

CORD

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2022 | NEWS FROM UNION COLLEGE

A LIFESTYLE IN MOTION

Sharon McDowell Larsen and many other Unionites have learned the value of staying active throughout life.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE |



Photo: Ryan Teller/Union College

AdventHealth Innovation Classroom

Jodie Trana had a dream for a new kind of classroom. So when AdventHealth offered \$250,000 to Union to enhance the Business Program, the professor was ready with an idea. Why not create a learning space designed to foster innovation and collaboration?

And so the AdventHealth Innovation Classroom was born. Trana led a team that developed the new learning space, which included eight touch screen TVs, movable tables and chairs that could be easily configured into pods, glass boards and some tactile collaboration spaces — including a Lego wall.

The resulting classroom allows students to easily work in teams and use the interactive touch screens to solve problems and build new ideas together. Trana even developed a new course called Creativity and Innovation in Business focused on helping students learn to think creatively and solve business challenges using ethical, outside-the-box thinking.

You may not be able to fund the renovation of a classroom, but every dollar makes a difference in providing an outstanding Union education to our students. If you would like to get involved, visit ucollege.edu/give or call 402.486.2503.


Watch Jodie Trana give a tour of the AdventHealth Innovation Classroom at ucollege.edu/innovation-video 



Photo: Scott Cushman/Union College

Touch screens and interactive software allow students to work together to creatively solve problems and collect ideas.



Photo: Ryan Teller/Union College

The Lego wall is one tactile creative space that allows students to build on each other's work over time.

STAFF

LuAnn Wolfe Davis '82

Publisher

Ryan Teller '98

Editor

Steve Nazario

Art Director

Hannah Le '22

Student Designer

Scott Cushman '03

Digital Editor

Peggy Christensen

Carlson '00

Class News Editor

Linda Deibel

Skinner '71

Copy Editor

REGULARS

4 FORESIGHT

5 WHAT'S ONLINE

6 CAMPUS NEWS

22 BIRTHS AND WEDDINGS

25 KEEP IN TOUCH
Updates from classmates

26 IN MEMORY

31 THE LAST WORD
from President Sauder

FEATURES

Eno named vice president 9

Debbie Eno has been appointed vice president for Academic Administration.

Construction to begin on wellness center 10

The project will begin this summer with expected completion in 2024.

College is hard, but so is life 14

Recent grad Austin Hill recounts how college turned out to be a better choice than working construction.

Inspired to an active life 15

May grad Norma Mena was inspired to stay active by her professor, Nancy Petta.

Swimming to Europe and back 16

A Larson Lifestyle Center member swims more than 9,000 miles in the past 35 years.

The gift of movement 18

Sharon McDowell Larsen has dedicated her life to helping others stay healthy through physical fitness.

A champion of lifestyle change 20

After his brother died in mid-life, Ed Rusk decided to radically change his lifestyle.



Photo: Scott Cushman/Union College

ADMINISTRATION

President

Dr. Vinita Sauder

Vice president for Academic Administration

Debbie Eno '99

Vice president for Financial Administration

Steve Trana '85

Vice president for Spiritual Life

David Kabanje '16

Vice president for Advancement

LuAnn Davis '82

Vice president for Enrollment Services

Michelle Velasquez Mesnard

Vice president for Student Life

Kim Canine

ABOUT THE COVER

Sharon McDowell Larsen caught the running bug while a student at Union and went on to compete in Ironman triathalons. She has spent her life as a coach helping people learn to be healthy through exercise. Photo by Glenn Sackett.

© 2022 Union College all rights reserved. No material may be reproduced without permission. CORD Magazine is published as a service to Union College alumni and friends.

We encourage readers to submit letters and article ideas. Please send inquiries, submissions and address changes to:

CORD Magazine
Union College
3800 South 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506
or alumni@ucollege.edu

Paying it forward



David and Judie Hagestrom Csokasy started the Hagestrom Family Scholarship to support nursing students.

photo: courtesy of Judie Csokasy

Judie Hagestrom Csokasy '63 is no stranger to hard work. Now she hopes to help some college students have a little easier time paying for their Union College education.

After graduating from Oak Park Academy in Iowa, she entered the Union College Nursing Program. Studying nursing may be challenge enough, but she also worked in the cafeteria and cleaned houses to help pay her tuition. She then traveled to Denver to complete her clinical training at Porter Hospital before the grueling two-day state board exams.

"Union gave me a strong education and I have always been grateful," said Csokasy. After working in various nursing positions and earning two more degrees, she completed her career as an associate professor of nursing at Indiana University.


She appreciated her college experience and wants to support a new generation of Union students. "I hope some students coming to Union will have a slightly lighter workload and more time to study as they pursue their nursing degree because of this scholarship."

To honor her parents' love and hard work to support her college education, she created the Hagestrom Family Scholarship. "God has been good to my husband David and me," she explained. "In making this scholarship possible, we hope it will ease the financial burden for the recipients."

The couple is utilizing the required minimum distribution (RMD) from their retirement accounts to fund their gift. Directing their RMD to Union College does not qualify as a charitable tax

deduction, but they will avoid paying federal and state taxes on their RMD. They found designating the funds to Union College a viable alternative to spending the money or reinvesting in a taxable account.

There are many ways to give back to Union College and help to provide an Adventist Christian education to our students. It's best to consult your tax advisor to help determine your best options.

Gifts like this truly make a difference on our campus and in the lives of our students. If you are searching for a way to support Union or you have questions about individual retirement account RMD, feel free to contact ken.farrow@ucollege.edu, or call 402-486-2600, ext. 2200. 

Facebook



Graduation 2022 | Experience graduation weekend in photos — from the PA ceremony on Friday morning to the graduates and families enjoying a cool Sunday afternoon following commencement. facebook.com/ucollegene



ReUnion 2022 | Couldn't join us for the ReUnion homecoming weekend this past April? Check out Union's Facebook feed for pictures from the weekend — including special Warrior, ASB officer, Nursing and Common Ground reunions, plus videos from several of the events. facebook.com/ucollegene

Instagram



Senior focus | Check out Union's Instagram feed for stories about graduating seniors — including Michael Amankwaa. Michael graduated from Union under the Best of Both Worlds Program where he lived at Union, but studied meteorology and climatology at the University of Nebraska. "I will miss the close-knit family culture at Union. I enjoyed my classes at UNL, and I've made friends there. But you don't find a family on a bigger campus like you do at Union. I will miss the family here."

Read more stories at instagram.com/ucollegene

YouTube



A "taxing" assignment pays off

For Daniel Daum, playing a role in the financial wellbeing of others seemed downright scary. "You don't mess with other people's money," said the senior business major. But this spring he and his classmates in Corporate Tax class helped Lincoln's low-income residents prepare their tax returns for free through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistant (VITA) program at the local Good Neighbor Center — a Lincoln community center largely funded by area Seventh-day Adventist churches.

See the video and about how he discovered the rewards of helping people find more tax savings at ucollege.edu/vita-video



Foot Clinic

Every month the Union Nursing and PA programs run a foot clinic at Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach where the students provide foot care for Lincoln's homeless and give them socks and shoes. Watch the stories of how this impacts their patient care at ucollege.edu/footclinic-video



April Fools

On April 1, Union released a video outlining a new program that will allow parents to take up to six hours of college classes for their student. Watch at ucollege.edu/substitute-video

Nursing students discover a different perspective on health care on a spring break Peru Trip

A group of students in Union's Global Health Nursing class spent their spring break working with the People of Peru Project in Iquitos, Peru, conducting medical clinics in the city and in some remote villages along the Amazon.

Global Health Nursing is a unique elective class for nursing students giving them the opportunity to learn about practicing

medicine in developing nations that do not have the resources of the United States. While the class typically involves a spring break trip to a developing nation, this was the first trip since 2019 — the pandemic cancelled the past two years — and the first trip to Peru.

Read the story, watch a video and see more photos at ucollege.edu/globalhealth2022



LEFT | Clinics were typically held in open air locations where sanitization was difficult and privacy impossible. Many of the patients suffered from the same common ailments. "If it wasn't dehydration, it was parasites," said nursing student Olivia Jacobs. "You'd have a patient come in saying, 'I have back pain, I'm not urinating, I have low blood pressure, I'm tired,' and you'd say, 'Ok, you sound dehydrated.' So you'd figure out how to educate them on how much they should be drinking each day, and then your next patient would come in with the exact same complaints." The students rotated through positions at the clinic so that they wouldn't become burned out and begin missing important symptoms.



ABOVE | At each clinic site, the students took turns examining patients, providing care and working in the pharmacy. Although People of Peru Project had translators available, several students — including Steve Medina — also spoke Spanish fluently, which helped the group see more patients at once. A local dentist also came to the clinics to provide free dental care.

LEFT | Nurses always make lots of new friends on their adventures — including instructor Jill Weyers and students Carlie Hanson and Grace Lumsden.



Matching work scholarship helps students SAVE

by Annika Cambigue '23

“The SAVE Scholarship is basically a lifesaver,” said pre-nursing major Sinan Firisa. The sophomore transferred to Union College at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year and was thrilled to hear about the newest scholarship program.

Through an endowment, Union College provides a 50 percent match to the on-campus work earnings of students enrolled in the SAVE scholarship program. SAVE coordinator Daniel Daum hopes the scholarship will help students decrease their student loans. “Over the years, school bills become very oppressive, just hanging over your head as a constant strain,” he said. “Helping students pay for their education with reduced loans is really important.”

Union offers student jobs all over campus with responsibilities ranging from grading to landscaping to designing publications to fixing computers to cleaning. Firisa works

in Enrollment, where she assists with new student applications. “I work about 10 to 15 hours each week, and I put 85 percent of my earnings towards my school bill,” she said. “I love the spirit at my job. My boss and the other people in the office are very encouraging and welcoming, and they make work very fun.”


Jolina Console, a theology major, first visited Union during her senior year of high school and knew that it was where God was calling her to be. Console enrolled in the SAVE program, working as a small groups coordinator for Campus Ministries, as well as in the Religion Program. “I’m a teaching assistant for Dr. Allen, but I also grade for other professors and do office work. I don’t really have a specific job title, but my work is really fun.”

The SAVE scholarship program started this year as a pilot program with 25 students enrolled, but Union plans to double that

number next school year. “People feel that the SAVE program helps take the stress off balancing school and work. They can focus more on school and not worry as much about finances,” said Daum.

By relieving financial worries, the SAVE scholarship helps students like Firisa and Console focus on their success in college. When asked what she wants to do after graduation, Firisa’s eyes lit up. “Honestly, I just love helping people. I really want to be a nurse.”

Console said, “I chose to pursue theology because I know God is calling me in that direction. At first the price of college seemed really intimidating, but when I came here and realized the amount of money Union was giving me, I was relieved. I thought, ‘maybe I just belong here.’”

To learn more about the SAVE scholarship program, go to ucollege.edu/save 

ScholarshipUniverse helps students find “a needle in a haystack”

by Hannah Olin '23

“While scholarships are a great way to get free money for college, finding scholarship money from outside Union College can seem like an impossible search. “There are literally millions of dollars from foundations and corporate scholarships that go unclaimed because students don’t know how to navigate this complex field,” said Lila Cervantes, a financial aid advisor at Union.

As a result, many students don’t look further than the institutional scholarships offered by the college. “They get very discouraged because there are so many resources out there and narrowing down the search is like finding a needle in a haystack,” said Cervantes. “We just want to make it easier for students.” This is why she is thrilled to introduce ScholarshipUniverse at Union.

ScholarshipUniverse is software that quickly and easily matches students with outside scholarships, helping them find the “needles in the haystack” without all the frustration and guesswork. After building a profile based on the student’s information and interests, it narrows down the search, sorting through thousands of vetted scholarships to find the ones they are eligible for and that cater to their interests. Now, students can browse available scholarships, apply, and keep track of their applications in one convenient place.


“We hope to help students take on less student loan debt,” said Cervantes, “School is expensive and we want to lower the students bottom line costs.”

Annelise Jacobs was one of the first

students to dive headfirst into the scholarship platform. “I think it is really convenient,” she said. “It was fun to look through, and it gave me a lot of ideas!”

She was impressed with the wide range of topics that catered to her specific interests and passions. “There is definitely something for everyone,” she said. “If students start applying, I think it will be great because it will provide them with a lot more money on top of the scholarships provided by alumni and friends of the college.”

“There is still work involved,” explained Cervantes. “But the more you apply, the more chances you have of getting a scholarship!”

Jacobs agrees. “Once you go on the website, then you get the inspiration to do it! You just have to get on in the first place.” 



John and Lilya Wagner both dedicated a major portion of their lives to Union College — Lilya as vice president for advancement and John as president.

photo: Union College archives

Lobby renamed in honor of John and Lilya Wagner

by Annika Cambigue '23

When John Wagner’s time as college president is remembered, his leadership by example comes to mind first. “If we had a program in the gym, John Wagner would be the first one to take his coat off, roll up his sleeves and start picking up chairs,” shared Rich Carlson, who was chaplain during both of Wagner’s terms as college president. “John didn’t say, ‘Everyone else come help me,’ he’d just start picking up chairs. Everyone would see him and say, ‘Oh, Dr. Wagner’s picking up chairs, we should help him.’ And all of a sudden, everyone would be helping. He has an uncanny way of leading people by example.”

Union College has named the lobby of the Everett Dick Administration Building the Wagner Lobby in honor of Drs. John and Lilya Wagner. John Wagner served as Union’s president from 1986–1991 and 2011–2014, and Lilya served as vice president for Institutional Advancement from 1986–1991.

“We’re deeply, deeply honored,” said Lilya Wagner. “We truly love Union. It was a privilege to serve such a fine institution, to help it in difficult times and to enjoy the positive times.”

The Wagners’ relationship with Union began in 1980 when John Wagner accepted a call to become academic dean, a position he held until 1983. He then created the personalized degree program, which still exists today. He left to accept a call to become president of Southern College, now Southern Adventist University. Three years later, Union asked the Wagners to return—John to be president and Lilya to be vice president for institutional advancement. The couple accepted and moved back to Nebraska.


In 1986, Union College was facing a financial and enrollment crisis. Much-needed upgrades to the school’s infrastructure had come at a high price, and fewer and fewer students were enrolling each year. “We were millions of dollars in debt,” said Carlson. “Lilya raised money for this school like you cannot believe. She was committed to the goal of paying down the debt. John’s strength and his gift was caring for people from a sacrificial perspective. He would sleep in his van that had over 300,000 miles rather than rent a hotel when he traveled to talk to donors. He would go into a truck stop to brush his teeth and clean up before he went to see a potential donor.”

When the Wagners left Union in 1991, they had led the college in reducing the debt by half. Over the next twenty years, they continued their careers in various fields. Lilya Wagner served as associate director of The Fund Raising School at Indiana University, before working as vice president for development at the National Association for Community Leadership and vice president for Counterpart International, a global development organization in Washington, D.C. She also served as director of Philanthropic Service for Institutions at the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over her career, she worked as a consultant and trainer in over 80 countries. John Wagner worked for a number of non-profit organizations around

the country, then became founding president of a corporate foundation. Later, he became CEO of Prevent Blindness Indiana.

In 2011, Union asked John Wagner to return as interim president for a year. He agreed, although he was partially retired and serving as assistant administrative pastor at Sligo Adventist Church in Maryland. One year as interim president became three years as full-time president, as Wagner led the college through the completion of the Krueger Center for Science and Mathematics. He served Union as president until 2014.

“John Wagner is one of my greatest spiritual mentors,” said Carlson. “He was known for affirming and encouraging and supporting people. At least once a week, I would walk into my office and there would be a note on my chair. People who worked at Union while he was president still talk about notes from John Wagner on their chair thanking them for something, affirming them for something and telling them how much they were appreciated.”

Union College is deeply grateful for the philanthropic generosity, the sacrificial leadership and the steadfast commitment the Wagners have shown through the years, and is proud to commemorate their service to the school. In the words of Rich Carlson, “John and Lilya gave so much to Union personally and financially, but more than that, they gave their hearts.” 

Eno named vice president for Academic Administration

by Kim Peckham '82

Debbie Eno has accepted the position of Vice President for Academic Administration at Union College. Having served as the interim VP for a year now, she enters the role already on the downward slope of the learning curve.

Eno graduated from Union in 1999 and went to work in Lincoln as a med/surg nurse. She became a traveling nurse and completed a postgraduate degree. She returned to Union in 2003 as a nursing professor, and was honored in 2011 as the students' choice for Teacher of the Year. "I love teaching and being in the classroom," she says. Even now, she plans to continue teaching a research class for nurses.

Before serving as interim vice president, Eno was one of three academic deans at Union, each of which oversees the administration of several academic disciplines. She was approached about a promotion to the top academic position last summer, but said she wasn't interested. She did agree to step in as an interim VP. "I thought it was good for the college to have someone in that role while the search committee did its work," she said

As the months passed, she began to change her mind about the job. "I'm very deliberate," she said. "It takes me awhile to think through these things."

Meanwhile, her colleagues took notice of how adept she was at her temporary position.


"In just the short time she was interim, she moved along initiatives and projects that had been in the wings for years," said Union president, Vinita Sauder. "I could see as she worked, she felt like she was growing into it."

Dealing with responsibility is one of her strengths, and it is needed in her new position. "It is a lot of responsibility to keep our current academic offerings market-matched to the needs of the students," she said.

"We looked for someone who fit the culture and could lead us forward," said Sauder. "She's going to make sure our academic programs are sharp and up to date. She approaches her job as a calling and

is committed to Seventh-day Adventist Christian education in general and Union in particular."

When not engaged in the adventures of budgeting and accreditation reports, Eno and her family enjoy canoeing in the Boundary Waters and hiking Colorado's fourteeners. Her husband, Alan, is a professor at UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communication. They have two young children, Elle and Devin.

"I'm always excited to see what the possibilities are for the next steps at Union," says Eno. And now that she has taken a few months of deliberation, she is ready to help set the direction of those steps. 

"Debbie Eno approaches her job as a calling and is committed to Seventh-day Adventist education and Union College in particular."

Long-time Union professor Debbie Eno was recently named vice president for Academic Administration.

photo: Scott Cushman/Union College



Construction to begin on new wellness center

by Ryan Teller '98

The Union College Board of Trustees recently voted to move forward with the construction of the AdventHealth Complex and Reiner Wellness Center. Some parts of the project will begin this summer and the building should be completed in 2024.

“This is exciting news for Union,” said President Vinita Sauder. “We are now one step closer to our goal of providing a greatly improved fitness and wellness facility for our students, employees and community members.”

Union publicly launched the Fit for the Future fundraising campaign in June 2021 to raise \$13 million to help fund the project. Currently more than \$10.8 million has been committed toward the goal.



The main entrance will serve the wellness center, pool and the Health and Human Performance Program.

College leadership worked with architects, builders and other commercial construction experts to create building plans to meet the needs of the college, provide for future expansion and fit within Union’s ability to effectively steward the resources available for the project. The

resulting 40,000-square-foot building connected to Larson Lifestyle Center will contain a field house with multiple sports courts, an elevated walking track, and large strength and cardio workout spaces.

The project will also provide some needed renovations to the Larson Lifestyle Center and a new mobility-accessible entrance to the Nursing Program on the upper level.

“We are very thankful for the leadership of Rich Reiner, our campaign chairperson, and the rest of our board who believe in this project,” said Sauder. “With their contributions, their ideas and the vote this spring, they have helped to strengthen Union and build an even better place for students to learn and grow.”

Thanks to a lead gift from AdventHealth, the entire facility—which will house the Reiner Wellness Center, the Larson Aquatics Center, the Nursing Program and the Health and Human Performance Program—will be called the AdventHealth Complex. AdventHealth is a Florida-based healthcare system affiliated



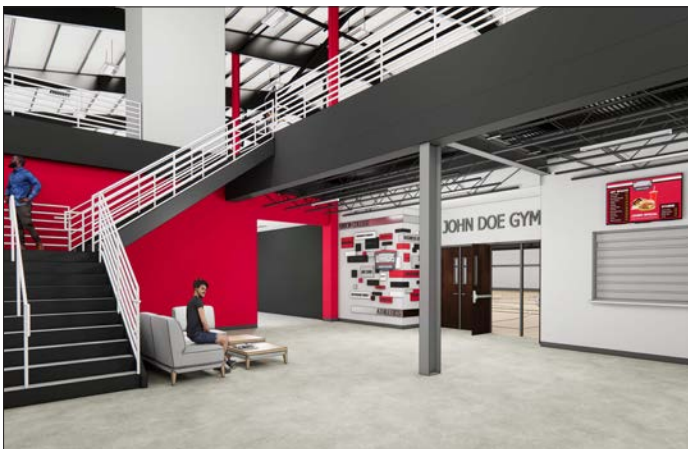
The Nursing Program will receive mobility-accessible entrance facing the south parking lot.



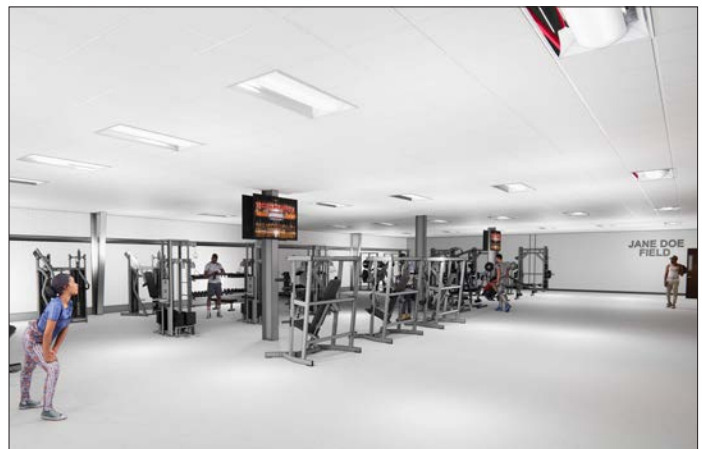
A walking track will encircle the entire second level of the new wellness center.



The cardio gym space on the second level will offer an open-concept feel for treadmills, elliptical trainers and exercise bikes.



The main lobby will offer easy access to areas of the new wellness center.




An expanded strength gym on the main level will offer a variety of training equipment.

with Union College's parent organization—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The second-largest private healthcare system in the country, AdventHealth operates more than 50 hospitals, including several in the Chicago, Kansas City and Denver metro areas.

Other lead donors for the project include Rich and Lynnet Reiner, Nelnet, Allo Communications, Union Bank and Trust, H&B Communications, Kettering Health, J.S. Lang Enterprises, Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Terry and Paula Tarasenko Shaw.

"This project would not be possible without the generous support of our donors who have given nearly \$11 million dollars so far," Sauder said. "But there is still more to do. I encourage anyone who believes in wellness and in Union College to support the Fit for Future Campaign."

Learn more and get involved at ucollege.edu/fit 

STUDENT FEATURES |

Faith soars over the tumbling floor

by Annika Cambigue '23

"My life doesn't have purpose without God in it," said junior business administration and mathematics major Devin Schlisner. "I can study all I want. I can get good grades. I can do well in sports. But my life doesn't have meaning unless I put God in my life and I form a connection with Him."

When Schlisner came to Union College as a freshman, he struggled to feel spiritually connected to God. "I don't know why I was having such a big problem, but I was," he said.

Things began to change when he joined the Gymnares, Union's acrobatic gymnastics team. "I love anything to do with gymnastics," he said. "I did it for two years in high school and couldn't get enough." Not only did joining the Gymnares give Schlisner the opportunity to juggle and tumble, but also to make new friends. Soon several of his friends on the team decided to begin a Bible study and invited him to join.

For more than a year, the small group has been meeting together after each gymnastics practice to read a chapter of the Bible and discuss it. "Our Bible study has been a really big blessing for me because it's totally changed my relationship with God for the better," said Schlisner. "I don't think I would have joined if the people at Union weren't as friendly as they are."

Schlisner credited the community aspect of the Bible study group with showing him new perspectives. He said, "One of the best things about Bible study in a group is that all of us have different viewpoints on each verse we read. When we're sitting there, I'll see something and say, 'hey, this is really cool,' and then someone else will see something totally different that I wouldn't have noticed if they weren't there."

Although Schlisner was raised as a Seventh-day Adventist, his faith didn't become personal until he grew older. He said, "When you grow up Seventh-day Adventist, you can sometimes end up just going with the flow. You go to church, you go to chapel, but it doesn't become an important part of your life until you realize that it's meaningful. Spirituality went from one of the last places in my life to my first priority when I realized that this world has a bunch of things that try to satisfy me, but that don't mean anything."


This year, Schlisner is one of the Gymnares team captains. When he graduates, he plans to begin his career in the business world. "I want to work as an actuary for the first few years," he said. "But I don't want to do that my entire life. Eventually I want to come back to Union and get a degree in education, so that I can be a high school math teacher. I think that that would be a very



After falling in love with gymnastics in high school, Devin Schlisner was excited to join the Gymnares.

"Our Bible study has been a really big blessing for me because it's totally changed my relationship with God for the better. I don't think I would have joined the acrobatic gymnastics team if the people at Union weren't as friendly as they are."

fun job to spend the rest of my life doing."

Whenever he can, Schlisner encourages others to spend time in scripture. "I think that sometimes people can be a little scared to dive into the Word of God to try to answer the questions they have. But I definitely think more people should try it because it can lead to a lot of blessings. God isn't just going to leave you alone; He is definitely going to be there to get those questions answered and to pull you to a better place." 



Devin Schlisner built relationships with new friends and God through a weekly Bible study group after Gymnares practice.

Jillian Dean: the nuts and bolts of advocacy by Annika Cambigue '23

A senior psychology and social work double major from Lone Tree, Colorado, Dean is completing her final practicum at the National Association of Social Workers. With 55 chapters across the United States and its territories, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. “Our mission at the Nebraska chapter is to advocate for Nebraska families and citizens,” Dean said. “We focus on what we can do for agencies in Nebraska.”

At work, Dean helps organize annual webinars and conferences, as well as assisting the advocacy committee with their work. “We’ve been focusing a lot on the Nebraska legislative session,” she said. “The advocacy committee goes through all the bills that are introduced and picks the ones that are most important to social workers. Then they write letters about the legislation to senators and some even go and testify. I helped keep the documents organized. Recently I helped set up the yearly Legislative Day conference. I got to select the speakers from organizations in Lincoln to present. I was given a lot more responsibility at this practicum, and I really enjoyed it.”

For Dean, working at NASW has opened her eyes to new ways to use her degree. “The biggest

learning experience so far has been the shift from individual-based social work to whole community-based social work,” she said. “The NASW focuses on advocacy at the macro-practice level and working on policies that will best support communities. It’s been really cool to see what we can do on a larger scale.”

Dean isn’t the only Union student with ties to the NASW. “When social work students reach their senior year, Union College enrolls them in the NASW so students can start experiencing the benefits of belonging to their professional organization,” said Jody Detweiler, assistant professor and social work field director. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to connect with local social workers and to learn best practices for therapy, advocacy or large-scale change.”


Along with becoming an NASW member, social work students are also required to complete 400 hours of practicum work with a local organization. Most students choose to split these hours over two semesters. Dean said, “At the end of my junior year, my advisor gave me a list

of agencies around Lincoln I could apply to. For my first semester, I chose to do my practicum at Friendship Home, which is a local domestic violence shelter. Working there was definitely more client-based. We worked with moms and their children and helped them get set up with housing

“I’ve learned social work isn’t just about counseling, school and hospital work. It’s also about what you can do by advocating for the people of the state and even the country.”

and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.”

Her on-campus advocacy has been no less serious, but possibly more fun. As the social vice president of Union’s Active Minds club, Dean works to raise mental health awareness and plans activities to help her fellow students de-stress. She is also a student social activities dean for the women’s residence hall, organizing events such as cinnamon roll Sabbath and TV nights.

After Dean graduates, she will be attending the University of Denver to pursue a master’s in social work. Because Union’s social work program is accredited by the Council for Social Work Education, Dean will only need one more year of schooling to complete her master’s degree rather than the usual two. “There are many different specializations I could go into, and I haven’t chosen which one I’ll do yet,” she said. “But my practicum at NASW has helped me see that I like advocacy a lot, and picking a pathway toward that would be a good option for me.” 

Jillian Dean saw a much broader picture of social work after an internship at the Nebraska chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.



Photo: Scott Cushman/Union College

Austin Hill: College is hard, but life can be harder

by Trena Reed '97

Sitting on a roof in the bitter cold of a Chicago November, joints aching, Austin Hill thought to himself: Going to school is better than working construction.

So he returned to Union.

Austin's meandering journey to graduation started at Union, but he dropped out before completing his degree.

"I quit because I became disillusioned with college," Austin admits. "I was spending a lot of money and it was high stress. I was convinced by friends and family that college was the key to success. But school was never my thing, and I experienced burnout, so I decided to go work on other things."

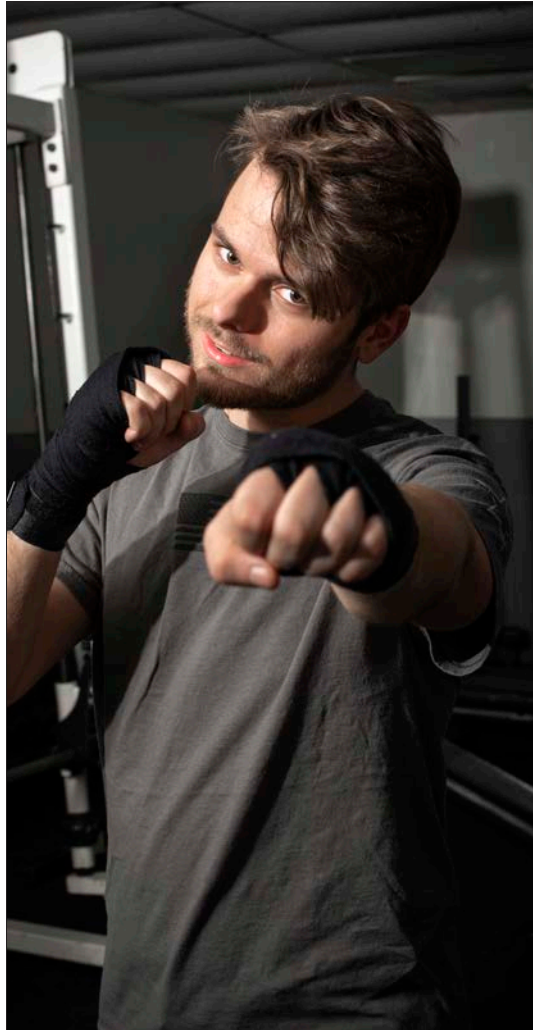
He took a two-year hiatus before his rooftop reckoning returned him to Union. These gap-years weren't the first time Austin contemplated the merits of college. He pursued a brief career in construction before beginning his freshmen year. He wasn't convinced college was a worthy investment.

But at Union he found financial advisors who were forthright and teachers who cared.

"The financial advisors were always honest with me. I could tell they were trying to help me get my money's worth. And the teachers cared about me. That was one of the things I liked best about Union, the teachers cared about me, and I could tell."

When considering a major, Austin knew a desk job wasn't for him. "I want to do something dynamic. I don't work well in a rigid structure. I also want to be creative and to help others."

His reasons for choosing the Health and Human Performance Program were both practical and personal.



Austin Hill returned to college to help people transform their lives through exercise.

"When I was in high school," Austin shared, "the doctors told me I should take more concern with my health. They told me I could end up diabetic if I didn't turn my numbers around."

So, Austin did. His journey transformed his life and planted in him a passion to help others experience this same transformation.

"I get really excited seeing people's turnarounds," Austin explained. "I love seeing how it can change lives. I like watching people gain confidence. I like watching them smile more. I like seeing them have more energy. I like seeing the happiness and fulfillment it gives them. It's so rewarding to see someone's life change for the better and to know you helped them get there."

After a false start and two gap years, Austin graduated from Union in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in health and human performance and minors in personal training and business.

Austin admits it can be a challenge to maintain an active lifestyle, but a simple formula has proved useful in reaching his goals. "Make it work and make it play," Austin advises. "By make it work, I mean: Make it a part of your schedule; write it down; make it something you do every day; make it a habit. But at the same time, don't forget to make it play; find the exercise you like. At the end of the day, the exercise you like doing the most is better than the best exercise you never do." 🏋️

"Make it work and make it play. By work I mean — make it a part of your schedule, write it down, make it something you do every day, make it a habit. But at the same time, don't forget to make it play by finding an exercise you like. At the end of the day, the exercise you like doing the most is better than the best exercise you never do."

Norma Mena: Learning to live healthy for a lifetime

by Trena Reed '97

Norma Mena graduated from Union with a health and human performance degree in May, and she understands firsthand the challenges of pursuing a healthy lifestyle. As a teenager, she found herself at a crossroads in her own fitness journey.

“I was told by a doctor that I was at risk of being overweight,” she explained. “That really affected me and pushed me to explore what it means to live a healthy lifestyle.”

That exploration led her to high school sports where she thrived. But, because of her commitment to the Sabbath, she was unable to participate in Friday night and Saturday meets.

“It was nice to come to Union,” Mena shared, “and experience a community where activities end early on Friday, and everyone goes to family worship and church together.”

When she considered colleges, Norma looked for a spiritual community. She wanted God to be a part of her college experience.

“Union is like a family. At public school, I didn’t see my professors outside the classroom; at Union, I see them at church and at other events. It’s nice.”

One of those professors, Dr. Nancy Petta, who inspired Mena to see fitness

“I’d like to work with teens. That’s the age I was struggling the most, trying to discover what it meant to live healthy.”

as a lifetime goal and encouraging her to switch her major to health and human performance.

“I love how Dr. Petta practices being healthy,” Mena said. “She inspires me to want to be like her; to live a healthy lifestyle throughout my life, even into my old age.”



Photo: Scott Culman/Union College

Norma Mena was inspired by Dr. Nancy Petty to live an active life and help others do the same.

Because Mena’s major provides a wide variety of career options, she’s not sure exactly what direction her career will take, but being a guide, educator, and cheerleader for those struggling to fulfill their fitness goals interests her. During her internship at Profile by Sanford, she experienced personal coaching in action.

“Helping people on their journey to living a healthy lifestyle attracts me,” Mena shared. “There’s so much more to health than going to the gym and drinking protein shakes. I want to be involved in a client’s entire journey to health—exercise, nutrition, and mental wellbeing. I want to equip my clients with the skills they will need to succeed without me.”


Because of her own challenges at a young age, she has a soft spot for teenagers.

“I’d like to work with teens. If they start out young, they can be educated correctly,

which will impact their entire lives. And that’s the age I was struggling the most, trying to discover what it meant to live healthy.”

And for all of us struggling with our own fitness routine, Mena has some sage advice:

“Find a physical activity you enjoy and do it regularly with someone who will hold you accountable. And when you have a difficult workout, remember that not every workout is going to be great. Just because you don’t sweat in a workout doesn’t mean it isn’t an effective workout. It’s a process, and change isn’t going to happen overnight, it’s going to happen over months.”

And, lastly, Mena advised, “Celebrate off-the-scale victories. Do you feel better? Do you feel more energized? Do your clothes fit better? Celebrate, not just the numbers on the scale, but also those little off-scale victories.” 

Swimming to Europe and back

by Brennan Hallock '11



Jim Clements started swimming laps at Union College's Larson Lifestyle Center in 1984 — just a couple of years after the pool opened. Now 9,000 miles later, he's swum far enough to cross the Atlantic and back and made some great friends along the way.

Although Clements didn't have any connections to Union or the Seventh-day Adventist church, he loves to swim and found Larson's pool to be very convenient.

He developed a love for swimming during his days spent lifeguarding in Japan, where he lived while his father was stationed at a naval base in Tokyo. During his time in Japan as a high schooler he taught swimming lessons to sailors and others in the area.

Clements swam competitively in high school and looked for a location near his home to continue practicing his swimming skills. Larson Lifestyle Center proved to be the perfect spot, allowing Clement to get in a daily swim 5:45 a.m. before breakfast and the start his workday at Lincoln Machine, Inc., where he worked as a toolmaker.

Now retired, he continues to swim in Larson's pool because of the supportive swimming and workout community that formed around him. "There was a good group of people there and I developed friendships among the other members and some of the students who worked as lifeguards," he explained.

9,000 miles of community

Clements' 9000 miles in Larson's junior Olympic-sized 25 meter pool means Clements has swum more than 579,000 laps in the past 36 years.

"I'm not sure I was even counting when I first started to swim," he said. "But around '86 they gave me a T-shirt. They gave out a T-shirt if you swam 100 miles in a year." This inspired him to begin tracking his laps, and he hasn't stopped.

What keeps him coming back, though, is the people he met; people and relationships built through



Photo: Scott Cushman/Union College

the fitness center. "I would continue to swim even if they weren't recording laps," Clements said. He could swim and record laps at any other pool in Lincoln, but he wouldn't have the same community that is offered through Larson Lifestyle Center.

The 100-mile club and the 2,000-mile mark

One of the friendships Clements formed through the Larson Lifestyle Center is with Jean Heuke. She began frequenting the center in 2010 when she and her husband moved to Lincoln after he retired. Heuke is not a Union College alumnus but, like Clements, she lives near the school. She joined the center to exercise and started attending water aerobics, then began swimming laps with her husband.

When she found out about the 100-mile club it caught her attention, and she has been involved in this motivational group ever since. "If you reach 100 miles—either swimming or walking—we have a recognition gathering," explained Heuke. The group recognizes each person with a T-shirt or other reward, depending on their achievement. "So far, I have received a plaque and a jacket. And I'm close to the 2,000-mile mark," she said.

Heuke built many relationships through the Larson Lifestyle Center as she became more connected in its strong community. "I've made friends at Larson. We talk to each other and look forward to seeing each other. Jim Clements and I even have a little competition to see who can get the 100 miles first each year," laughed Heuke. "We just do it in fun—no actual competition. We do it as a motivator."

Heuke said she has also felt a significant improvement in her health since she began swimming at Larson's pool. She has enjoyed swimming since she was young, but where she lived before moving to Lincoln didn't have a pool. "Being in a warm water pool has helped me a lot health-wise," she said.

She also made friends with Larson Lifestyle Center Director Maria



Jim Clements and Jean Heuke represent a dedicated community of Union's neighbors who have swum thousands of miles since the Larson Lifestyle Center opened in 1981.

dos Santos, back when Maria worked at the pool as a Union student.

"Maria was a student teaching autistic kids on Sunday afternoons and I was going to the pool," said Heuke. "Sometimes the pool would get to be full, and I would let her work with the kids in my swimming lane. And we just got to be really good friends. We still have lots of laughs when we see each other."

58 memorial gifts toward something better

When Larson Lifestyle Center opened, it was a health facility for Union College students, but it quickly turned into more than that through individuals like Jim Clements and Jean Heuke. It has offered the Lincoln community and Union College a way to connect and grow with each other through health and exercise.

Clements and Heuke are two examples of community members who have built a deep, lasting connection with Union College solely through the Larson Lifestyle Center. Neither attended Union College. Both found the college and its warm community by using the resources offered to them by the fitness center.

The level of care and connection offered by the fitness center is unique. "It's like a supportive family," says Heuke. "If we know somebody has had something difficult happen to them, we try to be there for them with prayer and listening."

Heuke has even become a strong donor for the

school and has given 58 gifts to Larson honoring people across the community since September 2014. "I just feel like something good can come out of it through Larson," said Heuke.

The right time for better athletic facilities

The upcoming expansion to create the AdventHealth Complex offers a way to build on these strong relationships and increase the school's connection with the community. Clements and Heuke both offered supportive words for the upcoming expansion, saying they are excited to see the upgrades and additions coming to the fitness center.

"I think it's a good time to have better athletic facilities," said Clements, adding that it is important that the school maintains the community access to the facilities. "I think that's always been a good thing," he said.

"I'm very excited about it—very positive about it," Heuke said of the AdventHealth Complex. "They're going to do a lot of improvements at the pool, which need to be done. And they're going to have a walking track! If I get injured and can't use the pool, I can use that," she added.

They both hope that students use the new facility as well. "I'm hoping more students come and use it," said Heuke. Clements added that he recommends students use the facilities that are available to them, and get into an exercise routine early in their lives.

Through members like Clements and Heuke, Lincoln community members and Union College students can learn that the Larson Lifestyle Center—and the upcoming AdventHealth Complex—is much more than a fitness facility. It is a community—both for the school and the people of Lincoln. 🏊



After trying out the Lincoln Marathon in college, Sharon McDowell Larsen has been hooked on running every since.

photos courtesy of Sharon McDowell Larsen

From running club to Ironman to coach: Union graduate embodies the gift of movement by Lauren Bongard '04

Sharon McDowell Larsen '84 has always been on the move. Born in Zimbabwe, she moved back and forth between Africa and the United States as a child, and then to Canada. During college, her homebase shifted from Canada to Kansas. As a young adult, she found herself in her adopted home state of Colorado, where she still lives. All the while, moving her body and participating in team and individual sports propelled her to peak physical performance, and she's shared the gift of wellness with countless others throughout her career and personal life.

Larsen got serious about fitness after enrolling at Union. She jokes that she was bribed to switch colleges; she was attending another school when her father moved to Kansas, and he invited her to transfer to be closer to him. "He said, 'If you go to Union, we'll give you a car.' I thought, 'Well, I don't know where Nebraska is; I hope it's close to mountains or the ocean.' But it turned out to be a good move."

A good move, indeed, for her career and personal wellness goals. She joined the running club and was motivated to train for the Lincoln Marathon. After that, she was hooked. An article about an Ironman Triathlon piqued her interest, even though she didn't swim or competitively bike. So she signed up for swimming lessons and got a bicycle. After a few years of training, she competed in the Ironman Canada, and her time qualified her to compete in the 1988 Hawaii event.

At Union, Larsen double majored in math and biology. She wasn't sure at first what she was going to do with the degrees, but she loved the subject matter and, as a result of her interest in running and triathlon, she went on to earn a post-graduate degree in exercise physiology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL). After graduation, she accepted a job in the sports science lab at the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

All the while, Larsen kept up her own active lifestyle. She traded triathlons for trail running and mountain bike racing, eventually competing in XTERRA races, which combine swimming, mountain biking, and trail running in off-road triathlons.

Larsen embarked on a career with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), where she headed a program for executive-level corporate managers. The week-long courses emphasized the importance of maintaining good health and fitness to meet the demands of high-powered careers and to fuel executives throughout every stage of their lives. "If you look at chronic conditions and the state of health in this country, a lot of diseases, like Alzheimer's, dementia, cancer, and diabetes, happen over years and years due to poor lifestyle habits," she said. "When you read the research, particularly brain-health research, the admonition is to start as soon

as you can to eat a healthy diet, get regular physical activity, and other lifestyle factors that are a very powerful combination in terms of predicting long-term health outcomes.”

To achieve those outcomes, Larsen says what goes in is key. “I’m in my early 60s now, and I’m very passionate about the dietary side of wellness,” she said. “Most of my focus is on a nutrient-dense, high-quality, plant-based diet. It helps sustain my ability to train hard and be competitive.” And she loves to share this information. “It’s cool to hear how clients turned their health around, lost weight, their blood pressure went down, they’re off their medications, they have more energy, feel better, and think better,” she said. “It’s very rewarding to see it play out in people’s lives. It kept me in the job for 20-plus years and impacts my own life every day.”

Larsen officially retired in March 2020.



Sharon McDowell Larsen competes in many types of races — including the Xterra World Championships in Maui, Hawaii.

Spurred by the additional training time that retirement afforded, she got back into triathlons after years away. She won her age

group in the Tulsa race, which qualified her for the 2021 Ironman World Championships in Hawaii—34 years after her debut race there—but the event was postponed due to COVID. That meant maintaining her triathlon training and performance levels for at least another year.

She also remains on-call for some clients and continues to share the importance of physical activity, including how it impacts personal development. “There are lessons to be learned in challenging yourself, taking risks, thinking like a team player, and taking the wins with the losses,” she said. “You can be extremely talented, but sooner or later, you’ll bump up against competition that is better than you. Winning is great, but even if you lose, you’ve still done better than 99 percent of the population by just trying.” She adds that the skills of pushing through adversity, embracing challenges, and trying even when failure is likely are all lessons she’s learned and taught as an athlete and coach. “We’re designed to move, and physical activity optimizes our bodies and brains.”

Union College recognizes this and has reiterated its commitment to health and wellness by unveiling plans for an expanded wellness center that will give students, employees, and the community more opportunities to increase and optimize their fitness levels.

“College-age people don’t realize how critically important it is to take health seriously and engage in positive life behaviors,” Larsen said. “Having opportunities to get people involved in activities and sports can carry on through your life.” And she knows this is true from personal experience. “I appreciate the opportunities Union offered me in terms of learning to swim and be part of the running club, playing tennis, and learning to windsurf. They provided opportunities to do things that I wouldn’t have done by myself, and that led me to greater things.”

For more information about Union’s Fit for the Future wellness facility revitalization campaign, visit ucollege.edu/fit 📍



Sharon McDowell Larsen with her husband, Matthew.

“There are lessons to be learned in challenging yourself, taking risks, thinking like a team player, and taking the wins with the losses. You can be extremely talented, but sooner or later, you’ll bump up against competition that is better than you. Winning is great, but even if you lose, you’ve still done better than 99 percent of the population by just trying. We’re designed to move, and physical activity optimizes our bodies and brains.”

Ed Rusk: A champion of lifestyle change

by Emily Lynn Roque-Cisneros '17

Like many, alumnus Ed Rusk '88 lived an active lifestyle during his adolescence and college years. As he got older though, his health declined due to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Then, his older brother, Marton, died suddenly in 2005.

Rusk recognized he was headed in the same direction. This realization was a wake up call to focus on improving his health through diet and exercise. "I thought I was average health," he said. "I didn't realize the average for most Americans is extremely unhealthy." A friend suggested Rusk sign up for a triathlon in the spring to help him stay active during the winter. Training was challenging at first. He didn't like to swim. "I couldn't go one length of the pool without hyperventilating," he said. "My technique was horrible, so I was exhausted."

He took lessons and persevered, determined to conquer his fears and not fail. Five months later and an internet training plan completed, he crossed the finish line. He was the last person out of the water and was passed by a 73-year-old woman on the run. But, he was hooked. "It was humbling — feeling like I was going to die, but also feeling so alive because I set a goal and reached it," he said. He's come a long way since that first race.

Surrendering success to God

Over the past 16 years, Rusk's completed 106 races of different lengths, including multiple Ironman Triathlons. The Ironman race features a 2.4 mile swim, 112 miles of biking, and a full 26.2 mile marathon — all completed in under 17 hours.

During one race in Penticton, Canada, now detailed in a 10-minute documentary short film "I Will Not Fear," Rusk realized the parallel between his own Christian walk and the intense commitment athletes endure to cross that finish line. He prepared for six months, envisioned a personal record. Then, halfway through swimming he started throwing up. In mile twenty of the bike ride he wanted to give up.

God had other plans and kept him going. "God chose to take time and teach me a lesson," he said. "He reached out to me in a dark moment when I was doing something selfish—Ironmans are a selfish sport."

His experience changed his view on racing and his spiritual walk. "If athletes don't train and focus on completing the

After watching his brother die in mid-life, Ed Rusk decided to change his life and started competing in triathalons.



photos: courtesy of Ed Rusk

workouts, we won't finish our race. Similarly, if we as Christians don't study, devote time to prayer and ultimately build a relationship with Christ then our spiritual life suffers and alongside it our secure hope for salvation," he said. "Previously it was me against the world and now I'm much more relaxed." After sharing this testimony at his church, a professor encouraged his students to transform Rusk's story into a film. He was hesitant at first but now Rusk enjoys using every opportunity to show the film and share this experience of setting goals, overcoming fear and obstacles—at youth groups and even when traveling. "I wanted this to be about God and His ability to reach us, not about me," he said. "I'm an average Joe. I've simply done a lot with my wellness and athletic journey. I now realize this film is its own ministry." The film received four different awards, including the Inspire Award at the Christian Film Festival in 2016.

Commitment and adaptability

Competing in races like the Ironman Triathlon takes dedication, and upwards of 16 to 20 hours of training a week. "It takes a juggling act sometimes, but if I take care of my family and work first, then my workouts are simply fitting them in where I can," he said. "I can't let this overtake my life. Ironmans are something I do, not who I am."

Efficiency is key. He uses this method when training other athletes as a certified Ironman coach. "I'm a coach now to help people who were in my position in the beginning—new to the sport and unfamiliar with prioritizing efficiency in training," he said.

To stay focused, Rusk credits advice given during his time at Union from retired Chaplain Rich Carlson. "I'll never forget what he told me before I went as a student missionary to Africa," he said. "To be successful, in the mission field and in life, there's three things you have to learn: adaptability, adaptability, adaptability. I've used that in business, and now in my life as an athlete." While Rusk and his wife Britta chose to not have kids, he said if they had they knew they'd go to Union. "I grew more at Union than I think I would have anywhere else. That's exactly where God needed me to be," he said.

Rusk was moved by an anonymous donor who personally helped him when he was faced with a startling financial situation a couple weeks from graduation. A few years after graduating with his business degree, Rusk paid it forward and set up scholarships with Britta to help students in similar situations. "Union is dear to my heart because of that experience," he said. During his time as a student Rusk was active by playing basketball, volleyball and even running the Lincoln Half Marathon. He utilized the Larson Lifestyle Center like many students, but noted it wasn't as worn down as it is now.

Union's commitment to health and wellness is why the Fit for the Future fundraising campaign was started to renovate and add to

the wellness facility, the Larson Lifestyle Center. The goal is to provide adequate space and equipment for students and employees to focus on fitness and continue to help the surrounding community stay active. "I agree that as an Adventist institution Union does need to focus on more than just spiritual development. If we disregard the physical aspect of taking care of ourselves, we're only giving part of our unique message," he said.

The new facility, named the AdventHealth Complex, is part of Union's expanding wellness program to provide students the opportunity to focus on health all year long.

A ripple effect

Rusk's lifestyle transformation didn't just affect his life, either. Four years into his change, he began noticing the employees at his company, Chattem Chemicals in Chattanooga, Tennessee, were also having health problems. He implemented a company-wide "Biggest Loser" challenge. As the chief financial officer, Rusk personally hosted lunch and learn sessions to help others learn about small lifestyle changes for big results—portion control, balanced plates, and exercise. "I tried to give them tools to focus on each week and build on that," he said.

After eight weeks, 32 people lost a combined total of 350 lbs.

"I think our health as a company has definitely improved over the years because we're conscious of it," he said.

For anyone looking to improve their health, lifestyle changes can be overwhelming at first. "As I tell my employees when we're making a major change, we have to eat the elephant one bite at a time," he said. "We didn't get in this spot overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight." He recommended setting a major goal, and then breaking it down into smaller goals with timelines as a key way to measure progress.

Currently, Rusk exercises for fitness more than racing, and coaches other athletes to reach their triathlon and Ironman goals. He recognized that accountability was a key factor for success when making lifestyle changes, and wanted to

help others stay on track to reach their goals. "Sometimes it's tough to stay motivated, but knowing someone is looking over your shoulder at your workouts and progress often helps with the motivation," he said.

Since changing his habits Rusk lost 50 lbs, decreased his stress, lowered his cholesterol, avoided blood pressure medication and reversed various inflammations. "I can get up early, work all day, and still have energy. I no longer get home and collapse on the couch because I'm tired," he said. Now, at 57, Rusk said he has more energy than he did 20 years ago. "The body has an amazing ability to heal itself if we take care of it," he said.

To watch "I Will Not Fear", visit iwillnotfearfilm.com 📺

"God chose to take time and teach me a lesson, He reached out to me in a dark moment when I was doing something selfish —Ironmans are a selfish sport."

BIRTHS |

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Luke 18:16 (NIV)



Devin '17 and Agnes Marbun '20 Alexander announce the arrival of Eden Nauli Alexander on April 4, 2022. Devin works at Union College as the associate registrar, and Agnes works at Agtac Services in Lincoln.



Addison '18 and Camerine Flores '17 Collingsworth are proud to announce the birth of Ridley Ulysses Collingsworth on December 4, 2021. He joins brother Orson at home in Lincoln, where Addison owns a home automation company.



Travis and **Rebecca Ruf Donaldson '11** are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Lydia Rose, born on July 6, 2020. Travis works as Emergency Services Director for their county, and Rebecca is a PA for Cherokee Indian Hospital in North Carolina.



Jason '03 and Melanie Santos '07 Donovan welcomed Micah Elias on October 18, 2021. He joins brother Josiah (3) at home in Kansas City where Melanie is an RN at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission and Jason works for Pharmscripts as a pharmacist.



Bethany Joy joined **Benjamin '12 and Breanna Bramblett '16 Barnett's** family on November 22, 2021. She joins her sisters Joanna (4) and Julia (2) at home, in Lincoln. Benjamin works at Union College.



Saylor Ray Tension was born on November 30, 2021, to **Chris '07** and Jessica **Tension**. They live in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.



Kiefer and **Jessyka Albert Dooley '16** are the proud new parents of Lachlan Kip, born on February 6, 2022. They live in Broomfield, Colorado, and both work for the Rocky Mountain Conference.



Michelle and **Aaron Flores '12** are the proud new parents of Adrian Santiago Flores, born on October 26, 2021. They are both elementary school teachers in Lincoln.



Andrew and **Cara Flemmer Jones '13** welcomed Claire Raeann on October 10, 2021. She joins sister Amelie (3) at home in Brighton, Colorado. Andrew is a teacher at Vista Ridge Academy, and Cara has her own dental practice in Lafayette.



Daniel Thomas Martinez, III was born on August 16, 2021, to **Daniel Jr '11** and **Shy Conopio '11 Martinez**. Shy teaches nursing at Union College and Dan is a math teacher at Lincoln Northstar High School.



Cainan Ming '19 and his wife, Gabby, welcomed Elisha Lorenzo Ming-Hernandez on January 8, 2022. They live in Lincoln where Gabby is a medical aide, and Cainan coaches Union College's soccer team.



Cid '15 and **Tabitha Schumacher '15 Coto** announce the birth of their second child, Aurora Joy, on August 26, 2021. She joins her brother, Enoch Eddie, at home in Jamestown, North Dakota. Tabitha teaches at Hillcrest Elementary and Cid works remotely at Sandhills Global.



James and **Tara Taylor Wheeker '08** welcomed Jocelyn Brooke on June 23, 2021. She joins brother Noah at home in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where James is an engineer for American Airlines and Tara is a remote medical coder for the Oklahoma Heart Institute.



Justin '11 and **Betsy Norton '12 Woods** are excited to announce the birth of their son, Jasper, on July 13, 2021. They live in New Orleans, Louisiana, where Justin is currently completing a fellowship in palliative care.



Micah and **Heather Matthews Johnson '10** welcomed Stella Kathleen, born March 22, 2022. They live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where Heather works in elementary special education and Micah is a web designer.



Jay and **Taylor Turgeon Johnsen '18** are the proud new parents of Letty Lane Johnsen, born August 4, 2021. They live in Frederick, Colorado, where Taylor works for Peak Anesthesia and Pain Management, and Jay is a lineman.



Tim and **Mindi Heinrich Huffman '11** welcomed Blayze Easton on November 25, 2021. He joins sister Dallas at home in Montrose, Colorado. Tim owns a flooring and tiling business..



Kennie '13 and **Brianna Nieto '10 Jackson** welcomed Landon Isaac on November 8, 2021. He joins brothers Lucas, Liam and Logan at home in Dayton, Ohio, where Kennie is a nurse at Kettering Medical Center.

Terrill '05 and **JoJean Baker '06 Birth** are happy to announce the birth of Lucas LeeRoy Birth on May 4, 2022.

John and **Erin Hofmann Boiger '10** are excited to announce the arrival of Oryana Elizabeth February 17, 2022.

Jonathan '11 and **Nelly Melendez '10 Greenberg** are the proud parents of Ruby Sloane, who was born on September 1, 2021. She joins sister Penelope at home in Oregon.

Andy '09 and **Rachel Halim '11 Seiler** welcomed their second child, Solomon Charles Halim Seiler on November 9, 2021.



WEDDINGS |



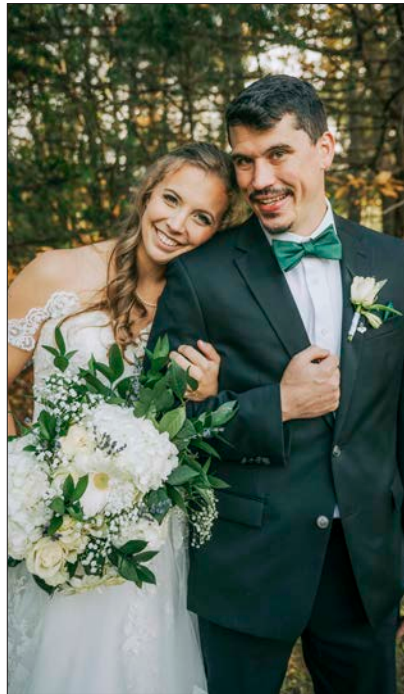
Tracy Faber '05 married **Kjell Mickelson '02** on October 25, 2020, at Red Rocks outside of Denver, Colorado. Although they did not technically meet at Union, they are eternally grateful for their hundreds of mutual Union connections which brought them together.



Kelli Poplau '19 married Matt Malouf on August 7, 2021, in Hastings, Nebraska. The couple lives in Hastings, where Kelli works as a neurosurgery PA.



Zakary Perrin '18 and **Ashton Lair '18** were married in Phoenix, Arizona, on December 23, 2021. The Perrins currently reside in Scottsdale, Arizona, where Ashton works as head girls' dean at Thunderbird Adventist Academy. Zak is doing fieldwork to complete his OTA degree from Union.



Kerri Vogler '15 married Jordan Cookson in Massachusetts on November 7, 2021. Jordan works as a licensed electrician while Kerri is opening "Sweetness and Honey Bakery" in Foxboro, Massachusetts.



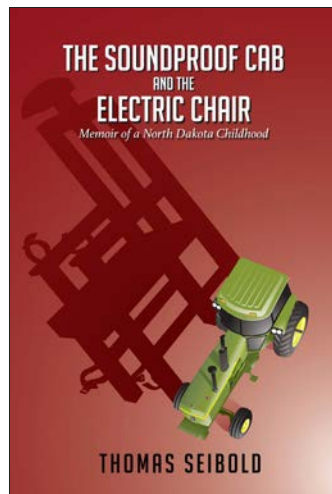
Briana Jenkins '13 married Paul Starkebaum on July 3, 2021, in Bozeman, Montana. They currently live in College Place, Washington, where Briana works for Walla Walla Public Schools and Paul is athletic director at Walla Walla University.

1960s

Kit (Catherine) Watts '66 was recognized as Andrews University's "2021 Honored Alumni" for her work as a journalist, pastor, librarian, teacher and editor and for pioneering the way for women in ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Kit is now retired in College Place, Washington.

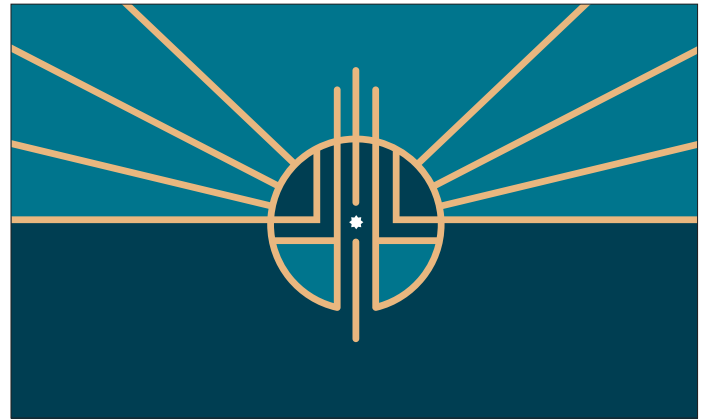
1980s

701 Press recently published a book of memoirs by **Tom Seibold, '85**, a technology marketing specialist in Kansas City. *The Soundproof Cab and the Electric Chair* is a remembrance of Seibold's childhood in North Dakota and features stories about his time at Union, including his work at the then-college-owned radio station, KUCV-FM. A preview of the book's first 20 pages, and ordering information, is available at 701press.com.



1990s

Ed Mejia '98 recently created a design that was chosen as the new flag for Lincoln, Nebraska. Titled "All Roads Lead to Lincoln" the teal, navy, and gold flag includes art-deco style design inspired by architecture and Native artwork displayed inside the Nebraska State Capitol. Mejia's design was chosen from six finalists and the new flag will be flown at many government buildings across the city.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

You have told us this is your favorite section. Tell us where you are, what you're doing or just send greetings.

Direct your letters to:

Alumni Office
Union College
3800 S. 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

email: alumni@ucollege.edu

Make address changes at ucollege.edu/cordmagazine

'67 denotes graduation year

('67) denotes last year attended or preferred class year

PUBLICATION POLICY

Personal submissions for publication from college alumni and friends will be printed at Union College's sole discretion. The college may choose not to publish any information that will conflict with the values of Union College and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2000s

Union international rescue and relief graduates **Janae Schumacher '20**, **Justin Dena '17** and **Lauren Lombard '09** provided critical support in Haiti after a devastating 2021 earthquake. The three volunteered with the Haitian-run Educare to provide medical assistance in rural mountain areas around the epicenter where aid was most needed and least available. Schumacher and Dena worked in Haiti while Lombard provided remote support by fundraising for the organization. Read more at ucollege.edu/haiti-2021

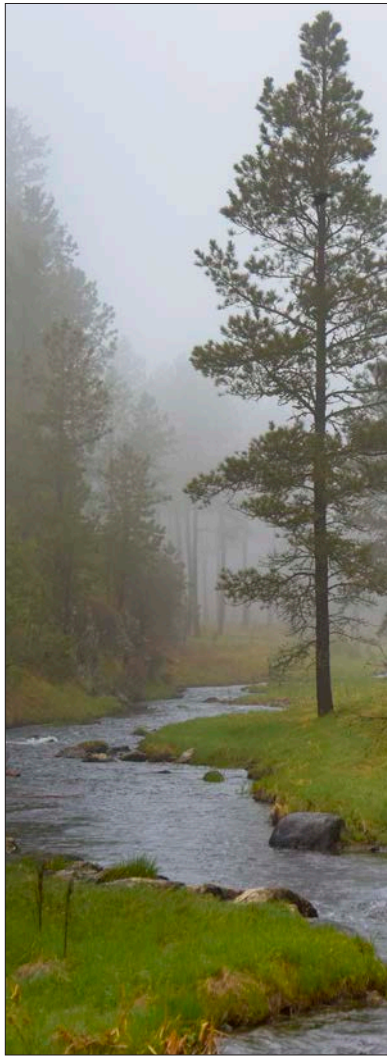


photo: Steve Nazario/Personal Library

Death dates and/or obituaries have been received for the following individuals.

1940s

Arthur Gibb '42 of Sandy Spring, Maryland, died on September 30, 2021, at the age of 101. He is survived by his children, **Kenneth '65**, **Phyllis Eisele '66**, **Melvin ('71)**, Keith, and Glenn; sister, **Thelma Gibb Olson '66**; brother, George; 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.



Alice Falconer

Alice McFarland Falconer ('47) of

Littleton, Colorado, died on October 14, 2021, at age 95. Alice was born September 10, 1926, in Greenville, Michigan, to Alford McFarland and Anna Jensen McFarland. She graduated from Champion Academy and attended Union College, before meeting William Falconer, whom she married in June 1948.

Sylvia Johnson Christensen ('49)

died on April 25, 2022, at age 92. She was born to Jacob and Wilma Doud Johnson on March 29, 1930, in Slayton, Minnesota. She graduated from



Sylvia Christensen

Sheyenne River Academy and attended Union College where she studied nursing. On September 18, 1948, Sylvia married **Wilbur "Dean" Christensen ('50)** in Des Moines, Iowa. Survivors include sons, **Larry ('72)** and **Ken '82**; a daughter, **Kathy Erickson '75**; siblings, **Mardella Bergquist** and **Lewis Johnson**; nine grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Arloene "Arlo" Rentfro Goley died on December 22, 2021, at home in Grand Junction, Colorado. Arlo was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, September 26, 1930,

where her parents were missionaries. She married **John Goley '49** on June 24, 1951. Arlo worked as an RN for 51 years in a number of hospitals, and she taught nursing at several schools including Union College. She is survived by husband, **John '49**; son, **John A. '77**; daughter **Brenda Morris '84**; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Carol Magnuson Quance '49 died on September 16, 2021, at age 97. She was born in Big Stone County, Minnesota, on April 25, 1924, to Axel and Ruth Magnuson. Carol graduated from Ortonville High School and Union College and married **Arthur Quance '50** in May 1950. She is survived by daughter **Deborah '77** and three grandchildren.

Dorothy Weisz ('49) of Lincoln, Nebraska, died on April 2, 2022. She was born on November 27, 1927, in Hurdsfield, North Dakota, to Andrew and Lydia Weisz. She graduated from Sheyenne River Academy and Union College in 1949, then earned a master's in civil engineering from Long Beach State University. She was the first female engineer hired by the Flood Control District and authored the 1984 Project Status Report, which identified a \$1.2 billion deficiency in regional flood control system; after which EMA pursued a 25-year flood control program. She is survived by a son, **Cordell Gutknecht**; sisters, **Virginia Widicker ('45)**, **Dessa Hardin ('47)** and **Helen Myres**; grandchildren **Corey Gutknecht**, **Brianne Reynolds** and **Courtney Bartlett '14**; and four great-grandchildren.

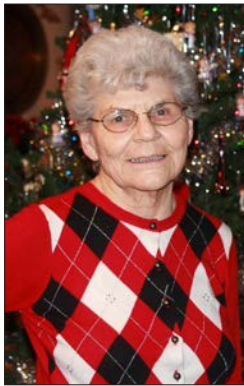
1950s

Virginia Hause Baker ('50) died Friday, February 18, 2022, at her home in Lincoln, Nebraska. She was born in Fort Lupton, Colorado, on August 8, 1928, to Mattie and Dare Hause, and was married to **Melvin Baker '51** for almost 43 years, until his death. She served as the director of the Good Neighbor Center and dean of women at Union College. She is survived by daughters, **Judi Wagner '74**, **Joni Gorton** and **Jeanne Hevener '83**; eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Mitchell Thiel '50, was born on December 23, 1925, in Lincoln, Nebraska, and died on October 25, 2021, at age 95 in Collegedale, Tennessee. After his service in WWII, he enrolled at Union College and majored

Union College was built on the strength and sacrifice of those who have gone before. We thank God for the blessed hope that we will see them again soon.

in physics and chemistry. He began his Ph.D. studies in Nebraska but transferred to the University of Maryland and married Nancy Wright in 1956. Upon graduation, Mitch began working for the Navy, and took a job teaching chemistry at Southern Missionary College in 1966 until retiring in 1994. He is survived by his wife, Nancy, extended family members, and many friends who were like family.



Mabel Werner

Mabel Flemmer Werner '50 was born July 15, 1927, in Lehr, North Dakota, to Jacob and Emelia Werth Flemmer, and died on December 20, 2021. She graduated from Sheyenne River Academy and Union College, then earned a master's degree in home economics from Colorado State University. She taught in secondary schools in Nebraska, Colorado and California. In 1959 she met Bob Werner and they married on June 14, 1960, in Pueblo, Colorado, where they resided until 1979 when they moved to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. They enjoyed 48 years together until Bob passed away in 2008. She is survived by her son, Bill Werner; and sisters, **Erna Flemmer Hauck '69** and Ida Lehman; and two grandchildren.

Carol Johnson Ruffcorn ('51), age 91, of Grand Terrace, California, passed away on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. Carol was born December 22, 1930, and is survived by her husband of more than 70 years, **John Ruffcorn '51**.



Frank Moore

Frank Moore '52, age 93, of Keene, Texas, died on February 15, 2022. He was born to Willard and Hilda Moore in Panama City, Panama, on August 7, 1928. Frank left Panama in 1945, at the age of 14, to attend Southwestern Junior College in Keene, Texas. He then finished his B. A. degree in Theology at Union College, where he met his future bride, **Lillian Tolar '52**. Together

they served in South America to all over the United States. He is survived by his sisters, **Jennie Perez '57**, **Lena Escandon '56**; brother Samuel Chester Moore; daughters, Judy Toms, Connie Szalay, and Laurie Truitt; eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren.



James Stokos

James Stokos '52 died November 8, 2021, at age 93. Born October 9, 1928, in San Francisco to Annette Gerdes and Nick Stokos, he attended Union College Academy and graduated from Union College. He also earned a D.D.S. degree from University of Nebraska in 1957 and a M.D. degree from Loma Linda University in 1967. His professional career spanned more than 50 years, including private practice in both dentistry and medicine; service in the Army and Navy, both stateside and overseas; contributions to academic and clinical teaching and concluding with his great pleasure in the private practice in dermatology in San Diego where he lived for over 30 of his last years. He is survived by two daughters, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Betty Rauh Bruce ('53) born in October of 1931 in Gage, Oklahoma, died on October 15, 2021, in Lincoln, Nebraska. She and her husband, Billy, came to Lincoln in order for her to get her teaching certificate from Union College. She and Billy had four children together; and today, she is survived by her daughter Sandi Bruce; 11 grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren.

Pauline "Polly" Justice '53, of Collegedale, Tennessee, passed away on December 27, 2021, at age 92. Polly was born September 10, 1929 to William and Pauline Roethel in Bismarck, North Dakota. Polly practiced for 35 years as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist at Decatur, Alabama. then retired to Collegedale, Tennessee, to be closer to family. She is survived by daughters Tammie Peltier and Pamela Mountz; four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Joseph "Joe" Schnell ('53) of Sturgeon, Missouri, passed away Friday, September 24, 2021, in Columbia, Missouri. He was born September 5, 1933, in Hooker, Oklahoma, to Joseph and Florine Schnell. Survivors include wife, Barbara; children David, Larry, **Cindi Kelly '83**, and **Jolene Johnston ('92)**; siblings Gladys Wagner and **Jerry Schnell '61**; 13 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Marvin Frishman ('55), of Solway, Minnesota, died on March 19, 2022. Marvin was born in Upham, North Dakota on April 22, 1931 to Henry and Gertrude Frishman. He attended Plainview Adventist Academy and joined the military from 1952 to 1954. Marvin continued his education at Union College, where he met and married **Arlene Larson '54** on August 27, 1956. Marvin worked at Porter Memorial Adventist Hospital in Denver, Colorado, before moving to Solway in 1967 where he opened Marv's Repair in Solway. Marvin was co-director of the Adventist Clothing Center Thrift Store in Bemidji for 25 years. Survivors include wife Arlene; siblings Lyle, Shirley York and Louella Smith; five children, 14 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Lynn "Pete" Knight, Jr. ('55) died on April 18, 2021. He was born on October 25, 1933, to Wanda Mills and Lynn B Knight in Wilburton, Oklahoma. He married his college sweetheart Nanette White, who passed away in 1995. He later served as president of Wellington Press, and then he and his wife Helenka owned Knight Lithograph. Survivors include wife Helenka; brothers **Billy "Jake" Knight '60** and **Bob Knight '63**; five children and six grandchildren.

Carolyn Spring Dickinson '57 died on February 15, 2022, her 87th birthday. After community college at Fort Worth and Keene, Texas, she completed her business degree at Union College in 1957. She met and married **Loren Dickinson '57** at

Union. Together they had two children, Greg and Terri Neil; and two grandchildren.



Eula May Gabbert

Eula May Lindquist Gabbert '57, of Duluth, Georgia, passed away March 6, 2022. Born to missionary parents in India, Eula May obtained an elementary education degree from Union College. She met her husband, **Gale Gabbert '54**, working in the school cafeteria. They taught school in Maryland before Gale took up pastoral work. Eula May taught school, piano and supported Gale's ministry. Survivors include sister, Evonne Baasch; children Teresa Dorn, Dennis Gabbert and Brenda Theus; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ernest Fisher '57 of Slick, Oklahoma, passed away on December 5, 2021, at the age of 89. He was born and spent most of his life on the family farm near Slick. After graduating from college, Ernest went into the egg business, building his first commercial chicken house around 1958 while also farming. Later he expanded to include a feed business. Survivors include by his brother, Helton Richard, his wife, Lori; four children; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; four step-children; and six step-grandchildren.

Jack Robinette '57 and **Rachel Taylor Robinette '58** both passed away in 2021. Jack was born on September 23, 1935, to Eugene "Pop" Robinette and Velma Allen Robinette in San Francisco, California and passed away on September 14, 2021, in Keene, Texas. He attended school in Keene and finished his business degree at Union College in Lincoln. He married Rachel on November 30, 1958, in Keene,

Texas. Rachel Taylor was born December 20, 1935, to Lawrence E. and Esther Taylor in Thornfield, Missouri, and passed away on February 21, 2021 in Cleburne, Texas. She attended school in Keene and finished her nursing degree at Union College after doing her internship in nursing at Porter Sanitarium in both Boulder and Denver, Colorado. Most of her career was spent helping to deliver babies at Cleburne Hospital and Huguley Hospital. Together they raised three beloved children in Keene to ensure they had the opportunity for Christian education.

Jim Hagerman '58 of Gresham, Oregon, passed away on February 14, 2022. He was born in Satanta, Kansas. He was loved and cherished by many people including: his parents, George Hagerman and Wuanita Hagerman; his siblings, Fred, Roland, Zarita and Jackie; his wife Maxine; and his children, Cindy, Karen, Cheryl, Kevin, Brenda, David, Shirlene, Sandy, Shelly, Terri and Bill.

Franklin House '58 passed away on April 13, 2022. Born on April 18, 1936 to Lucille and Harold House in Mexico City, he was married to Bonnie Rae Turner House for 65 years. He is survived by his wife, Bonnie, their sons Rick, Ray and Rolly; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Paul Vercio ('58) passed away on November 7, 2021, and his wife, **Patricia Petersen Vercio ('59)** died on April 14, 2022. Paul and Pat are survived by their children, **Alan Vercio ('68)**, **Buffy Halvorsen ('83)**, Cathy Thayer, Philip Vercio, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



Paul and Patricia Vercio

1960s

Ralph Darrough '60, of Greeley, Colorado, passed away January 18, 2022. He was born June 7, 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri, to David and Ruth Darrough. He

graduated from Sunnydale Academy and served the Army Medical Corps from 1950 – 1956, including 16 months in Korea as a surgical technician in a field hospital. Ralph graduated from Union College in 1960, and then earned a master's in school administration from Colorado University. In 1953 he married Mary Kathryn Shoemate. She preceded him in death on March 26, 1995. In 1999, he married Lois Watters. Ralph was an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For 35 years, he served as a pastor and/or teacher and school administrator in the Rocky Mountain and Michigan Conferences. Ralph is survived by his wife, Lois; daughter, Susan Alexander; son, Brian; two step-daughters; two brothers, Fred and Lloyd, eight grandchildren, five step-grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren.

Sharon Chatfield Sawyers '60, of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away on March 21, 2022. She was born June 23, 1938, in Crowell, Texas, to Charles and Betty Elliston Chatfield. Sharon graduated from Union College in 1960 and in 1988 earned a Master of Community and Regional Planning degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Sharon married Harold Keith Sawyers in 1965. She grew to share her husband's passion for architecture and for many years provided assistance and leadership in numerous Nebraska projects focusing upon town histories, building research and development of several booklets.

Henry Delgado ('63) passed away on September 6, 2021, at age of 82. He was born in Hondo, Texas, on December 12, 1939. Henry worked for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination for more than 35 years and retired in June 2006. He is survived by his wife Eva; his daughter, Lisa; and two grandchildren.

Muriel Lehto Sharp ('63), of Norfolk, Nebraska, died August 5, 2021, at age 86. Survivors include husband John; and daughters Janet Sharp and Jeanine Jackson.

Russell "Russ" Johnson '64 of Meridian, Idaho, died October 19, 2021. Russ was born in North Central Minnesota on February 2, 1939. He worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in various positions including local church pastor, conference departmental director; and lastly, president of the

Alaska Conference. Russ is survived by his wife of 58 years, **Mary Nell Roper Johnson '63**; siblings, Kenneth and **Mary Johnson Young '73**; daughters, Nancy Hammond and Becky White; and three grandchildren.

Gwen Waterhouse Pritchard '64 of Clearwater, Idaho, died on October 12, 2021, two days before her 80th birthday. She is survived by her husband, **Marion '65**.

Vernelda Johnson Bischoff '65 was born to **Helen Cornell Johnson '36** and **Kimber Johnson '37** on April 14, 1944. While at Union College she met **Robert Bischoff '66**, and they were married in Des Moines, Iowa, on July 6, 1965. She is survived by her children Robbie and Traci Barker, brother **Edmond Johnson '69**, and two grandchildren.

Nathan Starr ('65) passed away September 30, 2021. Nathan graduated from Southwestern Adventist Junior College in 1964. In 1966, he married **Patricia Springfield ('65)** in Menard, Texas. Survivors include his wife, Patsy; daughters, Tammi Lesczynski and Stephanie Anker; and two grandchildren.

Darlene Teske ('65), passed away on Wednesday, March 16, 2022, in North Dakota. She was born on November 5, 1944 in Ellendale, North Dakota, to Daniel and Elizabeth Teske. Darlene graduated from Plainview Academy and attended Union College. She worked in the banking industry and various administrative positions in Jamestown, North Dakota, over the years. Survivors include brother Darwin Teske; sister Linda Jury and nieces and nephews.

David Wolkwitz '65, died June 3, 2020 in Phoenix, Arizona. He was born in Navasota, Texas, on April 13, 1943. He married **Gaylene Kassa '65** while attending Union College, who passed away on May 5, 2018. He is survived by his daughter Jacinda Garner, son **Jonathan Wolkwitz '89**, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Donald Ham '67, born on June 1, 1932, and passed away on January 31, 2022, at age 89. He graduated from Oak Park Academy in 1950, and married **Judith Miller ('53)** in 1954, whom he had known since

childhood. After owning a floorcovering business for 12 years, he decided to return to college to become a pastor and worked as a chaplain for many years. After Judith died, he married **Lola Cleveland '58** in 1993. He is survived by his wife, Lola; sister, Eloise; children, **Sherri Seibold ('76)** and Kevin.

Norman Jarnes '67 of Fallbrook, California, died March 16, 2022, at the age of 76. He was born October 12, 1945, in Bemidji, Minnesota, to **Peter '39** and **Lauretta Wilcox Jarnes '35**. Norman graduated from Union and serving in the Philippines, he began a lifelong career in editing and publishing, most recently as publishing editor of Outlook at Worldview Publications (worldviewpublications.org). He married Barbara Heinselman in 1970, and together they established HomeLife Housekeeping in 1985 in Fallbrook, California, where he was the CFO until his death. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; sister, **Ann Jarnes Randall '68**; daughters Kathleen Rose, Grace Mathewson, and Laura Gresoro; and four grandchildren.

William Kuehl '68 of Peebles Valley, Arizona, died on March 18, 2022. He was born December 7, 1944, in Lincoln, Nebraska, to William and Mauveth Kuehl. After marrying **Bettina Strickland Rowe '68**, he worked in his family's business, Kuehl's Grocery Store and Kuehl's Midwest Distributor for many years. **William ('31)** and Bettina divorced, and Bill married Jacqueline Jacobsen in 1995 and retired to Arizona in 2012. He is survived by wife, Jacqueline, and his five children, Jay, Brandon, Rachel, Ryan and Riva, along with eight grandchildren.



William Kuehl and family

Charles Darcy ('69) of Walla Walla, Washington, passed away on November 2, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Kay; children, Nicolle Allen,

Shon and Seth; siblings, Karen Breuer, Prudence Renner, **Bryan '69**, and Bruce; and 11 grandchildren.



Wally Fox

Wally Fox '69 passed away on September 15, 2021. A beloved Adventist educator for 49 years, he devoted the last 43 years to Georgia-Cumberland Academy. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, **Mary Ellen March Fox '67**, a daughter and grandchildren.

1970s



Fred Wier

Fred Wier '70, passed away January 18, 2022 in Hickory, North Carolina. He was born in San Antonio, Texas, on October 4, 1947.

After graduating from Union, he earned a medical degree from Loma Linda University and completed a general surgery residency at Kettering Medical Center. Fred practiced in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, for 30 years. Survivors include his wife of 39 years, Rhonda; five children; nine grandchildren; siblings; and many other extended family members.

Lawrence Friestad '71, of McCook, Nebraska, passed away on January 11, 2022. He was born in Ottawa, Illinois, on September 22, 1946, to Joseph and Hazel Foreman Friestad. Lawrence attended College View Academy and then married **Rosalea "Tillie" Betts ('68)** in Nevada, Iowa, on August 4, 1968, while attending Union College. He became a CRNA in 1976 and worked in hospitals in McCook, Oberlin, Cambridge and Benkelman

IN MEMORY

until he retired. He and Tillie gifted the trumpet pipes for the pipe organ at the College View Church. Lawrence is survived by his brother, **Lloyd Friestad '71**; sister, **Lorraine Friestad '67**; and a host of friends and relatives.

Carol Niederman '74 died September 1, 2021, in Suisun City, California. She was born March 4, 1952, in McLaughlin, South Dakota, to Mary and Thomas Niederman. She graduated from Union College and La Sierra University. She taught in Adventist schools in North Dakota, Arizona, and California. She is survived by her son, Kevin; her mother, Mary; and sister **Karen Cooper '76**.

Carolyn "Joy" Hilliard McFarland '76 of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away October 28, 2021. She was born May 21, 1955, to Corliss and **Betty Baker Hilliard '46** in Northeast Iowa. She attended Platte Valley Academy and graduated in 1976 from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a degree in accounting. Survivors include her husband, William Arthur McFarland; son, Alan Gordon Wilder (Lisa); sister, **Beverly Hilliard Davis '70**; brother, **Donald Hilliard '73**; and two grandchildren.

Wayne Schlenker '76, of Edgeley, North Dakota, died March 6, 2022 in Jamestown, North Dakota. He was born October 19, 1950, at Jamestown to Reuben and **Ruby Pfeifle Schlenker ('43)**. After high school, he attended NDSU, Valley City State College, and Union College before moving to Loma Linda for medical school. He married **Myrna Swayze '73** and they made their home in Riverside, California, where he practiced medicine. In the late 90s, Wayne returned to North Dakota to farm. Survivors include his brother, Calvin.

1980s

Frances "Jean" Cavin Rentfro '83 passed away on December 5, 2021. She was born

on July 29, 1935, in Natchez, Mississippi, to William and Gladys Cavin. She attended Ozark Academy and then Union College in 1954. **Robert Rentfro '60** married Jean on August 19, 1957. Jean earned a degree in from Union College in 1983. She worked as real estate broker and senior management of Cherry Hill Construction Company throughout her life. Jean is survived by her husband and her four children, **Randy ('78)**, Kathleen Dahill, Robin Smith and **Rocky ('93)**.

Paul Burnett ('84), was born August 14, 1957, and died on October 23, 2021. He is survived by sisters, Bethann Gilmore, Tonia Armstrong, Judith Hill, Carolyn Turner and Tonitta Turner; and a host of extended family.



Cindy Johnston

Lucinda "Cindy" Rose Johnston ('84) was born July 30, 1965, in Kansas City, Missouri, and died in Jefferson City, Missouri, on August 24, 2021. Cindy attended Cedarvale Jr Academy, Dakota Adventist Academy and Union College. She married **Norman Johnston '87** on December 21, 1986, in Kansas City, Missouri. She is survived by her husband, Norman; daughter Rebecca and son Brian; parents Ferrill and Lynne Rose, siblings Deborah Rose, Kathleen McCullough, and **Frankie '02**; and many extended family.

Linelda "Lin" Clouten Clutter Shapka '85, died November 17, 2021, in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada. She was born August 22, 1963, in Newcastle, Australia to Keith and Ngaire Clouten. She is survived by her parents; children, Jenny Hansen, Jeff, and Josh; sister, **Kerrie Clouten Kimbrow '88**; and one granddaughter.

1990s

Michael Jaquez '93 passed away on November 29, 2021, at age 51 after a battle with COVID. He was born January 8, 1970, to Linda and Ronald Jaquez in



Michael Jaquez

Cocoa Beach, Florida. After graduating from Champion Academy and Union College, he married **Shelley Peck '91** in 1997. Michael worked for a number of years as an independent consultant and then spent the rest of his career at the Arbor Day Foundation. He is survived by spouse Shelley; children **Sophia '24**, **Nathan '26** and David; mother Linda Jaquez; sister Julie Stone; and many extended family members.

FORMER STAFF/FACULTY:

Richard Laverne McCluskey passed away March 31, 2022, in Keene, Texas. He was born in Sanitarium, California, on June 28, 1930, to George Melbourne and Myrna Moon McCluskey. Richard served as a medic in the United States Army during the Korean War. He married Marilyn Fayne Woodard on February 8, 1951, in Glendale, California. Richard earned a bachelor's degree at Andrews University, a master's at Walla Walla University, and a PhD in biology at North Texas State University. He taught biology for many years at Southwestern Adventist University and Union College. He taught at Union from 1979-1983, was chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics and Academic Dean from 1983-1986 before retiring at the age of 80. He is survived by his daughters, Cheryl Jacko and **Linda Lewis '81**; and son, **Brian '87**.

Notice of the following deaths has been received:

Estaleva "LaVon" Cotte Shafer ('45) died on January 30, 2022, at age 95.

Maurine Strom Holland ('47) died on November 1, 2021, at age 93.

Elizabeth "Betty" Nilsson West ('49), Portland, Oregon, died on September 21, 2021, at age 91.

Dorothy Chase Covrig ('59)
died on August 17, 2019.

Roy Wightman ('59)
Berrien Springs, Michigan,
died June 25, 2021, at age 95.

Delores Heiser Archer ('60)
Walla Walla, Washington,
died on April 2, 2022, at age 84.

Rosemary Hooks '61, died on
February 14, 2022, at age 83.

Ann Silverstein Gray '62, born on
May 25, 1941, died on December
18, 2019.

Marilyn Papenberg Ideran ('63),
died in August 2021, at age 78.

Darrell "Bruce" Brenneise ('69)
Lincoln, Nebraska,
died on April 12, 2018, at age 70.

Harry Rimer ('69), Hudson,
Florida, died on July 29, 2020.

Joyce Rodie '73 died on December
27, 2021.

Roma Groulik Edmonds ('78)
died on April 26, 2021, at age 60.

Norman "Bruce" Simmons '79
died on December 9, 2020, at age 71.

Jerry Capps, Jr. '82, died February
20, 2022, at age 69.

Joel Jennings ('87), died on April
5, 2022, at age 55.

Reconnecting to the Creator

The first two chapters of Genesis paint a joyful picture of the Father expressing His love through the creation of a magnificent home for His children — the ideal setting for building a relationship to last all eternity.

The next 1,187 chapters of scripture recount His plan to restore that original picture of a perfect life of love with His creation.

At Union, we believe a key part of rebuilding that ideal connection to our Creator is through living out the principles He outlined — conveniently summarized in AdventHealth's CREATION Life acronym (learn more at creationlife.com).

- C**hoice
- R**est
- E**nvironment
- A**ctivity
- T**rust in God
- I**nterpersonal Relationships
- O**utlook
- N**utrition

The new AdventHealth Complex and Reiner Wellness Center will play a vital role in helping our students develop habits of a joyful life connected to their Creator by providing a place for them to build community while they stay active and learn to balance all aspects of a healthy life.



Photo: Steve Nazario/Union College

I invite you to join us as we build the next chapter of the Union experience. Visit ucollege.edu/fit to learn more. If you feel led by the Creator, join the journey with your prayers and financial support. We are 80 percent to our goal and still need your help to fund this project's completion.

Thank you for being a part of the Union family and sharing in fulfilling God's calling for Union and for our students.

Vinita Sauder, President

Our mission

Union College is a Seventh-day Adventist community of higher education, inspired by Jesus Christ and dedicated to empowering students to learn, serve and lead.

Our vision

Union College mentors every student to become a highly sought graduate who serves joyfully in God's calling.

Learn more about Union's mission and vision at ucollege.edu/mission


CORD

MAGAZINE

News from Union College
Vol. 87, No. 1, Spring 2022

Union College Advancement Office
3800 South 48th Street,
Lincoln, NE 68506
Address Service Requested

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lincoln, NE
Permit No. 62



From college to career in just two years Occupational Therapy Assistant

Right now, health care organizations are eagerly looking for occupational therapy assistants. They need people with compassion and creativity who are trained to help patients relearn functions after an accident or illness.

Union College lets you finish an OTA degree in just two years. In only half the time it takes to earn a bachelor's degree, you can be making more money than you might have expected.

Come visit our friendly campus in Lincoln, Nebraska. We welcome students of all faiths and offer good scholarships.

If you like helping people every day, you'll love OTA.



UNION
COLLEGE

Finding purpose. Unlocking potential.

Visit ucollege.edu/OTA

