the author of *The Coordinates of Time, Treasure, and Truth*. **Ryan J. Eikmeier, BA'99, EdD,** Oak Park, Illinois, has recently taken on a teaching position with Purdue University Global's online Doctor of Education (EdD) in Leadership and Innovation program. Eikmeier continues to serve as the assistant dean of curriculum for Purdue University Global. He designed two courses for the program. He credits his enriching experiences with Creighton's EdD program for laying the foundation for his professional journey.

WEDDINGS

06 Brett Diane Thornhill and Kyle M. Eilenfeldt, BA, Sept. 3, 2023, living in Portland, Oregon.

13 Anna Tosone, BA'07, MBA'12, MS, and Jeff Innis, Dec. 1, 2023, living in Tampa, Florida.

BIRTHS

99 Dr. Tin H. Tran, BS, and **Christine DiMasi Tran, MS'06,** a son, Seamus Huu, Feb. 16, 2024, living in Omaha.

12 Peter J. Freeze, BA, and **Kathleen Hart Freeze, BA'11,** a daughter, Josie Pauline, June 23, 2023, living in Kansas City, Missouri.

14 Daniel Latus and Kimberly Utzig Latus, BSBA'12, JD, welcomed twins, a son, Wesley Daniel, and a daughter, Amelia Mae, June 7, 2023, living in Verona, Wisconsin.

16 Michael A. Herrera, DPT, and **Samantha Klawin Herrera, BS'13, DPT,** a daughter, Kit Everly, Jan. 16, 2024, living in Westminster, Colorado. **Joseph C. Winter, BSBA,** and **Grace Meehan Winter, BSN'15,** a son, Christopher, July 6, 2023, living in Wayzata, Minnesota.

DEATHS

46 Col. Bernard J. Pankowski, ARTS, Woodbridge, Virginia, Nov. 11, 2023.

48 Joseph D. Beraldi, BSPha, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Nov. 3, 2023. **James R. Sutton, BS'46, DDS,** Bella Vista, Arkansas, Jan. 1, 2024.

49 Patricia Leonovicz Edick, SCN, Omaha, Feb. 17, 2024. **John J. Pluhacek, BS,** Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Aug. 23, 2022. **Richard J. Wiedenfeld, ARTS,** Coralville, Iowa, Jan. 15, 2023.

50 Earl E. Collins, BS, Omaha, Jan. 18, 2024.

51 Donald J. Arens, ARTS, Yankton, South Dakota, Jan. 12, 2024. **Thomas R. Carvlin, BS,** Dolton, Illinois, Oct. 25, 2023. **John D. Gilbert, BS,** Sun City, Arizona, Dec. 12, 2023. **Raymond L. Huelskamp, BS,** Omaha, Feb. 24, 2024. **George D. Johnson, BS,** Omaha, Sept. 29, 2023.

ALUMNI PROFILE

From the Heartland to Hollywood

Many would-be actors with dreams of palm trees, magnificent homes, Hollywood celebs, the beautiful coastline – and star-studded aspirations – pack up their belongings and head west to Los Angeles. That's what **MEGAN CARROLL, BA'11, MFA,** did. Except she didn't want to be a star on the big screen. Or even the smaller screen.

And she wasn't just crossing her fingers. She had a solid plan. And that plan – that desire – was to be a writer and director. "I strictly want to work behind the camera," Carroll says. "There's no acting for me."

Carroll describes herself as an independent filmmaker who views film as a tool for social change and who creates stories to help audience members feel less alone. She also has held a variety of jobs in the entertainment industry, including working on an award-winning television show.

Carroll has persevered since studying English and graphic design at Creighton. She moved to L.A. to attend the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts, receiving her MFA in film and television production in 2019.

The knowledge and skills she gained and the connections she made have opened doors that she is prying open even wider – including working in production on the popular sitcom *Abbott Elementary*.

Through internships, she learned "coverage," the industry word for script reading, which helps studio development executives ascertain what scripts among the plethora they receive are worth considering. After graduation, she started picking up freelance coverage assignments to make money in between full-time jobs.

"I'm sure some people are able to make a full-time living writing coverage," Carroll says, "but I see it as more of a side gig."

She reads film scripts, TV pilot proposals and books that are being considered for development or adaptation and writes short synopses and opinions on the projects' strengths, weaknesses and viability.

She finds the side gig a good way to keep tabs on the pulse of the industry. "Writing coverage gives me a window into

the current Hollywood landscape. And there's always something to be learned from reading a script, no matter how good or bad it is."

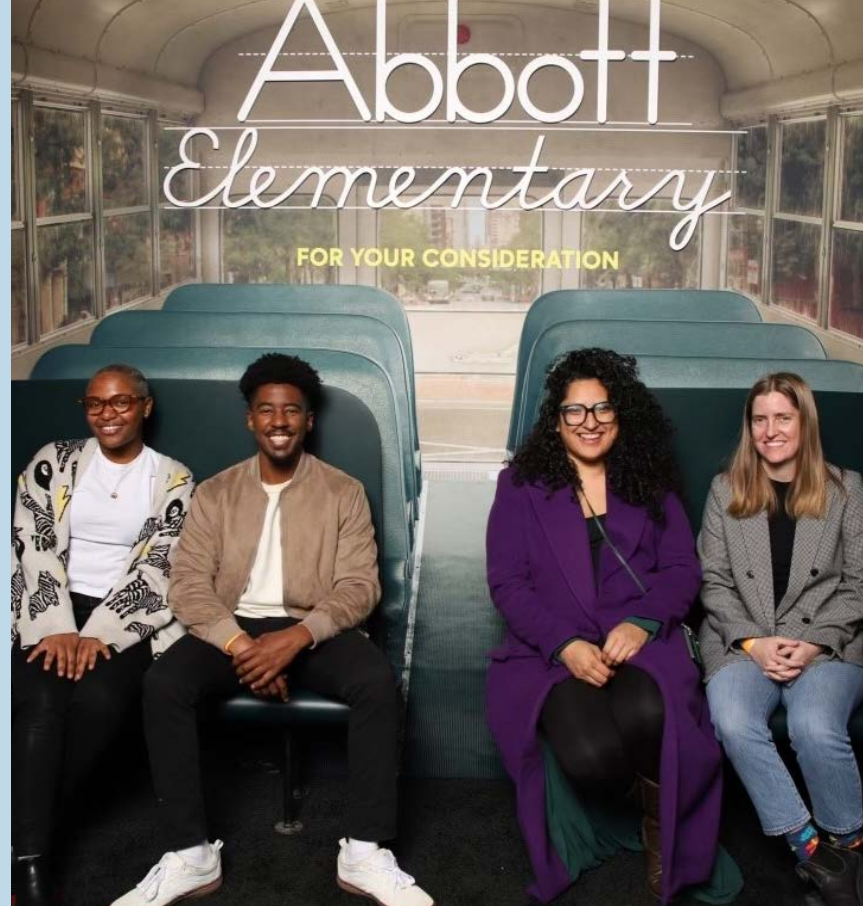
But while the freelance coverage work helps pay the bills and contributes to her ultimate goal of being a film or TV writer and eventually a director, she also has had success gaining entrée into television production through several shows.

One of the first to hire her as an office production assistant was the sitcom *The Unicorn* in the spring of 2020. It was one of the earliest shows to come back with testing protocols after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Testing was required as often as three to five times a week, depending on the position.

Production assistant jobs aren't glamorous. But after supporting the production staff with any needs – lunch, coffee, office supplies, etc. – Carroll says, "I get to sit in the room and listen to them work and see how things come together."

Next came the sitcom *Grown-ish* (a spin-off of *Black-ish*) and then *Abbott Elementary*, which has won numerous Emmy nominations and awards. Carroll is the writers' production assistant during the current third season after

© Left: Megan Carroll, BA'11, MFA, far right, and fellow *Abbott Elementary* crew members, taken during season 2 at a Directors Guild of America event. Right: Carroll directed *Rio*, a sci-fi short, in 2017.



“Working in television production can often be grueling, but *Abbott* is a supportive environment, and I’ve learned a lot.”

MEGAN CARROLL, BA'11, MFA

spending the show's first two seasons as an office production assistant.

"I feel very lucky to be a part of the *Abbott* family," she says.

"Working in television production can often be grueling, but *Abbott* is a supportive environment, and I've learned a lot."

Carroll's interest in filmmaking began in high school, "but as a kid from Nebraska with no connections to the industry, the idea of becoming a filmmaker seemed impossible. I intentionally double majored in English and graphic design at Creighton, thinking I could learn some skills that could be applied to filmmaking, such as writing and visual composition, but I still didn't really know how to pursue it as a career.

"After college, I found myself working in marketing in St. Louis, where my duties

included some video production and editing work. I enjoyed those projects but felt I wasn't really reaching my full creative potential. After years of casually considering it, I finally decided to apply to film school, and I got accepted to USC, and everything changed."

While at Creighton, as part of her design major, she took video courses with Tim Guthrie, BFA'89, MFA, professor in the Computer Science, Design and Journalism Department, and learned how to shoot and edit on Final Cut Pro.

After graduation, she went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Guthrie and John O'Keefe, PhD, former theology professor, to assist on a documentary, *Tokimane*, about the courageous efforts of a Catholic diocese.

"That trip was another confirmation that filmmaking was what I wanted to do," Carroll says. — **BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA'74**



© The goal of iA's automated system is to allow pharmacists more time for patient consultation and care.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Leading an Industry Change

TOM UTECH, PHARM D'97, didn't become a pharmacist to count pills, label vials or spend countless hours on the phone with insurance companies. Like most in his profession, he became a pharmacist because he wanted to help people.

He wanted to focus on patient-centric activities related to medication management, to deploy an education that taught him to care for the whole person and to dedicate as much of his time and energy as he could to enhancing the experience of healthcare.



Tom Utech, PharmD'97

Utech has made a career of streamlining the more tedious aspects of his profession. He's made it his mission to introduce these game-changing efficiencies to all providers, as well as the patients they serve. In the process, he's become a leader in the transformation of his industry – centralized pharmacy fulfillment.

Utech is the chief executive officer of the Indianapolis-based iA, a company that provides an integrated pharmacy fulfillment platform running the process from prescription acceptance to delivery for pharmacies in a variety of volumes and settings.

With U.S. pharmacies processing about

4 billion prescriptions annually, iA's automated fulfillment reduces the manual effort involved in dispensing medications, which allows pharmacists more time for patient consultation and care.

iA's retail partners no longer fill the majority of their prescriptions on-site. The prescriptions are instead filled in a central fulfillment facility and brought to the brick-and-mortar store for the patient to pick up the following day. iA's fulfillment centers run on NEXiA, a leading enterprise software suite that's the foundation of the company's operations.

Fears of automation abound in just about every sector of the modern workforce. In the case of iA's fully automated prescription fulfillment process, Utech said, the goal isn't to replace pharmacists; it's to elevate them.

"We help empower pharmacists by alleviating pressures and time constraints and minimizing nonvalue-added tasks," he says. "This approach supports the focus on the meaningful, human-centric work they trained for in pharmacy school."

Since iA built its first fulfillment centers

roughly a decade ago, iA's customers who were at the forefront of adopting this technology have achieved remarkable success, Utech says. "While it took some time for this innovative model to really catch on, it is now experiencing rapid and widespread market adoption."

This paradigm shift can't come to the industry soon enough. Last fall, retail pharmacies, particularly big chains, faced nationwide staffing shortages amid their busiest time of year.

Pharmacists who have left their employers cite high levels of stress and too little time for the patient-facing parts of their job. Larger chains like Walgreens have limited their pharmacy hours due to a lack of job candidates.

"This industry is transforming because it needs to transform," Utech says. "While the pressures for change have existed for quite some time, COVID only accelerated it. The pandemic increased the need for pharmacists to be frontline healthcare providers because there weren't enough physicians, physician assistants and nurses to take care of everyone."

Even as the pandemic subsided, the pharmacist's more prominent role in frontline patient care has remained in place. That's a significant development, Utech says, but only if there are enough pharmacists (and only if those pharmacists have enough time) to serve their patients effectively. To ensure both will require taking a great deal of the work out of the pharmacy itself.

The cost savings of doing so will be tremendous, Utech says. If scaled, those savings could positively impact the drug reimbursement pressures pharmacies face nationwide. But the vision of iA's model serves a more fundamental, human-focused purpose: to strengthen the connection between pharmacists and their patients, creating a more fulfilling profession for providers and a higher quality of care for all.

"iA is on the front end of an industry that's transforming itself," he says. "While the current landscape poses challenges for pharmacists, a brighter future awaits. We foresee a healthcare model where pharmacists will be at the center of providing frontline, patient-focused care for the communities they serve." – **BY MICAH MERTES**

Walter J. Moy Jr., ARTS, Omaha, Sept. 10, 2023. **Paul M. Murphy, MD**, Denver, Feb. 1, 2024. **Capt. Edward Whelan Jr., BS**, Placentia, California, Sept. 1, 2023.

53 William G. Bauer, BS, Olney, Maryland, Sept. 25, 2023. **Richard L. Codd, MD**, Fort Collins, Colorado, Dec. 1, 2023. **Fred Muenchrath, BS**, Wichita, Kansas, Nov. 30, 2023. **Hon. Lyle E. Strom, BA'50, JD**, Bellevue, Nebraska, Dec. 1, 2023.

54 Raymond D. Duve Jr., BS, Clive, Iowa, Jan. 16, 2024. **David H. Pedersen, BSPH**, Scottsdale, Arizona, Nov. 14, 2023. **Dr. Jerry F. Toller, BSPH**, Yuba City, California, Jan. 22, 2024. **Rita Nowak Wolbach, SCN**, Omaha, Jan. 4, 2024.

55 Patrick W. Achatz, JD, Centennial, Colorado, Nov. 15, 2022. **P. James Connor Jr., BS'51, MD**, Omaha, Sept. 29, 2023. **Larry C. Gasunas, PHARM**, Bensenville, Illinois, July 13, 2022. **Andrew E. Houston, BS**, Houston, Jan. 30, 2023. **Owen G. Neary, BS**, Omaha, Jan. 11, 2024. **Joan Zegob O'Halloran, ARTS**, Marshfield, Wisconsin, Feb. 28, 2024.

Mary Lou Berberich Parks, SCN, Santa Maria, California, Nov. 25, 2023. **William B. Woodruff, JD**, Omaha, Nov. 24, 2023.

56 Richard G. Belatti, MD, Madison, South Dakota, Oct. 23, 2023. **Thomas G. Biner, DDS**, Gallatin Gateway, Montana, March 8, 2023. **Georgie Evans, MLN**, Hastings, Nebraska, Aug. 4, 2022. **Gretchen Schenkelberg Moylan, SJN**, Omaha, Dec. 6, 2023.

57 Robert G. Archibald, BSBA, Littleton, Colorado, Jan. 16, 2024. **Mary Wingender Hulsing, SCN**, Omaha, Nov. 15, 2023. **Lucille Hilz Respeliars, SCN**, Omaha, Jan. 9, 2024. **Lewis E. Roccaforte, BSChM**, Cary, Illinois, Sept. 26, 2023. **Edward J. Schlachter, BS**, Hastings, Nebraska, Nov. 30, 2023.

58 Anthony C. Battaglia, BUSADM, Omaha, Oct. 18, 2023. **Janet Bock Johnson, BSMT**, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, Nov. 13, 2023. **Colette Huewe Kramer, BS**, Omaha, Oct. 27, 2023. **Donald N. Mickells, BSBA**, Duxbury, Massachusetts, Jan. 2, 2024. **Patrick S. O'Halloran, MD**, West Palm Beach, Florida, Feb. 6, 2024.

Leonard A. Vinci, DDS, Scottsdale, Arizona, Feb. 26, 2024.

59 Robert R. Brady, DDS, Omaha, Dec. 31, 2023. **William H. McCarthy, MD**, Milwaukie, Oregon, Aug. 19, 2023. **Kathleen Ravlin Roberts, SJN**, Anchorage, Alaska, Nov. 13, 2023. **Donald J. Safarik, BSBA**, Orange, California, Dec. 21, 2023. **J. Pat Thornton, BS'54, JD**, Omaha, Dec. 2, 2023.

60 William J. Duffy, ARTS, Papillion, Nebraska, Dec. 14, 2023. **Joseph F. Grismer, MD**, Spokane, Washington, May 6, 2023. **Hon. James M. McNally, LAW**, Santa Barbara, California, Nov. 16, 2023. **William J. Nosek Jr., BSPH**, Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, Feb. 1, 2024. **Frank J. Semin, DDS**, Bellevue, Nebraska, Jan. 13, 2024. **Edward S. Terlaje, BS'57, JD**, Yona, Guam, Aug. 11, 2022. **John F. Yost, MD**, Parker, Colorado, Feb. 19, 2024.

61 JoAnn Caniglia Reilly, BS, Pell City, Alabama, Sept. 28, 2023. **William J. Dickason, BA**, Moorhead, Minnesota, Dec. 10, 2023.

62 Sharyn James Baldacci, BSMT, Chandler, Arizona,

Nov. 6, 2023. **Dr. Frank R. Barta Jr., BA**, Los Angeles, Oct. 15, 2023. **Larry W. Hacker, BSBA**, Henderson, Nevada, Sept. 15, 2023. **Samuel T. Hicks, BSBA**, Dallas, Sept. 13, 2023. **Henry C. Kennedy, BSBA**, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Sept. 6, 2023. **Margaret Malone McClaren, BA**, Creston, Iowa, Dec. 14, 2023. **Jean O'Neil Nolan, BS**, Cape Coral, Florida, Nov. 17, 2023. **Jacelyn M. Schlautman, BSPH**, Chesterfield, Missouri, Feb. 8, 2022. **Ronald W. Swassing, ARTS**, Omaha, Jan. 23, 2024.

63 Rev. John J. Keefe, BA, Crete, Nebraska, Oct. 11, 2023. **David M. Lamey, DDS**, La Quinta, California, Feb. 26, 2023. **Elmer W. McCann Jr., BSPH**, Omaha, Jan. 25, 2024. **James F. Menehan, JD**, Monroe, Wisconsin, Oct. 19, 2023. **Raymond J. Walowski, JD**, Omaha, Feb. 14, 2024. **John S. Wingfield, DDS**, Mitchell, South Dakota, Nov. 28, 2022.

64 William J. Curry Jr., BSBA, Eagan, Minnesota, March 6, 2023. **Gordon H. Miles, JD**, Cardiff By The Sea, California, Aug. 21, 2023. **Ann Klosen Rose, SJN**, Omaha, Feb. 18, 2024.

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SHE BLAZED TRAILS AT CREIGHTON AND BEYOND

For years, Creighton's records and histories have named Melba Faucett, BA'43, as the first Black woman to graduate from Creighton University. But thanks to the efforts of another alumna's family, Creighton recently learned that this milestone took place 30 years earlier.

The first Black woman to graduate from Creighton is now believed to be **Cassie Chancellor**, who earned her degree from what was then called the College of Pharmacy in 1913. Chancellor was a trailblazer in countless ways, and it is high time Creighton told her story.

Chancellor can be found in the University's records, but details are scant. The following account comes from the research of Chancellor's great-great-niece and great-great-nephew — Keshia Hardin and Quintin Frazier — and their cousin, Shavahna Hunt.

Cassie Chancellor broke barriers all her life. Born in 1894, she grew up amid the challenges and racial prejudices that all Black Americans faced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her family emphasized the importance of a good education, of its power to open pathways otherwise closed.

After earning her pharmacy degree from Creighton, Chancellor and her husband — Meharry Pharmaceutical College graduate Titus Irving — opened Irving Pharmacy, originally located on Chicago's south side. This was more than a business, Chancellor's family says. "It was a symbol of empowerment for the Black community in a time when segregation and discrimination were so pervasive."

Soon, Cassie and Titus relocated Irving Pharmacy to Phoenix, Illinois, a village south of Chicago. Theirs was the first Black-owned pharmacy in the village.

"Their commitment to serving their community extended beyond providing medications," Shavahna Hunt writes in an email. "It was about creating a space where individuals of all backgrounds could access healthcare without prejudice."

From 1930 to 1960, Irving Pharmacy served as a community hub for anyone seeking not just prescriptions but ice cream, soda or friendly conversation. "Irving Pharmacy was a testament," Hunt writes, "to the resilience of Black entrepreneurs during an era of profound social change."

Pictured above: On the left, Cassie Chancellor in front of Irving Pharmacy in Phoenix, Illinois. On the right, the College of Pharmacy Class in 1913, with Cassie Chancellor in the bottom right corner.

Charles A. Vacanti, BSBA, Omaha, Sept. 14, 2023. **Dr. John P. Wareham, BSPha, HON'16**, Orange, California, Jan. 25, 2024.

65 R. Scott Archer, BSBA'60, JD, Edina, Minnesota, April 29, 2022. **Duane J. Dowd, JD**, Omaha, Oct. 27, 2023. **Don M. Fedric, JD**, Roswell, New Mexico, Jan. 10, 2024. **Mary Pitzl Heitmann, BA**, Aberdeen, South Dakota, Nov. 17, 2023. **Linda Nimmo Kasher, ARTS**, Vero Beach, Florida, Dec. 12, 2023. **Anne Mixan Kenkel, BSN**, Omaha, Nov. 9, 2023. **Dr. Salvatore A. Lofaro, BS**, Ardmore, Pennsylvania, Sept. 29, 2023. **Deacon Richard J. Petersen, BS'61, MD**, Omaha, Oct. 27, 2023. **H. Wayne Walker, DDS**, Killeen, Texas, Dec. 15, 2023. **Jean Markhofer Watson, ARTS**, Omaha, Oct. 11, 2023.

66 Larry J. Andreini, MD, Arnold, Michigan, April 27, 2022. **Patricia Cunningham Bucknell, BA**, Avon Lake, Ohio, Oct. 30, 2023. **David M. Daughton, BS**, Omaha, Dec. 5, 2023. **Joseph B. Lovell, MBA**, Ames, Iowa, Jan. 18, 2024.

67 Adrian R. Bourque, MD, Wausau, Wisconsin, Nov. 11, 2023. **Verlyn E. Husa, MBA**, Greenwood Village, Colorado, Dec. 14, 2023. **Rosemary Murphy Lane, BA**, Omaha, Dec. 4, 2023. **Francis S. Luecke, BS**, Crestwood, Kentucky, Sept. 9, 2023. **Dr. Syed M. Mohiuddin, MS**, Omaha, Nov. 20, 2023. **Sr. Rose Ann Muller, MSEDu**, Louisville, Kentucky, Oct. 19, 2023. **Sr. La Verne Ramaeker, BSRT**, Waukegan, Illinois, Jan. 12, 2024. **Gary M. Vogelsberg, DDS**, Omaha, Dec. 27, 2023.

68 Joseph J. Cernik, MD, Mattawan, Michigan, Feb. 5, 2024. **Susan Metz Chilcott, MA**, Alexandria, Virginia, Dec. 25, 2023. **Margery S. Cunningham, BA**, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Sept. 9, 2023. **Edward P. Danciewicz, MD**, Rockport, Massachusetts, Sept. 7, 2023. **Richard M. Egan, MD**, Walnut Creek, California, Nov. 28, 2023. **Lorraine H. Martin, MD**, Morristown, New Jersey, Nov. 24, 2023.

69 Frank M. Bluvus Jr., ARTS, Omaha, Feb. 12, 2024. **Robert W. Burns, MD**, Lake Mary, Florida, Nov. 20, 2023. **E. Thomas Clark, BSBA**, Parachute, Colorado, Sept. 4, 2023. **Edward A. Hittner, MSEDu**, Columbus, Nebraska, Jan. 9, 2024.

Dr. Richard E. Jones, BS, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Jan. 3, 2024. **Peter R. Langan, MD**, Garden City, New York, June 17, 2023. **Edward W. Lueninghoener, BS**, Omaha, Jan. 19, 2024. **William F. McAdoo Jr., DDS**, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dec. 10, 2023. **Otto L. Walter, MBA**, Minneapolis, Oct. 19, 2022. **Robert Wayne, MD**, Cannon Beach, Oregon, Oct. 19, 2023.

70 Dennis M. Baumgartner, DDS, Denver, Jan. 8, 2024. **Patrick W. Bowman, MD**, Omaha, Oct. 14, 2023. **Margaret Tomek Duggan, BS**, Anchorage, Alaska, Jan. 30, 2024. **Mary Good Mornin, ARTS**, Omaha, Nov. 28, 2023. **Robert E. White, DDS**, Alto, New Mexico, Oct. 6, 2023.

71 Victoria Carrico Challis, ARTS, St. Louis, Dec. 16, 2023. **Terrence F. Ciurej, BSPha'67, MD**, Blair, Nebraska, Feb. 19, 2024. **Wilma Mott Crawford, MSEDu**, Sharpsburg, Georgia, Nov. 20, 2023. **Capt. Thomas O. Felton, MBA**, Paoli, Pennsylvania, Oct. 20, 2023. **Tony L. Fugit, JD**, Yuma, Arizona, Oct. 23, 2023. **Thomas A. Heim, MBA**, Omaha, Oct. 10, 2023. **George H. Heye, MD**, Olympia, Washington, Aug. 15, 2023. **David M. Keller, BSBA'64, MBA**, Omaha, Feb. 3, 2024. **F. John Kissel, MD**, Omaha, Feb. 19, 2023. **Rosanne Schumacher**

Klug, ARTS, Omaha, Oct. 20, 2023. **James J. McCauley, MD**, Toms River, New Jersey, Aug. 2, 2023. **Sherry T. Potter, MSGuid**, Topeka, Kansas, Feb. 20, 2024.

72 John M. Cann, JD, Suffern, New York, July 20, 2023. **Glenn L. Cronin, BSPha**, Omaha, Oct. 25, 2023. **John E. Hubbard, JD**, Omaha, Jan. 23, 2024. **Michael A. Kelley, BA'69, JD**, Omaha, Sept. 8, 2023. **Robert C. Perry Jr., BA**, Murphy, North Carolina, Jan. 14, 2024. **Sr. Rose M. Schoolcraft, BSBA'69, MBA**, Omaha, Sept. 15, 2023. **Nancy Pratschner Witt, BSMT**, Seattle, Jan. 1, 2024. **David R. Zachary, MD**, Ladera Ranch, California, Sept. 9, 2023.

73 Gerald K. Russell, JD, Rawlins, Wyoming, Jan. 6, 2024.

74 Debra Yule Heiber, BA, South Beloit, Illinois, Oct. 2, 2023. **Keith A. McCawley, ARTS**, Lincoln, Nebraska, Sept. 16, 2023. **Francis Nolan, LAW**, Omaha, Oct. 15, 2023. **Gerald W. Schmidt, BSPha**, Omaha, Nov. 6, 2023.

75 Steven F. Bauwens, BSPha, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Dec. 31, 2023. **Gregory T. Harshbarger, MD**, Redlands, California, Jan. 19, 2023. **Thomas A. Ruma Jr., MD**, Omaha, Nov. 11, 2023.

76 Charles J. Antonini Jr., MD, Roseville, California, Dec. 11, 2023. **Steven R. Eggers, DDS**, Omaha, Aug. 31, 2023. **Michael D. Havlik, BA'70, JD**, Omaha, Dec. 15, 2023. **R. William Petersen, JD**, Marion, Iowa, Oct. 18, 2023. **Robert G. Siriani, DDS**, Oak Lawn, Illinois, Oct. 24, 2023.

77 Randall E. Berg, BSPha, Elk Mound, Wisconsin, Dec. 19, 2022. **Nancy A. Jackson, ARTS**, Omaha, Dec. 18, 2023. **Timothy J. Ryan, MD**, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Dec. 20, 2023.

78 J. Michael Caruthers, MD, Haymarket, Virginia, Aug. 20, 2022. **Kevin R. Kuehl, BSBA**, Kansas City, Kansas, Jan. 6, 2024. **Thomas M. Locher, BA'74, JD**, Omaha, Oct. 8, 2023. **Joseph P. Rindone, PharmD**, Prescott, Arizona, Jan. 18, 2024.

80 Grant J. Flenker III, BS'76, DDS, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Dec. 26, 2023. **Cathy Canaday Trecek, JD**, Bellevue, Nebraska, Feb. 6, 2024.

81 Anne Pearson Nowlin, BSN, Libertyville, Illinois, April 29, 2023. **Kent E. Prewitt, BSBA**, Kimberling City, Missouri, Nov. 3, 2023.

82 Richard J. McCormick, BA, Omaha, Nov. 11, 2023.

83 Hon. Gregory G. Plesha, BA, Chicago, Dec. 20, 2022.

84 Sr. Jeanne C. Clennon, MChrSp, Notre Dame, Indiana, Dec. 14, 2023. **Richard F. Nelson, BA'78, JD**, Chicago, Sept. 1, 2023. **Alan M. Thelen, BA'81, JD**, Omaha, Jan. 27, 2024.

85 Thomas R. Haynes, JD, Omaha, Jan. 16, 2024.

86 Rebecca L. Cohen, BSN, Omaha, Dec. 31, 2023.

88 Sr. Rita P. Lombardi, MChrSp, Amityville, New York, Oct. 22, 2023.

89 Ingrid Dillstrom Stites, MS, Louisville, Nebraska, Nov. 5, 2023.

90 M. Patricia McCormack, JD, Elkhorn, Nebraska, Jan. 3, 2024.

91 Tisha N. Holland, BS'83, MS, Omaha, Dec. 8, 2023.

Scott A. Lautenbaugh, BA'87, JD, Omaha, Dec. 16, 2023. **Neal F. Shaw, MBA**, Fairhope, Alabama, Oct. 8, 2023. **Linda Winterringer Tronvold, BSOT**, Yankton, South Dakota, Sept. 1, 2023. **Joseph M. Zaccone, BSBA**, Harlan, Iowa, Oct. 30, 2023.

93 Mary Jo Ellen Lash, JD, Omaha, Oct. 3, 2023. **Patrick D. Schmiesing, BSBA**, Papillion, Nebraska, April 1, 2023. **Sarah Danner Zahm, BA**, Omaha, Nov. 11, 2023.

96 Renee Langhorst Cann, BSOT, Omaha, Oct. 21, 2023.

97 Anna Parsons Dedic, BSN, Auburn, Nebraska, Jan. 16, 2024. **Nicole Eaton Limer, BSN**, Lees Summit, Missouri, Dec. 8, 2023.

98 Dr. Matthew R. Mendlick, BA, Omaha, Oct. 15, 2023. **Michelle Stanworth Rogers, PharmD**, Delta, Utah, Nov. 7, 2023.

99 Eugene M. Eckel, JD, Omaha, Sept. 23, 2023.

00 Brenna S. Walsh, BA, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Oct. 18, 2023.

01 Krista Walker Smith, BSN, Fostoria, Ohio, Feb. 5, 2024. **Patricia Hess Travis, MA**, Omaha, Jan. 21, 2024.

03 H. Christian Krambeck, MS, Omaha, Sept. 28, 2023.

05 Jill Fix Sucha, JD, Burleson, Texas, Sept. 27, 2023.

06 Kelly M. Zittlow, BSBA, Omaha, Dec. 18, 2023.

10 Thomas Neumeyer II, BS, Seattle, Nov. 18, 2023.

11 Thomas J. Rayl, MD, Pagosa Springs, Colorado, Jan. 31, 2024.

12 Ashley M. McClure-Wolfson, PharmD, BSBS, Chicago, Nov. 11, 2023.

17 Taylor I. Bierwirth-Herman, BS, Missouri Valley, Iowa, Dec. 15, 2023.

19 Brenton R. Ayotte, JD, Shelby, Iowa, Sept. 18, 2023.

22 Dr. John H. Purk, MA, Kansas City, Missouri, March 9, 2024.



DAVE WEAVER

Leading with Ethics

Throughout her career, **Beverly Kracher, PhD**, Robert B. Daugherty Endowed Chair in Business Ethics and Society at Creighton's Heider College of Business, has sought to enforce a specific narrative of what constitutes good business practice. For Kracher, "good" is both profitable and ethical. She founded the Business Ethics Alliance 15 years ago to champion this broadened understanding of good business within the Greater Omaha business community. In August 2023, the Greater Omaha Chamber recognized Kracher's impact on the business profession by inducting her into the Omaha Business Hall of Fame.

What did it mean to you to receive this honor?

The honor is a recognition that ethics matters in Greater Omaha. For me personally, being the first Heider faculty in the history of Creighton (who also happens to be the first female endowed chair in Heider) to be inducted into the Omaha Business Hall of Fame is pure joy.

Locally, you have been a pioneer in business ethics by founding the Business Ethics Alliance. Can you tell us a little about that organization and its purpose?

The Alliance is proof of the ethical climate pervading the Greater Omaha business community. It is a partnership between business leadership, Creighton's Heider College of Business, the Better Business Bureau and

the Greater Omaha Chamber. The Alliance is an educational initiative that fosters and encourages the ethical mindset in every business and economic development decision in our city. It is delivered through a mix of public events, invitation-only small group discussions, communication channels and in-house programming. It has helped people feel comfortable talking about doing the right thing.

When the Alliance was conceived back in the 2000s, we were reeling from corporate scandals, like Enron, Lehman Brothers and the notorious Bernie Madoff. How has corporate America improved since those days?

Business is like a waltz — two steps forward and one step back. We have definitely made

forward steps with national ethics initiatives by the Business Roundtable, Blackrock and others. But there will always be backward steps. Bernie is a glaring example of unethical behavior in the extreme, and most of us can say, "We're better than Bernie." But the same ethical considerations Bernie Madoff magnificently breached are the same issues everyday business professionals continue to face today.

You've consulted and spoke on business ethics around the world. Are there certain characteristics of good business ethics that are consistent across cultures?

There are universal moral principles that apply across every aspect of life, for all time and all places. They are simple and powerful: don't harm and do good. In business there are two specific values that emanate from these, namely, trust and respect. These two values form the fundamental business covenant that allows us to enter into contracts, compete and collaborate across cultures and the world.

What is currently happening in business ethics?

There are many significant topics that are playing out, but just to name a few: First, how businesses, both big and small, address climate questions and sustainability. Second, the increasing role — and ethics — of AI and generative technologies. But today, especially in this year of elections and worldwide political stress, we are asking when and how businesses should take public stands on social issues. We are looking for strong governing boards and executive leadership to lead our way.

In teaching the next generation of business leaders at Creighton, what is the one thing you would like them to remember in terms of business ethics?

The smartest, most successful leaders keep ethics front of mind. The business leaders who talk to my students are bold and creative and dispel the misconception that business ethics are for the meek, the mild and the weak of heart. Ethics is power.



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AARON RIVERA,
HEIDER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS,
CLASS OF 2024