





© The Creighton community gathered in St. John's Church for the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit this fall, invoking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit for the new academic year. The worldwide Jesuit tradition began in 1548 in Messina, Italy.

## A Time of Community and Thanksgiving

**I**n this annual season of thanksgiving, I am indeed grateful for our supportive alumni and friends, dedicated faculty and staff, and exceptionally talented students.

Our University continues to attract record numbers of students, receive national recognition for academic excellence, and engender tremendous support from our alumni and donors.

In September, we announced a transformational \$10 million gift from longtime Creighton friends and supporters George Haddix, PhD, MA'66, and his wife, Susan, to build and enhance academic programming in the College of Arts and Sciences. I am thankful for George and Susan's generous commitment to Creighton, and excited about the many opportunities it will offer our students and faculty.

I am also grateful for our spirit of community on campus, which lifts us up in hopefulness and comforts us in times of tragedy. At the beginning of the academic year, we gathered in prayer and support after a four-vehicle crash claimed the life of one of our bright, young students, and injured three others. An alumna traveling in a separate car also was injured.

Joan Ocampo-Yambing, the 19-year-old computer science major from Rosemount, Minnesota, who died in the collision, was remembered on campus as a bright light, a loving friend, and an outstanding student. She is greatly missed.

We also mourned the passing of several faculty and staff, along with two former members of our Board of Trustees. Bill Fitzgerald and Bill Kizer, both graduates of our business college, left a legacy of corporate and community leadership, generous philanthropy, and service and dedication to Creighton.

This fall, we welcomed the newest members of our campus community — the class of 2021. These 1,119 students represent the largest freshman class in Creighton's history, and pushed our total enrollment to an all-time high of 8,654.

*U.S. News & World Report* continued to recognize Creighton in its annual listing of America's top colleges. Creighton was ranked No. 1 in the Midwest for the 15th consecutive year, and was the only Catholic school recognized for undergraduate research opportunities.

Our Creighton Global Initiative — now in its second year of funding — continues to offer significant opportunities for students and faculty, with \$2.5 million in seed-funding supporting 47 projects. In addition, this year, more than 400 students will study abroad and more than 200 international students will study at Creighton.

My hope is that this global perspective and understanding can bring to greater reality that traditional holiday message: Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.

Finally, please enjoy our newly redesigned *Creighton* magazine. We hope that you find within these pages the fullness of the Creighton experience. Best wishes for a blessed Christmas, happy holidays, and wonderful new year.



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**Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ**  
President

## Our Gift to You

**E**very Christmas Eve, I climb into the crawlspace and pull out the four-foot-tall lighted Santa, the foldable manger scene, the reindeer with the nose that glows and the small garland Christmas tree that my mom made with the kids years ago. I place these and other “heirlooms” around the living room as my wife finishes putting freshly wrapped presents under the tree. And then we turn off the living room lamps, plug in the Christmas lights and stand back. The glow washes over us. It renews our spirit. It’s peaceful, comforting and inspiring. The scene is familiar, but somehow excitingly new — as the lights, time and personal experiences illuminate different perspectives.

I have similar feelings as we unwrap our newly redesigned *Creighton* magazine. It remains steeped in tradition, but with a fresh approach that we hope illuminates new, fresh angles on the Creighton experience that will surprise, excite and inspire you.

Unlike my Christmas shopping (which sometimes begins on Christmas Eve), we began preparing for this issue during the summer. In the ensuing months, we have been busily checking off to-dos and hustling to pull together compelling stories, artwork and photographs.

Along the way, Creighton received a gift of its own — a \$10 million gift from George Haddix, PhD, MA’66, and his wife, Susan, that will build and enhance academic programming in the College of Arts and Sciences. We couldn’t wait to unwrap some of the possibilities. In this issue, we share how previous initiatives established by the Haddixes are enhancing faculty research, getting students involved in scientific discovery, and providing scholarships to students from a local high school. We expect this new gift to build on that tradition and illuminate new opportunities for students and faculty.

As we prepare for the holidays, I’ll admit that I have a sweet tooth for Christmas cookies. I have my favorite (the round pretzels filled with chocolate and topped with a peanut M&M, in case you’re baking), but I like being surprised with a good sugar cookie or something more exotic.

Likewise, we have flavored this issue with a variety of tantalizing stories — minus the calories, of course. We dive into the changing state of democracy worldwide, and share the fascinating story of an alumna in Alaska who is pioneering a unique approach to occupational therapy (hint: it involves a trapeze). And there’s more. How does one become an official saint? Read about Creighton’s involvement in the canonization process for Boys Town founder the Rev. Edward Flanagan. Want to improve your managerial skills? Check out the minimalist manager story.

We also have developed new departments: Dialogue, By the Numbers, Jesuit Gardens and Lesson Plan, which allow us to share a variety of Creighton-related stories. We also invite you to share your stories, opinions and thoughts in our new Voices department (see Page 5). We look forward to the dialogue. Finally, we wrap it up with the news from you and your classmates. This tradition we are keeping. As always, we encourage you to send your news to [alumni@creighton.edu](mailto:alumni@creighton.edu).

With the holidays quickly approaching, we are, admittedly, a bit exhausted, but we also are eager to share this gift with you. As we stand back, we hope the light of Creighton University shines through and warms your heart, soul and imagination.

**Rick Davis**  
Director of Communications



### ABOUT THE COVER

A cross section of the multitude of facets and disciplines that compose Creighton University — which stands to benefit from a \$10 million gift from George Haddix, PhD, MA’66, and his wife, Susan, to the College of Arts and Sciences — is depicted in this illustration by Jasu Hu, whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post* and elsewhere.



## Thought-Provoking. Mission-Focused.

That not only reflects our goals and aspirations for *Creighton* magazine, it also describes the work of those responsible for bringing you each issue. From left are, front, Adam Klinker, public relations manager; Cindy Murphy McMahan, BA’74, associate director of communications; Emily Rust, communications specialist; Rick Davis, BA’88, director of communications; back, Jim Berscheidt, chief communications and marketing officer; Glenn Antonucci, senior director of communications; Sheila Swanson, associate director of communications; and Amanda Brandt, BA’14, social media and content strategist.

### ATTEND AN ALUMNI EVENT

For the latest on alumni gatherings, contact the Alumni Relations Office at 800.282.5867 or visit [alumni.creighton.edu](http://alumni.creighton.edu).

### MAKE A GIFT

Contact the Office of Development at 800.334.8794 or visit [alumni.creighton.edu/give-back](http://alumni.creighton.edu/give-back).

### RECOMMEND A STUDENT

Contact the Undergraduate Admissions Office at 800.282.5835 or email [admissions@creighton.edu](mailto:admissions@creighton.edu).

### READ US ONLINE

You can read this issue and past issues of *Creighton* magazine online at [creighton.edu/creightonmagazine](http://creighton.edu/creightonmagazine).

### CONTACT US

Send Letters to the Editor to [creightonmagazine@creighton.edu](mailto:creightonmagazine@creighton.edu) and alumni news (births, weddings, promotions, etc.) to [alumninews@creighton.edu](mailto:alumninews@creighton.edu). Address mail to: Creighton University, University Communications and Marketing, 780480 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178-0480

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**CREIGHTON MAGAZINE’S PURPOSE**  
*Creighton* magazine, like the University itself, is committed to excellence and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms. The magazine will be comprehensive in nature. It will support the University’s mission of education through thoughtful and compelling feature articles on a variety of topics. It will feature the brightest, the most stimulating, the most inspirational thinking that Creighton offers. The magazine also will promote Creighton, and its Jesuit, Catholic identity, to a broad public and serve as a vital link between the University and its constituents. The magazine will be guided by the core values of Creighton: the inalienable worth of each individual, respect for all of God’s creation, a special concern for the poor and the promotion of justice.

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# Contents



## IS DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS?

Political scientists, including two at Creighton, are concerned about signs that democracy may be in danger worldwide.



## A SHINING LIGHT

A professor and professor emerita play key roles in furthering the cause for sainthood of the founder of Boys Town, the famed organization for at-risk youth based in Nebraska.

on the cover

## AN EQUATION FOR SUCCESS

A recent \$10 million gift to the College of Arts and Sciences from alumnus George Haddix, PhD, MA'66, and his wife, Susan, will enhance research and stoke the passions of the next generation of Creighton scientists.



## THE LAST FRONTIER

Through twists and turns, a Creighton alumna falls in love with Homer, Alaska, and a unique form of therapy.



## THE MINIMALIST MANAGER

A Creighton business professor says minimalism can bring more meaning to the workplace.



**6 Creighton Connections**

**11 Jesuit Gardens**

The Rev. Thomas Simonds, SJ, EdD, shares insights on how to more fully appreciate the gifts of the season.

**15 By the Numbers**

**16 Health Briefs**

**18 Dialogue**

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is discussed from Lutheran and Catholic perspectives by a Creighton professor and administrator.

**20 Lesson Plan**

Alumni and Creighton's sustainability coordinator offer real-world advice on living a greener life.

**54 Impact**

From South Korea to Omaha, a nursing scholarship recipient finds Creighton is where she is meant to be.

**55 Alumni Notes**

**64 Creighton Conversations**

The University's vice president for University Relations says his is a "dream job."

# Voices

## Heard on Campus

"When we help medical students understand leadership, we help them to not only be strong scientists, but we help them to artfully lead teams."

**JENNIFER MOSS-BREEN, PHD**, associate professor and program director for Creighton's Interdisciplinary EdD, who along with John Schmidt, MD, associate professor of pediatrics, co-authored "It's Good for What Ails You: Leadership in Medical School"—winner of the 2017 Most Publishable Leadership Education Paper Award from the International Leadership Association.

"Whether it's Republicans or Democrats in America or the (Indian National) Congress or the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in India, the fundamentals of the relationship between our two countries are sound and will survive political change in either country."

**HON. SHASHI THAROOR, PHD**, a former United Nations undersecretary general and current member of parliament for the Indian National Congress, at the inaugural U.S.-India Friendship Summit convened at Creighton.

"I'm inspired semester after semester by all the students who not only have a desire to serve others, but who also want to learn about the justice issues facing communities across the country and around the world."

**JEFF PEAK, BA'08, MA'11**, assistant director for the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice (SCSJ), on the 240 Creighton students who visited 30 sites nationwide during fall break as part of the SCSJ's Service & Justice Trips.

"I am excited that The Landing project will serve as an important gateway to Creighton, but also for the communities surrounding the development to connect in many ways."

**TODD HEISTAND**, president of NuStyle Development, which is converting the former Creighton University Medical Center property into a development called The Landing, with apartments, retail space and a pedestrian bridge over U.S. Highway 75 that will link to Creighton's main campus.

"This is the way of the future, to meet people where they are and to provide the services they need most and might be unlikely to otherwise pursue."

**MARGARET MURPHY BEGLEY, BA'90, BSN'91**, faculty member, preceptor and school health coordinator in the College of Nursing, who is heading up Creighton's partnership with Building Healthy Futures to provide vision screenings in Omaha Public Schools.

## What's on Your Mind?

Let us know what you think of the newly redesigned *Creighton* magazine and the stories presented inside. One of our hopes is that this magazine will serve as a forum for more conversation with you, our readers. We are eager to hear from you — whether it's feedback on a story or a special memory from your Creighton days that we've sparked. Please send your letters to the editor via email to [creightonmagazine@creighton.edu](mailto:creightonmagazine@creighton.edu) or via postal mail to the address below.

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## Let's Get Social

**@CarliTritz:** Shoutout to **@CreightonPres** for picking up my Starbucks tab this afternoon!! Coolest prez evaaaa! **#BigEspressoGuy** ☕️👉

**@AditiGetsTweety:** If you go to **@Creighton**, protecting health care for marginalized people, being men and women for and with others, is our mission. LIVE IT.

**@MidwestJesuits:** Ice cream shop near **@Creighton** has a new **#Jesuit-inspired** flavor: "Ite Inflamate Omnia," or Go Set the World on Fire.

**@RyanHolmgren:** Proud to be a **@Creighton** alum. (Referencing Creighton's efforts as one of 28 U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities to protect Dreamers)



DAVID SENIOR

## A Last Wish

BY ADAM KLINKER

As a private, faith-based institution, Creighton University relies upon the generosity of donors to accomplish its mission in educating future generations in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition.

**M**ost of the donations are monetary in nature and these gifts, if they could speak, might wax nostalgic of college days, life-changing realizations, spiritual enrichment and a final wish to see those experiences borne forward. For Don and Mary Margaret Wolters, who donated to the University in another way, the gift bespoke all three and more.

Don Wolters, MD'51, died in December 2016 at age 93. His wife of 65 years, Mary Margaret, SCN'51, died four months later at 88. Both alumni from Creighton's

health sciences programs, they donated their bodies to the School of Medicine's Department of Biomedical Sciences.

"There was never a question that they'd donate their bodies and donate them to Creighton," says Peter, BA'74, JD'78, the couple's son. "I feel like I've known all my life that's what they wanted to do. We had the option to do something else, but I knew it was always their very strong desire to see themselves, even in death, be of service to people. That's always resonated for me."

Don and Mary Margaret met on the first day of Don's third year in medical school, when the med students went to St. Catherine's Hospital for the first time. When the nursing students came out to greet the new crop of future physicians, Mary Margaret Bradley caught the eye of Don Wolters.

A native of Atchison, Kansas, Don was a World War II veteran. His undergraduate education at Benedictine College was interrupted when he volunteered for the U.S. Navy's V-12 officers training program. The advent of the war

also cut short Don's budding baseball career. He'd been invited to spring training with the St. Louis Browns just before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mary Margaret was born in Ulysses, Nebraska, and grew up in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. She had a few uncles who were doctors and an aunt who was a nurse in Omaha, likely spurring her interest in the medical field.

The couple married Sept. 1, 1951, and after Don Wolters completed a residency in Sioux City, Iowa, he established a practice in Estherville, Iowa, that he maintained until his retirement in 1988. Mary Margaret, with her nursing degree, worked occasionally as a nurse and taught courses at a local community college, but her real occupation was as mother to Peter, who arrived within a year of the couple's wedding, and daughter Peggy, who the couple adopted five years after Peter's birth.



### NEW BOARD MEMBER

Michael "Mike" Zoellner, BSBA'78, JD'81, of Denver, was named to Creighton's Board of Trustees in August. Zoellner is the managing director of ZF Capital, chairman of the Colorado Multifamily Housing Alliance and a member of the Urban Land Institute. Zoellner is fulfilling the term of Jane Miller, who stepped down in July after 11 years of service on the Board.

up in small towns in Nebraska and Iowa, might've gone for a place with a bit more traffic but, as her son said, she knew her love story was destined to bloom where it was planted.

"I think he would have rather been a farmer himself," Peter Wolters says. "He was a small-town, rural-area kind of guy. My mother would have gladly moved to Seattle or Omaha, a little bigger city. But she got involved with what was happening in town. She knew this was a fulfilling life."

And so, for the better part of seven decades, Don and Mary Margaret Wolters made a life in Estherville, taking care of patients, raising a family, tending to the needs of their community. But they also remembered that moment at Creighton and what their health sciences education had meant to them, not only as a career path, but in bringing their lives together.

Creighton receives about 90 donated bodies each year for use in its Department of Biomedical Sciences. Bodies typically arrive six months after death and after they have been cleared through the Anatomical Board of the State of Nebraska.

Thomas Quinn, PhD, director of Creighton's Clinical Anatomy Program, said in the course of a year, just about all of Creighton's health sciences students will work with or observe work on a donated body, making the program crucial to medical education.

"We generally refer to the donated body as the first patient," Quinn says. "We encourage the students to use the person's first name and there's a form of HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act that keeps medical records private) involved. It's a lesson in professionalism as well as anatomy."

After the year the bodies spend in the lab, Creighton hosts a memorial service for families, where students are able to talk with loved ones and share their gratitude for the deceased family member's donation. For those families not recovering the cremains. [▶](#)

“We talk at Creighton about finding God in all things and the donation and the anatomy lab is a good place to look. You can see how people, after they're gone, are helping teach our students to keep us alive and well.”



### BIG EAST ACES

Harrison Lang, BA'17, received the BIG EAST Conference's 2016-2017 Scholar-Athlete Sport Excellence Award in men's tennis, while volleyball standout Lauren Smith, BSBA'17, was one of two BIG EAST nominees for NCAA Woman of the Year. Lang earned a perfect 4.0 GPA in neuroscience, with a minor in biology, while Smith, a marketing and entrepreneurship major, was a four-time BIG EAST All-Academic Team selection.

an interment is also held at Resurrection Cemetery.

Without the donors, Quinn says, lessons on human anatomy can only go so far.

“All in all, it really is a beautiful thing,” he says. “The bodies are some of our best teachers. There’s nothing to compare with being able to use the whole body and see how it works. It really does get you ready for practice. We talk at Creighton about finding God in all things and the donation and the anatomy lab is a good place to look. You can see how people, after they’re gone, are helping teach our students to keep us alive and well.”

In his mother’s obituary, Peter Wolters wrote of his parents’ decision to donate their bodies to the School of Medicine in this poignant way: “Having met at Creighton while Don was in medical school and Mary Margaret was in nursing training, they decided to spend eternity together at Creighton.”

© Lauren Glaser, left, a fourth-year medical student at the School of Medicine’s Phoenix Regional Campus, was instrumental in establishing a student-run clinic at the St. Vincent DePaul medical clinic, serving patients in the Phoenix area. Third-year medical students Courtney Smith, middle, and Ahmad Atallah are student leaders at the clinic.

“They’re doing exactly what they wanted to do,” he says. “Both my mother and father saw opportunities to give back and took them. It was a big motivation for my father becoming a doctor. For my mother, she always looked for a way to help her community. Donating their bodies to Creighton fulfilled that last wish, that they could still be of service.”

For more information on the body donation program, contact the Anatomical Board of the State of Nebraska at 402.559.6249 or the Creighton Department of Biomedical Sciences at 402.280.2542.

### Desert Difference-Makers

Health Care Partnership Expands Creighton’s Service Reach

BY NICOLE PHELPS, BA’02

Creighton alumni and students with a passion for volunteering are making a difference in and around south-central

Arizona, as the University expands its academic health care partnership with Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix.

Creighton alumnus George Stavros, MD’62, always wanted to do missionary work. In the late 1990s, the Phoenix family medicine physician began seeing patients in his home after church on Sundays. Many of those coming to his door were from Mexico or of Mexican descent.

In the nearly 20 years since, Stavros, along with his church community, developed a medical clinic on two acres of donated land 60 miles south of Phoenix in Puerto Peñasco, Mexico—a town of approximately 40,000, where fishing and tourism are the main sources of income.

Longtime volunteer and fellow Creighton alumnus Floyd Roberson, MD’81, said little by little the clinic came together, but at times it was painfully slow. He chuckled as he recalled the first

clinic building. “There was no grass, just dirt to a building—no doors or windows. Eventually we would get doors but still no windows, and when we got windows, we didn’t have air conditioning.”

But the patients never seemed to mind. “We’re constantly amazed at how appreciative people are,” Roberson says. “By and large, our patients are humble people who are extremely grateful for any care you can provide.”

Patients are notified of clinic days via flyers and word of mouth. Approximately 150 patients, who otherwise have no access to care, are seen each clinic day. “The need is enormous,” Roberson says. Patients come from the community and the surrounding areas to see physicians, dentists and physical therapists and to have prescriptions filled.

Recently, third- and fourth-year medical students from the Creighton School of Medicine’s Phoenix Regional Campus have started traveling to Mexico every other month for a Saturday clinic. There, students are exposed to a health care system that is consistent with a developing nation. They see patients and assist with the delivery of care. “It’s a wonderful experience and it can be heartbreaking at the same time,” Roberson says.

A student-led clinic was a dream for many since Creighton established a medical campus in Phoenix in 2009. January 2018 will mark the one-year milestone since that dream became a reality.

When medical student Lauren Glaser was considering completing her last two years at the School of Medicine’s Phoenix Regional Campus, she was interested in volunteer opportunities. While there were many, she was surprised to learn that there was no community clinic that was exclusively tied to Creighton—similar to the student-run Magis Clinic at the Siena/Francis House shelter in Omaha. Glaser felt the time was right to change that and was met with encouragement and support along the way.



## CREIGHTON

Sink your teeth into these eight informational bites about the School of Dentistry and its new state-of-the-art building, scheduled to open in July 2018.

- 1 Among applicants to U.S. dental schools, 1 in every 6 seeks admission to Creighton (nearly 2,000 students annually).
- 2 Our dental students hail from 31 states and 5 countries.
- 3 About 70 million pounds of dirt—enough to fill nearly 11 Olympic-sized swimming pools—were excavated to make way for the new 220,000-square-foot building.
- 4 Our students and faculty are expected to examine 15,000 patients—or roughly 500,000 teeth—annually in the new facility by 2021.
- 5 A total of 400 pieces of precast brick panels and limestone were erected over the building’s steel structure.
- 6 The economic impact of the new facility will hit \$848 million by 2023, with an anticipated 200 new jobs created indirectly.
- 7 The projected value of free or discounted dental services to be offered over the first 10 years of the new building’s operation is \$91.4 million.
- 8 Our dental care expands beyond campus. In the 2016–2017 academic year, students provided nearly 5,000 dental sealants to children in local elementary schools.

Glaser and fellow medical student Joshua Blessing, MD’17, initially met with St. Joseph’s Family Medicine physician Sara Peña, MD, a volunteer at the Society of St. Vincent DePaul medical clinic, and Maurice Lee, MD, medical director of the clinic, to discuss plans for establishing a student-run clinic. Lee was familiar with Creighton students because the clinic is a family medicine clerkship site.

From those early meetings in the fall of 2016, the project continued to gain momentum. Glaser and Blessing recruited student leaders to create training manuals, planned orientations and involved more family medicine physicians.

Fast-forward a few months: Five third-year Creighton medical students and three student leaders welcomed 12 patients to the first clinic in January 2017. Working under the supervision of two attending physicians, these students guided the patients through their entire visit—from check-in and vitals to blood draws and dispensing medications.

Nearly a year later, the students are still operating their Saturday-morning clinic with hopes to expand to a weeknight. And while it may be a small clinic, it’s a big start for the current and future medical students in Phoenix.

### Feeling the Freedom of the Road (even if it’s a driveway)

**Sage Meier, 22 months old**, is getting strapped into her bright yellow, modified Fisher-Price car when she flashes a slight frown of apprehension.

There are a few extra people in her driveway to watch her tool around in the car, which has been modified to strengthen her right hand and arm.

But when Sage’s father, Tate, flips the car’s battery switch, the grimace is gone. Her hand shoots out and punches the throttle—on the car’s steering wheel—and there’s no stopping her now as she coasts down the driveway, through the yard, out to the sidewalk. ▶



DEBBY WOLVOS



© Sage Meier, 22 months, motors down her west Omaha driveway in a motorized toy car, specially modified by students and faculty in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions to help improve range of movement and strength in her right hand.

“That smile says it all,” says Sage’s mother, Erin. “Anyone who has a child with a disability knows that they miss out on a lot of things. This car has let her ride outside with all the other kids, chase her siblings around, be part of the neighborhood activity.”

Sage is one of five Creighton Pediatric Therapy Clinic patients participating in a 12-week study testing the effects of newfound mobility in children with medical conditions limiting them in this area. Students from Creighton’s occupational therapy and physical therapy departments modified the miniature, battery-driven cars to meet the specific mobility needs of each child.

The study was devised by Stacy Wong, BS’07, DPT’10, an instructor in the Department of Physical Therapy, and Marisa Sevick, OTD, an instructor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, and funded by a 2017 Dr. George F. Haddix President’s Faculty Research Fund award.

And if Sage’s experience is any indication, the future holds that more cars will roll off the Creighton assembly line in the future.

“She just goes, goes, goes,” Erin Meier says.

## Creighton Launches New MBA in Healthcare Management

Creighton has developed an all-new Executive MBA in Healthcare Management program, with an accelerated, 18-month format that blends online learning with several four-day campus-based residencies.

“Our primary target student is a physician, other advanced clinician — dentist, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, etc. — or a health care executive,” said Laurie Baedke, director of health care leadership programs for the Heider College of Business.

Individuals seeking an advanced degree to expand their business acumen, deepen their professional impact and accelerate their career success are “a terrific fit for the Executive MBA in Healthcare program,” she said.

The program, which launched in October and enrolls both clinicians and non-clinicians, is housed in the Heider College of Business but utilizes faculty expertise from the School of Medicine,

School of Dentistry, College of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. For more information, visit [business.creighton.edu/HealthcareMBA](http://business.creighton.edu/HealthcareMBA) or call 402.280.4948.

## A Good Apple

Julie Kalkowski was recently honored at Nebraska Appleseed’s 2017 Good Apple Awards. She received the Jim Wolf Equal Justice Award, which recognizes a Nebraskan for significant career contributions to justice. As executive director of Creighton’s Financial Hope Collaborative, Kalkowski helps low-income families in Omaha with financial literacy and independence. She also was recently appointed to the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s consumer advisory board.



### A CANCER LUMINARY

Henry Lynch, MD, the Charles F. and Mary C. Heider Endowed Chair in Cancer Research, professor of medicine and director of Creighton’s Hereditary Cancer Center, was selected to receive a 2017 Luminary Award in GI Cancers from the Ruesch Center for the Cure of Gastrointestinal Cancers. The award will be presented in Washington, D.C., in December.

## New Law Clinic to Assist Immigrants, Refugees

“There’s a crisis of migration right now,” says David Weber, professor of law. “There are tens of millions of displaced persons who need to leave a difficult life. If we can do a little to help that, we want to do it.”

The Creighton Immigrant and Refugee Clinic, which opened this fall in the School of Law, works to address this crisis — not only by directly aiding immigrants and refugees in open cases in immigration courts, but by training the next generation of lawyers to dedicate themselves to one of the most pressing social justice issues in the country today.

“We see the clinic as an extension of Creighton’s Jesuit values to be men and women for and with others, reaching out to the most vulnerable among us,” Weber says. “But it’s also an opportunity for students to exercise the technical skills they’ve acquired and be touched by the life experiences of the individuals they’re helping.”

## JESUIT GARDENS

# A Gift’s True Worth Isn’t Always Apparent

BY THE REV. THOMAS A. SIMONDS, SJ, EdD,  
Associate Professor of Education,  
College of Arts and Sciences

One day a man with an unusual talent went to see a talent scout. The man said, “I have a unique talent. I can do very convincing bird imitations.” The talent scout looked the man up and down, and with a dismissive wave of his hand said, “Get out of here — bird imitations are a dime a dozen.” With that, the man flew out the window.

Sometimes we have to wait for a gift to be revealed. Someone’s gift may not be readily apparent to us. The man who flew out the window obviously had a unique gift that the talent scout would have loved to market, but because he did not give the man time to share his gift, the talent scout lost out.

One of the challenges we face at Christmastime is that we receive so many gifts, it is hard to appreciate all of them in a good way. I am not only talking about gifts that are wrapped or stuffed in a stocking. Think of the gift of a new snow, or a song someone sings, or a warm embrace. God gives us so many gifts at Christmastime, the biggest gift being his Son Jesus. How can we possibly appreciate all of



DAVID SENIOR

them? It is not easy, but the key is to keep things simple. If we overdo it, we end up with lots of gifts that we cannot appreciate.

One year I received a Christmas card with a picture of the Magi on the front. Below the picture in large type was the line, “The wise still seek him.” Now I have had this card for some time, and it is a little bit worn, but the message is clear. The Magi were wise men, ancient scientists and scholars, whose study of astronomy and ancient texts led them to the conclusion that the King of all Kings would be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

They were so convinced of their conclusion that they set out on camels to follow a star and find this King of Kings. And when they came to Bethlehem, the City of David, what did they find? A baby nestled with hay in a rough-hewn feeding trough for animals, his wayfaring parents nearby, resting in a place where animals were kept in those days.

If you were Caspar, Melchior or Balthazar, and you came to this little shed, or maybe a cave in the side of a hill, would this look like the birth place of the King of Kings? No, it would not. However, remember the story about the flying man. The baby lying in a manger really is the King of Kings, and he really can save your life, if you let him show you his gifts.

**About the writer:** Fr. Simonds is the author of *Advent and Christmas Reflections: Ideas for Teaching the Catholic Faith in the Home, School, and Parish* (2010, National Catholic Educational Association).

The clinic follows the long-standing tradition of Creighton's civil clinic, the Milton R. Abrahams Legal Clinic, in providing representation to the underserved, and where faculty, lawyers and students, recognizing the marginality of immigrants in the legal system, have engaged in legal work on behalf of these new arrivals.

“

We see the clinic as an extension of Creighton's Jesuit values to be men and women for and with others, reaching out to the most vulnerable among us.

”

The clinic is partnering with Justice For Our Neighbors Nebraska, an Omaha-based chapter of a national nonprofit organization specializing in legal services for immigrants and refugees. Charles “Shane” Ellison, legal director for the organization, who also teaches at the law school, will oversee the clinic. Second- and third-year law students working in the clinic will be required to complete a one-hour per-week course on immigration and refugee law.

Weber says the clinic will primarily focus on three types of clients: those seeking asylum, unaccompanied minors, and victims of human trafficking or abuse. But there are other cases in which the clinic could play a role.

“There's a great alignment with our mission and Justice For Our Neighbors, and the exposure to different people facing difficult legal problems is a huge

# Stoicism and Star Wars

BY ADAM KLINKER

**M**uch to tell us of *Star Wars*, the Stoics have. The philosophy of equanimity in all things, arising out of ancient Greece and Rome, has been fertile ground for the science fiction franchise that this year marked 40 years since the premier of the first film.

“Yoda is one of the most Stoic characters in film,” says William Stephens, PhD, philosophy professor and an expert on Stoicism. “His wisdom echoes what Stoics like Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus said: ‘Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.’ That code of the Jedi is Stoicism 101.”

The Stoics emerged in Athens in the third century B.C., teaching a system of living in harmony with the vast framework of nature and the acceptance of all people, places, things and situations. Some two dozen centuries onward — though placed in a time long ago and in a galaxy far, far away — Yoda and the Jedi seek to impart similar lessons on the exercise of the emotions in concert with the logic and reason of the Force.

“The Stoics teach that true power is self-mastery,” says Stephens, who published an essay about Stoicism in the films in a 2005 collection, titled *Star Wars and Philosophy*. “It's self-fulfillment, self-containment. It's not controlling other people. That's tyranny and that's what Yoda and the Jedi fight against when it comes to the Dark Side.”

Read more online at [creighton.edu/creightonmagazine](http://creighton.edu/creightonmagazine).



DAVID SENIOR

benefit [for our students], too,” says Catherine Mahern, the Connie Kearney Chair in Clinical Legal Education and director of the Abrahams Legal Clinic. “I think this will open a lot minds and a lot of hearts.”

## Recognized for Collaborative Care

**Creighton University** and its academic health partner, CHI Health, were honored with one of three national awards distinguishing institutions committed to and promoting a collaborative care model.

The Nexus Award, given annually by the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education, recognizes the efforts of higher educational institutions, health care systems, clinics and community organizations in “linking health professions education and inter-professional practice to transform care delivery, improve health outcomes, and decrease costs.” Creighton and CHI Health earned one of two honorable mention distinctions for the award.

## Marijuana Legalization's Impact on the Mile High State

*Munchie industry soars, others not so much, Creighton professor finds*

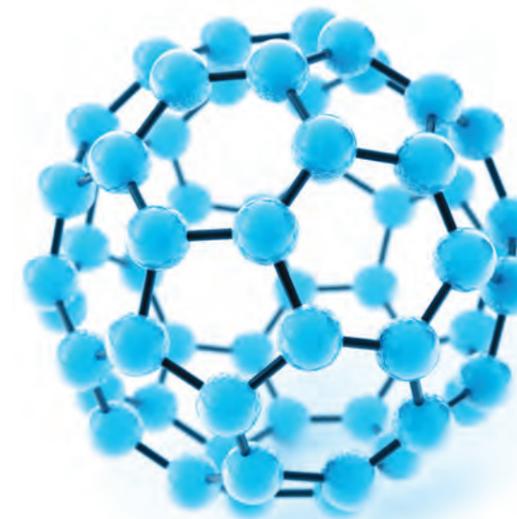
BY ERNIE GOSS, PhD, Jack MacAllister  
Chair in Regional Economics

Since 2013, when marijuana was legalized in the state, Coloradans have toked up, tuned in and chowed down. Between 2013 and 2017, Colorado has increased employment by 9.2 percent, well above the nation's 6.4 percent. On the other hand, since 2013, Colorado wages expanded at approximately three percentage points less than that of the U.S.

Two factors contribute to Colorado's stronger job growth but weaker wage growth. First, Colorado added jobs in lower wage industries. Second,

# WAIT...WHAT?

Creighton is known for the research opportunities it offers undergraduates. Here's a brief insight into one current student's project.



## TITLE

“Detection of the order-disorder transition via birefringence during solvent vapor annealing of poly(styrene)-block-poly(lactide) thin films”

### STUDENT RESEARCHER

Son Nguyen, junior applied physics major, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

### FACULTY MENTOR

Andrew Baruth, PhD, associate professor of physics

**WHAT IT MEANS** Nguyen's project is in the field of nanotechnology, using nature's ability to make repetitive shapes (think honeycombs, only much, much smaller). This has the potential for many life-enhancing applications — including drug development, water filtration and decontamination, energy collection and storage, and information and communication technologies. Nguyen's research involves the production of new materials with superior optical, electrical, magnetic and/or mechanical properties for such applications.

Coloradans cut their average workweek. For the two years following legalization, per capita spending in the low wage food and beverage industry expanded by 3.4 percent for the U.S., but almost double that for Colorado, at 6.7 percent. Additionally, between 2013 and 2017, the average hourly workweek fell by 3.9 percent for Colorado, but climbed by 1.5 percent for the U.S.

To support greater spending on food and beverages with fewer work hours and lower wage growth after the state legalized marijuana, per capita welfare benefits in Colorado climbed by almost 10 percent versus 7.8 percent for the U.S.

But Colorado's growth in tax revenues from the pot trade from \$52.6 million the year after legalization, to \$85.3 million in 2015, to \$120 million in 2016 is likely to encourage even more states, beyond the current eight, to make recreational use of cannabis lawful even with potentially mixed economic impacts.

## Prairie Companions

*Faculty, students study nature at 424-acre site northwest of Omaha*



“It's a regal frit,” exclaims biology professor Ted Burk, PhD, as he spies a flutter of orange blowing like a candy wrapper in a straightline wind.

Burk smiles, flips open a composition notebook he's carrying and pencils in the species name and a hashmark — one regal fritillary. He closes the book and moves on.

Since 1998, Burk has made this same circuit through the prairie at [▶](#)

Glacier Creek Preserve—a reclaimed tallgrass prairie northwest of Omaha—diligently documenting the butterfly population, once a week for 20 weeks each year.

Butterflies, Burk says, are a good species by which to take the measure of an ecosystem's health, and he's also been able to make a good study of the insects' prowess as pollinators.

"Conservation ecology of invertebrates has lagged behind plants and vertebrates, despite insects making up about 50 percent of any ecosystem," Burk says.

Emerging generations of Creighton biologists in several courses have found an alfresco classroom on the prairie, tracking over hills and dales, observing insects and plants on this 424-acre site surrounded by suburbs and agricultural land.

"It's nice to get out of the library every once in awhile, to come out here and take in this great place," says Adam Grazzini, a junior biology major whose research includes monitoring, collecting and studying the butterflies' favorite plants. "What a great resource for us to have."

On a good day, Burk and his students will encounter about 20 different species and 200 individual butterflies.

Burk says he hopes the experience on the prairie is an encouragement to students to immerse themselves in the world beyond their windows, to look upward and outward at the bounty and beauty of nature.



**EMERGING TALENT**

Thomas Wong, PhD, who joined Creighton this fall as an assistant professor of physics, was named an emerging talent by the *Journal of Physics A*. The collection recognizes outstanding early-career researchers in mathematical and theoretical physics. Wong leads the new quantum computing research area at Creighton.

"Life is so much more interesting when you look around," he says. "In that regard, this has been a great student project. A lot of our students are city kids who haven't spent a lot of time in nature and this builds their confidence in being in the field and taking part in a long-term project."

**Vigil Memorializes a 'Beautiful, Gentle Soul'**

"Here at this place, Creighton University, a place of religious perspective and faith, we have one another," said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, as more than 800 students, faculty and staff filled St. John's Church—to pray, to cry, to reflect and to remember.

Earlier in the day on Aug. 21, at the start of Welcome Week, news that four Creighton students had been involved in a four-vehicle crash along Interstate 80 shocked the campus. Three students were injured, and Joan Ocampo-Yambing, a sophomore computer science major from Rosemount, Minnesota, was killed.

"Joan was a beautiful, gentle soul," said HollyAnn Harris, PhD, associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and an advisor to Ocampo-Yambing. "She had a positive attitude and faced both good times and adversity with equal grace."

The four students had been traveling to get a better view of the total solar

eclipse that was making its way across Nebraska that day.

The three other students—Demetra Arvanitakis, a sophomore in the College of Nursing from Overland Park, Kansas; Madalene Steichen, a sophomore theology major from Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Will Tavis, a sophomore computer science major from Kirkwood, Missouri—were all taken to the hospital and eventually released. Kim Davlin, a 1990 Creighton occupational therapy graduate, who was in another car involved in the collision, also was hospitalized and later released.

**Remembering Two Trustees**

Creighton mourned the loss of two Omaha business leaders, philanthropists and longstanding members of its Board of Trustees with the deaths of William "Bill" Kizer, BUSADM'49, HON'96, and William "Bill" Fitzgerald, BSBA'59.

Fitzgerald, who died Sept. 1 at the age of 79, served on the Board for more than 40 years. He began his term in 1973 and oversaw several major expansions and enhancements on the Creighton campus. He served as Board chairman from 1999 to 2011 and was named chairman emeritus in 2013.

The former chairman and CEO of Commercial Federal Bank, Fitzgerald was inducted into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Omaha Business Hall of Fame in 2006. In the

# "It's kind of perfect for me"



With a record-setting 1,119 freshmen arriving on campus for the 2017 fall semester, Creighton eclipsed its previous high of 1,068 incoming students, set in 2015. Total enrollment for the 2017-2018 academic year reached 8,654—also an all-time record.

Creighton continues to embrace and thrive on diversity—and not just demographically, but intellectually and experientially, as well. Students come from all walks of life, bringing with them fresh, stimulating ideas to add to the already vibrant chorus on campus.

The newest crop of freshmen comes from states across the U.S., and well beyond. While a little more than a third come from less than 200 miles away, 20 percent had a decidedly longer trip to campus—more than 1,000 miles.

Freshman Giang "Emily" Pham, pausing here for a photo with Billy Bluejay amid August freshman orientation activities, has called Vietnam home for most of her life.

Why did she #ChooseCreighton? Quite simply, she says: "It's kind of perfect for me."

## CLASS OF 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

156

freshman students are the first generation in their family to attend college

256

have a legacy connection to Creighton, through close relatives who also attended the University

32%

of new students ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class and 100 graduated at either No. 1 or No. 2

more than 80%

of the class of 2021 volunteered during high school

3.83

median grade-point average

15

international students joined the class of 2021 from 9 other countries—representing Asia, Europe, the Middle East, South America and points in between—giving the class, and campus, a global flavor

27%

of the incoming class identify as students of color

100%

will receive a top-flight, Jesuit education in the Creighton tradition

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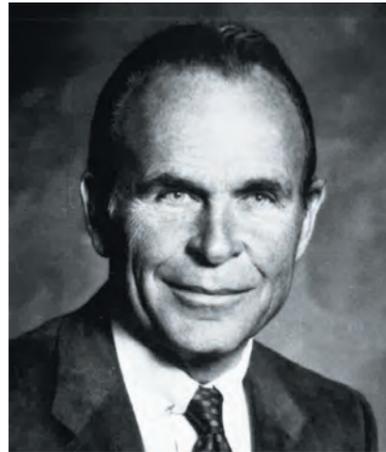
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© William "Bill" Fitzgerald, BSBA'59, left, and William "Bill" Kizer, BUSADM'49, HON'96, former members of Creighton's Board of Trustees, died Sept. 1 and Aug. 20, respectively.



community, he held leadership roles in more than 28 nonprofit organizations, leading fundraising efforts benefiting religious organizations, health care, elementary and secondary education, the arts and social services agencies.

Kizer, who died Aug. 20 at the age of 92, served on Creighton's Alumni Council beginning in 1961 and joined the Board of Trustees in 1974. When he stepped down from the Board in 1994, he was named director emeritus. Five of his nine children graduated from Creighton, including his son and current trustee, Dick Kizer, BSBA'71, JD'73.

Bill Kizer was past president and chairman of both Central States Health and Life Co. of Omaha, a company founded by his father, and Central States Indemnity, a company he co-founded that was acquired by Berkshire Hathaway Inc. in 1992. A pioneer in the field of wellness, Kizer was the founder and director of the Wellness Council of America. He received the Omaha Health Citizen of the Year award in 1985.

### Creighton to Launch New Physician Assistant Program

Creighton plans to offer a new, 28-month Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program beginning in August 2019, pending successful accreditation. Applications will be accepted starting in April 2018.

With the job market for physician assistants booming and demand looking only to strengthen, director Stephane VanderMeulen, an associate professor in the School of Medicine, says the new program comes to the right place, at the right time.

"At Creighton, you learn much more than just the practice of medicine," she says. "If you are driven by the call to serve others and to positively impact the lives of patients, our program will be a perfect fit."

#### HEALTH BRIEFS

## Is Coffee Bad for Your Bones?

"I wouldn't worry about it," Robert Recker, MD'63, director of Creighton's Osteoporosis Research Center, told *The New York Times*. Huge, national studies in different countries have found "no evidence of an increase of fractures due to coffee," said Recker, who holds the O'Brien Endowed Chair in Health Sciences.



© Chris Destache, PharmD, is conducting pioneering work using nanotechnology to treat HIV.

### HIV Research: Nano-Therapy, Big Results

Therapies for treating HIV have improved dramatically over the last 30 years. Patients who once needed to take three or four medications, up to five times daily, can now get the same effect through one pill, once daily.

But, even so, getting patients to consistently take their medication is one of the biggest challenges in HIV treatment, says Chris Destache, PharmD, professor of pharmacy practice. "For some people," Destache says, "drugs remind them they have HIV, and they get drug burnout. Plus, sometimes when taking the drugs, they just don't feel good."

Using nanotechnology for drug delivery may provide a solution. Through his patented formulation, Destache has been able to insert a combination of HIV-fighting drugs into a polymer, which, when injected into the body, breaks down slowly and releases medication gradually. As a treatment option, he says, it would require only one injection every month or so.

Destache also is researching nanotechnology as a way to deliver a gradual release of drugs for preventing HIV. The

hope is that patients could be injected with a drug-containing nanoparticle once a month instead of swallowing a daily pill. The National Institutes of Health awarded Destache a \$1.5 million grant to further investigate this approach.

### No Laughing Matter

Ruth Maher, PhD, is one of four original inventors of innovotherapy, a new, non-invasive treatment for pelvic-floor weakness — a condition that affects one in three women to some degree and results in intermittent urinary leakage, particularly when some women cough, sneeze, exercise or laugh. Maher also is a pioneer in using transabdominal ultrasound to teach students and patients about abdominal and pelvic-floor muscle movement in real time.

### New Sealant Strengthens Tooth Enamel

A Creighton chemistry professor and the dean of the School of Dentistry have collaborated with a dental products company to create a new sealant that helps protect teeth from decay.

The sealant, called BioCoat, which is used to seal pits and fissures, those small hollows and grooves found on the biting surfaces of back teeth, uses a remineralizing microcapsule called SmartCap, which Creighton developed in collaboration with Premier Dental Products Company.

Through this technology, microscopic capsules containing calcium and phosphate ions are placed into the dental sealant. When patients brush their teeth, the calcium and phosphate ions are released and combine with the fluoride to strengthen tooth enamel — a process known as remineralization.

"While fluoride has been long known to help reduce decay, fluoride is much more effective in healing teeth when calcium and phosphate ions are present near or on the tooth," says Stephen Gross, PhD, associate professor of chemistry, who, along with School of Dentistry Dean Mark Latta, DMD, and Premier Dental's William McHale, developed the new technology.

### Latest Buzz in Tracking Viruses

In the lifecycle of viruses, it's typically only the endgame that gets any attention: People become hosts to the virus, sicken and sometimes die. But the vectors — insects and other organisms — that spread viruses often live with these infectious agents for a much longer period than the final hosts, and are thus able to spread the virus farther and wider.

"A virus can live in a mosquito for much longer than it lives in a human being," says Carol Fassbinder-Orth, PhD, associate professor of biology specializing in avian immunology and zoonotic diseases. "If we're going to understand how outbreaks happen, we have to know more than just what happens in the end."

Fassbinder-Orth studies the life of viruses in vectors like mosquitoes — their genetics and structures — in the hopes of intercepting major outbreaks of insect-borne diseases. To escape detection in its host, a virus will delete a portion of its genetic code.

Creighton's RaD Lab collaborated with Fassbinder-Orth to develop a computer capable of sequencing whole genetic structures of viruses and comparing them to a base reference genome — essentially mining massive amounts of a genetic haystack to find a few critical needles.



# Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Oct. 31, 1517, an Augustinian monk and theology professor named Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, beginning an argument concerning practices in the Roman Catholic Church and touching off what became the Protestant Reformation.

*Creighton* magazine asked the **Rev. H. Ashley Hall, PhD**, an associate professor of theology at Creighton and ecumenical officer for the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and **Eileen Burke-Sullivan, STD, MChrSp'84**, a Catholic and Creighton's vice provost for Mission and Ministry, to talk about what commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation looks like, especially at Catholic Creighton, where the second-largest reported religious denomination is Lutheran.

**CREIGHTON MAGAZINE:** How is Creighton putting some of the principles of *From Conflict to Communion* (latest report from the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity) into practice on campus?

**AH:** We are hopeful we can do four ecumenical services this academic year at St. John's — two in the fall, two in the spring. We are trying as best we can to embody what church leaders on both sides agreed to in *From Conflict to Communion*. Sitting together, praying together, reading Scripture together is where we can find the common ground we share.

**EB-S:** We are restoring the opportunities on both sides to engage the Spirit and celebrate what we share. We may not be at a juncture where we're ready to share the Eucharist, but simply being with one another, we are in a position to understand one another.

**CREIGHTON MAGAZINE:** It seems the Catholic and Protestant traditions have benefited in different ways from a continued interest in the Reformation. With both claiming millennia of tradition, are there still ways the denominations are being "reformed"?

**EB-S:** I can't believe that God intended anything on this earth to be unchanging. We are living human beings. We experience constant

individual changes and the whole body of human beings changes. Change is a movement toward wisdom, insight, love and grace that God alone possesses. As human beings, we are constantly, I hope, changing toward that. We can either mark this date and be sad that we're not further along, or we can mark it with joy that we are still on the journey together.

**AH:** The Reformation is a story we tell together. Some people just hear about these ecumenical pronouncements and think, "Oh, it's just Pope Francis being liberal or the ELCA being liberal," and either overestimating or underestimating what's been accomplished. The real change taking place and that we can call attention to is that we can pray together, do service together and articulate common agreement on some core issues. We weren't able to do that in the 1950s and 1960s.

**CREIGHTON MAGAZINE:** What are the implications of this effort at ecumenism?

**EB-S:** We have bigger issues in this country and the world — racism, gender biases, other religious biases among people in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities. Work on this dialogue is critically important. If we can't harvest this fruit, how can we begin to solve the many other, bigger problems dividing our nation and our world? We're simply not as virulent toward one

another as we were 500 years ago. I think we've seen that there was right on all sides and wrong on all sides. We've been willing to adjure the wrongness and seek the rightness. We have been able to get into hard conversations and find ways in those conversations to get to the "and" of engaging the Spirit, rather than "either/or."

**AH:** I recently returned from the Luther Congress in Wittenberg, an academic and clerical conference attracting scholars from around the globe. The perspectives delivered in the seminar went toward the idea that to be Lutheran is to be ecumenical. The Lutheran church doesn't claim to be something separate or other-than, but claims that in its essence, it's part of the one true, catholic church. The other noteworthy trend in Luther scholarship is an emphasis on Luther and the continuity of tradition. That's not to say that Lutherans have been Roman Catholics all along, but it does cause us to question this certainty that we've drawn: that Luther started the Reformation as an alternative to being Catholic. I think now we're seeing Luther presented an alternative way of being Catholic.

# How to Go Green

BY AMANDA BRANDT, BA'14

What can we do to foster a more sustainable, cleaner, healthier world? We asked a few alumni and Creighton's new sustainability coordinator, all of whom are passionately involved in environmental issues – on the farm, on campus, in business – to share their best advice. *Here's what they told us.*

“

## PICK YOUR PASSION

CATHERINE QUEEN, BSEVS'10

Queen, a manager of sustainable development at DanoneWave, says finding your passion and focusing on that is the most authentic way to make a difference. Queen was named to the 2017 GreenBiz Global Top 30 Under 30 list for her work in corporate sustainability.

“If you're passionate about being outdoors, that is the only motivation you need to help the planet.”

“

## EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE

PARKER REVIER, BA'16

After graduating with a degree in sustainable energy, Revier returned to Olivia, Minnesota, to support sustainable farming practices at his family's cattle and crop operations.

“You can't fix a problem if you don't know it exists. For true change to happen, there has to be a policy change. And unless we change the way that we are thinking about the problem, there's not going to be that policy change.”

“

## RESEARCH YOUR PURCHASES

LT. CMDR. JEREME ALTENDORF, BS'97

A Reserve officer in the U.S. Coast Guard, Altendorf works on a variety of issues relating to the environment and sustainability. In 2010, he worked as the federal resource coordinator managing the Coast Guard's effort to clean up the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Altendorf previously worked for the Environmental Protection Agency.

He advises paying attention to what efforts companies are making in the area of sustainability.

“Do the research, and ask questions.” And, he says, focus on water and energy conservation and use, as well as consumer life cycle issues, such as how a product was manufactured, packaged, and how well it can be reused or recycled.

“

## SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT

BELYNA BENTLAGE

Bentlage is Creighton's full-time sustainability coordinator. A graduate of Loyola University Chicago, she says small steps and commitments to sustainability in a variety of areas can add up to a big impact.

“Sustainability touches all parts of life,” Bentlage says, “something you might not think about at first glance.” That can include buying local produce at a farmer's market (to reduce transportation distances and packaging); being aware of energy usage (and remembering to turn off screens); thinking before you print; and taking public transportation or walking/biking as much as possible.

“

## MAKING DECISIONS

STASHA THOMAS, BS'16

While taking energy science classes at Creighton, Thomas says she learned to think about projects in a holistic way, considering how they can impact people and the environment. Now, she's pursuing a Master of Architecture degree at Kansas State University, and aspires to become an architect who creates sustainably sourced and efficient spaces.

Thomas says living more sustainably takes a dedicated and diligent effort. It needs to be top-of-mind when making decisions. “Making conscious environmental decisions and passing the word on to others is what makes a difference.”



## How Creighton Goes Green

The *Princeton Review* has consistently recognized Creighton as a “Green College,” and the Arbor Day Foundation has recognized the University with nine straight Tree Campus USA designations. Here's a brief look at some of Creighton's sustainability efforts.

### PRINT WISE

Last academic year, thanks to more environmentally friendly printing processes, Creighton saved an estimated 5.3 million sheets of paper, 635 trees and more than 540,000 gallons of water — while realizing a nearly 60,000-pound reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

### NATIVE PLANTS

Creighton serves as a demonstration site for working with native plants through an affiliation with the Nebraska statewide arboretum.

### MAJOR FOCUS

One of the first Catholic universities to begin offering a degree program in environmental science more than 25 years ago, Creighton has since added degree programs in sustainable energy science and sustainability, both of which offer majors and minors.

### ENERGIPLANTS

Constructed by energy technology students in partnership with Omaha Public Power District, two campus sculptures harness wind and solar energy and serve as charging stations for students to power electronic devices.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

Since 2014, Creighton has been working with the local power company and two consulting companies on 10 energy conservation projects that are expected to save the University \$1.5 million annually starting in 2018.

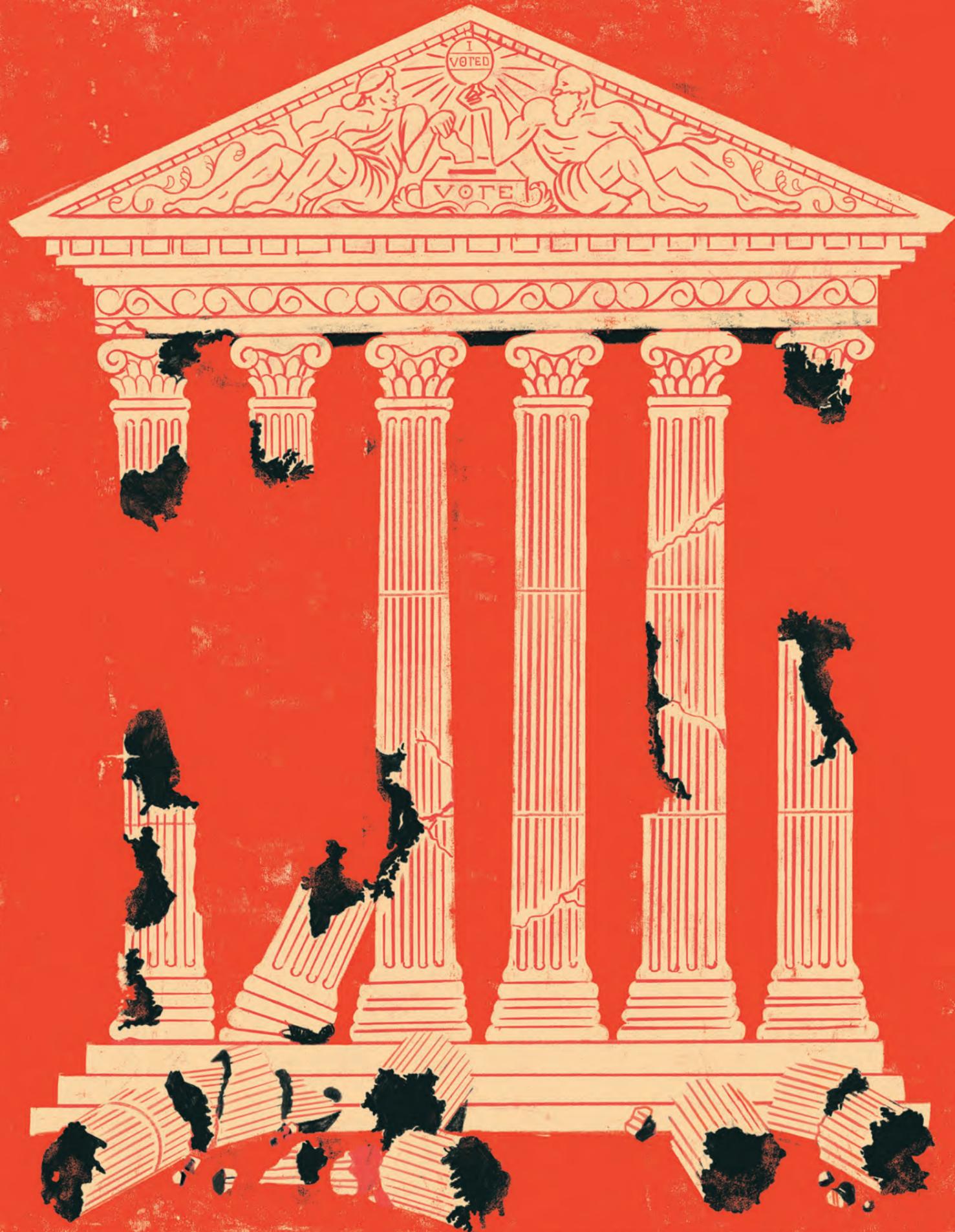
© Top: Biology professor John Schalles, PhD, meets with students in the Stuppy Greenhouse on campus. Bottom: Students get their bikes tuned up on the campus mall in October.



REFLECTIONS

## A Creighton Tradition

Dance professor and director **Patrick Roddy** works with **Emma Welsh**, left, and **Elise Beal** on the “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” for Creighton’s biennial production of *The Nutcracker*. Creighton has been performing the cherished Christmas tale since the 1960s.



# IS DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS?

BY Cindy Murphy McMahon, BA'74

**M**id-year in 2016, when many Americans were trying to cool off from summer's sizzle and election rhetoric was heating up, an event quietly rocked the world of many political scientists.

What could alter our understanding of human nature and government began with a simple hypothesis: The future of democracy may be in danger.

A study in the July 2016 *Journal of Democracy* cited many reasons that democracy—even in developed nations—is approaching a crisis point. The article cast doubt on the accepted theory that once democracies are firmly established, or “consolidated,” they can be presumed to be self-sustaining.

One of the political scientists who was alarmed by the study, as well as a subsequent article in the same journal by the same authors in January 2017, was Erika Moreno, PhD, associate professor of political science and international relations at Creighton.

“Democracy serves as one of the trusses of what political scientists study because, in

part the discipline developed here in the U.S., and the U.S. is one of the more established democracies in the world,” Moreno says. “So to talk about democratic deconsolidation in advanced democracies is a radical departure.

“It is kind of a given that in new democracies, in the third wave of democratization in the 1980s in Latin America, Africa and Asia, you have seen growing pains and you do see reversals, or deconsolidation,” she says. The study of how democracy functions for the average citizen, especially across Latin America, is Moreno’s area of expertise.

“But we have not spent time on deconsolidation in established democracies,” Moreno adds. “To look at Great Britain, for example, the progenitor of modern democratic institutions across the world, and say, ‘I don’t know, is it going to stay that way or not?’ is groundbreaking.”

Moreno thought the ideas deserved further analysis, so she brought them to the attention of her students in Comparative Politics, a largely sophomore-level class.

“So far, we had studied the United States as an established democracy, and the same for most of the countries in Europe, and here was

a study that was saying, ‘Hey, we need to be paying attention to some warning signs.’”

The first article, “The Danger of Deconsolidation,” authored by Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, cautions that just as social scientists, policymakers and journalists failed to read the signs of the times and recognize the impending collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s, there are signals being ignored today that liberal democracy is in danger.

World Values Surveys, which explore people’s beliefs and values in more than 100 countries, show that citizens in a number of consolidated democracies in North America and Western Europe are not only more critical of their leaders, but also are more cynical about democracy itself. They also are less hopeful that they can influence public policy and more willing to express support for authoritarianism.

These views vary by age groups. For example, 72 percent of Americans born before World War II gave a “10” on a scale of 1 to 10 to the statement that it is “essential” to live in a democracy. However, for the millennial generation, only about 30 percent gave the same importance to the statement. A similar pattern is noted across all major democracies, including Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand.

The authors state that not long ago, young people were more enthusiastic than older people about democratic values. In World Values Surveys done in 1981–1984 and 1990–1993, for example, young respondents were much keener than elders on protecting freedom of speech. Today, the roles have reversed.

There are many factors that seem to add fuel to the theories presented in the *Journal of Democracy*.

For one, the United States recently was downgraded from a full democracy to a flawed democracy by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU). The EIU’s annual Democracy Index scores nations in five areas: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Nations are then rated into four categories: full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime or authoritarian regime.

The U.S. score fell to 7.98 from 8.05 the year before, which is below the 8.0 required for a full democracy rating. The 2016 report, released in early 2017, cited Americans’ growing distrust in governmental institutions as a key factor



“There’s the feeling that democracy doesn’t work anymore, that it doesn’t solve our problems anymore. This tends to lead to the rise of populism.”

JAMES WUNSCH, PHD

Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization, says only 13 percent of the world’s population enjoys a free press, which it defines as “a media environment where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures.”

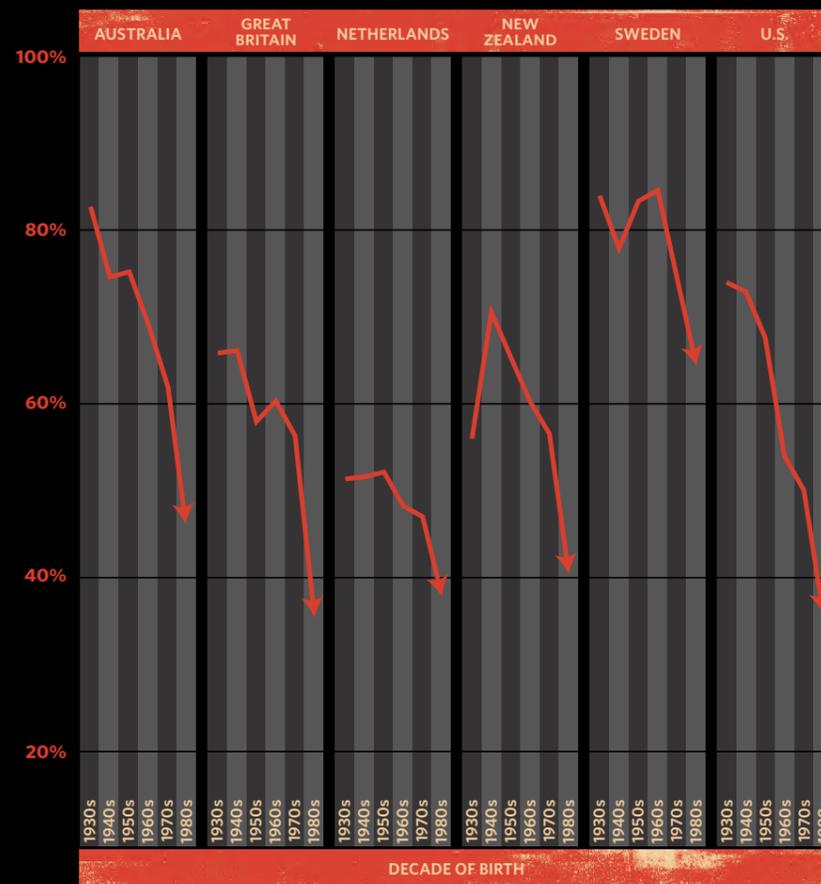
When people think of democracy, they often primarily think of free elections. But there’s actually more to it.

“What the journal articles brought out is how much more is involved in what we call liberal democracy than just elections,” says James Wunsch, PhD, the Rev. John P. Schlegel, SJ, Distinguished Professor of Politics and Government. Wunsch has taught political science at Creighton for more than 40 years, concentrating in comparative politics, public policy and political thought and development. He is particularly interested in global poverty and state performance, especially in Africa.

“There is the rule of law, which is critical; the distribution of powers, which can be done in various ways; respect for minority rights; a consensual process of making policies; respect for civil society and individual rights; a free media; and so on.

### IS IT ESSENTIAL TO LIVE IN A DEMOCRACY?

Data from European and World Values Surveys (2005–2007 and 2010–2014) show that the percentage of respondents saying it is “essential” to live in a democratically governed country is decreasing among younger people in most countries. (Data interpreted by Erika Moreno, PhD, Creighton University)



for the downgrade. Other flawed democracies with similar scores on the EIU index include Japan, France, Singapore, Israel, South Korea, Italy and India.

(The U.K., on the other hand, actually maintained its full democracy status, raising its score to 8.36 from 8.31 in 2015 because of increased political participation with the Brexit vote.)

Pew Research Center data show Americans’ lack of faith in government has been declining since the late 1950s. Only 20 percent of Americans in 2017 say they trust the government to do what is right “just about always” or “most of the time.”

When Pew began asking about trust in government in its National Election Study in 1958, about 75 percent of Americans voiced trust. The erosion began in the 1960s and continued through the 1970s, with some ups and downs the next two decades. Public trust

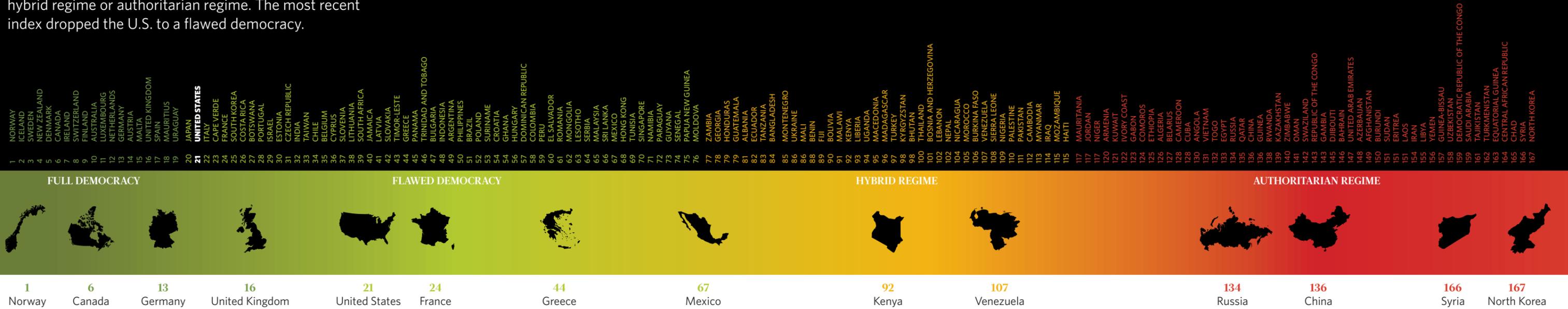
reached a three-decade high shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but declined quickly. Since 2007, Pew says the public’s reported trust in government in the “always” or “most of the time” categories has never topped 30 percent.

Another troubling 2017 Pew Research Center survey of adults in 18 Central and Eastern European countries showed only lukewarm support for democracy among both the young and the old. Among those under 40, 49 percent said democracy was preferable to other forms of government, while 44 percent of those 40 and older agreed.

Additionally, freedom of the press worldwide declined to its lowest point in 13 years in 2016, according to a 2017 report from Freedom House, with unprecedented threats to journalists and media outlets in major democracies and new attempts by authoritarian states to control the media, even beyond their borders.

# The Company We Keep

The Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) scores nations in five areas for its annual Democracy Index. The countries are then rated into four categories: full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime or authoritarian regime. The most recent index dropped the U.S. to a flawed democracy.



“So it takes a huge amount of things that come together to bring about a functioning democracy, and one of the biggest proponents of that, underlying all of this, is a support and belief among the public, largely unarticulated, that these sorts of institutions are the way we ought to govern ourselves.”

Confronting this broad, deeply held faith in these aspects of democratic governance today, Wunsch says, is public frustration.

“Frustration that is in some measure economic, following the events of the Great Recession, but in some measure more deeply rooted in the deindustrialization of the United States and other countries. There’s the feeling that democracy doesn’t work anymore, that it doesn’t solve our problems anymore. This tends to lead to the rise of populism.”

“We know that inequality has profound effects on a political system,” Moreno says. “A vibrant and strong middle class is essential to maintaining democracy.”

“Inequality erodes the middle class. It eats away at it and we have seen that in the developing world. When you see that yawning gap between rich and poor, that’s when you

begin to see an almost Darwinian struggle among groups within the same nation, which tends to tear at the fabric of the nation and make it difficult to conduct political discourse in a reasoned and civil tone.”

The national share of American adults in middle-income households decreased from 55 percent in 2000 to 51 percent in 2014, according to Pew data. At the same time, the share of adults in the upper-income tier increased from 17 percent to 20 percent, and the share of adults in the lower-income tier increased from 28 percent to 29 percent.

When Moreno initially presented the Foa and Mounk study to her students, she got a range of reactions.

“Some students were genuinely shook that young people (in the World Surveys) would be comfortable with a military government,” she says. “Many had questions about what the data mean, and some wisely wondered if this could be a fluke.”

A number of students presented research proposals to explore the theories in the study and several plan to carry out their research this academic year. One of those who took the subject to heart was Annie Fernandez

of St. Louis, a sophomore majoring in political science.

She was just a freshman in Moreno’s class when a general interest she had in politics became more intense. “The 2016 election started me thinking about the principles and institutions experts see as essential to democracy, and whether any of those were in real danger of deconsolidating.”

“To see this new research focusing on public opinion polls and people’s disaffection with democracy, their openness to alternative regimes and military rule, etc., was really striking.”

Fernandez says she and her classmates found it “pretty alarming and bothering” to think about a possible democratic backslide in countries that have for so long been thought of as some of the strongest democracies in the world.

“It is striking to think that some citizens might be losing faith in democracy and the institutions it is built on, instead of only being dissatisfied with the current government or the representatives in power.” The fact that younger people are especially dissatisfied, she says, simply could be because, “We tend

“Can we in the U.S. and in Western Europe look around and learn the lessons that other countries have had to learn the hard way, and apply them before it’s too late?”

ERIKA MORENO, PHD

to be a little more critical in general and don’t necessarily appreciate fundamental rights since we don’t know anything else and we take them for granted.”

So, this year, in her Research Methods course, Fernandez will take on a research project to delve further into whether democracies such as the U.S. and Great Britain are indeed in the early stages of democratic deconsolidation, combining both public opinion polls and expert assessments of democracy.

“I’m excited to see what the data say. It’s a new, pretty unexplored research question, so it will be exciting.”

The authors of the *Journal of Democracy* articles do offer some hope, saying, “Perhaps longstanding democracies have sufficient systemic resources to turn the growing anger of citizens into a force for democratic reform, as occurred in France under Charles de Gaulle or in the U.S. during the Progressive Era,” and conclude in their second article that the

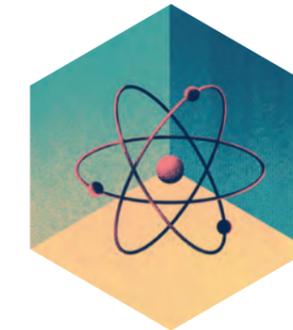
“survival of liberal democracy may now depend on the will of citizens to defend it effectively against attacks.”

Moreno and Wunsch both believe more research needs to be done to determine whether democratic deconsolidation is indeed happening in advanced countries, and they say there are fixes available if it is.

“One of the lessons is that these difficult, challenging problems, such as inequality for instance, are not unsolvable. You can enact a handful of policies that tend to undo inequality,” Moreno says. “Can we in the U.S. and in Western Europe look around and learn the lessons that other countries have had to learn the hard way, and apply them before it’s too late?”

“Everything is soluble,” says Wunsch, “there’s just a lack of political will. If we got government moving again on solving problems, that would solve a lot of the alienation.”

Wunsch also says he derives some hope from the next generation he sees in his classes. “Creighton students are fun to work with. There’s an intellectual curiosity and there’s a concern with social and world problems, and a desire to understand them and do something about them.”



# AN EQUATION FOR SUCCESS

\$10 million gift, plus outstanding science programs, equals infinite possibilities. **BY RICK DAVIS, BA'88**

**T**he memory is still fresh in Noah Yoshida's mind. He's a senior now, but at the time was only a sophomore. He had just started working in the biophysics laboratory of Patricia Soto, PhD, earlier that year, and now he was facing his fellow student lab partners — giving a presentation.

"I had to explain 13 different algorithms," he recalls today, a smile crossing his face. "That was a very stressful moment. I remember, at the end, the back of my shirt was just dripping in sweat because I was so nervous."

Fast-forward to February 2017: Yoshida was one of four students from Soto's lab presenting research posters at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society in New Orleans.

"We got to meet people interested in biophysics from around the world, and they wanted us to explain our research," Yoshida says.

This time, no sweat. Yoshida and two other classmates plan to attend the same meeting in San Francisco in February.

Now in his third year in the lab, Yoshida feels confident not only in his research abilities, but in pursuing the opportunities that lie ahead — which, for him, include medical school.

"This lab has given me an opportunity to expand on the knowledge I've gained in the classroom," he says. "I'll learn concepts in cell structure, and then I'll come to this lab and apply that in a real-world way.

"I feel like I can talk about this research both in scientific terms, and at a level that appeals to people who are not as familiar with science."

The latter includes his own family. His father and sister are musicians with the Omaha Symphony, and his mother, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico, is a Spanish translator at a local elementary school.

"I played jazz drums," says Yoshida, who graduated from Omaha Central High School. "But my passions really lie with trying to understand the basic sciences and wanting to help people."



© Patricia Soto, PhD, a Haddix President's Faculty Research Fund award recipient, works in her lab with Creighton senior Noah Yoshida.

GEOFF JOHNSON

“I’ve been on the faculty here for 21 years, and I’ve seen a lot of great things happen at Creighton, but to my mind, and I think many of my colleagues would agree, this is absolutely a transformational gift.”

BRIDGET KEEGAN, PHD,  
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

### STOKING THE PASSIONS OF SCIENCE

Stoking the passions of the next generation of Creighton scientists is one of the goals of a recent \$10 million gift by George Haddix, PhD, MA’66, and his wife, Susan, a member of Creighton’s Board of Trustees. It is the largest single gift to the College of Arts and Sciences, and enhancing research in the sciences is a primary focus.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean Bridget Keegan, PhD, is excited about the opportunities this gift will provide students like Yoshida and their faculty mentors.

“I’ve been on the faculty here for 21 years, and I’ve seen a lot of great things happen at Creighton, but to my mind, and I think many of my colleagues would agree, this is absolutely a transformational gift,” Dean Keegan says. “This is a gift that I think is going to make such a difference for our students in the years ahead.”

Adds Creighton’s president, the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ: “Susan and George’s generosity will not only impact generations of students in the College of Arts and Sciences, but it will

also build and enhance a legacy of faculty support George created many years ago, by giving our professors the resources to create new knowledge for our world, and enhance our preeminence in the country for providing research opportunities to undergraduates.”

Soto, a biophysics professor and researcher at Creighton for the last 10 years, believes the gift will further develop a “synergy of collaboration” that, to a great extent, is already happening among the various scientific disciplines at Creighton. For instance, Soto’s lab, which is strictly computational (using highly sophisticated computer modeling), is partnering with wet labs in medical microbiology to advance scientific discovery related to prion proteins.

Soto is a past recipient of grants provided through the Dr. George F. Haddix President’s Faculty Research Fund, which has awarded approximately \$660,000 in seed-funding to promising Creighton researchers.

George and Susan Haddix say they are proud of the results. Since the fund was established



## CORNERSTONE INITIATIVES

The \$10 million gift to Creighton from George Haddix, PhD, MA’66, and his wife, Susan, will be the cornerstone of four distinct academic initiatives in the College of Arts and Sciences:

✿ **The Haddix Faculty Innovation Fund.** Will include renovation and modernization of the 50-year-old Rigge Science Building and its laboratories.

✿ **The Haddix Faculty Research Incubator.** Will afford professors dedicated time to concentrate primarily on research, with fully funded sabbaticals awarded to top-tier faculty.

✿ **The Haddix 24th Street STEM Corridor.** Will fund scholarships and other opportunities for 10 top science students from Omaha North High School (George Haddix’s alma mater), Omaha South and Omaha Central annually, along with summer programming and workshops for students from these schools.

✿ **The Haddix Ignatian Advising Program.** Will support a unique and comprehensive approach to academic advising in the College of Arts and Sciences that affirms Creighton’s Jesuit mission.

in 2011, grant recipients have secured more than \$6 million in new additional funding for their research. The success of that fund, in part, encouraged the Haddixes in their \$10 million gift to the University.

“We look at these things as an investment, so you want to invest in something that is going to multiply,” George Haddix says.

Soto, a native of Colombia who also speaks to Latina high school students and encourages them to pursue opportunities in the sciences, received Haddix grants in 2012 and 2015 for her research into prion proteins. These abnormally folded proteins can lead to degenerative diseases such as Mad Cow disease in cattle, chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans. The

molecular mechanism studied in Soto’s lab also may offer insight into other disorders linked to similar protein-misshaping processes, such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases.

“We want to know what triggers this process, this misfolding of proteins,” Soto explains. “The outcome of our research, we hope, will lay the groundwork for the design of diagnostic tools and therapeutics to aid in targeting deadly prion diseases.”

### ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY

The Haddixes’ gift will fund four distinct academic initiatives in the College of Arts and Sciences (see box at left).

It will establish the Haddix Faculty Innovation Fund, which will help finance the

“This gives us a very special way to say we’re part of Omaha, that we impact the city of Omaha, we serve the city of Omaha. It’s part of who we are.”

REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ



## ABOUT THE DONORS

renovation and modernization of the Rigge Science Building laboratories; the Haddix Faculty Research Incubator; and the Haddix Ignatian Advising Program.

It also will extend Creighton's outstanding science programs into the community through the Haddix 24th Street STEM Corridor, which targets top students in the sciences from three local public high schools. STEM stands for "science, technology, engineering and mathematics."

"All parts of this gift are exciting to us," Fr. Hendrickson says. "But this gives us a very special way to say we're part of Omaha, that we impact the city of Omaha, we serve the city of Omaha. It's part of who we are."

Dean Keegan is equally excited about the Haddix Ignatian Advising Program, a project she described as "near and dear" to her heart, which will touch all students in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Student advising at Creighton, she says, is reflective of the Jesuit tradition and involves not only helping students find an academic or career path, but emphasizes care of the whole person and reflecting on one's higher purpose.

"With this gift, we're really going to be able to think about that mentoring process in a comprehensive, four-year developmental way," says Keegan, which could include expanded advising programming.

In addition to the \$10 million gift, the Haddixes previously established the Center for Mathematics of Uncertainty (Fuzzy Math) at Creighton and funded the Omaha North High School Scholarship Program, which supports four students annually at the University.

"Most of the kids from North High have been first-generation college students," says Fr. Hendrickson. "They are amazing kids doing wonderful work. To see more of that, I can't imagine anything better."



KENT SIEVERS / OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

George and Susan Haddix of Omaha are generous philanthropists and ardent supporters of Creighton University. George grew up in Omaha and graduated in 1957 from Omaha North High School, the same alma mater as his first wife, Sally, who died in 2008. George and Susan, introduced by a mutual friend, were married three years ago.

Susan has been an active volunteer in the Omaha community, with a particular passion for foster care and education. "Education, for me, is the best thing to give to this community to change lives," she says. Susan is a member of the Creighton Board of Trustees.

George earned a master's degree in mathematics from Creighton in 1966 while working for the Army Corps of Engineers, and taught math at Creighton from 1969 to 1971. "For two and a half years, I was on the faculty at Creighton," he says. "I loved it. I was also doing consulting work, and the tail started wagging the dog."

He formed his own consulting company, building mathematical models for everything from "water to garbage systems." He served as chairman, CEO and president of Applied Communications and president and CEO of U.S. West Network Systems Inc. before cofounding software services companies CSG Holdings and CSG Systems in 1994. He retired after serving as president and CEO of PKWARE Holdings and PKWARE. George was named to the Omaha Business Hall of Fame in 2011 and is a Creighton trustee emeritus. He also received the 2016 Alumni Achievement Citation, the highest all-University award given to Creighton alumni.

© George and Susan Haddix discuss the importance of supporting STEM education and research and how they hope their gift will provide opportunities for current and future students.

## SCIENCE RESEARCH AT CREIGHTON: PATHWAYS TO DISCOVERY

Haddix gift will impact generations of students in the College of Arts and Sciences

BY RICK DAVIS, BA'88

**G**eorge and Susan Haddix's \$10 million gift to the College of Arts and Sciences continues a legacy of giving to science research. In 2011, the Dr. George F. Haddix President's Faculty Research Fund was established, providing seed-funding for promising Creighton researchers. For four consecutive years, Creighton has been honored by *U.S. News & World Report* for undergraduate research opportunities. *Creighton* magazine talked to a few Haddix grant recipients, and selected students, about their research and the recent \$10 million gift.

### STUDYING LEAD EXPOSURE IN CHILDREN

Maya Khanna, PhD, professor and associate chair of psychology, received a Haddix grant in 2014 that funded a yearlong study on the effects of game-like online cognitive intervention programs in improving the cognitive performance and executive function in local children (ages 6-12) who had potentially been exposed to lead. Khanna and psychology colleague Amy Badura Brack, PhD, are currently among a group of researchers from Nebraska, New Mexico and Louisiana conducting a study involving state-of-the-art neuroimaging to examine the developing brains of children ages 9 to 15 through a four-year, \$6 million National Science Foundation grant awarded in 2015. A subset of this research will be the first study of brain function and development in children exposed to lead, Khanna says. "This would help address the question: Does early lead exposure have detrimental effects early on, even when the exposure is happening, not just after the fact?"

**Aziza Siddiqui**, senior psychology and German major from San Jose, California, on working with a faculty mentor: "You see their passion, and it ignites your passion." Siddiqui, whose father is from India and mother is from Germany, is currently working on a study with Dr. Khanna on cognition, memory, and word and color associations.

**Krystal Hopkins**, a senior nursing major from Council Bluffs, Iowa, on working with Khanna: "She has been wonderful. She's always available for questions. She also is great at making sure we have other opportunities for research." Hopkins is currently working on another study with Khanna, partially funded by NASA, in which psychology and exercise science students are collaborating with faculty members to study the relationship between exercise, cognition and verbal processing.

**Khanna** on the Haddix gift: "I think the benefit of this gift is in its trajectory, not just its immediate impact. In that, what will happen is Creighton will have more people conducting the initial seed-grant type of activities, getting pilot data. And then having that data, they will have the confidence to apply for larger national grants. So I think the impact of this gift will just grow."

### SNAIL PARASITES AS ENVIRONMENTAL BAROMETERS

The Rev. John Shea, SJ, assistant professor of biology, received a Haddix grant in 2015, along with Rebecca Gasper, PhD, assistant professor of mathematics, to study snail parasites as indicators of ecosystem health. "The idea is that these parasites have complicated life cycles

that involve multiple hosts,” Fr. Shea says. “So a diverse assemblage of these particular parasites indicates a healthy functioning ecosystem.” The study was conducted on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and involved students from Creighton and Red Cloud High School.

**Elizabeth Aulner**, a senior biology major from Dimock, South Dakota (population, 125): “One of the great things about Creighton is there are a lot of undergraduate research opportunities. You can approach professors and ask them about their work. And if there is a research opening, you can often set that up directly through the professor.” Aulner, a first-generation college student whose mother is a mail carrier and father is a mechanic, entered Creighton after

finishing high school in three years. Inspired by her involvement in Creighton’s ILAC program in the Dominican Republic, Aulner plans to pursue a master’s degree in public health and work in the southern United States or the Caribbean.

**Fr. Shea** on the Haddix gift: “I’m excited about the STEM corridor program. I think getting under-represented high school students involved in STEM research and programming is good not only for those students, but for Creighton and for furthering our Jesuit mission.”

#### LOOKING FOR A QUICK REACTION

Kayode Oshin, PhD, assistant professor of inorganic chemistry, received a Haddix grant this past spring to study, with his students,

new compounds (catalysts) that could be used to accelerate chemical reactions. “We make compounds that other chemists could use, and we try to make them more efficiently than other methods,” Oshin explains. “These compounds may be used, for example, for propellants or fire extinguishers.”

**Oshin** on the Haddix gift: “I think it’s a big deal. Really, from my perspective, we’re trying to see how we can get more students in the lab to participate in research, and this donation will allow us to do just that.”

© From left, Maya Khanna, PhD, works with students Emma Munger, Alec Harrington and Krystal Hopkins on a study of the relationship between exercise, cognition and verbal processing.



## ‘MORE THAN I THOUGHT WAS POSSIBLE’

Haddix scholar Tristin Taylor looks to pay it forward

BY GLENN ANTONUCCI



© Omaha North High School graduate and current Creighton student Tristin Taylor reunites with Christopher Wiley, ARTS’75, who suggested Taylor consider Creighton.

**T**ristin Taylor never dreamed he’d wind up at Creighton.

Truth be told, the University wasn’t even on his radar. Not for the vast majority of his youth, despite spending most of it in the Omaha area.

That changed toward the end of his education at Omaha North High School.

Carrying a high grade-point average, with a classload heavy in advanced placement courses and an active extracurricular life steeped in football, Taylor got the attention of Christopher Wiley, ARTS’75, a guidance counselor at North.

“He was an outstanding young man,” Wiley says. “Just waiting for someone to help put things together for him.”

Wiley opened Taylor’s eyes not just to the prospect of attending Creighton — his alma mater — but also pushed the idea of taking an uncommon route to the venerable Jesuit university.

Namely, the Omaha North High School Scholarship Program, funded by the Haddix Foundation. Through the program, scholarships are awarded each year to a select few North High graduates.

Taylor says he went along with the idea, but he didn’t really know what to make of it. He couldn’t quite grasp attending school at a place like Creighton. It was a journey he hadn’t imagined for himself. Among his friends and teammates who were considering college, Creighton simply wasn’t in downfield view.

But gradually, the idea of aiming for Creighton — on a full ride, no less — began to take hold.

He started talking to his father about it. A career Air Force man, the elder Taylor took a practical stance on the matter.

You have to consider it, he told his son. Especially if it’s going to be paid for.

His girlfriend’s older brother concurred. “If you can get the Haddix,” he said, “go for it.”

Go for it, he did. With encouragement from Wiley, Taylor gained acceptance to Creighton and earned one of the coveted Haddix scholarships.

He remembers when he received the double good news in the mail. His mother — also an Air Force veteran — “was ecstatic,” he says.

It wasn’t a particularly smooth transition to Creighton’s campus for Taylor, however. During his first two weeks, he wondered if he’d ever fit in. Faculty members were accommodating, he says, but doubt had crept in.

“I thought, ‘This is way different from North,’” he says. “I don’t know if I’m comfortable here.”

Soon, however, he got to know some of the other freshmen on his floor in Gallagher Hall. “Motivated friends,” he calls them, pursuing big goals. A different landscape than that from which he’d come.

He then joined a fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. “That extended my group of friends a lot,” Taylor says.

And they were motivated, too.

“They embodied everything I wanted to be,” he says. “They were going to be investment bankers, things like that. They rub off on you. They pushed me to consider grad school, pushed me to achieve more than I thought was possible.”

And that, he says, was all made possible because someone believed in him.

“For the Haddixes to devote this much of their resources to me, it’s meant a lot,” Taylor says. “Someone invested in me. That’s something I can’t waste. And it’s made me think more highly of myself.”

Now a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, studying economics and pre-law, Taylor has some advice for the Haddix scholars who will follow in his footsteps.

“Take advantage of the opportunity,” he says. “You don’t realize it right now, but this gift means somebody believes in you. And it will make you aim higher than you did before.”

Taylor’s aim is to attend law school, become a corporate attorney and, eventually, set up a practice in Omaha to provide legal help in the North Omaha community.

“I look at George Haddix, and I think, ‘I can’t wait to be where you’re at.’ I think that’s kind of his goal, too. To pay it forward.”



# The Last Frontier

Through twists and turns, a Creighton alumna falls in love with Homer, Alaska, and a unique form of therapy.

BY EMILY RUST | PHOTOS BY DAVE WEAVER

**THE "ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM"** was a massive steel aerial rig. And there was the book: *The Aerial Circus Training and Safety Manual*.

Melissa Gagnon, OTD'13, had moved into a cabin in Homer, Alaska, with a friend, and the rig was there, in the living room — intriguing and inviting.

She began practicing with it, every day, following along with photos from the book. She eventually got good — carefully contorting her body on the rig's trapeze bar, her flips and spins mimicking those of the otters she watched from her cabin window. She taught herself moves with names such as "bird's nest" and "gazelle."

This wasn't your traditional circus trapeze, upon which a performer flies through the air. This static trapeze hangs about four feet off the ground, attached to the steel rigging, allowing for a variety of acrobatic moves.

After time, all the flipping, twisting and contorting became Gagnon's life's work and an effective therapy tool for children visiting her occupational therapy clinic in Homer — aptly named Cirque Therapy.

There, Gagnon has her own steel rig, but now she teaches children the secrets behind aerial acrobatics using a trapeze and a long piece of fabric called a silk, all while improving her patients' spatial awareness, social skills and quality of life.

It's not an ordinary approach to pediatric occupational therapy, but nothing about Gagnon's life has ever been ordinary.

A native of New Jersey, Gagnon lived in Philadelphia, Orlando, Florida, and Miami, before buying a bus ticket as far west as her last few dollars would take her — Reno, Nevada.

Eager to relocate, Gagnon, with \$10 in her pocket, hitchhiked from Reno to work on a sustainable farm in a small Russian village

on the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska, relying on the kindness of strangers who took her from the deserts of Nevada, through the Canadian Rockies until she reached the Last Frontier.

"Money is not going to stop me from doing something," Gagnon says.

She only intended to stay in Alaska for the summer months, but 13 years later, the once nomad has settled here.

With the shortened Alaskan winter days — when sunlight can be fleeting — Gagnon enrolled in courses at a satellite campus of the University of Alaska Anchorage as a way to keep busy. She mainly stayed in Homer, earning a degree in biological sciences. A few courses required her to move to Fairbanks with her then-infant daughter Zayda, where she lived in a house in which a trek to the bathroom meant going outside in minus-65 degree weather.

"If you don't have an outhouse in Fairbanks, you don't see the Northern Lights," Gagnon says.

Realizing many of her co-workers on the

sustainable farm had science degrees and were only earning \$12 per hour, she knew she needed more education.

A frequent traveler, Gagnon had met a German couple while visiting Laos who were both occupational therapists, a profession she had always considered.

"They were like, 'You should do it,'" Gagnon says. "'We love our jobs, it's satisfying.' They totally sold me on it."

As she finished her undergraduate degree in Fairbanks, she volunteered at an occupational therapy clinic in town, remembering her German friends. A co-worker mentioned a new occupational therapy program administered by Creighton University at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

"There are so many scientists fighting for jobs in Alaska," Gagnon says. "Occupational therapy is the complete opposite. There are so many jobs and so few occupational therapists. So it made a lot of sense."



© Melissa Gagnon, OTD'13, stands on Skyline Drive, overlooking the town of Homer, Alaska, her home for the last 13 years.

© Fresh salmon is filleted on the Homer Spit, a strip of land jutting out into the Kachemak Bay. Commercial fishing boats, water taxis and private motor vessels all dock at the Spit's harbor.



## FORGING A PATHWAY

**MEANWHILE, CREIGHTON LEADERS** had come to the same realization about the state of occupational therapy in Alaska a few years earlier. Al Bracciano, EdD, an occupational therapy professor at Creighton, was an early proponent of the Alaska program.

"Our primary goal is to provide occupational therapists who stay and practice in Alaska," Bracciano says.

In 2008, Creighton established the Alaska Pathway Program, the first occupational therapy program in Alaska. It was designed for Alaska residents to study occupational therapy and eventually work in their home state — where there was a dire need for therapists.

Before, Alaska residents wanting to study occupational therapy had to leave the state and move far away.

"There was hardship on the student, hardship on the family," Bracciano says. "What usually happens is where you do clinical rotations, internships, that's where therapists will stay."

Without these rotations happening in Alaska, there were not near the number of therapists in the state to fill the need. And those who were there were aging quickly — 42 percent of therapists in Alaska are 45 or older.

"Alaska was the one state that did not have an occupational therapy program," Bracciano says. "The national professional occupational therapy organization, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), knew there was a need. Nobody would take a risk to do it. Creighton was really progressive."

Five to 12 students — each of whom must be a resident of Alaska — are accepted annually into the program, which features both online classes and on-campus professors in Anchorage. Each year, members of Creighton's Omaha-based faculty travel to Anchorage for Welcome Week and other events, and many Alaska students travel to Omaha for graduation.

"I didn't want to leave my house and my family," Gagnon says. "We are so lucky that the Creighton program did develop here."

**"Alaska was the one state that did not have an occupational therapy program. The American Occupational Therapy Association knew there was a need. Nobody would take a risk to do it. Creighton was really progressive."**

AL BRACCIANO, EdD

## LIFE IN ALASKA

**HOMER RESIDENTS ARE RUGGEDLY** independent yet quick to come to a neighbor's aid.

"You can't afford to not help someone with a flat tire, because one day, that'll be you," says Dylan Smith, a native of Homer and one of Gagnon's friends. "I can't leave someone to the elements. With a greater population density, you think someone else can help them. Here, someone else might not come along."

And along Alaska Route 1, which ends in Homer, that someone might indeed not come along. It's where the land ends and the sea begins.

Alaska Route 1 starts in Tok, weaving through Anchorage and down through the Kenai Peninsula until it blends into the Kachemak Bay at the end of a long strip of land called the Homer Spit. Snow-capped mountains, dotted with glaciers, line the coast, a natural beauty that continues to draw inspired artists. The town of 5,515 is known both for its commercial fishing industry and arts scene.

Like a lot of Alaska residents, the townspeople in Homer have a hardy self-sufficiency. There is a general "distrust of 'The Man,'" particularly when it comes to traditional medicine, Smith says.

Once, the highway into town was just a single-lane dirt road, but as word traveled of easy money from halibut and salmon fishing, the town grew.

Hippies and artists also flocked to Homer, delighting in its natural beauty. It is also the hometown of Jewel, the Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter.

It's the perfect place for a unique form of therapy.

"In Alaska, we have a lot of people who are very alternative and very hesitant about engaging in medical care," Gagnon says. "Before I opened my clinic, the only place for pediatric occupational therapy was at the hospital in Homer. There's a wait list and a lot of parents said, 'I don't want to take my kid to the hospital.'"

## CIRQUE THERAPY

**SO GAGNON COMBINED** the artistic, holistic spirit of her town with clinical treatments that have proven to be successful. It might look like her therapy is more play than work, but she has found a way to tap into these children's lives.

Consider Ryan, an 11-year-old, who Gagnon puts on the trapeze. A little wobbly, Ryan looks



© Kelsey, a 5-year-old patient, practices fine motor skills by pouring water as Gagnon looks on.

© Gagnon holds Ryan, an 11-year-old patient, in the acrobalance "throne" position to work on his lateral stability.



nervous as he balances himself on the bar. After a misstep, Ryan falls down on the mat below.

"Well, that is not the preferred exit," Gagnon says. "Don't forget, I can always do it after tons of tries," Ryan says.

After a successful "bird's nest" (a trapeze move), Ryan has earned a game of foosball, something Gagnon uses to motivate her patients.

"They will do things they hate just to do foosball," Gagnon says. "I really want everybody to enjoy what they're doing, but I have to challenge them all the time."

Gagnon sees about 25 patients from one to three times a week. She works with patients ages 2 to 19, and with a contractor for any infants. Homer's service area is about 40 miles or 13,000 people, so some patients travel an hour for sessions. Her patients have often been diagnosed with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and fetal alcohol syndrome.

Ryan may have fetal alcohol syndrome, Gagnon says, but the disease is difficult to diagnose. A lot is unknown of the trauma he experienced in the womb, but Gagnon says his birth mother consumed various drugs and alcohol while pregnant. Alcohol abuse is a major problem across Alaska.

Exposure to these adverse child experiences, or ACES, has a great impact on a person's life.

"Some days he's thriving and doing so well," Gagnon says. "Some days, he has serious regression and he's at a developmental level at [age] 8 or so.

"He doesn't have a lot of confidence, which is a very common thing in children, especially in my patients. They've struggled through life and they want to avoid those struggles."

For families in Homer, there wasn't always a ready solution for children who were in need of occupational therapy. One reason was because medical clinics in town were not sure how to help, until Gagnon took it upon herself to educate those health care providers.

"When I did talk to them, they said, 'Great, because we didn't know who to send these kids to before. We didn't know what to do for them before,'" Gagnon says.

With new Medicaid laws in Alaska, parents no longer need referrals from a doctor to come to Gagnon's clinic. Almost all of her clients are on Medicaid.

"Previously, parents would try to get a referral, and there's a wait list just to see the doctor," Gagnon says.

Now, Gagnon is able to focus on outreach and community education, directly presenting her practice to parents.



© Melissa and Mark Gagnon perform acrobalance onstage at Alice's Champagne Palace during the First Wednesday Spectacle, a kind of talent show for Homer residents.

One educational seminar helped Izzy Scott realize her daughter Kelsey needed Gagnon's help.

"She was hitting buttons with Kelsey that we were recognizing," Scott says.

Kelsey, 5, may have autism, but has not been officially diagnosed. In her six months with Gagnon, she has worked on sensory processing with activities like cutting with scissors and pouring water.

When Kelsey went on a two-week vacation in Oregon with her family, her progress with occupational therapy did not pause, thanks to an activity kit Gagnon prepared.

"She goes above and beyond helping the kids as much as she can," Scott says.

After just three months of working with Gagnon, Kelsey showed more confidence. At a local McDonald's PlayPlace, for the first time, Kelsey went up the stairs and started climbing around. Before, she wouldn't play at all.

"I don't know what we would do without Melissa," Scott says.

Gagnon says her practice is one of only three in the U.S. that combines circus arts and therapy. During her professional rotations, Gagnon studied with licensed clinical social worker Carrie Heller, the author of *The Aerial Circus Training and Safety Manual* (the same

book Gagnon had found in her cabin) and founder of the Circus Arts Institute in Atlanta.

"Children tend to respond better to movement and play than just talking," Heller says of her practice.

Gagnon remembers, during one rotation, working with a patient who was no longer able to participate in gym class because of a lack of "body awareness." The patient's academic performance was correspondingly plummeting.

"Once I got her on the trapeze, she started building up a lot of awareness," Gagnon says. "It was just awesome. She's now in gym class; she's thriving."

## A TOWN SPECTACLE

**GAGNON'S LOVE FOR THE CIRCUS** extends beyond her clinic, into all aspects of her life. On the first Wednesday of every month, Gagnon and her husband, Mark, perform "acrobalance" at Alice's Champagne Palace, one of Homer's oldest bars.

Around 60 Homer residents gather for the First Wednesday Spectacle. It's an eclectic assembly of people who sign up to do "weird human tricks," Mark says, as he and his wife waited to perform this past August.

Singers, comedians and even a fisherman reciting rhyming poetry take the stage this

particular night. Melissa and Mark are the final act. Mark lifts Melissa on his feet, her entire body-weight balanced carefully. Their performance is a little comedic. Falls are scripted. Mark shows off his muscles, and the audience loves it all.

"She's really passionate about circus arts," says Gagnon's friend Dylan Smith. "That's the dream, to combine two of your passions, right? And to help people."

Melissa and Mark return to their table, where their daughter Zayda, now 9, has been watching patiently. Zayda is part of the next generation of circus performers, having started on the trapeze at age 4.

The next morning Gagnon is back at Cirque Therapy, the giant steel rig waiting for the next patient. It's no longer the elephant in the room; it's as important to her practice as her Cirque Therapy is to the town of Homer.

"It's a little more rough and tumble," Smith says. "A little more Alaskan."

# A SHINING LIGHT



A Creighton professor and professor emerita work on canonization efforts for Boys Town founder Fr. Flanagan

BY Adam Klinker

Only a select few will see the biography Creighton professor Heather Fryer, PhD, spent three years quietly researching and writing on the Rev. Edward J. Flanagan, the Roman Catholic priest who began the Boys Town mission in 1917, ministering to unemployed men and wayward boys in the streets of downtown Omaha.

Fryer's biography — which looks to separate the man from the myth — is a key element in the long and arduous process of Fr. Flanagan's candidacy for sainthood.

"It's a very interesting way of doing historical research and writing, one that I've never experienced before," says Fryer, who served on the Historical Commission for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Father Edward J. Flanagan.

"But it was a way of helping the (Vatican) Tribunal take its own measure of the man. It's a history absent interpretation. It does not argue anything, which is not how a historian is trained. But it delves way more deeply into the details of the life and influence of one fascinating person than most projects allow."

While working on a separate project involving Fr. Flanagan, one looking into the assistance he provided to Japanese-Americans during World War II, Fryer became intrigued with Fr. Flanagan's life and his larger-than-life persona. In 2012, when the Father Flanagan League called asking if Fryer would lend her academic expertise to their push for the canonization of Fr. Flanagan, she jumped at the chance.

To begin building the sainthood case, the league needed — along with prayers and what is called a groundswell of devotion — an exhaustive recapitulation of Fr. Flanagan's life.

At the same time, another Creighton faculty member, Sister Joan Mueller, OSC, PhD, in the Department of Theology, was assigned by the archbishop to chair the Theological Commission, whose charge was to comb through Fr. Flanagan's writings and homilies, making sure the theological underpinnings of his life and mission were compliant with Church teaching.

"Our job was an interesting one," says Sr. Mueller, now a professor emerita. "Fr. Flanagan was a unique individual, especially for his time. A very progressive figure. Our job was to find out whether that progressiveness had theological grounding and discernment. Was his work coherent with the teachings of the Church? Did his lived example, as well as his words and writings, signal a faithful, priestly and moral life?"

Along with Fryer's historical biography, the work of the Theological Commission also was forwarded to Rome, where the final decision rests with the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints and, ultimately, the pope.

Working from a voluminous archive at Boys Town, Fryer began the process of recreating Fr. Flanagan's life in as granular detail as possible, while also putting into context the times in which he lived.

Living and working in the early 20th century, Fr. Flanagan became a trendsetter in more ways

than one, says Tom Lynch, Boys Town's director of community programs, who oversees the archives. He revolutionized the way much of society viewed children and, when his method of bringing together boys of different races, ethnicities and religions chafed some people in Omaha, he moved his mission out into the countryside west of the city, where it sits to this day, although the city has grown around it.

"The prevailing idea of the time was eugenics," Lynch says, citing the pseudoscience that gave rise to various 20th century efforts at ethnic cleansing. "That and the Edwardian era notion that you could beat the devil out of a child were the basic ideas around how to deal with children who might not have had the proper parental guidance.

"Boys Town is a direct rejection of those ideas and Fr. Flanagan made it clear, going around the U.S., that he rejected those ideas that were the mainstream philosophies of the time. And for the most part, he succeeded. We have the documents that show how he went about imploring people around the world to do this work, too."

**"He discerned where God needed him and he offered himself to be in the right place and the right time always. That's grace. That is extraordinary virtue."**

SR. JOAN MUELLER, OSC, PHD

Fairmont, Minn., November 20<sup>th</sup> 1922

Mr. Laurina Madison,  
Fox Lake, Minn.

Dear Mrs. Madison,

Your kind letter and beautiful song received here Saturday, and I hasten to thank you most sincerely for your interest in my little boys, and the cause I represent.

The song is beautiful, and will be greatly appreciated by the boys. If you run across any nice sympathetic song on Homeless Boys, which would fit into our program, I would greatly appreciate it. You might write me at Omaha, Nebraska, if you would find any.

Thanking you again, I remain,  
Yours most respectfully,  
Rev. E. J. Flanagan.

Having all these documents — some 3 million papers and half a million photographs — identified, organized and accessible in Boys Town's Hall of History, a museum in the heart of the community, put the Fr. Flanagan canonization campaign decades ahead of many similar efforts.

"When I got here, 30 years ago, we were looking at just stacks and stacks of paper on tables," Lynch says. "Our task at the Hall of History for 30 years has been to organize and categorize that information, and we've formed dossiers that deal with Fr. Flanagan's life, day-to-day, what he did, where he went, whom he met.

"When the causes postulator visited Boys Town as part of the process, he toured the Hall of History and reviewed the archives and said we'd already cut 25 to 30 years off the process."

Given Fr. Flanagan's stature, especially in the Omaha area, Fryer says the life sometimes conflates into well-meaning but erroneous superlatives. For instance, it's sometimes said the priest was the only person in the U.S. to reach out to Japanese-Americans being interned during World War II.

"A mythology builds up around people and you hear a lot of 'first and only,'" says Fryer, an expert in 20th century social history. "Fr. Flanagan did do a lot for Japanese-American internees, but he was not the only person who reached out a hand to internees. What my job was, I found, was to lay out the complete, precise historical picture of the man and his achievements so that the members of the Vatican Tribunal could see them as clearly as possible."

Sr. Mueller and the Theological Commission encountered similar conversations related to Fr. Flanagan's celebrity and its role in his larger mission.

"One obvious question is whether Fr. Flanagan moved in the secular forum for God or for publicity," Sr. Mueller says. "After all, Fr. Flanagan was a priest, first and foremost. But what we found, time after time, is that he used his position to advance the mission at every turn. He answered the letters regular people wrote to him; he took the time. He rescued each individual child; he took the time. He discerned where God needed him and he offered himself to be in the right place and the right time always. That's grace. That is extraordinary virtue."

Fr. Flanagan was one of the most recognized people of his day, Lynch says. Even before the film *Boys Town*, for which Spencer Tracy earned an Academy Award for his portrayal of the priest, Fr. Flanagan was often mobbed by crowds and inundated by letter-writers.

"And he would minister to them," Lynch says. "He was constantly talking to people. Anyone who wrote him a letter, he wrote a response. And it wasn't all about Boys Town. People wrote to him asking for advice on their marriage, about faith. There are letters from people during World War II, asking about how they should deal with anger and hatred toward the enemy. He sat down and he wrote these people earnest reflections as part of his larger calling."

The responses sent by Fr. Flanagan, Sr. Mueller says, demonstrate the overwhelming concern he expressed for humanity.

"That kind of letter writing is a charity," she says. "It's what you do for people with pastoral needs. It's quite amazing. He used his time in every conceivable way to minister and be of service."

Lynch says the priest's last days in 1948, spent on a mission President Harry Truman asked him to undertake to report on the condition of children in war-ravaged Europe and Asia, is a microcosm of Fr. Flanagan's life. During that mission, Fr. Flanagan was called to Rome to help Pope Pius XII with a concordat with the Church in Austria, re-establishing relations in the aftermath of World War II.

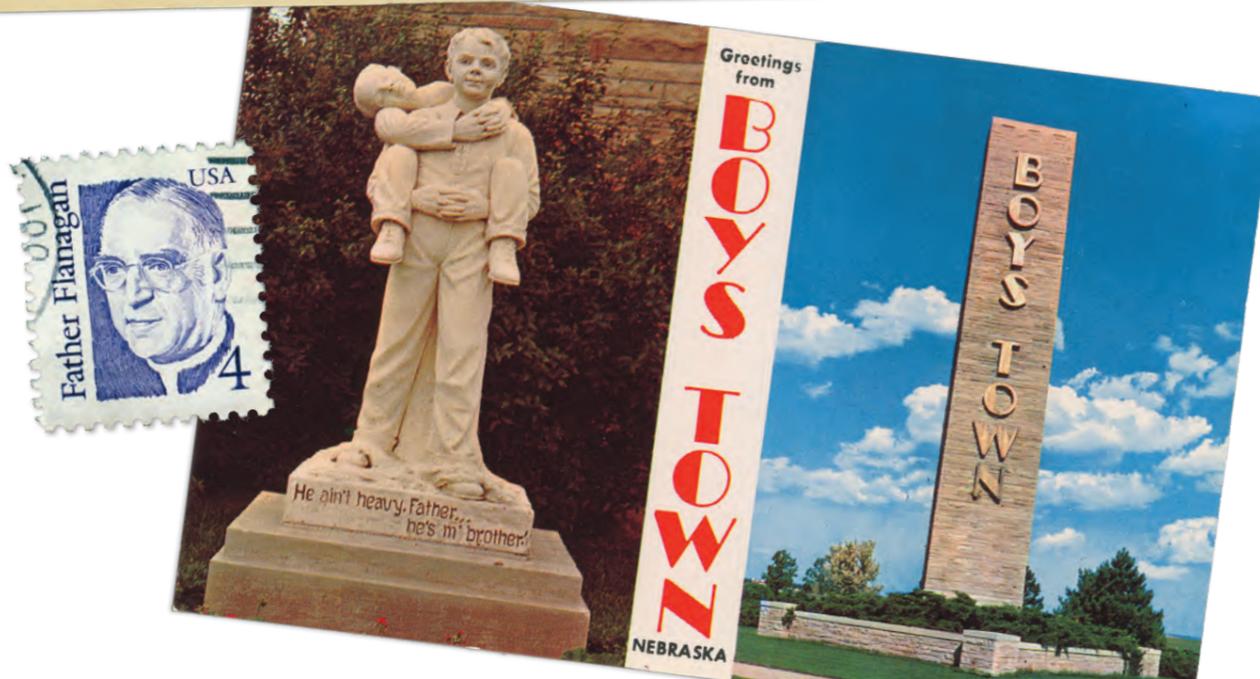
"It goes to show how highly he was regarded, both in the larger world and in Church circles," Lynch says. "Here he was, just a monsignor, and the pope is asking him to come help. And he goes. Of course he goes. And then he returns to his mission from the U.S. government and meets children living in the sewers of Tokyo or in bombed out houses in Berlin. He never stopped."

The work of Fryer and Sr. Mueller went into one of four huge boxes that were wrapped and sealed by Omaha Archbishop George Lucas. On May 15, the 69th anniversary of Fr. Flanagan's death, the Vatican announced that the case presented by the Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion was "complete and without error," giving rise to a decree of validity.

The next steps are a Vatican inquiry through those many documents sent to Rome to determine if Fr. Flanagan's life exhibited heroic virtue. That inquiry satisfactorily concluded, Fr. Flanagan would be elevated to venerable status, after which the pope then moves for beatification and canonization.

But it could be many more years before the process gets that far, and Fryer, Lynch and Sr. Mueller say they recognize and appreciate the deliberate nature of the process.

"It was simply a blessing for us to read through the materials that Fr. Flanagan has left to posterity," Sr. Mueller says. "One of the roles of moving people forward to sainthood is asking, 'Was the person a Christian example for their particular time?' Whatever happens moving forward with sainthood, I feel privileged to have been a part of this and to have had an opportunity to wander through the mind of a man who was committed to a great mission and a pastoral genius. I think it's clear that Fr. Flanagan is a shining light for us."



# the minimalist manager

## Can Minimalism Bring More Meaning to Your Workplace?

BY Rick Davis, BA'88

**M**ore than a mere handful of shirts hang in Creighton business professor Todd Darnold's closet.

He lives in a typically sized suburban home with his wife, Stacy, and their two children. They own two cars. Todd collects baseball cards with his sons. And he subscribes to cable TV — binge-watching recorded Premier League soccer matches when he has the chance.

Yet, Todd Darnold, PhD, is a self-professed minimalist.

Further, he believes minimalism's principles can make us better managers, in the broad sense of the word — offering lessons to all those who provide oversight, from Little League coaches to parents to corporate CEOs.

The minimalist movement is not one-size-fits-all. The art of living with less offers a big canvas. Tiny houses, the 100 Thing Challenge, Project 333 (dressing with 33 items or less for three months) are on one side of the spectrum.

"For me, it's not about having only seven shirts hanging in your closet," Darnold says. "It's more about being mindful and intentional about your purchases and behaviors than it is about having less stuff."

"When I got my first job, I bought some things like everybody does. And I realized that they don't make you any happier. Once I bought them, the thrill was over almost immediately."

He then stumbled across *theminimalists.com*, created by Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus — two young professionals who adopted minimalism after finding financial success and accumulated stuff were not leading to greater happiness.

"It resonated," Darnold says.

He and his family began to embrace the lifestyle — customizing it to fit their situation. A radical purge of possessions, he says, was not the goal. Their focus has been on buying and keeping only those things that bring real value to their lives, and gradually ridding themselves of other "stuff." It's about being mindful — purposeful.

### MOTIVATING PEOPLE

As an associate professor of marketing and management at Creighton, who also holds the recently established Charles "Mike" Harper Chair in Business Leadership, Darnold thought this concept might also relate to management. Could a minimalist approach help in motivating people?

"We are only really motivated in a long-term way when we are working for a purpose," Darnold explains. "If we haven't answered the 'why' question in a meaningful way, we are not going to be motivated. And we will quickly find that work is drudgery. We will become dissatisfied and unmotivated."

"The basis of leadership is really about helping your people find purpose in work, and then crafting the jobs and the culture of the workplace to keep people working on that purpose as much of the time as possible."

Darnold believes minimalism's "purpose-driven discernment" has benefits for both personal and professional management.

"We manage our lives, our children, our relationships. All of those things need to be purpose-driven. To me, that is at the core of what minimalism is all about."

### TEAMS OF HUMAN BEINGS

He encourages managers to write down their team's purpose, and then gather together and discuss it. "That way, everybody is crystal clear



PHOTOS BY BRAD IWEN/ADMIRAL DISTRICT

about why they are there, and what value they bring,” he says.

It should happen at all levels. For example, the janitorial staff plays a critical role in ensuring that an organization has a safe, clean and attractive workplace. “That’s really meaningful work,” Darnold says. “We don’t often frame things for people very well. We don’t tell stories very well to help them find meaning.”

While “less” is often a word associated with minimalism, Darnold says that description is incomplete, especially for those who manage people. It’s really about communicating and facilitating a sense of purpose among individuals and teams, he says, which, for some managers, might mean spending more time

with employees to get to know them better — to understand their passions.

Consider this example. A manager learns an employee is building a deck. To recognize that employee for a job well done, that manager gets the employee a gift card to a home improvement store. “That says, ‘I know you as a human being; we care about you; you’re a part of this,’” Darnold says. “It builds relationships. It builds trust.”

Darnold adds that organizations and managers need to understand that employees have purposeful pursuits beyond work, in their personal lives. He says that employees feel more engaged when they see that work is allowing them to do meaningful things at home. “It’s about creating a culture where it’s

a team of human beings who have whole lives,” Darnold says.

#### FINDING OUR PURPOSE

Finding purpose at work is not just a job for management. All of us have a responsibility for discovering our passions and skills, and putting them to best use in all aspects of our lives — including at work.

Gallup polling found that in 2016 only 33 percent of U.S. workers considered themselves engaged in their work, while 51 percent label themselves as “not engaged” and 16 percent as “actively disengaged.”

Engaged employees are those who are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work. Gallup’s research shows that employee engagement is strongly connected to business outcomes essential to an organization’s financial success.

“I think a lot of people just kind of get trapped,” Darnold says. “There’s that old song, ‘everybody’s working for the weekend.’”

Honest reflection is critical. What makes you happy? What are you good at? Then you can begin to find a career path that matches. It could mean starting your own business, joining a big company or going back to school.

#### REDEFINING SUCCESS

For those still restlessly searching for that perfect job — with a high-paying salary — it might require a redefinition of success.

“I think that is the broad theme under all of minimalism,” Darnold says. “Success is when we achieve purpose. It isn’t based on income level or an accumulation of things.”

For Darnold, a Christian, minimalism carries a spiritual component.

“Am I striving toward... achieving the purpose that I believe was God-given? I believe God put me on earth to do something. If I’m making progress toward that, I’m successful.”

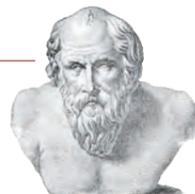
© Darnold and his sons, Zack, left, and Drew, look over their baseball card collection in the backyard of their suburban home. The minimalist lifestyle, he says, allows the family to focus on hobbies and activities they enjoy.

“Success is when we achieve purpose. It isn’t based on income level or an accumulation of things.”

TODD DARNOLD, PHD



**The Ancient Minimalist** The minimalist lifestyle isn’t a new cultural or philosophical phenomenon, says Creighton philosophy professor **Bill Stephens, PhD**. In fact, he says, the first minimalist might have been **Diogenes of Sinope**, who roamed the streets of Athens nearly 2,500 years ago with one cloak, a staff and a pouch. [Read more online at creighton.edu/creightonmagazine](https://www.creighton.edu/creightonmagazine)



© Marika Svolos, BA'17, is living a life of simplicity, serving as a volunteer at Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City, Missouri.

## MINIMALISM, MILLENNIALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

After graduating from Creighton in May with a degree in sociology, Marika Svolos found her dream job making \$125 per month.

“I’m not worried about making money,” says Svolos, who works as a volunteer at Jerusalem Farm, a Catholic community in Kansas City, Missouri, dedicated to prayer, community, service and simplicity.

She shares a home — a converted convent — with nine other adults and two children near Kansas City’s downtown loop. The nonprofit farm has a garden, fruit trees, chickens, honeybees and a large compost pile. The community hosts spiritual retreats, provides home repair to low-income residents and offers weekly curbside composting to its neighbors.

Svolos serves as house manager. She gets groceries for the community, which includes accepting some recently expired items from the store so they won’t go to waste; she does canning; she helps cook and clean; she meets with those on retreat. It’s a simple life. And she loves it.

“My life is full of joy and grace,” she says. “I wouldn’t want to live any other way.”

But she does not consider herself a minimalist.

“I don’t think of my lifestyle as minimalist, even though it is very simple,” Svolos explains. “What I’m doing is not about trying to have the minimum; it’s about becoming aware of the abundance that’s all around us.”

Labeling issues and a lack of solid data make it difficult to determine the growth of the current minimalism movement. Studies have shown that millennials, the oldest of whom are now in their mid-30s, aren’t buying houses like their parents did at that age.

But those studies, and others that show millennials as cautious consumers, don’t necessarily mean this generation has made a decision to embrace minimalism as a lifestyle, says Ryan Wishart, PhD, assistant professor of sociology. At least not voluntarily.

Dubbed the “children of the Great Recession,” the generation has faced stagnant wages, a difficult job market and high student loan debt.

“When you’re saddled with student loan debt, and you don’t have a lot of disposable income and you have uncertainty about your economic future,” Wishart says, “it makes you think harder about what you really want to spend your money on.”

Wishart says America’s work and consumer cultures have taken a toll on the environment — an important issue for a major segment of minimalists, as well as millennials.

“Societies that work longer hours tend to engage in consumption patterns that have a higher ecological footprint,” says Wishart, referencing the work of Boston College sociologist Juliet Schor, an expert in consumption and sustainability. “It’s not just that you consume more. You consume differently.”

As an example, Wishart says Americans pressed for vacation time might be more likely to hop on a plane and take the family to Disneyland, instead of taking a more leisurely, less fuel-intensive trip.

And, even if minimalism takes greater hold among Americans, Wishart isn’t sure if it will make much difference environmentally.

“Consumption is increasing among the rich,” Wishart says. “Even if we got the majority of the middle-class, working-class people to adopt a minimalist lifestyle, the consumption patterns of the richest 10 percent are enough, by themselves, to drive us over the cliff.”

“The flip side, and the good news, is we don’t have to get everyone to become minimalists if we significantly tackle that inequality and profligacy at the top.”

REFLECTIONS

# Preflight Check

Creighton men's basketball players and coaches pause during a preseason practice at CenturyLink Center Omaha to check out this year's game-day video. The theme: Let it fly. Find the latest Bluejay schedules, scores and news at [gocreighton.com](http://gocreighton.com).





IMPACT

## ‘God was Calling Me Here’

Scholarship Recipient from South Korea Finds Her Passion in Nursing

Growing up in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, **KELLY KIM**’s life revolved around school and studying. After a full day of traditional school, Kim would head off to “cram school” for private tutoring and wouldn’t return home until around 10 p.m. – facing at least an hour of homework to complete for the next day.

And this was elementary school.

“South Korea is too competitive; it’s all about studying,” Kim says. “There’s no such thing as extracurricular opportunities.”

At age 12, Kim moved in with a family in Canada – the mother was a friend of her parents’ who had previously taught English

in South Korea. She studied for eight months in Mississauga, Ontario, before returning to South Korea.

“It was a different life because we were going swimming, we were going to drama club,” Kim says.

Disillusioned with the educational environment and the competitive college-admission and job-search climate in South Korea, Kim’s parents decided that she and her brother would move with their mother to the United States.

After a short stint in Chicago, Kim’s family moved to be with other family members in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she went to high school.

“I love that the United States is all about individuality and the person’s own uniqueness,” Kim says. “South Korea’s more about conforming.”

In high school, Kim finally was able to participate in things other than studying. She

was a cheerleader and played flute in the Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra.

As she began her college search, Kim discovered Creighton’s great health care programs. She also received the Diane McCabe Endowed Scholarship.

“I thought that God was calling me to come here,” Kim says.

Her father’s career as a surgeon inspired Kim to enter the medical field. She wanted a hands-on experience and found it with nursing and its undergraduate clinical rotations.

“Even from junior year, we have clinicals to learn about all the medical terminology and take care of patients,” Kim says.

She draws inspiration from the founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale.

“Nightingale said that, when she first started nursing, she was questioning God, asking, ‘How can I serve other people with love, and how can I serve you?’” Kim says. “Nursing is so spiritual for me.”

And despite the years of intense studying in South Korea, Kim has come to enjoy hitting the books.

“I feel like I really am studying what I love.”

— BY EMILY RUST

# ALUMNI NOTES

## Send Us Your News

Penned your long-awaited novel? Traveled around the world? Received that awesome promotion? Earned a prestigious honor? If so, we want to hear about it! Share your memories and milestones by emailing us at [alumni@creighton.edu](mailto:alumni@creighton.edu).

**56 George Blue Spruce Jr., DDS,** Surprise, Arizona, was honored by the city of Cincinnati on June 22, 2017, when Mayor John Cranley issued a proclamation declaring the day to be “Dr. George Blue Spruce Day.” The announcement was made as the city hosted the 27th conference of the Society of American Indian Dentists. Blue Spruce founded the organization and served as president for 16 years. He now serves as president emeritus. Blue Spruce has made significant contributions to the field of dentistry. As the first American Indian dentist in the U.S., he has been a tireless advocate for diversity and inclusion in the profession. He considers his life’s work to be encouraging people of American Indian heritage to consider careers in dentistry and the health professions.

**62 John G. Manesis, MD,** Fargo, North Dakota, has published *His Good Stuff*, a collection of his baseball poems.

**66 Frederick B. “Rick” Allan, JD,** Lincoln, Nebraska, retired from his position as director of the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program. Allan’s successor is **Christopher B. Aupperle, BSBA’89, JD’92,** of Omaha.

**67 Dr. Joseph P. Drozda Jr., ARTS,** Chesterfield, Missouri, was honored by the American College of Cardiology (ACC), receiving the designation Master of ACC. In prior years, Drozda was awarded ACC’s Presidential Citation and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the ACC’s Missouri Chapter. Drozda is the director of outcomes research at Mercy – a four-state regional health system headquartered in suburban St. Louis. He is the principal investigator of a large, multi-center FDA-funded initiative developing systems for using electronic health record data to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of implanted medical devices.

**74 Joseph M. LaTona, JD,** Buffalo, New York, has been named in each edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* since 1987. He has been selected in each edition of *Super Lawyers – Upstate New York Edition* since 2008.

**75 Col. Mason E. Smith, BA’66, MA,** Colorado Springs, Colorado, has been elected president of the Denver Council on Foreign Relations. He also serves on the boards of the Colorado Hospital Association, St. Mary-Corwin Hospital and Colorado School District 20 Foundation.

**76 Kent Irwin, MS,** Omaha, has written *Exploits of a Common Adventurer*, a tale of his many adventures encompassing the seven continents of the world. **Daniel E. Monnat, JD,** Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered, has been ranked in the top tier of Kansas attorneys in the practice areas of appellate law, criminal defense litigation and white-collar criminal defense. In addition, Monnat was recognized by *Best Lawyers in America* for the 30th consecutive year in the legal sectors of criminal defense: general practice; white collar criminal defense; bet-the-company litigation; and appellate defense.

**77 Mark A. Weber, BA’74, JD,** Omaha, was acknowledged by the Omaha Community Foundation for his work with the Charitable Advisor of Philanthropy Study Group program. Weber also published a book, *The Legacy Spectrum*, for affluent individuals preparing their estate plans.

**79 Hon. Evelyn B. Clay, JD,** Oak Park, Illinois, retired from the Cook County (Illinois) Court in August. Judge Clay sat on the bench for more than 20 years.

**80 Dr. Patrick J. Edwards, BA,** Newton, Iowa, recently started his 30th year as a family practitioner at the Newton Clinic in Newton. He also is the mayor of Lambs Grove, Iowa. **Mary Jo Morrissey Jerde, BSN,** Tempe, Arizona, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nurses in October. Jerde was one of 173 highly distinguished nurse leaders selected for the 2017 class of academy fellows. Jerde also received the Distinguished Nurse of the Year award from the Arizona March of Dimes in June. She is the senior vice president, UnitedHealth Group, Center for Clinician Advancement.

**82 Gina D. Scales, BA’79, MS,** Florissant, Missouri, was honored with the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award for her lifelong commitment to building a stronger nation through volunteer service from President Barack Obama in June 2017.

**83 Stephen A. Donato, JD,** Fayetteville, New York, has been recognized in the 2017 *Upstate New York Super Lawyers* 

# HONORING OUR ALUMNI



The Creighton University Alumni Achievement Citation is the highest all-University award presented to Creighton alumni. This year's recipient, **Floyd Malveaux, MD, PhD, BS'61**, is a nationally recognized expert in the field of asthma and allergic diseases, leading initiatives at

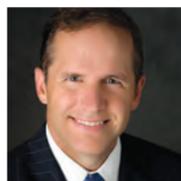
Howard University College of Medicine to address asthma morbidity among inner-city children. He served on the Creighton University Board of Trustees from 1997 to 2015 and has a long history of philanthropy, both to his community and to Creighton. Malveaux was honored at Homecoming 2017.

## 2017 ALUMNI MERIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Creighton University Alumni Merit Award recognizes outstanding alumni from the schools and colleges. The following were honored at Homecoming 2017:



**Jim Simpson, BA'80**  
College of Arts and Sciences



**Mark Henkels, BSBA'83**  
Heider College of Business



**Terry Lanphier, BS'78,**  
DDS'82, MBA'10  
School of Dentistry



**Gen. Anthony Zinni, MS'15**  
Graduate School



**Donald Montgomery, BSBA'84, JD'89**  
School of Law



**Marjorie Leimomi Mala Mau, BS'81, MD'85**  
School of Medicine



**Patti Scott Higginbotham, BSN'86, MS'95**  
College of Nursing



**Daniel Hilleman, PharmD'81**  
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions

list in the field of bankruptcy: business. Donato is an attorney in the Syracuse, New York, office of Bond, Schoeneck & King. He is chair of the firm's business restructuring, creditors' rights and bankruptcy practice. **Muirne Heaney, ARTS'76, JD**, Omaha, received the Nebraska State Bar Association's Visionary Award at the Barrister's Ball in March for her work on the Law Help of Nebraska interactive website.

**Stephen B. Shapiro, JD**, Greenwood Village, Colorado, was selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America 2018* for his work in insurance law. Shapiro is managing partner of Denver-based Shapiro Biegging Barber Otteson.

**84 September D. Williams, MD**, Mill Valley, California, published her first novel, *Chasing Mercury*, as an eBook. The book was written to support the recently ratified United Nations Minamata Convention on Mercury.

**88 John W. Nepl, BSBA**, Omaha, has been appointed chief financial officer of Green Plains in Omaha.

**90 Lawrence H. Necheles, BA'86, JD**, Pontiac, Illinois, was appointed to serve as a hearing officer for the Illinois State Police Merit Board.

**91 Dr. James G. Taylor VI, BS**, Oakton, Virginia, was appointed director of the Center for Sickle Cell Disease at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Taylor leads the center's staff in their mission dedicated to patient care, research, teaching and community outreach for sickle cell and other red cell diseases. He is also professor of medicine (hematology/oncology) at Howard's College of Medicine.

**92 Christopher B. Aupperle, BSBA'89, JD**, Omaha, was named director of the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program. He replaces **Frederick B. "Rick" Allan, JD'66**, of Lincoln, Nebraska, who recently retired.

**93 Laura E. Duffy, JD**, San Diego, was appointed by California Gov. Jerry Brown as a San Diego Superior Court judge. Duffy has been a U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California for six years, where she has led initiatives to prosecute criminals

involved in human and sex trafficking and drug smuggling.

**94 Dr. Dawn R. Ebach, BS**, Iowa City, Iowa, was promoted to clinical professor at the University of Iowa in July. She works in the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology. **David M. Williams, MD**, West Des Moines, Iowa, is the president and CEO of UnityPoint Clinics and UnityPoint at Home in West Des Moines.

**96 Michaela Sims, JD**, Arlington, Virginia, opened Sims Strategies in Washington, D.C.

**97 Kimberly A. Lammers, JD**, Blair, Nebraska, joined the health care practice group of the law firm Baird Holm in Omaha. Lammers was previously the vice president for compliance at Methodist Health Systems in Omaha.

**99 Shari Cuvelier Flowers, JD**, Omaha, is the vice president for compliance for Methodist Health Systems in Omaha.

**01 Dr. Nathan E. Brummel, BS'99, MS**, Nashville, Tennessee, is an assistant professor of medicine at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where he is the recipient of a Paul E. Beeson Emerging Leaders in Aging Research Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health. He was awarded the 2017 Global Rising Star Fellowship from the Australia New Zealand Intensive Care Society where he presented his research on impairments and disabilities after critical illness in Gold Coast, Australia.

**02 Patrick S. Cooper, BA'99, JD**, Bennington, Nebraska, was named president-elect of the Omaha Bar Association.

**Brandie Van Ness Fowler, BA'96, JD**, Omaha, was named secretary of the Omaha Bar Association.

**Grant W. Mussman, BA**, Omaha, was recognized as part of the *Midlands Business Journal's* "40 Under 40." Mussman is a State Farm agent in Omaha. **Daniel W. Oldenburg, JD**, Lincoln, Nebraska, joined the law firm Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather in Lincoln. Oldenburg practices immigration law.



## ALUMNI PROFILE

# Arming the Warriors

With the roar of cheering fans still ringing in his ears months after his Golden State Warriors won their second NBA Championship in three years, **MARTY GLICK, BSBA'70**, a minority owner of the Warriors and special advisor to the team's ownership, is looking to the new season. And trying to answer the question: Can we make a great team even better?

"Our goal is to make the team stay at a very high level, but the system is built to stop you from creating a dynasty," Glick says, relaxing in his office at Oracle Arena, the Warriors' home court in Oakland, California. "To be successful for a long time, we've got to develop young players. And we just signed a couple of (free agent) shooters. I think we'll be even better this year."

Though friends and fans constantly give him their opinions on which player the team should pursue or get rid of, Glick's job lies more at the business end of the franchise.

Today, Glick, the Warriors' former chief financial officer, has spent a busy morning in meetings about the construction of the team's new \$1 billion-plus arena to be built across the bay in San Francisco.

"We're using zero public money," he says. "I'm proud to say this is one of the only major privately financed arenas in the world. Doing it this way allows us to control the project and build it the way we want to."

When completed in time for the 2019–2020 basketball season, the waterfront Chase Center will include two office towers offering 580,000 square feet of space, 150,000 square feet of retail space and a public park.

Glick says team ownership decided to build the complex for two reasons: The Oracle is one of the oldest sports arenas—it recently celebrated its 50th anniversary—and the Warriors want to generate a greater fan experience. "Sports marketing is evolving. Not only did we want to build an arena, we wanted to create a sports stadium that was a destination. Something that is unique to the Bay Area."

After high school, Glick was looking to study business at a small college when a family friend recommended Creighton University.

"There I was, a nice Jewish boy from Chicago going to a Jesuit school," he says with a laugh. "I also loved politics and in 1968, presidential candidates (Richard) Nixon, (Hubert) Humphrey, (Eugene) McCarthy and (Bobby) Kennedy all came to speak at Creighton. I was always a strong supporter of Bobby Kennedy, and meeting him was life-changing."

After graduating with an accounting degree, Glick earned a graduate degree in finance from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. He also is a certified public accountant and chartered accountant (Canada). Glick served on the management teams of Levi Strauss, Genentech, Theravance and PEAK Surgical before joining the Warriors in 2011. He was named special advisor to ownership in 2013. — **BY BENJAMIN GLEISSER**

# Caring for Spiritual, Moral and Psychological Wounds



The responsibility of having to tell family members a loved one has died is no easy or enviable task. Nor is helping others with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide prevention and intervention, and marital counseling. Yet for the **REV. GERALD IGBOANUSI, MS'14**, this is his normal day-to-day.

Igboanusi, a native of Nigeria who is a U.S. citizen and has lived in this country for 17 years, currently serves as the Battalion Chaplain for the 394th Combat Sustainment and Support Battalion in Fremont, Nebraska. This is an Army Reserve unit with an assigned strength of 850 soldiers living in Nebraska, Missouri and South Dakota. "I care for soldiers who experience spiritual, moral and psychological wounds," he explains.

Igboanusi, who earned his master's degree in counseling, credits his Jesuit, Creighton education for providing him with the tools to do his job well when the going gets tough. "My counselor education training prepared me well to work with military personnel and their families in the areas of spiritual and family counseling, trauma, PTSD, grief, loss, and to respond to all emergencies or crises," he says.

Igboanusi has continued to expand his knowledge and skills through Creighton's doctoral program in interdisciplinary leadership, in which he is currently an EdD candidate.

"In my doctoral courses at Creighton, I learned how to lead and do ministry in a pluralistic military environment," Igboanusi says. "Prayer was the hallmark of my education at Creighton and is the center of my work today. Prayer helps me to speak to the lives of my soldiers and remind them of who they are in Christ. When soldiers come into my office for help, I ask for their permission to pray with them. Ninety-nine percent of the time they say yes and if they are non-Christians, I ask them to pray in their own tradition.

"Such an invitation often changes the dialogue and opens up a deeper level within an already existing relationship. That is the beauty of being a chaplain and an officer. Other officers cannot do that due to the separation of church and state. Army chaplains, however, are given the authority to explore spirituality through the First Amendment clause of our Constitution and Army Regulation 165-1, which guarantees the free exercise of religion."

Igboanusi says the Army is very proactive when it comes to the mental health of service members.

"The Army also places a high priority in honoring fallen heroes," he says. "For this reason, all Army chaplains are asked to be in a 24/7 state of readiness for death notifications, military funerals and memorial ceremonies. My service uniform and pastoral care kit are always packed and ready to go in case the call comes." — **BY LISA FOSTER, BA'92**

**03 Laura Frankam Happe, PharmD**, Cornelius, North Carolina, was named chief pharmacy officer of Humana Inc. Happe also is the editor in chief of the *Journal of Managed Care and Specialty Pharmacy*. **Emily O'Malley Olsen, BSMth**, Atlanta, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Award to study epidemiology in Finland. Her research focuses on surveillance of adolescent health-risk behaviors and disparities in violence victimizations. **Victor C. Padios, BACLS'99, JD**, Omaha, was named general counsel for Nebraska Furniture Mart in Omaha.

**04 Michelle Romanek Beyronneau, BS**, Cathedral City, California, was named a 2018 Riverside County (California) Teacher of the Year. Of the nearly 20,000 educators in Riverside County, Beyronneau is one of four teachers who will represent the county in the 2018 California State Teacher of the Year competition. She teaches math at Desert Hot Springs High School in Desert Hot Springs, California.

**05 Gabriel E. Lapito, MBA, BSBA**, Billings, Montana, owner/financial advisor of Strategic Retirement Plans with offices in Billings and Gillette, Wyoming, was named to the *Forbes'* Top 500 Next Generation Wealth Advisors list. The inaugural list, published on *Forbes.com*, recognizes wealth advisors born in or after 1980. Lapito is the only advisor in Montana and Wyoming named to the list. **Brian M. Sadowski, BSChm'01, MD**, Omaha, joined Colon and Rectal Surgery, Inc., in Omaha.

**07 Joseph P. Naatz, BSBA'04, JD**, Omaha, was named treasurer-elect of the Omaha Bar Association.

**09 Larry J. Johnson Jr., JD**, West Des Moines, Iowa, has been appointed the state of Iowa's public defender.

**10 Erin M. Herrmann, MA**, Chicago, is the associate director of the Writing Center in the University Center for Writing-based Learning at DePaul University in Chicago. Herrmann previously worked as the assistant director of the University Writing

Center at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. **Patrick J. Mack, JD**, Omaha, joined the law firm Hennessy & Roach in Omaha and will practice in the areas of insurance defense, labor and employment, and worker's compensation. **Yvonne D. Sosa, JD**, Omaha, was a fellow in the New Leaders Council (NLC) 2017 class. NLC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that engages a diverse, collaborative national network of progressive political entrepreneurs.

**11 Christopher R. Barondeau, MS, JD**, Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, was named partner at Goosmann Law Firm in Sioux City, Iowa. He focuses his practice on divorce and family law and currently serves in the Nebraska Army National Guard as commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) of the 126th Chemical Battalion. **Jessica E. Thomas, JD**, Omaha, joined the law firm Pansing Hogan Ernst & Bachman in Omaha as an associate. Thomas practices in the areas of real estate, business law and business planning.

**12 Laura Goracke Anderson, OTD**, Lincoln, Nebraska, joined Bryan Health's Crete Area Medical Center in Crete, Nebraska. **Zachary W. Anderson, JD**, Lincoln, Nebraska, is an associate attorney with Baylor, Evnen, Curtiss, Grimit & Witt, LLP, in Lincoln.

**13 Brittany L. Murphy, MD**, Rochester, Minnesota, participated in a medical mission trip to Jalpatagua, Guatemala, last February. One of her surgical mentors on the trip was **Leroy J. "Lee" Trombetta, BS'92, MD'97**. Murphy is a general surgery resident at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

**14 Kelly J. Barth, MA**, Omaha, and his wife started a liturgical ministry publishing company, Simply Liturgical Music (SLM). SLM offers psalms, Mass settings and other hymns in a downloadable format at *slmusic.org*. Barth also composed his own Mass setting, *Mass of the Gathered Assembly*, which is currently sung in parishes around Omaha, across the Midwest and in Australia. **Anthony J. Quagliano, BS**, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, is pursuing his PhD in cell biology

and physiology through the University of Delaware. His work was recently published in the *Leukemia Research Journal* for the discovery of a novel therapy to combat microenvironment-induced drug resistance in pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

**15 Richelle Simmons, MS**, Omaha, joined Ameritas in Lincoln, Nebraska, as vice president of digital.

**17 Courtney M. Batterson, BSEvS**, San Jose, California, is an assistant research scientist with NASA. Batterson is continuing her research on Mars' climate.

## BIRTHS

**00 Benjamin Jacob and Kathryn Greene Jacob, BSW**, Mansfield, Texas, a daughter, Willa, Sept. 14, 2016.

**02 Daniel C. Blake and Becky J. Berggren, BSBA**, Boston, a daughter, Maya, Nov. 11, 2016.

**03 Adam J. Molzer, BSBA, and Laura Hanson Molzer, BA**, Fort Collins, Colorado, a son, Evan James, Dec. 19, 2016.

**04 Robert Hope and Enedina Madrid Hope, BSBA**, Sioux City, Iowa, a son, Jecheiah Alexander, April 30, 2017.

**06 Michael J. Ducey and Kimberly E. Armstrong, BA**, Omaha, a son, Emmett Leo, May 4, 2017.

**07 Andrew Blandford and Danielle J. Pressler, BA'04, MS, JD**, Washington, D.C., a son, William Daniel, Aug. 16, 2017.

**08 Todd Reinke and Jennifer L. Eisma-Reinke, JD**, Inwood, Iowa, a daughter, Charlotte, April 4, 2017. **Andrew C. Stevens, MD, and Jennifer J. Stevens, JD**, Prior Lake, Minnesota, a daughter, Anja Jacqueline, March 26, 2016.

**10 David G. Moore, JD**, and Trinity Moore, Show Low, Arizona, a son, Cash Daniel, May 13, 2017.

**11 Alex C. Covalt, BA, and Katherine Larcom Covalt, BSBA**, Omaha, a son, Davy, July 6, 2017.

**12 Gavin J. Guldenpfennig, BA, and Amalie Appleton Guldenpfennig**, Grundy Center,

Iowa, a daughter, Daenerys Victoria, Dec. 9, 2014; a daughter, Mariana Sue, April 5, 2016; and a son, Rorik Gavin, July 11, 2017.

**14 Spencer W. Werth, BA'11, MS, JD, and Carrie Bonsutto Werth, OTD'12, BSBS'12**, Omaha, a son, Benjamin Wayne, Jan. 13, 2017.

**15 Zachary W. Lutz-Priefert, JD, and Megan E. Lutz-Priefert, BSBA'13, JD**, Omaha, a daughter, Elizabeth Athena, June 14, 2017.

**16 Ali Agashteh and Hengameh Golchin, PharmD**, Issaquah, Washington, a son, Arshaam, May 25, 2017.

## WEDDINGS

**04 Enedina Madrid, BSBA, and Robert Hope**, July 1, 2017, living in Sioux City, Iowa.

**06 Erin E. Burns, BFA, and Declan M. McElroy**, May 27, 2017, living in Omaha.

**12 Stephanie M. DeRosa, OTD, and Myles Dangerfield**, May 20, 2017, living in Manassas, Virginia.

**14 Lauren P. Simpson, BA, and Christopher A. Salvatore, BA**, May 27, 2017, living in Omaha.

**15 Kaitlyn L. Kroyer, BSN, and Derek W. Steele, BSBA**, June 17, 2017, living in Burnsville, Minnesota.

## DEATHS

**45 Elizabeth Wack Doyle, SJN**, Council Bluffs, Iowa, July 30, 2017. **Nelly A. Nigro, BSpPha**, Los Angeles, Aug. 3, 2017.

**47 M. Bernice Holden Cheslak, SJN**, Omaha, July 30, 2017. **Mildred Dusing Glyn, SJN**, La Vista, Nebraska, June 7, 2017.

**48 LaVerne E. Abts, JD**, Elkhorn, Nebraska, Aug. 15, 2017. **John H. "Jack" Cruise, ARTS**, Corning, Iowa, Aug. 10, 2017. **Mary Korbmaker Simon, SJN**, Omaha, July 26, 2017.

**49 William M. Kizer Sr., BUSADM, HON'96**, Omaha, Aug. 20, 2017.

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**50 Dolores Doksansky Gruber, ARTS,** Omaha, Aug. 5, 2017. **Frank J. Insolera Sr., BSPha,** Omaha, Aug. 17, 2017. **Patricia Fairfield Newcomb-Hagan, BS,** Weymouth, Massachusetts, July 30, 2017

**51 Theodore W. Eller Sr., DDS,** Knoxville, Iowa, Aug. 23, 2017. **Paul B. Knievel, BUSADM,** Omaha, May 31, 2017. **Agnes "Peg" Kirby Mahoney, SJN,** Daly City, California, May 31, 2017. **Neil J. Welch, JD,** Omaha, June 29, 2017.

**53 Dr. Peter Jurtschuk Jr., MS,** Houston, July 9, 2017. **Daniel B. McNair, JD,** Columbus, Nebraska, May 31, 2017. **Natalie Newell McNeil, ARTS,** Omaha, June 30, 2017. **Gerald R. Uhl, BSC,** Sioux City, Iowa, Dec. 14, 2016.

**54 Kenneth J. Stangel, BSC,** Onawa, Iowa, June 16, 2017.

**55 Frank J. Gollon, BSC,** Cottage Grove, Minnesota, June 25, 2017. **Thomas E. Grier, BS'51, MD,** Carlsbad, California, June 2, 2017. **Frederick H. Hodell, MD,** Cherry Valley, California, July 1, 2016. **Theresa Hoffmann McCaslin, SCN,** Omaha, Aug. 11, 2017.

**56 Edward G. Bennett, BS,** Henderson, Nevada, Dec. 21, 2016. **Msgr. Mervin J. Hood, MSEdu,** Fort Dodge, Iowa, July 27, 2017. **Edward F. Malone, ARTS,** Houston, Aug. 11, 2017. **Gertrude Pound Tighe, BS,** Omaha, Aug. 16, 2017.

**57 Dr. King J. Dykeman, BA,** Fairfield, Connecticut, Aug. 8, 2017. **John A. Fischer, MD,** Thornton, Colorado, July 20, 2017. **John W. Kennedy, JD,** Omaha, June 17, 2017.

**58 Edward F. Greteman, BSBA,** Billings, Montana, June 11, 2017. **Francis J. "Frank" Kudlacz, ARTS,** Omaha, June 10, 2017. **Lucille Howser Kuzelka, SCN,** York, Nebraska, May 12, 2015.

**59 William A. Fitzgerald, BSBA,** Omaha, Sept. 1, 2017. **Gary R. Provost, DDS,** Scottsdale, Arizona, July 9, 2017.

**60 Kathleen Rynaski Caldwell, BUSADM,** Papillion, Nebraska, July 11, 2017. **Dr. Margaret F. Fay, SCN,** Buford, Georgia, Aug. 10, 2017. **Paul A. Floersch Jr., ARTS,** Omaha, July 5, 2017. **Darrell I. Gisvold, MD,** Belvedere Tiburon, California, July 11, 2017. **Joyce M. Ortgies, MLN,** Omaha, June 28, 2017.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

# Couple Bring Hope, Health to Haiti

In talking to **ELLEN CUNNINGHAM, BA'86, MD,** about her life and Lamp for Haiti, the nonprofit organization she and her husband founded, it's the enormous pride she has in her husband, **JAMES MORGAN, BA'86, MD'91,** that shines through in her voice and words.

They met as juniors at Creighton, both studying psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences.

"Our latter years at Creighton opened our minds to not only higher-level psychology classes, but also the study of philosophy. Honestly, I think it was Jim's love of studying concepts like goodness, freedom, justice, the presence of the Divine in one's life, beauty and so on, that cheered me on. He was challenged to look at how one chooses to live out a life."

Ellen worked part-time at a local hospital, helping drug- and alcohol-addicted teens. "Combined with my studies and my relationship with this socially conscious guy from New Jersey, I took a new look at the world around me," she says. She thought about becoming a physician, the path Jim was already on.

Jim attended the School of Medicine and during his fourth year, Ellen started medical school at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. They married when he was a second-year resident and she was in her second year of medical school. "By the time I graduated, we had two children, a handful of debt, and some decisions to make about our futures."

They settled in the New York/New Jersey area; Jim went to St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, and Ellen started a dermatology practice in New Jersey. St. Vincent's, now closed, served the poor in Greenwich Village.

"The medical and social side effects of homelessness, loneliness, drug addiction, alcoholism, domestic violence, the HIV and AIDS epidemic in

the late 1990s — these were all placed before him and he rose to the occasion," says his wife.

During that time, Jim accompanied his former high school religion teacher, the Rev. Vincent Biagi, SJ, a Jesuit and friend, on a service trip to Haiti. Jim came home with a renewed perspective on poverty and serving the needy.

He returned to Haiti in early 2005 after Ellen gathered supporters to fund his trip. He had made connections in Cité Soleil — an extremely impoverished community of over 300,000 — and set up an alley clinic with a backpack of medicines and a stethoscope. Ellen later learned that Doctors Without Borders would not even go to Cité Soleil then because it was too dangerous.

The Lamp for Haiti health center officially opened as a nongovernmental organization in 2006.

Today, Jim is Lamp's medical director and board chair. The primary care clinic is staffed by a professional health team, all Haitian, including two physicians. The clinic is open five days a week and sees more than 1,000 patients monthly. Services include a women's health clinic, child nutrition program and EKG and digital radiology services.

Lamp for Haiti provides physician consultations, medical testing and medicine. The medicine and testing are free, while fees asked for

**"Lamp looks to stay true to its mission of working with and for some of the most marginalized by providing health care and related services to even more vulnerable communities."**

ELLEN CUNNINGHAM, BA'86, MD

consultations equal about 25 cents per patient.

Lamp also sponsors water and sanitation projects, supports local schools and provides health education and humanitarian aid. Since 2012, Ellen's fundraisers have celebrated Haitian art and culture. She also helps support Jim's Haiti trips through their practice in Cedar Grove, New Jersey.

"My role as the support person became less financial and more as a wife and mother, 'holding down the fort' at home and being a sounding board to the innumerable obstacles my husband faced in this desperate part of the world." She also has worked side by side with him in Haiti.

She says they hope that the Lamp model, with staffing by local professionals, can expand to more communities.

"Lamp looks to stay true to its mission of working with and for some of the most marginalized by providing health care and related services to even more vulnerable communities." — **BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA'74**



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**61 Charles A. Hanna, MD,** San Diego, May 31, 2017. **Sr. Maureen Murray, SSND, MA,** Mankato, Minnesota, May 30, 2017. **Anne Barna Ostronic, SJN,** Omaha, July 12, 2017. **Alfred M. Rotondaro, MA,** Shady Side, Maryland, June 26, 2017. **Susannah Svoboda Trebtsoske, BA,** Crystal, Minnesota, July 21, 2017. **John L. Truscott, BSPha,** Prior Lake, Minnesota, May 28, 2017.

**63 Janet Kyril Dean, BSBA,** Bennington, Nebraska, Aug. 6, 2017. **Sr. M. Brendan Fry, OSB, MSEdu,** Atchison, Kansas, June 17, 2017.

**64 Susan Jakaitis Furay, BA,** Omaha, Aug. 4, 2017. **Joseph D. Lehan, BSPha,** Minden, Iowa, Aug. 7, 2017. **Joseph W. Robben Jr., BA,** San Clemente, California, May 31, 2017. **Sr. Teresa Wolfe, OP, BS'58, MA,** St. Catharine, Kentucky, Aug. 7, 2016.

**65 John W. Chandler, DDS,** Arcadia, California, May 9, 2017. **Edward J. York, BA'62, MA,** Goldsboro, North Carolina, June 26, 2017.

**66 Samuel J. Amato, BA,** Omaha, July 22, 2017. **Daniel R. Fritz, JD,** Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 25, 2017. **James C. Hohn, DDS,** Yankton, South Dakota, June 5, 2017. **Dennis J. Vidmar, DDS,** Pueblo, Colorado, June 12, 2017.

**68 Larry F. Lutwitz, BA'65, MA,** Carroll, Iowa, Jan. 23, 2017.

**69 W. Terrence Bates, BA,** Merced, California, July 8, 2017. **Anthony J. Cruise, BSBA,** Tucson, Arizona, June 20, 2017. **Gayleen M. Kuehn, SJN,** Carroll, Iowa, July 8, 2017.

**70 Clyde A. Christian Sr., JD,** Elkhorn, Nebraska, June 22, 2017. **Sr. Margaret Miller, RSCJ, MSGuid,** Atherton, California, May 17, 2017.

**71 Michael A. Wang, BA,** Omaha, July 22, 2017.

**74 Michael H. Feekin, MSGuid,** Joplin, Missouri, June 12, 2017.

**75 Joseph A. Corona, MS'72, MD,** Greeley, Colorado, March 15, 2017. **M. Gene Harmon, BSBA,** Grapevine, Texas, Dec. 11, 2015.

**78 Edward A. Junker, ARTS,** Bernalillo, New Mexico, July 14, 2017.

**79 James E. Connor, JD,** Omaha, Aug. 3, 2017.

**83 Mary Couchman Beerling, JD,** Omaha, July 26, 2017.

**84 Edward D. Ammala, BS'80, MD,** Rolla, Missouri, May 31, 2017.

**88 Kevin F. Mulhall, BSBA,** Omaha, May 25, 2017.

**91 John P. Weaver, MD,** Altadena, California, March 29, 2017.

**92 Shona A. Bohrink, BSN,** Fremont, Nebraska, July 24, 2016.

**96 James L. Gerstle, BSN,** Louisville, Kentucky, June 14, 2017.

**01 Michelle R. Glasz, PharmD,** De Witt, Iowa, June 13, 2017.

**02 Kelly L. Stankiewicz, PharmD,** Omaha, July 3, 2017.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

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

**Raymond F. Olmo, DDS,** associate clinical professor of periodontics in the School of Dentistry; Aug. 2, 2017

**Mark J. Wierman, PhD,** professor of computer science in the College of Arts and Sciences; Aug. 8, 2017

**Bruce J. Malina, PhD, STD,** professor emeritus of theology in the College of Arts and Sciences; Aug. 17, 2017

**Richard J. Hallworth, PhD,** professor of biomedical sciences in the School of Medicine; Sept. 1, 2017

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



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85	7.8%	\$1,950
90	9.0%	\$2,250

\*Based on a \$25,000 gift. Rates change periodically, so please contact us for the most current information.

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## THEN & NOW

The "Old Gym" (Vinardi Center) has served students in myriad ways over the years. Alumni, depending on their eras and activities, will remember standing in line to register for classes, swimming in the lower-level pool, and attending men's and women's basketball games and commencement ceremonies in the building at 24th and Burt streets. It has had numerous makeovers, and now the gymnasium itself has been transformed into a state-of-the-art, high-tech Pharmacy Skills Lab for campus and online students.

At top, the men's basketball team plays to a full house in 1924. At left, today's pharmacy students will be practicing vastly different skills in the same space as they learn sterile and nonsterile compounding and participate in community pharmacy simulation and drug information activities. The gym has been reconfigured to accommodate 85 on-site future pharmacists and many more online via digital tools.





## ‘Philanthropy Is in Our DNA’

“This is a dream job,” says Matt Gerard, who oversees fundraising and alumni relations as Creighton’s vice president for University Relations. He was named to the position in February, but he is no newcomer to Creighton. Gerard worked in various fundraising capacities for the University from 2004 until January 2016, when he accepted a position as vice president for development at Children International in Kansas City, Missouri, a nonprofit child-sponsorship organization fighting global poverty.

An Omaha native and avid runner, Gerard earned a track scholarship to the University of Iowa, graduating in 1994 with a degree in journalism. He then completed a master’s degree in secondary education from the University of Oregon, and taught high school English and coached track and cross country at both the high school and collegiate levels before joining Creighton in 2004. He worked on the highly successful *Willing to Lead* campaign, and served as the staff lead on the *Ignite the Greatness* campaign for the Heider College of Business.

Gerard and his wife, Melissa, a physical therapist in the Methodist health care system, have

three children, ages 13, 12 and 9. *Creighton* magazine had a chance to talk with him this fall.

**When you came to Creighton in 2004, you initially worked in fundraising for the School of Medicine. What was that experience like?**

I was fortunate to have a front-row seat to what makes Creighton different — the way the curriculum is designed and the types of doctors we produce. The medical alumni I worked with shared stories of being exposed to hands-on patient care early in their training, and how this made them better doctors, instilling a willingness to continue volunteering in local shelters and underdeveloped countries. This is just one example that goes to the essence of Creighton: You’re in the community, you’re learning and you’re doing service.

**Later, you were involved in the *Ignite the Greatness* campaign, which included the naming of the Heider College of Business.**

That project really highlighted the relationship and partnership between Creighton and Omaha. It showed the brain-gain that the business college brings to the city, and spotlighted the

tremendous partnerships all of our schools and colleges have throughout Omaha and the region. Because of the transformational gift from Mary and Charles Heider, the college’s enrollment increased by 50 percent, with almost two-thirds of its students now coming from more than 200 miles away to receive a Jesuit-inspired business education at Creighton.

**How can alumni lend their support to the University?**

There are three areas in which our alumni continually impact Creighton. First, they are our greatest ambassadors in carrying the Creighton message to high school students seeking a Jesuit, Catholic education. Second, they continue to be one of our greatest conduits for internships. We were recognized again by *U.S. News & World Report* for being one of the top universities for internship opportunities, and our alumni are a big factor. Third, our alumni help guide their alma mater’s future through their incredibly generous philanthropy. The gifts they invest in our students are often the difference that allows someone to pursue a Creighton degree.

**What is your priority in terms of fundraising?**

The president and the Board have a vision for the University, and my team works hard to match donors to the prioritized objectives for all of Creighton’s schools and colleges. That said, scholarships are so important in helping us recruit students who would most benefit from a Creighton education. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than sharing letters from student scholarship recipients with donors and seeing the joy it brings to those donors, knowing they are making a difference in the lives of these young students.

**What has it been like being back?**

The personal relationships formed here are incredible, and we are fortunate to have Fr. Hendrickson, who has a clear vision for Creighton’s future. This will happen because of our alumni and friends who believe in what Creighton does for students and the community. Creighton was founded by philanthropists. Philanthropy is in our DNA. This is a tradition that goes back to 1878, and every student who has come here has been a beneficiary of this legacy. It’s a tradition that makes opportunities possible for students today and into the future.

# TAKING FLIGHT

“The opportunity to share my work with international scientists and many experts helped me to understand the scope and utility of my research project in a real-world setting. The AAdvantage Global Scholars program allowed me to broaden my horizons.”

**Pooja Hegde**, AAdvantage® Global Scholars Travel Grant Recipient  
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, Class of 2018

Hegde’s research focuses on developing alternative treatments for tuberculosis, a pandemic disease responsible for high mortality around the globe.

**DESTINATION:** Pisa, Italy. Presented at the Gordon Research Seminar (GRS) and the Gordon Research Conference (GRC), June 21–30, 2017



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“The AAdvantage Global Scholars Travel Grant will allow Creighton students who wouldn’t otherwise have the means to travel to access opportunities to become transformational global leaders. The goals of the Creighton Global Initiative really impressed me. I’m pleased to have been the conduit from American Airlines to Creighton and to know that we can help make an impact on students and their global footprint.”

**Tom Weir, BSBA’79, MBA’84**, Vice President and Treasurer, American Airlines





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