world traveler returns home

Creighton University’s 25th President
Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D.

Beefing Up Your Brain
Bringing Care to Rural America
The First World War’s Legacy in the Middle East

Summer 2015
Go Set the World on Fire

St. Ignatius of Loyola
Burning Brightly

The Jesuit spirit of being a positive difference in the world is illuminated in a new campus sculpture by Creighton art professor Littleton Alston, called The Flame. The family of Charles (BSC’49) and Mary Heider, longtime supporters of the University, commissioned the 20-foot-tall stainless steel piece, which features a continually burning flame. The sculpture, unveiled at a ceremony in April, is located near the Harper Center and honors Jesuits past, present and future. Inscriptions along the base, in Latin and English, read: Go set the world on fire.

> Alston reflects on his creation in a video at creighton.edu/creightonmagazine.
Message from the Interim President

We ended the 2014-15 academic year with much momentum, and we eagerly anticipate the arrival of the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D., on July 1, as Creighton’s 25th president.

First, let me congratulate our recent graduating class of more than 1,600. We welcome you as Creighton alumni, and we look forward to hearing about great accomplishments to come.

I also would like to congratulate commencement honorees LEO A DALY and the Hon. Michael Fahey, BA’73, HON’09. LEO A DALY, an internationally recognized architectural and engineering firm based in Omaha, received the Presidential Medallion for its history of service and leadership. Fahey, a former mayor of Omaha, was presented with the Alumni Achievement Citation, our highest alumni award.

Looking ahead, we will welcome our largest entering class this fall — with approximately 1,080 students! The quality of this class is equally impressive. More than 35 percent rank in the top 10 percent of their high school class, and nearly one-quarter scored 30 or greater on the ACT. Eighty-three percent reported being involved in service or church organizations in high school.

When it comes to service, they will find kindred spirits here on campus. Our students performed more than 1 million hours of community service during the 2013-14 academic year, according to a recent report. Our students are living out Creighton’s Jesuit mission of being women and men for others.

We continue to be recognized for our good work. The Omaha Chamber of Commerce honored Creighton with its 2015 Headliner of the Year Award for promoting a positive image of Omaha through our new affiliation with the BIG EAST Conference. And our athletic director, Bruce Rasmussen, was recently named an AD of the Year — for the third time!

This spring, thanks to the generosity of the Heider family, we dedicated a beautiful sculpture created by fine arts professor Littleton Alston. The sculpture, titled The Flame, honors our Jesuit heritage — and encourages its admirers to “Go set the world on fire.”

We also are grateful that, through the gifts of many, we could recognize former president the Rev. John Schlegel, S.J., with the renaming of the Creighton Center for Service and Justice in his honor. It’s a most fitting tribute. Let us continue to pray for Fr. Schlegel as he battles pancreatic cancer.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the entire Creighton community for your encouragement and support in my interim role. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve in this capacity, and I look forward to continuing the conversations.

J. Chris Bradberry, Pharm.D.
Interim President
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A well-traveled priest and scholar who is deeply committed to Creighton’s Jesuit, Catholic mission, the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D., returns to Creighton to become the University’s 25th president.

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Online Extra . . . Employment by the Numbers
Although more Americans are finding work, Creighton economics professor Ernie Goss, Ph.D., cautions that the economic recovery remains slow. But signs point to an improved outlook for recent college graduates and workers who are willing to go where the jobs are.

View the magazine online at:
creighton.edu/creightonmagazine

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2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178
Keegan Named Arts and Sciences Dean

After nearly 20 years on the faculty of the Creighton College of Arts and Sciences, Bridget Keegan, Ph.D., is now leading it.

In April, Keegan, a professor of English, was named dean of the college, following a two-year interim tenure in that role.

“Dr. Keegan has served as the interim dean for two years and has demonstrated an ability for teamwork and collaboration,” says Provost Ed O’Connor, Ph.D. “Most importantly, she puts students and their learning first. She is a passionate advocate for the liberal arts and sciences and is deeply committed to our Jesuit, Catholic mission. Her longstanding commitment to undergraduate research and to interdisciplinary innovation makes Dr. Keegan the right person to lead the College of Arts and Sciences at this time.”

Keegan earned an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and her doctorate from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She joined Creighton’s Department of English in 1996, where her teaching and scholarship in 18th- and 19th-century British literature have inspired students. She has held numerous leadership positions within the college, including chair of the English department from 2001 to 2004, associate dean from 2007 to 2009, and acting chair for the Department of Modern Languages from 2009 to 2010.

An outstanding student mentor, faculty collaborator, prolific author and presenter, Keegan helped lead the team responsible for the establishment of the Phi Beta Kappa national academic honor society on campus. She received the University’s Distinguished Faculty Service Award in 2009 and the Mary Lucretia and Sarah Emily Creighton Award in 2011.

An Uplifting Addition to St. John’s Church

“Christ asks us to build his temple, his Body. We build it not with costly stones or sentiment that will fade. We build it with a commitment to those around us.”

Those words from the late Rev. Pat Malone, S.J., appear on a plaque inside St. John’s newest addition, an elevator on the west side of the church that can accommodate parishioners and visitors who may have limited mobility. Fr. Malone served as pastor of St. John’s Church from 2012 to 2014 and was a tireless champion of the elevator project as a way to welcome all of God’s people. Fr. Malone died last July after a long struggle with cancer. Many St. John’s parishioners provided gifts for the project, and the O’Keefe Elevator Company donated the elevator.

Two Journalists Inducted into Hall of Fame

Two members of the Creighton community, the Rev. Don Doll, S.J., professor emeritus of photojournalism, and alumnus the late John “Jack” McBride, BA’48, were inducted into the Omaha Press Club’s Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame on June 6.

> Fr. Doll has received national and international recognition for his photojournalism, including most recently the Photographic Society of America’s 2014 International Understanding Through Photography Award. He has been featured in National Geographic and a number of Day in the Life of... books. Fr. Doll was a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences for 45 years. He continues to hold the Charles and Mary Heider Endowed Jesuit Faculty Chair.

> McBride, who died in 2008, was given the award posthumously. A pioneer in television, cable, satellite and interactive computer technologies, McBride was widely regarded as an innovative visionary for founding and expanding Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET). He also helped several states and 25 countries launch educational programs and public broadcasting. McBride received the Alumni Merit Award from the College of Arts and Sciences in 1972.
CCSJ Named for Fr. Schlegel

The Creighton Center for Service and Justice (CCSJ) was renamed for former Creighton University president the Rev. John Schlegel, S.J., during an April 19 ceremony on campus. Fr. Schlegel said he was “deeply moved” by the gesture, which was supported by a $500,000 matching gift from several anonymous donors.

Fr. Schlegel, who announced in February that he has inoperable cancer, served as president from 2000 to 2011.

The center has coordinated community service and peace and justice initiatives for the University and its students since 1995. Fr. Schlegel shared a reflection with Creighton University Magazine in April on his battle with cancer. That piece appears on Page 43.

Watch a video highlight of the ceremony at creighton.edu/creightonmagazine.

Donate to the endowment fund for the newly renamed center at creighton.edu/schlegel-endowment.
Nostra Aetate: 50 Years After Vatican II

While it’s the smallest of the 16 documents produced during the Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate — officially adopted 50 years ago this October — revolutionized the Catholic Church’s relationship with non-Christian religions.

Creighton University Magazine asked the Rev. Dennis Hamm, S.J., professor emeritus of theology, and Leonard Greenspoon, Ph.D., the Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization, to discuss this historic document. Watch their presentation “Catholicism in Dialogue: Relating to Other Believers” for further discussion: bit.ly/nostra_aetate.

How groundbreaking was Nostra Aetate when it was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on Oct. 28, 1965?

Hamm: Nostra Aetate acknowledged what Catholic Christianity has in common with other world religions, advocated for dialogue and collaboration with other religions, acknowledged that non-Christian religions mediate valuable truths and it confronted the teaching of contempt regarding Judaism.

Greenspoon: For those within the Jewish community and the Catholic Church who had been working on this document for many years, this came as the hoped-for culmination of much prayerful hard work. For everyone else, the Church’s declarations were not anticipated, but a welcomed achievement.

Can you briefly place this document in its historical, cultural and social context?

Hamm: Given that Church councils up through Vatican I had been mainly European gatherings, Vatican II was the first council with truly worldwide representation. In the 1960s, globalization was awakening most people’s sense of being part of a world community and this new situation made the relationship of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions an urgent matter. In particular, we Catholics needed to overcome some false understandings and attitudes toward our close religious relatives, the Jews.

Greenspoon: The document appeared 20 years after the end of World War II and the first recognition of the horrors of the Holocaust and the roles played by self-professed Christians. As a sign that the Church recognized Judaism as a valid religion on its own terms, the document set the tone for both official and personal interactions for the decades that followed.

What particular elements of this document stand out to you?

Hamm: The fresh starting point regarding our relationships with non-Christian religions, beginning with what we have in common as religious human beings rather than starting with a focus on our differences.

Greenspoon: Up until Nostra Aetate, the Church’s teaching was that all Jews in all times bore guilt for Jesus’ crucifixion. In reversing the “teaching of contempt,” the Church took the first of many needed steps toward repudiating its anti-Jewish statements and activities.

What is the biggest positive effect this has had on interreligious dialogue and cooperation?

Hamm: The growing realization that members of the religions of the world have much to learn from one another and that all religions hold resources for collaborating on issues of justice and peace.

Greenspoon: Nostra Aetate paved the way for interreligious dialogue based on mutual respect. It allowed for religious communities, while acknowledging their distinctive features, to work together to combat issues such as racism, poverty and global warming.

Nostra Aetate is Latin for “in our time.” How is this document still relevant today, and where do we need improvement?

Hamm: We need to be more creative in our interreligious dialogue. One wonderful sign of hope: here in Omaha, a group called the Tri-Faith Initiative is building a shared campus featuring a synagogue, a church, a mosque and a fourth structure, “Abraham’s Tent,” which is a meeting place hosting a library with scholarly resources from all three traditions — Jewish, Christian and Islamic.

Greenspoon: In many ways, Nostra Aetate and similar documents are aspirational, but everyone realizes that true and significant change doesn’t occur overnight. It’s an ongoing process that has its setbacks, as well as advances. Until respect and understanding characterize all of our thoughts and actions, there is still much room for improvement.
Developing Your Inner-Coach

Skills essential for developing winning athletic teams are also important in business and life. An all-star lineup, home court advantage and raucous fans will get you only so far as an athletic team.

The same can be said for a great sales force, a dynamite advertising team and unlimited market potential.

Without a savvy leader at either helm, without a coach or a manager who knows what strings to pull and when, even the greatest contenders or businesses can flounder. And that’s where Heather Chadwick and her eight-week online class in Creighton University’s College of Professional Studies can come in handy.

“It’s an awesome course,” says Chadwick, who started teaching the course in 2013 as part of the University’s online Bachelor of Science in Leadership program. “When we start talking about leadership and what that means, we have to have the conversation on coaching and mentoring and demonstrate the importance of those ideas in leadership. What does it take to be a good coach?”

In Chadwick’s course, students explore the essential tools to help them develop their inner-coach, gradually developing the glue holding together championship teams or accomplishing great things in life’s numerous other pursuits.

Perhaps the most important lesson for any coach in creating a winning formula is the ability to be adaptable. The one-size-fits-all approach of management is no longer a viable option in the multifarious workplace of today, Chadwick says.

“You have to know your workforce,” she says. “Some people respond to the high-intensity, high-demand atmosphere. Other people, not so much. There are all types of different theories in coaching, so you have to know your stakeholders, know who’s involved and how to motivate them.”

It’s a lesson echoed by Todd Darnold, Ph.D., associate professor of organizational behavior and human resource management at Creighton, who extensively teaches the coaching model.

“To put it in the terms of athletics, you don’t coach your center the same way you coach your point guard,” says Darnold, who incorporates coaching management philosophies into his MBA courses and is also helping the Heider College of Business develop a program with the Institute for Career Advancement Needs, an Omaha-based nonprofit interested in developing the next generation of business leaders. “In the workplace, you don’t coach your highly motivated people the same way you coach those who might be struggling. It’s an idea that’s gained more momentum over time: How do you work with people from all across the spectrum and remain responsive to their needs?”

Coaching metaphors from the athletic world often wend their way into both Chadwick’s and Darnold’s curricula.

“One of the first lessons Chadwick’s classes tackle is taking the mystique out of coaching. Coaches like Mike Krzyzewski and John Wooden, she says, didn’t magically become eminent leaders of their basketball teams.

“They developed a system and a vision,” Chadwick says. “Metrics in athletics are fairly easy to find. They can be a little bit harder in the business world, but people know success when they see it. A great coach will get the buy-in from their employees, who then will take ownership of that success. And just like in sports, nobody wants to be coached forever. They want to take those skills and translate them into their everyday lives and become their own coach, passing on those leadership lessons.”

Werner-Robertson, Warren Honored at Women’s Athletic Fundraiser

Congratulations to Gail Werner-Robertson, BA’84, JD’88, left, and Tanya Warren, BSW’88, who were this year’s recipients of Creighton’s Believe and Achieve award and Leaders for Life award, respectively. They were recognized at the annual women’s athletic fundraiser event on May 1.

Read more about Werner-Robertson and Warren at creighton.edu/creightonmagazine.
Cardinal George’s Ties to Creighton Remembered

A former faculty member and chair of the Department of Philosophy at Creighton, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, HON’01, archbishop emeritus of Chicago, 78, was eulogized as an insightful and courageous Church leader upon his passing on April 17. He had been diagnosed with cancer in 2006.

Cardinal George came to Creighton in 1969 as an instructor in philosophy and left in 1973 as chair of the department.

Eileen Burke-Sullivan, STD, vice provost for Mission and Ministry, said he was well-respected as a scholar and teacher by both students and faculty, and he stayed in touch with fellow faculty members for the remaining years of his life and ministry. Cardinal George returned to Creighton last summer for the 25th anniversary of the Institute for Priestly Formation.

“His obvious affection for Creighton and its Catholic, Jesuit values was evident in his public comments,” Burke-Sullivan said.

He served as bishop of Yakima, Wash., and archbishop of Portland, Ore., before being appointed archbishop of Chicago by Pope John Paul II in 1997 following the death of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin; he was the first native Chicagoan to hold the position. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1998.

Cardinal George held a prominent position among U.S. bishops, serving as the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops from 2007 to 2010.

In addition to a Ph.D., Cardinal George held a Doctorate in Sacred Theology as well as honorary degrees, including a Doctor of Laws from Creighton in 2001. He authored two books and spoke several languages. He entered the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1957 and was ordained in 1963.

Ground Broken for Health Care Facility

A groundbreaking ceremony for Creighton University Medical Center’s University Campus building at 24th and Cuming streets took place on May 7.

Designed to meet the needs of the community, the new facility will broaden Creighton University Medical Center’s offerings and deepen educational opportunities for Creighton medical and health sciences students.

With family medicine, an imaging center, pediatrics, women’s health services, psychiatry and physical therapy, along with an emergency room and a 24-hour pharmacy, the new center will be focused on a team approach to health care and will also strengthen ties to Creighton’s community health care partners.

“At a Jesuit institution, the mission is to put resources where they can do the greatest good for the greatest number of people in need,” said dean of the Creighton School of Medicine Robert “Bo” Dunlay, MD’81.

“The goal is to create a different platform for providing care and this will be a great help in providing that care and educating students.”

Aiming at preventive medicine, family medicine and a general roundtable approach to health care, the University Campus facility will become a hub for service and education.

“We were running a large, complex academic medical center and we needed a way to better coordinate services for the people we help,” said Dale Davenport, associate dean of administration for the School of Medicine. “We needed a simpler way to connect people to health care. And we’ll be training students to deliver this kind of health care, a community-based, team-based approach, well into the future.”

Board of Trustees Names New Leadership

Creighton University’s Board of Trustees elected two longtime Omaha community leaders as the new chair and vice chair of the University’s 35-member governing body at its June 1 meeting.

Mike McCarthy, a board member since 2006, will serve as board chair, succeeding Bruce Rohde, BSBA 71, JD 73, who has served as chair since 2011. Bruce Grewcock, a board member since 2008, succeeds vice chair Dick Kizer, BSBA 71, JD 73, who has also served in a leadership role since 2011. Rohde and Kizer will remain on the board.

Creighton President-elect the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D., expressed enthusiasm for the board’s actions. “Our decision maintains a great tradition of strong leadership of the board,” he said. “Mike McCarthy and Bruce Grewcock bring genuine care and concern for Creighton, high regard in the city of Omaha and global perspective in their careers.”

McCarthy is founding partner and chairman of McCarthy Group, an investment holding company headquartered in Omaha since its founding in 1986. Grewcock is president, chief executive officer and chairman of the board of Peter Kiewit Sons’ Inc.
As a daydreaming middle schooler, Daniel Poston thought he might like to grow up to be, oh, maybe an architect. “Design rollercoasters or something like that,” says the Creighton Honors Program scholar from Sioux City, Iowa, who just completed his junior year, with a faux wistfulness in his voice. “It was seventh grade. It seemed like a good career to pursue.”

Then, in a mere moment, as life’s starker realities are wont to intrude, Poston’s whole outlook changed. At 12, he was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system, and spent several months undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy. There, as doctors and nurses and researchers fluttered about him and he watched other children in the oncology department undergo similar measures, a newer, sharper picture of the future began to come into view.

Poston’s cancer ultimately went into remission, but his experience remains forever etched on his heart. He still returns to the hospital where he was treated to volunteer with children undergoing chemotherapy. And as a biochemistry major at Creighton (a recipient of the John and Ann Langley Scholarship and other scholarships), he’s amassed a research record in nucleic acid biochemistry, earning him placement as the University’s 16th scholarship winner in the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program. In the last five years, Creighton has produced more Goldwater Scholars than any other Catholic college or university. This year, Creighton also had a Goldwater honorable mention in Jordan Roth, a physics major from Omaha.

Following his Creighton graduation and with the Goldwater scholarship in hand, Poston plans to pursue dual medical doctorate and doctor of philosophy degrees with an eye toward research, teaching and designing new cancer therapies. “Prior to being in the hospital and having chemotherapy, I hadn’t given science much of a thought,” Poston says. “I always wanted to be a doctor because I loved helping people, but after I came to Creighton and learned what research looks like, I wanted to do that, too. I realized my true calling is to use knowledge gained from scientific research and translate that into more effective treatment options. Having both an M.D. and a Ph.D. will help me perform that kind of translational research.”

Goldwater Scholar
Childhood cancer diagnosis shapes Daniel Poston’s career aspirations

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We Need More Vitamin D

Researchers at Creighton University and the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego), have shown that the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Institute of Medicine (IOM) miscalculated — and greatly underestimated — the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vitamin D. The miscalculation is by a factor of 10. The IOM recommends 600 IU per day through age 70, and 800 IU per day for those older.

Investigators in Canada noted the calculation error and the Creighton and UC San Diego scientists confirmed the error by using a data set from a different population.

Renowned Creighton vitamin D researcher Robert Heaney, BS’47, MD’51, wrote in the March edition of Nutrients: “We call for the NAS-IOM and all public health authorities concerned with transmitting accurate nutritional information to the public to designate, as the RDA, a value of approximately 7,000 IU/day from all sources.”

Why the Bone Loss?

The Creighton University Osteoporosis Research Center (ORC) is collaborating with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) on the Heartland Osteoporosis Prevention Study (HOPS). The researchers will evaluate the best way to prevent bone loss in women immediately after menopause, a time of rapid bone loss for women with the average being 15 percent.

The researchers will randomly assign the women into three different types of treatment over the course of one year: the first taking optimal calcium and vitamin D, the second taking a bone-building medication called Residronate and optimal calcium and vitamin D and the third doing bone-building exercises at one of the local YMCAs along with optimal calcium and vitamin D.

Women who are within five years post-menopause and have early bone loss are needed to participate in the study. For more information, call 402.559.6584 or email HOPS@unmc.edu.

Genome Replication May Hold Clues to Cancer Evolution

New research may have implications for the study of cancer cells. Along with a team of researchers from around the country, Creighton University microbiologist Anna Selmecki, Ph.D., used populations of yeast to determine that polyploidy — having more than two copies of an organism’s genome in one cell — can aid in the cells’ ability to adapt to their environments.

Selmecki said many tumor cells undergo a genome doubling and become tetraploid (having four copies of the genome). From there, many mutations can manifest, often with irregularities that develop quickly, including aneuploidy (an abnormal chromosome number).

Understanding how genome-doubling events impact the spread of growth-promoting mutations through a population of cells could help in the early diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Diabetes Studies Focus on Weight Loss and Heart Health

The Creighton Diabetes Center is involved in many clinical research studies focusing on new agents which have not yet become generally available. Its work has focused on GLP-1 agonists, agents that mimic a natural hormone released in response to eating food. This hormone stimulates the release of insulin and informs people they are no longer hungry. Therefore, these agents lower blood sugar and are effective in triggering weight loss.

Another class of agents, the SGLT2 agents, lower blood sugar by increasing loss of sugar into the urine after eating and promote weight loss. The Creighton Diabetes Center is also embarking on a major study of PKSK9 inhibitors, which are the newest hope for lowering cholesterol and preventing heart attacks. This new investigational drug is added to statins and has produced very low levels of cholesterol and has reduced the risk of heart attacks.

Diabetics interested in being study participants are asked to call 402.280.4319.

World-Class Symposium Honors Lynch

The School of Medicine and CHI Health are hosting The Dr. Henry T. Lynch Symposium on Advances in Hereditary Cancer to honor Henry Lynch, M.D., director of Creighton’s Hereditary Cancer Center, and his lifetime of research. This program will take place at Omaha’s CenturyLink Center Sept. 17 and 18, the weekend of Creighton’s Homecoming.

Lynch’s extensive groundbreaking research proved that some cancers have a genetic link, which led to improved treatment and prevention options.

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Increasing the Absorption Rate of Anticancer Drugs

The FDA estimates that 40 percent of drug compounds are not absorbed. **Harsh Chauhan**, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacy sciences, is conducting a study to increase absorption of drug compounds in the area of bioavailability and stability enhancement of poorly soluble anticancer drugs and phytochemicals.

His recently published research showed enhanced in vitro bioavailability of the anti-cancer drug Curcumin. Focused on developing novel oral delivery systems for chemotherapeutic drugs, Chauhan’s lab is working to make them accessible to cancer patients at home.

Environmental Factors Impact Neurological Infectors

Collaborating researchers from Creighton University, Colorado State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have made a significant microbiological breakthrough with implications for both human and animal health. Illnesses such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, chronic wasting disease in deer, elk and moose, as well as scrapie and mad cow disease in agricultural livestock, are caused by prions, an infectious protein. These microscopic agents, which bind to soil where they survive and remain highly infectious, enter the environment through an infected host’s blood, saliva, waste or decomposition.

The research shows repeated cycles of wetting and drying can significantly reduce prion infectivity through as little as a 10-phase cycle of rain followed by sunshine. This is the first study showing natural environmental processes having an impact on prions’ infectious activity.

Student Discovers Long-Lost Tannahill Sonnet

**Working 200 years ago by candlelight with a quill pen and an inkpot, Scottish poet Robert Tannahill crafted some of his nation’s most celebrated verse.**

Last summer, on a research trip to Tannahill’s hometown of Paisley, Scotland, and operating with more modern conveniences, **Cole Crawford** discovered there was more to the poet’s work than met the eye. Deep in the stacks of Paisley’s public library, the 2015 Creighton University honors graduate in English and computer science discovered a Tannahill sonnet long thought lost.

The find put a bright gilt on an already sterling project Crawford had been pursuing as his senior thesis for the Honors Program, compiling Tannahill’s known poems into a Web-based cache, replete with digital copies of original manuscripts and multimedia features allowing users to learn more about the poet, his poems, his times and even his landscapes.

With a special computer program, Crawford has been able to document places Tannahill mentions in his verse, and give users a map and a vantage point on what that place looks like today and what it might have looked like in Tannahill’s lifetime.

“Working in the digital humanities gives us a new way to see information,” explains Crawford, a Dubuque, Iowa, native and a recipient of the Presidential Endowed Scholarship at Creighton. “When you see digitally, when you’re able to utilize all the tools the online world has to offer, you really do begin to appreciate a poet’s or a painter’s work in a new way. We’re also giving people wider access to this work and opening more eyes on artists like Robert Tannahill.”

Rasmussen, Athletic Teams Earn Recognition

Creighton University Director of Athletics **Bruce Rasmussen** was named a 2014-15 recipient of the Under Armour AD of the Year Award. Rasmussen is one of 28 honorees nationwide and one of a select few to win the award three or more times. He was previously honored in 2004 and 2011.

In addition, six Creighton athletic teams (men’s basketball, golf and tennis, and women’s basketball, tennis and volleyball) received Public Recognition Awards in the NCAA’s most recent Academic Progress Rate (APR) reports, which measure eligibility, graduation and retention rates. Five of the six had perfect scores.
World Traveler returns home

By Rick Davis, BA'88

Creighton University’s 25th president, the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D., with students outside Creighton Hall. Pictured, from left, are: Bree Kaneakua, Lara Butler, Taryn Beard, BA’15, Fr. Hendrickson, Jaski Bir and Jacob Fischer.
The night before she is to travel to Chicago and on to India, Creighton freshman Kate Albrecht glances at her phone and sees an earlier message she had missed. It’s now 9:30 p.m. “Too late to call?” she wonders.

Apprehensively, she dials. Any fears are quickly allayed. The person on the other end is glad to hear from her. Her connecting flight out of O’Hare International Airport has been delayed. “Do you want me to look for a different flight for you?” he asks.

Don’t worry, she replies. She and fellow Creighton student Ian Fallon decide to keep their travel plans.

It’s a brief conversation. Nothing spectacular. A simple show of concern; a willingness to help. But it means a lot to Albrecht. And it informs her — and us — about the character of the caller, the next president of Creighton University, the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D.

“He’s just a really great human being,” Albrecht says.

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Fr. Hendrickson’s travels have taken him to some 23 countries on nearly every continent. The latest trip to India this March, during spring break, included Albrecht and three other students from Creighton and Marquette.

On July 1, Fr. Hendrickson returns to campus as the 25th president of Creighton University — where he served three formative years as a philosophy professor in the early 2000s.

This also marks a return to his roots. For the Nebraska native, this is a homecoming.

Nebraska Roots

Fr. Hendrickson grew up in Fremont, Neb., about 33 miles northeast of Omaha and Creighton’s campus.

His father, Jerry, owned a hairstyling salon in Fremont and three hairstyling schools in Fremont, Grand Island and Omaha.

His parents, both from rural Lyons, Neb., were high school sweethearts. Jerry attended Dana College in Blair, Neb., on a football scholarship, and Mary enrolled at Duchesne College of the Sacred Heart in Omaha. Jerry would eventually change course and go to barber school — putting into motion a remarkable entrepreneurial career.

Jerry began work at a hair salon in Fremont in 1966, and a few years later, purchased the business. Then, in 1980, he bought Bahner College of Hairstyling in Fremont, retaining the name, and, in 1986, opened additional locations in Omaha and Grand Island. In 1987, Jerry joined with other local business leaders in purchasing First State Bank in Fremont. While he remains a director at the bank, Jerry has since sold the salon and schools, and now retired, he and Mary split time between Nebraska and California.

Mary and Jerry, high school homecoming queen and king, were married in September 1966. Their first child, Ryan, was born on Jan. 13, 1969. Daniel and Scott, identical twins, were born on Oct. 4, 1970. (Daniel is five minutes older.)

For the Hendricksons, education was an easy priority — especially Catholic education. But they never had to push their three sons too hard when it came to school.

“They always just showed a spirit of curiosity and interest,” Mary says.

Mary says all three boys were close growing up — and remain so. And while Daniel and Scott are identical twins, and admittedly share a special bond, Mary always tried to stress their individuality.
“Jesuit higher education helps bring people to lots of good options, different disciplines and alternative ways of thinking.”

Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D.

“In fact, when they were in kindergarten, they came home and said, ‘People call us twins,’” Mary recalls. “We didn’t use that term, so we had to explain that to them.”

Toward the end of high school at Mount Michael, a Benedictine school near Omaha, both Daniel and Scott expressed interest in pursuing a religious vocation, Mary says. At one time, Mary had six cousins in consecrated life, including the Rev. William Dendinger, former bishop of Grand Island.

Mary and Jerry encouraged the two to get their college degrees and see where the Holy Spirit leads them. Daniel followed in Ryan's footsteps, enrolling at Marquette University; Scott enrolled at Saint Louis University.

The Beginning of a Calling

Daniel arrived at Marquette’s campus in 1989, with an academic major familiar to many of today’s entering college students: undecided.

“I’m very empathetic and even encouraging of students who come to campus to begin their university studies in a place of uncertainty or confusion,” he says now. “In fact, I think that’s a good way to start studies in higher education.

“Jesuit higher education helps bring people to lots of good options, different disciplines and alternative ways of thinking.”

Daniel’s freshman-year roommate invited him to the Mass of the Holy Spirit, a traditional Mass on Jesuit campuses that celebrates the beginning of the academic year. The Mass captured Daniel’s imagination and spirit.

“I can remember to this day where I was sitting in the Church of the Gesu in Milwaukee,” Fr. Hendrickson recalls. “I remember a lone voice chanting the Veni Sancte Spiritus. I recall plumes of smoke coming out of incense bowls as they were processed toward the altar. I remember the banners.

“But most of all, I remember the train of Jesuits that streamed into the Gesu. And something of their procession, their walk toward the altar, their company spirit, was alluring. I had an inkling that I wanted to be a part of that group. But I didn’t know what that meant. I didn’t know how genuine that desire was at the time.”

He graduated from Marquette in 1993 with a double major in psychology and theology. He then returned to Mount Michael with four high school classmates, including his brother Scott, as a volunteer teacher. He also took the time to reflect.

“I used the year out at Mount Michael to intensify my discernment, to look more seriously at the question of being a Jesuit.”

In 1994, Daniel Hendrickson entered the Society of Jesus.

The Journey Begins

Fr. Hendrickson says completing the 30-day retreat in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius was his most formative experience at the Jesuit novitiate in St. Paul, Minn. But the pilgrimage was “one of the best.”

The novitiate is the first stage in Jesuit formation; it’s a two-year period of prayer, work and study. With the 30-day pilgrimage, Jesuit novices are given $35 and a one-way bus ticket; they carry clothes and other essentials in a backpack.

“It cultivates a sense of dependence, the ability to ask others for help and assistance,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “You also depend on God and recognize that God is active in our lives in interesting ways.”

While other novices had destinations preplanned, Fr. Hendrickson says he had no idea where he wanted to go. A Jesuit at the novitiate suggested he go out and bring back some good stories.

“And I did that in abundance,” he says. He crisscrossed the country, from San Francisco to Laramie, Wyo., to Bardstown, Ky. He learned how to ride a motorcycle in Tempe, Ariz., and, after some lessons and with a spirit of determination, traveled to the Grand Canyon and parts of New Mexico on a Harley-Davidson.

“There’s something more immersive in that form of transportation. I think it has a lot to do with enjoying the amplified experience of being in nature and being out on the road and being out in the weather.”

His dad would later purchase a couple of Harleys and the two would go on several trips together. “Those were very special,” Jerry says. (He has since sold the bikes, and Fr. Hendrickson says he hasn’t ridden since 2005.)

Fr. Hendrickson would later develop a set of retreat talks titled “The Motorcycle Sermons: Narratives and Their Ignatian Insights.” The Ignatian-themed sermons use storytelling to highlight moments of grace, growth and awareness.

When the pilgrimage was complete, Fr. Hendrickson felt a sense of accomplishment. “It instilled a sense of confidence for dwelling in uncertainty, and coming through that in a pretty remarkable way.”

His final novice experience also shaped him profoundly — a roughly six-month stay at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota to teach at Red Cloud Indian School and drive the school bus. He admits it was a difficult experience, especially at first.

“It was an immersion in everything that is so terrible about
poverty and human struggle. And yet it was also the experience of beauty.

“The take-away for me was to continually open my life and my heart to difference and to better understanding the struggles of people’s lives. And not to try to come up with easy solutions.”

Jesse Renteria, BA’03, grew up on the reservation and had Fr. Hendrickson as a teacher, both at Red Cloud and later at Creighton. “He has a very approachable style,” says Renteria, who now works in Washington, D.C., on Native American issues. “He’s dynamic; he has a lot of energy. And he’s also very authentic. He was always there to help you in any way, shape or form.”

**The Overseas Experience**

Fr. Hendrickson’s first international trip focusing on service and reflection came in 1999. He was a Jesuit scholastic, studying graduate philosophy at Fordham University, when he was chosen to lead a group of undergraduates to India.

They lived in a Muslim ghetto in the city of Kolkata, and would rise early every morning to walk to the motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity, the religious congregation established by Mother Teresa.

There, volunteers from around the world would be dispatched to sites across the city. Fr. Hendrickson chose the same site every day — the Nirmal Hriday, a hospice for the sick, destitute and the dying established by Mother Teresa in 1952.

The volunteers would bathe the patrons. “They would quite literally pass through our arms.” They would also wash the soiled linens; serve lunch, assisting those who couldn’t feed themselves; and sit with the patrons — sometimes to talk, but mostly to simply be present.

“I, myself, was very moved by the experience. It showed me the importance of service engagement, of encountering the unfamiliar, of learning about where we come from, of sweat-equity and service, but most importantly about opportunities for relationships.

“Both Jesuit Superiors General (Peter Hans) Kolvenbach and (Adolfo) Nicolás have called Jesuit higher education to more genuine relationships with people and places of service, locally and globally.”

Another profound international experience came in 2006, when Fr. Hendrickson, newly ordained in a ceremony at St. John’s Church, traveled to the East African nation of Tanzania. He was originally assigned to work in a parish in Dar es Salaam. But after learning of his interest in philosophy and his teaching experience at Creighton, the East African Jesuits asked Fr. Hendrickson’s local provincial to change his assignment. Subsequently, he was placed back in the classroom, teaching seminary students at what is now Jordan University College in Morogoro.

“I loved it,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “I loved working with the students, who were from all over sub-Saharan Africa.”

The students also loved him, especially the way he engaged them — stepping down from the podium and walking among them in the lecture hall. They named him a professor of the year.

“The students felt very close to him,” says the Rev. Ferdinand Lukoa, SDS, who was a student of his in Tanzania and is now a
I think he’s well prepared. He’s had such wonderful experiences with Creighton, as a student, a faculty member, a Board member. It’s a great challenge, but I think he’s just excited to step in and start the job.”

D. Scott Hendrickson, S.J., D.Phil.

mission director for the Salvatorians in Milwaukee. “He was so friendly and loving, and everybody was able to approach him.”

The Teacher

Before he was a Creighton teacher, Fr. Hendrickson was a Creighton student, studying in the Jesuit Humanities Program in 1996-97. Bette Evans, Ph.D., a longtime political science professor at Creighton who retired in 2009, remembers having Daniel in her class.

“He and a fellow Jesuit scholastic took my course on philosophy of law,” remembers Evans. “He was one of the best students I ever had. And since I taught more than a generation of very bright students, that is saying a lot. Many good students understood ethical issues at the heart of law, but few ‘got it’ like Fr. Hendrickson.”

Fr. Hendrickson returned to Creighton to teach philosophy from 2000 to 2003.

Joe Abdo, BA’04, says Fr. Hendrickson’s philosophy classes were always “jam packed,” adding that some of his lectures “are still stuck in my head.” When Abdo applied to work with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps after graduation, Fr. Hendrickson encouraged him to consider teaching at Red Cloud. Abdo took the advice, and he’s glad he did. “That was one of the greatest, most challenging years of my life,” he says. “I also met my future wife while working there.” Fr. Hendrickson married them in 2007. Says Abdo, “He had a profound impact on my life.”

Laura (Hazuka) Plasencia, BSN’04, who traveled with Fr. Hendrickson and a group of Creighton students for a semester in the Dominican Republic in 2002, says the Jesuit priest was fun. “He was always up for an adventure,” Plasencia says. “He was actually one of my first patients. He needed an allergy shot while we were in the DR, so he let me give him his injections.” She says he also challenged students to wrestle with tough questions and to find God in all things.

“Teaching at Creighton was rewarding for many reasons,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “The concerns of philosophy take us deeply into ourselves, and they also propel us broadly around, allowing us to question local, global and cosmic realities.”

The Priest

Maureen Beckman met Daniel in 2002 while he was studying at the Jesuit School of Theology (JST) in Berkeley, Calif. Beckman was director of philanthropy at JST and a member of the parish council at St. Agnes, a socioeconomic and culturally diverse Jesuit parish in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Daniel volunteered to serve at the parish, where he would eventually direct an intense initiation program for new Catholics and run a monthly book club.

“His very charismatic, very outgoing,” Beckman recalls. “The people just loved him; he’s just a very caring person.”

When Daniel was ordained a priest at Creighton in 2006, some 17 people from the parish made the trip to Omaha — some older parishioners traveling by train because they didn’t like to fly.

“People haven’t forgotten him, and it’s been several years now,” Beckman says. “He made an effort to reach out to the people.
Well-Educated, Well-Traveled

Mary and Jerry Hendrickson have a wall of university pennants at their home in Fremont, Neb., representing each of the institutions at which a family member has either earned a degree or worked. "Currently, there are about 25 pennants," Jerry says.

In addition to his undergraduate degree from Marquette, Fr. Daniel Hendrickson holds advanced degrees from Fordham University, the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University and two from Columbia University.

The Rev. D. Scott Hendrickson, S.J., who earned his doctorate from Oxford, is an assistant professor of modern languages and literatures at Loyola University Chicago. Ryan Hendrickson, a married father of three, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is a professor of political science and interim dean of the Graduate School at Eastern Illinois University. Daniel, Scott and Ryan are all world travelers — at one time, each was living on a different continent.

Their travels and education have necessitated some adjustments to family celebrations.

“Scrabble is a family obsession,” Mary explains. “But we’ve had to set a lot of rules because too many words from their studies, and from foreign languages, began showing up.”

"He’s a good collaborator, he’s a very good listener, he’s a consensus-builder. At the same time, he leads when necessary. So he’s going to do a fantastic job for Creighton University."

Ryan Hendrickson, Ph.D.
Fr. Hendrickson: 10 Questions

1. Favorite ... musical artists?
   David Gray and Ray LaMontagne have dominated my musical interest for years, but now I am pretty obsessed with Mumford and Sons. *Awake My Soul* is fantastic.

2. ... Vacation spot?
   I have always loved San Francisco. It’s so distinctive — it’s urban, it’s recreational. Water, mountains, bridges and vineyards surround the city ... and so does a mystic fog. I also have many friends there.

3. ... Foods?
   I like many kinds of cuisine — Japanese, Thai, Indian and Italian. But it’s hard to beat a good pizza at the end of a workweek.

4. ... Place to pray?
   Vespers, anywhere. From my days as a student at Mount Michael Benedictine High School, I grew to love the chanting of psalms. My favorite time to pray is in the evening, when I can reflect on the day and anticipate a new one.

5. What do you do to relax?
   Ever since my year in Africa (2006), I have enjoyed bicycling. On used African-standard Chinese bikes, an older American Jesuit and I hit the highway alongside our campus four or five times a week.

6. What books are on your nightstand?
   I am currently reading a biography on the artist Michelangelo by Miles Unger. In the past couple of years, I have enjoyed newly published biographies about other artists, such as Thomas Hart Benton, Caravaggio and Chagall. Over the summer, I read works about Chief Red Cloud and St. Peter Favre. Most recently, I finished a biography on Pope Francis, *The Great Reformer*.

8. Have you and your identical twin brother, Scott, ever pulled a switcheroo?
   Scott and I were not constant tricksters, but we enjoyed strategic switches on occasion. For instance, I needed a photograph of myself when entering the Jesuits, so I used his.

9. What’s with the cowboy boots?
   A Jesuit in St. Paul gave me his pair when I was sent to work on the reservation in South Dakota, and I’ve been wearing them ever since. (Brother Scott cites an ulterior motive: “He wanted to be the taller twin!”)

10. Toughest part of traveling overseas?
    I contracted malaria twice during my time in Africa. Ironically, once I got it, I knew what it felt like and how to treat it. I quit wondering if I had it and what I would have to do about it. So, in a wry way, I was grateful.
He connected with them in a way that I haven’t really seen as much since.”

On balancing his dual roles of president and priest, Fr. Hendrickson says, “I hope to be a contemplative in action ... a practitioner of Ignatian spirituality, which is one of prayerful awareness and response. As a priest, I can also point to God in a special way, through the sacraments, as a homilist, in my actions and in recognizing the actions of others.”

Beckman has no doubt he’ll be successful. “What I think is great about Daniel is he’s a good listener. He listens, but he’s got a really good sense of getting to the point of things. He’s got this innate sense of what can be done. It’s a gift.”

The Administrator

In 2012, Fr. Hendrickson returned to his alma mater, Marquette University, as associate vice president in the Office of the Executive Vice President — working closely with the president, provost and academic deans on a myriad of issues. Later, he became an associate provost for academic initiatives. While working full time as a senior administrator, he also taught a philosophy of education class most semesters and served as co-director of the Burke service and leadership scholarship program.

The scholarship program requires recipients to engage in 300 hours of community service per academic year, write frequent reflections and complete a senior capstone presentation. Scholars also attend ongoing integration seminars with Fr. Hendrickson.

Jordan Smith, a junior biomedical engineering student at Marquette, is one such scholar. He has a special perspective on Creighton’s new president, having lived next door to him this year in university housing.

“He’s a great guy,” Smith says. “He’s the type of guy who will invite you over. I just sit down on his couch and we talk. We talk about life.” He adds: “I would tell students that they can expect a president who really cares about them and their experience, who’s not afraid to get to know them.”

Tina Rende, a junior at Marquette, is also a Burke scholar, and she was a regular at Fr. Hendrickson’s Tuesday night Masses at St. Joan of Arc Chapel, concelebrated with the Rev. Nicky Santos, S.J.

“Those two are kind of the dynamic duo,” Rende says. “The chapel is absolutely packed. They have this way of taking the word of God and making it very applicable to our college-age struggle.”

Stephanie Quade, Ph.D., dean of students at Marquette, has worked with Fr. Hendrickson as co-director of the Burke scholars program. “Daniel’s been a good reflection of the contemporary Society of Jesus,” she says, “and I think he’s gotten students to understand what it means to be a student at a Jesuit university.”

Fr. Hendrickson says his service on the boards of Boston College, Creighton and Xavier has given him insights into the issues and complexities of Jesuit higher education.

Now his sights are set on Creighton.

“I know I’m joining a campus with great faculty, great staff and a great leadership team in place,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “So I’m excited to jump in and start working with people here.”

Mary and Jerry Hendrickson are also excited. Says Mary, “We’re thrilled he’s coming home!”

“I hope to be a contemplative in action ... a practitioner of Ignatian spirituality, which is one of prayerful awareness and response.”

Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D.
Beefing Up Your Brain

By Cindy Murphy McMahon, BA’74
Internationally known for groundbreaking research that could improve treatment of epilepsy and other neurological disorders, the Simeones’ studies are funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), epilepsy organizations and others. Their years of research have made them experts on how diet and sleep influence brain health.

They both are strong advocates for taking care of your brain early in life — and throughout life — to improve brain function both now and later. While plenty of resources have been directed toward studying the aging of the human body, they say brain research has not kept up.

“It’s about peak performance,” says Kristina, assistant professor of pharmacology. “What you eat today will help you today, and what you eat today will help you later. It’s never too late — there are always beneficial effects.”

“We can ‘beef up’ our brains to help withstand insults (disease and injuries) and aging,” says Tim, associate professor of pharmacology. “In neurological disorders that have cognitive dysfunction, certain things people eat can help. In healthy individuals, if you eat particular things, you can help prevent cognitive decline and help reduce injury that the brain suffers.”

Since you can’t predict when your brain may become diminished in some way, he says, why not help it out now by making it stronger?

“We don’t know when something bad is going to happen, so it’s better to eat foods that will beef up the brain and its ability to fight damage before the damage occurs.”

Some of the scientific terms that come into play in brain health are oxidation, oxidative stress, free radicals and antioxidants.

Oxidation is a normal process involved in the production of energy that is constantly happening in all cells, including those in the brain. If normal oxidative processes are not properly regulated, however, damaging free radicals can be produced. “Free radicals are the damaging guys,” Kristina explains. “They hang things up and damage DNA, proteins and cell membranes, potentially leading to cell death.”

Free radicals can change a cell’s DNA and cause chain reactions that can overwhelm the body’s ability to defend itself, leading to many diseases. In addition, toxins such as cigarette smoke, air pollution and pesticides cause production of more free radicals.

Antioxidants are substances that stop free radicals in their tracks. Insufficient levels of antioxidants cause oxidative stress, which plays a role not only in disease but also in aging. “Our bodies make antioxidants,” Kristina says, “and we can help increase our body’s ability to make more. We can also get antioxidants directly from food.”

One of the best ways to get more antioxidants is to increase them in your diet — in other words, eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Dietary antioxidants include beta-carotene, lycopene and vitamins A, C and E. Carrots, other deep orange vegetables and green vegetables contain beta-carotene; tomatoes are a major source of lycopene; and vitamins A, C and E are found, respectively, in a variety of foods. Those include carrots, sweet potatoes, dark leafy greens, cantaloupe and red and green peppers; citrus and other fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, kiwi and pineapple; and sunflower seeds, nuts, cottonseed and sunflower oils, tomatoes, pine nuts and peanut butter. Blueberries contain a number of antioxidant properties.

In addition to good nutrition, exercise increases the body’s ability to make more antioxidants, Tim says. “Exercise is good not only for the muscles, but the brain.” Chronic inflammation puts the brain at risk for disease, but regular exercise decreases inflammation and increases antioxidants, resulting in a healthier brain.

Omega-3 fatty acids also are helpful for several reasons. “They reduce inflammation, are an alternative to glucose as a fuel source for body organs such as the brain and heart, and they can affect gene expression,” Tim says. “By that I mean they can minimize some of the bad effects of some diseases.” Omega-3 fatty acids are found in such foods as soybean, canola and flaxseed oil, walnuts, green vegetables and fatty fish such as salmon, sardines and halibut, among others.

Sleep was long thought to simply be “downtime” for the body and the brain, but research now shows that sleep is required for brain health. In fact, sleep is required for learning and memory — and that requires antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids. Sleep also helps free radicals clean up toxic byproducts of metabolism, including those formed when you are exercising or eating antioxidant-rich foods, such as carrots.

Some of the scientific terms that come into play in brain health are oxidation, oxidative stress, free radicals and antioxidants.
Couple Solving Different Pieces of Epilepsy Puzzle

Timothy Simeone, Ph.D., and Kristina Simeone, Ph.D., School of Medicine faculty-researchers in pharmacology, are a power couple in the world of neurological treatment research.

The husband and wife, ages 40 and 37 respectively, approach the puzzle of epilepsy from different perspectives. Their research is funded by such organizations as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy, the Epilepsy Foundation of America and the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act.

Tim recently received a five-year, $1.5 million grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to identify new mechanisms in epilepsy to provide targets for medications. This study is related to his previous research that identified a particular pathway (PPARgamma) important for the management of seizures in children and adolescents with the high-fat ketogenic diet.

Kristina is a neuroanatomist and neurobiologist currently researching sleep disorders associated with epilepsy. She is also studying brain metabolism (how the brain processes and uses energy) and how it differs in epilepsy. When she was awarded a five-year NIH grant in 2011, she was among only 1 percent of principal investigators who were 34 or younger when they received NIH R01 (health-related) funding. The average age for first-time recipients of such grants is 42.

Despite their different approaches, the Simeones’ combined interests and expertise allow them to collaborate at times. They both recently presented at the Society for Neuroscience annual meeting, which gathered more than 31,000 neuroscientists from around the world. Together, their labs are revealing the complex interplay among many factors that affect the epileptic brain.

Also, because other neurological conditions such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s share certain characteristics with epilepsy, there is potential for even wider applications of their research.

Nourishing Your Brain

> Foods that are rich in antioxidants

“Natural sources from fruits and vegetables are best. Try substituting sweet potato fries for regular fries.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>carrots</th>
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<th>sweet potatoes</th>
<th>dark leafy greens</th>
<th>cantaloupe</th>
<th>blueberries</th>
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> Foods providing omega-3 fatty acids

“Salmon is one of the best sources, as is walnuts. If you have a sweet tooth, you can try candied walnuts.”

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<th>soybean</th>
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<th>flaxseed oil</th>
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<tr>
<td>walnuts</td>
<td>green vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, halibut</td>
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> Foods that are good for your heart and your skin

“If you’ve heard it’s good for your heart, or your skin, it’s generally good for your brain.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>almonds</th>
<th>spinach and other dark green leafy vegetables</th>
<th>berries</th>
<th>oatmeal</th>
<th>salmon</th>
<th>avocados</th>
<th>olive oil</th>
</tr>
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> Enjoy a variety of foods

“Don’t have all your foods come from one source. Eat a variety of foods every day.”

| dairy | grains | fruits | beans | lean meats |
but numerous research studies have concluded that important brain processes take place during sleep.

Sleep has been found to have anti-inflammatory effects on the brain, similar to the anti-inflammatory properties of omega-3 fatty acids. Research that Kristina has led concluded that sleep is essential, and lack of appropriate duration and quality of sleep is detrimental to vital brain function.

“Of course,” Tim says, “doing all of these things in conjunction is the best. It’s not that you won’t ever get any disease, but you will give yourself the best chance possible for a healthy brain.”

The Simeones practice what they preach, for themselves and for their sons, who are 3 and 7.

“We try to eat blueberries, cranberries and/or strawberries every morning,” Kristina says. “We try to eat fish much more often than we used to. We do not recommend a nonfat diet — we think it is very unhealthy. Instead of eating potato chips, we try to snack on walnuts.”

They said they are adamant about making sure their boys get enough sleep, which is about 11 to 13 hours a night for preschool children, 10 hours for school-age children and teens, and seven to eight hours for adults.

“We recently wrote a textbook chapter on the importance of sleep,” Kristina says, “and it was ironic because we lost sleep while writing and editing that chapter!”

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**The Gut-Brain Connection**

A new area of scientific study that holds great promise involves the connection between the gastrointestinal tract and brain function and disease.

This budding area of research focuses on the trillions of “good” bacteria and other microorganisms in our bodies (probiotics), particularly in the intestines, or gut. Probiotics have been, up until recently, primarily touted by companies selling nutritional supplements and food products. But there has been a shift in interest and research funding as studies have shown that some disorders or diseases could possibly be improved by adjusting the gut microbiome, which is the “community” or ecosystem of microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi and viruses that live in each person’s intestinal tract.

“The impact of altering gut microbiome on various neurobehavioral disorders is particularly exciting,” says Sanjay Singh, M.D., chairman of the Department of Neurology in the School of Medicine, “because this would allow for the possibility of treating diseases that have no treatments at this time, including autism.”

Singh cites the work of Sarkis Mazmanian, Ph.D., a microbiologist at the California Institute of Technology, a pioneer in the study of beneficial microbes. He says one of Mazmanian’s studies showed that mice with some features of autism had much lower levels of a common gut bacterium, *Bacteroides fragilis*, than healthy mice did. Feeding *B. fragilis* to the autistic-like mice reversed their symptoms.

Other studies are looking at interactions between gut bacteria and the nervous system, possibly one day affecting such conditions as anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and others.

Singh says one study showed that a radical change in diet can quickly shift the microbial makeup of the gut in humans. The hope is that perhaps by adjusting diet, people could shape their gut microbiome to promote health. But he says research is not yet to the point of saying which diet is best for that.

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**Foods that have been grown, not processed**

“If it’s packaged or processed, don’t eat it. Even nonorganic-grown foods are better than processed foods.”

**Fresh vegetables**

**lean meats**

**grains**

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**Sleep, and plenty of it**

“Don’t use electronics (phones, computers, TV, etc.) 30 minutes before bed and do introduce dim lighting. Also, sleep in a cool (temperature) environment to maximize sleep efficiency. Sleep is so important for the brain, for learning and memory.”

**11-13 hours a night for preschoolers**

**10 hours for school-age children and teens**

**7-8 hours for adults**

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**Making a Better World**

Examining the mysteries of the brain is a major field of opportunity in today’s health care environment. Creighton University’s strategic initiatives call for increased emphasis on neuroscience education and research.
Bringing Care to Rural America

By Adam Klinker

Health care in America continues to be an expansive industry, employing, by a 2013 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics count, more than 12 million people, with a projection of jumping to 15.6 million jobs by 2022. That's doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, occupational and physical therapists, all plying their trades across the U.S., in dramatically increasing numbers.

But fewer health care professionals are finding their way to the nation's rural areas, where a mounting crisis in access to health care is underway.

"There are some considerable issues in the delivery of health services to rural areas," says Sherry Fontaine, Ph.D., director and associate professor in Creighton University’s Master of Public Health program. Recruitment and retention of an adequate health care workforce, compounded by the geographic isolation of rural areas, create significant barriers to health care access.

With 25 percent of the country living in rural areas, the National Rural Health Association estimates just 10 percent of the nation’s physicians practice in these areas and nearly 500 hospitals in the nation's countryside have closed in the last 25 years. In dentistry, there are just 40 dentists per 100,000 rural Americans, compared to 60 dentists per 100,000 people living in urban areas of the nation.

As a result, rural Americans are twice as likely to die from injuries sustained in accidents, have higher incidences and mortality rates of cardiovascular disease, and generally pay more for treatment and prescription drugs than their urban counterparts, with lower rates of access to private insurance.

"But there are some promising initiatives beginning to take shape," Fontaine says. "Telehealth and mobile clinics are expanding access to health services in rural areas. In programs such as the online Creighton University Master of Public Health (MPH) program, we provide access to an MPH program to students who reside in rural areas who will hopefully become public health practitioners in their communities. There are certainly opportunities for us to continue to improve the delivery of health services and expand outreach to rural populations."

With schools of medicine, pharmacy and health professions, dentistry and nursing located in the largest city of one of the nation's most rural states, Creighton University has turned out a number of practitioners who have found true vocation in the Nebraska countryside or farther afield.

Their stories are representative of what's happening in rural America and how dedicated professionals are finding ways to return home or start anew in areas desperately in need of their service. Here are a few of those stories.

Sarah Thompson, OTD’11
Palmer, Alaska

Palmer, Alaska, with a population approaching 8,000 and proximity to the state's largest city, Anchorage, doesn't readily fit Sarah Thompson's definition of rural.

"But if you want to be out in the beauty of Alaska's wilderness, it's not a long drive," says Thompson, a 2011 graduate of the Creighton Alaska Pathway program, a Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree offered jointly by Creighton and the University of Alaska at Anchorage (UAA).

"That's a major factor in what has kept me here all my life. There's really no place like it. Being able to practice OT in Alaska, where there is such a shortage of therapists, has been very important to me, too."
With rural America struggling to attract and retain practicing health care professionals, Creighton University alumni and students are answering the call.

Sarah Thompson, OTD’11, a graduate of Creighton’s Alaska Pathway program, works as an occupational therapist in picturesque Palmer, Alaska.
Thompson's status as a “lifer Alaskan” was in jeopardy for a time when she and her husband, Mike, tinkered with the idea of leaving the state for job opportunities elsewhere.

“We were getting ready to move when Creighton sent out this message about an OT program they were going to do jointly with UAA,” she says. “I thought, ‘Maybe I should check this out.’”

After her graduation with the inaugural cohort of the Pathway program, Thompson began working in highly specialized OT areas, including oncology rehabilitation and lifestyles management. She developed programs previously unavailable to most people in Alaska, and her patients traveled far and wide to receive these services.

Today, she works with developmentally and learning-challenged children in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, spanning 25,000 square miles of Alaskan wilderness and dotted with 45 schools ranging in enrollment from 20 students to more than 1,000. Thompson also continues to maintain a link to Creighton, serving as a teaching assistant in the spirituality curriculum for the OTD Pathway program.

“Creighton has given me such a great opportunity to serve,” Thompson says. “That’s at the core of what Creighton does. I have loved being able to be a part of Creighton and to be able to help people.”

Mary Kersenbrock Losing, DDS’10
O’Neill, Nebraska

Born and raised in the northeast Nebraska town of O’Neill (population 3,700), with a dentist father and a medical technologist mother, Mary Kersenbrock Losing says she saw very early on what the needs were in terms of health care in a rural community.

As an undergraduate, Kersenbrock Losing knew she wanted to do something in health care. She decided dentistry was the best fit. And as a second-year student at the Creighton University School of Dentistry, she decided practicing back
home in O’Neill, with her dad, was the best path for her career.

“I really value what a small town brings in its sense of community and family,” Kersenbrock Losing says. “My experience growing up in O’Neill, the values I learned, it all factored into that decision. And I knew going back home was going to bring with it the opportunities to fill those needs in dentistry.”

Kersenbrock Dental Care, composed of Kersenbrock Losing and her father, MJ Kersenbrock, a 1981 Creighton dental graduate, opened in expanded offices in 2010, shortly after Kersenbrock Losing’s graduation from the dental school.

In serving a patient base drawn mostly from the countryside and smaller towns outside O’Neill, Kersenbrock Losing has immersed herself in being a neighbor to her patients. To that end, she’s traded one Creighton for another. Kersenbrock Losing and her husband, Aaron, make their home in Creighton, Neb., roughly equidistant to O’Neill and Crofton, Neb., where Aaron is a teacher.

The feeling of weaving herself into the fabric of the community is something Kersenbrock Losing says she learned growing up in O’Neill, and also in her days as a dental student at Creighton, where she took part in the five-week Institute for Latin American Concern mission to the Dominican Republic. There, she and other students in the health professions established clinics in small towns dotting the Dominican countryside. While rural Nebraska is still a far cry from the rural Dominican Republic, she says the basic mission is similar.

“There is a huge need in rural Nebraska for dental providers,” Kersenbrock Losing says she learned growing up in O’Neill, and also in her days as a dental student at Creighton, where she took part in the five-week Institute for Latin American Concern mission to the Dominican Republic. While rural Nebraska is still a far cry from the rural Dominican Republic, she says the basic mission is similar.

“Maybe Nebraska is still a far cry from the rural Dominican Republic, she says the basic mission is similar.

“Since I feel like I followed my heart back home. I’ve never regretted it. I knew there were lots of opportunities in cities, but I wanted to be in O’Neill, to be in practice with my dad and have the ultimate mentor in a place where we can make a major difference.”

Kersenbrock Dental may just have to make room for a third member of the family in the practice, too. Kersenbrock Losing’s younger brother, John Kersenbrock, just completed his second year at Creighton’s dental school.

“Rebecca (Erickson) White, PharmD’08
Rural Nebraska and Iowa

When it comes to distance, rural Nebraska has plenty to cover. Closing the gap with technology is the aim of Rebecca (Erickson) White’s pharmacy clinic at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Lincoln, Neb.

White, a 2008 graduate of the Creighton School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, helped inaugurate the Lincoln VA’s telepharmacy program, which, with webcams, a secure Internet connection and TV screens, helps serve patients at satellite locations in Holdrege, Neb., Norfolk, Neb., and Shenandoah, Iowa, who log in, look in the camera and speak with their pharmacist in Lincoln. Many of White’s patients drive upwards of 60 miles round-trip to get to one of those satellites for medication therapy management care.

“It is a different way of serving rural Nebraska,” White says. “But I enjoy it a lot and I think my patients do, too. It feels very much like a small town when I get in front of the screen and see them there. We talk a lot, not just about their prescriptions and health care, but what’s going on in town, what the weather’s like. It’s like we’re speaking face to face. A lot of the patients I see are very sweet, older men who haven’t had a lot of experience with webcams. They come on and say, ‘Wow, I’m on TV!’”

The fact she’s serving veterans living in rural areas is an added measure of fulfillment, White says. The telepharmacy program at the Lincoln VA is one of a handful of similar initiatives the department has enacted nationwide. White has published on her work in the Journal of Pharmacy Technology, and the Lincoln program has been cited by the Department of Veterans Affairs as a Network Star for its initiation of the telepharmacy program.

“What we’ve seen is that telepharmacy

Rebecca (Erickson) White, PharmD’08, serves patients at satellite locations in Nebraska and Iowa through the VA’s telepharmacy program in Lincoln, Neb.
saves time and it cuts down on stress for the veterans,” she says. “It can be a little intimidating driving into some of the bigger cities, so if we can keep them in their comfort zone, it’s a better experience for them. With the number of patients we see, it feels like I’m really filling a hole.”

In 2014, between herself and one other pharmacist at the clinic in Lincoln, there were more than 4,700 telepharmacy visits.

“We’re touching a lot of lives,” White says. “I had no idea this is where my career might take me, but I’m glad it has gone this route.”

Justin McCarthy, BA’12
Creighton medical student

After four weeks in Wheatland, Wyo., last summer, Justin McCarthy underwent a minor epiphany, something on a continuum of feelings he had for the balance of his educational career.

McCarthy, who says he has an overarching desire to practice what he sees as “jack-of-all-trades medicine,” had his first sampling of rural life and work on a rural rotation in primary care and general practice. Having grown up in suburban Denver, McCarthy, who earned his bachelor’s degree from Creighton in 2012 and just completed his third year of medical school at Creighton, admitted his connection to rural America was tenuous at best.

“But from the taste I got of rural living there, I found it suited me well,” he says. “I felt drawn to that kind of life. It was rewarding to see medicine practiced across numerous generations, across numerous fields. And you felt a community concern that I think is lost in larger cities.”

Moreover, in an age of progressively granular specialization, an opportunity to broaden the practice and study of medicine was just what McCarthy found on the windblown scarp of southeastern Wyoming.

“I’ve always had the image of the primary care doc in the clinic, working across the broader scale of medicine,” he says. “In my rural rotation, I got to see that firsthand. It was something very striking to me, something seemingly very simple in practice, but profound in the way it can touch people’s lives.”

Working with underserved urban populations in Omaha at Creighton’s Magis Clinic at the Siena-Francis House Homeless Shelter, and also in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala on service trips as an undergraduate, McCarthy knew from an early stage his vocation lay in practice with people who don’t always have ready access to health care and who need the capacious knowledge a general practitioner can bring.

“It has been motivating for me to imagine distributive justice in becoming a physician,” McCarthy says. “Not everyone is dealt an equal hand in this life. I’ve not gotten where I am on my own. In this whole process, I’ve felt God has motivated me to do what good I could for those who were in need and, in that process, I’ve seen some amazing things. I’ve seen people healed. I’ve seen incredible innovations in working with a population that doesn’t have access to many of the things a lot of people take for granted. If I can be mindful of those things and remember that I’m doing what good I can, where I can, then I’ll have a rewarding career.”

Dawn (Stave) Nahrstedt, BSN’00, MSN’06
Bassett, Nebraska

She actually broke the leg in November, but Dawn (Stave) Nahrstedt couldn’t quite bring herself to get off it until she was ordered to do so in March.

Because even at Rock County Hospital in Bassett, Neb., a north-central Nebraska hamlet of about 550 people, the emergency room doors never close, and Nahrstedt, a nurse practitioner who is about the closest thing Rock County has to a full-time physician, felt she couldn’t let her injury stand in the way of serving the people she calls friends and neighbors.

“I didn’t want to let my patients down,” says Nahrstedt, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from Creighton and is one year away from attaining her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the College of Nursing. “I couldn’t. I’m a health care provider. And out here, that means a lot, because there aren’t a lot of us.”

Rock County and neighboring Brown County — where a larger hospital at
Ainsworth, Neb., is situated — can boast five nurse practitioners, something Nahrstedt says is a luxury compared to other rural areas. While there are some doctors who will rotate through the ER on an occasional weekend, Bassett is visited just once a month by a physician who commutes from South Dakota, meaning Rock County Hospital’s clinic and emergency room are staffed almost entirely by that rotating group of nurse practitioners.

“In a rural setting, you get a little bit of everything: ER, surgery, OB,” says Nahrstedt, who grew up in Bassett and left for 20 years before returning after attaining her first nursing degree. “But I’ve had an excellent education. Creighton prepared me for life practicing in a rural setting, where you can’t just be a specialist in any one thing. You kind of have to be ready for it all. Horse accidents, cow accidents, tractor accidents, yes, but also car accidents, lacerations, amputations and sore throats.”

For slightly more major cases, a larger hospital at Ord, Neb., is 90 miles away. Beyond that, bigger medical centers in Norfolk (125 miles) and Kearney (145 miles) get severe trauma cases, heart attacks and strokes after stabilization at Rock County, but both emergencies and routine procedures largely fall to Nahrstedt and her nursing colleagues. A typical day in Bassett means a full day’s slate at the clinic followed by a long nightshift in the ER, then maybe a few hours’ sleep before clinic duty again.

“In some days, you really have to ask yourself, ‘Is this what I wanted to do?’” Nahrstedt says. “Most days, though, you can’t help but love it. I never thought I’d be in a rural setting as a nurse, but I do love it. I love my job. I love the people I serve. There is a genuine place in my heart for the people I serve.”

While healing from a broken leg, Dawn (Stave) Nahrstedt, BSN’00, MSN’06, continues to serve as a nurse practitioner at Rock County Hospital in rural Bassett, Neb.

“\n
Dawn (Stave) Nahrstedt, BSN’00, MSN’06

“In a rural setting, you get a little bit of everything: ER, surgery, OB. But I’ve had an excellent education. Creighton prepared me for life practicing in a rural setting, where you can’t just be a specialist in any one thing. You kind of have to be ready for it all.”
In no other region of the world are the effects of World War I as current as they are in the Middle East.

The war’s dark inheritance is especially apparent in a core territory made up of five countries — Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Israel — and one seemingly permanent nonstate, Palestine. Hemmed in by the stronger and arguably more stable nations of Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, this median zone is the “bloodland” of the Middle East.
Few regions of the world have endured as many wars, civil conflicts, military coups and terrorist outrages. These days, the area is the cockpit of vicious struggles, sometimes overlapping, which involve, to various degrees, salafi jihadis, Shi'i militias, obdurate state regimes, not to mention Palestinians and Israelis.

To understand this historical anomaly, we must consider several factors, chief of which is the post-World War I fall of the Ottoman Empire and the accompanying division of Greater Syria and Mesopotamia into arbitrary political units that cut across the region’s religious and ethnic boundaries.

These divisions set the stage for the political exclusivity and sectarian blood-letting that plagued the region over the following decades.

Can we identify the starting point of this unfolding tragedy?

**The Berlin-Baghdad Railway**

On Aug. 2, 1914, the Ottomans signed a secret treaty that bound their empire to Berlin and Vienna. For the Ottomans, the alliance was consequential because it meant that they would end up on the losing side in the war.

Why did the Ottomans make such a rash decision?

One reason has to do with German influence within the empire during the period leading up to the war: German engineers built the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, and German officers played a prominent role in modernizing the Ottoman army. Yet German mentorship in Ottoman affairs was not a sufficient cause for the pact.

The primary motivation was the Ottoman need for protection from Russia. For at least two centuries, the tsars had threatened the Dardenelles — the strategic strait that would allow Russia unimpeded access to the Mediterranean. Ultimately, Russia’s ambition was to capture Istanbul — the medieval Constantinople — and revive it as the seat of Eastern Christendom.

Because of their treaty obligations to Tsar Nicholas II, neither France nor Britain was willing to shield the Ottomans from the Russian Bear. That left Germany. On Nov. 11, 1914, the Ottomans declared war against the Triple Entente: Russia, Britain and France.

**Jihad**

Almost immediately, the shaykh al-Islam (the highest ranking Ottoman religious official) issued five *fatwas*, or juridical statements, which called Muslims around the world to *jihad* against the empire’s new enemies. Islam, the shaykh said, was under siege by the Entente powers, and it was the duty of Muslims everywhere to respond.

Actually, it was the Germans who pushed hardest for the *jihad*. Strategists in Berlin had discussed the scheme even before the war commenced. Their idea was to awaken the alleged fanaticism of Islam and direct it against the colonies and peripheries of the Russian, French and British empires, each of which contained a significant Muslim population.

Leading this German effort was Max von Oppenheim, the scion of a prominent banking family whose prewar passion had been Near Eastern archaeology. Implementing the plan he laid out in his 1914 treatise, *Memorandum for the Revolutionizing of the Islamic Territories of Our Enemies*, Oppenheim dispatched German and Ottoman emissaries throughout Africa and Asia to circulate pan-Islamic propaganda.

But the *jihad* did not take off the way the Germans and, indeed, the sultan-caliph had anticipated. The Muslim world was too diverse for the proclamation to have any effect.

Many Muslims saw straight through Germany’s manipulation, while others questioned a *jihad* that targeted “disbelievers” in three Western countries but excluded three others: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

Nonetheless, the specter of Muslim holy war did succeed in frightening government officials in London, Paris and St. Petersburg.
Campaigns
With grim determination, the Ottoman leadership prepared for war. The government imposed conscription, forced many Christian and Jewish subjects of the empire into labor battalions and expelled Zionist settlers holding Russian passports from Palestine. In their military efforts, the Ottomans were aided by German engineers, economic advisors and army officers — some 25,000 in all.

The Ottomans, however, got off to a rough start. In December 1914, Enver Pasha, Ottoman general and commander in chief, launched his Third Army against the Russians in the highland region between the Ottoman and Russian empires — a plan made worse by the bitter cold. At Sarikamesh, the site of the campaign’s main battle, Enver’s army was completely destroyed.

The Ottomans blamed their defeat on the pro-Russian activities of local Armenian nationalist groups. In response to the perceived threat, the Ottomans forcibly removed the Armenian population from the sensitive areas in Anatolia. Perhaps a million Armenians died in the ensuing death marches and massacres — the first genocidal operation of the 20th century.

The Ottomans were more successful at the Dardenelles. Almost as soon as the Ottomans joined the war, Winston Churchill, then Britain’s First Lord of the Admiralty, concocted a plan to storm the straits with battleships, occupy Istanbul and knock the Ottomans out of the war. The campaign would allow Britain to supply its faltering Russian ally through the Black Sea and attack the Austro-Hungarians by way of the Balkans.

The naval offensive began in February 1915 but was halted after the British lost several ships to underwater mines and shells fired from the heavy guns the Ottomans had situated along the high shores. Forced back to the drawing board, the British decided to support the naval forces with troop landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

But the element of surprise had been lost. As a result, the British and ANZAC (Australian-New Zealand Army Corps) landings — the largest amphibious assaults in history prior to D-Day — ended in tears. It was Britain’s most decisive defeat in the entire world war.

Revolt and Betrayal
Defeated at the Dardenelles — and in Mesopotamia, too — the British decided to focus on the Ottoman Empire’s vulnerable Arab provinces. The plan matched up with the desire of some Arabs to cast off the Ottoman yoke.

In July 1915, Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt, began to correspond with Sharif Husayn ibn Ali, the Hashimite amir of Mecca who dreamed of an independent Arab nation-state that stretched from the Taurus Mountains to the Red Sea, and from the Mediterranean to the Persian border — the so-called “Arab rectangle.”

Husayn told McMahon that he would lead a Hashimite revolt against his overlord, the sultan-caliph in Istanbul, in return for a British promise to facilitate Arab freedom once the Ottomans were defeated. The British agreed to the condition. Like the Germans, the British were ready to harness the supposed mystic power of Islam for their own purposes.

The Hashimites fulfilled their end of the bargain. In June 1916, they began their insurgency by attacking Ottoman garrisons in western and northern Arabia as British General Edmund Allenby advanced out of Egypt into Palestine.

One of the liaison officers the British assigned to the Hashimites was an eccentric archaeologist named T.E. Lawrence, whom the American journalist Lowell Thomas glamorized as “Lawrence of Arabia.”

Britain, however, had a different future in mind for the Arabs.

“We also remember the Great War because it is such a puzzle. How could Europe have done this to itself and to the world? There are many possible explanations; indeed, so many that it is difficult to choose among them.” — Margaret MacMillan

The above quote is from the introduction of historian and award-winning author Margaret MacMillan’s book The War that Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War. MacMillan was the keynote speaker at this spring’s Ross Horning Lecture, sponsored by the Creighton Department of History.
Over the past year, Creighton’s Department of History and the Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library have organized public lectures, poster displays and exhibits in recognition of the centenary of World War I. “The war was a global event that involved millions of people in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Middle East,” says Creighton history professor John Calvert, Ph.D. “It resulted in the destruction of empires, the redrawing of maps and accelerated the spread of new ideologies and political systems.”

For more on the impact of World War I on the Middle East, Calvert recommends reading the following:


It's not every doctor who talks with awe about the morgue. Nor the M.D. who gets to her patients by skis. Andrea Saterbak does. The 1992 Creighton School of Medicine graduate is among a select pool of consulting physicians who care for the men and women of the U.S. Ski Team. She's been with them for a dozen World Cup races across Europe, including the most frightening of all — the annual Hahnenkamm downhill ski race in Kitzbühel, Austria.

Skiers can reach speeds approaching 90 mph in its twisting, icy, historic two miles, which feature 85-percent grade slopes and a drop of 2,640 feet from the start — known by racers as “the morgue.”

“You’re in a nook at the top and can’t see the whole face of the mountain,” Saterbak says.

Just five seconds out of the gate, skiers come to the “Mausefalle,” a blind, 260-foot drop.

Skiers don’t see where they’re landing until they’re high in the air. Here and elsewhere, the mountain often wins.

In 1989, Canadian Brian Stemmle wiped out so badly that his pelvis was ripped open “like a book,” leading some to refer to his crash as “the Wishbone.” More recently, the mountain claimed World Cup gold medalist Hans Grugger of Austria, who was placed in an induced coma for two weeks and underwent brain surgery after crashing.

“For a male who does downhill to even compete on that hill and finish that course … they go from a rookie to a veteran,” Saterbak says. “It’s harrowing. It’s unbelievable.”

It’s a good idea to have a physician on hand. As U.S. skiers begin their descent, Saterbak waits at the top, ready to ski to them should they crash.

“I stand at the top and pray they get down, especially without any kind of head injuries,” she says. “When the last U.S. skier goes, I’m like, ‘Thank God.’

“I don’t feel that in a lot of other races.”

From Mountains to Medicine

Saterbak has some idea of what Kitzbühel racers experience. Her parents started her in the sport as a kindergartener in the late 1960s growing up in Stillwater, Minn. At 13, she started skiing competitively and, after graduating from Stillwater Area High School in 1982, received a scholarship to ski at the University of Wyoming. She skied two years there before rupturing her Achilles tendon, twice, forcing her to quit competitive racing. (Wyoming won the team national championship the following year.)

The injury focused Saterbak on school. She earned a degree from Wyoming in 1988 then left the mountains for Omaha based on the recommendation of Robert Meisterling, MD’72, a Creighton graduate and co-founder of St. Croix Orthopaedics. His practice included a location in Saterbak’s hometown of Stillwater. She is glad for Meisterling’s nudge.

“They gave me an opportunity, and I’m so grateful,” Saterbak says. “That is the hardest part, getting that first step. It was unconditional caring for the student. I knew when I walked into the dean’s office they would understand any of the needs I had.

“The camaraderie I felt at Creighton with everyone coming in from California,
the East Coast, Minnesota ... we all kind of looked at each other and said, 'This is going to be everyone together. Let's form some bonds here.' Everyone kind of pulled together for that class. It was a great experience."

After graduating from Creighton, Saterbak completed her residency and internship in orthopaedic surgery at the University of Iowa. Then came a fellowship in orthopaedic sports medicine at the Steadman-Hawkins Clinic in Vail, Colo. — Alpine ski racing's mecca in the United States. Through the clinic's ties to the U.S. Ski Team, Saterbak made her first trip with the team, to Chile in 1997.

Her ties continue even though she's back in Stillwater with St. Croix Orthopaedics. She's one of six Creighton graduates there with Robert Meisterling; his sons Steven Meisterling, MD'03, and Michael Meisterling, MD'98; and Jessica Downes, MD'08, and Robert Knowlan, MD'93. The Meisterlings are something of a Creighton family. Robert met his wife, Janet (Knake), while an undergraduate, prior to medical school. Janet earned a business degree from Creighton in 1969, and their daughter Lori Meisterling holds a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree (2001) from Creighton. Robert has known Saterbak since she was in high school.

“Andrea was an excellent athlete,” Robert Meisterling recalls. “I probably operated on her three times — twice when she was in high school and once when she was out of college. She shadowed me in my clinic a number of times. When she applied to Creighton, I, of course, recommended her. Once she graduated, I encouraged her to return to Stillwater. She is known across the Twin Cities for her work in sports medicine.”

Saterbak, indeed, has made a name for herself. In 2013, she was named one of Minnesota Monthly's Best Orthopaedic Doctors for Women. Twice she has received the Stillwater Gazette's Reader Choice Award for Orthopaedic Surgeon. She provides care to local athletes at Stillwater Area High School, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the St. Paul Saints baseball team. (She also coaches her 12-year-old daughter's soccer team.)

Still on the Slopes
But her love is on the slopes. She makes one trip with the U.S. Ski Team each year for up to 10 days. Her most recent trips have been to Croatia, Slovenia and Austria. During races, she's on skis, ready to treat her team.

Knee injuries are common, of course. Some of them are catastrophic blowouts. Back pain and injuries also are common, as are fractures and concussions. It's among the most demanding sports in the world with 38 body-pounding races from November to March.

“It's like nothing else when you're in Europe,” Saterbak says. “It's a grind. But they do it for the love of the sport.”

Saterbak, too.
Alumni News

Summer 2015

AlumniNotes

SR. ANN VERONA KESSLER, OSB, MA, Yankton, S.D., and Dr. Neville A. Kelly, MA’04, worked together to update and revise Kessler’s previously published book, Benedictine Men and Women of Courage: Roots & History, Revised Edition. This new, comprehensive account is acclaimed as a significant, single-volume survey of 15 centuries of inclusive monastic history.

Lester L. Carter Jr., BSPha, St. Francis, Wis., received an honorary doctoral degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin in May. Carter is the owner of Carter Drug Store in Milwaukee.

Betty Murray Holman, BSBA, Arcadia, Fla., was inducted into the Sigma Beta Delta International Business, Management, and Administration Honor Society. Holman is studying for her Doctor of Business Administration at Argosy University in Sarasota, Fla.

Christopher M. Biety, BS’77, DDS, Golden, Colo., has participated in the annual Mending Faces Medical Mission to Kalibo, Philippines, with fellow Creighton graduates John J. Kirby, DDS’71, and Dr. Michelle M. “Mimi” Wong, BS’89. Mending Faces is a nonprofit organization providing pro bono cleft lip/cleft palate surgeries to impoverished children.

Michael R. Kealy, JD, Reno, Nev., was reelected by the shareholders at Parsons Behle & Latimer to the law firm’s 2015 board of directors.

Judy Phillips Bruce, JD, Omaha, has written two novels: Voices in the Wind, about a young attorney in Western Nebraska, and Death Steppe, set in Russia during World War II.

Paul F. Millus, BA’83, JD, Floral Park, NY., has been named a shareholder with the law firm Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, P.C.

Brian T. Grogan, BS, St. Paul, Minn., was reelected to the board of directors at the law firm Moss & Barnett in Minneapolis.

Dr. Michelle M. “Mimi” Wong, BS, Denver, has participated in the annual Mending Faces Medical Mission to Kalibo, Philippines, with fellow Creighton graduates John J. Kirby, DDS’71, and Christopher M. Biety, BS’77, DDS’81. Mending Faces is a nonprofit organization providing pro bono cleft lip/cleft palate surgeries to impoverished children.

Col. Ronald J. Place, MD, Fort Washington, Md., was confirmed by the U.S. Senate for promotion to the rank of brigadier general in the U.S. Army. Place currently serves as the assistant surgeon general for force projection, Office of the Surgeon General, in Washington, D.C.

Robin D. Shoffner, JD, Chicago, was named a judge for the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois.

Daria Allen Campbell, BA, New York, is the associate vocational training coordinator for Covenant House New York. She also is a certified group fitness instructor teaching at BeFitNYC and is a licensed New York real estate salesperson with Absolute Properties NYC.

Mary L. Ferwerda, BA, MS’01, Milwaukee, was named executive director of the Milwaukee Justice Center, a collaborative public-private endeavor to assist low income and disadvantaged populations who are unable to afford an attorney to represent them in civil court. Ferwerda received her law degree from Marquette University in 2011.

Michelle Cadwell Blackston, BA, Alexandria, Va., is a communications officer with the Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, D.C.

Shane M. Niebergall, JD, Lone Tree, Colo., has been promoted to partner at the law firm Perkins Coie in Denver.

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Alumnus Finds Dream Job in Fantasy Baseball

Tell Alex Beckey, BSBA’93, he’s living in a fantasy world, and he’s more than apt to thank you for the compliment.

The Creighton University alumnus and the 2012 Fantasy Sports Writers Association Baseball Writer of the Year readily admits he has been living a dream for the last 15 years — years he spent being introduced to fantasy sports, playing them avidly and now getting paid to weigh in on them for the benefit of other fantasy players.

“I absolutely love it,” says Beckey, who graduated from Creighton in 1993 with a bachelor’s degree in economics and finance. “Even if I wasn’t writing about fantasy sports, I’d still be playing them. I’d still be in two dozen leagues.”

Beckey first started in fantasy leagues shortly after his move to St. Paul, Minn., where he still lives with his wife, Jolie (Palensky) Beckey, a 1991 Creighton graduate, and the couple’s two sons, Joey, 6, and Michael, 4.

“My cousin called and said a friend of hers needed someone for a fantasy football draft and, ‘Oh, the draft is in an hour; this guy will come pick you up,’” Beckey recalls. “I’d never played fantasy football, did not know what it was about. But sure enough, the guy picks me up, hands me a cheat sheet and a pen, gives me a brief explanation, and before I know it, I’m having a great time, making new friends and I’m hooked.”

If he didn’t have the fantasy sports background specifically, Beckey still had plenty of attributes that might have predicted him as a star fantasy player.

His economics and finance degree from Creighton and his years working in the financial sector, analyzing stocks, bonds and mutual funds “until the numbers danced on the page,” he says, translated brilliantly to his new avocation. Moreover, Beckey had been doing something like fantasy baseball as a youngster, even if he didn’t quite know it.

“My sister and I would play office as kids,” he says. “We’d treat each of our bedrooms as individual offices and we’d sit in there and work. We’d even meet in the dining room for lunch, then head back to work. But what I was doing, I realized, is that I was taking the box scores from the Chicago Tribune and seeing who was doing well and putting those players together to form my own teams. So my dream job when I was 8 and 9 years old was to be the general manager of a baseball team. Those were really my first fantasy baseball teams.”

In 2010, after Beckey had enjoyed success as a broker and then running a construction firm, he saw a job posting for writers for USA Today’s Baseball HQ, the fantasy sports reporting wing of the national newspaper. He sent in a writing sample.

“They received more than a thousand applications for two positions, so I’m thinking there’s no chance,” Beckey says. “But they elevated me to the next level, and I did a little more player analysis. After submitting a few more writing samples, they offered me the job.”

After just five years with Baseball HQ, Beckey has already earned the industry’s top award as Baseball Writer of the Year and has also had two of his pieces nominated for Story of the Year, winning once. He continues to play in more than 20 fantasy baseball leagues per year, and while much of his career is taken up in the ethereal of what might be, in a game where anything can happen, he still enjoys the very tangible beauty of the game itself. April 13, the home opener for his hometown Minnesota Twins, found him in the stands at Target Field.

“For me, it’s still about the game,” he says. “If anything, doing what I do has really broadened my appreciation of baseball. I’ve been a lifelong fan, but this has really opened me up to all the possibilities and the sheer joy that exists in the game. When I first joined Baseball HQ, I don’t think I could have imagined loving it as much as I do. But it’s a true passion and I love sharing it and serving people — something I definitely learned at Creighton. It is a little like a dream.”

Twin Cities Alumni Event

The Creighton Club of the Twin Cities will be holding its annual Alumni Night at the Minnesota Twins game on July 6.
Four Inducted into Creighton Athletic Hall of Fame

Congratulations to the 2015 Creighton Athletic Hall of Fame inductees (left to right): Tammy Nielsen Winkler, BSBA’05, Chad McConnell, Tony Barone and David Wright, BSBA’08. Winkler was a standout softball player from 2003-05 and was the first pitcher in Creighton history to record three 20-win seasons. McConnell was on the baseball team from 1990-92 and helped the Bluejays get to the 1991 College World Series. McConnell was the 13th overall pick in the 1992 Major League Baseball draft. Wright dominated on the mound with the men’s soccer team from 1996-99, helping to lead the Bluejays to four consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances. Barone served as head coach of the men’s basketball team from 1985-91, compiling a 102-82 record in six seasons. Barone lead the Bluejays to two NCAA Tournaments.

99 Mandy Hobson Kamiyowski, BS, St. Louis, opened the law office of Kamiyowski, Gavin & Smith, P.C., in St. Louis, specializing in medical malpractice and professional liability defense work.

02 Sherrye L. Hutcherson, MBA, Omaha, was named vice president of human resources for Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha.

03 Taylor L. Kerns, BS, St. Louis, an attorney in the Alton, Ill., office of Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC, was elevated to a shareholder with the firm.

04 Ann Burkhardt, OTD, Bristol, R.I., has been named the director of the occupational therapy program at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Burkhardt, currently a therapy resources management occupational therapist at Crestwood & Grace Barker Nursing and Rehabilitation facilities in Warren, R.I., will begin her new position at Drake on July 1. Dr. Neville A. Kelly, MA, Seattle, and Sr. Ann Verona Kessler, OSB, MA’57, worked together to update and revise Kessler’s previously published book, Benedictine Men and Women of Courage: Roots & History, Revised Edition. This new, comprehensive account is acclaimed as a significant, single-volume survey of 15 centuries of inclusive monastic history.

06 Gregory R. Lunt, JD, Sandy, Utah, was named equity shareholder at Workman Nydegger. Patrick M. Ricketts, MBA, Omaha, president and CFO of Vintage Financial Group in Omaha, was a recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans award presented by the Omaha Junior Chamber in January.

07 Michael J. Rea, PharmD, Douglas M. Beshc, MBA, PharmD, and Brandy Kopecky Rea, JD, Overland Park, Kan., were featured in the February issue of Thinking Bigger Business magazine. The three Creighton graduates are owners of Rx Savings Solutions in Overland Park. The magazine calls their business one of the region’s most promising companies. In addition, Heather Green Epps, PharmD, Kansas City, Mo., is a key employee at the business. John A. Menicucci Jr., JD, Bennington, Neb., a transactional lawyer with the Omaha office of Husch Blackwell LLP, was a recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans award presented by the Omaha Junior Chamber in January.

08 Brian J. Blackford, BA’05, JD, Omaha, has opened Blackford Law, LLC, an immigration law practice specializing in removal/deportation defense and family-based immigration. Colleen L. Byers, BA’04, MBA, JD, Winston-Salem, N.C., was elected a director at the law firm Bell, Davis & Pitt, PA, of Winston-Salem and Charlotte. N.C. Brandon D. Mason, BSBA’05, MBA, Elkhorn, Neb., assistant vice president and credit products officer for Bank of the West’s Corporate Banking Group Agribusiness Division, was a recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans award presented by the Omaha Junior Chamber in January. Alissa M. Moran, BSBA, Fort Worth, Texas, earned a Master’s in Business Administration from Texas Christian University in December 2014. Jennifer J. Stevens, JD, Indianapolis, was named a 2015 Indiana “Rising Star” by Super Lawyers Magazine and Indianapolis Monthly magazine in the area of family law. She is an attorney with Cohen, Garelick & Glazier PC in Indianapolis.

09 Christine Wang Howard, BSBA, Spring, Texas, former marketing and sales business manager for Union Pacific Railroad, was named a 2014 “Rising Star” by Progressive Railroading for being an under-40 leader in the rail industry.

10 Colin C. Smalley, BSEVS, Olathe, Kan., is a regulatory specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District. Lecia E. Wright, BA’07, JD, Bellevue, Neb., is an assistant U.S. attorney with the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Omaha. Prior to her current position, Wright served with the Air Force JAG Corps. After leaving active duty, she continues to serve in the military with the Reserves.

11 Luke S. Christiansen, MBA, Omaha, co-founder of Valvora, a start-up software division of Union Pacific, was a recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans award presented by the Omaha Junior Chamber in January.

Weddings

04 Debra King, DDS, and Justin Schmidt, Dec. 17, 2014, living in Chicago.

05 Elizabeth P. Schroer, BSW, and Alex F. Zimmerman, BSBA, Sept. 13, 2014, living in Bennington, Neb.


Births


05 Casey J. Eikmeier and Ginger Ruskamp Eikmeier, BA,
Deaths


Esther Wuidham Polityka, SJN’35, BSN, Omaha, Feb. 6, 2015.


Robert F. Heimrod, BSC, Omaha, April 9, 2015.


V. Jane Knight Tell, SCN, Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 6, 2015.


Joseph J. Forman, JD, Omaha, Nov. 28, 2014.


Sara Evans Kennedy, SCN, Omaha, April 8, 2015.

New Members of the National Alumni Board Announced

The National Alumni Board (NAB) welcomed three new members last fall. They will represent alumni for the next three years. The NAB meets twice a year at Creighton to discuss various University issues, alumni concerns and alumni program plans. New members are:

Robert Greenwood, BSPha’77 — Greenwood is a practicing pharmacist in Waterloo, Iowa. He currently serves on the advisory committee for the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. He received the school’s Alumni Merit Award in 2014.

Mark Mowat, BSBA’86 — Mowat is an independent investor and financial consultant in Omaha. He serves on the Heider College of Business advisory board, and was a member of the cabinet for the college’s Ignite the Greatness capital campaign.

Daniel Semrad, BSBA’71, MA’09 — Semrad is an investment consultant and vice president at Smith Hayes, a financial services corporation with three locations in Nebraska. Semrad endowed an annual lecture series in non-Western thought at Creighton in 2002. Semrad has served on advisory boards for both the Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences.
Creighton University’s Office of Marketing and Communications has initiated a new effort, called Share Your Story, to highlight the people who make the Creighton community unique.

Share your story today at creighton.edu/shareyourstory

ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS

ENROLL TODAY AND CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY Limited Time

Creighton is recognizing alumni by offering a 25 percent tuition scholarship for the fall 2015 term when admitted into a qualifying graduate degree or certificate program at Creighton University.

For programs and eligibility guidelines, contact the Office of Graduate and Adult Admission at creighton.edu/alumni-scholarship | alumniisocholarship@creighton.edu | 402.280.2424 | 800.637.4279
“Cancer” gets everyone’s attention. After six months of an indeterminate stomach ailment, the doctor sitting across from me declared that I had pancreatic cancer. It was a late-detected and very aggressive form; the tumor was inoperable. This was a jolt to the body and the spirit.

As one who had enjoyed excellent health across many taxing decades, it was not the answer I wanted, but I did expect it. In an uncanny way, I always suspected I would experience something like this.

In the months prior to the final determination, I had thought, read and Googled, prayed and discerned, discussed and debated what my response would be. By the time my situation was revealed, I had decided on a personally framed plan of action: to take a noninvasive approach, no chemo or radiation treatment for me. I was going to let nature take its course, with reasonable pain medication, unto the end.

While objectively hearing both sides of the experiences from others, I decided that chemo would not advance the quality of my life in any significant way. In the end, I was interested in the “quality of life” not the longevity of life. I wanted to have time to say “goodbye” and farewell to the people and places I love.

I am well aware that this will come at a cost. I recall Thomas à Kempis writing: “If you are unwilling to suffer, how can you be a friend of Christ?” Like him, I believe suffering is at the heart of the Christian story. But I also agree with Teresa of Ávila in noting that “pain is never permanent.”

On reflection, God has been very good to me. I have had a rich and productive life. I have had a terrific run! I dare say, I have had a graced life. A life of wonderment! Together with so many of you, we have added to the building of God’s kingdom. I have experienced teaching or leadership on five Jesuit campuses — from the administrative learning curve at Marquette and John Carroll, to the excitement of reviving the University of San Francisco, to my lifelong love of serving Creighton and the Omaha community.

Overall, I spent some 27 years in and around Creighton. Many of you were there — be you parent, student, faculty, staff or alumnus/na — with your encouragement, friendship and prayers. I have taught you [and you, me], married you, baptized your children, buried your loved ones and picked your pockets. At the same time, we skied, hiked, played racquetball, rowed, golfed, cooked, listened to Jackson Brown and opera, and drank wine. And, yes, prayed together, from the Brandeis lounge to the Rockies. God is indeed a gracious and generous God. Because of you and because of these grace-filled experiences, I do not fear death.

The wonderment of it all. I, for one, remain astounded that this blue-collar kid from Iowa found a “fit” in higher education. The life in the academy became the focus of four decades of ministry. Those were graced years. And if, as Aquinas noted, “grace builds on nature,” there was LOTS of grace gracing these past decades.

This wonderment at the presence of God yields a deep and profound, almost tangible, gratitude — a gratitude resident in action and contemplation. It is a gratitude for companions shared, opportunities revealed, agendas realized, causes championed and justice pursued. It is this gratitude, born of the surprising, always transformational, presence of God in Jesus’ gentle mercy, restorative forgiveness, life-enriching relationships and humble attempts at building God’s kingdom, that accompanied me across these decades. The wonderment of it all.

As I pen this reflection, I know I am living on borrowed time. I have just finished a wonderful Easter celebration at the Gesu, my parish in Milwaukee; a celebration of HOPE in the power and the presence of the Risen Christ. So I judge that Jesuit Pedro Arrupe captures my present disposition best when he writes: “More than ever, I find myself in the hands of God; this is what I have wanted all of my life. But now there is a difference: the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in God’s hands.”

The Very Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Fr. Schlegel served as Creighton University’s 23rd president from 2000 to 2011. He also served in leadership positions at fellow Jesuit institutions Rockhurst University, Marquette University, John Carroll University and the University of San Francisco, where he also was president.
There’s no place like home . . . so come home to Creighton!
Mark your calendars now for Creighton University Homecoming.
Join alumni, families, friends and fans to meet Creighton’s
new president, take in soccer and volleyball matches and attend
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creighton.edu/homecoming
Don’t break out the champagne yet. Just because the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the unemployment rate was 5.5 percent in March 2015 — a healthy drop from 7.5 percent in March 2013 — doesn’t mean that “Happy Days are Here Again.”

Those numbers are deceiving, says Ernie Goss, Ph.D., the MacAllister Chair and professor of economics at Creighton University, and editor of Economic Trends, a newsletter with more than 11,000 subscribers.

“Two factors are causing the drop in unemployment,” Goss says. “First, the economy is improving, albeit at a slow pace. For example, GDP growth for 2015 is expected to be around 2 percent, which is well below a normal 3.5 to 4 percent. The recession ended in June 2009; however, this has been the slowest economic recovery since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

“And secondly, more and more of the unemployed have left the labor force due to becoming discouraged by not being able to find a job. The current labor force participation rate — those age 16 and above who choose to work or seek work — is the lowest in more than three decades.”

Here’s how the unemployment rate works: It is based on the number of people who are unemployed and have registered for work at unemployment offices; in other words, it counts the number of people who are actively looking for work as a percentage of the total labor force.

Those who aren’t registered at an unemployment office don’t count in the numbers. Therefore, the unemployment rate may actually be higher than the numbers indicated by government statistics.

Nevertheless, the economy is getting better and this bodes well for college students seeking employment after graduation, Goss says: “The job market for skilled and well-educated workers has improved significantly since the recession ended.”

Kandace Miller, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of the AIM Institute, an Omaha-based career development organization that promotes technology, agrees with Goss’ assessment.

“Technology is an economy-neutral job segment,” Miller says. “It doesn’t matter what the economy does, there will always be a labor market for people with technical skills. There will always be a need for people who are adept at creation and innovation, and designing new technology.”

Looking at the Numbers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that employment grew by 126,000 jobs in March 2015, after a gain of 295,000 jobs in February, and the unemployment rate was holding steady at 5.5 percent.

Employment continued to trend up in professional and business services,
health care and retail trade, while mining lost jobs. Job gains occurred in food services and drinking places, professional and business services, construction, health care, and in transportation and warehousing. Furthermore, the Consumer Confidence Index registered 102.9 in January, its highest level since August 2007.

Though more people appear to be working now than three years ago, not everyone has benefited from the upturn. Goss points out that the job market hasn’t improved for the less skilled, the less educated, nonwhite job seekers and youth.

Plus, some industry segments are not only losing jobs, but are disappearing. Witness the number of bookstores that have closed because more people are buying books online.

Goss urges students to study labor trends. For example, recent news reports note the explosion of baby boomers entering retirement, and predict that the number of dementia cases is expected to rise. This signals there will be a great need for skilled nurses, nursing home workers and other health care professionals with geriatric skills.

This works well for students planning to enter the job market in the future. But what about people who have recently lost their jobs and are now in a state of limbo?

“There are two things that will guarantee that you will always have a job: You have to be willing to be retrained, and you need to be geographically mobile,” Goss says. “Each month, we see the creation of 200,000 to 300,000 jobs. The question is, Where are these jobs being created?

“If you’re in the automobile manufacturing sector, and you want to stay in that sector, are you willing to move from, say, Detroit to Austin, Texas? Plus, are you willing to retool yourself by getting additional skills through education and training? Unfortunately, when some people lose their jobs, they are often unwilling to be retrained because they believe themselves unable to learn new skills.”

Other Trends

Barring a sudden catastrophic economic or political world event, the U.S. unemployment rate should hover between 5.3 and 5.4 percent through 2025, according to Statista, an Internet research firm.

The economic indicators show that the U.S. economy is going in the right direction, but Miller cautions that the numbers reveal good and bad indications of things to come.

“The good sign is job postings are at prerecession levels and growing,” Miller says. “The bad sign is that the unemployed may not be the ones taking those jobs. New entrants into the job market, such as graduates, immigrants or retrained people, are filling many of those openings, so the chronically unemployed will remain so to a large extent.”

Another trend that has shown great growth is the home office. Though popular with entrepreneurs — a home office means no rent payments plus a chance to deduct a portion of your mortgage from your income tax — Miller believes that the number of payroll employees who work at home will level off.

“Many employers I’ve talked to aren’t crazy about the idea of people working at home,” she says. “But those employers don’t mind it if their people occasionally work from a Starbucks. So, more likely, we’ll be moving to the idea of a mobile office, where people can work in multiple places.”

Miller points to the “so-lo-mo” mantra epitomized in the television show Silicon Valley, featuring high-tech engineers working to develop new apps. “Social-local-mobile,” she says. “Young people don’t want to sit home alone in a room and work online. They want to be engaged together. There’s a big need for social media, and for green communities of people to get together.”

The important thing to remember about trends and numbers is that they change, because new ideas are always being introduced — especially in the realm of technology.

With this in mind, Goss suggests that the way to always stay ahead of the curve, and to remain employed, is to have a good foundation of education.

“We continue to lose jobs in the manufacturing sector; for example, baseballs will never be produced in the U.S. again,” he says. “But if you can write well, communicate well, have good math skills and can learn another language, it’s a safe bet you will always find work.

“In other words, have a good liberal arts education. These are skills that will last you for your lifetime.”
Gail Werner-Robertson, BA’84, JD’88 | Believe and Achieve Award

Gail Werner-Robertson is an entrepreneur and leader in the Omaha community and is known for her continued involvement in the Creighton community.

She has received numerous recognitions, including the Heartland Family Services Leadership Award and the University of Nebraska Chancellor’s Distinguished Service Award, and she was an honoree at Omaha’s 24th Annual Tribute to Women, Women Making a Difference.

Werner-Robertson volunteers throughout the community. She assists women through support of the College of St. Mary’s Mothers Living and Learning housing program for students and is a Community Cabinet member for Project Harmony. Werner-Robertson has also volunteered as co-chair for the Salvation Army DJ’s Hero Awards Luncheon.

A strong advocate for autistic children, Werner-Robertson is the co-founder of Autism Action Partnership (AAP). A nonprofit foundation, AAP was founded with the purpose of increasing the quality and quantity of services in Nebraska benefitting those on the autism spectrum. In addition to the services AAP funds, they also operate Nebraska’s state-of-the-art online resource center for parents, educators and service providers about all aspects of autism.

In 2005, the Werner Institute at Creighton University was established thanks to a generous gift from the family of Werner-Robertson. In 2014, the Creighton Institute for Economic Inquiry at the Heider College of Business was founded with matching grants from Werner-Robertson’s family.

Tanya E. Warren, BSW’88 | Leader for Life Award

A standout guard for the Bluejays from 1983-88, Tanya Warren established herself as one of the top players in Creighton women’s basketball history, ranking seventh in career scoring as well as holding numerous other spots in the University’s record books.

While her career as a basketball player earned her a spot in the Creighton Athletic Hall of Fame, Warren’s accomplishments in the coaching realm are perhaps even more impressive.

She started her coaching career at Boys Town High School and Duchesne High School in the Omaha area, leading Duchesne to its first state tournament appearance in program history. Warren served stints as an assistant coach at Iowa State, Northern Iowa and Missouri before returning to Creighton as an assistant in 2004.

Warren oversaw the Bluejay backcourt and was in charge of player development, academic oversight and alumni events, all while playing a major role in camps, recruiting and scouting for the Creighton women’s basketball program. As the associate head coach, she helped guide the team to a WNIT appearance in 2005 and the Missouri Valley Conference (MVC) championship game in 2007.

In 2007, Warren made the leap to her first college head coaching position at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), becoming the first black female head coach in MVC history. She recently completed her eighth season as UNI’s head coach. A two-time MVC Coach of the Year, Warren directed UNI to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances in 2010 and 2011 and the program’s first regular-season MVC title in 2011. She guided the Panthers to the school’s first WNIT victory in 2013. In all, Warren’s tenure at UNI has been one of the winningest stretches in school history.

Under Warren, UNI has not only become a perennial contender in the MVC, but also one of the nation’s highest-achieving academic programs, regularly posting a team grade-point average that ranks among the top 15 in the nation. Her student-athletes have earned numerous academic awards to go along with their athletic accomplishments.

Most recently, Warren has been selected as an assistant coach for Team USA at the World University Games to be held this summer in South Korea.

Warren has a passion for the game of basketball and a passion for making a difference in the lives of the players she coaches. She feels a deep sense of responsibility that accompanies her status as a role model for female athletes, both on and off the court.