

DOANE

FALL MAGAZINE 2025

A photograph of a man with a beard and tattoos holding a wolf pup. Another person's arm and hat are visible in the foreground. The background is a blurred forest.

**FROM DOANE TO
DE-EXTINCTION**

**Matt James '06
and the future of
conservation** *pg 10*

DOANE
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Doane Magazine is a publication for students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the University.

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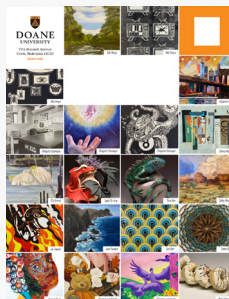
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From the President

Each fall, as new students arrive on campus, I'm reminded of the enduring promise of a Doane education. There's a renewed sense of purpose in the air — of students stepping into a formative chapter of their lives, ready to be challenged, supported and inspired. This year, we welcomed over 369 new students to our Crete campus — the largest incoming class since 2013. It's a testament to the value of a Doane education and the belief that what happens here is magical and truly prepares students to lead, serve and thrive.

We're building on that momentum in powerful ways. This year, we entered the public phase of our capital campaign, and I'm proud to say we've raised over \$83 million toward a stronger, bolder Doane. You're starting to see the impact already — construction is underway on our new performing arts center and recent renovations to our Health and Wellness spaces allow us to better support the whole student experience.

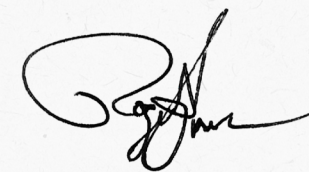
This summer, our faculty dove into artificial intelligence integration, preparing to bring cutting-edge tools into the classroom and future-proof our academic offerings. And through our "Partnering for Workforce Success" initiative, we've had honest, energizing conversations with business leaders and CEOs, asking what today's world needs from tomorrow's graduates. Those insights are shaping the design of Doane's next academic building and the programming that will be going on inside the new building, preparing our students not just for jobs, but for lives of impact.

And we're seeing that impact every day. We have a Fulbright winner. Our athletics department had a record-breaking year, placing 16th nationally in the Learfield Directors' Cup — our highest finish ever and the top spot among GPAC schools. And for the first time, every one of our sports teams averaged over a 3.0 GPA. Our Tigers are leading with heart and hustle, on and off the field.

We're also incredibly grateful to generous families like the Korffs and Tonniges, whose naming gifts are helping us dream bigger and do more for the next generation of Tigers.

Doane is moving forward with purpose, vision and momentum, and that's because of people like you. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Merrill Will Ring - Go Tigers!



Roger Hughes '82, Ph.D.
Doane University President

BY THE NUMBERS

384 degrees awarded to the Class of 2025

274 students made the Fall 2024 Dean's List

279 students made the Spring 2025 Dean's List

\$4,311,377
GRANT FUNDS



369 STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 2029

29 COUNTRIES & 38 STATES represented in our undergraduate student body

GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING MAKES ITS DEBUT AT DOANE

By Sara Hinds

Fall 2025 marks the inaugural season for Doane's newest athletics team: Greco-Roman Wrestling.

The new sport expands on the recent successes both Doane men's and women's teams have achieved. Since 2022, the two programs have earned a total of four GPAC conference titles and five top-10 finishes at the NAIA National Tournament.

Jason Christenson was named the Greco-Roman wrestling coach in December 2024 and spent the spring and summer recruiting. Christenson has extensive experience in the sport as head coach at the high school and national levels for the state of Iowa.

"I'm excited to build, develop and drive the growth of Greco at both Doane and nationwide," Christenson said. "Currently there are very few opportunities for Greco-Roman wrestlers to develop full-time through the college/university or regional training center systems." **D**



EDUCATION PROFESSOR ELECTED TO LPS BOARD OF EDUCATION

By Sara Hinds

Marilyn Johnson-Farr, Ph.D., was one of four new individuals elected to the Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) Board of Education in May 2025. She'll serve a four-year term representing District 7.



Johnson-Farr (in red scarf in photo), a professor of education at Doane, is a Lincoln High graduate who worked as a teacher in the district for a number of years before starting at Doane in 2003. She sees her public official role as an opportunity to "to redeposit" the time and effort LPS invested in her.

Johnson-Farr ran on a platform of recruiting and retaining teachers to fill LPS's teacher shortage and supporting

students on a variety of pathways to success — from joining the military or the workforce, to attending college or a trade school.

Johnson-Farr empowers her own students at Doane to use their leadership skills in capacities outside the classroom.

"There's more to teaching than being in a classroom," Johnson-Farr said. "To teach is to serve, and how you serve beyond that classroom space." **D**

DOANE CHOIR TOURS SOUTH AFRICA IN LATE MAY 2025

By Giovanni Castaneda

Doane's choir took a transformational tour of South Africa this summer, where students combined music with cultural exchange and getting to learn firsthand about social justice and resilience in a different country.

"The phenomenal thing about South Africa is the diversity of experiences that it offers," said Kurt Runestad, Doane's choir professor and trip organizer. "We stood in Nelson Mandela's prison cell on Robben Island [...] and sang 'Asimbonanga' in the prison courtyard, right next to his cell."

In addition to musical performances, students visited communities where they observed the challenges many South Africans still face, including widespread poverty and limited access to basic services.

"South Africa was a life-changing experience for everyone who had the opportunity to attend," said Elly Weimer '25. "For me, the biggest takeaway was the importance of leading with empathy."

From working with local choirs to encountering South Africa's wildlife, the tour left a lasting impression on the students. **D**



MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING INITIATES FIRST CHI SIGMA IOTA CLASS

By Sara Hinds

On August 24, 25 students became members of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), the international honor society for counseling students and counselors. Doane's chapter joins the 450+ active chapters around the world with 170,000+ active members.

Members gain access to mentorships, grants, research opportunities and continuing education credits.

Associate professors Arden Szepe, Ph.D. and Courtney East, Ph.D. serve as the faculty advisors, who say the addition of a CSI chapter on campus provides invaluable leadership and professional development for students in the Master of Arts in Counseling program. **D**

LITERATURE IN LONDON, FROM THE JOURNAL OF GRACE SCHROLLER

By Grace Schroller



London had always been on my travel bucket list, but I never expected the opportunity to visit would come so soon.

I first learned about the study abroad program during a creative writing class, where it was promoted through Doane's English department. Although

I wasn't a literature major, I quickly realized the program offered meaningful experiences for communications and media students as well. After attending the first meeting, I was completely on board.

We explored incredible sites including Oxford University, Big Ben, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Notting Hill and the Tower of London. The Tower was especially memorable — my fascination with royal history made walking through it feel surreal, especially knowing its connection to King Henry VIII.

One of my favorite stops was Brixton, where we visited New Beacon Books,

the United Kingdom's first Black publisher and bookstore. Our guide shared the neighborhood's rich Caribbean heritage and the legacy of those who fought alongside British forces in past wars. A memorial in Brixton honors their service.

On our final day, we toured the Harry Potter film sets at Warner Bros. Studios. As a media student, seeing the behind-the-scenes filmmaking process was unforgettable.

This trip broadened my perspective and left me deeply grateful for the experience and the memories made. **D**



HARD HATS AND HIGH NOTES

A Performing Arts Center Progress Update

By Kelly Stenka and Sara Hinds

Earlier this year, Doane officially broke ground on the long-awaited, \$23 million performing arts center. The project, which has been in the works for over a decade, is on track to open by fall 2026.

The expansion will not only modernize facilities for the award-winning theatre and music programs, but will also bring them closer together physically, creating shared spaces like lounges, concessions and a lobby.

Other features include a recording studio, practice rooms, rehearsal spaces, scene shop, green room, dressing rooms and a 220-seat theatre with a thrust stage and fly loft, among other upgrades.

We checked in with **Brian Flesner**, director of facilities operations and construction projects at Doane, to get a progress update and learn about exciting developments.



VIEW ADDITIONAL RENDERINGS

SCAN THE QR OR VISIT [BIT.LY/PAC-WEB](https://bit.ly/pac-web)

What are the next major milestones in the construction process?

The music addition currently has all of the structural steel, flooring, utilities and exterior wall framing in place. This will allow the building envelope to be closed here in the near future for interior work to begin. Another milestone that began in the middle of June, is the excavation of the basement for the theatre portion of the project. Construction on both ends of the building will be simultaneous at this point.

What has been your favorite part of overseeing this particular project?

I truly enjoy overseeing these larger projects in general, but this one in particular due to the amount of planning that has gone into this over the years and the pure dedication by all involved to see this through. It's an amazing feeling knowing that this will support the fine arts for many years to come after such a long wait!

Is there a fun or lesser-known fact about the project that most people wouldn't know?

I'll just say that at the end of the project there may be an easter egg of sorts somewhere within the building. Those who find it, will understand it.

Another fun fact is that on the south side of the building there will be some familiar musical notes designed into the large windows. A fitting design for the type of building we are constructing.

How many people and partners (contractors, engineers, designers) are involved in bringing this to life?

Wow, there has been a lot. We have had a tremendous amount of support and collaboration between the administration, board of trustees, the architectural team from Clark & Enersen, Sampson Construction, faculty and staff to make this all come together. It really took everyone and a lot of dedication and persistence.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS GIVE THREE-LEGGED PUPPY A NEW STRIDE

By Kelly Stenka

A group of sophomore and junior engineering students helped design a custom prosthetic for Nugget, a three-legged mini goldendoodle.

Armed with 3D-printing technology, the students developed two prototypes and Nugget returned for additional measurements, giving students a chance to refine their designs.

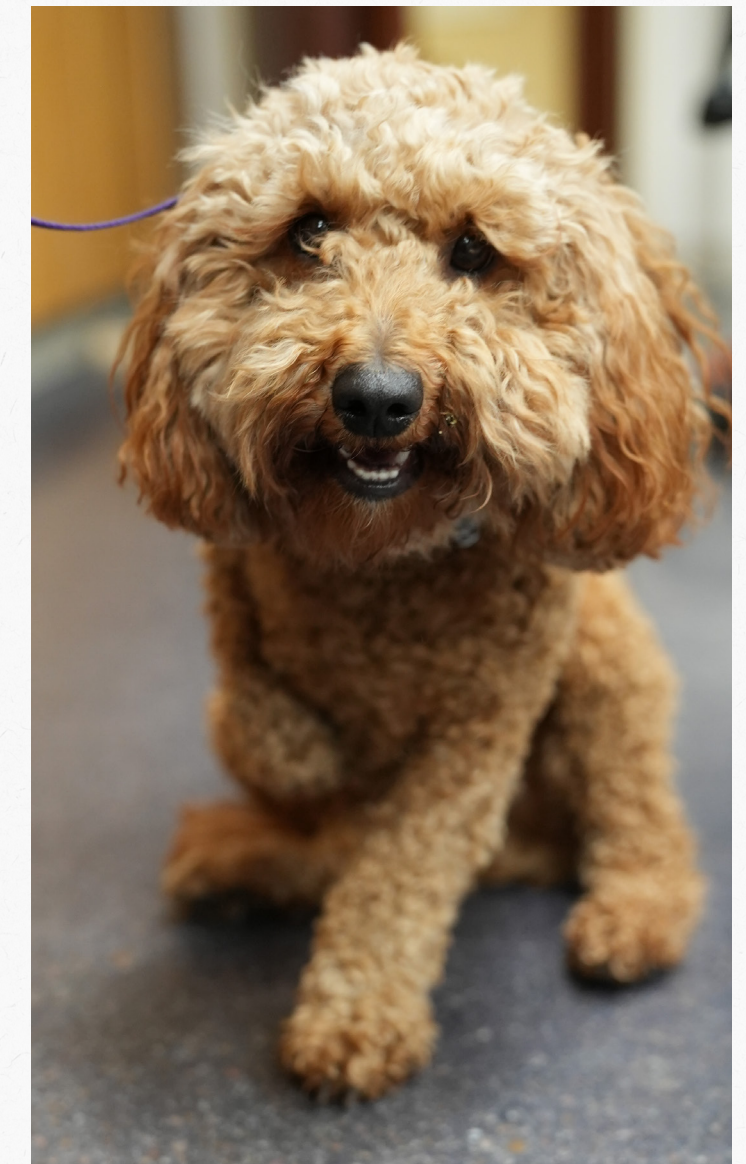
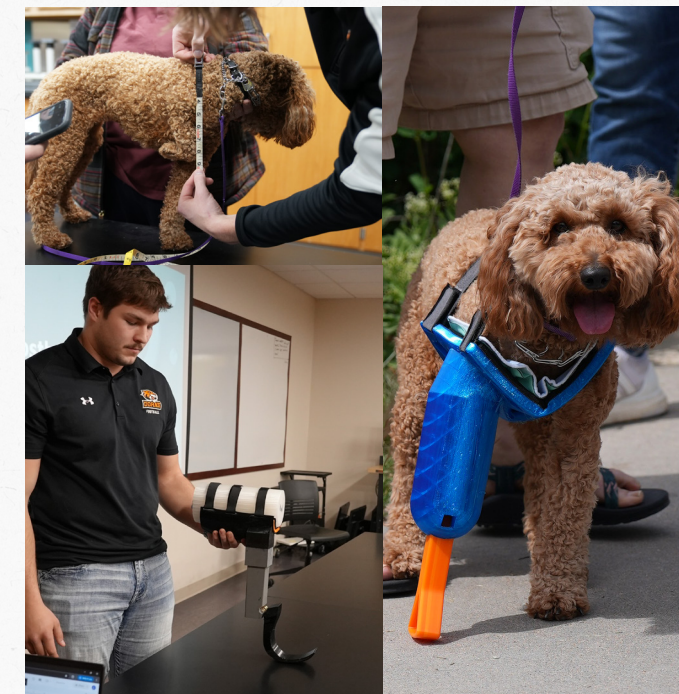
The engineering department brought in faculty from biology and exercise science to help students explore

broader questions: How can the prosthetic be optimized for Nugget's movement? Could this design be adapted for other animals? What is the long-term potential for a project like this?

By collaborating across disciplines, the students didn't just build a prosthetic (and pet a cute puppy!) — they gained real-world problem-solving experience that could evolve into a long-term initiative. There's discussion about expanding the project to serve the broader community by designing prosthetics for other pets in need.



Top row: Ethan Merk, Isaiah Miller, Diane (Nugget's owner), Lucas Christensen, Oleh Tyshkov
Bottom row: Associate Professor Cale Stolle, Ph.D., Cayden Miller, Curtis Oberg, Chandler Page, Carter Niles



ACADEMIC MINDS AND AI

Working Together to Build Leaders

By Kelly Stenka

Assistant Professor of Management **Charlena Miller, Ph.D.**, is changing the conversation around artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education.

Rather than discouraging its use, she challenges students to engage with AI responsibly, ethically and creatively. In her business capstone course, Miller incorporates generative AI to give students hands-on experience with emerging technology.

“We need to eliminate the idea that using AI is about cheating,” Miller said. “Our responsibility is to prepare students to lead in AI development, ethics and application.”

Each student in the course partners with a Doane faculty member to identify a real administrative challenge. Students then design an AI-powered solution tailored to that need — a collaborative process that benefits both faculty and students.

The course culminates in an AI Student Showcase, where students present their work to the Doane community and industry guests. **Maci McCarter '25**, presented Boost 365, a tool designed to enhance student preparedness and engagement. Created in partnership with Associate Professor of Practice **Kathleen Zumpfe**, the tool helps clarify assignments, refine discussion questions, and convert text to audio — all while upholding ethical AI use.

“The AI doesn’t write papers or allow negative language,” McCarter said. “It’s about improving the learning experience.”

The showcase also attracted interest from professionals, including Rich Teel of engineering firm Olsson. “We’re

creating an innovation department, and events like this help us identify talent — people who are collaborative and eager to learn,” Teel said.

Miller’s initiative extends beyond the classroom. She serves on an AI leadership council with educators and professionals across North America and is leading cross-disciplinary efforts at Doane to explore the future of AI integration across fields.

Starting in fall 2025, Miller’s course has expanded to a full 16-week semester. It’s another step forward in preparing students for a tech-driven future while staying rooted in Doane’s liberal arts foundation.

“Students need to lead the future, not fear it,” Miller said. “AI should be a tool that helps improve lives and communities.” **D**

Although **Charlena Miller, Ph.D.**, calls Doane home, she is also part of an exclusive Yale fellowship that brings together a global cohort of scholars from top institutions such as Cambridge, Oxford, Emory and Wellesley. Focused on the role of the humanities and liberal arts in higher education, the fellowship explores what makes life meaningful in the age of AI. This past summer, Miller traveled internationally, sharing her expertise and leading conversations on the intersection of AI and academia.



DOANE UNIVERSITY’S ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES CUTTING-EDGE AI CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

By Kelly Stenka

English majors, meet your next new line of work: AI prompt engineering. And Doane University is going to get you there.

Doane’s English department aims to set students up for success in the age of AI with the launch of an all-new Thinking and Writing with AI Certificate. This innovative program is designed to bridge the gap between classic rhetorical skills and modern AI prompt engineering.

Beginning this fall, students now have the unique opportunity to take specific classes geared towards applying literary skills in the world of AI, positioning themselves at the forefront of an evolving digital landscape.

In a world where AI literacy is becoming essential, Doane is equipping its students with the tools to not only coexist with AI but to collaborate with it.

Phil Weitzl, professor and chair of Doane’s English department, knew that embracing AI was key. “The study of English equips students with critical rhetorical skills for engaging with generative AI. Writers and readers are suddenly at the forefront of innovation and technology, perhaps like never before. The key for us is to teach students to focus less on the product and more on the process of literary studies.”

The certificate program weaves AI literacy into Doane’s curriculum. Courses on rhetorical strategy, narratology, literary research and textual analysis will prepare students to engineer prompts and evaluate AI-generated content with a discerning eye. From storytelling and information gathering to classroom lesson design, this certificate aims to enhance creativity and efficiency in ways that go beyond traditional writing.

As the world continues to embrace the potential of artificial intelligence, Doane University’s Thinking and Writing with AI Certificate program is an exciting new chapter for English majors, proving that the art of language and the power of AI can not only coexist — they can thrive together. **D**

DOANE UNIVERSITY HOSTS SUMMER WORKSHOP ON GENERATIVE AI IN THE CLASSROOM

By Giovanni Castaneda and Grace Schroller

Over the summer, Doane hosted a two-week workshop focused on generative artificial intelligence, giving faculty a space to explore how emerging technology can enhance learning, collaboration and innovation in the classroom.

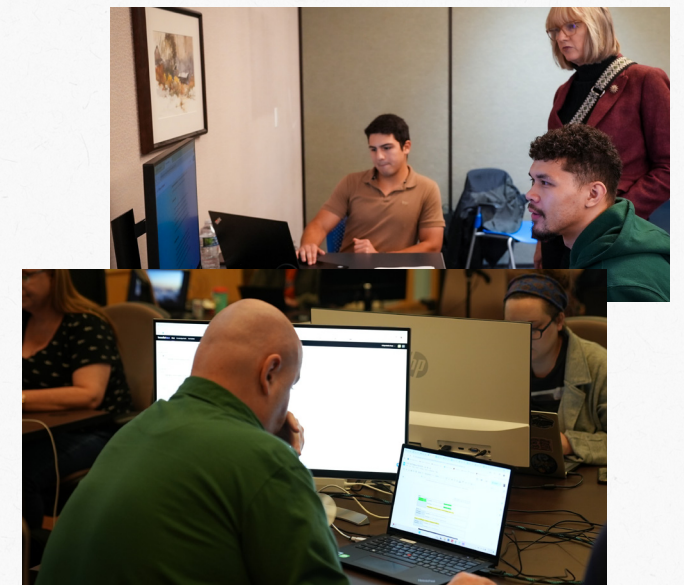
Faculty proposed projects that integrate AI into course design to better support student success. Among them was **Kathleen Zumpfe**, associate professor of practice in business. She created an AI-powered bot for her Introduction to Business course. The bot generates real-world business scenarios, prompting students to collaborate and problem-solve in real time.

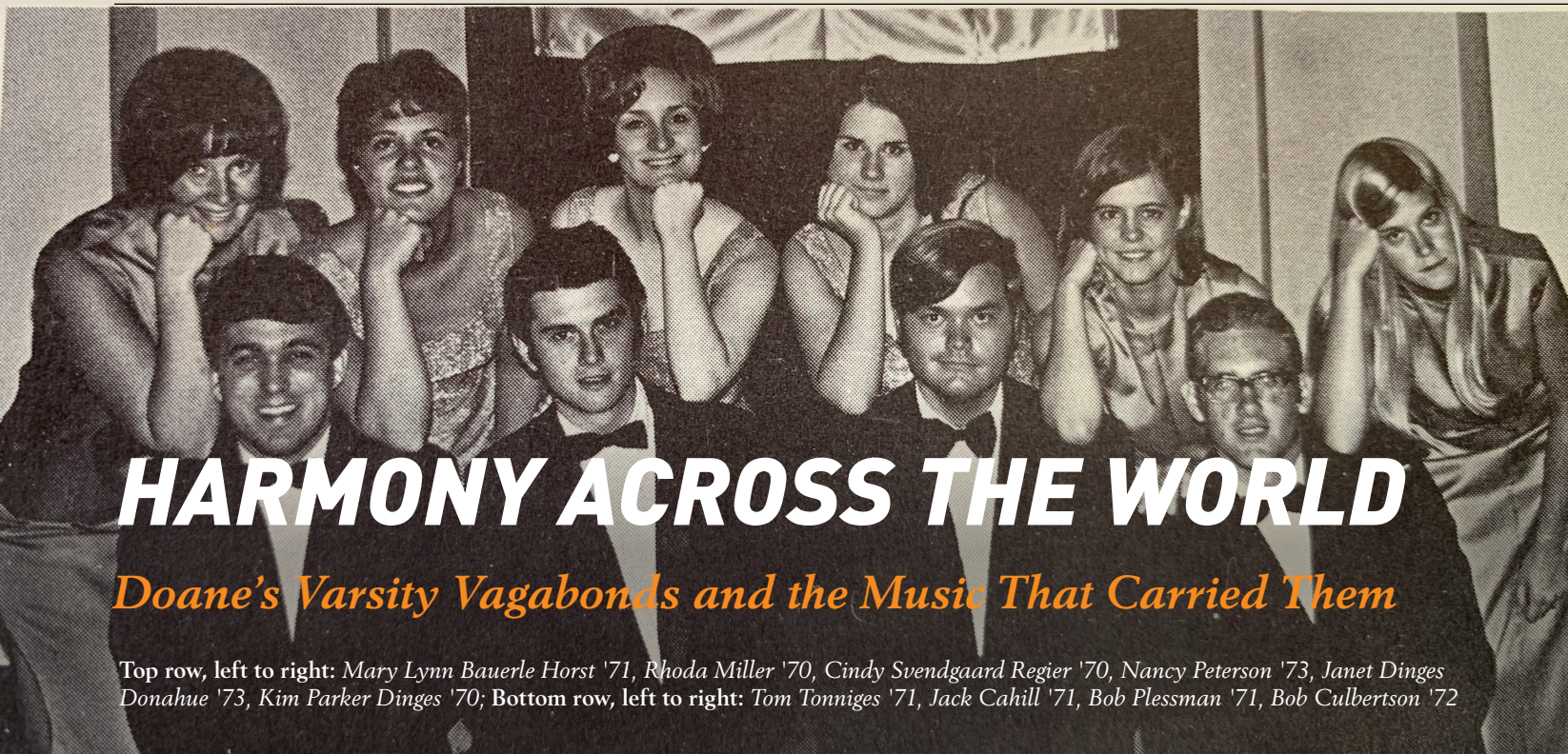
Her goal is to make early classroom engagement feel more natural while building practical business skills and peer connections.

“The students are new to college; they may not have found their people or their community yet,” Zumpfe said. “This gets them working together from day one.”

The workshop emphasized how faculty can guide students in learning with AI, not to replace instruction, but to empower deeper understanding and collaboration.

D





HARMONY ACROSS THE WORLD

Doane's Varsity Vagabonds and the Music That Carried Them

Top row, left to right: Mary Lynn Bauerle Horst '71, Rhoda Miller '70, Cindy Svendgaard Regier '70, Nancy Peterson '73, Janet Dinges Donahue '73, Kim Parker Dinges '70; Bottom row, left to right: Tom Tonniges '71, Jack Cahill '71, Bob Plessman '71, Bob Culbertson '72

By Kelly Stenka

For a group of Doane students from the small town of Crete, Nebraska, the chance to perform for American troops overseas was an exciting and unexpected adventure. Glenn Peterson, their choral director, saw an opportunity to lift spirits through music and brought together a special group of singers and dancers — the Varsity Vagabonds — to take part in United Service Organizations (USO) tours during the 1960s. From military bases in Asia to the icy landscapes of Greenland and even stops in Crete, these students shared their talent and brought a little bit of home to soldiers serving far from their families.

They were not just students with a love for performance; they were ambassadors of morale. In the middle of global unrest, they brought laughter, rhythm and the comfort of familiar songs to American troops. In doing so, they found lifelong friendships and memories stitched together by applause, adventure and an unwavering sense of purpose.

Formed in the early 1960s by Peterson — affectionately known as “Uncle

Pete” to his students — the Vagabonds were a handpicked group of 14 to 18 singers drawn from the larger Doane Choir. While they performed regularly across Nebraska during the academic year, it was their USO tours that left the deepest impression.

The first tour, in 1963-64, took them to Greenland, Iceland and England — key U.S. military outposts during the Cold War, a time when tensions between the United States and Soviet Union were at a peak and America was mourning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Later tours in 1967 and 1969-70 took the group to Asia, where they performed for American troops stationed near the front lines of the Vietnam War. At a time when national support for the war was beginning to fracture and young soldiers faced daily danger, the Vagabonds offered a slice of home.

Now, decades later, the former Vagabonds still recall those whirlwind years with astonishing clarity — the costumes, the cracked jokes during practices, the weight of performing for soldiers who had not seen home in

months and the bond — deep, unshakable — that still connects them today.

In conversations, the Vagabonds have reflected on their legacy, wondering if they may have been among the very first show choirs in the United States, even predating the Young Americans, who are widely credited with forming in 1962.

“We did not have a choreographer or a professor directing us in those early days,” one member recalled. “We would just head upstairs in the Conservatory and make something up — funny little skits or movements to go with our songs. It happened organically.”

By 1968–69, when the group was selected for a USO tour, their performances had become more theatrical. Under Peterson’s direction, the group began incorporating choreography and creative staging into their sets. One memorable number opened with performers pretending to get dressed on stage, transforming from disorganized chaos to a polished finale with women in red dresses and men in tuxedos.



Lois Chab Weyers '67 and Barbara Spencer Wettergren '67 performing Honey Bun from the musical "South Pacific."



Photo from "The Music Man," left to right: Bob Plessman '71, Cindy Svendgaard Regier '70, Tom Tonniges '71, Kathleen Ahres Birtwell '73, Bill Morell '73.



Rhoda Miller '70 performing It's a Fine Life from the musical "Oliver."

For Lois Chab Weyers '67, the Vagabonds were more than a college performance group; they were a lifelong source of friendship and adventure. Now living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Weyers fondly recalls participating in two USO tours: one in 1963 to the chilly northern reaches of Nova Scotia, and another in 1967 that took the group across Asia.

“I have so many memories of the travel and especially the people we traveled with,” she said. “I do not think I will ever forget them.”

One moment that stands out from the Asian tour involved performing on a battleship, flanked by two others on either side.

“We were in the middle ship, singing our hearts out, and the guys on the ships next to us were hooting and hollering from across the water,” Weyers recalled with a smile. “It was one of those surreal moments — you knew you were part of something special.”

Barbara Spencer Wettergren '67 was 21 when she embarked on her second USO tour with the Vagabonds. While the excitement of performing abroad left its mark, one moment in particular has stayed with her for decades. During their time in Japan, the group visited several military hospitals — many filled with young American soldiers who had been wounded in the Vietnam War. Some had been stabilized in field hospitals, transferred to hospital ships, and eventually brought to Japan for recovery. Others were preparing to return home, and some, Wettergren feared, might never leave those hospital beds.

After their group performances, the Vagabonds were encouraged to walk through the wards, sit with the patients and offer what comfort they could. Wettergren remembers one young man most vividly lying alone under a tented sheet suspend-

ed above his body to protect his severely burned skin.

“He had his eyes closed, but when I approached, he reached out his hand,” Wettergren said. “I sat down and held it. I asked how old he was, and he said 19.”

He asked her to sing “Summertime,” a request that she struggled to finish through tears. “I have always wondered what kind of life he had after that — if he made it home, if he saw his family again. That moment ... it changed me. It was the first time I truly understood the cost of war.”

Rhoda Miller '70, a freshman from Crete who joined the Vagabonds in 1967, said: “Of all the experiences I had at Doane ... being in the Vagabonds and doing the USO trips were by far the most fun and the most life-transforming. They literally opened the world to me.”

Reflecting on their time together, Jack Cahill '71 said, “When you look at the whole group and our leadership, just an amazing group of people who had an awful lot of fun while we were contributing in our own way. We sure had a lot of fun doing it.”

Calvin Hennig '64 was part of the Greenland tour and recalls the tension and surreal experience of performing at a missile control site during the Cold War.

“We were good, corn-fed innocent kids,” he said. “It was quite a reward for us to be there. That experience stays with you.”

The Vagabonds’ story is a reminder that even in difficult times, music and friendship can create moments of joy, hope and connection. For those who sang and danced their way across the globe, the echoes of their harmony still carry on. **D**

FROM DOANE TO DE-EXTINCTION

Matt James '06 and the Future of Conservation

By Kelly Stenka

From a small campus in Nebraska to the cutting edge of genetic science, Matt James is changing the future of wildlife — one extinct species at a time.

By the time Matt James graduated Doane University in 2006, he had no idea he'd one day be holding three dire wolf puppies — brought back from extinction after 10,000 years — with his own hands.

James, the Chief Animal Officer at Colossal Biosciences, is part of a team leading the charge on one of the boldest scientific missions of our time: de-extinction. The company originally made headlines in 2024 with the return of the dire wolf — an iconic predator made famous by the popular book series and television show "Game of Thrones" — and James has been at the center of it all. But how does a teenager know they want to go to college to become a chief animal officer? The short answer: They don't — at least not in James' case.

"I had no clue what I wanted to do with my life," James said of his high school years. "I knew I didn't want to be a vet, but that was about it."

With a brother (Charles '03) already attending Doane, James chose the school out of familiarity. He enrolled as a biology and chemistry major, unsure where the road would lead. What he found was a place that encouraged exploration and gave him the freedom to try and fail.

"The liberal arts approach my mom encouraged really helped," he said. "You don't get pigeonholed. You can explore. And the professors at Doane were critical. That one-on-one attention at such a crucial juncture in my life made all the difference."

Classes like ecology and genetics lit the initial spark. "That's when I really started thinking about ecosystems, biodiversity and how we can study and understand nature better."

After graduation, James pursued a graduate degree in wetland science and coastal ecology at Coastal Carolina University. But even there, he didn't quite

fit the mold of a traditional conservationist.

"I didn't want to be a government biologist or the world's leading expert on the smallest little species that nobody's heard of. I wanted to do something much more engaging."

So, naturally, he answered a Craigslist ad to train dolphins in Miami.

It paid \$7 an hour.

James' bold detour opened a door to a career in animal behavior and conservation. His dolphin training experience led him to St. Augustine, Florida, where he continued his work with dolphins. He caught the attention of ZooTampa who asked him if he could bring his knowledge and training expertise and apply it to their herd of elephants.

The enormous — literally and figuratively — opportunity to manage an elephant

herd soon expanded to include a wide range of species. James found his stride working with zoos, where he admired animal populations. His passion led him to Zoo Miami, one of the largest zoos in the United States, where he served as general curator. There, he built out conservation and animal management programs — efforts he later continued at the Dallas Zoo. James was on an exciting and engaging path, always asking: What's next?

Then the pandemic hit and that question took on a new weight.

"During that time, I started getting very introspective. I was, honestly, dissatisfied with the level of impact that I was having on the fight against biodiversity loss, and it made me wonder what other opportunities were out there."

That's when he connected with Ben Lamm, CEO of Colossal, who had an audacious idea: bring back the woolly mammoth.

James, ever the curious contrarian, responded with questions — lots of them.

"I was asking things like, 'How else can these technologies be used? What does this mean for conservation?' and Ben just said, 'You're asking the right questions. Why don't you help me start this thing?'"

So began the work of a lifetime.

At Colossal, James oversees animal welfare, reproductive sciences and the application of genetic engineering and conservation technologies to protect endangered species. His team works on projects that sound like science fiction — until they aren't.

These monumental efforts are to reintroduce lost genetic diversity to a species teetering on the brink of extinction. Take the dire wolf case. The extinct species was brought back not for its fame in pop culture, but to serve a real purpose: to support the endangered red wolf populations in the U.S. In the case of the dire wolf, James and the team at

Colossal announced they also cloned four red wolves — the world's most endangered wolf and the only one native to the U.S.

The work extends beyond de-extinction. The Colossal team is developing technologies to restore degraded ecosystems, enhance biodiversity and bring critical function back to fragile environments on a global scale.

Additionally, their efforts have uncovered countless technologies that have meaningful impacts to species on the brink of extinction today. With their efforts to restore the woolly mammoth, they were able to create a vaccine for elephants, protecting them from one of their leading causes of death — elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV).

James' role is a mix of bold ideas, complex science and deep ethical consideration. But James doesn't shy away from the moral questions. In fact, he welcomes them.



"We have to ask, what is the opportunity cost of *not* acting?" he said. "The status quo is rapid biodiversity loss — some experts think we could lose 50% of biodiversity by 2050. The most unethical thing we could do is nothing."

James' day-to-day isn't all genetics and genome-based. Along the way, he's rubbed elbows with "Game of Thrones" author George R.R. Martin, "Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson and seven-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Tom Brady — all supporters of Colossal. James and members of his team have even met with U.S. Secre-

tary of the Interior Doug Burgum to discuss how their groundbreaking technologies could help shape the future of conservation.

"It's still very surreal. I don't typically fanboy over much, but when you get in the room with some of these really intriguing people, it's hard not to get star-struck," James admits.

James likes to joke that his wife and friends keep him grounded. But when asked how he went from a small Nebraska campus to leading a global team of scientists, he's humble and witty about the whole experience.

"I don't know how I got here. I'm still figuring it out," he laughed. "But what got me here was trying everything. Doane gave me that opportunity."

He credits his experience in Delta Kappa Pi at Doane. Their high GPA standards, his social network on campus and the encouragement of professors Kate Marley, Ph.D., Russ Soucek, Ph.D. and Brad Elder, Ph.D., introduced him to a realm of new ideas and possibilities.

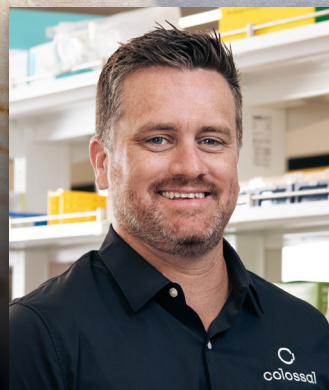
"That's the beauty of a liberal arts education — it doesn't trap 18-year-olds into thinking they have to be something before they've lived enough to know what that is."

Now, he's hoping today's students embrace the same mindset.

"Try things. Do weird stuff. Take chances. Don't fear failure," he said. "When you realize failure leads to better opportunities, you'll be more willing to take on risk. Now's your time to try as many things as possible."

And for all the surreal moments — like holding dire wolf pups or seeing years of science come to life — James says he's still the student from Doane who just wanted to try something different.

Luckily for the world's endangered species, he still is. **D**



Greetings from

By Kelly Stenka and Sara Hinds

Ever wonder what the Crete campus is like when students leave for the summer? June and July see hundreds of people stay in the residence halls and use outdoor and indoor spaces across campus for their classes. Doane's events staff works diligently to ensure everything runs smoothly. Read more about three of the groups that made our Crete campus their temporary home this summer.

LONG-STANDING WOODWORKING WORKSHOP NEARS 50 YEARS

When the woodworkers say "see you next year!" to each other, it's not just cordiality.

The Mid-America Woodcarvers Association has hosted its annual summer workshop on Doane's Crete campus since the late 70s, a couple years after it formed in 1974. Its summer 2025 workshop, held May 31-June 5, was number 48. Many of the members have attended for 20+ years.

Rohn Collins, who serves on the event's planning committee, just attended his 23rd camp.

"Everybody who attends our event is like family anymore," Collins said. "We all look forward to seeing each other again, visiting, getting together and learning a new technique, or just carving a project and having fun together."

About 100 woodcarvers from across the Midwest take one of 10 project-based classes during the week. They chip, carve and craft in Art/Ed classrooms, eat meals in the dining hall and stay in Brodie Hall.

The all-inclusive aspect of the workshop is convenient and reasonable, Collins said. Not only do the facilities stack up ("Brodie Hall is amazing," Collins said) but the Doane employees are a big reason the group keeps coming back year after year.

The events staff "anticipates our needs" Collins said. Other Doane staff stop by the classrooms to chat. And at the end of the week, many Doane employees attend the workshop's showcase, where the hard work of the past week is on display surrounded with an aura of pride and a scent of fresh stain.

The summer of 2027 will mark the group's 50th workshop at Doane. Collins said once next year's workshop is scheduled, he'll start brainstorming how they can make the big 5-0 special.

ADVENTURE ZONE BUILDS GLOBAL FRIENDSHIPS AT DOANE

This summer, Doane once again welcomed middle school students to its Crete campus for Adventure Zone — a weeklong cultural exchange camp that brings together local students and middle schoolers from Senshu University Matsudo Junior High School in Japan.

The camp, held June 9-13, offered interactive morning classes in subjects like fitness, photography and dance, followed by afternoon excursions around Nebraska for the visiting Japanese students, guided by Doane college student volunteers.



Adventure Zone was led by Mealer, Lisa Wells '05L, service center specialist, and Tim Burge '12, director of international programs.

LAUNCH LEADERSHIP STARTS BUILDING LEADERS

For the third summer in a row, Doane hosted Launch Leadership for two separate workshops. From June 17-21 and July 15-19, hundreds of middle and high schoolers moved onto campus for five days of hands-on learning and leadership development.

"Nearly every residence hall is filled with delegates or staffers as campus comes alive with Launch," Quint Geis '13, director of career, leadership and service at Doane said.

Launch itself has existed for more than 60 years, and its partnership with Doane is a natural fit. Both have a keen focus on creating an environment where students are challenged to grow, and encouraged to think critically.

"Each year, we create a safe, supportive environment that pushes students to learn and grow — all while having fun," Hannah Bauer '15 said. She serves as curriculum director for Launch. "I'm passionate about what our curriculum does to help young people develop pivotal leadership skills."

Bauer has volunteered with Launch since 2015, who learned of the program from her friend Andrea Johnson Wysocki '10, Ph.D., assistant professor and director of the honors program at Doane. Wysocki previously attended and volunteered with Launch.

Bauer looks forward to returning to campus every year and said it's the best two weeks of her summer. Students she once led are now Launch staffers who inspire the next generation of leaders. **D**

"This was my first experience with Adventure Zone, and it was truly unforgettable," said Suzanne Mealer, the camp's assistant director and Doane's Title IX coordinator and compliance officer. "Our American and Japanese students didn't just have fun — they made real connections. From exploring the zoo and visiting Morrill Hall and the Stuhr Museum to working together in class, they built friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. It was a powerful reminder of how meaningful cross-cultural experiences can be."

The program has deep roots, dating back 21 years to the start of Doane's partnership with Senshu University Matsudo Junior High School. Since then, hundreds of students have connected through learning and laughter.

"The best part of Adventure Zone was getting to do something new and exciting during summer break," said Evelyn Stenka, a local seventh grader at Raymond Central High School. "I made new friends, including students from Japan. We learned a lot about each other, did fun projects and activities together and even got to try each other's favorite candies. We've also been able to keep in touch since camp ended, which has been so cool!"

MORE THAN A GAME

How Doane Softball is Rebuilding with Heart

By Kelly Stenka



Junior Katelyn Hays (above and bottom right)



Grace Dowding '25 and Coach Valadez-Haralabidis

By all accounts, Doane University's softball team is in the midst of a comeback, and it's about more than the win column. It's a story rooted in culture, connection and commitment, led by coaches who know the program from the inside out.

Renaë Littrell, who served as Doane's first full-time head softball coach from 2012 to 2017, returned in 2023 to help revitalize the team. She knew what she was walking back into, not just in terms of facilities or tradition, but the student-athlete experience unique to Doane.

"I have a pretty deep knowledge of the program and our athletes," Littrell said. "When I first started here, we were at the bottom of the conference. Within three years, we won it. That's the foundation I came back to build again."

Littrell's second stint as head coach ended after the 2024-25 season, but not without ensuring the program was left in good hands. Associate head coach **Samantha Valadez-Haralabidis**, a 2017 Doane graduate and former player under Littrell, originally joined to help guide the rebuild. She has now stepped into the head coach role, bringing a deep connection to the program and a strong commitment to carrying forward its traditions and culture while adding her own perspective to guide Doane softball into its next chapter.

IN THE LEAD-OFF SPOT

Doane's junior and senior classes are poised to be the backbone of the program during this transition year. Small but mighty, they bring a mix of home-grown talent, transfers and diverse backgrounds from across the country. Many have been with the program since their freshman year, fully buying in and embracing leadership roles.

"They're a really diverse group," Valadez-Haralabidis said. "We've had the majority of these juniors and seniors since their freshman year, and that's always exciting, to see student-athletes start and finish their careers here. That

experience is something we're really going to lean on."

CONTINUING A GAME-CHANGING CULTURE

Valadez-Haralabidis is committed to continuing a positive, supportive culture that inspires players to have fun, push themselves and take ownership of the team's direction. She prioritizes open communication, encouraging athletes to speak up about their needs and goals, skills she believes will serve them beyond the field.

Valadez-Haralabidis also hopes to strengthen alumni connections, creating a program where athletes leave with lasting bonds and a sense of belonging that draws them back for years to come.

"To me, that piece is so important," Valadez-Haralabidis said. "That comes with the team culture and having a good experience."

LOOKING AHEAD

With a strong group of returning players and a promising class of newcomers, the Tigers are ready to get after it. Their goal is to compete at the top of the conference once again.

Doane softball is still writing its comeback story. But one thing is certain: The Tigers aren't just rebuilding, they're becoming a team with purpose, pride and a strong sense of who they are, on and off the field. **D**



GPAC COACH OF THE YEAR HONORS



DANA VOTE
Men's Wrestling



JULIAN GAYTAN
Women's Wrestling



ED FYE '82
Men's Indoor Track & Field
Women's Indoor Track & Field
Men's Outdoor Track & Field
Women's Outdoor Track & Field



JIM DANSON
Women's Golf



ED HUBBS '76
Women's Tennis

BASEBALL

The Tigers posted their fifth-straight 30-win season by going 32-15 overall. In addition to success on the field, the program welcomed new field turf on the infield playing surface.

Junior DH/OF **Sam Kwapnioski** led the Tigers with a .433 batting average. He had 32 extra base hits, including 14 home runs, to go with a team-high 52 RBI.

Redshirt freshman P **Riley Plummer** was named the GPAC Freshman of the Year after going 9-0 in 12 starts with a 2.86 ERA. Plummer and Kwapnioski were named First Team All-GPAC.

SOFTBALL

Doane finished 20-26 overall in 2025, advancing to the Northwestern bracket championship in the conference tournament. The Tigers had a 1-0 win over No. 10 Northwestern to open the tournament.

Senior OF **Grace Dowding** led the Tiger offense with a .365 batting average and 14 stolen bases, earning First Team All-GPAC honors.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Both teams had a successful run at the GPAC Championships, placing second in their respective races. The men received an at-large berth to the NAIA Championships where they placed 20th overall. Senior **Thomas Oliver** led Doane with a 55th place finish with freshman **Porter Bickley** placing 92nd.

Top 15 finishers at the GPAC meet receive All-GPAC honors and Doane had a record six earn the honor. Joining

FOOTBALL

The Tigers improved their win total as they finished with a 3-8 overall record under first-year head coach **Jonathan Johnson**. Doane finished the season by winning two of their final three games, both on the road.

Senior P **Kelen Meyer** was named First Team All-American by the Associated Press and Second Team All-American by the NAIA-AFCA. He led the NAIA in punts inside the 20 with 28 on the year. Meyer was named First Team All-GPAC as a punter and named to the Second Team as a placekicker.



Senior Kelen Meyer

Oliver and Bickley were juniors **Emmanuel Yego**, **Michael Grigsby** and **Nelson Ruto** and freshman **Jayden Wall**.

The women were represented at the NAIA Championships by two runners, **Calla Wittland** and **Danie Parriott**. Wittland placed 179th in her second appearance at nationals while Parriott was 217th in her first appearance. Both runners also received All-GPAC honors for the season.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER

The women posted a 7-8-4 overall record, going 5-2-4 in GPAC play. Sophomore **Virginia Johnson** was a finalist for GPAC Defensive Player of the Year as she posted a 1.00 goals against average (gaa). In GPAC play, Doane held opponents to a 0.73 gaa. Junior **McKenna Rathbun** led the team with 10 goals. Both players were named First Team All-GPAC.

The men finished 5-9-2 overall. Senior **Ameer Madden** was named First Team All-GPAC after posting eight goals and six assists out of his midfield position. **Guillem Colom** signed to play in the United Kingdom following graduation while he works toward his master's degree.



Junior McKenna Rathbun

Senior Ameer Madden

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Tigers improved from last year as they finished 9-19 on the season. The marquee win of the season came at home over then-No. 14 Morningside as freshman **Glavine McDonald** posted 14 points in a 64-57 final.

Senior **Brady Timm** led the team with 16.5 points per game and 4.7 assists as he was named Second Team All-GPAC.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Doane finished the season with a 15-14 record with several monumental wins on the year. The Tigers defeated then-No. 11 Dakota Wesleyan, No. 19 Arizona Christian and No. 14 Concordia and received votes in the NAIA poll for the first time in several years.

Senior **Mak Hatcliff** was named Third Team NAIA All-American as she concluded her career with 2,455 points. She averaged 19.2 points and 6.7 rebounds per game this year and was named First Team All-GPAC for the fourth-straight year. Senior **Macy Holtz** received Second Team honors and finished 29th in all-time scoring for Doane with 1,106 points in three seasons.

CHEER AND DANCE

Dance qualified for the NAIA Championships for the fourth straight year with another successful season. The Tigers walked away with a sixth-place finish — their third-straight Top 6 finish in the competition. **McKenna Wiley**, a junior, was named First Team All-American.

At the GPAC Championships, the team placed second overall, posting the program's first score over 90 with a 90.70 in the final round for an overall score of 89.69. Nine dancers earned All-GPAC honors.

The cheer team placed fifth at the GPAC Championships. A mere 10 points separated the Top 6 schools as Doane had a final score of 79.78.

MEN'S GOLF

Doane placed sixth at the GPAC Championships this year with a 905 team score. **Joshua Wassmer**, a sophomore, placed ninth at the conference meet and earned All-Tournament honors.

WOMEN'S GOLF

The Tigers claimed the program's first conference championship with a monumental comeback in late April. Doane trailed by 18 strokes midway through the second round, only to erase the deficit and enter the final round tied for the lead. Doane would fall behind again in the final round but stormed back on the final three holes and won the tournament by three strokes with a GPAC 54-hole record of 955.

Freshman **Connie Jarm** birdied the final hole to clinch the victory for the Tigers and she finished second overall. Jarm would earn First Team All-GPAC after posting a GPAC-leading 78.6 scoring average on the season, a Doane record. Junior **Kaitlyn Dumler** and freshman **Sydney Streeter** were also named First Team All-GPAC. The team placed 25th at the NAIA National Championships.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Women's Tennis finished second in the GPAC with a 5-1 record, finishing the year 13-7 overall. Sophomore **Maria Purizaca** earned Third Team NAIA All-American honors and was named the GPAC Player of the Year for the second consecutive season. She went 19-1 in duals this year with a 29-3 overall record.

Doane had six players earn All-GPAC honors with Purizaca, senior **Mariana Espinosa**, and freshman **Liz Calderon** earning First Team honors in both singles and doubles play.

Sophomore Maria Purizaca



MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

For the first time since 2018, a school swept the indoor and outdoor championship crowns as Doane returned to the top in all four championship events.

At the NAIA Indoor Championships, the women finished second behind national championship performances from senior **Madison Sutton** (weight throw) and sophomore **Kaylee Pribyl** (pole vault). Junior **Danie Parriott** earned runner-up honors in the 600m as the Tigers had 12 All-Americans. The men

placed third overall as senior **Zach Turner** claimed a national title in the 60m hurdles. The 4x400m relay team of juniors **Joaquin Gutierrez** and **Caleb Mulder**, freshman **Andrew Brown** and Turner picked up a second-place finish as the men had nine All-Americans.

Outdoors, Turner broke the NAIA all-time record in the 110m hurdles, posted the second-fastest time ever in the 400m hurdles, won two national championships in the hurdles events,

and was named the NAIA Most Valuable Performer in addition to receiving the NAIA Performance of the Meet at nationals. The men tied for seventh at the outdoor championships with seven All-Americans. Sutton paced the women at the outdoor championships with three All-American performances including a national title in the discus and a runner-up in the hammer throw. Junior **Kat Vogt** was also a three-event All-American as the women finished fifth overall with 12 All-Americans.

ESPORTS

Esports entered year two of competition at Doane. The program had more than 30 students participating this year in three different gaming specialties, Super Smash Bros., Rocket League, and Overwatch. The spring Overwatch team placed fourth in their postseason competition. Freshman **Caleb Panning** was the team's most valuable performer, competing in Super Smash Bros., finishing the season with 107 knockouts of the team's 238 on the season.

MEN'S TENNIS

The Tigers finished sixth in the GPAC with a 1-5 record, going 6-14 overall this season. Four players earned All-GPAC honorable mention honors including senior **Jose Purizaca**. He finished the year with an 11-7 record at No. 1 singles.

VOLLEYBALL

The Tigers took the court under new head coach **RanDee Ochinero** and saw an improvement in wins from the year before, finishing with a 9-20 record.

MEN'S WRESTLING

The men's wrestling team won the GPAC regular season title, their fourth in five years, with an 8-0 record and claimed the GPAC tournament title as well. At nationals, the Tigers finished fourth overall to bring home the program's first NAIA trophy.

Redshirt junior **Tyson Beauperthuy** was named the GPAC Wrestler of the Year. He posted a 33-1 record this year and took NAIA National Runner-up honors. Additionally, Beauperthuy has competed for Team USA. He earned a silver medal

at the U23 Pan-Am Championships in Mexico for Beach Wrestling and was the team's flagbearer for the opening ceremonies. He also competed in Greco-Roman while in Mexico. In September 2024, he competed in the World University Beach Wrestling in Brazil and brought home the gold medal.

Redshirt senior **Bradley Antesberger** became the program's all-time wins leader with 121 victories (121-14). Doane had four All-Americans this season.

WOMEN'S WRESTLING

The women have officially put themselves on the map this year following a ninth-place finish at the NAIA Championships. It marks the first Top 10 finish since the program began three years ago. The Tigers won the inaugural GPAC Championships, hosted in Crete, with junior **Cristelle Rodriguez** named the GPAC Wrestler of the Year, **Mora Peterson** named the GPAC Freshman of the Year.

Rodriguez earned her second NAIA National Championship and NAIA

Wrestler of the Year honor. She also won a U20 World Championship, U23 US Championship and the US Open. As a senior level team member, she'll compete at the World Championships in Croatia in September 2025.

Doane had four NAIA All-Americans this year, a program record. Joining Rodriguez were sophomore **Bridgette Sotomayor**, junior **Karina Vang** and sophomore **Aspen Barber**. Doane qualified the maximum of 12 for the championships.





Photo courtesy of Mackenzie Pike, class of 2028

Head women's golf coach Jim Danson and team captain Kaitlyn Dumler, class of 2026.

IT STARTS — AND WINS — WITH LEADERSHIP

By Sara Hinds

The Doane women's golf team made history in spring 2025, winning the program's first conference title, qualifying for the NAIA national championships and finishing 25th. Even more impressive is how they did it.

Four freshmen and one junior made up the conference championship team, with each individual placing in the top 25. The entire team is young. Of the 20 women who made up the roster, more than half were freshmen and only one senior graduated in May.

A young team requires leadership. A young team that exceeds expectations requires something extra. Something that's easy to write off as destiny. For Doane, it's the bond between Head Coach **Jim Danson** and team captain and now-senior **Kaitlyn Dumler**.

Dumler, who went to Lincoln East, knew Danson as a friendly but rival high school coach at Lincoln Southwest. In 2023, she transferred to Doane as a sophomore to be closer to home. Danson was in his second season as the head coach at Doane. Dumler would go on to be named "GPAC Newcomer of the Year" that season. That summer, Danson called Dumler.

"You're going to be my team captain," he told her. Danson has a strong vision for his team and the type of athletes he recruits. They have to be coachable, possess a strong work ethic and act with integrity. He requires all that and more out of his team captain.

This individual would "bridge the gap" between players and himself. They'd communicate his vision to the team and lead by example on and off the course.

Danson saw the leadership potential in Dumler when she stepped onto the Doane campus. He trusted her to build the team culture.

"We share very similar core values, as far as the respect and responsibility and just the integrity part of that," Danson said. "She's highly organized, her attitude is fantastic and she has a lot of respect for the program and for Doane as an institution itself."

Dumler's main focus was to welcome the freshmen to the team, to Doane and to college life as a whole. She paired up teammates who would then have to hang out outside of practice and snap a photo as proof. She kept track of her pairings on a spreadsheet. Once a month the



Photo courtesy of Mackenzie Pike, class of 2028

"We played for ourselves, but more importantly, we played for each other."

Kaitlyn Dumler, class of 2026

entire team would attend a bonding event, say a BBQ or pool party at Dumler's parents' house in Lincoln. Steadily, a team culture emerged, and ultimately it came into play in the 2024-25 season.

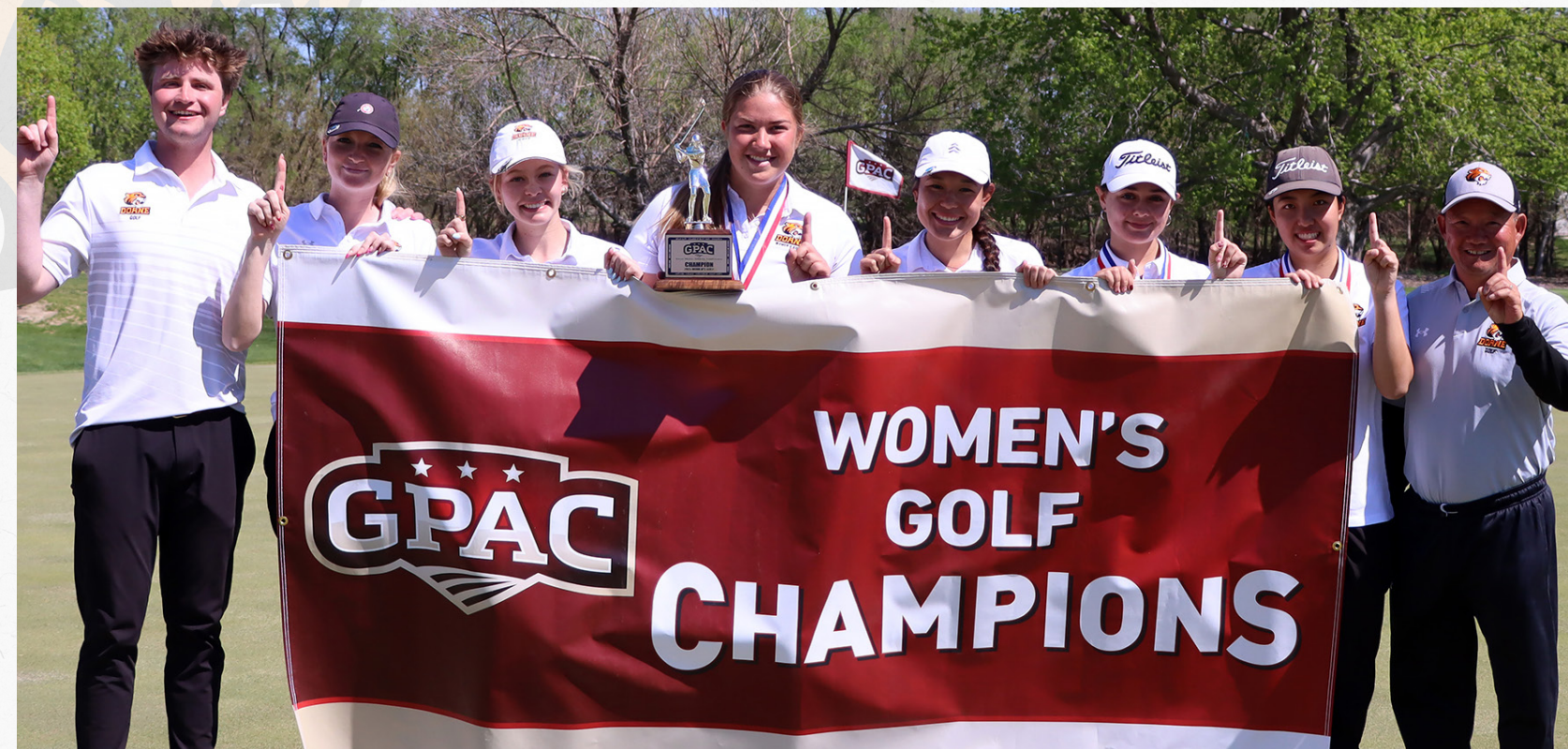
"I just think the success came from we played for ourselves, but more importantly, we played for each other," Dumler said. "When somebody had a bad day, somebody else would step up and kind of fill what they couldn't give."

By the end of the season, the absolute trust between Danson and Dumler trickled down to every individual and relationship on the team.

A young team comes with opportunities and challenges. The freshmen were hungry to win, Dumler said, but they hadn't experienced collegiate level of play before — and the culture shock that comes with being away from home for the first time. Dumler stepped in to guide the women both on and off the course.

It starts — and ends — with leadership. Dumler credits the coaching staff and their leadership. Danson says the team's success wouldn't be possible without Dumler.

"It really is refreshing to see a lot of my players understand how to achieve something that they didn't think was possible," Danson said. **D**



Graduate Assistant Garrett Dalton, Avery Van Horn, Sydney Streeter, Kaitlyn Dumler, Tia Phaisan, Laila Saunders, Connie Jarm and Head Coach Jim Danson



Financial Overview

COMBINED GIFT REVENUE (RESTRICTED, UNRESTRICTED AND CAPITAL)

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (FY25)

Alumni	\$ 2,128,391.12	39.66%
Bequests	\$ 1,595,649.32	29.74%
Foundations	\$ 642,951.81	11.98%
Trustees, Faculty & Staff	\$ 362,838.81	6.76%
Friends	\$ 292,359.33	5.45%
Corporations & Businesses	\$ 245,553.88	4.58%
Parents	\$ 96,433.45	1.80%
Religious Organizations	\$ 1,750.00	0.03%

Grand Total	\$ 5,365,927.72	100%
Total Donors	5,388	

EXCELLENCE FUND (UNRESTRICTED)

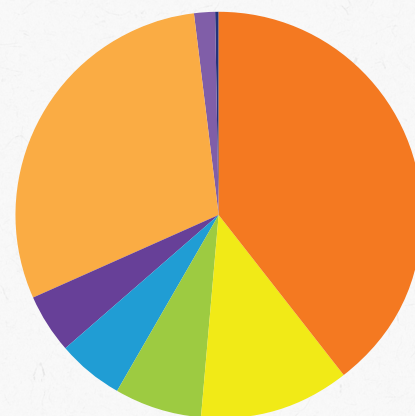
Total Raised	\$ 2,337,123.00
Total Donors	1,291

GIVING PARTICIPATION

Board of Trustees	100%
Alumni Giving	
Crete Campus Alumni	10.80%
All Undergraduate Alumni	7.32%
Master's Alumni	0.83%
Doctorate Alumni	0.00%
All Alumni	5.24%
Employee Giving	
Full-time	42.62%
Full-time and Part-time combined	41.27%

GIVING DAY

Total Raised	\$ 117,575.00
With \$80,000 in matching gifts (including \$75,000 challenge from the Board of Trustees)	
Total Donors	402



- Alumni
- Bequests
- Foundations
- Trustee/Faculty/Staff
- Friends
- Parents
- Corporations and Businesses
- Religious Organizations



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SUPPORT DOANE

MAKE A MEANINGFUL GIFT AND A SMART FINANCIAL MOVE

By Michael Stehlik '07

Giving back can be one of the most rewarding parts of your financial life, and with the right tools, it can also be a smart financial decision. Whether you're planning for retirement, managing required distributions, or organizing your philanthropic goals, some strategies can help you make a bigger impact while maximizing tax benefits. Two of the most effective methods are Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and giving through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF).

GIVE FROM YOUR IRA: QCDs

If you're age 70½ or older, you can make a tax-free gift directly from your IRA to a qualified nonprofit like Doane. QCDs allow you to donate up to \$100,000 per year, and the gift does not count as taxable income.

Even better, a QCD can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), which the IRS requires once

you reach age 73. By giving through a QCD, you can reduce your taxable income and still meet your RMD obligation.

IRAs are a powerful tool for making estate gifts to nonprofit organizations. When you name an individual as the beneficiary of your IRA, the amount they inherit is considered taxable income. However, if you name a qualified nonprofit organization like Doane as the beneficiary, the full amount passes tax-free — ensuring your gift makes its greatest possible impact.

It's a simple, powerful way to make a difference. For more information on how to direct a QCD to Doane, contact the Advancement Office at 402.826.8258.

PLAN YOUR GIVING: DAFs

A DAF is like a charitable giving account — you contribute assets (cash, stocks or other investments), receive

an immediate tax deduction and recommend grants to nonprofits like Doane over time.

DAFs are great for:

- Simplifying your giving with one source
- Donating appreciated assets and avoiding capital gains taxes
- Consolidating multiple years of gifts into one tax year

You can also involve family members, creating legacy of giving and supporting causes when the timing is right.

To recommend a grant to Doane from your DAF, contact your DAF manager and provide our name, Doane University, and our tax ID: 47-0377991.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the Advancement Office at 402.826.8258.

Doane University does not provide legal, tax or financial advice. Donors are encouraged to consult with their personal tax advisor, legal counsel or financial planner before making a charitable contribution.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: TY '84 AND TERESA "TWIG" O'GARA '85 COX

For **Ty and Twig Cox**, supporting Doane is rooted in relationships and a deep sense of gratitude.

"Doane has remained a part of our lives because of our connections with fellow alumni, our Greek organizations and our dear friend **Cody Vance '82**, who has kept in contact with us over the years," they said.

Their motivation is straightforward: to provide others with the same opportunities they had.


"Doane makes a difference in people's lives," they said. "We can play a small part in helping others realize their dreams."



The couple gives through a donor-advised fund, a method they've found both flexible and strategic.

"It allows us to separate the decisions of tax consequences and causes to support," they said. "We are able to decide the amount of appreciated securities to donate for the year, and achieve a tax deduction while avoiding capital gains taxes."

Their hope is to ensure Doane and its students continue to grow for generations to come.

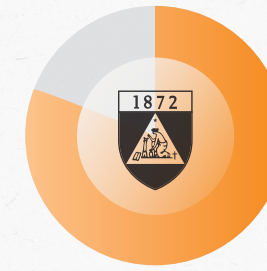
"The support of the Doane community allowed us to grow beyond where we thought we could be," they said. "We're grateful Doane allowed us to be associated with such wonderful people." 

LEADING THE WAY, TOGETHER.

By Michael Stehlik '07

Our Time to LEAD

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FOR DOANE UNIVERSITY



\$83 MILLION RAISED
OF OUR \$100 MILLION GOAL



Doane University has never tried to be the biggest, but it has always aimed to be the best — at caring deeply, teaching intentionally and preparing students to live with purpose.

That's the spirit behind *Our Time to Lead* — a \$100 million fundraising campaign that's not just about reaching a number, but setting a standard. One that says the college experience can still be personal, meaningful and transformative. One that shows what's possible when a university leads with integrity.

Launched publicly in May 2025 after nearly two years of quiet progress, the campaign has already raised \$83 million. It is the largest fundraising effort in Doane's history — and one that reflects the confidence our community has in the people who make the university what it is.

IT BEGINS AT THE TOP

Under the leadership of President Roger Hughes '82 and a forward-thinking Board of Trustees, Doane is moving into the future with clarity and ambition. Hughes has infused the university with renewed purpose — connecting past, present and future through bold vision and a deep commitment to students. The Board's support and strategic stewardship have positioned the university to think big while staying true to its roots.

At Doane, students don't get lost in the crowd. They're noticed. They're challenged. They're asked who they want to become, and then they're supported by faculty and staff who take that answer seriously. Whether a student is studying business in Crete, leadership in Lincoln, education in Bellevue or finishing a degree online, the experience is anchored by relationships, reflection and a readiness to lead.

Our Time to Lead is about amplifying that experience. It's about giving more students access to what makes Doane exceptional. It's about ensuring the university's best traditions are carried forward — and its brightest ideas have room to grow.

FOCUSING ON FOUR PILLARS

The campaign's four pillars — academic excellence, student experience, financial sustainability and technological transformation — aren't abstract goals. They're lived realities on our campuses, and they reflect what students need today and what our communities will need tomorrow.

With enrollment climbing, the need for scholarships and financial aid has never been greater. *Our Time to Lead* prioritizes that need, so cost never precludes a talented student from choosing Doane. That support also extends to experiential learning: internships, undergraduate research, global study and service experiences that help students

connect what they learn to who they want to become.

We're also investing in the spaces and people who make that learning possible. From state-of-the-art classrooms and performance venues to tools and training for faculty, the campaign is fueling innovation while honoring Doane's student-centered tradition. In addition to the \$23 million Korff Performing Arts Center, currently under construction, a planned academic building on the Crete campus will bring modern learning environments and collaborative space to the heart of campus, supporting a new era of cross-disciplinary teaching and student discovery.

Beyond academics, the campaign also supports student wellness, leadership and belonging. We know that students thrive when they feel seen and supported, and *Our Time to Lead* is ensuring that these systems are strong, inclusive and future-focused.

These are the kinds of investments that shape lives and launch leaders. And they send a powerful message: Doane isn't standing still. We're leaning forward into a future where every student is empowered to dream bigger.

This is Doane's moment to lead. And the best part? We're just getting started. **D**

Voices of Purpose

WHY THIS CAMPAIGN MATTERS

By Michael Stehlik '07



"I transferred from a large four-year university, and Doane has been an incredibly welcoming change for me. I've truly grown out of my shell here. This could not have happened without the generous contributions of donors — I am deeply grateful to be a recipient of their generosity. It has helped me focus on my studies instead of worrying about my finances. It is a wonderful feeling knowing that people care."

Aubrie Johnson '27
ENGINEERING MAJOR



"I came to Doane for the opportunity to teach engaged students and work with supportive, caring colleagues. I love being part of a place that values collaboration among faculty, staff and students. It's gratifying to see this kind of teamwork in action. What excites me most about this campaign is its potential to increase study abroad opportunities. That's a powerful way to broaden students' perspectives and enrich their education."

Danelle DeBoer, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY



"With the support of so many donors, I was allowed to explore countless avenues of growth during my time at Doane. These opportunities have greatly impacted my academic, professional and personal development. Donor support allowed me to become an involved member of the Doane community — enhancing my leadership skills, growing my network and developing in the classroom. Due to their generosity, I developed the mindset that anything is possible as long as you believe in it and are willing to put in the effort."

Juan "Zack" Perez '24
ENGINEERING, MATHEMATICS AND
DATA ANALYTICS DOUBLE MAJOR



"Life is about people. Doane is about people. We were supported by admissions counselors, professors, staff and community members who helped us succeed — and we never forgot it. Education is the key to the future. That's why we established the Robert E. '73 and Wintha M. Christiansen Endowed Scholarship: to make a difference in a student's life. Now it's our turn to be those people for the next generation of Tigers."

**Bob '73 and
Wintha Christiansen**

**LEARN MORE
AND GIVE TODAY**



SUPPORT THEIR PATH. CHAMPION THEIR EXCELLENCE.

By Michael Stehlik '07

Excellence at Doane looks like a student stepping into their potential. It sounds like curiosity in a classroom, a voice on stage, a cheer from the sidelines. It lives in every late-night study session, every act of leadership and every dream being chased on our campuses. That kind of excellence deserves support — and now, it has a name that reflects its impact: **The Excellence Fund.**

Previously known as the Doane Fund, the Excellence Fund continues to bridge the gap between tuition and the true cost of a Doane education. Now, you can direct your gift to the area that means the most to you.

When you choose where your gift goes, you help excellence grow where your heart leads — whether it's through scholarships, academics, student life, the arts or athletics.



CHOOSE YOUR IMPACT



FACULTY, STAFF & ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Advance innovation, research, teaching and professional excellence across all areas of campus life, including the work of directors, coaches and support teams



SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

Make college possible for students who need support



STUDENT LIFE

Invest in student organizations, leadership, wellness and belonging



ATHLETICS

Empower student-athletes in competition and in character



FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Celebrate creativity through music, theatre and visual art



CAMPUS BEAUTIFICATION

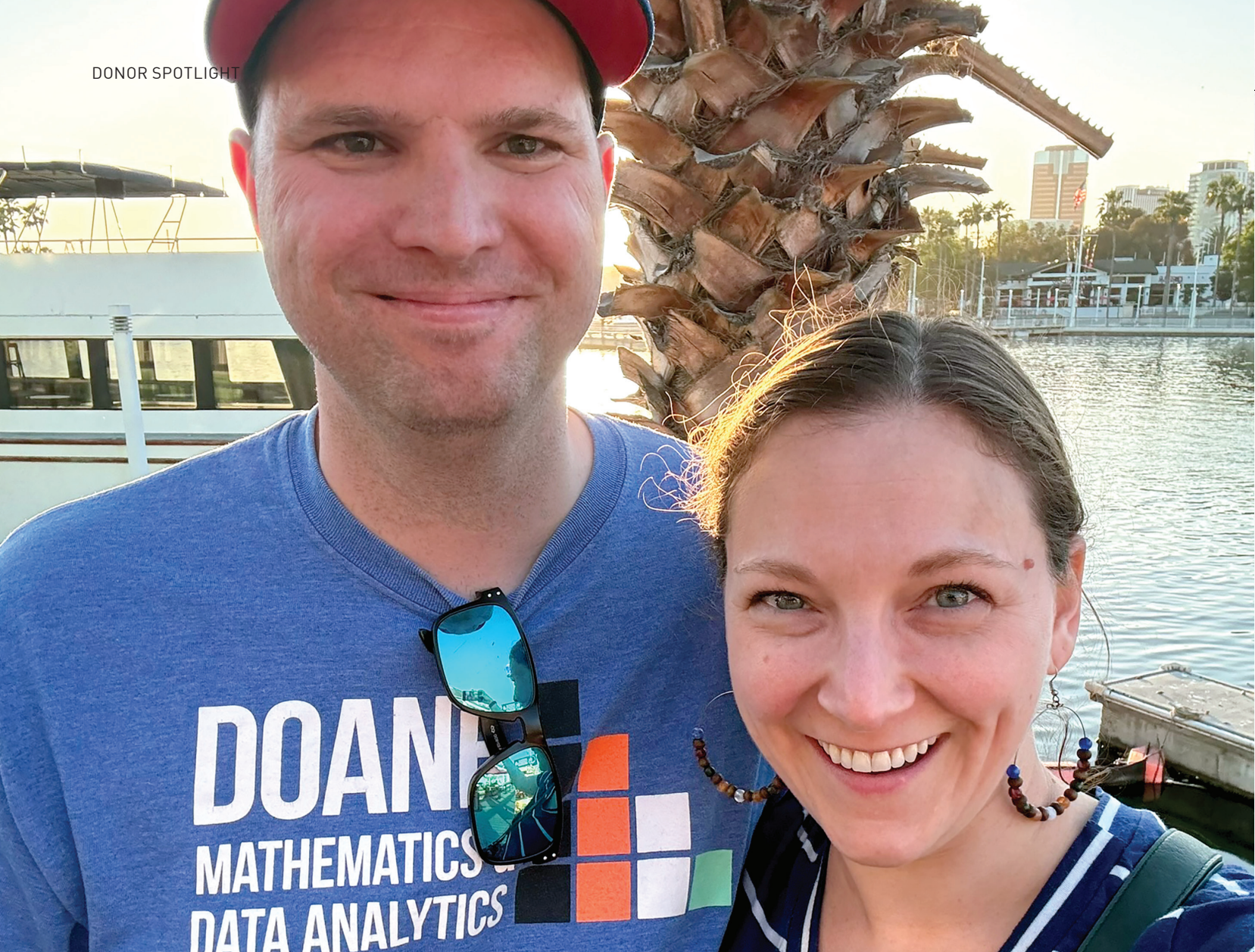
Keep Doane's campuses welcoming and inspiring



SUPPORT IT ALL

Fuel every corner of the Doane experience

Every gift is a vote of confidence in our students. Every dollar is an investment in their excellence.



DOANE COUPLE INVESTS IN THE FUTURE WITH TWO NEW ENDOWED FUNDS

By Michael Stehlik '07

For Billy Garver '11 and Caitie Leibman '11, giving back to Doane wasn't about waiting for the perfect moment — it was about realizing the moment had already arrived.

"Billy and I reached a moment where we thought, 'Why not? And why not now?'" Leibman said. "Many people wait until big milestones to start giving. We had these activities in mind for our gifts because we'd like to be here to see what happens when seeds are planted. We want to be here to celebrate and amplify the amazing things happening at Doane."

The couple recently established two new endowed funds that reflect their own Doane experiences and their hopes for the university's future. **The Forensics Endowed Support (FES) Fund** and the **Hands-on Analysis of Real Topics (HART) Fund** are designed to ensure students can access high-impact learning opportunities, regardless of financial need.

"Forensics was a fabulous in-between space for me," Leibman said. "It was academic and extracurricular. It connected me with other students across majors and



Leibman (front row, second person in) helped mark the 25th anniversary of Doane Forensics under its current name in April 2025, celebrating a tradition of speech and debate that dates back to the university's earliest years.

interests, and it gave me a space to explore topics and pieces of literature that I cared about."

She added, "The fund is flexible on purpose. Some years, travel costs are more expensive if the team has to fly to nationals. Some years, new students may need more financial support in finding competition attire that fits. The team has become more knowledgeable about serving students with disabilities, bringing in assistive technology so that competitors can present their work in more ways."

The HART Fund supports summer data research projects in partnership with nonprofit organizations and is named in honor of Associate Professor **Peggy Hart**, a longtime faculty member.

"Peggy has always put the student experience first," Garver said. "This model started organically because it made sense: not for awards, not for future financing."

"Peggy worked with students and nonprofits because it was a benefit to the students' experience, something they were unlikely to get at any other

institution," he added. "Being able to financially support this endeavor was obvious, just as it was obvious to name it after its creator, who happens to be a mentor and a friend."

Garver emphasized the importance of reducing financial barriers for students.

"College students have already invested in their long-term goals because they're here, getting a degree," he said. "Encouraging them to spend part of their summer doing research might be a big ask. We don't want that to be a barrier."

The couple hopes their gifts will encourage others to take that first step. "Ask yourself, 'What would feel good?'" Leibman said. "Where do you want to be able to look back and say, 'I was there! I was part of that!'"

"Money wants to keep flowing," she added. "We received scholarships, our parents helped launch us into the world and our faculty were committed to us. We've decided it's our turn. When it's your turn, do it. Whether it's your time, talent or treasure, keep it flowing." **D**



Doane is where Garver and Leibman first met — and where their paths as leaders began. Married since 2014, the couple continues to carry forward the values they learned during their time on campus.

"Billy and I reached a moment where we thought, 'Why not? And why not now?'"

- Caitie Leibman '11



Hart has taught at Doane since the 1992-93 academic year, mentoring generations of students — including Garver — through her work in mathematics and data analytics.

SCIENCE IN HER WORDS

Rachel Bedford '17, Ph.D. and Her Path from Research to Communication

By Kelly Stenka

When Rachel Bedford '17, Ph.D. stepped foot on Doane University's campus, she was set out to complete her English major. At least, that's how the rough draft of Bedford's story began. But as any good storyteller knows, the best tales are full of unexpected twists and new characters who change the plot entirely.

"In your first year, you're required to take a variety of courses," Bedford recalls. "I signed up for Intro to Biology just to check off a requirement." What she didn't expect was to fall in love with it.

The course, taught by Tessa Durham Brooks, Ph.D., wasn't just lectures and quizzes. Instead, students collected soil samples around Crete in search of bacteriophages — viruses that infect bacteria — cultivating them in the lab and watching as their discoveries came to life under high-resolution imaging. "We even got to name the phages and put them into a national database," she says, laughing. "It was the first time I felt like I was doing science."

Brooks noticed Bedford's enthusiasm and reached out. "She encouraged me to take another class. That mentorship — that spark — was a turning point." By the end of her first year, Bedford changed her major to biology.

It wasn't long before a summer opportunity with the INBRE program, a national biomedical research network funded by the NIH, took her to Creighton University. "I was able to work with Professor Laura Bruce, where I was first introduced to neuroscience and began using zebrafish as a model to explore the brain," Bedford recalls.

That summer changed everything.

"It was the first time I realized that science could be a

full-time career," Bedford says. "That you could actually spend your life asking questions and trying to answer them."

Back at Doane, she joined a chemistry lab under the mentorship of Andrea Holmes, Ph.D., to keep building her skills. She picked up a second major in psychology to better prepare herself for graduate work in neuroscience. And when it came time to apply, she set her sights on one place: the University of Oregon — the birthplace of zebrafish research.

"It felt so full circle," she says. "To start this journey in Nebraska, and then end up where zebrafish were first used as a model organism — getting to work alongside the scientists who pioneered the field. It was surreal."

Bedford's research focused on a mystery that had puzzled scientists for nearly a century: Why do certain "communication channels" between cells — called gap junctions — only show up during early muscle development, then disappear?

Gap junctions are tiny tunnels that let cells communicate instantly, like texting instead of mailing a letter. While they are widespread and vital during development, they mysteriously disappear from adult skeletal muscles, leaving scientists puzzled as to why.

Using zebrafish as a model — due to their genetic, muscle, and nerve development similarities to humans — Bedford discovered that one specific gap junction channel plays a key role in this short window of development. This gap junction channel helps deliver electrical signals from the brain and spinal cord to the developing muscles, telling them how to grow and form properly.

When that gap junction channel was removed, the zebrafish developed weak, wavy muscles and had trouble swimming. That showed just how important those early signals are for building strong, functional muscles.

Even more exciting? The same code to create these gap junction channels exists in humans and other mammals. Scientists believe it could be linked to rare neuromuscular disorders in children — a connection that hadn't been made before.

Bedford's research could one day help doctors identify these conditions earlier and, eventually, develop treatments.

After completing her Ph.D. in 2023, Bedford began a postdoctoral fellowship focused on unraveling the mysteries of motor neuron death — an area critical to understanding diseases like ALS. "It was meaningful work," she says, "but I realized that being the person pipetting at the bench every day wasn't where I felt most alive."

What truly energized her was a passion she had nurtured since her early days at Doane: communicating science beyond the lab. This spark first ignited in a comparative anatomy class which led to competing in a Science Slam at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she turned complex research into an

engaging presentation for a general audience. This experience, combined with ongoing faculty mentorship, helped solidify her unique dual identity as both scientist and storyteller.

Now, she's fully stepped into that role.

Today, Bedford works at the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact at the University of Oregon. Her title — Research Associate for Scientific Communication. "My job is to create scientific content that's engaging and meaningful for our stakeholders here. To show the impact of the work happening here."

Bedford's job is to capture and communicate that momentum — to tell the stories behind the breakthroughs, the people behind the papers, and the promise of what's to come. It's a career that merges her love of language with her scientific training, and a full-circle moment for a former English major.

"Ultimately, I see myself as a liaison — someone who can speak the language of science and translate it for different audiences," she says.

The shift from benchwork to creative storytelling has been energizing. "I think one of the things I'm really trying to do is to embrace the complexity of things and not be dismissive," she explains. Rather than



"Ultimately, I see myself as a liaison — someone who can speak the language of science and translate it for different audiences."

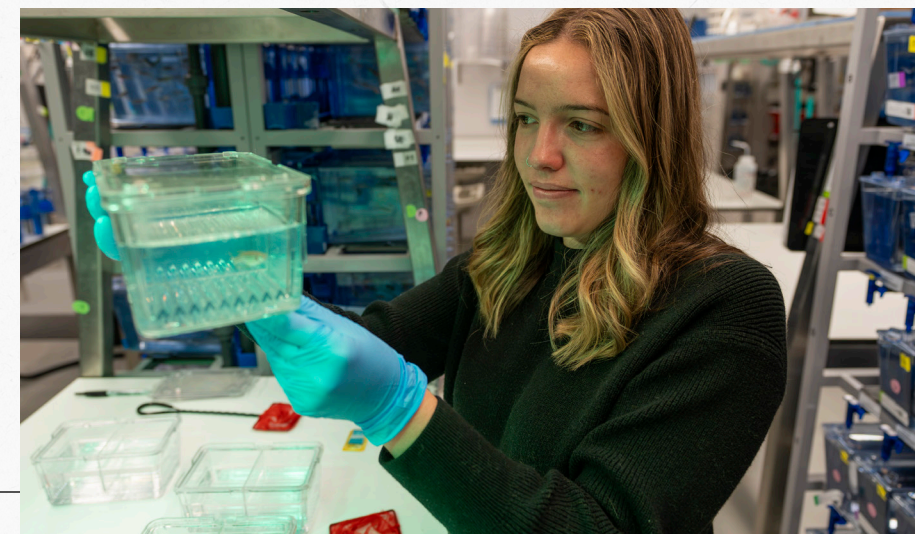
- Rachel Bedford

oversimplifying, Bedford focuses on making science understandable while respecting its nuances. Her goal is to help people connect with the "why" behind the research, showing not just results, but the obstacles and breakthroughs that make science worth following.

Bedford credits Doane as the place where her journey into science truly began. Her story is a testament to what happens when institutions like Doane create room for exploration, when mentors pay attention, and when students are willing to follow curiosity wherever it leads.

"I genuinely don't think I would have become a scientist if I had gone somewhere else," she says. "I think I would have gotten lost in the cracks at a bigger school. Doane made all the difference."

And it all started because one professor noticed a student having fun in a lab. **D**



Class Notes for 2025

- A** Administration arts and management master's program
- B** Business master's program
- C** Counseling master's program
- DE** Education doctoral program
- E** Education master's and advanced degree programs
- L** Lincoln bachelor's programs

Graduates without a letter designation are alumni of Doane's Crete campus.

1970s



✓ **Scott E. O'Keefe '72** *Hartford, Conn.*, and his wife, Marilda Gandara, hosted an alumni event at their historic Hartford home in Sept. 2024. Seated: **Rod K. Stoecklin '68**, *Newington, Conn.*; **Jim G. Rulison '72**, *Schenectady, N.Y.*; **Mike L. Tagg '74**, *Cromwell, Conn.*; **Ferris J. Jacobs '70**, *Portland, Maine*. Back row: **Scott O'Keefe, Hartford, Conn.**; **Chuck A. Mebus '82**, *East Lyme, Conn.*; Director of Planned Giving **Thomas R. Reeves '88**, *Lincoln*; Senior Development Officer **Jackie Lemke Hinrichsen '99**, *Lincoln*; **Suzanne M. Hertel '59**, *West Hartford, Conn.*

Paul S. Allen '73 *Oxford, Ohio*, produced a movie through the Institute for Learning in Retirement at Miami University. The short film was shared by AARP and drew a large audience.

Jeffrey D. Ross '76, Ed.D. *Gilbert, Ariz.*, published two poems, "When the Time Comes" and "Those Golden Years," in the anthology "Mortality Poems" in September 2024. Other poems by Ross appeared in the preceding anthology, "Magic Poems."

1980s

Barbara J. Fugate '80 *Minneapolis, Minn.*, was inducted into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame in 2025, honoring her 40-year career as a player, coach, and leader who helped shape women's rugby in America. A member of the 1991 Women's World Cup Championship Team, Barb also built a remarkable career in banking technology, retiring in 2024 as Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer, and Chief Security Officer at United Bankers' Bank



Ronald L. Hare '85 *Colorado Springs, Colo.*, published his first novel, "Boardroom Assassin," on June 22, 2025. The psychological thriller follows a CEO who believes he can commit the perfect murder. It is the first book in a series called The Elena Kolonik Files, featuring a detective who solves unsolvable cases. "Boardroom Assassin" is available on Amazon.



Anne O'Gorman Holling '85, '17E *Crete*, received the 2025 Friend of Autism Award at the Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders Network Conference in April. She served as an early childhood special education teacher for more than 30 years. Pictured with her is her daughter, **Claire Holling Johnson '22, '24E**.



Wende Beechler Burton '89 *Irving, Texas*, was appointed to the board of directors for The Family Place, which serves those affected by domestic violence. She is a nonprofit consultant for Social Impact Architects and previously worked more than 14 years at Communities Foundation of Texas.

1990s



✓ **Melissa Lehmann Wheelock '90** *Kearney*, was honored by the Nebraska Council of School Administrators as one of two people to receive its Distinguished Service Award. She is the administrator of Educational Service Unit 10.

Marsha Brumbaugh Clow '94 *East Grand Forks, Minn.*, received the 2024 Excellence in Mission Support Award and the Supervisory Professional Staff Employee of the Year Award from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

2000s

Nicholas L. Burke '04 *Sparks, Nev.*, began working as a senior economist II in occupational employment and wage statistics for the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation's Research and Analysis Division.

Tracy Hightower-Henne '04 *Omaha*, made the Forbes Advisor Best Divorce Lawyers of Omaha list for 2024. She is a partner with Hightower Reff Law.

Curt M. Hermesch '08L *Louisville*, took on one of the world's toughest endurance races this August — the Leadville Trail 100 in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. The 100-mile ultramarathon, run entirely above 10,000 feet, must be completed within 30 hours without rest. Curt also partnered with First Descents, a nonprofit that provides free outdoor adventures for young adults facing cancer. Learn more about First Descents at firstdescents.org.



2010s



✓ **Justin R. Cox '10** *Omaha*, welcomed daughter, Eleanor, with his wife, Elise Cox, on Feb. 19, 2025.



✓ **Andrea Johnson Wysocki '10, Ph.D.** *Lincoln*, and her husband, Keith Wysocki, welcomed their son, William, on April 30, 2025.

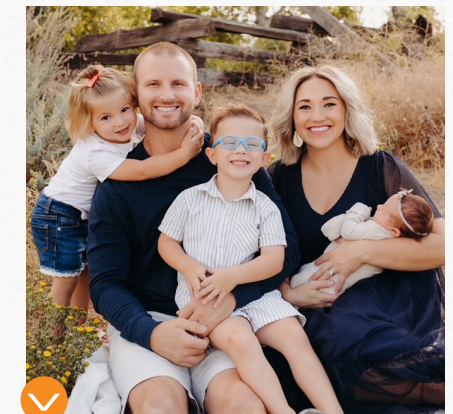
Lucas J. '11 and Amanda Bouc '11 *Fahrer* *Lincoln*, welcomed their son, Cedric, on Aug. 29, 2024. He joins big sister, Fiona.



Jacob M. '11, '17E and Alyssa Rogge '11, '15E *Baber Crete*, welcomed their daughter, Laurel, on June 14, 2024.

Maureen Beck Halama '12, '17E *Crete*, began working at Tri County Public Schools as a K-12 vocal music teacher.

Kailey Blazek Naranjo '13 *Des Moines, Iowa*, was recently elected shareholder at Dentons Davis Brown, a law firm in Des Moines.



✓ **Austin T. '13 and Morgan Griffith '13** *Benson* *Yakima, Wash.*, welcomed their third child, Baylor, on July 24, 2024. She joins her older brother, Haddix Travis (5), and sister, Palmer Lynn (3).

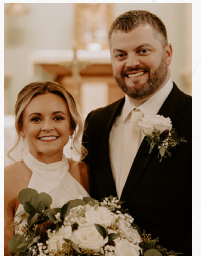
Tyler L. '15 and Whitney Allbery '14 *Johnson* *Jacksonville, Fla.*, were married on Dec. 20, 2024.

Robert F. '14 and Tessa Tierney '15 *Keeney* *Callaway*, welcomed their twins, Luke and Halsey, on Sept. 10, 2024.



✓ **Evan J. '14 and Nina Theiler '19, '24A** *Lasauskas* *Omaha*, were married on Aug. 2, 2025.

Nicholas A. '14 and Kelsey Christensen '15 *Renn* *Seward*, were married on Jan. 4, 2025.

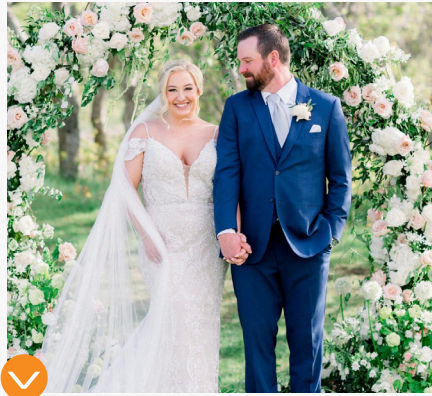


Alyssa Bouc Dahlgren '15 *Gretna*, and her husband, Tyler J. Dahlgren, welcomed their son, Walker, on Aug. 22, 2024.

Isaac E. Hunke '15 *Lincoln*, and his wife, Hailey, welcomed their daughter, Adelaide, on May 12, 2025.



✓ **Danielle Divis Luettel '15, '18E** *Lincoln*, welcomed her son, Knox Luettel, with her husband, Colton, on April 4, 2025. He joins siblings Josie and Dax, making a family of five. Danielle is a second-grade teacher at Shelby-Rising City.

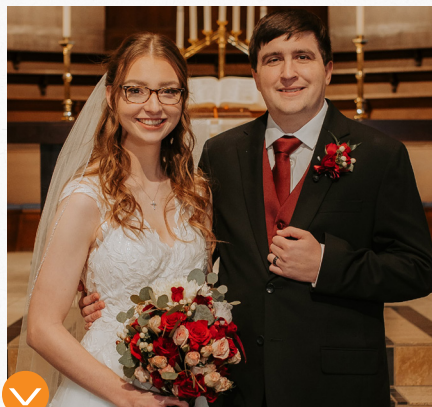


Brooke Ludemann Anthone '16 Castle Rock, Colo., married Matt Anthone on May 23, 2024.

Katlyn M. Rosas '16 Torrington, Wyo., began working at Eastern Wyoming College as an admissions representative in July 2024.

Rachel Lukowic-Bedford '17, Ph.D. Creswell, Ore., published a paper in "Current Biology," which the University of Oregon highlighted in a media release.

Cassidy J. Buescher '17E Lincoln, began working as a language arts teacher at Crete High School.



Craig J. '17 and Jenn Nyffeler '17, '20L Lechner Lincoln, were married on Nov. 16, 2024.

Mitchell K. '17 and Devin Lopez '19, '25B Marvin Milford, welcomed their son, Major, on Jan. 31, 2025.



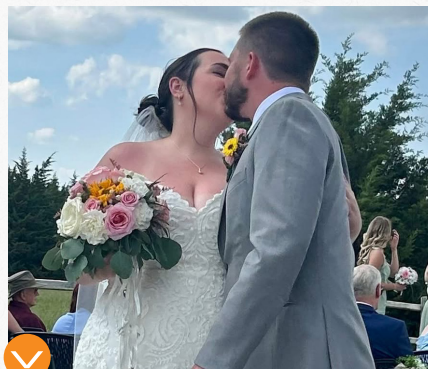
Wyatt J. '17 and Michelle Mlynczak '17 Simon Omaha, welcomed their son, Wesley, on March 24, 2025.

Brent A. Cain '18E Crete, began working at Crete Intermediate School as assistant principal.

Michaela Steager Ging '18 Thorndale, Texas, and her husband, Weston Ging, welcomed their son, Elijah, on Jan. 24, 2025.



Patrick S. Thimes '18 Annville, Pa., married Emily Hornung on Sept. 16, 2024.



April Blackledge Whitmore '18 Olathe, Kan., married Ross Whitmore on June 7, 2025.

McKenna Dodd Wolfgram '18 Omaha, married Dillon Wolfgram on Sept. 28, 2024.

Corey D. '19, '21E, '25E and Madison Behrends '19, '21E Bird Dorchester, welcomed their daughter, Bayla Clare, on Aug. 3, 2024.



Dana Johnson Margritz '19, '21E Lexington, and her husband, Bricen Margritz, welcomed their daughter, Brielle, on April 7, 2025.

Ignacio '19, '21B and Taylor Landenberger '18, '20E Morell Beatrice, were married on July 19, 2024.

2020s

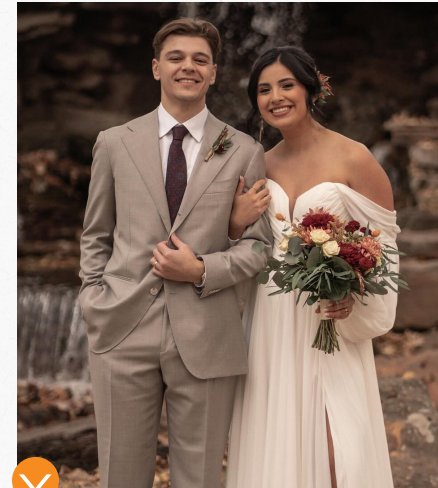
Katelyn Coble Corfield '20 Elm Creek, and her husband, Justin Corfield, welcomed their daughter, Marley, on Dec. 5, 2024.



Kyle D. '20 and Kayla Bachle '20 Hart Omaha, welcomed their daughter, Carter Lynn, on Sept. 10, 2024. Carter Lynn joins the family dog, Brew.

Austin J. '20, '23E and Sarah Daly '22, '25E Bruning Norfolk, were married on Aug. 2, 2025.

Jennifer Kuncl Parker '20, '23E Crete, began working as a science teacher at Crete High School.



Adam S. Ewalt '19 and Sydney Reiners-Ewalt '20, '22E Lincoln, were married on Oct. 26, 2024.



Blaire Edeal Berke '21 Lexington, and her husband, Teddie Berke, welcomed their daughter, Maisie, on June 28, 2025.

Riley Souchek Erickson '21 Sterling, married Matthew Erickson on Nov. 10, 2023.



Lauren Theiler Gehrls '21 Omaha, and her husband, Peter Gehrls, welcomed their son, Woodrow, on June 11, 2025.



Cole W. '20, '21B and Haylee Heits '21 Bruns Bloomfield, welcomed their daughter, Mallee, on Sept. 25, 2024.

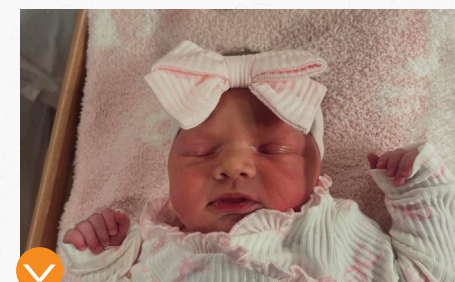


Tanner D. '21 and Joselyn Schnakenberg '21 Sand Omaha, were married on Sept. 28, 2024, in an outdoor ceremony at Wilderness Ridge surrounded by family and friends.

Bailey Sloup Brashear '21, '24E Columbus, married Ryan Brashear on Sept. 28, 2024.

Joslyn Crow Brosius '22 Hershey, married Jayden Brosius on Jan. 10, 2025.

Joseph D. '22 and Kiersten Dose '22 Burt Lincoln, were married on Jan. 10, 2025.



Delainey Stewart Novotny '22, '25E Fairbury, and her husband, Tanner, welcomed their daughter, Annie, on May 24, 2025.

Steven D. Huls '23L Western, began working as a teacher at Wilber Public Schools.

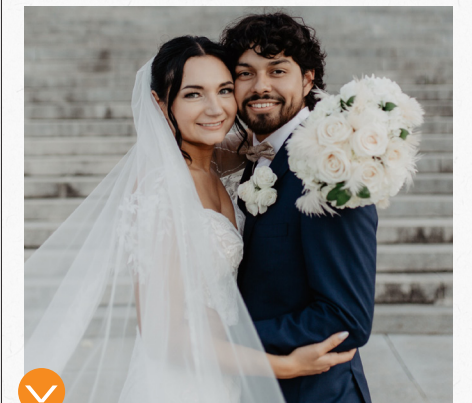
Trey K. '23 and Jessica Jensen '22 Porter Lincoln, were married on Sept. 27, 2024.

Cody D. Buescher '24 Crete, began working as an English learners teacher at Crete Elementary School.

Alexis D. Carbajal '24 Crete, began working at Crete Middle School as a teacher for intervention.

Olivia M. McBeth '23 Wilber, is the new K-6 vocal teacher at Central Elementary and Jefferson Intermediate with Fairbury Public Schools.

Kylie M. Meinke '24 Crete, began working as a first-grade teacher at Crete Elementary School.



Evan '25 and Anneliese Hinrichsen '24 Rocha Lincoln, were married on July 26, 2025 at the Scottish Rite Ballroom in Lincoln.

Maci McCarter Wallace '25 Elm Creek, married Morgan Wallace on July 12, 2025.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2024-25 ADDITIONS

Douglas Estrada '89
Elected 2024
Senior Director II Supply Chain,
Walmart Stores Inc.
Bentonville, AR

**Elizabeth "Betty" Nienkamp
Mason '86**
Elected 2024
Senior Director, Head of Program
Management
Zoetis | Global Manufacturing and
Supply
Firth, NE

Jihad Shoshara, M.D.
Elected 2024
President, Pediatric Health
Associates
La Grange, IL

Mark Christensen '81
Elected 2025
Attorney
Cline Williams Wright Johnson &
Oldfather, LLP
Raymond, NE

Craig Coppersmith '85
Elected 2025
(Retired) Licensed Professional
Engineer / Consulting
C 2 Consulting LLC
Omaha, NE

Bridget Kurkowski '01, '08A
Alumni Board Representative
Elected 2025
Vice President, Enrollment Services
Encoura
Prairie Village, KS

Timothy Wilson '90
Elected 2025
(Retired) Certified Public
Accountant, Forvis
Omaha, NE

In Memoriam

Friends and classmates of these Doane alumni may call the Alumni Office at 402.826.8258 to ask if more information is on file.

Date of death follows each name. Names are listed according to graduation year.

Marcia Stribling Patterson '42
Hiawassee, Ga., Jan. 28, 2025

Annetta Morton Haack '50
Santa Maria, Calif., June 19, 2025

William E. Larsen '50, Ph.D.
Bozeman, Mont., July 9, 2024

Marjorie Welsch Manglitz '51
Lincoln, Sept. 11, 2024

Eugene A. Kuhn '52
Worthington, Ohio, May 3, 2025

Glenn A. Edwards '53
Hardy, June 10, 2025

Ronald L. York '53
Montebello, Calif., June 16, 2024

Robert R. Billiar '54, DVM
South Sioux City, Sept. 29, 2022

Jane Hitt McAndrew '54
Saint Paul, Minn., Dec. 6, 2024

John R. Reisbick Jr. '54
Omaha, Jan. 26, 2024

Lillian "Bunny" Albrecht Dudley '55
Crete, March 7, 2025

Nancy Appleby Weldon '55
Beatrice, May 10, 2024

Nancy Rystrom Zelewski '55
Tulsa, Okla., Feb. 10, 2025

Nancy Zimpfer Hervert '56
Ravenna, Dec. 27, 2024

Jane Langenberg Johnson '56
Fremont, Nov. 5, 2024

Kathryn Stich Mass '56
Lincoln, March 31, 2025

Eldon R. Henning '57
Lincoln, Aug. 8, 2024

Stanley J. Hale '58
Omaha, April 13, 2025

Robert S. Apfelbeck '59
Sarasota, Fla., Aug. 28, 2024

Bonnie Figi Mack '59
Elkhorn, May 11, 2024

Edward G. Heilman '67
Palm Desert, Calif., Dec. 9, 2024

Gerald L. Ludwig '67
Omaha, July 23, 2024

Francis M. Siedhoff '67
Crete, Aug. 22, 2024

Earl L. Gerdes '68
Scottsdale, Ariz., June 16, 2024

Loree F. Dienstbier '69
Beatrice, Jan. 5, 2024

Ken E. James '69
Sunset, S.C., April 24, 2025

Fred D. Leary '70
New Haven, Conn., Aug. 27, 2024

Linda C. Portwood '70
Bellingham, Wash., Dec. 6, 2023

Neil H. Dunker '72
Beatrice, Nov. 4, 2024

James G. Rulison '72
Schenectady, N.Y., Feb. 22, 2025

John G. Birtwell '74
Walpole, Mass., Dec. 2, 2023

Rev. Stephen P. Gettinger '75
Anderson, Ind., April 12, 2025

Daniel R. Douglas '76
Scottsbluff, Oct. 30, 2024

Cheri Fritz Mager '79
Wilber, Aug. 5, 2025

Wendi Nordhausen Goodenberger '82
McCook, Dec. 5, 2024

James D. Barker '92
Omaha, Feb. 15, 2025

Randy L. Agena '94L
Beatrice, March 27, 2025

Jefferson J. Meyerink '00
Fremont, Sept. 5, 2024

Logan J. Hoyt '12
West Point, Oct. 29, 2024



Lillian "Bunny" Albrecht Dudley '55
April 21, 1934 - March 7, 2025

Bunny attended Doane College, where she met her best friend and husband, Dick "Doc" Dudley '56. At Doane, Bunny was a member of many organizations, including Phi Sigma Tau sorority. She graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's in music.

Bunny earned a Fulbright Scholarship to study vocal performance in Germany. She returned stateside to pursue a career as a kindergarten and music teacher at Crete Public Schools. She directed church choir, gave private music lessons, taught part-time at Doane and served Crete as the first woman elected to City Council.

When Bunny retired from teaching, she and Doc worked for the Advancement Office at Doane and earned an honorary doctorate degree from Doane in 2021.

Bunny was widely known for her generosity. She shared homemade treats and flower arrangements from her garden and handwritten letters with friends. She was a beloved wife of 68 years, a mother of five, a devoted grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt and a dear friend to many.

YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A HOME *at* DOANE



JOIN YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER

Alumni chapters are one of the best ways to stay connected with Doane in a meaningful way and meet other alumni of all ages!

CURRENT CHAPTERS



MEET JENN NYFFELER LECHNER '17, '20L AND HER DAD, JAMES NYFFELER '83

WHY THEY JOINED

Jenn: "I wanted to give a voice to recent graduates to help keep them involved."

James: "It was a way to stay connected to Doane. And a way to give back by promoting the university to more alumni and sharing the accomplishments with others in the Lincoln area."



PERSONAL BENEFIT

Jenn: "As a more recent graduate, giving financial donations isn't always feasible, so being able to 'donate' my time and energy is a good way to still support the university."

James: "I have met so many interesting staff and alumni and learned what they are passionate about outside of their careers paths."

PROFESSIONAL BENEFIT

Jenn: "I get to know and make connections with alumni of all ages and backgrounds. Staying involved also shows employers that I'm a lifelong learner and care about the success of future generations."

James: "Serving on the board has allowed me to learn how businesses outside of my career area operate."

To join an alumni chapter — or start a new one — contact Director of Alumni Engagement, **Michelle Dusharme Faltin '99**.

michelle.faltin@doane.edu | 402.826.6709

DOANE IS COMING TO YOU THIS SPRING/SUMMER 2026

- Locations include:
- Chicago, IL
 - Dallas, TX
 - Denver, CO
 - Kansas City, MO
 - Lincoln, NE
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - Minneapolis, MN
 - Omaha, NE
 - Phoenix, AZ



STAY IN THE KNOW

To ensure you continue receiving the Shield newsletter each month, please make sure to share your preferred email address with: alumni@doane.edu



USE OUR RESOURCES

Doane's Career, Leadership and Service (CLS) office is still available to you as an alum. The CLS team can help you navigate the job search and provide feedback on your resume. And they're always looking for alumni to share their professional experiences at classes and networking events.



Contact career@doane.edu to learn more.

LET'S TALK ABOUT LEGACY

Doane's impact doesn't end at graduation. It lives on in the friendships that began in residence halls, in the relationships sparked in classrooms, and in the quiet confidence that shapes careers and communities. Maybe you met your spouse in sophomore math. Maybe your college roommate is still your closest friend.

Sometimes, a legacy is less obvious — it's the trust you feel in sending your child or grandchild to Doane, knowing they'll be supported just as you were.

Now, there's a way to make that legacy permanent.

Many of the trees, benches and bridges that make Crete's campus beautiful are memorials or tribute gifts. They honor alumni or friends of Doane who were particularly impacted by the university. Consider establishing a memorial or tribute gift in your name, or that of a loved one. Legacies deserve to be remembered for generations of Tigers to come.

Contact Thomas Reeves '88 at 402.826.8284 or thomas.reeves@doane.edu for additional information on creating a memorial gift at Doane.

Special thanks to the Office of Strategic Marketing summer interns, seniors Giovanni Castaneda and Grace Schroller, for taking photos of some of the memorials around campus.



B



C



A



E



D



F



G

- A. Bench outside Perry Campus Center, donated by the Class of 1973 for their 50th reunion
- B. Bridge over Doane Lake, donated by John Jones who was a Crete resident who got the structure from the Burlington Railroad
- C. Bridge between Gaylord Hall and Frees Hall, donated by Kezzie Porter Brande 1905
- D. Trees between the Conservatory and Gaylord Hall, honoring John R. Lothrop '68, Rowena Adams Lothrop Miller '35 and Edna Cobb Lothrop 1909
- E. Pergola north of Frees Hall, donated by Carrie Dean '80 in honor of her parents
- F. Bench outside Chab Weyers Education & Hixson Lied Art Building, donated by Gamma Phi Iotas in memory of Trish Willers Kinnaman '88
- G. Bridge over Miller Pond, donated by Herman F. Brandt



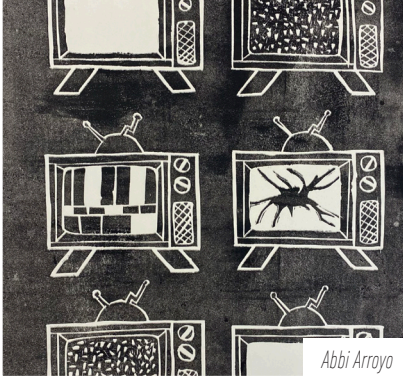
DOANE UNIVERSITY

1014 Boswell Avenue
Crete, Nebraska 68333

doane.edu



Abbi Arroyo



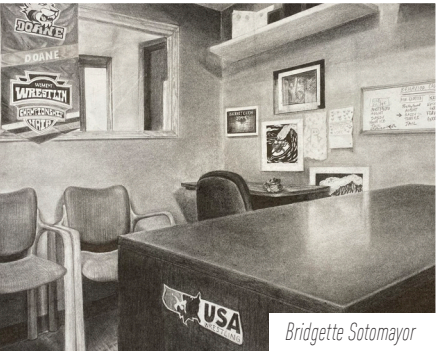
Abbi Arroyo



Abbi Arroyo



Alejandra Prat



Bridgette Sotomayor



Bridgette Sotomayor



Bridgette Sotomayor



Chaney Nelson



Elly Kennec



Jayda De Jong



Terra Nun



Gabby Maryott



Jax Stander



Jose Purizaca



Ceci Barr



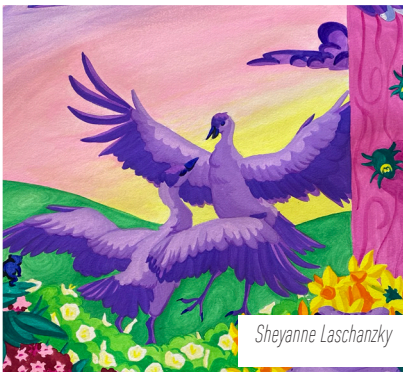
Emma Ryan



Hannah Brust



Sheyanne Laschanzky



Sheyanne Laschanzky



Madi Schneider